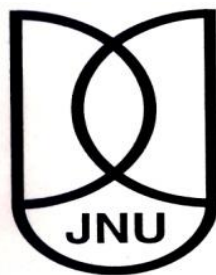


**SOVIET INFLUENCE ON THE IDEOLOGICAL
AND CULTURAL IMAGINATIONS IN INDIA:
A CASE STUDY OF KERALA**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AMAL P. P.



Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies

School of International Studies

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi 110067

2022



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies

School of International Studies

New Delhi-110067

Tel.: (O) -91-11-2670 4365
Fax: (+91) -11-2674 1586, 2586
Email: crcasjnu@gmail.com

Date: 30.08.2022

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “Soviet Influence on the Ideological and Cultural Imaginations in India: A Case Study of Kerala” submitted by me in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

Amal P. P.

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. Archana Upadhyay
(Chairperson, CRCAS)



अध्यक्ष/Chairperson
रूसी और मध्य एशियाई अध्ययन केन्द्र
Centre for Russian & Central Asian Studies
अंतर्राष्ट्रीय अध्ययन संस्थान
School of International Studies
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi - 110 067

Dr. Usha K. B.
(Supervisor)



Associate Professor
Centre for Russian & Central Asian Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067

*Dedicated to those who struggled for
an equal and just society in India*

Acknowledgements

Here comes a journey from Kerala to Delhi that is reaching its partial completion. Travelling from Kerala University to JNU was a great experience for a first-generation college student from a family in Moothakunnam village, Eranakulam district, Kerala. Many have inspired, supported and encouraged me to reach this level. I first heard the name Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi when I was a BA Political Science student at Maharajas College, Eranakulam. My teacher Dimpi V. Divakaran mentioned JNU while I went to talk to him in the staff room. Until then I was not aware of educational institutions outside Kerala. But from that moment onwards, JNU campus has become my dream. I eagerly wanted to go to JNU, which was also my first trip out of Kerala.

I had filled out my MA entrance examination form to JNU but could not write the exam because of lack of confidence. Later in my MA Political Science days at Kerala University Campus, Trivandrum, my senior Vandana pushed me to fill out the application form for the MPhil-PhD entrance. I skipped one exam, again, due to lack of confidence but appeared for the next test thanks to the well-deserved scolding I received from my friends Najeeb, Dilruba and Stalin. The test went fine, but I was not confident about the result. One fine day I received a message on my mobile that the test result is out, but I was not interested in checking it. The next day while I was sitting in the department library with Abdu Rahim and Thomas Mathew and had a cursory thought to check the result. A big surprise! I realised that I had been selected for the interview. While running helter skelter to prepare the synopsis and plan the travel, I got important suggestions from Biju B. L. and Siddik Rabiath. I got into contact with two JNUites, Manu M. R. and Umesh Omanakkuttan. Manu offered me to stay in his room 339E Brahma Putra hostel. I met Subin Dennis for the first time and started our never-ending discussions there. After attending the first-ever interview of my life, I was in a mood of disappointment. I concluded that people like me who started their studies at a government Malayalam medium school won't be able to study on a campus-like JNU.

While we were conducting the hostel day celebrations in the Men's Hostel, Karyavattom, I got a call from my friend Neethu that my name is in the list of

selected candidates for CRCAS/SIS/JNU. The happiest person in the world! Therefrom, my long journey started. The then CR&CAS Centre Chairperson, Late Prof. Arun Mohanty, Dr Usha K. B. and Prof. Phool Badan helped me with the technical difficulties I faced during the admission process. Prof. Arun Mohanty became my MPhil supervisor, and I cannot forget his care for me and committed academic thinking until the last days of his life. His wife Namita Mohanty treated us like her children. After Prof. Mohanty's sad demise, I started working with Dr Usha K. B. for my Ph.D.

From my entry to JNU to the submission of the PhD thesis, I have an enormous gratitude to Dr Usha K. B. for her constant supervision of my research, showering care and rebukes while directing and encouraging me in my academic life. Dr Usha's cooperation, guidance, and consideration amidst the difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic made it possible for me to complete my thesis. My academic collaboration with her equipped me with the necessary research skills, theoretical understanding and knowledge to avail an Erasmus+ student exchange fellowship to study at Kaunas Technological University, Kaunas, Lithuania, for one semester in 2019. Besides, her encouragement and guidance helped me to publish a series of articles in Malayalam journals and magazines on the post-Soviet space. My words are not enough to thank her at this moment.

My academic and social life on the JNU campus owe gratitude to Professors, library staff, mess workers, dhabhas, shops and sanitation workers on the campus. Many professors have inspired me - Prabhat Patnaik, C. P. Chadraseshar, Archana Prasad, Jayati Ghosh, Anuradha Chenoy, Nivedita Menon, Kamal Mitra Chenoy, Janaki Nair, V. Bijukumar, A. K. Ramakrishnan, Happymon Jacob and many more. The faculty at my centre Tulsi Ram, Tahir Asgar, Ajay Patnaik, Sanjay Pandey, Phool Badan, Archana Upadhyay, Rajan Kumar, Nalin Mahapatra, Preeti Das, Amitabh Singh and Raj Yadav contributed immensely to my intellectual formation.

Here I am extending my sincere gratitude to KTU Lithuania for hosting me as an Erasmus student. I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Sarunas Paunksnis, who was my supervisor at KTU. I also thank Vilnius University and Dr Kristina Garalyte, IISH Amsterdam, ZMO Berlin and National Centre for Scientific

Research (CNRS) Paris for hosting me during my fieldwork. I was fortunate to have an opportunity to travel to Estonia, Latvia, and Finland with Prof. A. K. Ramakrishnan, Dr. Usha K. B. and Prof. Phool Badan while I was at KTU. The ferry trip from Tallin to Helsinki and back with them is an excellent memory and enriching experience.

On my journey I have a lot of friends and comrades to mention, and I am afraid that because of a long list, I might forget some names. My friends and comrades gave me immense support and strength to carry forward this journey. From the first day of the journey, my SFI comrades helped and supported me until the submission of my thesis. Before getting hostel I stayed with Sheron in 101E Brahmputra Hostel and later with Shabeer and Shibin at 125 Sulej Hostel. This room contains lots of memories with SFI comrades, so does 129 Chandrabhaga Hostel. I met comrades Rahul Thankaraj, Abhilash Augustine and Vani Mecheril etc. in 125 Sulej. Comrade Shabeer has taken care of me more than an elder brother would do. He fed me when I had no money to buy food and helped me proof check and correct my broken English. Our “Chillers” gang became omnipresent in most of the events at the campus. My initial days with the SFI comrades on the campus like Ajmal Rasak, Aswathi Ashok and Nitheesh Narayanan etc. are evergreen memories.

My first official hostel room was Sulej 348 and I shared wonderful memories with Megwan and Javed over there. Later I shifted to my friend Dinesh Kattaria’s room, 124 Sulej. After a year Muneer M. arrived not only as a roommate but as a brother of mine. After Muneer Dawar Ghani became my room partner with a great friendship. I remember that Dawar was really upset when I received a punishment transfer to Kaveri hostel for being part of the Find Najeeb Protest at Admin block. In Kaveri 125 I spent a few months with friend Nitant Gaurav.

Many of my comrades were an important part of this journey. The comrades of my SFI JNU Unit and Delhi State Committee like Dipsita Dhar, Aejaz Ahmed Rather, Nisam Asaf, Ashique Ali T., Kriti Roy, Ranjith PM, Ajith Keralavarma, Paarithosh Nath, Viswanathan, Pavel Thomar, Samuel Philip Mathew, Deepanjan Krishnan, G. Suresh, Srabani Chakraborty, Aparna Mahiaria,

Sujith Nath, Salini L. R., Nimmi Indukumar, Athul S. G., Sanjuktha Nath, Sandeep Sudarshan, Sakkariya Ibrahim, Unni, Balu S., Pindiga Ambedkar, Piyush Kant, Survi Thakur, Arjun C. S., Nabeel, Haritha, Tresa, Jomy, Vineeth Sukumaran, Heidi, Kiran Sivan, Manish Kumar, Ratan Kumar, Gayathri Balusha , Deepali Aparajita, Twinkle Siwach, Anjaneya Sivan, Shafeena Runjun, Mukulika, Navaneetha, Dev Krishnan, Anjana, Hemnath, Nikhil Mathew, Vasudev Chakravarthy, Anand Yashodharan, Soori Krishnan, Devika Kathika, Shimjith, Krishna Priya, Parveen Shaikh, Sunaina Iqbal, Akshath Seth, Umesh Yadav, Anupam, Sri Harsha, Upasana Hazarika, Fahad, Aishwarya Bhattacharya, Imran, Jayapraksh, Elora, Farooque, Srijani Bhaswa Mahanta, Faisal Khureshi, Asif Idrees, Irfan Nazeer, Vanat Kalal and many others who were with me in this period of long struggles.

My classmates of the 2014 batch of CRCAS/SIS, faculty members and office staff have immensely contributed to my good days at JNU. A special mention of the PC Joshi Archives of Dr. B. R. Amedkar Library, JNU and its director Dr. Narasaiah Inugurthi is warranted. Various libraries and archives in Kerala especially the Kerala Legislative Assembly library had immensely contributed to my thesis. The enriching conversations with Prof. Madhavan K. Palat, Prof. K. N. Ganesh and many others have greatly contributed to this study.

The JNUSU days of mine have greatly contributed to the life experiences. It was such a wonderful camaraderie as a JNUSU-SIS Convenor with my dear siblings Duggirala Sreekrishna, Aishe Ghosh and Shibir Xavier. The days of struggle have continued being a JNUSU Vice President along with Satarupa Chakraborty, Mohit Kumar Pandey and Tabarez Hassan. These days have been immensely filled with debates, discussions, posters, pamphlets, speeches and protests, and a great time with friends in school canteens, Dhabhas, protests at Admin block, Parliament Street, and in front of various Bhawans and Embassies. I cannot forget my senior comrades like Vijoo Krishnan and Aniyam P. V. for supporting and strengthening me organisationally and emotionally. The comrades V. Sivadasan, Vikram Singh, V. P. Sanu and Mayukh Biswas have also an important role in my political life. I have to remember my dear comrades in my village, the CPI(M) Madaplathuruth North Branch Committee for their consistent

support and encouragement. My friends Anas Nazar, Praseetha K., Mansiya V. P., Shihabudhen, Hashim, Vishnu Murali, Mitchel Harmon, Kristina Gurmadaite, Pheroze Vincent, friends and comrades from Maharajas College and Kerala University Kariavattom Campus deserve a special mention here. I wanted to note the important role of the JNU scholarship for my survival in the campus and the UGC for extending the time period for submission in the pandemic times.

Without the support and encouragement of my parents Latha and Pushkaran I cannot even start a journey like this. Their sacrifice granted me to go away and complete my studies during a period of financial difficulties and ill health. Their faith in me gave me immense courage in my life to overcome all the challenges. My JNU days have become so lovely after the arrival of Sreelakshmi in my life. I remember her endlessly waiting for me after long protests and public meetings without any complaints. She has taken me to a beautiful world. Our life in the Mahanadi hostel 117E and 110E will remain the loveliest days of my life. Without the consistent support and encouragement of Sree and her parents Prabha, Muraleedharan and brother Harikrishnan, I will not be able to complete my PhD. The final period of my PhD writing has been made less stressful with the arrival of my dearest little one Havana Inessa (Innu). Her smile and cute little words gave enough relief these days. All these people have made my struggling life beautiful. After all, I can say these people have made my academic life an evergreen memory. But none of them above is responsible for any lapses and errors that crept into the thesis. All errors are mine alone.

*JNU, New Delhi.
26 August 2022.*

Amal P. P.

Table of Contents

	Pages
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iv-viii</i>
<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>xi-xii</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction: Review of Literature and Research Design	01-23
Chapter 2: Soviet Union's Influence on the Ideological and Cultural Imaginations in India	24-78
Chapter 3: The Influence of Soviet Intelligentsia and October Revolution in Kerala: Socialist Ideas, Social Reform Movements and National Freedom Struggle	79-104
Chapter 4: Ideological and Political Influences of the Soviet Union in Kerala: Working Class Movement, Communist Party, Government and State Policies	105-119
Chapter 5: The Influence of Soviet Literature and Socialist Realism in Kerala's Cultural Public Sphere and Imagination	120-169
Chapter 6: The Demise of the USSR and Post-Soviet Changes: The Contemporary Debates and Contestations in Kerala	170-209
Chapter 7: Conclusion	210-222
References	223-267

List of Maps

	Page
1. Map of Kerala until 1956	93

List of Abbreviations

AICC	All India Congress Committee
AMKS	All Malabar Karshaka Sangham
AMPU	All-Malabar Peasants Union
ATTUC	All Travancore Trade Union Congress
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CITU	Centre of India Trade Unions
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPM	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSDS	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies
CSP	Congress Socialist Party
DYFI	Democratic Youth Federation of India
INC	Indian National Congress
IPTA	Indian People's Theatre Association
IYC	Indian Youth Congress
KMPP	Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party
KSU	Kerala Students Union
SFI	Students Federation of India
AITUC	All India Trade Union Congress
AISF	All India Students Federation
CPI(ML)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
CPSU	Communist Party of Soviet Union
CPSU(B)	Communist Party of Soviet Union (Bolshevik)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
TCFU	Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union
KPAC	Kerala Peoples Arts Club
KUTV	Communist University of the Toilers of the East
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USA	United States of America

US	United States
KGB	<i>Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti</i> (Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union)
ECAFE	Economic Survey of Asia and Far East
ONGC	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation
HCC	Hindustan Construction Company
HCL	Hindustan Computers Limited
ISCUS	Indo-Soviet Cultural Society
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NKVD	<i>Narodny Kommisariat Vnutrennikh Del</i> (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs)
TOI	Times of India
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UN	United Nations
KSSP	Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishath
KSP	Kerala Socialist Party

Chapter One

Introduction: Review of Literature and Research Design

1.1 Background of the Study

This study attempts to analyze the profound influence of the erstwhile Soviet Union in Kerala society's political and cultural arena. It focuses on the peoples' movements and administrative interventions with Soviet-inspired imaginations for an equal and just society against oppression, colonial regime and caste domination. This research describes the influence of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union from the social reform movement to the formation of the Kerala state and its socio-political struggles and governmental policies. The chapters of the thesis deal with the reflections on the Soviet collapse and the emergence of alternative socialist imaginations to counter the growth of neoliberalism. Without limiting to the movements of the Communist Party, the study focuses on the imaginations of the Soviet Union in the collective memory of Malayalee generations. The study explores the Kerala state's social history and working-class movements through the international communist movement and the Soviet Union as its central theme.

From the October Revolution to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, every stage in Soviet history was widely discussed and debated in Kerala, from the renaissance movements to the democratic era of the state. The democratically elected Communist Party-led governments worked with the influence of the political programs in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union also widely influenced the cultural sphere in Kerala. Vast volumes of Russian literature were translated into Malayalam, and many Malayalam books and magazines were published in the Soviet Union itself and circulated in Kerala. Based on the political and cultural developments in the Soviet Union, various genres of writing got published in Kerala. The performing arts narrated Soviet history and ideas, including plays, kadhaprasangam, folk songs, etc., influenced by Kerala's cultural and ideological public imagination. These are understudied areas with historical significance. The study analyzes how the Soviet Union influenced Kerala's political and cultural spaces and, most notably, how it continued to sustain the collective memories of Keralites.

In this way, the study "Soviet Ideological and Cultural Imaginations in India: A Case Study of Kerala" has examined the influence of the Soviet Union on the

ideological and cultural imaginations of Kerala, the southernmost state in India, where a communist government came to power through the parliamentary election in 1957. The idea of socialism and Marxism that significantly influenced the evolution of modern Europe and Russia greatly impacted the political and intellectual lives in India in general and Kerala in particular, especially after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Social reform movements in India were inspired by a mix of western values and progressive trends within India's heritage that helped foster new self-awareness and resistance to foreign colonial domination in the 20th century. Marxism was one such ideological influence in India. Even before India's Independence, developments in the Soviet Union had influenced the political culture in Kerala.

Since the beginning of colonial rule, the colonial state tried hard to prevent the revolutionary ideas from reaching India. They categorized the Communist Party as the proponent of violence and banned it. Regardless of the British's oppressive tactics, the political influence of the Russian Revolution and the growth of the communist movement had already taken place in India. After the Independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, was widely seen as a socialist. He considered the Soviet Union a great friend that could contribute to the development of the Indian nation. The Five-Year Plans, agrarian reforms, science and technology development, industrial development etc., were the socialism-inspired policies of the Indian state in the Nehruvian era. When Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister, the word 'socialist' was added to the Preamble of India's Constitution in 1976. India received Soviet aid in various fields, including science and technology, military and other sectors, and the two countries shared great mutual respect.

The formation of the Communist Party in Kerala in 1939 was part of the state's broader renaissance and social reform movement. The social reform movements in the later 19th and early 20th centuries were based on Kerala's modernity. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others put forward the thoughts of reform at the national level. Similarly, social reformers like Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, Vagbhadananda and many others played a crucial role in Kerala. The prime aim of these movements was to fight against the caste system, superstitions and regressive customs and to invigorate the propagation of modern education. The political developments in the Soviet Union significantly influenced the public sphere in Kerala.

Soviet influence was not uncontested; while the Leftists favoured and were influenced by the Soviet movement, they also encountered opposition to left ideologies. The opposition came from certain groups of Syrian Christians who criticized the Soviet Union through print media owned by them. Along with the media, upper-caste Hindu groups, church leadership, and the Muslim community leaders stood firmly against the communist movement. They projected the Soviet Union and communist ideology as anti-religious and a 'foreign' ideology despite their linkages with 'foreign' groups. As a result, a counter group to communist ideology was formed, i.e. an anti-communist front. This front consisted of mainstream Malayalam media like *Malayala Manorama* and *Mathrubhumi*, religious and caste leaderships and right-wing sections in the Indian National Congress. These groups criticized the Russian revolution and communist ideology and argued that a 'bad spirit' had come into power in Russia. They projected the Soviet Union as an autocratic country under the dictator Stalin. However, within a short period (the 1940s), the communist movement in Kerala gained considerable momentum and won the support of the masses. In their struggle against imperialism, the leaders projected the Soviet Union as their model.

After the formation of the state of Kerala in 1956, the first state election was held in 1957, which later proved to be a milestone in the history of Kerala. A Communist government got elected under the leadership of EMS Namboodiripad and became the third-ever democratically elected communist government after San Marino (1945) and British Guyana (1953). After the electoral victory in Kerala, the Communist Party of India—and its parliamentary road to Socialism as an alternative development model—gained national-level attention. The opposition Congress party, the dominant caste groups, religious minority groups, and a few other political groups started a protest against the government and called it a 'liberation struggle.' The demonstrations had the support and funding of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). EMS Namboodiripad compared this struggle to the Civil War in Russia after the working class captured power. However, after the imposition of Article 356, the Emergency Powers of the President of India and the Congress Party ensured the dissolution of the Communist Ministry. Later irrespective of the strong anti-communist campaigns, the Communist Party-led governments have frequently elected in Kerala.

The Communist Party in Kerala was able to influence the social consciousness of the public through its sustained campaigns in the cultural public sphere. This

resulted in a genre of songs and popular theatre borrowed from folk culture. The new left movement focused on the ideas of social reform/renaissance, socialism, the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. The growth of the Marxist cultural movement resulted in the emergence of socialist realism in Kerala, and the cultural sphere was radically altered. The ruling elites of the society captured art and literature always. The communist theatre movement introduced socialist realism in Kerala mainly through political plays in the 1930s.

While the cultural sphere was emerging, the political debates on Georgy Dimitrov's strategy of the Popular Front idea during the Second World War also found wide acceptance. The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Khrushchev report against Stalin created a divide among the sympathizers of the Soviet Union in Kerala. The political opponents questioned the relevance of communism. The Soviet Union's interventions in Hungary, Prague, and Afghanistan and the implementation of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* have created confusion and prompted criticism from the sympathizers. The news about the disintegration of the Soviet Union made immense despair among supporters in Kerala. The Soviet Union was a dreamland for the socialists, and the collapse of the USSR was unbearable for them.

1.2 Review of Literature

A large body of literature is available on the Soviet influences in India and Kerala. The study follows three strands of literature to explain the Soviet political and cultural influences: Soviet ideological and cultural Imaginations in India, Soviet ideological influence in Kerala and reflections of the Soviet Union in Kerala's popular imaginations and culture.

Soviet Ideological and Cultural Imaginations in India

The Revolution in Russia and the further developments to build a socialist society in the Soviet Union were politically and culturally influenced in India. Regarding the national scenario, Prabhat Patnaik (2017) and Kamal Mitra Chenoy (2021) argue that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917 significantly impacted the national liberation struggles in the colonial world. The last decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed new streams of thought sprouting all over India because of capitalist transformations, which paved the way for different social reform movements (Joshy & Damodaran 1975). Soviet Russia was a new sphere of influence

in the ideological realm. Leaders like B. R. Ambedkar, Periyar, Bhagat Singh, Jawaharlal Nehru etc., took inspiration from the fact that the October Revolution took place in the Soviet Union, a peasant society like India (Nehru 1949; Ambedkar 2017; Imam 1987; Prashad 2017). After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian revolutionaries expected the upcoming socialist revolutions to occur in capitalist Western European countries like Italy, France, Germany, etc. They saw the revolutionary transformations of the European nations as essential for the survival of the October Revolution.

Contrary to their thoughts, strong support for the Russian Revolution came from the people fighting against colonial oppression in the global south (D'Souza, 2018). As part of the fight against capitalist imperialism, the Soviet Union supported and strengthened the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements in the colonies, including India. The Bolshevik government supported the Indian freedom struggle against British imperialism. Lenin discussed the similarities in the anti-imperialist struggles of the Eastern world:

The outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc. account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be (Lenin 1975: 752; Patnaik 2014: 39; Siddiqui 2017: 432).

M.N. Roy, one among the first Indian members of the Communist International, presented a counter-thesis to Lenin's thesis on the national and colonial question at the Comintern conference in 1920. This event is famously known as the Lenin-Roy debate (Haithcox 1963; Roy 1964; Cambridge 2011). Later Roy and a few communists formed the Communist Party of India in Tashkent with the help of the Soviet Union in 1920. Mohammed Shafeek got elected as the first secretary of the CPI (CPIM 2010). Since the 1920s, the Indian left had organized its mass organizations. The AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress) was formed in 1920 in Bombay, and the AIKS (All India Kisan Sabha) was formed in 1936 at Faizpur (Murali 2015). Progressive Writers Association in 1934 and the Indian Peoples Theater Association (IPTA) in 1941 aligned with the progressive sections in the freedom movement (CPI(M) 2018). There were several attempts by the colonial administration to stop the Communist Party from growing in India. As part of these efforts, the Peshawar Conspiracy Case in 1922-23, the Kanpur Bolshevik or

Communist Conspiracy Case in 1924 and the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case in 1929 were charged to arrest and suppress the communist activists (Bhambhri 1969). They were accused of establishing connections with Communist International. Finally, the colonial rule banned the Communist Party and made it illegal in 1934 (Bhambhri 1969).

Stalin showed slight interest in the Indian issues in his period (Rothmund 1969). After Independence, the Indian communist movement's relationship with the Soviet Union resumed with a meeting of S. A. Dange and A. A. Zhdanov in Moscow on 6th September 1947. Zhdanov suggested forming an Indian Communist Party after the split from Pakistan (Wilson Centre n.d.). In 1948, a thesis was presented at the CPI's Kolkata conference demanding a Russian model revolution with the idea that the Indian bourgeoisie had taken over power in independent India. However, the attempt failed miserably. After this incident, the CPI leadership decided to go and meet Stalin and take his advice. Stalin directed the delegation that rather than emulating the Russian and Chinese model of revolution, India needed to build a revolution concerning its national situation (Damodaran 1975; Menon 2009; Namboodiripad 2017; Wilson Centre n.d.). Later, during the period of Khrushchev, Indo-Soviet Friendship Agreement (1955) made it obligatory for the CPI to follow the Indian government and Congress Party (Overstreet & Windmiller 1959).

The socialist society of the Soviet Union had become an ideal model for the Indian leaders who built the nation soon after independence. Sheikh Abdullah of Jammu-Kashmir requested the Indian communists to write a manifesto for the new Kashmir state. As an admirer of the Soviet Union, he renamed Srinagar Chowk (Srinagar Square) Lal Chowk (Red Square), following the example of Moscow's Red Square in 1948 (Haksar 2017; Ganai 2017). The great Indian Poet Rabindranath Tagore, an admirer of the Soviet Union, said, "The October Revolution was the greatest sacrificial fire in history" (Chatterjee 2017; Bhattacharjee 2020). Tagore visited the Soviet Union in 1930 and wrote about his experiences in *RussiarChithi* (Letters from Russia) that the Soviet Union treated entire humanity equally. His life would not be complete without a visit to Russia, and the message of the October Revolution is true to the world (Chatterjee 2017; Bhattacharjee 2020). Rahul Sankrityayan learned the Russian language and wrote autobiographies of Marx, Lenin and Stalin and his most popular fiction, *Volga Se Ganga* (*From Volga to*

Ganga). The University of Leningrad appointed Sankrityayan as a professor of Indology (Puri 2011).

Nehru's first visit to the Soviet Union in 1955 resulted in many cultural events, including the first-ever Indian film festival, Indian art exhibition and launching of Nehru's *Discovery of India* in Russian etc., organized in Moscow (Stein 1967; Pravda 1955; Brands 1972; Mohanty 2015). Nehru tried to build a pro-socialist economy in India through five-year plans, central planning and a dominant public sector. After the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty in 1955, the Soviet Union and India decided to initiate cultural exchange as part of their cultural diplomacy. Such initiatives made Indian artists like Raj Kapoor an evergreen celebrity in Russia (PTI2017; Wangchuk 2018; Manning 2022).

Throughout the cold war period, India was closer to USSR. India bought weapons and received financial and technical aid from the Soviet Union (Kapur 2009). When Indira Gandhi visited the Soviet Union in 1966, she strongly supported the Soviet Union's position that America should immediately withdraw its military troops from Vietnam (Stein 1967).

In the 20th congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev's *Report on Stalin* in 1956 created division inside the CPI. Most party members were not convinced of Khrushchev's attack on Stalin, but some members supported the *Report* (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2009). The inner-party conflicts on various issues led to a split in CPI in 1964. Most communist leaders remained in a pro-Moscow section and maintained the name CPI (Namboodiripad 2009; Menon 2012; Rothermund 1969; Murali 2015). The more radical elements in the communist strongholds of West Bengal, Andhra, Kerala and Tripura led to the formation of a new party – Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) – which was interested in a more independent mode of communism, soon termed revisionist by China (Rothermund 1969; Namboodiripad 2009; Murali 2015; Jeffry 1978).

In the beginning, the CPI(M) was in favour of the Chinese revolutionary line, but soon after confronting the odd alliance between Pakistan and China, it hastened to congratulate the Soviet Union on the Tashkent achievement even more emphatically than the old CPI (CPI(M) CC Resolution 1966). The electoral victories of the CPI(M) in 1967 turned into the formation of a new communist establishment CPI(ML), in 1969, against the parliamentary form of democracy (Rothermund 1969). Later the

CPI(ML) split into hundreds of different groups and never gained a mass base (Ram 2014).

In the 1971 war with Pakistan, India received Soviet support and arms (Brands 1972). Indira Gandhi added the words “socialism” and “secularism” to the Indian Constitution in 1976 when her close relationship with the USSR was at its peak. With this relation, the USSR supported the imposition of the internal emergency act by the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. The USSR has made all the possible efforts to maintain India as its strongest ally in South Asia. This forced the CPI to support Indira Gandhi’s totalitarian rule and the prohibition of democratic interventions by the opposition parties and the press on state affairs (Ramankutty 2021).

Apparently, this period witnessed a coalition government led by the CPI with the Congress in Kerala. Initially, this move gave a popular name to CPI as the rightist communist party. After the electoral setback in North India, the Bhatinda Congress of the CPI in 1978 concluded that the party’s decision to support the Indira Gandhi regime was utterly wrong (CPI 1978). With this, the CPI backed out from its alliance with Congress in Kerala. The Bhatinda Congress of CPI in 1978 led to the expulsion of S. A. Dange, the former General Secretary of the CPI, one of the leading advocates of the Congress – CPI alliance and a staunch follower of the Soviet line. The post-emergency alliance between CPI and CPI(M) had the support of the USSR. Both the CPI and CPI(M) supported the Afghan intervention by the USSR and pushed New Delhi to take a more pro-Soviet stand (Sen 1981). The local communist parties critically discussed the Gorbachev’s doctrines like perestroika and glasnost.

One of the Marxist intellectuals from Kerala, P. Govinda Pillai, said, “I do not even have a drop of tear to waste for Gorbachev” (Radhakrishnan 2017). According to Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph (1991):

India feels orphaned - ideologically, strategically, and economically. The Soviet Union was not just India’s friend and neighbour. Socialism, secularism, and democracy comprise the Congress Party’s ideological trinity. Being progressive, on the cutting edge of historical change and moral high ground, meant sympathy for, though not emulation of, the Bolshevik Revolution. India’s ideological identity was intertwined with that of the Soviet Union.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union created severe despair and psychological trauma among the communists and socialists rather than electoral losses (Mannathukaren 2010).

Soviet Ideological Influence in Kerala

The socialist ideas became popular among the people of Kerala after understanding the events in the Soviet Union through newspapers and magazines (Namboodiripad 2017). The news of the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union not only strengthened the fight against colonialism and imperialism but also paved the way for the multi-faceted social reform movements in Kerala (Joshy & Damodaran 1975; Pavanan 2011; CPI(M) 2018; Andalatu 2011; Namboodiripad 2009; Menon 2009). The English education initiative by the Christian missionaries in Kerala was a significant catalyst in the social transformation in the state. The formation of Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) in 1903 among the untouchables strengthened the fight against caste oppression. They demanded rights for women and protested against barring women from covering their upper bodies (Sanu 1980; Namboodiripad 2016; CPIM 2010). The movement for a progressive and transformed society in Kerala was led by reformist leaders like Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali and Vagbhadananda, etc. (CPIM Kerala 2010; Guru 2015; Sanu 1980; Namboodiripad 2016, 2017).

The ideas of socialism and the Russian Revolution were promoted and propagated in Kerala through the movements and writings of Swadeshabbhimani Ramakrishna Pillai, Sahodaran Ayyappan, P Kesavadev and many other intellectuals (Pavanan 2011; CPI(M) 2018; Namboodiripad 2009). As a result of the groundwork laid by the renaissance movements, the struggle for democracy by the communists gained mass momentum in Kerala (Mannathukaren 2013; Namboodiripad 2009). However, the socialist/communist movement, built on the back of the caste movement, cannot be seen merely as an extension of the anti-caste struggles (Kumar 2000). The significant structural change was that the language of the class was introduced into the social consciousness (Desai 2006). The communists expanded the agenda of reforms in the social sphere to include the project of political democratization (Venu 2001).

The communist movement put forward an egalitarian Marxist view from the beginning. P. Krishna Pillai, one of the founders of the communist party in Kerala, said in 1934 that communism believes that the whole world belongs to one caste, i.e. the human caste (Pillai 1998). The communist leaders, who mainly belonged to the upper caste landlord families during the movement's inception, broke caste barriers by visiting untouchables' houses and sharing food with them. These were

revolutionary acts for the times (Bhasi 1999). Kunhaman (2001) argues that the caste elites usually never entered untouchable households; they only asked the lower castes to come out even when the former sought votes. As Mannathukaren (2013) argues, a major outcome of communist cultural and political struggles was the move of the lower castes from symbolic criticism of the upper castes to real, material contestation with them. The communist movement strengthened the life of oppressed castes like the Dalits, who led slave-like lives in the upper caste-dominated society.

The first trade union in Kerala was the Travancore Labour Association in the Empire Coir Factory of Alappuzha in 1922. The first agricultural workers' union in Kerala was the Malabar Kudiyan Sangham in 1920 and DesheeyaKarshakaSamajamin Kochi (CPI(M) 2018). These were not solid class-based unions. As an organized working-class movement, the Kerala Karshaka Sangham was started in 1935; EMS Namboodiripad was the president, and C. K. Govindan Nair was the secretary. From 1936 onwards, it was associated with All India Kissan Sabha (Balaram 2010). The TLA became the Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union (TCFU) in 1937 and merged with the All Travancore Trade Union Congress (ATTUC), which was the Travancore state unit of the Communist Party-affiliated trade union- All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). R. Sugathan was the Secretary, and T. V. Thomas, the President of AITUC (Govindan 1986).

The first communist organization in Kerala was the Communist League started in 1931 and was a Trivandrum-based small organization (Namboodiripad2009; Jeffry 1978). The Congress Socialist Party of Kerala, a subgroup within the Indian National Congress, comprised people attracted to socialism and the Soviet Union and started working in Kerala from 1934 onwards (Namboodiiipad 2009; Menon 2009; Jeffry 1978; CIA 1962).

At the same time, a counter-narrative was circulated against the Soviet Union. Balakrishnan (1998) avers that the mainstream Malayalam media similarly targeted Stalin as the western media projected him, i.e. as an autocrat. They reported the Kirov murder and the Moscow trials. In the 23rd December 1934 edition of *Mathrubhumi* daily, the arrest of Zinoviev and Kamenev was published. The mainstream media, which was also a part of the elite feudal class, was directly confronted by the growth of the communist ideology. The *Mathrubhumi* quoted *Daily Telegraph* and reported that the Soviet ruling party was increasingly becoming fascist, similar to Nazi

Germany. The same newspaper published the British workers' protest against Stalin (Balakrishnan 1998).

Between 1934 and 1935, the Communist Party of India and the Congress Socialist Party engaged in a friendly debate about the need to use the national movement to advance socialism (CIA Report 1962). In 1935, P Krishnapillai and EMS Namboodiripad had a detailed exchange of views with P. Sundaraya, the communist party leader (Namboodiripad 2017; CPI(M) 2018). According to a CIA report (1962), from 1937 onwards, it was difficult to distinguish between the CPI and the Kerala CSP. The Communist Party of India Kerala state committee was formed inside the Congress Socialist Party in 1937. In 1939, the Communist Party's state unit was officially formed in Pinarayi, Kannur, and they were separated from congress (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2009, 2017).

The Second World War and the popular front strategy by Gorgy Dimitrov got widely discussed and accepted in Kerala. The communist sympathizers and activists started associating with Congress as Congress Socialist Party as a popular front against British imperialism (Murali 2015).

Just before Independence, the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle in 1946 in Alappuzha against the denial of Divan C. P. Ramaswami Iyar to join the Indian Union was one of the most significant events in the history of Kerala's working-class struggle. The working class led a bloody struggle against the Divan's dream of American model administration and made a historic victory, and finally, Iyar fled from Travancore (Namboodiripad 2009). There was a narrative against this struggle from the opponents that the Communists were trying to create a Bolshevik model revolution in Kerala. Similarly, the Kayyur struggle in 1943 and the Karivellur struggle in 1946 by the agricultural workers had a tremendous impact on the working-class movement in the Malabar region (Baby 2016).

The communist government elected through the ballot in Kerala in 1957 got widespread attention worldwide. EMS Namboodiripad, the first chief minister, declared Kerala would be a new model for a parliamentary road to socialism (Jeffry 1978; Damodaran 1975). Against the communist government in Kerala, the opposition parties, upper-caste sections and religious groups formed an anti-communist front and started a protest. They called this protest a 'liberation struggle' (Murali 2015). The US ambassador to India at that period Ellsworth Bunker and the ambassador in the early 1970s, Patrick Moynihan, openly said that the CIA had given

financial help to this protest against the communist government (Isaac 2012). Finally, in 1959, the 28 months old government was dissolved by the central government and imposed President's rule.

Communist leader C. Achutha Menon registered his protest against the Soviet intervention in Hungary and moved away from the CPI in 1956, but soon he was brought back to the party (Pillai 2011). Similarly, the CPI leader K. Damodaran took an open position against Moscow's intervention in Prague in 1968 and became inactive in the Party and continued to be so until the end of his life in 1976 (Pillai 2011). When the party split occurred in 1964, the CPI took a political line as per the direction of the USSR to go along with Congress. This was one of the reasons for the shift of ground-level mass support towards the CPI(M). In Kerala, most of the leadership and the grassroots—from state committees to district committees—maintained affiliations with the CPI, but on the ground level, a vast majority of the cadres had joined hands with the CPI(M) (Damodaran 1975).

In 1975, when the Indira Gandhi government declared a national emergency, in Kerala, along with Moscow's support, the CPI had a coalition government with the Congress, which continued. The CPI(M) raised strong protests against this. The CPI was nicknamed the rightist communist party because of its close collaboration with Congress. The CPI(M) was called the 'leftist' communist party with an independent position (Namboodiripad 2009). Later both these parties decided to come into an alliance called the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and fight the election together with the slogan of a democratic socialist transformation of society.

There are various reactions from India to the disintegration of the USSR. EMS Namboodiripad (1991: 08), one of the prominent intellectuals and the former general secretary of CPI and CPI(M), analyzed the Soviet collapse as "the present crisis of Soviet society and world communism had its origins in the distortions of the Stalin period, but they were compounded by the unhistorical assessment of Stalin by the leaders of the USSR from Khrushchev to Gorbachev." The Soviet collapse and further developments led the Indian communist movement to learn many lessons, gave ideological clarity, and showed the way forward (Williams 2013).

Reflections of Soviet Union in Kerala's Popular Imaginations and Culture

In 1905, writers like C. S. Gopala Panikkar and K. Ramakrishnapillai wrote about the 1905 revolutionary movement in Russia. The first book on Marx or Marxism in the

Indian language was published in Malayalam, written by Swadeshbhimani Ramakrishna Pillai titled *Karl Marxinte Jeevacharithram* (biography of Karl Marx) in 1912 (Jeffrey 1978; Joshy & Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2017; CPI(M) 2018; Pavanan 2011). A sympathetic obituary of Lenin was published in Kerala in 1924 by A. K. Pillai (Nositor 1970; Menon 2009; Pavanan 2011). The people of Russia marched into the king's palace, overthrew the kingdom, and announced that all powers belonged to the people; this news inspired the freedom fighters in Kerala (Krishnan 1971). Sahodaran Ayyappan's 1918 poem *Ezhavolbodhanam* mentions about Russian Revolution and the first time used the word *Sakhav* (Comrade) in Malayalam. Similarly, Kerala's great poet Vallothol Narayana Menon's poem *Mappu* (apology) describes the destruction of the existing social structure and the coming of a new age. The poem first used *Muthalali* (capitalist) in Malayalam in 1922 (Pavanan 2011).

In the early 20th century, Malayalam literature was going through a renaissance; the main reason behind this was the influence of Marxism and the Soviet Union (George 1972). The first book in Malayalam on Russian Revolution was titled *Agniyum Sfulingavum* (Fire and Spark) by Keshavadev, who claimed to be the first communist of Kerala. In the early 1930s, EMS Namboodiripad, P. Krishnapillai, A. K. Gopalan, K. Damodaran, K. A. Keraleeyan etc. highlighted the achievements of the Russian Revolution as the building of an equal and just society, and this was projected as an ideal model to the world (CPI(M) 2018; Pavanan 2011). EMS Namboodiripad (1999) put forward the idea in 1946 that was emerging Kerala's model should be a *Maveli Nadu* (a myth related to the Onam festival in Kerala; the land ruled by the righteous mythological king Maveli/Mahabali).

Popular culture in Kerala is open to adopting ideas from across the world. The communist party viewed the cultural movement as an essential part of the struggle for the liberation of the working class (Dirlik 2019). As Mannathukaren (2013) argues, the elite upper-caste section historically ensured that the major performing arts should remain in the temples and feudal families. Nevertheless, due to the Marxist cultural intervention, a new genre of songs and popular theatre emerged from the folk culture. The play *Pattabakki* (Rent Arrears), written by Marxist theoretician and communist activist K. Damodaran, inaugurated socialist realism in Kerala. It was the first play to directly address the issue of class struggle Appukkuttan (2000). The writers at the forefront of the Progressive Literary Movement were also the pioneers of the theatre

movement, which began to flourish with the spread of the struggles led by communism. The starting of the drama club KPAC (Kerala Peoples Arts Club) was one of the notable events in 1950. Bhasi's play *Ningalenne Communistakki* (You Made Me a Communist, 1952) was a path-breaking play in popularizing communism. Performed by KPAC, it was taken to every town and village in Kerala. It was to later create a record by being staged more than 10,000 times (Mohandas 2009).

The songs' themes in the plays of KPAC were similar to the protest songs: agricultural workers, especially women, who raised their voices against the landlords. KPAC theatre songs were about breaking the imperialist chain by the working class, holding the red flag with a hammer and sickle, dreaming for a better tomorrow and so on (KPAC 2000). Dileep (2000) says that popular writers such as Ponkunnam Varkey were associated with it, several plays were staged, and its songs written by Vayalar Ramavarma were very successful. Similarly, the poet ONV Kuruppu (winner of Soviet Land – Nehru Awards and Pushkin Award) became popular through plays staged by KPAC. Equally important was the adaptation and use of songs from the international protest tradition. Even the KPAC sought to create a Malayalee identity that moved away from the dominant Sanskrit and Tamil cultural influences and borrowed from national and international sources (Damodaran 2008).

There were a series of exciting debates during this period about the Soviet Union which influenced the intellectual and the cultural sphere of Kerala society. EMS Namboodiripad (1999) wrote in *Pravaham* magazine in 1949 under a pen name P.V. Cherian, with sharp ideological criticism against social democracy and talked about Narodniks, Lenin – Trotsky debate, Stalin – Trotsky debate, the building of a working-class state in Russia and the Second World War etc. This period was marked by intense debates in the intellectual arena of Kerala. In his article, Namboodiripad (1999) refers to P. V. K. Nedungadi's quotes on Laski, Massine, Brails Ford, and wrote *The Other Side of Soviet Russia* in 1937. Soon his article was countered by EMS by referring to Laski's *Liberty of Modern State* (1930) to substantiate his arguments.

After the Second World War, especially in the 1950s, there emerged several debates and writings on the Soviet Union. Stalin versus Trotsky debate was considered very seriously by the communist party leadership in Kerala. Sanjayan, a satirical writer, wrote that Trotsky had two major enemies in the world: Stalin and our comrade K. Damodaran aka Damsky (Elayidom 2020). K. Damodaran (1952) wrote a

pamphlet titled “Jesus Christ in Moscow,” a political satire, questioning the “immaterialist understanding”. The piece left with a question to the ordinary people on the existence of our beliefs in non-existential things. In reply to this, Father Vadakkan (1952), a priest and the then anti-communist activist, wrote an article titled “Is Jesus Christ in Moscow?” to which K. Damodaran (1952) replied with yet another sarcastic piece as an answer to the former article “Yes Jesus Christ is in Moscow.” Damodaran argued that the Soviet Union is the real land of Jesus Christ because the state considers everyone equal. K. Damodaran’s argument in this debate indicates traits of liberation theology, but during that period, liberation theology was nowhere on the horizon of the Church (Sasi 2012).

Writers such as Kesari Balakrishna Pillai, C. J. Thomas, Ponkunnam Varkey, Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, P. Kesava Dev and Thakazhi Shivashankara Pillai etc. played a remarkable role in building a socialist cultural public sphere by democratizing literature and bringing people closer to the art. Notably, a known poet like Edassery, in his post-independence poem *Puthan Kalavum Arivalum* (A New Pot and Sickle, 1951), makes the peasants sing the famous lines: “we should harvest the power first and later the paddy” (Nair 2015; Chandrashekharan 1999; Gopalakrishnan 1987). Moreover, another major poet Changampuzha Krishna Pillai sang: “Let me tell you the philosophy of the sickle” (Gopalakrishnan 1987).

Jeffry (1978) says that youth organizations were established, and an increasing amount of Left-wing literature, ranging from Jayprakash Narayan’s *What is Socialism?* (Translated by EMS Namboodiripad) became available in Malayalam. Several newspapers started to spread socialist ideas. George (1972) refers to *Thozhilali* (Worker) by P. Keshavadev and *Prabhatham* (Morning) with EMS Namboodiripad’s editorship etc. This period witnessed the emergence of books and articles like *Nineteen Seventeen*, *Swarajam Anthinu* (Nation for What?) by EMS Namboodiripad and *Lapham Ennal Enthi* (Profit Means What?), *Daridrasangadana* (Poor Organization), *Maydinam* (May Day) by K. Damodaran. A socialist book club started in Calicut in 1938 (Pavanan 2011). The period saw an increase in the number of socialist newspapers and magazines *Yukthivadi* (Rationalist) by M. C. Joseph, *Kesari* (King) by A. Balakrishapillai, *Karshakathozhilali* (Agricultural Worker) by K. M. Ibrahim, *Mahathma* (Great Ideal) by Amsi Narayanapillai, *Sahodaran* (Brother) by K. Ayappan. A striking feature of these papers was that they did not directly

propagate the Soviet Union and its glorious victory; instead, they promoted its ideas to the people.

The period from 1930 to 1947 can be called the “Soviet era” in Malayalam literature (George 1972). According to Pavanan (2011), the poet and novelist who wrote gloriously about the Soviet Union, Kuttipuzha Krishnapillai, wrote, “If there is a heaven in the earth that is the Soviet Union”, but he was a strong critic of Stalin. Similarly, Sahodaran Ayappan, P. Keshavadev and M. Govindan were all critics of Stalin. Nevertheless, many people moaned when Stalin died, and these laments flowed into the form of poems. Among them, one beautifully remembered poem is *Stalin Ha* by Vallathol (2004). Balaram (2010) says the people who thought about the common person’s life were all the intellectuals, writers, activists, and a progressive section that the Russian Revolution attracted.

Writers like Vallathol Narayana Menon, Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, O. V. Vijayan and many others wrote about the Soviet Union and propagated by Russian writers like Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekov, Gogol, Gorky, Mayakovski and Sholokhov etc. These writers were critical of the Tsarist regime and used it to praise Russian Revolution, Bolsheviks and Lenin. From the 1950s onwards, Russian literature was introduced to the public. Initially, it came through Kesari Balakrishna Pillai’s translations. A series of Russian books were translated into Malayalam in Kerala during the cold war period.

Most famous Russian books, including the Communist Party publications, novels, magazines and comics, came to Kerala. The major books by Lenin, Stalin and other Communist Party leaders were translated and published. Magazines like Soviet Land, Soviet Union and the comics like Russian Folklore Stories and Misha were trendy and readily available in Kerala. The 20th-century Russian writers like Ludmila Stefanova Petrushevskaya, Vera Panova, and Mikhail Bulgakov were seen as top-rated in Kerala.

Naming people with Russian names, along with youth clubs and shops, was a reflection of the early Soviet Union’s popularity in Kerala. For instance, children’s names were derived from Russian influences like Nadezhda, Nilovna, Valentina, Olga, Gargi, Natasha, Ila, Sasha, Tania, Inessa, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Gorky, Gagarin, Pavel, Pushkin, etc. Similarly, multiple places in Kerala are known as Moscow Street, Soviet and Red Square, etc. Clubs named Moscow youth club in Kunnankulam, Thrissur and a theatre named Lenin Cinemas in Trivandrum etc.

The influence of the Soviet Union on the ideological and cultural imaginations of Kerala society is an underexplored area. The existing literature provides significant traits of Soviet influence in Kerala's socio-political and cultural sphere that can be identified, and a general understanding of the influence of the Soviet Union in the Kerala civil society, especially among politicians, working-class, intellectuals and academics. Very few scientific studies and writings are available on the comprehensive analysis of the political and literary influence of the Soviet Union in Kerala. This study attempts to bridge that gap.

1.3 Hypotheses

1. The Russian Revolution, the formation of the Soviet Union and its working-class political ideology influenced the ideological and political imaginations of the Kerala people to build a socialist society based on equality and justice.
2. Soviet literature and socialist realism have influenced Kerala's cultural public sphere and imagination.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the influences of the Soviet Union in the Indian anti-imperialist struggle?
2. What are the reflections on the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union within Kerala's social reform movement?
3. How was the Soviet Union reflected in Kerala's working-class movement?
4. What are the significant contributions of the Soviet Union to Kerala's cultural public sphere?
5. What are the Soviet-inspired administrative policies adopted by the communist-led governments in Kerala?
6. What are the debates and contestations in Kerala about the Bolshevik revolution and later developments in the Soviet Union?

1.5 Methodology

This study is historical, qualitative and analytical and follows an interdisciplinary approach. It employs theoretical insights from various disciplines such as culture studies, philosophy, Malayalam literature, linguistics, history, political science, sociology, political economy, etc. The study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include novels, movies, plays, and other literary works,

news reports, documentaries, party documents, government documents, personal conversations and so on. Primary data include archival documents related to communist party publications and old editions of relevant newspapers and magazines. Secondary sources include books, articles, internet sources, periodicals and magazines relevant to the study.

The relevant data has been collected from various archives including the International Institute of Social History Amsterdam, ZMO Berlin, National Archives New Delhi, Kerala State Archives Trivandrum, P. C. Joshy Archives JNU, Appan Thampuran Memorial Library Trissur, Sreechithra Library Trivandrum, EMS Academy Archives Trivandrum and Kerala Niyamasabha Archives Trivandrum. The visited libraries include Vilnius University Library Lithuania, Kaunas University of Technology Library Lithuania, DR. B. R. Ambedkar Library JNU, Kerala Niyamasabha Library, Centre for Development Studies Library Trivandrum, Kerala University Library, Russian Cultural Centre Trivandrum, and Public Library Trivandrum, Sahodaran Ayyappan Smaraka Library Cherai.

The study uses personal conversations with the Malayalee people from various backgrounds who have their experiences and knowledge of the political developments in Kerala related to Soviet-inspired imaginations. Personal conversations were conducted with political leaders, party activists, historians, academicians' eminent writers, journalists and other personalities in Kerala who have great knowledge and personal experiences in Kerala and the Soviet Union. The reception of international events in the communist world, from the Russian Revolution to the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been documented in the people's collective memories. The oral history of the people has narrated the importance of the Soviet Union in both their public and personal life.

The Malayalam literature and performing arts articulated the Soviet developments as its central theme and are analysed in the respective sections of the study. This includes poems, stories, novels, travelogues, plays, songs, kadhaprasangam etc. The archival documents of the old Malayalam media reports have been sighted through content analysis. This study mainly focuses on the political history of Kerala developed through Soviet-inspired imaginations. The anti-Soviet narratives, critical news reports and the words of the critics etc. have also been included in this study.

1.6 Definition, Rationale and Scope of the Study

The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the formation of the Soviet Union and the projection of a communist utopia as an alternative model inspired the people who were part of the fight against British imperialism. The colonialism in India by the British capitalist powers has imposed a full-fledged economical and socio-political exploitation of land and labour. Here the freedom fighters looked at revolutionary Russia as a liberatory model for a colonial society like India. What Lenin termed “imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism” (Lenin 2011: 266) was acceptable and inspirational to many of those who were at the forefront of the Indian freedom struggle. The Indian national liberation movements for expelling the English colonialist powers have inspired by the new and progressive thoughts of the Soviet Union. The leaders of the Indian independence movements have attracted to the idea of socialism mainly after the October Revolution. This later resulted in the Indian economic planning with major means of production controlled by the state-owned public sector.

The Russian Revolution and the emergence of communism are synonyms in India. The basic idea behind this development is the spirit to fight for social justice in a highly unequal society. The equal distribution of opportunities, education, wealth, privileges and fair treatment of every section was a dream in the caste-ridden unequal society of India. The ideas that emerged from the Russian Revolution gave ideological clarity on the emancipation of the proletariat to the progressive sections among the Indian national leaders. The thoughts on the class positions in India and the situation of the working class who live in socioeconomic backwardness and have only their labour to sell to survive came into the realm of the mainstream political movements.

Along with these developments, the building of the Soviet Union in the Stalin epoch, collectivization, Moscow trials, overcoming the global economic crisis, building of a powerful army, the Second World War and defeating fascism was debated and discussed widely in India. The five-year plans, planned economy, agrarian reforms, science and technology development, industrial development and many other socialist policies were the examples that the Indian state adopted during this period. The contribution of the Soviet Union in the Second World War was remarkable as it defeated the Germans and saved the world from fascist threat.

After the Second World War, several colonial countries were liberated. The Soviet Union remained a major force that supported the anti-colonial movements. During the Cold War, several countries formed the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM). However, these countries' inclination was more towards the Soviet Union, India included. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union tried to maintain good relations with all the countries in the global south. During this time, the relationship between India and the Soviet Union was strengthened.

Among the Indian states, the state of Kerala came to hold a unique position in the social development index, particularly in literacy, health care, land reforms, communal harmony etc. In Kerala, socialist and communist movements became active from the beginning of the 20th century. The October Revolution of 1917 in Russia and the Soviet Union's formation in 1922 greatly influenced the social reform movements in Kerala. The Soviet Union greatly influenced popular literary figures in Kerala. The state government adopted several socialist policies from the Soviet Union. That made a difference in the socio-economic and political atmosphere. The Human Development Index of Kerala is comparable with the developed countries. Such a development model of Kerala is popularly known as the "Kerala Model of Development". The state government adopted land reforms and various other socio-economic policies.

On the other hand, the counter-narratives and movements against the communist movement also prevailed in Kerala. There were anti-communist fronts, opposition from the Congress party, opposition from the various divisions within the left and identity politics. The communist models and strategies were questioned, challenged and countered by the opposition and answered by the communist movement. However, in building the state of Kerala, the imaginations of the Soviet Union had an immense role. Progressive government policies, interventions of a proactive civil society, efforts of strong political movements and cultural impacts in the society combined communist, socialist, nationalistic and social reform movements.

Socialist Realism popularly began at the helm of affairs of the 1930s when the songs, performing arts, and literary works started to talk about the struggle of the peasants, workers and the oppressed life of the proletariats. The influence of Marxism and the Russian Revolution has taken place in the cultural realm as entirely different from the earlier literary heritage. The progressive characteristics of such movements

made the political events in the Soviet Union a favourite matter of debate in the Kerala civil society.

There are very few academic studies which look at the Soviet ideological and cultural influence in Kerala in detail. There are few mentions of Kerala's deep affection towards the Soviet Union in academic as well as popular literature. But none of these works is discuss the various aspects and dimensions of the same in detail. Initially, the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union as a working-class state have given a new dimension to the social reform movements and later the radical political movements in Kerala. The successful developmental policies of the state led by the Communist governments have a major contribution from the Soviet-inspired imaginations. This study is looking into these under-studied areas with a historical significance and bridging those gaps with detailed research on the Soviet influence in Kerala. The scope of the study is the period from 1917 to 1991, i.e., from the beginning of the Russian Revolution to the collapse of the Soviet Union. This period represents an era of active socio-economic and political impact of developments in Soviet Union on the public sphere of Kerala. This study is a venture to evaluate and analyze the influence of the Soviet Union in the ideological and cultural sphere of Kerala. As in Kerala, the influence of the Soviet Union is still very visible and apparent in the socio-political and cultural sphere.

1.7 Structure of the Study

The study is structured into seven chapters. Chapter one, *Introduction: Literature Review and Research Design*, delineates the theme under study and formulates a framework of analysis by reviewing the relevant studies available in the body of literature and finding the research gap. It includes the research design comprised of the objective, focus and methodology used to answer research questions.

This second chapter, *Soviet Union's Influence on the Ideological and Cultural Imaginations in India*, analyses the specific characteristics and patterns of the influence of the Soviet Union in India. It will discuss the influential character of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union in the political history of India. The various sections in this chapter generally deal with the international communist movement in India, the development of the Indian communist movement, the influence of the ideas that emerged out of the Russian Revolution on the Indian freedom movement, and the attraction of Soviet literature, progressive writings, and scholars on India.

The third chapter, *The Influence of Soviet Intelligentsia and October Revolution in Kerala: Socialist Ideas, Social Reform Movements and National Freedom Struggle*, focuses on the sociopolitical history of Kerala's social reform movements that gained inspiration from the Russian intellectuals and the October Revolution. It also discusses the adoption of Soviet ideas in the emancipation of caste, gender and labour in the context of Kerala. This chapter explains the social transformation of modern Kerala and the history of the working-class movements and its connections with the Soviet Union.

The fourth chapter, *Ideological and Political Influences of the Soviet Union in Kerala: Working Class Movement, Communist Party, Government and State Policies*, examines the Soviet ideological influence in the formation and development of Kerala's working-class movement, the social democratic party and later the Communist Party. The creation of the trade unions, the peasant unions, major struggles against feudalism, capitalism, upper caste domination, movements for equality, and Communist Party-led governments have strongly influenced the thoughts of revolutionary Russia. The chapter analyses the administrative policies and complexities of the Soviet-inspired influences on the state. It also covers the diverse impact of the Soviet Union on the Communist movement and the split in the Communist Party. The emergence of the alternative developmental path of modern Kerala is entirely different from the other Indian states and comparable with the Western countries in terms of social developmental indicators discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five, *The Influence of Soviet Literature and Socialist Realism in Kerala's Cultural Public Sphere and Imagination*, describes the deep-rooted cultural influence of the Soviet Union in the public sphere of Kerala. A manifestation of Soviet ideas, values and literature in Kerala's cultural space, like songs, literary works, travelogues, translations, comics, magazines, performing arts, documentaries, and media, has been discussed and analysed. It examines Soviet influences in the popular imagination and uses Soviet names for persons, places, youth clubs, and shops. Sometimes the Soviet Union has been imagined as a promised land by a progressive section of the people. Almost all the literary figures in Malayalam have written about the Soviet Union and its leaders. The reading culture has immensely progressed where the print media gave a big part of their space to the news on USSR. The universal project of emancipation by the communists was successfully rooted in

the unequal Malayalee society. A unique form of Soviet cultural influence and its social impacts are analysed and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter six, *The Demise of the USSR and Post-Soviet Changes: The Contemporary Debates and Contestations in Kerala*, discusses the contemporary perspectives and critical views on the ideological and cultural impact of the demise of the Soviet Union. The personal and political experiences of various Malayalees on the Soviet collapse are analysed in detail through individual conversations with different people, Malayalam literature, travelogues and print media archives. It analyses the Soviet influence in Kerala society through extensive interviews, news reports, and 21st-century socialist imaginations. The present thoughts on the USSR and the Soviet nostalgia in Kerala have also been analysed in the chapter. As part of the post-Soviet alternatives, the policies of Communist Parties and Left Democratic Front governments like the people's plan campaign and democratic decentralization etc. are discussed and analysed. The post-Soviet sociopolitical and economic changes in Kerala state and the way forward of the Left movement are also analysed.

The final chapter seven, *Conclusion*, summarises and enlists the conclusions and findings of the study. It shows the validity of the hypotheses. It also suggests areas for further research identified during the course of the study.

Chapter 2

The Soviet Union's Influence on the Ideological and Cultural Imaginations in India

The engagements with the socio-political and economic developments in the Soviet Union have immensely contributed to the post-colonial nation-building in India. The early 20th century was a period of strong people's movements against British colonialism and feudal caste oppressions. The idea of a working-class state and the building of an equal and just society that came with the Russian Revolution have deeply influenced the leaders of the Indian renaissance and anti-colonial movements even though the British regime tried every possibility to stop spreading the news from Russia. After the Indian independence, the country's political leadership made a strong alliance with the USSR and enjoyed Soviet aid for the development and security of the nation until the collapse of the Soviet Union. This chapter contains ten different sections dealing with various aspects of the influence of Soviet-inspired imaginations in the political history of India. The impact of the Russian Revolution, role of socialist and communist parties, international communist movement, freedom struggle, the role of Indian revolutionaries, postcolonial nation-building, early literature and Soviet studies, ideological conflicts and splits in the communist movement and the collapse of the Soviet Union were discussed and analysed in this chapter.

2.1 The Background of the Development of Socialist Movement India

The rise of socialist movements began in Europe in 1848, and the year witnessed a wave of numerous struggles throughout the countries, which led Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to write the *Communist Manifesto*. The beginning of the discussions on the workers' issues and the development of class struggles in India by the revolutionaries of Europe can be traced to five years after the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*. In 1853, Karl Marx wrote two articles in the *New York Daily Tribune* titled "British Rule in India" and "The Future Results of the British Rule in India." The main argument in these articles was on the estrangement in India based on caste, religion, language and culture that benefitted the British in capturing power. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels called the 1857 revolt the first struggle for Indian independence. The First International (International Working Men's Association) was

founded in 1864 by the socialist leaders of various countries (CPI(M) 2018). The anti-colonial movements in the global south have developed parallel to the European socialist movements. An example is India through the 1857 rebellion, which shook the English colonial powers. The 1865 Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica, the 1867 Fenian rebellion, the escalation of Maori land wars after the 1860s etc., are some of the major uprisings by the oppressed nationalities against the colonial powers (D'Souza, 2018).

Without having any theoretical awareness of Marxism, in 1871, the revolutionaries from Kolkata who were inclined toward socialism contacted Karl Marx and discussed India's participation in the First International (CPI(M) 2018). An important incident to quote here is that when Swami Vivekananda met the Russian intellectual Peter Kropotkin in Paris in 1896, he expressed his idea that the *Shudra* rule (rule of the workers) would come from Russia (Datta 1954; Komarov 1970). During this period, the defeat of the Russian empire in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904 was viewed as the Asian nationalist victory against European imperialism by the then leadership of the Indian national movement (Chenoy 2021; Upadhyay 2021).

When it reached the period of revolutionary movements in Russia, Vladimir Lenin mentioned India in his famous book *Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1898). This was the first time that Lenin wrote about the Indian situation. According to him, "agricultural capitalism is taking another enormous step forward; it is boundlessly expanding the commercial production of agricultural produce and drawing several new countries into the world arena; its driving patriarchal agriculture out of its last refugees, such as Russia and India" (Lenin 2009: 329). In one of his first articles in *Iskra* in 1900, Lenin wrote on India, especially the British colonial policy of loot and plunder, which initially resulted in famine, a considerable number of deaths and endless war. In such a situation, Lenin stressed, "We need only recall the rebellion of the native peoples against the British in India and the famine that prevailed there, or think of the war the English are now waging against the Boers" (Lenin 2008: 373). Lenin wrote in the Bolshevik journal *Proletarian* titled "Inflammable Material in World Politics" in 1908 and discussed the arrest of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the six-day workers' strike in Bombay (Lenin 2010; CPI(M) 2018). For Lenin, Tilak and his fellow activists were the leaders of the Indian masses, and he noted:

In India the street is beginning to stand up for its writers and political leaders. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak - he was sentenced to a long term of exile, the question in the British House of Commons the other day revealing that the Indian jurors had declared for acquittal and that the verdict had been passed by the vote of the British jurors!—this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money-bag evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay (Lenin 2010: 184).

Lenin also discusses in the same article that there is a need for unity between the revolutionary movements in the West and liberation struggles in the East. This time in India, while countering the British propaganda on revolutionary Russia, the Indian nationalist leaders started to publish several positive notes on the political developments in Russia. Bal Gangadhar Tilak himself wrote an article titled “The Russian Leader Lenin” on 29 January 1918. His news daily *Kesari* described the Bolsheviks as true ideologues of self-determination and Lenin as a man of peace (Sardesai 1967; Farooqui 2017; Upadhyay 2021). Sripad Amrit Dange, one of the beginners of the CPI, has discussed the ideological transformation that he started as a follower of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Still later, in 1919, he became a follower of Vladimir Lenin (Chattopadhyay 2010).

2.2 The Russian Revolution and Colonial India

The revolutionary movement in Russia and the intersection of the socialist and anti-colonial movement in India are simultaneous developments. Any other event of the past centuries cannot match the far-reaching impacts of the Bolshevik Revolution in the colonial world. The Revolution has engaged and interacted with the rest of the world and shaped major global events and paradigms (Chenoy 2021). The Russian Revolution is unique because it brought about a revolution in the concept of revolution itself. All the historic revolutions have become located within this new conceptual universe (Patnaik 2016). The emancipatory link between the Russian Revolution and the anti-imperialist struggles in the global south Prabhat Patnaik (2016) notes:

Marx and Engels had of course seen the possibilities of revolution in what we would today call the countries of the periphery, like India and Egypt; but the nature of such revolutions in the periphery and their connections with the project of socialism had remained undefined. The October Revolution changed all that. It saw the revolutionary project within each country as part of that country’s transition in phases towards socialism; it saw the revolutionary projects of the different countries as inter-linked, and constituting merely the different moments in an overall worldwide transition to socialism; and correspondingly it saw the revolutionary project within

particular countries as being sustained by worker-peasant alliances (together with other oppressed classes) led by the proletariat, with the latter's leadership being a necessary condition for a successful transition to socialism. This last perception was clearly expressed in Lenin's call to set up "soviets of the working people" (as distinct from the working class) in oppressed and colonised countries.

The Russian Revolution strengthened the working-class struggle, anti-imperialist movements and the fight against social discrimination worldwide. According to Chenoy and Upadhyay (2021: 01),

Not only did it politically radicalize the working class throughout the world, but it also offered the possibility of an alternative model of development—an alternative to capitalism and imperialism. Unlike other political revolutions in the past that were confined to a single country and resulted in the replacement of one regime with another or at best could strike a chord with a single community and its diaspora, the Russian Revolution was international in the sense that its impact and reach was truly global.

The Russian Revolution greatly impacted the anti-colonial struggles in South Asia. It is an important point often excluded in the dominant narratives on the Russian Revolution (D'Souza, 2018). The major contribution of the Bolsheviks to the global south was to link anti-imperialism with colonial questions and nationalism (Chenoy 2021). The October Revolution altered the anti-colonial movements by strengthening its ideological base. The advocates of the Revolution have explained the togetherness of capitalism and colonialism. Lenin's theory on the right to national self-determination and extending independence to the Finnish, Baltic and Polish people were well received by the oppressed nationalities all over the globe, especially the anti-colonial movements of Asia and Africa (Prashad 2017; Chenoy 2021).

After the formation of the Soviet Union, the state's official policy was that the USSR would not merely stand to uphold the national interest of its people. The interests of world socialism and the international working class are greater than the national or state's interests. Lenin mentioned this in 1918 in the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Initially, this attitude led them to create the Communist International (1919-43). The Bolshevik Revolution was certainly Russian, but its premises were international (Prashad 2017). Lenin's foreign policy maintained that the nature of the revolutionary movements in China, India and other colonized countries would determine the outcome of the global revolutionary struggles (Chenoy 2021). According to Kamal Mitra Chenoy (2021: 71), "The Bolsheviks and the young Soviet state drew their strength from the anti-colonial movements and thereby

developed relations with the liberation movements of the South and contributed toward the shaping of their policies towards the West.” The Russian Revolutionary ideas of anti-colonialism, socio-economic modernization and women’s emancipation have received an enthusiastic reception among the struggling masses (Chenoy and Upadhyay 2021). It is considered that the victory of socialist revolution in Russia would automatically lead to gender equality ending women’s oppression as women would gain economic independence and political participation unlike in capitalism (Usha 2005; 2012).

The news of the Russian Revolution led to the overthrow of the Tsarist Kingdom, and the Soviet takeover of power was received with great enthusiasm by the people and the press in India (Farooqui 2017; Upadyay 2021). Upadhyay (2021: 88) notes:

The Decree on Peace and Decree on Land was widely lauded and Lenin’s Appeal to the Muslim Toilers of Russia and the East on December 3, 1917, calling upon the Persians, Turks, Arabs and Hindus to discard the yoke of slavery and shape their destinies found wide resonance in India. In response to President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the Bolshevik government in Russia sent a note stating: You demand the independence of Poland, Serbia, Belgium and freedom for the people of Austro-Serbia. But strangely we do not notice any mention of freedom for Ireland, Egypt, India or even the Philippines Islands in your demand.

K. M. Troyanovski, the editor of the Blue Book on the situation prevailing in British India published by the Commissariat of Foreign Relations in Soviet Russia in 1918, mentions:

There can be no general peace without a free independent India ... India is the centre of Western activity in the East. India will, therefore, be the first fortress of the Revolution on the Eastern Continent. We, Russian Revolutionaries and International Socialists, feel it our duty to rejoice at the announcement of a revolution in India but also to support this revolution by direct or indirect means and with all our powers (Senterla 1991: 03; Chenoy and Upadhyay 2021: 3-4).

In 1918 K. M. Troianovsky expected that the Indian freedom struggle had a revolutionary character against European capitalism and that India would lead the revolution in the colonial world. He wrote that “If Russia is justly considered to be a citadel of the world revolution, then India can be called a citadel of the revolution in the East, a revolution which is bound to resound most strongly in the East and the world in general” (Eudin and North 1957: 92). The British colonial government in India was in fear of the Russian expansion and influence in Asia. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the increasing military expenses by the British government were

criticized by the Indian National Congress, but the British used to justify it by referring to the growing Russian threat (Imam 1987; Upadhyay 2021). The Russian Revolution inspired the formation of communist parties in the colonial world as part of their anti-imperialist struggle, which included the Communist Party of India in 1920, the Communist Party of Indies in Indonesia in 1920, the Communist Party of China in 1921, South African Communist Party in 1921, Brazilian Communist Party in 1922, Chilean Communist Party in 1922 and the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1925 etc. The fear of a revolution leads to the crackdown of these communist parties in their respective countries. This highly diverse development of the communist movement led to multiple verities of Marxism. Later, any single interpretation of Marxism has become impossible in any state or political party (Chenoy 2021).

In India, the prominent leaders of the anti-colonial movement welcomed the October Revolution. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, “Like every other great upheaval, it (Russian Revolution) had its cusses deep down in history and the misery of generations of human beings” (Gupta 1981: 105). The Indian freedom fighter Dadabhai Navroji maintained close contact with the International. The Indian revolutionaries participated in the Second International’s Stuttgart conference and spoke against colonialism and British Imperialism. Many revolutionaries from India went to the Soviet Union to learn political and tactical aspects of the Russian revolution to bring out a revolution in India and end British rule (Murali, 2015). Eminent Indian historian Bipan Chandra notes that in spite of the wide impact of Lenin's thought on the socialist movements in Europe, North America and Australia, it is in the colonial and semi-colonial world of Afro-Asia that it has led to the most revolutionary consequences since the days of October Revolution.

Moreover Leninism was the main form in which Marxist ideas were adopted and absorbed by the people of the colonial world. Undoubtedly, the writings of Marx and Engels contained some of the basic ingredients of the Marxist approach to the national and colonial question' : and other revolutionaries, for example, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi-Minh, Kim 11-sung, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, have enriched it further. But the ideas of Marx and Engels on the subject were rather patchy and had been developed in the earlier period of world capitalism. It was through the writings of Lenin that the broad outline of a theory of revolution was provided to the people of the colonies and semi-colonies (Chandra 1971: 40). The first Indians who met Lenin after the Russian Revolution were two brothers named Abdul Jabbar Khairy and

Abdul Sattar Khairy. They lived in Germany. When the Khairy brothers heard about the Russian Revolution, they were eager to meet Lenin, which happened in 1918, November 23, in Kremlin. As a token of admiration, the brothers gifted Lenin a sandalwood stick with an ivory tip, still preserved in the Lenin Museum in Moscow. They were impressed with Lenin's slogan on the self-determination of nations against the imperial powers (Gupta 1981: 30). The Khairy brothers were invited to speak in the All Russians Central Executive Committee on 25th November 1918 as representatives of the Indian freedom fighters (Rai 1995). While addressing the Russian people, they acknowledged the leaders of the Russian Revolution as their comrades. On 5th December 1918, Jabbar Khairy attended the Second International in Petrograd. On Khairy brothers, the CPI leader G. Adhikari wrote in his book *Documents of Communist Party of India* (1971) that the Khairy brothers were "Pan Islamic from the very beginning and later on their return to India, they became the supporters of Hitler and Fascism, do not belong to CPI" (Adhikari 1971 Vol. I: 93).

The Indian provisional government in exile was established two years before the Russian Revolution in December 1915 by the Indian nationalists in Kabul. The government consisted of Mahendra Pratap as president, Muhammed Barakatullah as Prime Minister, Chempakaraman Pillai as foreign minister, and Obaidullah Sindhi as interior minister (Farooqui 2017). It was a response to the First World War. The role of the provisional government was to create alliances with foreign governments, make fronts against British imperialism, and fight for Indian freedom. They approached the Kerensky government, but the government did not have any colonial policy, and no response came from their side. Kerensky's Russian provincial government even refused to provide tacit support to the Kabul-based Indian freedom fighters (Vasudevan 2017).

Another group of Indian nationalists from abroad formed the Indian Independence Committee in Berlin in 1915. The leading figure of this group was Virendranath Chattopadhyay. They came under the influence of the Soviet Union and Marxism. Chattopadhyay considers the link with Soviet revolutionaries essential for the nationalist activity of India (Farooqui 2017). In 1919 an Indian delegation including M. Barakatullah, Dalip Singh Gill, Abdul Rab Peshawari, M. P. B. T. Acharya and Ibrahim visited Moscow under the leadership of Raja Mahendra Pratap and met Lenin on 7th May 1919. The delegation came to seek help and support from the Bolsheviks for the anti-colonial struggle against the British and to support the

provisional government for India formed under the leadership of Raja Mahendra Pratap. On 25th November 1919, the Indian delegation gave a memorandum to Severdloff, President of the Central Executive committee of the Soviets, in the name of Indian freedom fighters. The memorandum explained the martyrs under British rule and the population of 325,000,000 who were forced into slavery (Farooqui 2017).

After the Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik government supported the Indian freedom struggle against British imperialism. Lenin discussed the similarities in the anti imperialist struggles of the Eastern world like

The outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc. account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be (Lenin 1975; 725 Patnaik 2014: 39; Siddiqui 2017: 432).

Raja Mahendra Pratap (2004) wrote in his memoir about Prof. Vosnesensky's descriptions of the ancient imperial palace in Moscow and its large room with a wide table where the photo of the working-class leader comrade Lenin was placed. Pratap elaborates:

I being the head of the party entered first and proceeded towards the figure sitting right before me. To my astonishment, the main hero stood up suddenly, went to a corner and fetched a small chair and put the chair near his office chair, and as arrived by his side he asked me to sit down. Comrade Lenin had asked me; in what language I want him to address – English, French, German or Russian. I told him that we should better speak in English. And I presented to him my book Religion of Love. To my astonishment, he said that he had already read it. Lenin said that my book was Tolstoyism. Lenin also asked a couple of questions to a servant of Maulana Barakatullah who remained standing a bit far (Pratap 2004: 112-13).

During this period, Maulana Barakatullah proved to be an important link between colonial India, Soviet Russia and Afghanistan. In an interview of Barakatullah with Petrograd Pravda in 1919, he said, "I am neither a communist nor socialist, but my political programme at present is the expulsion of the English from Asia. I am an incredible enemy of European capitalism in Asia whose main representative is the English. In this respect the communists and we are genuine allies" (Pratap 2004: 118).

Many Indian revolutionaries who fought an uncompromising fight against the British colonialism considered the Communist Russia an inspiration and a genuine allied nation. The Hindi Association of Pacific Coast was formed by the Indian freedom fighters in St. Jones, the USA, in 1913 under the leadership of Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna and Lala Har Dayal is an example. It became known as Gadar Party

after releasing its journal *Gadar* (revolt) on 01 November 1913 (Lal 2013). The Gadar Party successfully organised a network between the anti-colonial movements in the British colonies and many other parts of the world, including Argentina, Brazil, Kenya, Malaysia, Iran, Aden, Hong Kong, China and Singapore etc. The movement was an anti-colonial network against imperialism which progressed with socialist thoughts against capitalism. Soon the Gadarites came into contact with Soviet Russia in 1920-21. The initial interaction of the Gadarites with Soviet Russia has begun after the arrival of Rattan Singh and Santokh Singh in Moscow. In USA with the help of the Communist Party USA, a few Gadarites named Harjap Singh, Pritam Singh, Santa Singh, Karam Singh Dhoot and Prem Singh Gill came to Russia in 1926, and all of them were admitted to the Communist University for the Workers of the East (KUTV) (Vasudevan 2013).

Thereafter, between 1926 and 1935, the 76 activists of the Gadar Party from various places in several countries like Panama, Nairobi, Rosario and Canada came to the Communist University for their studies (Vasudevan 2013). Some of these students only knew the Punjabi language; some were hardly literate in Punjabi. Among the students, Rattan Singh Gholia Kalan and Sardra Singh attended the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935. Most of these students gradually returned to India through Paris, Pondicherry and Colombo. After reaching India, the British quickly imprisoned two activists named Harban Singh Bundala and Bachan Singh Gholia. While reaching Punjab, the Moscow students were confused and joined different political organizations like Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Kirti Kissan Party and Communist Party (Vasudevan 2013).

In the Indian freedom movement, the idea of socialism and rationality were considered to be unacceptable by the majority of the orthodox religious leaders. But the communitarian ideas and egalitarian social life were part of the Indian enlightenment tradition. In 1912, Muhsir Hussain Kidwai wrote a pamphlet on “Islam and Socialism”, explaining the similarities between the prophet's guidance and socialism. The Khilafat movement's attention to the socialist world is another important part. When the Turkish Sultanate was under British attack, the Muslims in India largely turned against British imperialism. The movement that emerged on this issue was known as the Khilafat movement. Twenty-eight Indian revolutionaries who were part of the Indian Revolutionary Association arrived in Tashkent on 2nd July 1920. This association campaigned and worked among the Indian Diaspora in Kabul

and got one-fifth of their total number as its members (around 150 people). The elected chairman of the Indian Revolutionary Association was Abdur Rabb Barq, the deputy chairman was Partivadi Acharya, and the secretaries were Fazil Al Qadir and Amin Farukh (Persits 1973). The Association adopted its famous message on 17th February 1920 to greet Lenin and thank Soviet Russia for its position and struggle for the national liberation of the colonial countries, including India. Lenin and Soviet Russia replayed joyfully to the association and considered them an important factor for the future revolutionary movement in India. Lenin maintained that “the principles of self-determination and liberation of subject peoples, proclaimed by the workers’ and peasants’ republic, had fetched so larger a response from politically conscious Indians” (Persits 1973). During this period, the Communist University of the Toilers of the East and the Indian military school at Tashkent played a crucial role in developing the ideological framework for the Indian revolutionaries.

The Russian revolutionary leaders were concerned about the anti-colonial movements, and the organizations took the lead in the struggles. In his book *Economics of the Transition Period* in 1920, Bukharin mentioned that the anti-colonial struggles in China, India and elsewhere had no direct relationship with the proletarian revolution. He noted that the working classes of these countries are weak, and no possibility existed of the dictatorship of the proletariat (White 1984). On the other hand, Lenin mentions, “In India and China, too, class-conscious proletarians could not take any other path but the national one, because their countries have not yet been formed into national states. If China had to carry on an offensive war for this purpose, we could only sympathize with her because objectively it would be a progressive war” (Lenin 2013: 299). But Lenin was optimistic about the feature of the struggling colonial world. In his polemic against the social democrats of the colonizer countries, Lenin mentions:

Socialists should explain to the masses that the English socialist who does not struggle now for freedom of secession for Ireland, India, etc., is a socialist and internationalist only in words, and a chauvinist and annexationist in practice. The same applies to the French socialist who does not fight for the freedom of the French colonies, against the war to annex Alsace-Lorraine, etc.; the German socialist who does not fight for freedom of secession for Alsace- Lorraine, the Danes, the Poles, the Belgians, the Serbs and others; the Russian socialist who does not fight for freedom of secession for Ukraine, Finland, etc. (Lenin 2013: 382-83).

Lenin made his point that the Eastern world had a more important role in the next phase of the world revolution. Communist Russia gave greater importance to the Eastern world. Western imperialism was a common enemy of both the Soviets and the colonies. Lenin recognized the strength of the anti-communist ideology in the West and realized the importance of supporting and politicising the people fighting against colonialism in the eastern region. The Bolshevik leaders understood the necessity of further revolutions in the other countries to survive the October Revolution. They initially thought that the next revolution would go to occur in Germany. They were more curious about the colonial world when that scope was over. So the Comintern had given material assistance to the revolutionaries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It initially helped strengthen the Global South's anti-colonial struggles (Prashad 2017). In his lecture at Severdlov University in April 1924, Stalin stated that the next line to follow the example of Bolshevism was India (Ray 1969).

2.3 The Influence of the Communist International and the Lenin-Roy Debate

The conference of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1907 witnessed representatives from the colonial world, and a total of 886 delegates had attended the conference. The congress discussed the question of colonialism and nationalism, and the delegates from the colonies questioned the socialist world's position on the freedom struggles. The delegates under the leadership of Madam Cama unfurled the Indian flag at the conference, marking the first time in history. On the colonial question, the Stuttgart congress of the second international was deeply divided. The Holland Congress representative Van Kol saw colonialism as not altogether wrong. According to Kol, the colonizers brought civilization to the third world. With all these debates, several questions emerged in the International on colonialism (Roy 1964).

Following this, a committee was set up to study the colonial questions deeply, as insisted by the Russian delegation led by Lenin. The Russian delegation was very keen on the colonial question because Russia was an empire with its colonies. The commission appointed by congress to study the colonial question submitted its report and suggested a socialist colonial policy. It was defeated in the voting with a narrow margin because of the presence of the members from the colonial world. All these developments resulted in forming three factions in the international- nationalists, vacillating centrists and revolutionary Bolsheviks (Roy 1964).

Later the formation of the Communist International under the leadership of Bolsheviks after the Russian Revolution changed the scenario. The Second Congress of the Comintern (July 19-August 7, 1920) was held in Petrograd, and Moscow was a turning point for the congress's decision to expand toward Asia. Lenin concentrated on the resolutions undertaken by the second congress related to the national and colonial questions and the agrarian questions as the primary task of the communists. On the other side, the Comintern debate on the “National and Colonial Question” became famous due to the debate between M. N. Roy and Lenin in congress. This happened during the crucial period of the Indian freedom movement, marked by the Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements from 1919 to 1922. Lenin took a position that the international must support the national liberation movements, including India, irrespective of their ideological nature. As per the Marxist definition of the historical determination of the stages of a revolution, the bourgeois-democratic revolution will occur before the proletarian revolution. So the Communist International should support the anti-colonial movement in India led by the national bourgeoisie (Ray 1969).

After the Russian Revolution, there was no diplomatic relationship between Soviet Russia and Britain. This created difficulties for Indian revolutionaries since they had to travel to other European countries or Afghanistan to reach Soviet Russia. M. N. Roy was one of the leaders who attended the second congress as a Mexican delegate and as one of the founders of the Mexican Communist Party.

The two notable results of the second congress of the International were the setup of the “Central Asiatic Bureau”, composed of M. N. Roy, Georgy Safarov and General Sokolnikov. It focused on the Indian scenario. The next important decision was to hold a conference, particularly for the people of the East. The decided place was the Azerbaijan city of Baku. Delegates from 37 countries attended the congress. Indian participants were 14, which was comparatively less than many other countries. The “Congress of the Peoples of the East” was held in Baku in 1920, from September one to eight, mainly to discuss life in the colonized world. 1891 delegates across the world attended the meeting. The manifesto of the Baku Congress mentioned a note on the Indian situation among the Eastern people that

Peoples of the East! You know what Britain has done in India, you know how it has turned the many-millioned masses of the Indian peasants and workers into dumb beasts of burden without any rights.

The Indian peasant has to hand over to the British Government a proportion of his crop so large that what remains is not enough to sustain him for even a few months. The Indian worker has to work in the British capitalist's factory for such a miserable pittance that he cannot even buy the daily handful of rice he needs for subsistence. Every year millions of Indians die of hunger and millions perish in the jungles and swamps where they are engaged in heavy labour undertaken by the British capitalists for their own enrichment.

Millions of Indians, unable to find a crust of bread in their own very rich and fertile homeland, are obliged to join the British armed forces, to leave their homeland and spend their whole lives enduring the hard lot of the soldier, fighting endless wars in all comers of the world, against all the peoples of the world, upholding everywhere the ruthless dominion of Britain. While paying with their lives and their blood for the unceasing expansion of the wealth of the British capitalists, securing monstrous profits for them, the Indians themselves enjoy no human rights: the British officers who rule over them, insolent sons of the British bourgeoisie which has grown fat on Indian corpses, do not regard them as human.

An Indian dares not sit at the same table with a Britisher, use the same quarters, enter the same railway carriage, attend the same school. In the eyes of the British bourgeois every Indian is a pariah, a slave, a beast of burden, an animal which dare not have any human feelings or put forward any demands. Every demand, every expression of anger by the Indian peasants and workers when driven to extremities is met by ruthless mass shootings. Hundreds of corpses of those shot cover the streets of revolted Indian villages, and British officers force the survivors to crawl on their bellies, to amuse them, and to lick the boots of their enslavers (Communist International 1977: 165).

In the debate between Roy and Lenin on the national and colonial question, Roy argued that the Indian communists should simultaneously lead a parallel fight against the Indian bourgeoisie with the anti-colonial movement to bring a socialist revolution. However, Lenin was against this position and argued that Indian communists should go for a united front with the national bourgeoisie leaders against British imperialism. At the end of the debate, Lenin's position got the majority in the Comintern Congress (Roy 1964).

The debate in the International on National and Colonial Question revised and reformulated the theoretical debate on progressive social transformations. Lenin's position was that the progressive movements in the colonial world must make a temporary alliance with the bourgeoisie's national movements but should not merge with them. Lenin expressed that the second international is not international as the struggling masses from Africa and Asia were subsequently not there. It recommended that the Third International resolve this issue.

M. N. Roy played a key role and asked the Comintern to make its colonial policy. The Indian leader was received well by the Bolshevik Party. In his memoir Roy mentioned:

Together with other non-Russian Communist leaders, I had the privilege of participating in the discussions in the higher circles of the Bolshevik Party, and I supported the opposition to the New Economic Policy. To my youthful revolutionary romanticism, it appeared to be a negation of the fundamental dogmas of Marxism (Roy 1964: 503).

This is considered a major theoretical engagement in Communist International, which took position on the colonial and agrarian questions. M. N. Roy highlighted the strength of western capitalism as the plunders of wealth and resources from its colonies. They used the working class army from the colonies to protect their power hunger. So for the survival of a proletarian revolution, the emancipation of the colonies from the imperialists is necessary. The socio-economic and other exploitative mechanisms of the colonizer to the colonies are the specialities of the capitalism. The breaking of this imperialist chain was necessary for the proletariat's emancipation and the Russian Revolution's expansion.

M. N. Roy strongly insisted that Communist International make a distinction between the bourgeoisie-led national liberation movement and the anti-imperialist movement led by the working class. The trajectories of the development of capitalist states were historically different from the day-to-day experience of colonial life. Lenin's view was that imperialism was the reason for the backwardness of the colonial countries. The exploitation of the Eastern countries led to the development of capitalism. This historical process eventually created the native bourgeoisie. Roy (1964: 377-78) suggested that

In the national liberation movements, the native bourgeoisie's democratic revolution will come first and then the proletarian socialist revolution later. In this way, every stage of history was socially determined. And therefore, the communists must support the national liberation movement by the national bourgeoisie in the colonies.

Gandhi was one of the main topics for the heated debate between Lenin and Roy. Being a popular leader of the freedom movement, Gandhi, the Indian National Congress leader, was a revolutionary for Lenin (Roy 1964). Roy insisted on his version that a religious and cultural revivalist like Gandhi is socially reactionary even though he might appear revolutionary politically. To substantiate his argument, Roy borrowed the theory from Georgy Plekhanov, who inspired Lenin, and is considered the first Marxist in Russia. According to Plekhanov, the Russian populist and radical

movement Narodniks believed in terrorism, genius Slav race, and propagated to go back to villages, was politically revolutionaries, but socially, reactionaries. After Lenin's thesis got the majority, he suggested the council note Roy's critical remarks and positive ideas and kept Roy's thesis as supplementary. After detailed discussions, Roy's thesis was amended and brought in line with Lenin's thesis and later, both were adopted by Congress (Roy 1964: 378-81).

As one of the youngest and newest members of the International, Roy felt honoured by Lenin's attitude. M. N. Roy mentioned in his memoir that Lenin was very kind and friendly and patiently listened and democratically argued his points in the International (Roy 1964: 378-81). According to Lenin,

This idea of the difference between nations, their division into the oppressed and the oppressors runs through all the Theses, not only the first ones that I signed and which have already been printed, but also through Comrade Roy's Theses. These were written predominantly from the point of view of India and the other great Asian peoples who are oppressed by Britain, and are thus particularly important for us (Marxists.org n.d.).

On Lenin's thoughts Roy (1964: 365) mentioned that

Having been drafted and circulated well ahead of time, Lenin's Thesis on the National and Colonial Question could be discussed at length by the delegates. But the major European delegations took little interest in it. The pre-war Socialist tradition of ignoring the problems of the world outside Europe and America was still strong. Lenin wanted to disown that tradition and organise a new International which would embrace the whole world.

Lenin did not agree with Roy's point that the revolutionary movement in the colonial world could entirely decide the fate of Western capitalist nations. He pointed out that India consists of 5 million proletariats and 37 million peasants who do not own any land. But the communists failed to form a Communist Party over there. The then Commissar for nationalities, J. V. Stalin, supported Roy's thesis (Ray 1969).

The discussion between Lenin and Roy on the colonial question led to the formation of the CPI in Tashkent on 17 October 1920 (Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972: 389). M. N. Roy and a few comrades formed the Communist Party of India in Tashkent with the help of the Soviet Union. Mohammed Shafeek got elected as the first secretary of the CPI (CPI(M) 2010). Later Roy became active in organizing the communist activists to build a party in India. Through his comrades Shaukat Usmani and Nalini Bhushan Dasgupta in 1922, M. N. Roy established his link between the communists in major Indian cities like Gulam Hussain in Lahore, Muzafar Ahmed in Calcutta, S. A. Dange in Bombay and Singaravelu Chettiyar in Madras (Yadav 2021).

The Comintern decided to invite S. A. Dange for the 4th congress of the Communist International in November 1922. Charles Ashleigh, a British communist, was given the responsibility to meet Dange to pass the message. But when he came to India as a messenger, he was arrested by the British police on 19 September 1922 and was sent back to England. During the 36th session of the Indian National Congress, held in Ahmadabad in 1921, a manifesto in the name of the Communist Party of India undersigned by M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherjee was presented. The manifesto included the demands of the workers and peasants to take them fully into the freedom struggle and put forward a program of full-fledged anti-imperialist democratic revolution. In the Ahmadabad Session of INC in 1921 on behalf of the Communist Party of India, Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Swami Kumaranand put forward a resolution on *Poorna Swaraj* (complete independence) from the British. Gandhi vehemently opposed this. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj was not developed as complete independence from the British during this period. The resolution got defeated in the Congress session (Adhikari 1971: 341-54; Yadav 2021: 6-7; Yechuri 2021).

The Communist Party of India started associating with the International from 1921 onwards. But the party was formally established in India on 26 December 1925, as per the official records of the CPI. There were several attempts by the colonial administration to stop the Communist Party from growing in India. As part of these efforts, the Peshawar Conspiracy Case in 1922-23, the Kanpur Bolshevik or Communist Conspiracy Case in 1924 and the Meerut Communist Conspiracy Case in 1929 were charged to arrest and suppress the communist activists (Bhambhri 1969). In the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case accused were M. N. Roy, Musafar Ahmed, S. A. Dange, Shaukat Usmani, Gulam Hussain, Nalini Bhushan Dasgupta, M. Singaravelu Chettiyar and Ram Charan Lal Sharma. They were accused of establishing connections with Communist International and planning to develop a Bolshevik model revolution in India. The British colonial rule considered any mass action of people against the ruling system as seditious. Because of this, the attempt of working-class mobilization by the communists against the British government and landlords initially led to the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case (Yadav 2021). In June 1923, J. Crerar, the secretary of the Governor-General, suggested immediate action against the potential danger of the emerging communist movement in India (Yadav 2021). After all these efforts, the colonial rule banned the Communist Party and made it illegal in 1934 (Bhambhri 1969).

2.4 The Influence of the Russian Revolution and the Formation of the Soviet Union on the Indian Freedom Struggle

The Russian Empire was on the brink of collapse on the eve of the First World War. The Russian colonies were up for grabs by the USA, France and Britain. In the meantime, the Kerensky government failed to address issues and supported World War One, which badly struck the Russian economy. Lenin's *April Thesis* made a new revolutionary turn in the situation, which led the working-class movement towards the Revolution. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian revolutionaries expected the upcoming socialist revolutions to occur in Western European capitalist countries like Italy, France, Germany, etc. They saw the revolutionary transformations of the European nations as essential for the survival of the October Revolution. Contrary to their thoughts, strong support for the Russian Revolution came from the people who were fighting against the colonial oppression in the global south (D'Souza 2018).

After 1905 the freedom movements in Ireland, Iran, China and South Asia got Russia's support, particularly against English imperialism. The thoughts of the Russian Revolution significantly impacted the national liberation struggles in the colonial world. The Soviet support strengthened the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements in the global south (Patnaik 2017; Chenoy 2021). It was the context of Soviet support for Indian national liberation movement.

According to Hari Vasudevan (2017), the Russian Revolution, and Communism have become synonymous in India. The Russian Revolution was a sense of liberation for the freedom fighters in colonial India. The Bolsheviks supported national emancipation, and in the early days of the Soviet Union, the leaders were most empathetically committed to a quest for Indian freedom. The modern Indian national ethos evolved in the shadow of the October Revolution, which greatly contributed to the country's nation-building. The ideas of the Bolshevik Revolution were considered a global alternative and supported anti-colonial nationalism. Initially, the Russian Revolution was more than Communism for the Indian nation (Vasudevan 2017). The Soviet Union was promoted as more than a role model much before the Indian independence. This idealization was a product of the relationship between the Indian freedom fighters and Russia from 1917 to 1947. The image of the Soviet Union in South Asia in the early half of the 20th century was progressive and anti-imperialistic (Vasudevan 1999).

A prominent nationalist newspaper of Calcutta, *Dainik Basmati*, reported on 17 November 1917 that “the downfall of Tsardom has ushered in the age of destruction of alien bureaucracy in India too” (Chattopadhyay 2010: 02). The radical nationalists of the Home Rule Movement from Madras in 1917 wrote in their pamphlet, “Our hour is approaching, India too shall be free. But sons of India must stand up for rights and justice as the Russians did” (Chattopadhyay 2010: 02). The Montague and Chelmsford Report on the Indian Constitutional Reform in 1918 mentions that the Indian freedom struggles get inspiration from the Russian Revolution. Zafar Imam (1987: 53) quotes from the report that “The Revolution in Russia and its beginning was regarded in India as a triumph over despotism. It has given an impetus to Indian political aspirations.” Gautam Chattopadhyay (2010: 03) quotes from a report by the head of the British intelligence Cecil Kaye titled “Bolshevism in India” in 1919 that “in UP and Bengal, the Kisan Sabha and the Ryot Sabha are frankly pro-Bolshevik. The Bolshevik method on the question of land has greatly attracted the Indian masses.”

As part of this political inspiration, the attempt to form a trade union in India took place in Madras in 1918 under the leadership of B. P. Wadia. The Madras Labour Union was formed among the textile mill workers in Collai, Madras (Bhambhri 1969). Indeed later, the inaugural session of the first organized trade union in India, the All India Trade Union Congress, was held in Bombay in October 1920. Several nationalist leaders, including Motilal Nehru and Annie Besant, attended the function chaired by Lala Lajpat Rai. Soon the communists established their hold on AITUC (Farooqui 2017). A confidential note submitted to the Centre by the special superintendent of police, intelligence branch, Bengal P. C. Bamford and Cecil Kaye’s another report titled “Communism in India” in 1926 mentions the invitation given to Subhas Chandra Bose, Chitranjan Das (son of C. R. Das) and S. A. Dange to the Congress of the Communist International. This was an effort by the Communist International to bridge the gap between the Communists and the Left nationalists of India. But none of these invites could attend the Congress because of British censorship (Chattopadhyay 2010: 4-5). The Soviet Union was curious about the development of the communist movement in India in the 1920s and sent their messages and help via the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). British communist leaders like Philip Spratt and Ben Bradley are important in these interactions (Vasudevan 1999).

The political developments in India related to the Soviet Union at the time of the Second World War are important in the history of the Indian freedom struggle. The Congress Socialist Party's conference in Lahore in 1938 hailed that the Soviet Union was the only nation struggling for world peace and freedom (Bhambhri 1969). This period witnessed the emergence of Fascism and Nazism in Europe, which strengthened the anti-communist movements worldwide along with the support of the Western capitalist powers. These developments compelled the Soviet Union to build a national and international mechanism to protect the socialist state system. As part of this, from 1935 onwards, under the direction of the Communist International, the Communist Party of India started cooperating with the freedom movement led by the national bourgeoisie, aka Indian National Congress. The Communists needed a National Front similar to the Popular Front by the communist parties in Europe against the Fascist and imperialist forces. In this way, they broadened the idea of collaboration with other organizations (Demaitre 1963).

During this period, a non-aggression treaty has signed by Soviet Prime Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (Molotov-Ribbentrop pact) on 23 August 1939. has created heated debates all over the world. The West has strengthened its anti-Soviet propaganda in the name of the Stalin-Hitler pact. However, it seems, this issue has not made any strong impact on India.

Later the Soviet-German pact was violated when Nazi Germany invaded the USSR on 22 June 1941. To race the international support for the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, a friendship society was established in 1941 named Friends of the Soviet Union (Wishon 2013: 106). In India, the Friends of the Soviet Union was organized by the Soviet sympathetic Indian nationalists. They tried to mobile the Indian people's opinion on the Nazi attack on the USSR a to strengthen the British war efforts against the Axis powers (Vasudevan 1999). This time, the CPI took a position that the USSR was capable enough to defend them and fight against the enemies, so the Indian communists should concentrate their movement against the British. It took a turn when the direction from the Comintern changed the scenario in December 1942. The message came through Harry Pollitt, the British Communist Party leader, where it was strictly mentioned maintaining an international commitment and not going with an ultra-nationalist line (Palat et al. 1994).

The communists changed their position on war when the Axis powers had attacked the Soviet Union. They termed the new situation as “peoples’ war” instead of “imperialist war” to raise international support for the USSR (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 1991; Shukla 1997). To protect the “first-ever working-class state,” the communists were urged the global support for the Soviet Union. The newly changed circumstances have demanded strengthening the anti-Hitler alliance. After the change in the party position, the British authorities lifted the ban on the CPI. The CPI actively mobilized support for the USSR against the Axis alliance led by the Fascists. The communists are more ideologically oriented toward proletarian unity and proletarian internationalism, which is reflected in this issue. In India, the sudden blackout of the communists from the then Quit India movement against the British administration has backfired (Ibid).

The Congress Party has criticized the withdrawal of the communists from an anti-imperialist struggle (Shukla 1997). The position against an anti-British struggle has reduced the mass base of the CPI. Later the communists understood the problems of this position in the Indian national scenario. Later, and the CPI publicly acknowledged the mistake and moved forward (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 1991). After the War, to strengthen the Soviet support base in India, the socialists organized a network named Indo-Soviet Friendship Society in 1952. From the 1960s onwards, they made 15 branches all over the country (Sager 1966). These popular platforms had significantly contributed to building a pro-Soviet attitude among the Indian masses.

2.5 The Leaders of the Indian Freedom Movement and the Soviet Union

The last decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a new stream of thought sprouting all over India because of capitalist transformations, which paved the way for different social reform movements. Soviet Russia was a new sphere of influence in the ideological realm. Leaders like Ambedkar, Periyar and Nehru etc. were inspired by the ideas that emerged from the October Revolution of Russia, which was a peasant society like India (Prashad 2017). The Soviet Union and the building of a socialist society were inspiring for the socialist fraction inside the Indian National Congress. This, the writings of Jawaharlal Nehru, Jai Prakash Narayan and Subhash Chandra Bose etc., influenced the creation of new ideological thinking in India (Namboodiripad 2016). Mahatma Gandhi was inspired by the 1905 Revolution

of Russia and mentioned that it was the greatest event in the present century and can be a model for India (Gandhi 1961; Upadhyay 2021). Gandhi had noted that the Russian people rose against the King. It means that even a powerful emperor cannot rule without the cooperation of the people (Prashad 2017). Gandhi felt a linkage between the 1905 Russian Revolution and the *Swadeshi* agitation in Bengal. He mentioned that the movement for the use of native goods is much like the Russian agitation, and we can also show the same strength as the Russians (Prashad 2017).

But Mahatma Gandhi had a different take on the Bolshevik Revolution. He had expressed that his socialism and communism are based on harmonious cooperation between capital and labour, tenant and landlord (Ray 1969). He was passionate about his ideal socialist state where a non-violent government would manage the wide gap between rich and hungry millions. Gandhi confessed that he had not been able to study Bolshevism but mentioned that the acceptance of violence and denial of God repelled him (Ray 1969). When the Bolshevik leaders invited Mahatma Gandhi to the Soviet Union, he refused it. Gandhi feared that suppose if he went to the Soviet Union it would be conveyed that he was legitimizing the violence (Ray 1969). On the communist idea of abolishing private property, Gandhi stated that if it is with the consent of the owners, which will be great; otherwise not. Anything built with violence will not last long. Gandhi never seriously attempted to study Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin and the Russian Revolution (Ray 1969). Against the spread of Bolshevik ideas in India, Gandhi warned that the Indian people should remind the legacy of their culture and civilization (Komarov 1970).

Nevertheless, contrary to his later statements, Gandhi wrote in *Young India* in 1928:

there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake; an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin, a noble example of their renunciation ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes (quoted in Komarov 1970: 384-85; Prashad 2017: 18).

Gandhi supported the socialist policies of the state ownership of the land and the nationalization or state control over factories which was mentioned in his article in *Young India* in 1924 (Komarov 1970). On the other side, the writings of the Russian authors were profoundly influential to Gandhi. He admires Tolstoy and Gorky (Upadhyay 2021). *The Kingdom of God within You* by Tolstoy greatly influenced Gandhi's thoughts (Gandhi 1961; Upadhyay 2021).

On the other hand, one of the most influential leaders of modern India, Dr B. R. Ambedkar, was naturally attracted to socialism as an idea of a property equalizer (Teltumbde 2018). The Left sympathies of Ambedkar are well-known (Omvedt 2008). He welcomed the Russian Revolution by publishing various articles in his journals *Bharat*, *Mooknayak*, *Janata* and *Bahishkrit* (Teltumbde 2018). Ambedkar viewed the October Revolution as the first conscious attempt of humankind toward a socialist feature. But he was clear that the socialist revolution was only possible after the destruction of caste in India. Without social reform, there is no socialism (Ambedkar 2017; Teltumbde 2018). He imagined and tried to make the Indian constitution with a socialist structure. He thought that the key industries should be owned and run by the state, and agriculture should consider a state industry. The state should accrue the agricultural land from the owners with compensation and give the land for lease to the farmers' collective without caste discrimination. The insurance should be a state monopoly and provide compulsory life insurance to every citizen of the country (Teltumbde 2018).

In his small book, *Budha or Karl Marx*, Ambedkar (2017) mentioned that the violent means of Communism de him uncomfortable, and the Proletariat's Dictatorship is suitable only for a short period. It cannot continue for a long time in a democratic system. Humanity wants not only economic values but also spiritual values. He acknowledged that the Russian dictatorship is good for all the backward nations, but it should not be a permanent dictatorship (Ambedkar 2017; Sakaria 2015). Ambedkar (2017: 22) says, "It has been claimed that the Communist Dictatorship in Russia has wonderful achievements to its credit. There can be no denial of it. That is why I say that a Russian Dictatorship would be good for all backward countries. But this is no argument for permanent Dictatorship."

The Indian socialist revolutionary Bhagat Singh had greatly inspired by the Russian Revolution and its leader Lenin. Stalin had asked the Indian revolutionary Shaukat Usmani to arrange a meeting with Bhagat Singh in Moscow (Usmani 1977; Lal 2019). Jawaharlal Nehru too wished Bhatat Sigh to be sent to Moscow. Nehru was ready to fund his trip to Moscow and communicated this to Chandra Shekhar Azad (Usmani 1977; Ahmed 1970; Lal 2019, 2021). In this incident, Usmani mentions, "I met Bejoy Babu as per our arrangement. What followed is related by him in his article (Bejoy Kumar Sinha in the *New Age* dated April 19, 1970): "I consulted Bhagat Singh, and we felt that it was not the opportune time. We both decided to follow

Usmani later after our Party had arranged some militant actions... to smash the constitutionalist illusions, to break the stagnant calm” (Usmani 1977: 89).

Later, Usmani attended the 6th Congress of the Communist International on 17 July to 01 September 1928. While dealing with the colonial question, the International had discussed the emergence of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) led by Bhagat Singh and his comrades. The HSRA was one of India's most popular progressive movements inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution (Chenoy 2021). The International has considered this development the result of the failure to address the struggling people’s issues by the bourgeoisie organizations like the Indian National Congress (Usmani 1977; Agarwal & Harshvardhan 2021). But due to his arrest and later the execution related to the Central Assembly bomb blast case, Bhagat Singh was never able to go to Moscow and meet Stalin. Bhagat Singh and his comrades were executed and buried in unmarked graves by the British colonizers (Chenoy 2021).

Chaman Lal (2019: 134) quotes from the Selected Writings of the Shaheed Bhagat Singh by Shiv Verma:

On 21 January 1930, the accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case appeared in court wearing red scarves. As soon as the magistrate took his chair, they raised slogans of ‘Long Live Socialist Revolution’, ‘Long Live Communist International’, ‘Long Live People’, ‘Lenin’s Name Will Never Die’, and ‘Down with Imperialism.’ Bhagat Singh then read the text of this telegram in court, and asked the magistrate to send it to the Third International.... On Lenin day we send hearty greetings to all who are doing something for carrying forward the ideas of the great Lenin. We wish success to the great experiment Russia is carrying out. We join our voice to that of the international working-class movement. The proletariat will win. Capitalism will be defeated. Death to Imperialism.

The day Bhagat Singh was hanged to death on 23 March 1931, he partially read a book on Lenin (Lal 2019). The Soviet scholar L. V. Mitrokhin published his book in 1971 titled *The Books Read by Bhagat Singh*, and his 1981 book *Lenin and India* included a chapter for Bhagat Singh titled “The Last Days of Bhagat Singh.” Soviet scholar A. V. Raikov wrote an article in 1971 titled “Bhagat Singh and His Ideological Legacy.” These Soviet scholars looked up to Bhagat Singh as a Marxist revolutionary (Lal 2019).

Udham Singh is another Indian revolutionary who worked with Bhagat Singh in HSRA and became part of the Gadar Party when he worked in the USA, UK and Canada (Fenech 2002). He had travelled through the Soviet republics, including the Baltic States. Udham Singh has requested support from the CPSU for the Indian

revolutionary movements. He had an ultimate aim to kill the culprits behind the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of Amritsar, Punjab, in 1919. As part of this, he shot and killed Michel O'Dwyer in March 1940 when he was attending a meeting in Caxton Hall in Westminster, London. Michel O'Dwyer was the British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab from 1913-to 1919 and had directed the firing against unnamed protesters meeting in Jallianwala Bagh (Fenech 2002). Udham Singh was arrested after this and had given the death penalty by the British authorities in July 1940. When his trial occurred in Central Criminal Court of England and Wales, Old Baily, London, he raised the slogans of Long Live Revolution, Down with British Imperialism and Long Live India (Singh 2007).

After his visit to the Soviet Union in 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru made inspirational speeches and published enthusiastic write-ups among the public. This attracted a lot of people to join the left fraction inside the Indian National Congress (Ammu 2010). One of the significant points of Nehru's attraction to the USSR was that when he visited on the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution in 1927, he saw the leadership of the country as coming from rural and marginalized backgrounds. He met Mikhail Kalinin, the head of the state who belongs to an agricultural worker's family. The head of the Soviet government, Joseph Stalin, belongs to the family of cobblers and housemaids. The extraordinary large country was run by ordinary people (Prashad 2017).

Nehru noticed that India and Russia were vast agricultural countries at the beginning of industrialization. Both nations are facing illiteracy and poverty. If Russia finds solutions for this, the job of the Indians will be easier (Nehru 1949; Prashad 2017). Jawaharlal Nehru published his book titled *Soviet Russia* in 1929, a collection of his articles on the Soviet Union published by various newspapers in India. The book was republished in 1949. There he mentioned that Soviet Russia has a lot of similarities with India, and the history of the formation of this state is remarkable. Nehru pointed out that we should send students and eminent professors to Russia because it could deepen our understanding and friendship, and the academic exchanges had more significance than the politicians' visits (Nehru 1949). The first article in the book titled "The Fascination of Russia" describes:

Russia thus interests us because it may help us to find some solutions for the great problems which face the world today. It interests us especially because conditions there have not been, and are not even now very dissimilar to the conditions in India. Both are waste agricultural countries with only the beginning of industrialization and

both have to face poverty and illiteracy. If Russia finds a satisfactory solution for these, our work in India made easier (Nehru 1949: 03).

When Hitler invaded the USSR, Nehru was quick enough to say that all the world's progressive forces were allied with the USSR and their heroic struggle (Upadhyay 2021). Nehru was not an admirer of Marxism, but he was passionate about Marx's social insights and the scientific approaches in his theories (Nehru 1962: 591). This led Nehru to admire the economic system of the Soviet Union. Indeed the Nehru government adopted five-year plans, public industrialization and public education system etc. (Nehru 1949; Bhambhri 1969). Jawaharlal Nehru mentions in his autobiography that "So I turned inevitably with goodwill towards Communism, for, whatever its faults, it was at least not hypocritical and not imperialistic... These attracted me, as also the tremendous changes taking place in Russia" (Nehru 1962: 163). In the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1929, Nehru mentioned in his presidential address that he was a socialist and a republican (Nehru 1962; Bhambhri 1969). On many occasions, Nehru differed with Gandhi on the question of ideology and mentioned him as a great paradox but accepted his leadership (Nehru 1962; Bhambhri 1969).

Subhas Chandra Bose, one of the significant figures of the Indian national movement, shared a very close relationship with the communists. Bose and Nehru became part of the "The Independence for India League", formed in 1928 in Delhi. The Communists formed the organization, and the Leftists aimed to achieve complete independence and construct the future Indian society with economic and social equality. The organization also had a connection with Virendranath Chattopadhyay's Berlin-based League against Imperialism (Chattopadhyay 2010). In 1928 the Calcutta session of the INC witnessed the resolution for complete independence from the British by Subhas Bose. Nehru strongly supported the resolution and the Communists too. Gandhi again came with his opposition, and the proposed amendment was defeated with a narrow margin (Chattopadhyay 2010). With the support of the communists, Bose was elected as the president of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) in 1931 (Chattopadhyay 2010).

There was a Left unity between CPI, CSP, Royalists and Subhasites (Left Consolidation Committee) that emerged inside the INC and consolidated the votes for Subhas Bose as the president of the INC in 1939. He had defeated the right-winger's candidate Sitaramayya who contested with the open support of Gandhi. During this

period, the CPI's mouthpiece, the *National Front*, published under P. C. Joshy's editorship, openly announced to vote for Bose and later celebrated Bose's victory by mentioning, "Subhas Bose is the Rashtrapati Again" (Chattopadhyay 2010: 12). The *National Front* published two articles by Subhas Bose later. Later on, Subhas Chandra Bose came out of the Indian National Congress and started a new party called Forward Block in the time of the beginning of the Second World War. They made an alliance named Left Consolidation Committee with the Congress Socialist Party and National Front Group (the then banned Communist Party). According to Nikhil Chakravarty (1994), initially, Jawaharlal Nehru favoured this alliance. CPI continued to maintain a good relationship with the Forward Block.

Subhas Bose has chosen the Axis powers as his ally in the fight against British imperialism and his theory that the enemy's enemy is a friend. According to Madhavan Palat (1994), when Hitler emerged as a popular leader, the European intelligentsia was promoted him because he opposed communism. In India, there was a good ground for mixing up fascism and communism because both were the principal enemy of the British. Subhas Chandra Bose's book *Indian Struggle* can be considered an example of this, and in the last chapter of the book concludes that India needs a synthesis of fascism and communism (Palat et al. 1994). As criticism against this, in 1933, Nehru mentioned that "there is no middle road between Fascism and Communism. One has to choose between the two, and I choose the Communist ideal" (Chattopadhyay 2010: 11).

Later, as an Indian National Congress president Subhas Bose visited England in 1938 and was interviewed by R. P. Dutt for *Daily Worker*. There he apologetically admitted that he did not understand the inner meanings of fascism. The later editions of his book came with these convictions (Palat et al. 1994). But when Hitler had asked to use Subhas's Indian Legion against the Soviet Union, he refused it. This invited strong criticism and hostility from Hitler. Hitler mentioned that the Indian Legion was a joke and that they couldn't kill anyone. The Indian National Army's refusal to go to the Eastern Front to fight against the USSR made even the execution of their ten soldiers with a Fascist court-martial. But Bose's direction was clear to his soldiers that the fight explicitly was against the British but never against the Soviet Union (Chattopadhyay 2010).

Rabindranath Tagore, an admirer of the Soviet Union, stated that the October Revolution was the greatest sacrificial fire in history. Tagore visited the Soviet Union

in 1930 and wrote about his experiences as *Russiar Chithi* (Letters from Russia - 1933) that the Soviet Union treated entire humanity equally. His life would not be complete without the visit of Russia, and the message of the October Revolution is true to the world (Chatterjee 2017; Bhattacharjee 2020). After Rabindranath Tagore visited the Soviet Union in 1930, he wrote:

In Russia at last! Whichever way I look I am filled with wonder. It is unlike any other country. From top to bottom they are rousing everybody without distinction. What has pleased me most here is the complete disappearance of the vulgar conceit of wealth ... The dumb have found their voice, the ignorant have cast the veil from their minds, the helpless have become conscious of their power and those who were in the depths of degradation have come out of society's 'black hole' to claim equally with everybody else" (Tagore 1960: 01; Upadhyay 2021: 90).

During Hitler's attack on USSR in 1941 Tagore in his bedridden stage stressed, "The only hope of the world is the Soviet Union" (Wishon 2013: 106).

Sheikh Abdullah of Jammu-Kashmir requested the Indian communists to write a manifesto for the new Kashmir state. As an admirer of the Soviet Union, he renamed Srinagar Chowk (squire) 'Lal Chowk' in 1948 after Moscow's Red Square. Freedom fighter and intellectual Rahul Sanskritayan learned Russian and wrote the autobiographies of Marx, Lenin and Stalin and his most popular fiction, the Volga to Ganga. The University of Leningrad appointed Sanskritayan as a professor of Indology (Puri 2011).

Indian freedom fighter Bhikaiji Rustom Kama (Madam Cama – 1861-1936) was very keen on the revolutionary movements in Russia and made contact with the Russian political emigrants in Paris. When she was in Paris, she was attracted to the 1905 Revolution of Russia, working-class struggles, Marxist literature and the writings of Maxim Gorky. Kama tried to contact Gorky through her Russian friend Mikhail Pavlovich (Veltman). When they got to know each other, Gorky requested the Kama to write an article on the struggles of Indian women, her current role and status in the Indian freedom struggle. Maxim Gorky had written to Bhikaiji Kama that "Russian democracy and Russian woman will be much obliged to you for telling them about the life and struggles of the people living on the banks of the Ganges, the democrats and the women of great India" (Lyusternik 2019: 175). Kama enthusiastically responded and gave her article, which translated to Russian titled "Indian Siren" was published in the 'Foreign News' column run by Gorky in the journal titled *Sovremennik*. This piece mentioned Annie Besant (1847-1933), the British activist who strongly studied for India's freedom. Notably, Besant was the

campaigner for the ‘Theosophical Society’¹ in India, co-founded by the Russian spiritualist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (Lyusternik 2019: 175). This was also a reason for the Russians to read the article. Gorky was also in contact with the Indian revolutionary Shyamji Krishna Varma (1857-1930). Varma used to send his journal *The Indian Sociologist* to Gorky. In his letter to Varma in 1912 Gorky has called Varma as Indian Mazzini (Lyusternik 2019: 175-177).

The Indian revolutionaries were executed in the great purges too. The well-known Indian revolutionaries who worked abroad like Virendranath Chattopadhyay and Abani Mukherjee are believed to be executed in the Great Purges² of the 1930s. Chattopadhyay was working with Comintern and as a resource person. He worked at the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography in the Academy of Sciences, Leningrad (Liebau 2017). He was arrested in Moscow in 1937. Later no information has officially published on him (Liebau 2017; Pemmaraju 2022). There are various stories spread about him. Indeed, Pemmaraju (2022) quotes that the Soviet scholar Mithrokhin has accessed the KGB archival documents and notes he was assassinated on 02 September 1937. Abani Mukherjee, one of the founders of the Communist Party of India in Tashkent in 1920 and who worked at the Academy of Sciences, USSR, also executed purges in the 1930s (Narayanan and Prashad 2022).

Joseph Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva alias Lana Peters has a connection with India. Her husband was an Indian communist named Brajesh Singh who came to Moscow in the 1930s. After the demise of Brajesh, she came to India with his ashes for doing the cremation rituals in 1966. After completing the same in his native village in Uttar Pradesh she stayed in Delhi for a few days. From Delhi, she defected to New York in 1967 without informing the Soviet embassy and left behind her two children in Russia. This was shocking for Moscow. The US used her request for political asylum as a propaganda coup and immediately provided her visa and

¹The ‘Theosophical Society’ is a spiritual organization founded in New York in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), William Quan Judge (1851-1896) and Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907). They had moved to India in 1878 and made Adyar near Chennai the international headquarters of the society. The Greek word Theosophy means divine wisdom. The goals of the society are defined with three objects that are “to form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour; to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science; and to investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in human beings” (Melton 2020).

²During the 1930s a widely published, three show trials and a series of unpublished trials were held in the USSR. The trial conducted by the secret police NKVD found many prominent Bolshevik leaders were found guilty of treason and were either executed or jailed.

other facilities. She had personal disagreements with Stalin on various grounds. But her life in the US was unhappy and stressful with media trials and propaganda mechanisms by the American regime. Normal life was not possible for her in the USA. She came back to the Soviet Union after renouncing the USA in 1980 but again left because of feuding with relatives. For the rest of her life until her demise in 2011, she lived in the USA (BBC 2012; Narasimhan 2017).

2.6 The Early Literature and Soviet Studies in Indian Academic Institutions

Among the leaders of the freedom movement, the essence of the attraction toward Russian politics had developed from Russian literature. The Smuggled literature from Soviet Russia was read in India with a keen interest (Bhambhri 1969). The English colonial rule tried to keep India away from Russia despite being geographically closer. During the Indian freedom struggle, the British authorities imposed strict surveillance and censoring on the spread of Bolshevik ideas. Similarly, they managed all the capitalist-controlled mass media to publish strong anti-Soviet propaganda. They maintained vigilance in schools and colleges to stop spreading the ideas of the Russian Revolution. The British curriculum stressed the English world's studies and neglected the rest of the world.

Before independence, very few Indians learned Russian, but no official course was initiated. Then the names of well-known Russian figures in India were limited to Peter the Great and Catherine II. Similarly, in Indian academia, Michel Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin were the only Russian philosophers mentioned. Then again, in the field of Political Science situation was slightly better and Marxist literature, Lenin's contributions, Soviet political system and its structure and functions were typically unavoidable. The university syllabus on the Soviet Union was mainly on Russian literature and the conflicting news from the region. At the same time, the Western world had more organically focused on Russia and produced conflicting schools with great scholars who eventually helped them to make political propaganda on Russia, including pro or anti-communism. But at the same time, the colonial British adamantly opposed the Indian universities' collaboration with Russian academics. They were under the threat of the spread of Bolshevik ideology among the Indian students interest (Bhambhri 1969).

While studying the historical reasons which led the Russian working-class towards a revolution might result in the Indian campuses becoming the breeding

ground of communism. But the university students searching for alternative ideas to fight against imperialism were attracted to the Russian Revolution and Marxism. They played an important role in spreading the ideas, especially among the youth. A few examples of the intellectual thoughts of the university campuses in this period are, in Bengal, in the Presidency College magazine, Nikhil Chakravarty wrote an article titled *ABC of Marxism* (Palat et al. 1994). Similarly, in Kerala, A. K. Damodaran wrote a piece on M. N. Roy and circulated it among the students. Roy was a well-known figure and his anti-fascist thoughts were popular among the students (Palat et al. 1994). The student movements of the early 20th century India seriously considered the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union in their fight against British colonialism.

The young leaders and intellectuals from the early 20th century contributed their time and energy to study and publish so many materials on revolutionary Russia. Few among these are Bombay and S. A. Dange started an English weekly titled *The Socialist* in 1923 (Bhambhri 1969). G. V. Krishna Rao wrote an autobiography of Lenin titled *Nikolai Lenin: His Life and Activities* from Madras in 1921. Similarly, B. I. Bhargava wrote an autobiography titled *Lenin* from Lucknow in 1922, M. N. Roy's *The Russian Revolution* in 1949, *The Russian Panorama* and *The Flying Troika* by K. P. S. Menon, *The Evolution of the Soviet Society* by Damodara Kurup, *Bharat-Rus* by P. M. Kemp, *India and Lenin* by Anand Gupta, *Young Russia* by Ramakrishna Bajaj and *Three Years in Soviet Russia* by K. C. Mahanta etc. (Bhambhri 1969).

There were many writings in Hindi from the beginning of the 1920s onwards. Two books titled *Russian Revolution* and *Lenin, his Life and His Thoughts* were published by R. S. Avasthi in 1920, S. D. Vidyalkar published a work titled *Rebirth of Russia* and the *Soviet State of Russia*, and in 1923 U. N. Jijja published *The great Change in Russia*. *The Soviet State of Russia* was published in the same year by P. N. Vidyalkar, *The Red Revolution* in 1928 by R. S. Avasthi and in 1930 *Russia Today* by Dev Vrat, *Mahatma Lenin* by S. D. Bharati and *Awakening of Russia* by Dr D. R. Prem. *Sibiat Dear Itihas* (History of Soviet Union) written in Bengali by Risi Das and *Soviet Sovayda* by Bejoy Ghosh. *Russiavin Valaralu (History of Russia)* written in Tamil by Venkalathur Swaminatha Sharma and *Agniyum Sfulingavum (The Fire and Spark)* in 1931 by P. Keshavadev in Malayalam were the first popular works in the regional languages with many subsequent editions.

After Independence, the situation radically changed, and the Indo-Soviet relations progressed along with the Nehru–Khrushchev agreements. In the 1950s, the Soviet and Indian governments initiated cultural exchange as part of cultural diplomacy. Such initiatives made Indian artists like Raj Kapoor the evergreen celebrity in Russia (PTI 2017; Wangchuk 2018; Manning 2022). The Soviet Union took the initiative to translate Indian books to Soviet languages and the Soviet books to Indian languages. The most demanded Indian authors in the Soviet Union are Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Prem Chand, R. K. Narayanan, D. K. Mukherjee and C. Krishen etc. (Stein 1967). Indeed the Soviet Union published the letters exchanged by Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi. The Soviet intellectuals started demonstrating the closeness of Tolstoy and Gandhi to show ideological unity (Ray 1969).

Stein (1967) mentions that in 1958-61 periods, 5.5 million Indian books were printed in USSR and in 1963, the magazine *Soviet Land* had a circulation of 350000 copies in 13 Indian languages, including English. The *Soviet Land* magazine has started by the USSR in various European languages in the 1930s, and the editions in Indian languages came in the 1950s. The magazine's headquarters were established in Delhi, with several regional offices too (Sager 1966). The Soviet Union had arranged several schemes for India. This includes books and magazines in various Indian languages, broadcasting on Moscow Radio, student exchange programs and film exchanges etc. These projects were reflected in the academics too. The CPSU always emphasised education to the upcoming generation to make them highly qualified cadres. To educate poorer nations' youth and e them ideologically socialists, the Soviet Union established the Communist University of the Toilers of the East (KUTV) in the 1920s (Hilger 2011).

But the Soviet Union was forced to dissolve KUTV between the war efforts in the Second World War in the late 1930s. To support the developing nations and expand its soft power, the USSR again built a university, especially for the poor in the East. The Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow was opened in November 1960, it was named after the Congolese Communist Party leader Patrice Lumumba. Patrice Lumumba University consists of many Indian students. Among them, many were affiliated with the Congress Party. But because of the support received from the Soviet Union, they used to be pro to Socialism (Bhadrakumar 2021).

In 1955 Soviet aid was given to build the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay (Hilger 2011). The Moscow State University has established links with Delhi University, Leningrad University with Bombay University, Tbilisi University with Madras University, the Stalinabad University of Tajikistan with Aligarh University, Tashkent University with Lucknow University and Ashkhabad University of Turkmenistan with Osmania University of Hyderabad (Dyakanov 2015).

The Indian School of International Studies, a premier educational institute for international studies established in 1955 in Delhi, gave considerable effort to the importance of the research on the USSR. The institution established an area studies program, particularly for USSR, in 1963. The first research project in this institution on the Soviet Union includes a research thesis titled “A Study of Some Factors in America’s Relations with the Soviet Union in 1921-33” by Tarun Chandra Bose. A full-fledged Soviet study started at the Indian School of International Studies in 1966 (Vaidyanath 1969).

Later, when the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) was established in New Delhi in 1969, the Indian School of International Studies was part of it. The Indian School of International Studies became the School of International Studies, and the Soviet Centre became the Centre for the Soviet and East European Studies. After the USSR’s collapse, the Centre renamed the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies.

Hari Vasudevan (1999), one of India’s eminent Soviet/Russian specialists, notes the prominent Indian social scientists have focused on the Soviet Union, Russia and Central Asia since the 1960s. He considered the names of R. Vaidyanath, Devendra Kaushik, Padmalochan Das, Nirmala Joshi, Madhavan K. Palat, Arup Banerji, Zafar Imam, Dasgupta, Giddhadhubli, Anuradha Chenoy, R. R. Sharma and Ajay Patnaik. Most of these scholars did their higher studies abroad and came back to the Indian universities. Many of them were taught in JNU, New Delhi.

2.7 Perspectives on the Soviet Union in Early Independent India

The Soviet Union and its foreign affairs were under the leadership of CPSU General Secretary J. V. Stalin (1922-53), Minister of Foreign Affairs V. M. Molotov (1939-49, 1953-56) and Soviet Foreign Minister A. Y. Vyshinsky (1949-53) India was the least interesting area for the USSR. This was because they had a negative impression of the Indian leadership with its urban origin and the colonial and imperial intellectual

background. Along with this, India expressed her neutrality in world power politics by not joining the power blocks of the USA and USSR (Chereshneva 2021). The first Indian ambassador to Moscow was Jawaharlal Nehru's sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit who took charge of the office on 14 August 1947, hours before the official declaration of Indian independence. Nehru wrote to his sister in 1948 that we need to be friendly with the Soviet Union because, in many ways, that nation is similar to our future development model and we should learn much from them (Hilger 2011). During the two years of her office period, other than the official engagements with V. M. Molotov, there were no meetings provided with Stalin (Chereshneva 2021).

The Soviet Union has expressed solidarity and support with India in the UN General Assembly on the racial discrimination of the Indian minority in South Africa. This was part of the Soviet policy of being along with the anti-imperialist struggle of the people. As a response, Nehru immediately sent a letter to Moscow on 05 February 1948, mentioning the gratitude of the government of India. He expressed that the act of the USSR has been made to strengthen the faith of India in the UN as a community of freedom-loving nations (Chereshneva 2021). In July 1949, Dr S. Radhakrishnan became the second Indian ambassador to the USSR. The Soviet Union started its first trade agreements with India from 1949 to 1951 regarding the supply of tea, wheat, jute, tobacco and other primary products (Chereshneva 2021).

When India and Pakistan became two nations, the Communist Party of India's official relations with the Soviet Union began with a meeting of S. A. Dange and A. A. Zhdanov in Moscow on 6th September 1947. Zhdanov gave suggestions to Dange, especially on forming an Indian communist party. In this discussion, Zhdanov asked Dange to make all possible efforts to stop the killings between Hindus and Muslims and establish friendly relations between them. There should be a comradely relationship between the communist parties of both India and Pakistan. Zhdanov also suggested changing the name of the Indian communist party to the workers and peasant party or the party of labour to gain a mass base. There should not be immediate inception of communism in India. Regarding the issues of caste in Indian society, Zhdanov notes:

It appears to us that without the eradication of the remnants of the caste system, it is impossible to move forward, as the caste system obstructs the working people from recognizing class distinctions and replaces these with the distinctions from an archaic past. We consider that this is the most reactionary vestige and poses the biggest difficulty for the Indian communists. But the Communist Party must make all efforts

to eliminate these vestiges, though we are aware that this cannot be achieved in the near future (Wilson Centre n.d.).

At the same time, the Soviet leadership under Stalin was not interested in India's national bourgeoisie-led government (Rothmund 1969). This contributed to the lack of Indo-Soviet connections in the early post-war years (Brands 1972). The communications of S. A. Dange with the USSR leadership can influence their conclusions on India (Chereshneva 2021). Communist China was the major ally of the Soviet Union in Asia during Joseph Stalin's period. He started a rapprochement with India from 1952 onwards (Stein 1967).

After independence, Pakistan was the first country to negotiate with the Soviet Union for a helping hand. The first Pak Prime Minister, Liaqat Ali Khan, visited Moscow in 1949. But the CPSU never gave much interest to the Pakistani motives (Hilger 2008). For Stalin-led CPSU, the Indian government with national bourgeoisie leadership is a lesser evil than the Pakistan (Hilger 2008). But Stalin did not want to celebrate the freedom of the Asian countries through the orthodox nationalist parties and their bourgeoisie leaders. The Soviet press expressed the nation's official view that this freedom was the outcome of the political compromise by the Indian bourgeoisie and the Indian leadership continued its subordination to the Anglo-American colonialists. The British military officers in both Indian and Pakistani army forces, membership of both the countries in the British Commonwealth and the British business people in both the countries made a feeling for him that the English were merely altering the power in both countries (Brands 1972; Chereshneva 2021).

When the Indian Ambassador S. Radhakrishnan visited Stalin in January 1950, in their discussion, Stalin expressed his support for India's peace-building process. Stalin asked about India's membership in the Commonwealth and mentioned that this will not suit India's legacy. He had also inquired whether the Indian Navy and Army were completely under the control of the state or still the British's role. Radhakrishnan responded that the armed forces are entirely under India. Stalin was very pleasant in the meeting and suggested an early agrarian reform for India to improve the production and the peasantry (Chereshneva 2021; Nayudu 2017). In the last two, to three years of his life, besides the Indian ambassador, Stalin has only met US and British representatives. This shows a goodwill gesture in India and a positive attitude for more future engagements.

Later in April 1950, S. Radhakrishnan met A. Y. Vyshinsky, the Soviet Foreign minister. There they had a broad discussion on Soviet national policies and the Indian stand on various issues. Vyshinsky has asked about the harsh treatment of the Indian Communists by the Congress government. Radhakrishnan responded that they were trying for an armed rebellion in India and asked the USSR to stop them if possible. Vyshinsky replied that the Soviet Union could not advise them even though they were interested in them. The Soviet Union will not intervene in the people's movements in any other country, and the revolution is not for export (Chereshneva 2021). These two important meetings in the Stalin period show a positive change in the attitude of Soviet leadership towards India. As a sensible alternative, India considered the idea of a national question propounded by Stalin. This is reflected in the constitution as an autonomous republic and lower hierarchy of authorities.

On the question of Kashmir, from Stalin's time onwards, the Soviet Union stood in support of the Indian position (Palat et al. 1994). Khrushchev once announced in Srinagar that we are just across the mountains for you (Palat et al. 1994). As per the study of Devendra Kaushik (1974), the Soviet Union had an independent view of the conflict over Kashmir. The USSR wanted to resolve the issue with India and Pakistan without outside interference. This was a different attitude compared to the other Western powers who tried to use the issue for their political benefits (Chereshneva 2021). The Soviet representatives to the UN like A. A. Gromyko and V. Zorin, were used to support the Indian positions in the Assembly during the Stalin period (Kaushik 1974; Chereshneva 2021). As part of their Soviet ideological point of view, the USSR supported the National Conference party and its leader Sheikh Abdullah in Kashmir, a comparatively better political ally of the Soviet Union (Chereshneva 2021).

A thesis was presented at the CPI's Kolkata conference in 1948, demanding a Russian model revolution with the idea that the Indian bourgeoisie took over power in independent India. However, the attempt failed miserably. There were no conceivable reactions on the path of Indian communists from the CPSU (Hilger 2008). In December 1949, the CPSU's foreign affairs department (VPK) chairman V. Grigoryan submitted a report to Molotov on CPI. The report mentioned the party's left sectarian failures and Right reformist deviations. Hilger (2008) quotes from the report that the CPI leaders failed to understand the newly emerged situation in

Independent India, and there was no unity inside the party. The party's lack of ideological clarity paved the way for petty bourgeoisie elements in the leadership.

The depressing situation was initially the by-product of the post-colonial condition. After this crisis, the CPI leadership decided to go and meet Stalin and take his advice in 1951. Stalin directed the delegation that rather than emulating the Russian or Chinese model of revolutions, India needed to build a revolution concerning its national situation (Wilson Centre n.d.; Damodaran 1975; Menon 2009; Namboodiripad 2017). Stalin mentioned that the Soviet Union do not think India was on the threshold of a revolution. The problems of the revolution are depended upon its various stages. All stages cannot be jumped together (Wilson Centre n.d.). He also pointed out that he did not think the Nehru government is a puppet. Instead, it has strong roots among the people (Wilson Centre n.d.). Stalin was not happy with the foreign policy of the Indian government and told the CPI leaders that Nehru's foreign policy was mere manoeuvring and he plays in-between USA and UK (Wilson Centre n.d.). The CPI formed its new party program by incorporating the insights from the discussion with Stalin (Hilger 2008).

When the news of Stalin's death came in March 1953, Jawaharlal Nehru issued a moving note from the core of his heart (Namboodiripad 1991). On 06 March 1953 at the Indian Parliament, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru made a touching obituary speech for Stalin. Few words from his speech are quoted here:

Looking back at these 35 years or so, many figures stand out, but perhaps no single figure has moulded and affected and influenced the history of these years more than Marshal Stalin. He became gradually almost a legendary figure, sometimes a man of mystery, at other times a person who had an intimate bond not with a few but with vast numbers of persons. He proved himself great in peace and war. He showed an indomitable will and courage that few possess, but perhaps when history comes to be written many things will be said about him and I do not know what opinions, what varying opinions, subsequent generations may record, but everyone will agree that there was a man of giant stature, a man such as few who had moulded the destinies of his age, a man – although he succeeded greatly in war – who ultimately would be remembered by the way he built up his great country. Again, people may agree or disagree with many things that he did or said, but the fact remains of his building up that great country, which was a tremendous achievement,.....I do not know what the future will hold, but undoubtedly even though Marshal Stalin has passed away, because of the great hold he had on peoples' minds and even hearts, his influence and memory will continue to exercise peoples' minds and inspire them (Nehru 2004).

Nehru made a special impression on Stalin in his knowledge of Indian culture and linguistics. Nehru mentioned in the last discussion of the Indian Ambassador with

Stalin that “it was interesting how he discussed with our Ambassador some of our cultural problems, showing a certain knowledge which was slightly surprising. He discussed—it may interest the House—the languages of India, their relationships, their parentage and their extent, and our Ambassador gave him such replies as he could on the subject” (Nehru 2007). Later on 04 April 1953 Nehru’s Parliament speech has published as an obituary note on Stalin by the *Labour Monthly*, London.

Since Nikita Khrushchev, a drastic change in the Soviet foreign policy gave India higher priority. This initiative helped the emergence of India as a key power in the region. Ajoy Ghosh, the then General Secretary of the CPI made a statement after coming back from Moscow in 1954 that the foreign policy of the Indian state was addressing the masses, but the internal policy was not (New Age 1954). When the Soviet Union acknowledged the Nehruvian policies as socialist, the CPI felt betrayed and forced to move along with the Soviet stand (Brands 1972). The Indo-Soviet Friendship Agreement in 1955 made it obligatory for the CPI to follow the Indian government and the INC (Overstreet & Windmiller 1959).

In February 1955, India and USSR signed an agreement to build a steel plant in Bhilai with technical and social aid from the Soviet Union. When India adopted a socialist pattern of society and expanded the public sector in 1955, the United States was never ready to support it. They were reluctant to support policies other than privatization and the capitalist planning style. The Planning Commission, Five Year Plans and Planned Economy were the policies which alienated the USA from India (Bhadrakumar 2021). This made India and the USSR closer to cooperation (Brands 1972). The American interest was focused more on the oil-rich West Asia, leading India to become their secondary importance in Asia. Simultaneously Pakistan became a good ally for the US to expand their interest in West Asia. The neutral attitude of the Indian foreign policy has not promised anything for the US interests in the region. For the USSR, the cultural exchanges in India have been successful, and they required alternative partnerships against the capitalist block. This became a soft power mechanism to build goodwill on USSR among the Indian public. But the style of approach by the Western powers was different. The capitalists are never ready to compromise their returns for any service (Brands 1972).

When Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru planned his first visit to the Soviet Union, many were sceptical, which was reflected in the Indian media too. The media focused on the trust factor between India and USSR. With this attitude, the

Times of India reported that the communists accused Nehru a “running dog of imperialism” and Gandhi of a “bourgeoisie canaille” (Stein 1967). This scepticism continued for a long because when Nehru has introducing the Five Year Plans to India it was the Swatandra Party leader and the Member of Parliament, Minoos Masani strongly opposed it in the house in 1957. He had mentioned that this is an evil project and Nehru is leading India towards Soviet model collectivization (Palat 2021; Raju 2021). Later Masani stood in support with Congress’s decision to dissolve the Communist Government in Kerala in 1959 (Raju 2021).

Jawaharlal Nehru’s extensive travel through the Soviet Union and his speeches in the midst of 1955, made the Indian Prime Minister the first non-communist leader to address the Soviet people. On the first visit Nehru to the USSR, there were discussions to construct factories, plants, dams, electric power stations, projects to develop agriculture and to work for peace and cooperation through mutual efforts (Pravda 1955; Brands 1972). Nehru’s first visit to the Soviet Union in 1955 resulted in many cultural events, including the first-ever Indian film festival, Indian art exhibition, and Nehru’s *Discovery of India* in Russian, organized in Moscow. The events were flagged off from the first week of June 1955 onwards, and the Russian translation of Nehru’s *Discovery of India* was sold in large numbers across the country (Stein 1967; Mohanty 2015).

The official newspaper of the Communist Party, *Pravda*, had published an editorial saying that from Afanasy Nikitin, the first Russian traveller reached India from the 15th century to the present; the Indo-Russian relation always remained friendly. The desire of both the peace-loving countries resulted in managing the complex situations in Korea and Indo-China (Pravda 07 June 1955). The scenes of *Shakunthala*, a play by the Indian literary figure Kalidasa in the 5th century, were translated by Karamzin (Eastern Economist 10 June 1955). To re-establish the historic cultural ties, the USSR has reopened the Datsang, a Buddhist cultural centre with archival collections of Indian, Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts.

The 15th-century Russian traveller Afanasy Nikitin who came to India in 1469-72, was celebrated with his monument on the riverbank of Olga in his home town at Kalinin and written - in memory of his friendship visit to India. The *Pravda* came on 1st June 1955 and mentioned that Nikitin’s friendship visit to India occurred before the arrival of greedy colonizers. On Nikitin, an Indo-Soviet co-production film was made with the co-direction of Mahmud Abbas and Vasily Pronin titled *Travel*

over the Three Sea. The film was premiered in Bombay on 07th December 1957. Another important project was commemorating the Russian linguist and adventure Gerasim Lebedev (1749-1818). He had come to India in 1785 and opened a theatre in Calcutta in 1794. The British authorities banned him in 1797, leading him to go back to St. Petersburg and later, he worked with the ministry of foreign affairs in Russia. The Russian painter Nikolay Roerich who came and settled in the Himalayas and painted beautiful Indian landscapes, was commemorated (Dyakanov 2015; Chakrabarti 2019).

The Soviet Union treated Nehru and India in such a spectacular way. After the 1917 October Revolution, Nehru became the first non-communist head of a state to address the people of Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Tashkent, Alma, Ata, Samarkand, Ashkhabad, Sverdlovsk and other cities. There Nehru praised the Soviet Union's social and economic achievements and appreciated Soviet Union's vital part in the world's peaceful co-existence. At the time of departure after completing the tour, Nehru told the media at the Moscow airport, "I am leaving my heart behind." Before his return, Nehru invited Soviet leaders to India as he believed it would strengthen the friendship (Stein 1967).

The visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin (Premier of the USSR) to India in November-December 1955 has made with a warm response by a tremendous crowd in India. The delegation came through Afghanistan and Burma, which included prominent personalities like Rasolov, the minister for agriculture, and Mikhailov, the minister for culture, Kумыkin, the minister for foreign trade, and Gromyko the minister for foreign affairs and Serov the chief administrator. From the Central Asian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Uzbekistan minister for culture Madame Rahimaivena also joined the delegation. They visited New Delhi, Jaipur, Punjab, Srinagar, Calcutta, Poona, Bombay, Bangalore, Madras and Coimbatore. The Indian masses celebrated the visit of their nation's greatest allies. A spontaneous gathering of the citizens at the Ram Lila ground, New Delhi, witnessed more than five hundred thousand people (Dyakanov 2015; Stein 1967).

Similarly, millions gathered in Calcutta and other cities to see the Soviet leaders. The Communist Party of India actively mobilized the people and published several articles in its weekly *New Age*. Another notable Indian publication that promoted the visit was *Blitz*. Many speeches from the welcoming ceremony ended in the Indian way expressing friendship "Hindi-Russi Bhai-Bhai" means Indians and

Russians are brothers (Menon 1963). Both Khrushchev and Bulganin praised Mahatma Gandhi for his ideas, leadership and guidance in the Indian freedom struggle in their speech in the Indian parliament. Khrushchev announced the Soviet Union had made the Russian translations of Gandhi's works (Ray 1969). This was different from the earlier Soviet critical stand on Gandhi.

The Soviet leadership has directed their Eastern European partners to participate and help in the process of building the Indian nation. East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Romania were willing to participate in the projects. The first among these was announced on 12th November 1955, the processing and refining the oil products in India with the help of the Soviet Union and Rumania because India had to spend hugely to import petroleum products (Stein 1967). The imports and exports from these countries shared equal statistics in this period. Exports increased from .7 \$ in 1953 to 26.2 \$ in 1956 similarly imports from 1953 to 1956 were .9 \$ to 31.3 \$. The Soviet Union started offering scholarships to students from ECAFE³ countries (Dyakonov 2015; Stein 1967).

With Nehru's request, Khrushchev sends the Soviet experts to India to find new oil fields. They find the oil deficits in Assam fields. With their help, India made the ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation), engineering industries and steel mills like HCC (Hindustan Construction Company) and HCL (Hindustan Computers Limited) etc. Bhadrakumar (2021) mentions that now nobody from the ruling class of India remembers this history. Irrespective of being a Non-allied country, India became close to the USSR and received Soviet aid, including funds and technical help for industrial and infrastructural projects.

The leaders of the post-colonial era and one of their major international coalitions, the Non-Allied Movement (NAM), was influenced and closed with the Soviet Union. The leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, was influenced by Marxism (Chenoy 2021). Though the communists did not become a significant force in NAM countries, all of its leadership Nehru of India, Tito of Yugoslavia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Sukarno of Indonesia, had communist influence in their grouping (Chenoy 2021). Early independent India purchased the Soviet arms at prices of rupees, state trading in soft rupees and rubbles, including oil, newsprints and non-

³Economic Survey of Asia and Far East, 1951. This includes the countries of Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Federation of Malaya, Nepal, North Borneo, Pakistan, Philippines, Sarawak, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

ferrous materials (Rudolph and Rudolph 1991). For the USSR, member countries of the Non-Alignment Movement are hopeful allies as per their policies of Peaceful Co-Existence and Anti-Imperialist Struggle (Bhadrakumar 2021).

India used to export swatters made from Ludhiana as returns for the Soviet assistance. The USSR agreed on whatever price India was charging on these items. It was a trade balance for India in the crisis period (Bhadrakumar 2021). The five-year plans of India are designed to create a self-reliant economy drawn from the USSR. The second five-year plan of India from 1955 focused on industrialization and infrastructure development was heavily contributed by the socialist planners from the Eastern Europe M. I. Rubinshtein of the USSR and Oscar Lange of Poland in the Indian planning commission (Chenoy 2021).

Khrushchev and Bulganin also addressed the Indian issues on Goa and Kashmir with a pro-attitude. According to Bulganin, “there is no justification for the Portuguese colony of Goa exists still on the ancient soil of India, and it is a shame on civilized people” (Brands 1972). As a continuation of the debate, Khrushchev criticized the Portuguese in Goa and said the Portuguese forcefully occupied Goa and colonized the people. Khrushchev also opposed any outside powers’ interference in the Kashmir issue and said it is an internal issue of India and Pakistan and they should tackle it (Hindu 11 Dec 1955; Brands 1972). After the Indian visit, Khrushchev declared in Moscow that the people of India, Afghanistan and Burma are our allies in the struggle for a better peaceful world. The western world was certainly not happy with India’s warm relationship with the Soviet Union.

During this visit, Khrushchev gave unconditional support to India over the Kashmir and Goa disputes (Brands 1972). Goa, an Indian territory colonized by the Portuguese, was occupied by the Indian state in 1961. The Soviet Union extended strong support to it. Portugal considered Goa as their integral part, and the former is a NATO member. The USA publically criticized India’s action and tried to pass a resolution in the UN Security Council by accusing the violation of international law by India. But this was vetoed by the Soviet Union. The mouthpiece of CPSU, the *Pravda*, has published articles in support of India titled “Clean Asia from Colonizers”, “Get the Portuguese Colonizers out of India”, “Imperialists Debunked”, and “Happiness of Gained Freedom” etc. (Dyakanov 2015: 27).

On the other side, when Khrushchev and Bulganin came to India, the first Andhra state election was about to conduct in 1955. They praised the policies of the

Nehru government in their speeches. The newspapers covered this with wide publicity. The Congress Party had translated these speeches of the Soviet leaders and spread them widely. The supporters of the CPI got confused with this campaign. This helped Congress win the first Andhra state assembly election (Namboodiripad 1992). The Nehru and Khrushchev relationship put the Communist Party of India in a dilemma. On the one side, they have to strongly oppose the domestic rule led by the congress and contrary to that; there is no other way around to oppose the Nehruvian foreign policy. The Soviet Union did not see the CPI would emerge as a ruling party in India. So the USSR did not want to make a parallel track to destroy her relationship with Congress in India (Bhadrakumar 2021). However, the CPI had no second option on the character of the Congress that they are representing the interests of the national bourgeoisie.

On the ground level, the Communists had to fight against Congress ideologically and electorally and enlarge its mass base other than Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. They strongly opposed the Congress party among the Indian masses and its compromising stands towards feudalism and caste oppression to take up this fight. The editor of the CPI weekly *New Age* and Politbureau, member of the party P. Ramamurti wrote an article that Nehru's policies were important as an opponent of American imperialism (Ramamurti 1954). This created opposition and differences of opinion in the party, but soon General Secretary Ajoy Ghosh repeated his comment that "there are progressive aspects in Nehru's foreign policy, but he is reactionary when it comes to domestic policies" (Ghosh 1955; Windmiller 1956).

2.8 International Communist Movement, Ideological Conflicts and Splits

Khrushchev's report against Stalin in the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956 became a heated issue inside the CPI. The secret report containing the confessions on the Personality Cult of Stalin was presented by Khrushchev and sowed the seeds of a complex fight inside the Communist Parties globally (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2009). The new approach of the Soviet Union towards the West, named Peaceful Co-Existence, and the emergence of the Cold War between the USSR and the USA have created confusion and challenges for the Communist Parties worldwide. More than this, in India, the Soviet Union's new decision on close cooperation with the Indian National Congress and the friendly relationship between Khrushchev and Nehru created many uncertainties for the CPI (Damodaran 1975).

Nehru welcomed the 20th Party Congress resolution of the CPSU on the personality cult of Stalin and indirectly criticized the CPI in the Indian parliament regarding their role in the protests related to the recent state reorganization act (Loksabha Debate 23 Feb 1956). Nehru made his point that the trend of liberalization started inside the USSR. As a peace-loving country, India needs to welcome the policy of peaceful co-existence by the USSR (Loksabha Debates 20 Mar 1956). But the CPI had a different take on this. The 4th Congress of the CPI held in Palakkad, Kerala, has welcomed the corrections done by the 20th CPSU Congress 1956. Then the elected Central Committee deeply analyzed the criticisms against Stalin and passed a resolution against CPSU regarding this act. The rest of the CPSU resolutions were agreed upon by the CPI Central Committee (Namboodiripad 1992).

The late 1950s witnessed many important incidents in the international communist movement, which had serious global impacts. The issues regarding the Soviet interventions started with the 1956 October uprising in the People's Republic of Hungary. This impacted a lot of heated debates, criticisms and problems in the socialist world. An important example is the resignation of E. P. Thomson, a well-known working-class intellectual from the British Communist Party (Sarkar 1993). Similarly, the CPI leader C. Achutha Menon had complete dissatisfaction regarding this incident and went away from the party. This time K. Damodaran, a National Council member of CPI went and convinced C. Achutha Menon and made his return to the party (Pillai 2011; Elayidom 2019). India never took an open position on the Hungarian intervention of the USSR. Nehru's unwillingness to condemn the USSR resulted in a much stronger Indo-Soviet tie (Nayudu 2017). This issue became heated up in the Indian Parliament and socialist leaders like Ashok Mehta, J. B. Kripalani and H. V. Kamath accused Nehru of his double standard (Kripalani 1959). The western powers and media were highly critical of Nehru's soft approach toward the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution (Reid 1981). The Indian government was under pressure to make a decision.

Nevertheless, by abstaining from voting in the UN Assembly, India and the non-allayed countries initially backed the Soviet Union (Brands 1972). India did not vote for the USA-sponsored resolution against the USSR in the United Nations on 4th November 1956. This made the Western media highly critical of the Indian position on the Hungarian issue. Along with India, 15 Non-Aligned nations abstained from voting (Mansing 1965). On the execution of Imre Nagy, Nehru expressed his deepest

distress on 3 July 1956 in a press conference, and the Indian ambassador to the Soviet Union, K.P.S Menon expressed it as an act of savage revenge (Mansing 1965). Irrespective of the abstention in the UN Assembly, the Indian government took a position to withdraw the outside military troops from Hungary and favoured the entry of the UN Secretary-General into Hungary (Mansing 1965). This was India's principled position, but at the same time, India was never ready to lose her friendly relationship with the USSR. The period witnessed the Nehru – Khrushchev relationship becoming stronger than the CPSU – CPI relationship. On the other side, the Sino-Soviet ideological conflict in 1959 created a deep theoretical crisis in the Indian Communist Movement.

The Soviet Union wanted the Indian communists to be with the Indian National Congress, but initially, the Communist Party of India was rooted in a strong anti-Congress stand, particularly against its national bourgeoisie character. One section among the communists was fine with the Congress alliance as they saw it as the pro-Soviets, while another was rebellious. When Khrushchev visited India in 1960, he never discussed the dissolving of the communist ministry in Kerala by the Congress-led central government in 1959 (Stein 1967; Namboodiripad 1992). In the initial period, the anti-Congress section was sympathetic toward the Chinese model of the Indian revolution. The Indo-China conflict did not have any direct role in this party split, but it was often reflected as ideological blocks that were either close to the Soviet line or the Chinese line. The border hostilities between India and China in the late 1950s spilt oil into this conflict. The Indo-China war in October 1962 put the issue at its peak.

The Soviet Union tried to negotiate when the Chinese attack occurred on India regarding asylum to the Dalai Lama and the border conflicts. The USSR was under pressure because, on the one side, there is a member of the communist bloc, and on the other side, a close friend. The CPI and the Left intellectuals from India strongly condemned the act of China. The Chinese were termed Communist aggressors by the Indian government. Indeed the USA tried to gain out of it and offered help to India. All these developments pressured the Soviet Union to criticize China in 1963 publicly. The USSR supported a non-communist nation against a communist country (Dyakanov 2015). Khrushchev was reluctant toward the Chinese allegations against India. This paved the way for a new dimension in Sino-Soviet relations. An article published by the CCP mouthpiece *Peking Review* took an open stand against the

USSR, titled “The Truth about how the Leaders of CPSU have allied themselves with India against China” (Peking Review 8 Nov 1963).

The Indo-China war and the Chinese criticism of the USSR challenged the Soviet ideological position of peaceful co-existence. Nehru was happy about the position of the USSR and made a speech in the upper house that the Soviet Union was the real peace-loving people in the world, but China was just the opposite (Rajyasabha Debates 27 Nov 1959). Nehru was an open critic of the “Hundred Flowers” campaign, and coercive measures were taken to eradicate the enemies of the Chinese Communist Party. Nehru used this opportunity to corner the CPI. The government imprisoned many communist leaders under preventive detention and branded them as Chinese spies.

A nationalist fervour also came inside the Communist Party during the period of the war (Hunter 1972). The communist right, aka nationalists, was strong in the National Council and the leadership of the State Councils. The debate was on the party program and adopting Marxism – Leninism to Indian concrete conditions. The right-wingers agreed with the Khrushchev doctrine of Peaceful Coexistence, Peaceful Transition, Peaceful Competition, National Democracy and Non-Capitalist Growth (Gupta 1981). The Left-wing section was strongly against this position and argued for the revolutionary struggle for social transformation. For them, the line of class collaboration and the coalition government with INC for a peaceful transition was never acceptable. The Left disagreed with the Chinese School concerning the violent overthrow of the established order but rejected any alliance with Congress (Klatt 1972). Heated debates and racial abuses against China took place inside the National Council of the party (Damodaran 1975).

A section of communist leaders took a position that capitalism has not advanced in India, and there is a possibility of alliances with the other liberal-bourgeoisie political forces. To build a non-capitalistic way of development, there was no need to stick to a proletarian leadership. Through this understanding, they put forward the idea of National Democracy and explained it as a transitional stage in which the bourgeoisie and the working class will share power. But for the leftists, capitalism has advanced in India, and the bourgeoisie has controlled the government with the help of feudal landlords. The proletariats needed to overthrow the system. With this understanding, the left put forward the idea of People’s Democracy under the leadership of the working class.

EMS Namboodiripad, the then general secretary of CPI and the editor of the official organ *New Age* was the principal theoretician against the right-wingers in the National Council. Namboodiripad frequently intervened and prevented the party from taking neither a pro-Chinese nor a pro-Soviet position (Hunter 1972). EMS did not reject any strategy, whether it is violent or nonviolent but pointed out that it depends on the nature of the situation, people's sentiments and their cohesion and unity (Hardgrave 1970). He identified himself as a centrist in the debates who tried to make a separate revolutionary program for the CPI other than the Chinese or Soviet model. His positions, especially the efforts for the coalition governments in the states, were attacked by the far-leftists. The Sino-Soviet dispute and the Chinese attack on India were important aspects of the internal divide in CPI, but the domestic issues in the country were responsible for the final split (Klatt 1972; Damodaran 1975).

The split happened inside the CPI on 11 April 1964, and 32 members out of 65 from the National Council of the party came out and later formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in July 1964 at Tenali, Andhra Pradesh (Wood 1965; Namboodiripad 2009; Achutanandan 2014). Most communist leaders remained in the old pro-Moscow party (Wood 1965; Stern 1965; Murali 2015). The more radical elements in the communist strongholds of West Bengal, Andhra, Kerala and Tripura became the bastion of CPI(M) which was interested in a more independent mode of communism that was soon termed revisionist by China (Rothermund 1969; Jeffrey 1978; Namboodiripad 2009; Murali 2015).

The USSR did not readily recognize the CPI(M); for them, the CPI was the only official Communist Party in India. The CPI(M) did oppose the CCP's worldview in the 1960s and 70s. They criticized the CCP for their extreme hatred against the Soviet Union and their move to make friends with the imperialist USA. The CPI(M)'s staunch criticism against CCP came in 1979 when China attacked Vietnam and announced solidarity and sympathy for Vietnam. The CPI(M) was sympathetic to Mao's interpretation of the third world realities but strongly opposed the Chinese support to the reactionary regimes in the developing world like Pakistan and the military regime of Chile (CPI(M) 1978). The Marxists criticized Moscow and Beijing for their interventions in the developing world only for self-interest rather than for supporting the revolutionary movements. Gupta (1981: 35) highlights the CPI(M) statement in *The Statesman*, 14 March 1974:

Our party has, again and again, declared that the leaders of both the Soviet Union and China in their efforts to improve relations with American and other imperialist powers and in pursuance of the short-term needs of their foreign policies are resorting to steps that are causing damage to the national liberation and world liberation cause.

Gupta (1981: 36) quotes a statement from *The Statesman* daily on 18 May 1979 by EMS Namboodiripad on the policies of CPI and CPSU that both of them are trying to make Indira Gandhi come back to power and Moscow is always reluctant to criticize the great mistakes by Indira Gandhi when she was in power. The CPI(M) had taken a position against the Soviet arms aid to Pakistan in 1968 (CPI(M) 1998). The Indo-Pak war in 1965 and a simultaneous threat of an attack by China were controlled by the USSR. They arranged a mutual discussion in Tashkent with the Pak president Ayub and Indian Prime Minister Shastri for negotiations which were moderated by the then USSR Prime Minister Alexi Kosygin. It was successful, and the West was never happy about it (Brands 1972).

The CPI(M) made a new program and constitution, but the party's structure was closer to the Soviet Union than the CPI. The CPI(M) was confronted with the odd alliance between Pakistan and China and hastened to congratulate the Soviet Union on the Tashkent achievement even more emphatically than the CPI (CPIM CC Resolution 1966). According to Gupta (1981), the CPI(M) was wrongly labelled as pro-Chinese because the party rejected the Soviet directions. The position of the CPI(M) leadership was to maintain an equal distance with CCP and CPSU and to work for an independent political line (Gupta 1981). However, the split resulted in a total loss of 33 per cent of the party's membership in 1965 to 1968, but in Kerala, it is only 05 per cent (Fic 1970).

When the Prague Spring of 1968 took place, India tried to ignore the issue and did not publically respond to it. Initially, Indira Gandhi made a statement in the Loksabha (Lower House) that "the right of nations to live peacefully and without outside interference should not be denied in the name of religion or ideology" (Government of India 1968). The capitalist world welcomed this statement of Mrs Gandhi. But in the United Nations Security Council, India maintained a different position, avoided condemning the Soviet Union and abstained from voting (Ganguli 2009). This position of the Indira government was rather strategic than ideological. The press noted that even the socialist block leaders like Tito and Ceausescu

maintained a much better distance from the USSR on the Czechoslovakian issue (Nayudu 2017).

Mrs Gandhi and the Congress leadership stopped other members from putting any resolution against USSR in the Indian Parliament. It resulted in the resignation of a prominent socialist leader Ashok Mehta from the house. The CPI(M) took the view that the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia was an aggression (Nayudu 2017; Pillai 2011). The organized left parties took different positions in the house. The CPI supported the Indian position in the UN. But the CPI leaders like C. Achutha Menon had voted in the CPI National Council against the resolution supporting the Czechoslovakian interference by the Soviet Union (Ramankutty 2021). The CPI(M) opposed the Soviet Union but considering the global socialist solidarity; they did not come up with an open statement against the USSR (Nayudu 2017; Pillai 2011). The CPI(ML) used this opportunity to denounce the Soviet Union as a “degenerated social-imperialist state” and fully supported the Prague Spring (Nayudu 2017). But the organized communist parties in India did not take any position openly against the USSR or Warsaw Pact. CPI firmly stood with the Soviet Union. But the prominent national leaders of the CPI, like K. Damodaran, took an open position against Moscow’s intervention in Prague and became inactive from the party until the end of his life in 1976 (Pillai 2011). The ideological issues inside the communist movement in India have developed parallel to the Indo-Soviet relation. Here Indira Gandhi also tried to use her father’s tactic of “offsetting internal communism with international communism” (Kaviraj 1979).

The electoral victories of CPI(M) in 1967 turned into the formation of a new communist establishment CPI(ML), in 1968 against the parliamentary form of democracy (Ruthermund 1969). In the spring of 1967, the Soviet Union urged the two communist parties to lead a united front and registered their strong disagreements related to the CPI’s involvement in the dismissal of the CPI(M) lead government in West Bengal. The view was expressed in Pravda on 05 May 1967 (Brands 1972). The far left section among the then CPI(M) registered their strong disagreement on coalition politics. The newly formed CPI (Marxist-Leninist) faction termed the tactical line of CPI(M) as ‘neo revisionist.’ They supported the Maoist line and Cultural Revolution. The CPI(ML) took a position in 1969 that the Soviet Union was a social-imperialist state who are more dangerous than the USA.

Initially, the USSR is trying for capitalist restoration (Venu 2019). The CPI(ML) repeated the Chinese criticism against the USSR that it was a ‘running dog of imperialism’ and urged to throw away the orthodox Marxism of the Soviet Union (Ganesh 2021). The CPI(ML) criticized the CPI(M)’s agreement with the electoral politics and its electoral victories in Kerala and West Bengal in 1967. The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) wanted to create an armed revolution and capture power. This is not possible with CPI(M)’s parliamentary position. The Chinese Communist Party supported the CPI(ML)’s ideological position (Venu 2019). The repercussions in the international communist movement are also reflected in the second split in the Indian Communist movement. The CPI (Marxist-Leninist) compared the world powers that the USA is capitalist-imperialist and USSR is socialist imperialist. Later the CPI(ML) faced many inner conflicts and split into hundreds of different parties (Ram 2014). After most of the Left lenient political parties in India, including CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML), RSP, and SUCI etc., developed their version of the interpretations of Soviet history.

2.9 Development of Indo-Soviet Relations in the Post Nehru Era

Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri visited the USSR in 1965. In his discussions with the Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin, he had extended the Indian support for Vietnam, Congo and Dominican Republic against US imperialism. Shastri urged the nonaligned nations to take a firm stand against the aggression in these countries. In 1965 USSR promised 4.84 billion rupees of aid to India, equal to 1.071 dollars. These projects were successfully carried out with the Five Year Plans and built large public sector projects, including Bhilai steel mill, Ranchi plants, a large mechanized farm in Rajasthan, oil exploration in Bombay and Punjab and an oil refinery in Barauni, Bihar (Stein 1967). Indian government repaid these loans in their currency or goods by maintaining a proper schedule (Stein 1967). The Soviet Union also trained the Indian engineers, technicians, operators, etc., to start the big plant in Bhilai. Thousands of Indians learned comprehensive professional training in the factories of the USSR (Hilger 2011). The capitalist nations always wanted huge returns for whatever helps was given them to the developing countries. But the Soviet Union helped India without any profit motives (Bhadrakumar 2021). India was constantly in need of a strong ally to build the nation after the independence and tackle the threat from Pakistan.

When the next Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, visited the Soviet Union in 1966, she strongly supported the Soviet Union's position that America should withdraw its military troops from Vietnam immediately (Stein 1967). During this visit, she received a well-organized and warmest reception from the USSR. During this period, the Bokaro Steel Mill, the biggest steel producing unit of the government of India, was constructed with the help of the USSR. The USA was not ready for such helps to India and was initially against all such public constructions. With all these close connections and help, the Indian criticism was mild of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968. India does not want to oppose USSR on any issues (Brands 1972). In the 1971 war with Pakistan, India received Soviet support and arms. The USSR fully supported the Indo-Pak war and the creation of Bangladesh. The Soviet vetoes protected India from the critical resolutions that came in UNO. This international backup has contributed significantly to expelling the Pakistani forces from East Bengal (Bangladesh) (Brands 1972).

The 1971 election victory of Indira Gandhi was wholeheartedly welcomed by the Soviet Union (Brands 1972). Indira Gandhi added the words 'Socialism' and 'Secularism' to the Indian Constitution in 1976 when her close relationship with the USSR was at its peak. She made a much stronger relationship with the USSR during her tenure, especially in the Brezhnev period. With this relation, the USSR supported the Internal Emergency, and they sincerely wanted to maintain their strongest ally in South Asia (Ramankutty 2021). This forced the CPI to support Indira Gandhi's totalitarian rule during the time of the Internal Emergency, along with the prohibition of the opposition parties and the media on state affairs. The period witnessed a coalition government led by the CPI and Congress in Kerala. The CPI-headed state government in Kerala has lasted seven years. The emergency act has granted the extension of two years. The CPI(M) has vehemently opposed the Internal Emergency Act, and as a result, the party cadres were brutally hunted by the state.

Similarly, the CPI(M) maintained a critical view of the USSR when they used to support the Indian ruling class (Namboodiripad 1991) officially. Because of the anti-democratic rule in the emergency period, the North Indian states strongly stood against the Indira regime. They supported the agitations of the Janata Party led by Jayaprakash Narayan. Indira Gandhi was defeated in the next parliament election, but the Kerala election results were entirely different. The CPI-led front got a sweeping

victory in Kerala, and the JP movement was never strong in the state. Initially, these developments gave a popular name to CPI as the 'Rightist Communist Party.' When it comes to the North Indian states, the vote base of the CPI got vanished, creating a heated fight inside the party. Later, the Bhatinda Congress of the CPI 1978 concluded that the party's decision to support the Indira Gandhi regime was completely wrong (CPI 1978). With this, the CPI backed out from its alliance with Congress in Kerala. Congress has gained mainly out of the support extended by the CPI, but eventually, the CPI became a historic loser. Besides the election defeat, the CPI(M) has maintained its mass base. The Bhatinda Congress of CPI in 1978 leads to the expulsion of S. A. Dange, the former General Secretary of the CPI and a staunch advocate of the CPI – Congress alliance. He formed a new party named All India Communist Party, loyal to both Indira Gandhi and USSR but unable to gain any mass support (Gupta 1981).

Ultimately, the USSR became the key actor in making CPI as 'Right-wing Communist Party.' The Indian National Congress has always used the pro-Congress editorials of *Pravda* for their socialist recognition. This was an embarrassment for the Indian communists. But the CPI leadership has continued to maintain a pro-Congress position. Former diplomat and writer M. K. Bhadrakumar remember the words of his father and CPI leader M. K. Kumaran that without allying with the Congress Party, the future of the CPI would be in trouble (Bhadrakumar 2021).

India maintained a pro-USSR stand when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan on 24 December 1979. The USA had announced their opposition to this act. In India, Indira Gandhi has spoken against the move of the USSR in her on going election campaign (Washington Post 12 January 1980). The later Indian Prime Minister and nearly five years ambassador to the USSR (1976-80), Inder Kumar Gujral (2006), recalls his memories of this event. According to him, Indira Gandhi was never soft on this issue. Whenever it came to the UN Security Council, India never took the Soviet nor US side and abstained as always. Indira never appreciated the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in any forum but was not in a position to publicly disapprove of the Soviet Union. The act of abstention initially gave support to the Soviet position.

For India, Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan and the military alliance of the USA has faced serious security challenges. More than this, the Soviet support to India on the Indo-China border hostilities and the then Indo-Soviet arms trading

agreements had influenced the Indian position. This period has witnessed a warm and close relationship with the USSR by the Indian Prime Ministers including Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai and Charan Singh etc. (Gujral 2006). The CPI was in full support of the Afghan intervention of the USSR and pushed New Delhi to take a more pro-Soviet position. The 12th Party Congress of the CPI has witnessed the presence of Eduard Shevardnadze the Politburo member of the CPSU. He had urged the CPI to support Mrs Gandhi's foreign policy and her realistic approach to the Afghan issue (Horan 1983).

The CPI(M) took a position in support of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in February 1980 (Gupta 1981). A statement was issued by the Politbureau of the CPI(M) on 1st January 1980 in support of Afghanistan's April Revolution (1979) led by the People's Democratic Party (pro-Soviet) against the tyrannical Daoud regime. India was one of the first countries to support and welcome Afghanistan's new government, backed by the USSR. The new government implemented several changes, including the land reform policies, abolishment of feudal landlordism and the land was given to the cultivators etc. The opposition groups have waged a counter-attack with the help of the USA and Pakistan. According to CPI(M) (1998), to protect the April Revolution and retaliate against the reactionaries, the then Afghan government has asked for political, economic and moral aid and military support from the USSR. That's why the Soviet intervention is necessary over there.

The CPI(M) (1998) has criticized the Indian government and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for not properly supporting the Soviet Union. Indeed Indira has taken a position against the Iranian Revolution and the peoples' struggle against US imperialism. Indira Gandhi opposed Shah's trial, who committed monstrous crimes against the people. These policies show that the Indian government is more accurately moving toward the CIA and US imperialism (CPI(M) 1998). The CPI(M) statement on 11 February 1989 strongly condemns Pakistan's suggestion for a confederation of Pakistan and Afghanistan. It criticizes Pakistan as the prime agent of US imperialism. The CPI(M) has supported the Najibullah government and Soviet efforts to maintain peaceful national conciliation. It also says there is a complete violation of the Geneva Accord of the UN by the imperialist forces led by the USA. The accord can only be implemented with the troops' unilateral withdrawal (CPI(M) 1989).

2.10 The Soviet Disintegration and its Implications for India

When the USA and its allies celebrated the collapse of the USSR, the Indian situation was different. The Indian response was very emotional, like a dear friend had passed away (Rudolph and Rudolph 1991). Indian foreign affairs have never expected the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was a big surprise for the Narasimha Rao government (Bhadrakumar 2021). According to Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph (1991), it's like India lost her best friend who had deeply influenced the nation-building of the country economically as well as ideologically. India felt orphaned. The unexpected demise of the Soviet Union had badly struck India in many ways. The dominant section of the Non-Allied Movement (NAM) has considered the Soviet Union as their natural ally. The demise of the Soviet Union and the Socialist Block has not only the loss of trading partners but also a great friendly superpower (Kohli 1993).

The neo-liberals in India, including the then Finance Minister and the later Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, demanded that without any reservations, India should move towards a capitalist path and open the markets for the West (Kohli 1993). The statement of then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao came in September 1991 that there should be a larger change in the cultural and economic part of the foreign policy. The preparation for a reorientation is necessary with the Ministry of External Affairs. The experts are training to make up the new changes with the equations of the international economic situation (Kohli 1993).

The devaluation of the Indian rupee and the fall of the Russian ruble finally led to the giving up of the rupee-ruble trade between India and Russia. But the Indian export items severally lost their market due to the loss of the Soviet Union. The period between 1991 and 1992 has marked the loss of 200 crores rupees alone with the hosiery goods export (*Times of India* 28/8/1992). India's defence and military areas have too adversely affected the Soviet collapse. In the period between 1986 to 1990 in India, 73 per cent of the total value of arms was imported from the Soviet Union, including submarines, Mig fighter aircraft, battle tanks, etc. (Choudhory 1991).

EMS Namboodiripad, one of the prominent Left intellectuals and the former General Secretary of both the undivided CPI and later CPI(M) has analyzed the Soviet collapse:

The present crisis of Soviet society and world communism had its origins in the distortions of the Stalin period but they were compounded by the unhistorical assessment of Stalin by the leaders of the USSR from Khrushchev to Gorbachev” and he had also mentioned “Gorbachev went to the root of communist politics - class struggle which he denied. Evolving his theory of ‘human values which should have priority over class struggle’, he started negating the existence of imperialism which is militarizing its economy and driving towards destructive wars, exploiting and suppressing colonial countries, etc. (Namboodiripad 1991).

Prakash Karat (2017) has analysed the collapse of the CPSU in a dual format. Firstly the merging of the government and party has made the Communist Party part of the establishment. Through this, the party lost the capacity to organize and work as a political force as well as the vanguard of the working class. The consolidation and growth of bureaucratism and the privileges of party rank gifted the inability to correct mistakes. The negative agents of social change in the society, including the ethnic and nationality problems, have also contributed their part. This caused a substantial degree of alienation of the people from the party. The beginning of the Gorbachevian reforms promised the attempts to correct these mistakes and revitalise socialism. But ultimately, all the promises were betrayed.

Secondly, the ratification process from the party to strengthen socialism on Marxist-Leninist lines turned its opposite. The CPSU itself became the agency of the bourgeoisie’s liberal reforms. This was propounded by the technocrats, managerial personnel and intellectuals within the party rank aimed the benefits of a liberal capitalist regime by breaking away from socialism. The party bureaucratic elites were already privileged but ambitiously targeted the standard of living by the elites of the western capitalist world. We can see these leading reformers inside the ranks of the CPSU as A. Sobchak, GavarilPopiov and Yeltsin, the then Mayors of Leningrad and Moscow. These developments prove that without Marxism-Leninism, a Communist Party cannot follow a revolutionary theory; without democratic centralism, the Communist Party cannot remain a revolutionary organization (Karat 2017).

In a country like India, the Left and progressive political movements learned a lot and explored different dimensions. The opinions were raced against the *Perestroika*, *Glasnost* and the sudden opening of a closed economy with a capitalist outlook by the Indian socialists and communists. Many expected a change in the system when they saw the fall of the socialist governments in Central and Eastern Europe (Parameswaran 2019). The Soviet collapse and further developments led the Indian communist movement to learn many lessons, gave ideological clarity and

showed the way forward (Baby 2020). The communist parties in India started encouraging internal elections and tried to bring a more democratic outlook to the party structure (Rajeev 2021; Nair 2021). The collapse of the USSR made the Communist Parties rethink the nature of the government. This made the CPI(M) organize a World Communist Conference in Calcutta. This move included an analysis of Socialism and Contemporary World Situations as part of the party program (Baby 2020; Rajeev 2021). The program of the Communist Party was restructured; the secretaryship was limited to three terms and the formation of the Control Commission, etc., avoiding the possibility of centralization (Rajeev 2021). These discussions and changes in the organizational structure strengthened the CPI(M) more, and nationally the membership of the party got increased (Rajeev 2021). Anyhow, this stage is an unforgettable era in world history that provided a lot of lessons for humanity. The demise of the Soviet Union has become a great loss for India.

While remembering the Soviet Union as a close friend who has always stood with India in difficult times is considered a great loss for the nation. This demise has created an unbridgeable gap for India in terms of international support and the nation's development. But the political lessons of the collapse of the first working-class state gave new thoughts and retrospective analysis to the Communist Parties. The progressive political movements have been able to learn from the Soviet collapse and focussed on countering neoliberal capitalism with these experiences and ideological clarity.

Chapter 3

The Influence of Soviet Intelligentsia and October Revolution in Kerala: Socialist Ideas, Social Reform Movements and National Freedom Struggle

This chapter focuses on Revolutionary Russia's ideological influence in Kerala since the beginning of the 20th century. The social reform movements of the state have shaped modern political movements. The influence of the Soviet Union has a great role in these developments. The working class movement is a subsequent development after the social reform movement. Later the Communist Party has organised, and a democratic path to socialism is developed. This Communist trajectory has its speciality than the other parts of the world. The chapter analyses this development in detail.

3.1 The Social Reform Movements and the Emergence of Political Left in Kerala

It has to be noted that since the beginning of the 20th century, the political developments in Russia had greatly influenced the public sphere of Kerala, and a socialist intelligentsia became active. The late 19th century and the early 20th century marked a culmination of two movements in India; the anti-imperialist struggle against the British and the movements against caste discrimination (Namboodiripad 2009; Menon 1994; Balaram 2010; Mannathukaren 2010). This period also witnessed a strong opposition against the emerging idea of socialism, working-class movements, and the struggles for democracy. To quote an incident from 1899, the colonial British commission had set up a committee to enquire about the disparity in the wage of tenants. One of the committee members who belonged to the feudal class objected to the timely wage allowance to the workers as it was a theory propagated by Karl Marx (Balaram 2010: 155).

Similarly, the tenant policy reform bill presented by the Dewan Mannathu Krishnan Nair had received a comment from the feudal lord Prabhakara Thamban that “this is an attempt to implement the Bolshevik doctrine.” The Travancore Disaster Enquiry Committee reported that the Russian Revolution was one of the reasons behind the economic crisis in Kerala and the world (Balaram 2010: 155). But generally, the feudal class in Kerala did not understand much about the ideology of Communism except for a few, including Leslie Aaron, a coir mill owner of Alappuzha (Ganesh 2021). The colonial force had keenly observed the spread of

revolutionary ideas. They started the witch-hunting of the emerging communist activists in 1917 (Ganesh 2021).

The early 20th century witnessed a thoughtful and revolutionary resistance against the feudal regimes and caste oppression (Bijukumar 2019). In the second phase of the social reform movement (early 20th century), from 1905 onwards, many leaders started propagating revolutionary ideas from Russia. The majority of the intellectuals and thinkers of Kerala society took a positive note on the Russian Revolution. Some people were attracted to the equality established in Russian society, some to the fight against imperialism, and some to Marxism (Namboodiripad 2017; Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011). It was propagated as the dawn of Sudras (lower caste workers) (Govindan 1938).

Rationalist E. Madhavan perceived the Russian Revolution as the great victory of the anti-religious movement (Madhavan 2015). The people at the forefront of social reform movements and anti-colonial struggles searched for alternative models other than the Brahmanical and colonial models. According to Dilip Menon (1998), the emergence of Marxist thought in Kerala results from growing self-consciousness and pursuit an ideal model like that of the Soviet Union. The native translations of the communist ideal of equality challenged the caste-ridden unequal society in Kerala.

Ultimately Kerala perceived the Russian Revolution as an idea of social justice (Rajendran 2011). The Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union were rays of hope for the working class (Damodaran 1984). The news of the October Revolution was published immediately in Malayalam, one of the first Indian languages that curiously covered the news of revolutionary Russia (Kerala Sahithya Academy 2011; Menon 2011). The people of Russia marched into the king's palace, overthrew the kingdom, and announced that all powers belonged to the people. This news came as an inspiration for the freedom fighters in Kerala (Krishnan 1971).

Various leaders of the social reform movement cited the Soviet Union as an alternative model against caste discrimination and the future model for uplifting the working masses. The Soviet influence had begun in Kerala in the second half of the social reform movement (early 20th century), which paved the way for widespread working-class mobilizations. The renaissance movement brought the backwards communities to the forefront, which later played a major role in the anti-imperialist struggle (Namboodiripad 1968, 1976; Herring 1988). This era represents the transition toward democracy in Kerala society. The Russian Revolution and the formation of the

Soviet Union strengthened not only the fight against colonialism and imperialism but also paved the way for the multi-faceted social reform movements in Kerala (Pavanan 2011; CPI(M) 2018; Namboodiripad 2009; Menon 2009; Joshy & Damodaran 1975). Some people believed in Fabien socialism and waged a strong movement against superstitions in northern Kerala during this period. The leaders of this movement include Guru Vagbhadanandan, Shivanandan, and Kelari Kunjikannan Teacher, among others (Balaram 2010).

The fight against the feudal and caste-ridden social structure was taken up by various reformation movements led by spiritual leaders. The ideas propagated by these leaders were against the conservative religion and the feudal regimes. They ideologically fought against the inequality within the religion, propagated by the priests and the ruling class. Indeed it was not a movement led by the western educated elites restricted to a dominant class (Kurup 1994). During this period, Kerala's social condition was worse than the other Indian states. As per the caste composition in Kerala, the higher caste people can be polluted not merely on touch but on sight, called "unseeability" (Namboodiripad 2016; Jeffery 1984; Desai 2001). Reformers including AyyaVaikundaSwamikal, Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyankali, Vagbhadanandan, Brahmananda Shivayogi, ChattambiSwamikal, Vakkom Abdul Khaddar Maulavi, PoykayilAppachan, Pandit K. P. Karuppan, Dr V. V. VelukkuttyArayan, V. T. Bhattadiripad and so on have worked for a society rooted in equality.

The 'Vaikom Sathyagraha' (1924-25 - in the present Kottayam district), the fight against caste discrimination, where the lower castes were denied access to the roads leading to the Vaikom temple and its surroundings, gained nationwide attention. Similar to the global revolutionary movements, these state-wide movements took place from the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century. Missionaries' interventions and educational projects in the colonial era helped the lower caste communities develop the modern aspirations taken forward by the social reform movements. This enlightenment thinking of egalitarian norms instituted the struggle for egalitarian protocols (Guru 2009). According to the first systematic census, from 1870 onwards, Kerala maintained the record of the most literate region in India (Jeffery 2009).

The educated section, which emerged from the renaissance movement, created a discourse between local ideas of equality and justice and European ideas of

modernity and rationality and paved the way for a new modern democratic system (Osella and Osella 2000). The modern democratic struggles, including the '*Maru Marakkal Samaram*' (women's protest for the right to cover their breasts), were conducted with the support of missionaries and colonial officials. In the 1920s, along with the Temple Entry Movement, the "Temple Boycott Movement" took place. Vadappuram P. K. Bava, one of Travancore's first trade union leaders, campaigned and distributed pamphlets among the workers for boycotting the temple, for which he was fired from his job (Govindan 1981; Nair 2006).

Sahodaran Ayyappan rephrased the Sree Narayana Guru's call of "One Caste, One Religion and One God for Human" to "No Caste, No Religion and No God for Human" and wrote a *Science Dashakam* an alternative to Guru's prayer *Daiva Dashakam* (Ayyappan 1981; Salam 2019; Elayidom 2019). Similar movements have self-assertive solidarity politics since the 19th century (Raman 2017). In such a scenario, the Malayalee people started to hear about the Bolshevik Revolution and building a working-class society based on equality in Russia.

The spiritual leader and a prominent figure of the social reform movement in Kerala, Sree Narayana Guru, declared in 1916 that "we do not belong to any particular caste or religion." These developments can be considered the scientific rationale for empiricism using modernist frames of discourse (Osella and Osella 2000: 224; Vijayan 2016; Elayidom 2019; Isaac 2020). Sree Narayana Guru's ideas have strongly impacted the growth of the Communist movement in Kerala (Bhadrakumar 2021). When Narayana Guru learned about the Russian Revolution, he thought that "this is as same as what we are propagating" and gave the directions and blessings to the first trade union in Kerala; Travancore Labour Association (TLA) (Nair 2006; Pillai 2019; Kunjahammed 2019; Salam 2019). Ayyankali, another major leader of the renaissance movement, showed how modernity evolved when education and resistance joined hands. He organized the first agricultural workers' protest in Kerala, demanding modern education for the oppressed communities (Raman 2017; Bijukumar 2019; Elayidom 2019).

Gopal Guru (2015) argues that the movement of Ayyankali mainly raised the question of democracy rather than modernity. But his struggles progressed in a period of emerging modern social organizations, and the movement raised the question of the right to live. These movements inspired radical thoughts in the lower caste life, which gradually attracted them towards the working-class ideology propagated by the

communist movement, which idealized the Soviet model of equal distribution. The Muslim reformist scholar Vakkom Abdul Khader Maulavi started the *Swadeshabhimani* (The Patriot) daily in 1905 with the imported press equipment from England. The well-known journalist and reformer K. Ramakrishna Pillai became the editor of the *Swadeshabhimani* daily. This was the opening of a critical press in Malayalam (Raman 2017). The *Swadeshabhimani* is one of the first newspapers in Kerala which published stories on Revolutionary Russia, Soviet society, and its leaders with a positive impression.

When the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union became a discussion in the public sphere, the working class found a motive, and creating a socialist society became their ultimate aim (Jeffery 1984; Isaac 1985). The activists and intellectuals in Kerala had already started following Soviet Russia and the building of a socialist society. The Soviet model of working-class society inspired and attracted youth to join the trade and peasant unions and later the Communist Party (Damodaran 1975). The downtrodden sections, which hold the legacy of fighting the social struggles for equality, formed the mass base of the communist movement in Kerala. Among the pioneers of the Communist Party in Kerala, many belonged to Upper Castes who left their privileged lives to organize the working class who belonged to the lower castes. This leadership had also evolved through the freedom movement and renaissance struggles. They successfully organized the lower caste sections under the hold of the Red Flag. The leaders and intellectuals cited the similarity of the on-going global revolutionary movements with the regional movements, which gave energy to the local struggles.

K. Ayyappan alias Sahodaran Ayyappan (1889-1968), a follower of Sree Narayana Guru and a leader of the social reform movement, organized the very first trade union in the state of Cochin. His newspaper 'Sahodaran' (meaning - brother) was the first to publish Lenin's picture in Kerala in 1930 (CPI(M) 2020: 167). Ayyappan started to publish a journal in 1933 titled *Velakkaran* (Worker) from Alappuzha (Nair 2006; Pavanan 2011; CPI(M) 2020: 167). Among the Ezhava community, which consisted of the untouchables and was also the largest caste group, the effect of the renaissance movement inspired them to wage a strong fight against discrimination by the upper castes. Within the Ezhava Social Reform Movement, many later became advocates of Radical Left Ideology because of its stand on religion and atheism.

The Malabar rebellion, which happened in Northern Kerala, is one of the most important political struggles in the early 20th century where the Muslim peasantry class fought bravely. The communists displayed the Malabar uprising's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character (Gopalan 2021). The Malabar Rebellion of 1921 got international attention when Lenin learned about it and asked the Indian representatives in the Communist International to present a report about it. The Malabar Rebellion began as native people's fight against British Imperialism and the feudal lords. The movement was led by the native Mappila Muslims, who constituted the majority population in the region. Since most protesters belonged to the traditional Muslim section, religious morality and customs had become part of their struggle. But it has to be noted that the local Hindu sections were also part of this movement. It was essentially a working-class movement. The Mappila Muslim agrarian workers struggled against the oppressive Hindu upper-caste landlords backed by the British colonial administration (Mukherji 2022; Roy 1922; Tagore 1932; Namboodiripad 1970; Panikkar 1978; Kurup 2021).

As per Lenin's query, the Indian communist leader Abani Mukherji studied the Malabar Rebellion and submitted his report to the Comintern in 1921. The "Moplah Rebellion" report was published in English and Russian from Moscow (Mukherji 2022; Vijayan 2013; Deshabhimani 2021). The English version of the report was published by the *Communist Review*, the journal of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), in March 1922 (Mukherji 2022). When Mukherji submitted his findings, Lenin asked the Bolshevik leader Nicolai Bukharin to look into the report (Lenin 2015; Navas 2021). On 14 November 1921, Lenin (2015: 376) wrote to Bukharin, "Comrade Bukharin, please read this. We need to have (regardless of this particular article, which appears to be good) more publications of Indian comrades to encourage them and to collect more information about India and her revolutionary movement." M. N. Roy (1922: 95), a prominent Indian member of the Communist International, mentioned the agrarian distress and the protests of the Mappila agricultural workers of Malabar in his book *India in Transition*, published in 1922.

Soumyendranath Tagore is another early communist leader who came to Kerala and studied the Malabar Rebellion. He attended the Congress of the Communist International in Baku in 1921 along with M. N. Roy and received theoretical classes from Nicolai Bukharin (Kurupu 2021). Later Tagore studied the Malabar Rebellion and published his research findings in 1932. Tagore's report was

published as a pamphlet but the British government soon banned it on 11 August 1937. The Bengali daily Amritbazar Patrika published this news on 13 August 1937 (Kurup 2021: 45). The British feared that the Khilafat⁴ movement, which was happening worldwide, including in India, would be a Bolshevik-sponsored conspiracy. The colonial administration at the central level directed its Malabar regional administrative officials to investigate the Khilafat connections as well as the Bolshevik threat behind the Malabar Rebellion (Sivadasan 2021).

Meanwhile, a section of freedom fighters started The Home Rule Movement, which also came to be known as the 'British Bolshevik Home Rule'. One of their pamphlets titled *Sadhyakalathinte Rashtreeyam: Russiayil Nunnulla Sandesham* (Politics of the Evening: The Message from Russia) became a headache for the British (Sivadasan 2021). The British colonial official, Captain Harry's article about the methods adopted by the British to suppress the Mappila Uprising was published in the French magazine *Science et Voyages* on 10 August 1922. In the article, Captain Henry alleged that the Mappila Uprising had the support of the Soviet Union (Panakkal 2021). All these prove that the British lacked clarity on the rebellion and largely depended on propaganda narratives. Indeed all these developments and the effect of the Russian Revolution inspired the Mappila working-class's brave fight against the British and feudal lords (Sivadasan 2021). Soviet scholar Kutowsky was the first to work on a doctoral thesis on Malabar Rebellion. British communist leader Conrad Woods also studied the Malabar Rebellion (Vijayan 2013). This is the first intervention of the Communist International as well as Lenin in the political movements of Kerala.

During the 1930s, more people started to read and write about the Russian Revolution. Being a British Colony, more than any Western-centric debates or the popularity of Marx's writings, the developments in Russia had a greater influence on the development of Socialism in Kerala. The native Malayalam speakers were introduced to the works of Karl Marx and the basics of Communism after reading the news about Soviet Russia (Namboodiripad 2017). P. Krishna Pillai, one of the organizers of the workers' movement and the first State Secretary of CPI, read about

⁴ The Khilafat movement (1919-24) was led by the Indian Muslim sections who considered the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph of Islam. They waged an agitation against the British kingdom which made broke up the Turkey-centered Ottoman Empire after the First World War and demanded the preservation of the Sultanate. Gandhi initiated and incorporated this movement as part of the Indian national struggle against the British.

Russian Revolution through John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World* while he was in prison (Krishnan 1971). Learning about the Russian Revolution gave ideological clarity regarding Marxism. In 1934, Krishna Pillai urged the workers first to overthrow the discriminatory caste system and identify themselves as working-class. He exhorted to "let the priests squabble over religion while workers fight for bread" (Pillai 1998: 175; Pavitran 2002: 301; Mannathukaren 2013: 506).

In the first meeting of the All Malabar Peasant Union, which took place in 1936, its President Vishnu Bharatheeyan, who was a Brahmin by birth, announced, "there are only two castes, two religions and two classes - the haves and the have nots" (Menon 1994: 134). The old slogan "*Destroy Nair Rule*" transformed into "*Destroy Capitalism!*" when the working-class movement gained strength. These events have marked the transition of caste and communal outrage to class conflict (Karat 1976; Jeffery 1984). The workers began identifying themselves as an exploited group, a class rather than a caste or religious group. The trade union leader and the first Minister for Industries and Community Development of Kerala, K. P. Gopalan, had said that at the beginning of their activism, they dreamed of living in a socialist society without knowing its depth (Balaram 2010).

Various magazines and newspapers with a progressive outlook inspired by the Renaissance tradition emerged in the early 20th century. These magazines propagated revolutionary ideas and scientific temper, which attracted the youth. People began dreaming of living in a society based on equality and hence idealized Soviet Union. In fact, after a long fight with the religious and caste orthodoxy, many people drifted away from the path of spirituality. They also were dissatisfied with the Indian National Congress, which was led by bourgeois elites. Eventually, they started to support the politics of a radical social change propagated by the communists. Ever since the First Russian Revolution of 1905, Malayali intellectuals had developed an interest in Russian Politics. This includes Dr Palppu, Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai, A. K. Pillai, Sahodaran Ayyappan, etc. (Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011; Keshavadev 2017).

This curiosity led Swadrshabhimani K. Ramakrishna Pillai to write *Karl Marxinte Jeevacharithram* (Biography of Karl Marx). The book published in 1912 in Malayalam was the first to be written about Karl Marx in an Indian language (Joshy & Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2017; Jeffrey 1978; CPI(M) 2018; Pavanan 2011). Later the communist leader K. Damodaran wrote a detailed biography of Karl

Marx in 1934 (CPI(M) 2020: 39). The *Communist Manifesto* was translated and published in Malayalam in 1932 by Edappalli Karunakara Menon (CPI(M) 2020: 40). EMS recalls that he first heard the term 'Bolshevism' when he was just 13 or 14. This was during the Madras Legislative Council election in 1922-23. During the campaign, a candidate who represented the orthodox tradition of the landlord class visited EMS's home and spoke about the opposition candidate as someone who wanted to limit the landlords' powers over tenants. This candidate feared that Bolshevik ideology would triumph and take away the wealth of the feudal class (Namboodiripad 2017: 07). As a student, EMS Namboodiripad learned about the trial of Bhagat Singh and the Meerut conspiracy case, which eventually attracted him to socialism.

While the writings on Russian Revolution reached the educated youth and middle class, the common masses came to know about the same through the enthusiastic speeches of communist leaders. These speeches informed them about revolutionary Russia. Leaders like Sahodaran Ayyappan, K. M. Ibrahim, C. Keshavan and P. Keshavadev etc., who were also great orators, spoke about the radical socio-economic changes in the life of the working class in Russia after the Revolution in the streets, gatherings, agricultural fields and trade union meetings etc. (Balaram 2010). Sahodaran Ayyappan, in his speech at the workers' gathering in Alappuzha in 1919, welcomed the Russian Revolution and announced that the revolutionary youth of Russia was the model for the Ezhava youngsters in their anti-caste struggle (Ayyappan 1981).

Similarly, in the period of Vaikom Sathyagraha (1924-25), the untouchables' protest for the right to walk in front of the temple, Sahodarn Ayyappan urged in a workers' conference in Alappuzha that just like the working-class revolution against the royal family of Russia, the Ezhavas (the commonality consists of 80 per cent of the workforce in the region) should lead a revolutionary movement without worrying about the armed police or the Maharaja (King) of Travancore (Jeffery 1978). Sahodaran Ayyappan was banned from speaking in public gatherings in Travancore after this speech. The disturbed Dewan (administrative head of the state) alleged that most of the agitators against the state were communists and were talking about equality (Isaac 1985).

In a speech at the workers' conference in Alappuzha, N. Krishnan, the TPI Company manager, mentioned that in the developed industrialist states, the organized labour movement has progressed and achieved a lot, and we are at the beginning. This

would mark the end of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya era (period of the Savarna feudal tradition) and the begging of the Sudra (lower caste workers) era. It had already started in Europe, and now we will receive it through our labour movement (Isaac 1985). P. Keshavadev, in one of his speeches at a shipping workers' conference at Clappana, Kollam made a comparison between Rasputin of Russia and the Dewan of Travancore - C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. He pointed out that C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's influential role in the Kavadiar palace is similar to what Rasputin was in the Kremlin Palace. Similar to the Tsarist regime, the Travancore kingdom will also fall. His words created a scuffle in the meeting and received strong opposition from the Nair Service Society (NSS). They were in support of the Dewan and Maharaja, especially in the context of opposing Nivarthana Agitation⁵ (Keshavadev 2017).

Many of the speeches were delivered by C. Keshavan (1891-1969), who was the State Congress leader, SNDP General Secretary and the Chief Minister of Thiru-Kochi⁶ (Travancore-Cochin) state quoted the positive developments in the Soviet Union. C. Keshavan, in his speech at the State Congress meeting at Karunagapalli in the Malayalam era on 23/10/120, cites the ordinary Malayalee workers' love towards Stalin and the pro-working-class atmosphere in the Soviet Union. He mentions an incident where a poor beedi (country cigarette) worker at Vaikom made a beautiful pencil drawing of Stalin. He cites that, unlike in the Soviet Union, there are no opportunities for the working-class people to get the proper training to become an artist in our society, and we should strive to build such a social order (Rejikumar 2015).

Despite being a non-communist, C. Keshavan addressed the gathering as 'comrades', a term generally used by the communists. His speech at the State Congress annual campaign meeting at Punalur in Malayalam era 17/2/121 is an example of this (Rejikumar 2016). In a speech at the State Congress meeting in Kottayam on 20/11/1120, in the Malayalam era 20/11/1120, C. Keshavan stressed the

⁵ The Nivarthana Agitation (1932-37) also known as the Abstention Struggle, was led by the Ezhava, Muslim and Christian communities together against the then-existing feudal system of the state legislature and public services are only reserved for the Hindu upper-caste sections in the Travancore princely state. Qualification for the voting was the payment of property tax. To make sure their representation adequately to the population they abstained from participating in the elections. C. Keshavan, P. K. Kunju and N. V. Joseph were the main leaders of the movement. The united and continuous struggle by the three communities ended with success and the feudal government was forced to restructure the legislature and public services as per the demands.

⁶ The United State of Travancore and Kochi has called the Thiru-Kochi state. It was formed after the merger of the former Travancore and Kochi kingdoms just before the official formation of the state of Kerala. This state prevailed for a short period after its independence from 1949 to 1956.

need for worker's unions and urged that the workers should unite without any laziness (Rejikumar 2016). C. Keshavan took an active part in the organization called 'Friends of Soviet Union' formed during the Nazi attack on the USSR in the Second World War. In his speech near the Pettah railway station in Thiruvananthapuram on 12 July 1942, he praised the Soviet effort to resist the fascists. He stressed the need for global support for the Soviet Union. He said that the commitment of the Soviet soldiers was fascinating in their war against the Nazis. Still, at the same time, the Western European soldiers were simply market-oriented and business-minded in their commitments (Rejikumar 2016).

K. M. Ibrahim, in his speeches among the agricultural workers, used to speak on the achievements of the Soviet Union and its pro-working-class ideology. He often quoted P. Keshavadev's *Agniyum Sfulingavum*, based on the Russian Revolution, in his speeches (Balaram 2010). Peasant leader K. M. Ibrahim published a magazine titled *Karshaka Thozhilali* (Agricultural Worker) from Mattancherry. He was also the organizer of Kerala's first agricultural workers' protests at Kodungallur in 1932 (CPI(M) 2018: 256). All these events helped make a large section of the common masses in Kerala become pro-Communist even when they were unfamiliar with communist literature (Ganesh 2021).

The ninth annual conference of the Travancore Labour Association (TLA), which happened in September 1933, was addressed by the social reform movement leader of Tamil Nadu, EV Ramaswami Naicker (Periyar). In his speech, he appreciated the developments in the USSR and mentioned his recent visit to the Soviet Union (Jeffery 1984; Isaac 1985). Trade union leader R. Sugathan mentions that it was for the first time that the workers heard first-hand information about Russia (Raghavan 1979). The then TLA secretary P. Kesavdev was a radical and staunch supporter of the Soviet Union. He played a key role in transforming TLA from a welfare association to a trade union. Kesavadev (2017) has mentioned that it was under his leadership that revolutionary slogans, which gave nightmares to the factory owners, were raised for the first time.

This period also witnessed the formation of the first communist organization in Kerala, the 'Communist League' in 1931. It was a small organization based in Trivandrum, formed under the leadership of N. C. Sekhar, N. P. Kurukkal, G Shivasankara Pillai, Thiruvattar Thanu Pillai, Ponnara Sreedhar, etc. They organized a union among printing press workers and youth organizations in Thiruvananthapuram,

Balaramapuram, and Nedumangad. They translated the Communist Party Programme prepared by the prisoners of the Meerut Conspiracy Case into Malayalam (Namboodiripad 2009; Jeffery 1978; Balaram 2010). N. P. Kurukkal could also be the first communist in Kerala. He went to Trichy and met communist leader Singaravelu Chettiar. He was the leader of the first student strike in Kerala at the present Arts College, Thiruvananthapuram, against a fee hike (Ganesh 2021). Communist leader N. C. Sekhar was born in a feudal Nair family in Balaramapuram, Thiruvananthapuram, but became part of the revolutionary discussions in the 1920s and became the co-founder of the Communist League (Sekhar 2018; Ganesh 2021).

The early Leftist leaders played an active and leading role in the movements for an equal society. The main demand of the 'Guruvayur Satyagraha' (1931-32), led by the socialists within the Indian National Congress (INC), including P. Krishna Pillai, and A. K. Gopalan, was the entry of the lower caste people into the Guruvayur temple (in the present Trissur district). Similarly, the Paliyam Satyagraha (1947-48) was for the right to access the paths near the Paliyam palace in Chendamangalam near North Paravoor, Ernakulam. The protest was inaugurated by the socialist and State Congress leader C. Kesavan. In this struggle against the kingdom, communist activist A. G. Velayudhan was martyred (Keshavan 2015; Isaac 1985; Jeffery 1978; Nair 2006).

EMS Namboodiripad, one of the founders of the CPI in Kerala, was part of the 'Namboodiri Yuvajana Sangham' (Namboodiri Youth Organization) and became the editor of its magazine *Unni Namboodiri*. Under the leadership of V. T. Bhattathiripad, the organization members began breaking their own *Janeu* (divine thread of the Brahmin community) and also worked on women's rights. V. T. Bhattathiripad's symbolic propagation "now let us set fire to the temples" represented the emergence of a radical socialist thought among the progressive section of the Kerala Brahmin community (Bhattathiripad 2019; Nazeer 2013). These progressive social movements challenged society's dominance of feudal, caste, and class superiorities.

Most of the revolutionary movements during the 1930s and 1940s were also anti-caste struggles. Ezhava community leader E. Madhavan in his book *Swathanthra Samudayam* (Free Society) urged that the Ezhavas should come out of the Hindu religion and move towards a socialist society. C. Keshavan and fellow activists protested against the growing orthodox and middle-class trends in the 'Sree Narayana

Dharma Paripalana Yogam⁷ (SNDP), a renaissance organization of the untouchables, especially the Ezhava community. Due to their class interest, the wealthier sections in the Ezhava community became loyalists of the royal family and the state administration. Similar to the Savarna castes, this elite section of Ezhavas also discriminated against the poor working class belonging to their community along with Dalits (Kesavan 2015). This section which became the middle class, wanted to support the Travancore Maharaja. They opposed the movements for democratic reforms and working-class struggles and its leaders like Dr Padmanabhan Palppu, Sahodaran Ayyappan, C. Kesavan etc. Sahodaran Ayyappan was mocked and called “Pulayan Ayyappan” for organizing inter-caste dining (Kesavadev 2017).

The business class, landowners and those who joined with government services rose in the social hierarchy and became a new pressure group within the community. They opposed the workers’ agitations against the feudal government and withdrew their support to the state congress in 1939. Hundred eminent members of the Ezhava community from north Travancore demanded the withdrawal of SNDP’s participation in the Nivarthana Agitation against the princely state and the removal of C. Kesavan from the post of General Secretary of SNDP for being an atheist and rationalist (Isaac 1985). Initially, the caste organizations worked for the betterment of their community while effectively practising caste. These developments distanced the working-class sections from the caste organizations and attracted them towards the newly emerged socialist group within the State Congress who actively took up the working-class issues (Jeffery 1984; Issac 1985).

In 1951, when the SNDP leader C. Keshavan became the Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin, his response to the Sabarimala fire incident⁸ was that “when one temple burns, it burns the superstitions along with it” (Rajan 2015). Such incidents

⁷ The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) is an organization that emerged out of the renaissance movements in Kerala in 1903. The SNDP has led by the Ezhava community who were the untouchables and largest caste group organized under the spiritual leader Sree Narayana Guru. The first president of the SNDP was Dr Padmanabhan Palppu a prominent figure in the social reform movements who led the organization towards the socio-economic and educational achievements of the backward communities.

⁸In 1951, a fire broke out in the Sabarimala pilgrim temple. The then Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin, C. Kesavan ordered a probe regarding this incident. In the following press meeting, he was questioned by the media reporters on his take on the incident. C. Keshavan, responded that he will conduct a free and fair investigation on this and will take sufficient actions. But being a rationalist he is not a believer in any temples and religion and the superstitions spread by same. For him, one temple burned means that much darkness of the society is ending with it.

show that a large number of socio-political movements were going through a radical Leftist trend inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution.

Dr V. V. Velukkutty Arayan (1894-1969), one of the leaders of the Kerala's renaissance movement, later joined the Communist Party. His monthly titled *Arayan* enthusiastically published articles praising the Russian Revolution in 1917. *Arayan* was started as a monthly magazine in 1917 when Dr V. V. Velukkutty Arayan was just 23 years old. Later he established a printing press, and *Arayan* became news daily in 1919. The newspaper had to stop publishing twice, in 1921 and 1938, following the orders of the Travancore princely state before the Kingdom completely banned it in 1938 (Pillai 2019: 43). Being a doctor, journalist and the leader of the oppressed Araya community (fishermen), he founded the organization 'Samastha Keraleeya Araya Mahajana Yogam' in 1919. While organizing the lower caste communities against the socio-political inequalities, Velukkutty became attracted to the revolutionary thoughts of the Bolshevik Revolution (Namboodiripad 2019; Pillai 2019; Balakrishnan 2019; Vijayan 2019; Baby 2019).

Velukkutty Arayan took part in the social reform movements, including the Vaikom Satyagraha and Guruvayur Satyagraha, and later became part of the working-class struggles led by the Communist Party (Keshavan 2019; Iyer 2019; Baby 2019). As part of the Vaikom Satyagraha, a platform called 'Avarna Hindu Mahasabha' was formed in 1924 and Velukkutty was elected as its General Secretary. He believed that the movements of the oppressed communities should be part of the Indian national movements and the Left movements to clinch the struggles for social justice. He chooses the ideology of Marxism-Leninism as the vanguard of the oppressed communities (Namboodiripad 2019; Iyer 2019; Pillai 2019; Vijayan 2019, Baby 2019).

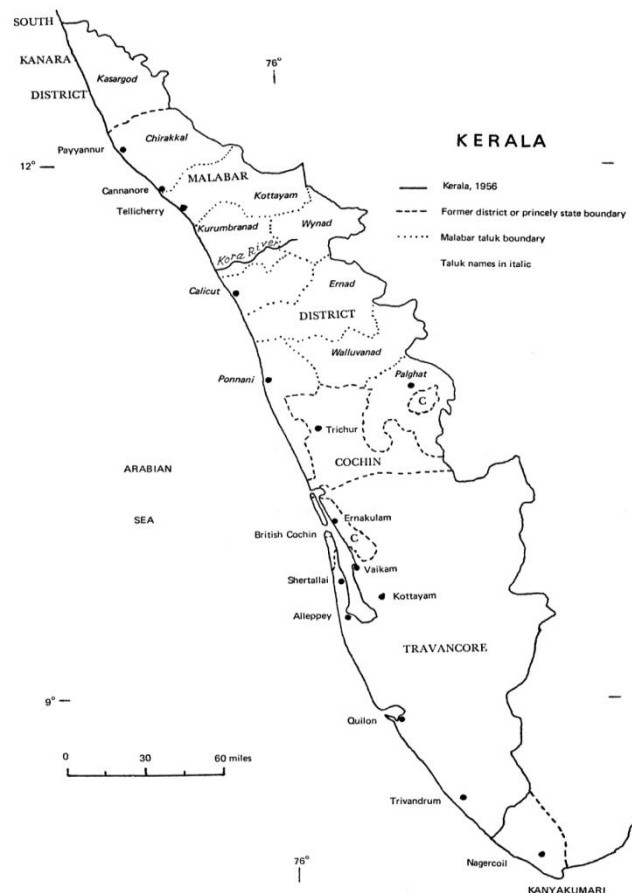
Velukkutty Arayan became part of the All Travancore Port Workers Union (1931), Travancore Fishing Workers Union, Travancore Mineral Workers Union and then the Communist Party. He was arrested and jailed as part of the shipping workers' strike in 1940, and because of his active participation in the victory of the Punnappara-Vayalar working-class struggle, he had to go underground in 1946. In 1948, Velukkutty contested as the Communist Party candidate from the Karunagappally I constituency for the Travancore State Assembly. He strongly campaigned against the 'Vimochana Samaram' organized to overthrow the first Communist government of

Kerala and the subsequent dissolving of the ministry by the Central Government in 1959 (Pillai 2019: 45; Vijayan 2019: 50).

3.2 The Emergence of the Organized Working-Class Movements

The leaders of the working-class movements faced many challenges while organizing struggles across Kerala. The political geography of Kerala was much different from today in the first half of the 20th century. Before independence, the present Kerala state was divided into four Malayalam-speaking states under the British colonial empire. In the modern period, especially after the end of the Anglo-Mysore wars, Kerala existed as four regions. In the north, the Kasaragod region was part of the Madras Presidency South Canara district. The Malabar region was also under the Madras Presidency. Cochin and Travancore were the Princely States under the British colonial empire. This was the broader picture of the state before the linguistic reorganization of Kerala on November 1st, 1956. The working class leaders organized political movements in each of these regions.

1. Map of Kerala until 1956



Source: (Jeffery 1978: 79).

The social transformation in Kerala is different from that of other Indian states and resembles the classic cases of social democracy in Europe (Mannathukaren 2011). The industrial base of Kerala was minimal, but militancy existed in the working-class movements, which largely contributed to the emergence of popular and radical political movements (Herring 1988). The workers battled poverty and starvation alongside social inequalities. These socio-economic conditions also contributed to Kerala becoming a fertile land where Communism could grow. Before radical socialist thoughts gained popularity, the labour organizations simply worked on moral and spiritual lines. The spiritual Theosophical Society organised the first trade union in Malabar. The first country cigarette-making workers' union was formed under the name 'Sree Narayana Beedi Thozhilali Association' (Sree Narayana Cigarette Making Workers Association) in 1934 (CPI(M) 2020: 124).

Similarly, the first plantation workers' union in Travancore formed in Mundakkayam named itself 'Sanmargodayam Koolivela Sangham', meaning Moral Workers Union (CPI(M) 2018: 230). Even the famous Uralungal Thozhil Karar Sangham (Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society⁹) was formed in Malabar in 1924 and was organized by the spiritual leader Vagbhatananda (CPI(M) 2018: 59). Later, the working class became inspired by the Russian Revolution (Ganesh 2021). In the 1920s, especially after the First World War, the demand for coir products went down, and the coir factories owned by foreigners and natives started deducting workers' wages and increasing the working hours. This further worsened the conditions of the working class and led them to create an organized labour movement. As a result of this, the first trade union of Kerala, the Travancore Labour Association (TLA), was formed under the leadership of Vadappuram P. K. Bava in 1922 (Keshavadev 2017; Jeffery 1984; Isaac 1985; Nair 2006).

The Princely state of Travancore witnessed the first organized trade union movement in Kerala- in the coir factories of Alappuzha. As most of the factory workers were tenants, they had to work in the landlords' fields without wages before coming to work at the factories. Moreover, these labourers had to walk long distances after midnight to reach their homes. This often led them to protest against the work

⁹ The ULCCS is organized in Uralungal near Vadakara, Kozhikode in 1924 by a group of unemployed youth under the direction of Vagbhatananda Guru one of the leaders of the Kerala renaissance. This unemployed mutual assistance group has not formed to make a profit but to uplift the working class. Today this cooperative society is one of the top builders in Kerala and is famous for major public construction works including bridges, highways and flyovers etc.

timings in the factory (Nair 2006). As the first workers' union, the TLA was ultimately a mass labour welfare organization loyal to the administration and never served as a guardian of class interest of the working-class (Keshavadev 2017; Jeffery 1984; Isaac 1985). TLA started a library and reading room in 1924 and a weekly newspaper, *Thozhilali* (Worker), in 1925. It was in circulation until the General Strike of 1938, after which the Travancore state government banned it (*Thozhilali* 1937; George 1939; Jeffery 1984; Isaac 1985; Nair 2006).

TLA became part of the All Kerala Workers Conference by the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in 1935 and thus began their interaction with the communists. The Kollam Factory Workers Union was formed in 1936. The female workers of the cashew factories too became part of this union later (CPI(M) 2020: 126). TLA was the first trade union to register under the Trade Union Act of Travancore in 1937. There they changed the union's name to Travancore Coir Factory Workers Union (TCFU). The CSP suggested a militant movement against the reduction of wages. Through this movement, the workers became part of the Responsible Government Movement by the State Congress. The leader of the socialists, P. Krishna Pillai, arrived from Malabar to lead the workers' movement. Factory-level committees were organized under his leadership. They started rigorous campaigns and arranged regional-level workers' meetings.

The workers' union called for a General Strike in 1938 in the coir mats and matting industries. This was the first long strike of the working class with clear demands. The TCFU gave a memorandum to the management against the cutting down of the wages (there were cases of 50% reduction of wages), against the imposition of fines, wages in kind, leave for health conditions, full payment of wages, and for the recognition of the labour unions, etc. During the strike, the coir workers raised two flags: the tricolour for national independence and the red flag symbolizing revolution (Namboodiripad 1952; Krishnan 1971; Herring 1988). The strike, which lasted for 26 days, started on 1938 August 16 and ended on September 11, saw the involvement of about 30,000 workers (Nair 2006). This period witnessed the emergence of the working class leaders like T. V. Thomas, R. Sugathan, K. V. Pathrose, Rosamma Punnus, P. T. Punnus, Kalikkutty Ashatti, K. Devayani, etc. Under the influence of TCFU, workers from various factories organized trade union units. They merged with the All Travancore Trade Union Congress (ATTUC), the Travancore state unit of the Communist Party-affiliated trade union- All India Trade

Union Congress (AITUC). R. Sugathan was the Secretary, and T. V. Thomas, the President of AITUC (Govindan 1986).

The trade union organizations observed 23 July 1939, as a black day upon the request of the All Travancore Workers Committee because the state banned the use of the Red Flag and the slogan *Inquilab Zindabad* (Long Live Revolution). The period witnessed the State Congress's disagreements with the militant struggle of the working class and its soft attitude towards the Dewan and Travancore Kingdom. This led to tensions between the workers and the State Congress, and they moved away from the party. By 1940, the organizers of the workers' movement- the Kerala CSP and the Youth League, officially merged with the Communist Party (Govindan 1986).

The peasantry-class organization 'Kerala KarshakaSangham' was started in 1935. EMS Namboodiripad was its President, and C. K. Govindan Nair the Secretary. From 1936 onwards, they were associated with the All India Kisan Sabha, which worked at the national level (Balaram 2010). In 1936, CSP decided to make regional peasant unions and took out a series of propaganda marches. The agricultural workers received these marches with leaders like AKG at their forefront. These small rallies shouted revolutionary slogans like *Death to Imperialism, Death to Landlordism and Death to Capitalism, etc.*, and waived red flags (Karat 1976). The lower caste labourers worked all day in the field and had no right over the yield. When Marxism came into the field, the poor understood that the yield from their hard labour belonged to them (Mannathukaren 2011). In 1937, the peasant unions started officially raising the Red Flag.

The All Malabar Peasant Union was formed in 1938. The agricultural workers' disenchantment with various organizations carrying the legacy of the social reform movement and the Gandhian Congress was much reflected in this change (Jeffery 1978). The Kayyur agricultural workers' struggle in 1942 had a tremendous impact on the working-class movement in the Malabar region. Similarly, the Karivellur struggle by the peasantry in 1946 was against the appropriation of paddy by the Chirakkal King. The Kavumbai struggle of the peasantry in Kannur was also led by the Karshaka Sangham, which led the majority of the peasantry-class movements in Malabar (Baby 2020). "Victory to the Revolution" was a common slogan raised in these struggles. The peasant movements organized by the CSP built the strongest base of the Communist Party in Malabar, especially in the northern Malayalam-speaking areas of the Kasaragod region.

The CSP focused on organizing the working class of Malabar. The beedi (local cigarette) workers of Kannur and Thalassery and the weaving workers of Thiruvannur and Kannur were thus organized. In 1935, the workers under the Red flag called for the first organized strike in Thiruvannur Malabar Spinning Mill and Kallai Cotton Mill in Calicut, demanding adequate wages and working hours. In 1937, the Malabar Vayanasala Conference held in Calicut elected CSP activists K. Damodaran as convener and M. Sankaran, M. K. Kelu, and K. P. R. Gopalan as members to lead the movement. The school teachers also made their union and contributed to it. These unions used Red Flags and raised the slogans like *Kissan Mazdoor Raj Zindabad* (Hail Peasants-Workers Rule), *Death to Landlordism*, *Death to Imperialism*, and *Death to Capitalism*, etc. (Balaram 2010; Mannathukaren 2011).

The new slogans, new camps, and different modes of struggle motivated Kerala's working class. The second All Kerala Workers' Conference took place at the Rama Varma Theatre in Thrissur. It was chaired by one of the prominent national leaders of the Communist Party- S. S. Battilivala. The leaders spoke about the relevance of the Soviet Union, anti-imperialist struggles, and the working class struggles. The conference witnessed resolutions demanding complete freedom from the British, civil liberty, a responsible government, unity of the working class, permanent jobs, reduced working hours, an increase in wages, etc. (Balaram 2010).

3.3 Formation of the Communist Party and the Democratic Path to Socialism

In the 1930s, the Congress Socialist Party emerged as the dominant group inside the state unit of the Congress Party, the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC). The socialist fraction within KPCC had expressed their disagreements on the compromising policies of Gandhi in 1934. The Civil Disobedience Movement's calling off resulted in CSP's formation (Klatt 1972). The CSP consisted of a trade union, a peasants' association, and a students' federation. The socialist fraction of Kerala did not have the opportunity for a wide reading of Marxist and socialist theories. But they were deeply impressed with the social and economic progress of the USSR. They admired the transformation of a poor agrarian nation into a global power despite the global economic crisis of the 1930s (Namboodiripad 1976; Krishnan 1971). The socialist section inside the Congress Party, through rigorous activism among the workers and peasants, created a new ideological realm. The working-class protests were simultaneously held along with the anti-caste struggles. The socialists

were politically growing as rebels against the elite leadership of the Congress Party. The ideological issues within the Indian National Congress, especially on the question of land reforms, led to its first split in 1920.

The conservative group refused to vote against the reform and walked out of the section (Namboodiripad 1968; Hart and Herring 1977; Herring 1988). P. Krishna Pillai said that Congress has two fractions; Congress of the rich and Congress of the poor (Krishnan 1971; Pillai 1967). The socialist section's views were strongly reflected in the Radical Conference of the INC in 1935. The representatives criticized the double standard of the party. According to EMS Namboodiripad (1935), the 50 years old party could either go and beg for independence from the British or lead a struggle to achieve it. The primary aim of the congress socialists was to push the INC toward a socialist agenda that modelled the achievements of the Soviet Union. The first conference of the CSP came up with a socialist party programme that included; increasing wages, reduction of working hours, abolition of landlordism, removal of indebtedness, improvement of the working conditions, making the Congress into a real people's organization, setting up youth leagues and clubs, to work for complete freedom, to oppose all the imperialist agendas and wage an anti-imperialist struggle for freedom (Mathrubhumi 1935).

Soon after the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was formed in Kerala in 1934, they came under the influence of CPI within a year. The Kerala CSP was hopeful about a socialist change under the leadership of INC. By the second half of the 1930s, they had lost all hope. INC was reeling with inner conflicts, and fights for power were dominated by the feudal and caste leaders who showed no interest in changing the existing social structure (Namboodiripad 1998). When EMS and P. Krishna Pillai met Kamalanath Tiwari, a political prisoner accused along with Bhagat Singh in the Lahore conspiracy case (1929), it was an important juncture in the Left movement in Kerala. In his autobiography *Athmakadha*, EMS Namboodiripad (2015) says that the discussions with Kamalanath Tiwari in Kannur jail sowed the seeds of an organized Left movement in Kerala. For the young Leftists, Kannur central jail became a university. The leaders of the Congress Socialists in Kerala started discussions with the Communist Party in the second half of the 1930s. The CSP leaders from Malabar actively tilted towards the communist ideology and played a major role in the CPI-CSP accord in 1936 (Isaac 1986). The global capitalist economic crisis of the 1930s was a major event of this period. The Soviet Union, under the leadership of Stalin,

effectively managed this crisis and impressed the socialists (Namboodiripad 1991). This admiration for the Soviet Union pulled them closer to communism (Namboodiripad 1991). The socialists believed that adopting the Soviet model could alter the Indian struggle for a better social and economic life.

Frequent discussions happened between P. Krishna Pillai, EMS Namboodiripad, and the Communist Party leader P. Sundarayya of Andhra Pradesh. In 1937, a Communist Party of India committee was secretly formed inside the Kerala CSP. Even before this, K. Damodaran had become a member of the CPI during his student days at the Kashi Vidyapith in 1936, making him the first Malayalee member of the CPI (Pillai 2011). A radical group was formed within the Travancore-Cochin CSP under the leadership of M. N. Govindan Nair in May 1939, which worked close to Malabar CSP (Isaac 1986). The CSP played a leading role in the workers' General Strike at Alappuzha. This important development transformed the industrial working class of Kerala towards the Communist front. The socialist faction supported the struggle for responsible government in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin. This was against the Gandhian policy of non-interference in the internal politics of the princely states. Later these struggles for a responsible government played an integral part in the unification of three Malayalam-speaking regions as the state of Kerala (Namboodiripad 1968; Mannathukaren 2011).

The INC represented different ideological groups, and they were busy with mobilising opinion within the party. The Congress Party was an umbrella organization comprising people from different political spectrums ranging from the Hindu Mahasabha to the Muslim League. The Kerala state conference of the INC (KPCC) in 1938 was clinched by the Left-wing fraction and the nationalist Muslim section. The left wing's plan of building larger solidarity against the imperialist powers was acceptable for the nationalist Muslims, who came together and defeated the right-wing section within the KPCC. Muhammad Abdurrahman got elected as the President of the KPCC and EMS Namboodiripad became its General Secretary. The right-wingers mocked this alliance as the Mecca-Moscow alliance. The nationalist Muslim section inside the Congress, under the leadership of Abdurrahman and Moithu Maulavi, was pro-working-class and worked with the peasant unions and trade unions (Balaram 2010). The positions of the conservative fraction and socialist fraction inside the Congress were contradictory, ideologically and organizationally. This resulted in a series of clashes within the party. As a result, the National Congress

Working Committee dissolved the socialist-led KPCC in 1939 (Namboodiripad 1968).

Compared to other parts of India, the Communist Party took its time to start functioning in Kerala. Even though it could start officially only in 1939, it was well connected with the renaissance movements and the democratic struggles here. The formation of peasant unions, trade unions, Congress Socialist Party (in 1934), the Communist Party (in 1939), and their organization of agrarian and egalitarian assertions within the larger anti-colonial movement became a glorious phase in Kerala modernity (Isaac 1985; Oommen 1985; Raman 2017).

In little time, the Communist Party transformed into a major force in the state to be reckoned with. The official state committee of the CPI was formed in Kerala in 1939 at a conference held at Parappuram in Pinarayi, Kannur. The majority cadre base of the Congress Socialist Party in Kerala was transformed into Communist Party in December 1939 at this conference. The official declaration of the formation of the Communist Party came on 26 January 1940. The scenario was different in other parts of the country. According to a report by the Central Intelligence Agency that came out in 1962, between 1934 and 1935, the Communist Party of India and the Congress Socialist Party engaged in a friendly debate on the need to use the national movement to advance of socialism. From 1937 onwards, it became difficult to distinguish between Kerala's Congress Socialist Party and the CPI. The speciality of the Kerala CSP was that the party did not have a section or a group that had an anti-Communist or an anti-Soviet position (Balaram 2010). The transformation from a socialist party to a communist party came with violent confrontations with landlords and the state (Mannathukaren 2011). The change from the CSP to CPI marked the beginning of the adoption of a different position of Marxism; the Soviet/Stalinist Model.

The organised Left leaders in Kerala started serious political activism and literary interventions in the 1930s. But from the beginning itself, they lacked clarity regarding various issues. This was mainly due to the unavailability of reading materials and the lack of political directions. The first writings of the prominent communist leader EMS Namboodiripad (as a socialist) were different from what he wrote in the latter part of his life. In 1935 while in prison, EMS wrote a small book titled '1917' inspired by Trotsky's '*History of Russian Revolution*' (Namboodiripad 1998). This was Namboodiripad's first book on Russian Revolution. In this book, EMS speaks of Trotsky as a world revolutionary and that he was forced to flee from

Russia because of the reactionary powers. On the contrary, Trotsky was not admired as a leader in the pro-Soviet communist circles during this period. Later, in the early 1950s, as a Communist Party member, his writings reflected a similar Soviet party line (Jeffery 1979).

Similarly, the well-known communist leader P. Krishna Pillai had worked with the Bengal-based populist radical group 'Anushilan Samiti' from the beginning itself. The ideology of the Left leaders seems to be scattered during the early 20th century. The scarcity of sufficient study materials in India as well as in Kerala continued until the late 20th century. The major ideological organizers, particularly EMS Namboodiripad and K. Damodaran deepened their understanding of Marxism with the help of the books that came from the USSR (Menon 1998).

At the national level, there were disagreements on the choice of nationalism and internationalism. Disagreements also emerged around the Stalin regime, especially during the Moscow Trials¹⁰ after the Kirov Murder Case. Balakrishnan (1998) avers that how the mainstream Malayalam media targeted Stalin was similar to the western media's portrayal of Stalin as an autocrat. On 23rd December 1934, *Mathrubhumi* daily reported the arrest of CPSU Politburo members Zinoviev and Kamenev after an alleged conspiracy against the state. The mainstream media, controlled by the elite feudal class, were threatened by the growth of communism (Ganesh 2021). In 1935, *Mathrubhumi* re-quoted the *Daily Telegraph's* comparison between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The same newspaper also published the news on the British workers' protest against Stalin (Balakrishnan 1998). *Mathrubhumi* used to report the Moscow trials in the 1930s, quoting the English dailies in line with Congress's political agenda (Ganesh 2021).

The Congress in Kerala established a narrative that Gandhism is the alternative to Communism. For them, Communism was absolutism and unethical. The early 20th-century reporting of the Congress daily *Mathrubhumi* is an example. They published news on the killings of the peasants as part of the Collectivization¹¹ and

¹⁰ A series of legal trials has been taken place under the Stalin regime in USSR in the 1930s. This started after the enquiry on the killing of the CPSU Leningrad Secretary and Politburo member Sergei Kirov in December 1934. Many prominent old Bolsheviks were found guilty and executed or imprisoned. This act has invited strong criticisms and ant-Soviet campaigns internationally.

¹¹ The policy was adopted by the Soviet government in 1929-30. The peasants were directed to give their farms and cattle wealth to the collective farming of the state. The policy aims to rapidly industrialize the USSR. The state has failed to make consensus among the masses which resulted in the

against the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact¹² in World War II (Ganesh 2021). In 1951, when the communist movement started gaining strong momentum, the Catholic Church actively mobilised the believers against the communists (CPI(M) 2020: 125).

When protests started erupting against the first EMS Namboodiripad ministry, the anti-communist front of the Church actively mobilized the people. A few established the 'Moral Rearmament Army', an anti-communist front of the Catholic Church (CPI(M) 2020: 190). The Ecumenical Council was leading the programs, and they made the *Kuruvadi Sangham* (Kristopher Army) fight the communists (CPI(M) 2020: 190). Bangalore town became the centre of anti-communist training. Father Alexander Adappoor, Pawvathil Methran, and Bishop Kundukulam were the priests who led this anti-communist movement. The communists organized the Christian Marxist Dialogue to interact with the Christian believers in this period (Ganesh 2021). Communist leaders like K. Damodaran actively engaged in this debate through his writings and speeches.

After the formation of its Kerala state committee, CPI's first task was mobilizing people against World War II. Their position on World War II was an attempt by antagonistic imperialist groups to reparation the world among themselves. When Germany invaded USSR on 22 June 1941, CPI took the international communist position declaring that "the war decides the future of the Soviet Union and through it of world socialism... with the entry of Soviet Union as one of the contestants; the war had become a People's War" (Namboodiripad 1952: 151). Georgy Dimitrov's Popular Front Strategy to defeat fascism was propagated in the communist campaign. As part of the campaign against the Axis Powers, the *Jappu Virudha Mela* (Anti-Japanese Fair) was organized at many places (CPI(M) 2020: 112).

Some leading leftists formed the Kerala Socialist Party (KSP) in 1942, opposing the pro-war position of the communists. Since 1947, the KSP was led by Mathai Manjooran. The minority socialist fractions have disagreed with the communists since 1939. This led to the formation of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) in 1948 under the leadership of N. Sreekandan Nair and Baby John. Another group, the Praja Socialist Party (PSP), was formed in 1954 under the leadership of

resistance of a large number of the peasant community. Then the state used coercive methods to implement the policy.

¹² Non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union on 23 August 1939 related to the Second World War.

Pattom Thanu Pillai (CPI(M) 2020: 250, 251, 283). They alleged that CPI was functioning according to Moscow's diktats. They started competing to control communist mass organizations like the students' federation, peasant association and trade union but couldn't succeed (Fic 1970).

Contrary to the national situation, CPI did not face many consequences for the pro-war position in Kerala. The party cadres had an ardent admiration and inspiration towards the USSR and possessed strong organizational discipline. The Quit India Movement failed to create greater momentum among the masses in Kerala. The British imprisoned the Congress leaders for their anti-war position. The major communist campaigns in this period, which focused on demands like food rationing, price control, famine relief and growing more food, got wide acceptance among the people. Between 1942 and 1945, the CPI had demanded the formation of a united Kerala, which would be a state of people speaking Malayalam (Herring 1988).

Soon after the war, the British were forced to give statehood to India. The discussions to join the Indian union were progressing in all the respective states. The Travancore Dewan (administrative head of the state) C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar wanted Travancore to be a sovereign state under his control and refused to join the Indian Union. He came up with the proposal of an American model administration in Travancore. The working class of Alappuzha, who were part of the struggle for responsible government, opposed Dewan's proposal of an independent state and the King agreement. The workers' protests led to the historic Punnappra – Vayalar Struggle of 1946. The Communist Party organized the working class and raised the demands for better working conditions, payments, protection from poverty, discrimination and deteriorating living conditions under famine. The pathetic conditions of the working-class life in Travancore were highlighted by diseases, malnutrition, insufficient clothing etc. The Servindia, Kerala Relief Centre, surveyed this in 1943-44 and published a detailed report in 1945 (Sivaswamiet al. 1945). The working class conducted massive strikes by raising the slogan "*American Model Arabikkadali!*" (Throw the American Model into the Arabian Sea).

The protests were met with brutal repression by the armed forces of Travancore. The firing killed many workers (the exact number remains unknown), and the region became a bloody war zone. A narrative appeared against the workers' protest that the communists were trying to organize a Bolshevik model Revolution in

Travancore. C. K. Kumara Panikkar,¹³ one of the organizers of the uprising, was known as ‘Vayalar Stalin.’ A prominent Congress leader, K. Kelappan, wrote a pamphlet on Congress and Communism with a strong anti-communist line. He openly supported the killing of communist activists during the Punnapra-Vayalar Struggle (Ganesh 2021). He later left Congress, formed KMPP (Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party), and joined in alliance with the Communist Party. Ultimately this revolt forced the Dewan to flee, and the Travancore state joined the Indian Union (Kaimal 1976; Pillai 1988; Menon 1997; Nair 2006; Isaac 2016). The Punnapra-Vayalar struggle has played a major role in the formation of the Kerala state.

The Utopian dream of an equal society by the modern Malayalee imaginations leads them to attract the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. The leaders at the forefront of the renaissance and political movements were keen on international political developments. They were impressed with the achievements of a pro-working class society based on equality in the Soviet Union. Later in the 1930s, the political movements by the socialists projected the Soviet Union as their ideal model. After the formation of the Kerala unit of the Communist Party the peasants and working-class movements transformed into a militant class character. The grassroots level movement of the Communist Party has gained a strong mass base, leading them to form the first Kerala state government and future governments at regular intervals.

¹³ Late CPI leader C. K. Chandrappan’s father.

Chapter 4

Ideological and Political Influences of Soviet Union in Kerala: Working Class Movement, Communist Party, Government and State Policies

This chapter covers the Soviet influence on administrative and governmental policies of the Kerala state and its diverse impacts on the Left political movement. The chapter includes the formation of Communist-led governments, the split in the Communist Party and the alternative development model of the Communists. All these events have connections with the Soviet Union. The Communist movement in Kerala faced criticisms over various political events in the Soviet Union. The chapter tries to present the political history of Kerala after the independence.

4.1 The Formation of the Kerala State and Towards a New Model of Development

The post-colonial era witnessed a rare transition in the global south. The state of Kerala successfully managed the social change from modernity to democracy (Mannathukaren 2010). The linguistic organization of the Malayalam-speaking regions into the state of Kerala happened on 1st November 1956. The word Kerala means land of coconut trees. After the formation of the Kerala state, the Communist Party immediately started campaigning for the immediate state legislative assembly election. They cited their past accomplishments and their radical socialist agenda for the future. The agenda of the Communist Party initially was to build a planned economy in the state and uplift the working class, similar to what the Soviet Union did. Herring (1988: 406) mentions, "Their manifesto stressed industrial development with increased funds from Delhi, wage increases, nationalization of foreign-owned plantations, decentralization of administration, sweeping agrarian reforms and a "new police policy" to prevent the police from suppressing peasant and working-class agitations". The Congress that Nehru led also had a similar agenda. But Nehru's socialist dreams put the Congress in Kerala in a dilemma as their state leaders thought India would never become a socialist country (Fic 1970).

The first democratically elected administration formed by the Communist Party in Kerala was the Malabar District Board in 1954, two years before the official formation of the Kerala state. The district board administration was led by President P. T. Bhaskara Panicker and the Vice-President K. V. Mussan Kutty. The

administrative experiences with the Malabar District Board became a pilot study for the first Kerala government led by the CPI (CPI(M) 2020: 46-47). The first assembly election took place in Kerala in 1957, creating history by electing a Communist government through the ballot. The new government took charge on 5th April 1957. It was also the third ever democratically elected Communist Party-led administration after San Marino in 1945 and British Guyana in 1953. The CPI-led government came to power with 40.7% of the votes (Gough 1967; Kaul and Kannangara 2021). EMS Namboodiripad, a prominent leader of the Indian communist movement, became the first Chief Minister of Kerala. This showed the extraordinary strength of the communist movement in the state and affirmed the unquestioned hegemony of the communists in Kerala's cultural public sphere (Devika 2010). This was also an instance of the emergence of 'late socialism' in Kerala (Mannathukaren 2010).

Socialism as a political ideology became rooted in Kerala's imagination much later compared to other societies in the global scenario (Mannathukaren 2010). This political development invited the attention of various Western scholars who came to study and publish their works on Kerala. As a result, Kerala was branded as the model of democratic socialism in the developing world, and many development features of Kerala began to be compared to that of the Western democratic states (Parayil 2000; Jeffery 2003). These studies made a conceptual shift in the discourse of social democracy in the Western narratives (Devika 2010).

Kerala's communist egalitarian development model is widely argued for two major social achievements; the struggle against inequalities driven by the caste system and the movement for the linguistic organization of Malayalam-speaking regions in Kerala state (Desai 2001; Lindberg 2001; Devika 2010). The broad alliance between landless industrial workers in the south, tenants in the north, and the oppressed sections from the three dominant religions (Hindu, Muslim, and Christian) in conjunction with the ideas of renaissance and modernity became the pillar of strength of the CPI government of 1957. This was the third phase of Kerala modernity (Jeffery 1978, 2010; Lieten 1982; Isaac 1985; Kannan 1988; Menon 1994; Heller 1999; Desai 2005; Raman 2017).

Victor M. Fic (1969) argues that the triumph of communists in Kerala was because of the implementation of 'Peaceful Transition', which was part of the Khrushchev Doctrine that came after De-Stalinization. Prakash Karat (1972) criticizes Fic's arguments by calling them bogus in his review. Karat (1972) mentions that the

Khrushchev model influenced the election strategies of the Communists. Still, the transition from Socialism to Communism could not happen through forming election strategies and winning the parliament and his understanding of capturing state power was ideologically flawed. After the Kerala legislative assembly election, CPI held its party congress in Amritsar in 1958, where they presented the Amritsar Thesis highlighting the achievements in Kerala (Fic 1970). K. Damodaran (1975) states that the majority in the Communist Party leadership thought that the workers captured power in Kerala through a peaceful electoral process and that Kerala had set an example of a peaceful road to socialism. P. Govinda Pillai (2011) argues that Damodaran's statement was wrong, and the leaders of the CPI put forward no such thought. Education, public health, and land reform policy were this government's primary agendas; these efforts were noted down in the history of modern Kerala.

While facing difficulties in the administrative reforms during the term, Chief Minister EMS Namboodiripad clinched the words of Vladimir Lenin:

“the entire history of the bourgeois parliamentary countries shows that a change of ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. This army, however, is rotten to the core with a non-democratic spirit; it is connected by thousands and millions of threads with the landlords and bourgeoisie and is completely dependent on them. It is a terrible illusion, a terrible self-deception of the people to attempt by means of this state apparatus to carry out such reforms” (Lenin 1917: 366-67).

EMS Namboodiripad pointed out that “the socio-economic development of the state was impossible until basic transformations are made in the existing administrative system, for the present system, handed down to us from the erstwhile British rulers and their Indian allies, is inefficient, while it is unjust and oppressive in its relation to the basic masses producing the wealth of the country” (Namboodiripad 1957: 12). EMS Namboodiripad's efforts to seek Russia's help for the developmental projects in Kerala were widely publicized by the media when he went to attend the Communist International Congress (Schoenfeld 1959). M. N. Govindan Nair, the then Kerala state secretary of the CPI, made it clear that the party couldn't bring a revolution under the limitations of the Indian parliamentary system. Still, the communists will work within the limitations of the system for the betterment of the working-class (Times of India 1957). In Schoenfeld's (1959) interview, EMS Namboodiripad said that his ministry proved to the world that the democratic system is not alien to the communists.

At the same time, the economic development plan of Jawaharlal Nehru at the centre considered the Soviet Union as a model. Nehruvian socialism also inspired EMS Namboodiripad to become a communist (Namboodiripad 1999; Raman 2017). Under Nehru, India embraced Soviet development patterns like advances in scientific and technical education, scientific management of agriculture, hydroelectric power, heavy industrialization, etc. Before forming the government, CPI had a clear modernization plan for the state administration. Many of these egalitarian ideas faced serious challenges and could not be implemented according to the original vision due to the social realities (Devika 2010; Raman 2017). The Agrarian Relations Bill of 1959 and the Land Reform Act of 1969 were partially successful projects. One of the first projects by the Communist Government in Kerala which followed the Soviet and Nehruvian development ideas was the Mavoor Gwalior Rayons company in Calicut, which had investments from the Indian business group- Birla (Rammohan and Raman 1988).

The communist struggle for an alternative social development within the limitations of the Indian democratic system set a new 'third-way path' of social democracy similar to the model of western welfare states (Mannathukaren 2010). In reality, any reform in the state apparatus would not be possible through constitutional means. One of the prominent demands of the working class was land reforms which were resisted by the elite class and even led to the formation of the landowners association with members from all the dominant communities. This resulted in a violent campaign against the trade unions and workers (Osella and Osella 2000). The government faced serious backlash while trying to implement land reform policies and policies on education. Whenever the government tried to resolve these issues, the opposition used it against the communists (Lieten 1979).

There were a series of debates concerning the policies and ideological issues within the CPI and the INC. As part of the Soviet-inspired people's planning, CPI wanted to centralize all the foreign-owned plantations in Kerala. This was opposed by Congress Party and the Central Government, especially Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. G. K. Lieten (1979) quotes *The Hindu*, 2 February 1957 that Jawaharlal Nehru was not ready to lose the nation's good name for a few crores of rupees. Nehru's stands were contradictory because he also believed that the central issue in building a democratic and dynamic republic is the question of land (Herring 1988). Namboodiripad held discussions with the centre, hoping for a positive change in the

land policies. Namboodiripad wanted to take back the state's land from the foreign companies as he believed it was essential for the betterment of the life of the common masses. But the Congress-led Central Government was not ready for this. Even the so-called socialists like Praja Socialist Party (People's Socialist Party) strongly opposed the land reform policy. Nissim Mannathukaren (2011: 388) quotes the Navajevan magazine, 18 April 1957, the speech of a PSP representative in the Select Committee Report discussion:

Tens of thousands of murders will take place after the passage of the bill. What has come down through many generations will break down and disappear . . . It is a sin to take away somebody else's land and wealth, equivalent to murder . . . I had felt earlier that it is not yet time to introduce adult suffrage here. That is the reason why they (Communists) have been able to come to power and introduce this expropriation bill.

Here democracy is blamed for the ascent of the communists to power. Namboodiripad, as the Chief Minister, said that his government's policies would not eradicate trade and business. Still, at the same time, the government will not allow exploitation by the owners. The act, which allowed a considerable amount of private capital, had similarities with the New Economic Policy (NEP) brought under Lenin in the Soviet Union. K. P. Gopalan, the Minister of Industries, stated that the government would provide all the possible facilities to the private industries under the rules and regulations, and they will get reasonable profit out of it, provided the workers get a reasonable share of the profit (Lieten 1979). These statements made the government's policies clear to the public and countered the campaign that the Soviet-inspired government was totally against trade and business. The first Finance Minister of the state - C. Achutha Menon, presented the first budget as a surplus budget while all the other Indian states had a 77 crore deficit altogether. The number of jobs and job seekers increased. Kerala was one of the first Indian states to provide loans to small-scale industries.

To make the state working-class friendly, the Communist Party implemented a 25% immediate increase in the pay package. The Finance Minister made an effort to rationalize and adjust the pay structure. The wages of various low-paid employees were increased. G. K. Lieten (1979), quoting the *Times* report of 29 April 1957, said that the Communist Party-led government in Kerala increased the wage of the village headman from 6.75 dollars to 11 dollars monthly while the ministers themselves cut their monthly salary from 155 dollars to 72 dollars. Bonus allowance in the state

service was fixed as 8 per cent compared to the previous system of 5 to 8 per cent according to the department's income. Union Industrial Minister Morarji Desai criticized this position of the EMS ministry. He argued that the workers should be kept alive before making them prosperous. The wage increase policy in the private sector and the Minimum Wage Act were also implemented in the private industries. Another important policy was the maternity relief fund for female workers.

The wage and working hour policies had positively impacted the lower strata of society. They acknowledged the communists and accepted the Communist government as their government (Lieten 1979). Through such policies, the government gained the mass support of the poor. K. Damodaran (1975: 47) witnessed an incident, saying that the poor people countered the police officers who threatened them often by saying, "Now you daren't attack us because our government is in power. Namboodiripad is our leader. We are ruling." The land reform bill was one of the major policies implemented by the communists in Russia after the revolution. Regarding the efforts by the communists on the land reform, T. K. Oommen (1975: 157) says:

The Communists of Kerala made tremendous efforts to mobilize the peasants and the workers in support of the bills they introduced, but their efforts could not match the combined efforts of the local landed interests and the mighty, constitutional weapons of the Union Government. Thus, even when legislation is followed or paralleled by a social movement, the successful implementation of legislation depends on the nature and content of the opposition it faces.

This gave new light to the implementation of workers' rights. It became evident that land reforms were possible only through mobilization among classes and pre-existing caste and communal identities (Mannathukaren 2011).

At this time, there was an extreme concentration of wealth and power in certain sections in Kerala that the institutions like the court, press and other state missionaries were hardly sympathetic to any reforms in favour of the oppressed. The communists understood that rights could be won only through continuous struggles (Oommen 1975). Land reform was one of the major policies that helped the communist parties to secure support among the working class (Mannathukaren 2011). The first communist government acted as a watershed while addressing caste issues at the local level (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967). The number of cases of caste bias got lowered where the communist party was active (Lieten 1979). The Government took clear and punitive actions against the upper caste sections for their atrocities and

discrimination against the lower castes (Ayyappan 1965; Alexander 1973). Because of this, the Pulaya community stopped conversion to Christianity. They realized that social discrimination does exist among religions. This politicization brought them into the Communist Party (Koshy 1968; Alexander 1968; Oommen 1971). According to Lieten (1979: 37), “the class antagonisms within the various castes have been revealed mainly by the activities of the communist organizations”.

In Nissim Mannathukaren’s (2011: 403) view, “the struggle for recognition was now interlinked with the struggle for redistribution of material resources without displacing the latter.” In addition to the Ezhavas and Pulayas, economically backward Nair, Christian, and Muslim labourers, along with the middle class, crossed the line and joined CPI and later CPI(M). The first communist government showed that public education was an apparatus of social emancipation. Education was made accessible to the masses, including the marginalized sections, and the curriculum incorporated secular, rational, and scientific outlooks that impacted the students’ social relations. Some of the founders of the Communist Party in Kerala, including P. Krishna Pillai and A. K. Gopalan, were initially school teachers and considered rational teaching a part of social transformative politics (Bijukumar 2019).

The mid-day meals, the distribution of free study materials, scholarships and stipends enabled the lower caste children to enter schools. As Franke and Chasin (1991) point out, the schools launched affirmative action programs for lower caste children enrolled at the school. The public education initiatives by the state governments gained strength in Kerala not only with the reservation policy but also due to the support programs. Bijukumar (2019: 5011) notes, “the ‘school feeding’ lessened the caste feeling among the children and broke down traditional social barriers. Thus social capital developed.”

Apart from school education, the Communist Party also concentrated on providing education for the working class. A. K. Gopalan (1976) told the story of Alora Krishnan, a maid in a landlord’s house in Malabar. Generally, people like her had no opportunity to acquire an education in the first half of the 20th century. But through the night school arranged by the peasant movement, she became capable of giving speeches and writing poetry (Gopalan 1976; Devika 2010). The communist government in Kerala was dismissed by the use of special power by the President of India under the instigation of the Congress-led Union Government in 1959. This happened following the notorious anti-communist *Vimochana Samaram* (Liberation

Struggle) of 1959, led by the Nair Service Society (NSS), Church, Muslim League, and the Congress Party. The narrative being spread against the communist government was built on top of the same old European campaign of 'threat to religion by the satanic force of Communism'. The six-week-long liberation struggle succeeded with the centre's support, and the Union government dismissed the Kerala state government. The government was overthrown mainly because of leftist movements like land reforms and education bills, which Congress failed to address (Oommen 1975). EMS Namboodiripad, in his work *Twenty Eight Months of Kerala a Retrospect* (1959), mentions that the Communist Party could not succeed in building a revolution, particularly for one state. Still, the party led a democratic government that immediately eased the hardship of the oppressed masses. At the same time, the CPI government exposed the hypocrisy of Congress by implementing fairly radical promises which Congress couldn't (Namboodiripad 1959; Herring 1983, 1988).

It was proved beyond doubt later that it was the western interest to eradicate communism globally that worked in Kerala too. Ellsworth Bunker, the US ambassador to India during that time, and Patrick Moynihan, who held the position in the early 1970s, had publicly accepted that the CIA had provided financial aid to the liberation struggle against the communist government (Isaac 2012). In the 1960 state legislative assembly elections, despite the liberation struggle and communal polarization by the Congress, Church, NSS, and Muslim League, the Communist Party increased its vote share from 40.7% to 43.3% (Lieten 1979). Except in three constituencies, the party's support increased everywhere. With four candidates, the Christian-dominated constituencies of the Kottayam district set an example of the increasing vote share from 29 to 40 per cent and in some constituencies' even more than 50 per cent of Catholics voted for the CPI (Election Commission of India 1960; Bhagat 1962; Nair 1960; Weiner and Field 1975).

4.2 The Split in Kerala's Communist Movement

Some disagreements had started brewing inside the Communist Party from 1947 onwards. One could see its effects in the discussions on the *Calcutta Thesis* of the party and the positions over Khrushchev's report against Stalin in 1956. C. Achutha Menon openly opposed the *Calcutta Thesis* of the party (Surendran 2021). After the Punnapra -Vayalar Struggle, the anti-Soviet propaganda gained more strength. A group of leftists had differences of opinion against the Communist Party and created a

platform called 'Forum for Democratic Justice' in the 1950s (Ganesh 2021). The international political developments had a strong impact on Kerala society. The conflicts over the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956 and Khrushchev's report against Stalin substantiate this. The leadership of the Communist Party in Kerala faced a lot of internal and external challenges regarding this. While on one side, the critics projected this issue and questioned the Soviet lenience and even the relevance of the Communist Party, on the other side, the party itself was divided on the Stalin – Khrushchev positions. The Khrushchev report was unacceptable for leaders like Namboodiripad, while leaders like K. Damodaran fully supported the report. Major debates in India and Kerala focused more on whether Stalin was right or wrong rather than the democratic structure of the party (Elayidom 2019).

The news of Khrushchev's report came like an explosion (Damodaran 1975). Most of the party leaders were not convinced by the attack on Stalin. CPI founding leader K. Damodaran (1975) mentioned that he lost two to three days of sleep after reading the 20th CPSU conference report. However, the undivided CPI rejected Khrushchev's unhistorical approach to the 'Personality Cult of Stalin' (Namboodiripad 1991). Later, Party became divided, and the comrades stood as two fractions. K. R. Gauri Amma (2019), the first Revenue Minister of Kerala and people like her, took a strong pro-Stalin position. The veteran CPI(M) leader M. M. Lawrence (2018) has mentioned that he was a strong advocate of Khrushchev, which earned him the nickname 'Khrushchev' among the party circles. Irrespective of the later split in the party, a strong divide emerged among the leadership. But this difference of opinion did not affect the local-level cadre of the Communist Party. The grassroots movements of the CPI in Kerala were getting stronger despite the ideological clashes among the leadership (Ganesh 2013). After the split, the CPI fully supported the Khrushchev report. The CPI(M)'s official position continues to be against the Khrushchev report, raised several questions, and was suspicious about the report. They criticized that Khrushchev's policies were not too different from that of Stalin's (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2009).

The CPI completely stood with the official Soviet position and removed all the pictures and works of Stalin from their offices, conference halls, libraries, etc. EMS Namboodiripad (2012), in his 1972 speech titled "Remembering Stalin," says that there should be a critical analysis of the merits and demerits of Stalin, and nobody can completely reject Stalin while dealing with the history of international communism.

After the official split in the Communist Party, it was evident that the CPI(M) was not ready for a complete rejection of Stalin. They agreed that Stalin had committed grave mistakes and his term consisted of both positive and negative aspects. According to EMS Namboodiripad (1991), the socialist achievements of Stalin's time inspired millions from the colonial world, including India that they become partisans of the struggle for socialism, democracy, national liberation and peace. C. Achutha Menon also registered his protest against the Soviet intervention in Hungary and moved away from the CPI in 1956. He was brought back to the party by K. Damodaran, who was pro-Soviet then (Pillai 2011; Venu 2019; Elayidom 2019; Ramankutty 2021).

The Sino-Soviet dispute in 1959 created strong fractional tendencies inside the CPI. At the same time, the Congress-led Union Government imprisoned several communist leaders under preventive detention during the Indo-China war of 1962. The state alleged that the communists were working for China and were Chinese spies. In Kerala, the leaders like C. Achutha Menon, though he was associated with the nationalist fraction, were jailed. The CPI's official split in 1964 occurred due to several reasons. One among them was the question of whether to adopt the Soviet model or the Chinese model ideological path. A series of issues included its ideology, programme and tactics (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2009).

After the 1964 split, the majority of the leadership remained in CPI, while 32 members came out of the National Council and formed the new party CPI (Marxist), which was more radical. They were successful in building new mass organizations, including the Students' Federation of India (SFI), Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) and trade and peasant unions like the Centre of Indian Trade Union (CITU) and All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) in Kerala. Most of the leadership, from state committees to district committees, maintained the affiliation with the CPI in Kerala, but on the ground level, a vast majority of the cadres joined hands with the CPI(M). The CPI's base gradually vanished from the local to branch level (Damodaran 1975). The party cadres believed that the CPI went along with the parliamentary politics of Congress and that CPI(M) was the only party that could bring a revolution to the proletariat (Damodaran 1975). In Kerala, the base of the Communist Party was formed by the oppressed and the downtrodden masses. They ideologically stood against the feudal and casteist section led by the right-wingers. When the CPI took a political line as per the direction of the USSR to go along with Congress, it resulted in the shifting of ground-level mass support towards CPI(M).

After the split, the popular campaigns of the CPI(M) leaders like EMS Namboodiripad and A. K. Gopalan got wide acceptance, and their political line was much more convincing to the masses (Baby 2020).

After the split in the party, the second EMS ministry took charge in 1967 with a predominantly left wing coalition of seven parties, including three national parties, CPI(M), CPI, United Socialist Party (SSP) and four regional parties, including Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Muslim League, Peasant and Workers Party (KTP) and Kerala Socialist Party (KSP). EMS Namboodiripad, in his R. R. Kale Memorial lecture at the Gokhale Institute in Poona in 1968, mentioned that the ruling class would use the luxury of parliamentary democracy to protect their interest. The working class should use our constitution as an instrument of struggle (Hardgrave 1970).

About the party's electoral victory of 1967, the CPIM's Political Organizational Report (1968: 178) states that "state governments under the present setup have neither real autonomy nor adequate powers to undertake any radical and effective measures of relief and reform." The report also mentions that "in clear class terms, our Party's participation in such governments is one specific form of struggle to win more and more people, and more and more allies for the proletariat and its allies in the struggle for the cause of Peoples' Democracy and at a later stage for socialism" (CPI(M) 1968: 171). But the Marxists could not proceed with this alliance because of the allies' differences of opinion, which resulted in the Seven-Party Front Government's dissolution in 1969.

The CPI leader M. N. Govindan Nair, known as 'Kerala Khrushchev', later stated in an interview that "we take the view that the capitalist system will unleash its discontent and there is no need for the CPI to unleash it further . . . The CPI(M) believed that the opportunity should be used to unleash discontent — the basic problems of the coalition arise from this difference in attitude" (Hunter 1972: 62). The words of M. N. Govindan Nair, the senior leader of CPI, gave a clear picture of the ideological difference between the two communist parties during that period. While the EMS-led state government was in power, the CPI(M) gave a slogan of 'Agitation and Administration' as they were fighting the central government policies at the same time while leading the state government in Kerala. The CPI differed with this slogan and said that agitation and administration would not work together. Countering this, the Marxists in Kerala quoted Lenin's polemics against the *Narodnics* that extremism

as another kind of opportunism like revisionism, and these were two sides of the middle-class petty bourgeoisie's vacillation. They targeted the CPI and CPI(ML) together through this logic (Hardgrave 1970). After the collapse of this ministry, the Marxists maintained their vote base in the consecutive elections to the democratic bodies, proving their mass base among the poor.

After the dispersal of the CPI(M) led government, Congress took the initiative to form another ministry in 1969 and made CPI's C. Achutha Menon the Chief Minister. Being close to the INC, the USSR had encouraged CPI to form a government with Congress. CPI also defended this alliance with their Soviet-sponsored political line of the 'National Democracy.' CPI(M) took their political position named 'People's Democracy', which was against the CPI's position of building socialism through a political alliance with INC. The Marxists strongly put forward the idea of building socialism in India by capturing states through electoral means by the Communist Party (Klatt 1972). The period witnessed the imposition of the National Emergency Act by the Indira Gandhi regime. The CPI-led coalition government in Kerala stood in support of the emergency.

During this period, the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev's leadership was close to Indira Gandhi. The USSR also extended its support to the emergency. Since India was the strongest ally of the Soviet Union in South Asia, the USSR supported Congress in every decision. Out of the Soviet compulsion, CPI remained in the coalition government in Kerala. The then Chief Minister, C. Achutha Menon, was not happy with the imposition of the emergency (Ramankutty 2021). USSR was never really happy with the national situation following the emergency (Nossiter 1978). The period witnessed police brutality, the scuttling of press freedom, and unlimited power for the autocratic government.

The CPI-led state government in Kerala lasted seven years, including the extension of two years due to the emergency. As a result of the brutalities of the emergency, the North Indian states strongly stood against the Indira regime. They supported the socialist movement led by the Janata Party under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan. Indira Gandhi herself was defeated in the next election. The Kerala election result was entirely different. The Congress-led front got a sweeping victory in Kerala as the JP movement was never strong in the state. But at the national level, the coalition government in Kerala and the party's support for the national emergency became a setback for the CPI. The North Indian vote base of the party

vanished in the next election, creating a heated fight inside the party. In 1977, C. Achutha Menon expressed his disagreement to continue as Chief Minister. The Bhatinda Congress of the CPI, which took place in 1978, came up with a resolution that the party's decision to support the Indira Gandhi regime was completely wrong (CPI 1978).

With this, the CPI backed out from its alliance with Congress in Kerala. The coalition ministry led by the CPI leader and Chief Minister P. K. Vasudevan Nair was dissolved. The decision of the CPI to move together with the CPI(M) gained the support of the CPSU. The Left Democratic Front, under the leadership of CPI(M), marked the victory in the next election with a good majority. The official CPSU mouthpiece *Pravda* praised this alliance and its victory in Kerala (Gupta 1981). During this period, CPI(M) came closer to the USSR. CPI(M) Politburo's support of the Afghan intervention against the USSR was an example of this (Horn 1983).

4.3 The Kerala Model of Development

The 1970s and 80s witnessed discussions on Kerala's development index, which was much ahead of other Indian states. Kerala had marked immense progress under the Communist-led governments. The state was regarded as one of India's most politically turbulent and backward states until the 1970s. From the 1970s onwards, the world started to study and reorganize a particular way of progress in the state as the Kerala Model of Development. This happened because of the state's remarkable achievements like the highest literacy rate, lowest infant mortality, longest life expectancy. It was the only state where women outnumbered men regarding sex ratio. Kerala set an Indian example of the quality of life in a relatively peaceful way without massive disruption (Jeffery 2009). Except for the two Southern Indian states- Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the lower caste political mobilization did not disturb the upper caste political domination (Jaffrelot 2003; Heller 2020). The women in Kerala have comparatively better autonomy than in other parts of India. Girls went to school in large numbers, and most classrooms had more girls than boys.

Research conducted in the 1970s found a paradox that challenged the existing established wisdom of developing social and economic growth (CDS and UN 1977). This was achieved through a series of public politics and public action by the Communist Parties in the second half of the 20th century (Sen and Dreze 1989). The research found that Kerala was economically poor with a greater social development

index. This included a strong public health system, falling birth rates, low infant mortality, longevity of life, high levels of literacy, and a better standard of living (Heller 1999; Parayil 2000; Ramachandran 1997; Devika 2010).

The social model of human development and progress makes Kerala a comparatively better place to live (Jeffery 1978; Franke and Chasin 1989; Oommen 1990; Dreze and Sen 1995; Parayil 2000). Kerala's development experience contains not only social capital alone but also effective public policy, active public mobilization, and a radical civil society, which played an important role in socio-economic development. Radical politics always constituted an integral part of the development process. It initiated the process of development and highly politicized social relations. As Harris (2001) points out, "public action and political mobilization in the state were instrumental in bringing about many radical reforms, including land reforms." According to him, radical reforms are the results of "not the social capital that lies in the congeries of voluntary associations highlighted by Robert Putnam, but rather powerful class and mass organizations" (Bijukumar 2019: 512).

The major socialist policies behind this development index are social security measures for the agricultural workers, old-age pensions, minimum wages, rural employment guarantee schemes and homestead rights by the state governments, all inspired by the Soviet Union. Such initiatives have had remarkable impacts and made a comparable difference between Kerala and other Indian states. Even a major critic of the CPI(M), Victor M. Fic (1970), agreed with EMS's words that what Kerala was in the last 15 years, India will become in the course of the next ten years. According to Klatt (1972), an outstanding leader and intellectual, EMS Namboodiripad contributed to the present shape of Kerala more than any other political leader.

Amartya Sen (1999) argues that "to achieve as much as Kerala has done for a population of its size is no mean record in world history" (Taramangalam 2010: 364). There is no sharp rural and urban divide in Kerala like most other Indian states. The high literacy rate partially explains this (Sunder 1989; Bijukumar 2019). The concept of the development model put forward by the state of Kerala, whatever its drawbacks, continues to top the country's development index. In 2014, India received more than 70 billion dollars from Kerala as remittances, around 36 per cent of the state's domestic product (Economist 2015; Tharamangalam 2019).

The generations of strong and able political leadership inclined with Marxist ideology and deep-rooted activism among the village poor left the communists in

Kerala unaffected by the Soviet collapse (Ganesh 2021; Rajeev 2021; Nair 2021). Indeed, whatever the disagreements, the projection of the Soviet Union as an ideal and alternative model of society based on equality helped the reform movements by the communists in a society with deep-ridden inequalities. Irrespective of all the negative sides, for the fight against social and economic discrimination, this utopian model construction gave much energy to the Malayalee oppressed masses under the hold of the Red Flag.

The various political developments in the international communist movements and the Soviet Union had raised several questions and challenges for the Soviet-inspired thoughts in Kerala. But largely, the Soviet Union was admired by a major section of the people. People are always in need of a model to inspire their movements. The history and various narratives on the Soviet Union have successfully played that part. Even after the split in the Communist Party and strong disagreements over the CPSU, the inspiring role of the Soviet Union has continued.

Chapter 5

The Influence of Soviet Literature and Socialist Realism in Kerala's Cultural Public Sphere and Imagination

This chapter deals with the deep-rooted cultural influence of the Soviet Union in Kerala. The Soviet land was considered an ideal world by a large section of people in modern Kerala. The deep influence of the Soviet Union is visible in the Malayalam literature, songs, performing arts, and the cultural activism of the people. The majority of the 20th century Malayalam literary figures wrote the Soviet Union as an important theme in their literary works. The communist activists placed their idea of a universal project of emancipation against the unequal and oppressive social system through cultural activism. Unlike many other Indian states, the cultural intervention of the communists through Soviet-inspired imaginations was deep and strong in Kerala. The creation of this 'national popular' helped the communists to come to power and sustain themselves as the largest political party in Kerala. The various sections of this chapter analyse the different aspects of the Soviet cultural influences in Kerala.

5.1 Imaginations to Build an Ideal World

The spread of information about pre-revolutionary Russia in Kerala is correlated to the spread of Russian literature. Although it started to get translated to Malayalam in a great amount only from the 1950s, the ideas spread among native English readers earlier than that (Ganesh 2021; Nair 2021). From the beginning, the most influenced section on Russian literature was the middle-class of the population (Thomas 2021). As part of the social reform and anti-colonial movements, print media and reading culture grew in the early 20th century Kerala (Jeffrey 2009). This had initially made the Russian political developments attractive to the Malayalees. The literacy rate was 29 per cent in Travancore, 34 per cent in Cochin and 14 per cent in Malabar in 1931, and an average Indian literacy of 8 per cent (Census of India 1931). The reasons behind the highest literacy rate were the result of the propagation of modern education by the leaders and the organizations of social reform movements, the promotion of educational institutions by the native rulers and the work of Christian missionaries as part of religious propagation. The literacy rate helped the development of many new local printing presses with magazines, weeklies and dailies (Jeffrey 2009). This helped to spread new ideas across the globe, which inclined with the literature on social

reform movements, anti-colonial struggles, the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. The people of Kerala had started reading about Karl Marx and Communism through the news on the political developments in early 20th century Russia (Namboodiripad 2017).

The core ideas of the French Revolution, like Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, had influenced the Kerala intelligentsia, and they found a meaningful follow-up of the same in the Russian Revolution. The European renaissance movements and thinkers like Mazzini, Garibaldi and Jefferson etc., were an attraction among the Kerala intelligentsia, who later turned towards the revolutionary ideas from Russia (Ganesh 2021). This influence was mainly related to a utopian concept of equality formed among the leaders of the social reform movement through their experiences with caste, feudalism and imperialism (Ganesh 2021; Pillai 2019; Mannathukkaren 2013; Menon 1998).

The prominent figure of the social reform movement in Kerala, Sree Narayana Guru, responded to the ideas of the Russian Revolution by noting that it is the same ideas that he also wanted to propagate (Kunjahammed 2019; Pillai 2019). According to Kallayil Raghavan Pillai (2019), as per Sree Narayana Guru's propagation "*Velakundu Orumichu Cheruka*" (the workers should unite based on their work), the first trade union in Kerala, the Travancore Labour Association were organized in Alappuzha, the industrial town of Kerala in 1922 (Pillai 2019; Nair 2006; Kunjahammed 2019). The early Communist leaders like S. Damodaran used to quote Sree Narayana Guru's message in his speeches to explain that "we the workers should unite" (Pillai 2019). This ideological inspiration has made Malayalam literary critic K. P. Appan call Sree Narayana Guru a Spiritual Socialist (Appan 2021; Siddeek 2019).

Revolutionary Russia had become an ideal model for a major section of the second-generation leaders of the Kerala social reform movements. This is mainly because they found it as an alternative model, perfect for fighting against imperialism and feudalism in the Kerala context. They imagined that the working class movement in Kerala should develop like Russia. The story of overthrowing the Tsarist Empire and feudal lords was much inspiring to a society where strong social and economic oppression and inequalities have prevailed (Isaac 1985; Ganesh 2021). In the early 20th century, the cultural intervention of the socialists played a key role in reaching these ideas among the working masses. The political movement of the Left got mass

momentum and enhanced its role through its sustained interference in the cultural arena of Malayalee society (Mannathukkaren 2013). Unlike the other Indian states, as a stronghold of the communist movement, the Left cultural movement had deep-rooted among the village poor in Kerala (Bijukumar 2019). The leaders propagated the ideology of a radical socialist movement based on equality through their cultural and literary interventions, public speeches and activism among the working class. These strong critics of the existing social structure have wanted to radically alter society through a new ideological framework (Jeffery 1984).

The sustained cultural campaigns among the village poor are the main reason behind the successful incorporation of Soviet ideological thoughts in the political movements. Here an alien ideology became a popular thought among the public. This happened with the effort to develop a counter-culture to challenge the existing hegemony of feudal, caste and religious traditions in mainstream society (Mannathukkaren 2013). In the early 1930s, prominent political leaders like P. Krishnapillai, A. K. Gopalan, EMS Namboodiripad, K. Damodaran, K. A. Keraleeyan, N. C. Shekhar and N. P. Kurukkal etc. projected the achievements of the Russian Revolution, Soviet concept of an equal society and highlighted it as an ideal model to the Kerala society (Sekhar 2010; Pavanan 2011; CPI(M) 2018). The economic development (planned economy) of the 1930s and the military victories (victory against fascism) by the Soviet Union under Stalin was the first attraction toward Marxism for EMS Namboodiripad's generation. This is similar to the spread of Soviet popularity in the global south countries like Cuba, Vietnam, China, Korea, etc. (Namboodiripad 2017).

From the 1940s onwards, through a radical cultural intervention, the communists enjoyed almost unquestioned hegemony in Kerala's socio-cultural public sphere (Devika 2010). A new genre of songs and the popular theatre was born, borrowed from the folk culture (Mannathukkaren 2013). The emergence of socialist realism played a key role in forming a new performance, literary and artistic tradition in Malayalam. This radical alteration of the cultural public sphere of the Malayalee community brought a new social change from the bottom level. The movement immensely contributed to the change of being tagged as the 'Mad House' of caste inequalities by Swami Vivekananda to a progressive and secular model with active political interventions (Nossiter 1982; Bijukumar 2019; Rajagopal 2019). For the Leftists, it was a bit easy to start a counter-cultural movement in a society where the

common masses had very little access to the mainstream upper caste - Brahminical cultural and art forms. But initially, the revolutionary movement contributed to a structural transformation of the society out of inspiration from the Russian Revolution. In this way, the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) originated and was organized inside the Congress Party and later transformed into the Communist Party in the 1930s.

The basic idea that emerged out of the October Revolution was initially the revolutionary emergence of a new society based on equality (Bijukumar 2019). One among the great poets of Malayalam, Kumaran Asan (1963), in his 1922 poem *Duravastha* (Tragic Tale), propagated a strong fight against the existing social structure. The lines “*Mattuvin Chattangale, Swayamallengil Mattumathukalee Ningalethan*” (Change the Traditions, Else they will be Your Downfall) in *Duravastha* have marked the most revolutionary propagations of that period (early 20th century).¹⁴ These sloganeering lines gave him the name ‘poet of revolution and poet of the renaissance’ (Mundassery 2004; Sankaran 2000; Namboodiripad 2012; Pavanan 2011). Kumaran Ashan’s great poems like *Duravastha*, *Chandala Bhishuki*, *Chinthavishtayaya Seetha* etc., influenced revolutionary Russia (Kunjahammed 2019). The literary figures and the leaders of the social reform movements started to write about Russia to introduce the possibility of establishing a working-class state.

Rasika Ranjini magazine published an article in its 1905 January-February issue titled “*Russia Chakravarthyude Amrithethu*” (Feast of the Russian Emperor), detailing the cruelties of Tsar Nicolas II by C. S. Gopala Panikkar. In 1905 December journalist K. Ramakrishnapillai wrote in the newspaper *Keralan* about the revolutionary movement of 1905 in Russia. Dr Palppu, Barrister A. K. Pillai, and Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai discussed and appreciated the 1905 movement in Russia (Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011). The first book on Marx or Marxism in any Indian language is published in Malayalam, written by Swadeshabhimani Ramakrishna Pillai titled *Karl Marxinte Jeevacharithram* (Biography of Karl Marx) in 1912, published five years before the October Revolution. The biography of Karl Marx in China was published only in 1919 by Yuan Quan (Joshy & Damodaran 1975; Jeffrey 1978; Namboodiripad 2017; CPI(M) 2018; Pavanan 2011). Later, K.

¹⁴The poem *Duravastha* also includes very problematic content while describing the Muslim communities in the context of the Malabar Rebellion. But it has raised strong thoughts on the upcoming changes in the existing traditions in the caste Hindu society and gave a message for radically altering the existing social structures.

Damodaran published the biography of Karl Marx with more details in 1934 (CPI(M) 2020).

Swadeshabhmani Ramakrishna Pillai wrote a series of articles on the Russian Revolution, Socialism, Communism, and Communist Manifesto etc., in 1913-14 in *Athmaposhini* magazine owned by the well-known poet Vallathol Narayana Menon published from Kunnankulam, Thrissur (Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011). V. V. Velukkutty's Arayan Masika (Arayan Monthly) has actively published the news of the Russian Revolution in Kerala (Pillai 2021: 43; Nair 2019; 2021). The first two articles published in Kerala after the October Revolution was in *Mithavadi* and *Athmaposhini* by C. Krishnan and Ambadi Narayana Menon. In *Mithavadi*, December 1917, C. Krishnan wrote an article on the similarities between the struggling masses of prerevolutionary Russia and India. In December 1917 and January 1918, Ambadi Narayana Menon mentions some positive notes in his article titled *Bandhanasthanayirunna Russia* (Russia was Imprisoned) in *Athmaposhini* magazine to clarify the misunderstanding of the Russian Revolution (Menon 1917; Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011). Sardar K. M. Panikkar wrote an article in *Athmaposhini* in 1918 and discussed his doubts about the new Russian social formations (Panikkar 1918; Pavanan 2011). Although he supported the breaking of the existing orthodox social structure, he was suspicious about the future of the new system. The monthly magazine *Lakshmi Vilasam* used to come with articles on revolutionary Russia in the first initial period (Nair 2019). The *Lakshmi Vilasam* was an economic and political review published from Kottakkal by P. V. Gangadhara Varyar, the founder of the famous Kottakkal Arya Vaidhya Sala (Kottakkal Ayurvedic Hospital) (Nair 2021).

A rationalist and one of the important leaders of the renaissance movement Sahodaran K. Ayyappan, in his poem *Ezhavolbodhanam* in 1918, coined the term *Sakhav* (Comrade) first in the Malayalam language. This was the first poem on Russian Revolution in Malayalam. He urged the Ezhava youth to unite and fight against Kerala society's deep-ridden religious bankruptcy, malicious traditions, customs, and the oppressive feudal monarchy. He also reminded the youth that they should remember the Russian Revolution whenever they feel tired of their struggles, as the oppressed youth of Russia fought and won against the same kind of evil powers (Ayyappan 1981). Sahodaran's poem *Navavarsham* (New Era), published in 1919, discussed the occasion of the people's welcoming of Chingam (the first month in the Malayalam era). He discussed that the month of *Chingam* produced a great natural

beauty, but the common masses still lived with social inequalities. He also noted a wind coming from the North West side (Russia) with hopeful news, which should be the message of this new era (Ayyappan 1981). Alappuzha's newly emerged working class first heard about the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union through Sahodaran's poems (Sanu 1980). Sahodaran Ayyappan started the Brotherhood Movement (*Sahodara Sangham*) and promoted inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining from the inspiration of the very ideology of the Russian Revolution.

In 1922, the great poet of modern Malayalam literature, Vallathol Narayana Menon, wrote a poem titled *Mappu* (Apology), describing the class contradictions in Kerala society. This poem first mentioned the Malayalam translation of the term Capitalist as *Muthalali*. A new vocabulary came into being in the Malayalam language through this movement. Malayalam poet Bodheswaran¹⁵ wrote a poem on Red Flag in the 1930s (Ushakumari 1999). Vallathol had written poems titled *LeninteShavakudeeram* (*Lenin's Graveyard*), *Stalin Ha* and a collection of poems titled *Russiyil* (*In Russia*) (Vallathol 2004; Ushakumari 1999).

The new ideas and inspirations created by the Russian Revolution led to the birth of such poems in Malayalam literature (Pavanan 2011). K. Kumaran published his article titled *Lokopakarikal* (Helpers of the World) in *Sweshabhimani* in 1922, praising Lenin and his policies, arguing that he was the real leader of Europe and discussing his contributions to the Revolution and nation-building. The beginning of the leftist political and cultural movements marked the ionization or the iconoclasm of the personal cult of Lenin as a leadership figure in their narratives (Dutt 2019). This can be seen in the writings, poems, stories and performances in the early 20th century Kerala. The Left movement, at the beginning faced the dilemma of portraying Lenin as a world revolutionary leader and a better socialist than Gandhi. The alternate iconography of the communists projected a new socialist vision against Gandhi's bourgeois ideas. Despite the Gandhian empathy towards the untouchable village poor and peasantry, the ideology invested in the caste system and middle-class hegemony. As a counter to it, the Communists symbolized Leninist principles of egalitarian society and abolishing private wealth and property (Dutt 2019).

This period was when the British colonial rule censored all the information coming from Russia. But the freedom fighters were curious to search and access the

¹⁵Father of well-known Malayalam poet Sugatha Kumari.

news from the new Soviet Russia. The *Swadeshabhimani* newspaper had translated an article from *the Manchester Guardian* in 1923 explaining the changes in the dressing and lifestyle of the Russian people. As mentioned, before the Revolution, it was easy to find the class differences in peoples' dressing styles. Still, after the Revolution, this difference had vanished, and everyone's dressing became the same, and happiness sparked in people's faces. The same edition of *Swadeshabhimani* also reported on Jawaharlal Nehru's article in *The Hindu*, where Nehru mentions the jails in Soviet Russia. He points out how the prisons in Russia taught to transform a prisoner or culprit into normal life (Pavanan 2011).

The British ruling powers tried to prevent the news of the success of the Russian revolution from reaching the Indians. But the freedom fighters in Kerala were among the first to collect and circulate the news about Russia. The State Congress leader A. K. Pillai wrote a long biographical article on Lenin soon after his demise in January 1924. It was published in *Swadeshabhimani* in October 1924 (Pillai 1924: 83; Jeffery 1978; Pavanan 2011). The Travancore State Congress leader A. K. Pillai discontinued the Law School from Oxford and returned to Trivandrum to join the freedom struggle in 1921. His friend and well-known Malayalam writer P. Keshavadev (Soviet Land Nehru Award winner) saw a copy of *the Communist Manifesto* first in his life from A. K. Pillai's home in Trivandrum in 1927 (Keshavdev 2017). A. K. Pillai advised many to read Marxist literature, and with this inspiration, P. Keshavadev read *Ten Days that Shook the World*.

The first two Malayalam books on Russian Revolution were *Agniyum Sfulingavum* (Fire and Spark) in 1931 by P. Keshavadev (Keshavadev 2010; Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011). The first is on Russian Revolution and a critical note on Lenin's life. The second one is on the Russian situation before and after the revolution and a critique of Trotsky (Namboodiripad 1998). There he stressed the importance of Lenin's immediate announcement on power, peace and land reform after the Russian Revolution. This work is a criticism against Stalin regarding the sixth Comintern conference and the divide between Stalin and Trotsky. P. Keshavadev used to claim himself a Trotskyite (Ganesh 2021) openly. Keshavadev had a self-claim as the first communist in Kerala (Keshavadev 2017; Pavanan 2011). Orator and activist K. M. Ibrahim used to quote points from this book on Revolutionary Russia in most of his public speeches. The *Yukthivadi* (Rationalist) magazine published important points of *Agniyum Sfulingavum* (Fire and Spark) in 1931 (Balaram 2010). EMS Namboodiripad

reviewed Keshavadev's book in 1932 in a magazine named *Unni Namboodiri* by the Namboodiri Yuvajana Sangham under the leadership of V. T. Bhattathiripad. Edappali Karunakara Menon published in Malayalam translation of *the Communist Manifesto* in 1932 (CPI(M) 2020).

From 1932 onwards, the translated Marxism and Lenin articles began appearing in *Mathrubhumi* daily. The Soviet Union has referred as a realization of a Utopia where the workers owned and organized the agriculture and the industries for the needs and welfare of the people (Menon 1994). In 1932, K. P. Keshava Menon wrote a series in *Mathrubhumi Weekly* about the Russian Revolution titled *Russian Samrajyathinte Adhapanam* (The fall of Russian Empire) (Balaram 2010; Pavanan 2011). The *Prabhatham* (Morning) newspaper, started by the CSP leaders in 1935 with EMS Namboodiripad as the editor, covered a lot of news and articles on the positive developments in the Soviet Union and the achievements of the international communist movements (Pavanan 2011). N. E. Balaram (2010) mentions in a May 1st edition of the *Prabhatham* which discussed the workers' observation of May Day along with the slogan demanding the minimum wage as 8 *Anas* (0.50 rupees).

The workers' magazine *Thozhilali* propagated Marxism for educating the working class and gave solidarity to Soviet Russia. The *Thozhilali* weekly addressed a significant proportion of international issues, especially on the Soviet Union, the international communist movement and the principles of Marxism, Leninism etc. It even serialized the parts of *The Capital* by Marx and Engels (Balaram 2010). The editorials called for workers and peasants' solidarity to achieve a responsible government in Travancore (Jeffery 1984). The TLA had started a library and reading room in 1924 and the *Thozhilali* (Worker) as a weekly newspaper in 1925. It circulated until the workers' General Strike of 1938. From then, the Travancore state government banned it (Thozhilali 1937; George 1939; Jeffery 1984; Isaac 1985; Nair 2006).

5.2 The Emergence of a Counter Culture

The 1930s was an important period in the history of Kerala as a quick process of social decentralization took place different from the other Indian states. The Matrilineal system of governance in the upper caste Hindu families marked its quick collapse over the same period (Jeffery 1978; Nossiter 1982). The socialist thought emerged as an anti-thesis against the existing social structure, which made the

deconstruction of the society faster. According to Bijukumar (2019: 504), “In contrast to the two dominant conceptions of modernity – western capitalist modernity and eastern socialist modernity, which conceptualized that modernity is the result of industrialization and centralized planning and development, respectively – modernity in Kerala was the result of political actions from below, which forced the state to adopt radical social and political reforms...” The radical and sustained political actions not only radicalized civil society but also brought a new kind of modernity based on public reason against social conservatism and obscurantism (Panikkar 2008).

Moreover, they enabled visualizing a society based on equality and social justice, wherein the marginalized sections could come out of social stigma and achieve social mobility.” At the same time, in the Indian public sphere, the political struggles gained mass momentum as freedom movements, but simultaneously the cultural struggles marginalized and became increasingly weaker. Contrary to this, in Kerala, the cultural intervention of the communists emerged as an intense site of struggle. Initially, they successfully managed the nature and direction of this struggle (Panikkar 2008). The CPI officially formed in Kerala in 1939, and the majority of socialists inside the KPCC¹⁶ who led the Left cultural movement transformed into the Communist Party. Their movement much more focused on a socialist transformation of society.

In Kerala, the communists characterized the basic idea of the Soviet Union as a state without any social and economic exploitation and discrimination. Rather than simply propagating it in their speeches, the leaders of the Communist Party made an effort to materialize the same in their activism. The communist leaders born and brought up in upper-caste families took strong personal efforts to come out of that caste and class baggage. As part of this effort, they consistently visited the huts of the untouchable communities and spent time and discussions with them. As a political gesture, they purposefully asked for water to drink from these huts (Madhavan 2014). The communist leaders did it to gain the confidence of the lower caste sections, and that act itself was a revolutionary activity in mid-20th century Kerala (Kunhaman 2001). Because of these adventure acts against the social orthodoxy, the communists faced many challenges in their personal and family lives. The family members and

¹⁶ KPCC – Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee is the state committee of the Congress party.

their community friends started maintaining distance from them, throwing abuse and mocking them (Keshavadev 2017; Baby 2020).

When the British colonial rule made the communist party illegal in the 1940s, the first CPI state secretary of Kerala, P. Krishna Pillai, directed the leaders, including EMS Namboodripad and A. K. Gopalan etc. to go and spend their underground life in untouchable community houses (Patnaik 2017). M. Kunhaman recollects his memory of EMS Namboodripad as the first legislative assembly candidate who came and sat at his home, had some water and later requested votes from everyone. Candidates from other parties only used to command everyone to come outside their huts, and then with a well-maintained distance, they will seek a vote and leave (Kunhaman 2001; 2020). This act brought a new tradition and a profound and immense impact on the life of the people (Kunhaman 1996).

On the other side, Dilip Menon (1994: 175) argues, “the Soviet Union had less to do with any conscious attempt to recreate socialist society than an idealized notion of Utopia”, an argument challenged by the former’s historical experiences. While Menon (1994) is making his argument in the context of the communist movement in Malabar, these experiences with the Communist Party from the same region are standing in contestation against his claim.

According to Mannathukkaren (2013: 501), “A major outcome of communist cultural and political struggles is the move of the lower castes from symbolic criticism of the upper castes to real, material contestation with them.” The communist movement empowered the lower strata of the society, especially the Dalits, as their slave life began to change when they started to defy the upper caste landlords (Bhasi 1999). The communist mobilization of Dalit agricultural workers like Pulayas and Parayas led to their liberation from caste oppression to a certain extent (Bijukumar 2019).

The early leaders of the communist movement were mostly born and brought up in upper-caste families but initially adopted the ideology against the inequalities in the society and fought for equal opportunity and social justice out of inspiration from the very idea of the Russian Revolution. In the words of Mannathukkaren (2013: 495), “The communists tried to negotiate dualisms such as tradition/modernity and the universal/particular, with some success. Unlike many “Third World” nationalist projects, which emphasized cultural difference, the communist project attempted to link cultural difference with the universal project of emancipation.” The ideology of

working-class liberation by the Russian Revolution experimented in a highly exploitative society of Malayalees.

In the context of literary movements, in the first half of the 20th century, Malayalam literature was going through a renaissance. The main reason behind this was the influence of Marxian ideology and the Soviet Union (George 1972). It has to be noted that the period from 1930 to 1947 can be marked as the Soviet era in Malayalam literature (George 1972). The Red Literature in Malayalam lasted long, but its peak period lasted from 1937 to 1952. The prominent literary figure like P. Keshavadev, Ponkunnam Varkey, Thakazhi Shivasankara Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, S. K. Pottakkat and Uroob etc. are the products of this revolutionary age (George 2011). The magazines containing the literature on the Soviet Union were much influential among the readers. The *Yukthivadi* (Rationalist) magazine started in Calicut in 1930 by activists like M. C. Joseph, Appan Thampuran, Ayyappan, and C. V. Kunjuraman with the help of C. Krishnan Vakeel and P. P. Antony etc., played a key role in spreading rational and socialist ideas. This magazine has published many articles on the working class's achievements in the Soviet Union.

The youth organization Namboodiri Yuvajana Sangham and their magazine *Unninamboodiri* under the leadership of V. T. Bhattathiripad, played a key role in circulating radical socialist thoughts. The Magazine represents a radical transformation of the upper caste youth of Namboodiri Brahmins in Kerala. They promoted widow remarriage and inter-caste marriages, campaigned for a progressive social status for women and started their movement by throwing away the *Janeu* (divine thread of the Brahmins). V. T. Bhattathiripad's famous play *Adukkalayil Ninnu Arangathekku* (from the kitchen to the mainstream - 1929) is considered an important juncture of Kerala's social reform movement in terms of the fight for gender equality.

As one of the leaders of the 'Namboodiri Yuvajana Sangham,' the transformation of EMS Namboodiripad into a communist became easier. He expressed each of his political transformations through his writings. EMS Namboodiripad has translated Jayaprakash Narayan's (1936) *Why Socialism?* into Malayalam in 1938 (Namboodiripad 1999). In 1937 the Malabar *Vayanasala* Conference held in Calicut elected CSP activist K. Damodaran as convener and M. Sankaran, M. K. Kelu and K. P. R. Gopalan as members to lead the movement. In 1938 EMS Namboodiripad, P. Narayanan Nair and Subramanya Sharma started a

socialist book club in Calicut. They rigorously published Malayalam versions of the Soviet books include Lenin's works like *What is to be done*, *To the Poor of the villages*, *State and Revolution* and Stalin's works like *Philosophy*, *Victory of the Socialism in USSR* and Georgy Dimitrov's *United Front against Fascism* and Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, *Wages and Capital*. The *May Day* translated by K. Damodaran, *Fascism Means* translated by Subramanya Sharma, *Socialism Means* translated by EMS Namboodiripad. A Literary Cooperative Society introduced in 1945 named Sahithya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham (SPCS) to publish books at affordable and discounted rates (Bijukumar 2019).

The story of the Soviet ideal world, aka the communist model, constructed as equal to Malayalee mythical imagination *Onam*¹⁷ by EMS Namboodiripad and helped a successful spread of Marxist ideology among the rural poor. The mythology behind the regional cultural festival Onam is to recollect the memories of the rule by the downtrodden (*Asura*) mythical king Mahabali where an equal and just society prevailed. The Hindu upper-caste section's concept of Kerala as *Parashurama Kshethram* (the land belongs to the Brahmin warrior Parasurama so as the Brahmins) countered with the antithesis of *Mavelinadu*, the land of equality and freedom. The communist leader EMS Namboodiripad discussed this in his famous work *Onnekal Kodi Malayalikal* (One and Quarter Crore Malayalees) in 1946 (Namboodiripad 1999; Devika 2010). The Communist Party has propagated in their campaigns that they will make this ideal true in the 20th century. The feudal, religious and caste-ridden atrocities in the society strengthened the people's aspirations toward this belief. As always, the Soviet Union stood tall as an example where similar imagination became practical.

The formation of the 'Progressive Writers Association' in India in 1936 out of inspiration from the 'Union of Soviet Writers' (1934) led to the creation of 'Jeeval Sahithya Sangham' in Kerala in 1937 (Namboodiripad 2017; Pradhan 2017). The left-wing literary figures of Malayalam got an enhanced role with the formation of Jeeval Sahithya Sangham. The Jeeval Sahithya Sangham worked for the spread of Russian literature (Nair 2021). Within 6-7 years, prominent Malayalam literary figures like

¹⁷ *Onam* is a festival celebrated in Kerala in memory of Asura King Mahabali who upheld the values of justice, equality, fraternity, liberty and humanity in his reign, who later trapped by Devas as his virtues became challenge to Deva King Indra. One day in the month of Shravan or Chingam has given to visit his people, i.e., the day Onam. People of Kerala remember the injustice faced by their beloved King every year. Onam also considered as a harvest festival.

Joseph Mudassery, M. P. Paul, Kuttipuzha Krishna Pillai, P. Keshavadev and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai etc. were part of the movement (Namboodiripad 2013). Puthussery Ramachandran (2017) mentions in his autobiography that in the 1930s, the village people had very few opportunities to buy books in their native places. They had to wait for the annual religious festivals. The most sailed books were the Puranas, folk songs and comics. The literary works of Keshavadev and Thakazhi were never popular until the progressive writers' movement (Ramachandran 2017: 43).

The association changed its name to 'Purogamana Kala-Sahithya Sanghatana' (Progressive Writers Organization) in 1944 at its Shoranur conference. There emerged a new slogan – the art is not for art's sake; it is for social change (Namboodiripad 2013). Similar to the Soviet Writers Union's ideological positions, the Puragamana Kala-Sahithya Sanghadana argued that the literature should stand for a progressive change in society. In the context of fascism, Maxim Gorky raised a question to writers worldwide: "which front are you in? Are you with fascism and war or with democracy, national freedom and world peace?" The Left-wing writers raised the same in Kerala to build a progressive writers' movement in Kerala (Namboodiripad 2013: 08).

The progressive writers' movement mobilized the writers to write their literature against imperialism, and fascism and feudalism. The communist leaders understood the importance of literature for enhancing political movements. Numbers of pro-communist literary works came out during this period. P. Keshavadev's short story titled *Red Volunteer* in 1949 is an example of this. C. Achutha Menon had written the first comprehensive book on the Soviet Union titled *Soviet Nadu (Soviet Land)* in this period in his prison days. The book published in 1944 by the Mangalodayam Press of Trissur. The prominent Congress leader and his fellow prisoner Panampilly Govinda Menon had written an important foreword to this book. Panampilly had mentioned that as part of the orthodox sections' negative campaigns against the Soviet Union, his school teacher commented that the Soviet Union made everything public property, including the Russian women (Menon 1944).

C. J. Thomas's (2017) article titled *Mayakovski Enna Manushyan* (The Man Named Mayakovski - 1949) had written as part of a debate in Kerala on Mayakovski's poems and life. There he mentions his criticisms of the style of Soviet administrative systems and his comparison of Mayakovski with various Malayalam legendary poets. Thomas (2017) compares Mayakovski with Kunjan Nambiar

regarding the similarities in their criticisms against the state and its systems, with Changampuzha on the style of language and themes of the poetry and with Edappalli Rakhavan Pillai on disappointment in life and suicide (Thomas 2017). C. J. Thomas had written several plays and articles, which discusses Soviet issues as part of his support and criticism of the Communist Party in Kerala. Few among them are *Fascist Communism* (1954), *Sakhav Kathanar (Comrade Priest - 1955)* and *Communisttukarkku Ezhuthiya Onnam Lekhanam (The First Essay Written for the Communists -1959)* etc. From the late 1930s onwards, major Malayalam publications focused more on the Russian Revolution as an inspiration to propagate against the religions' superstitions, orthodox customs, and unquestionable dominance and to fight for equality and women's rights.

The period of the 1940s witnessed many heated debates, conflicts and divides inside the Purogamana Kala-Sahithya Sanghadana (Keshavadev 2017). The reason behind the former was the ideological conflict between various strands of Indian independence, the question of the importance of the writer, the form of literature, the content and whether the writers could be members of the political party or not. The *Roopabhadra Theory* introduced by the literary figure Joseph Mundassery. This projects the importance of the form of the art. On the other side, the communists argued that the content in the literature is more important than its form. The reason behind these debates is the consciousness of the communist leaders and Malayalam writers on the literary developments that occurred in the Soviet Union. The writers received the positive sides of socialist realism and became critical of the former regarding the official policy of the Soviet state in 1930-40 (CPI(M) 2020: 175).

The late 1940s and early 1950s witnessed the relieving of many literary figures from the Communist Party by sighting the disagreements on the Progressive Writers Forum. Literary figures like P. Keshavadev, Kesari Balakrishna Pillai, Thakazhi Shivasankara Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai, C. J. Thomas, M. Govindan, M. V. Devan, P. Bhaskaran etc. were among them (Ganesh 2021). They disagreed with the official policy of the Purogamana Kala-Sahithya Sanghadana that a progressive writer should write for the development of the poor. That art is not the sake of art as the primary aim of the art should be the improvement of the life of the common masses. Later, EMS Namboodiripad (1997) has self critically analyzed that this was contrary to the Leninist tradition and that after the demise of Lenin, the Soviet Communist Party had intentionally intervened in the creative writings of the

authors. The Communist Party had also expressed the same argument on progressive literature in Kerala in earlier times. Later, the party acknowledged and corrected the mistake (Namboodiripad 1997: 16). As a result, a few among them, including Joseph Mundassery and P. Bhaskaran, returned to the Communist Party.

The poet Vallathol Narayana Menon became more active in the communist circles after the dispute between the writers and communists related to the progressive writers' policy. Vallathol became a Communist Party member when a group of writers turned against the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. The 'Samadhana Prasthanam' (The Organization for Peace), an organization propagating peace after the Second World War, helped the communists of Kerala to organize their movements (Pillai 2019). This had developed as an anti-imperialist platform against the war, and peace became their slogan. Many cultural activists and writers also became part of the organization. As part of the activities of this organization, Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayana Menon has visited the Soviet Union and China (CPI(M) 2020: 125).

When the Communist Party was illegal, the leaders used the platforms of the Samadhana Prasthanam to interact with people and coordinate their works. The leaders of the Samadhana Prasthanam, including Samadhanam Parameswaran Pillai, helped the communist leaders with this (Jayachandran 2018). Vallathol gave a famous speech praising the Soviet Union after returning from a visit (Ganesh 2021). Later the scenario changed, and Communist Party tried to engage with all the possible literary figures of Malayalam. In many circumstances, the writers took different positions on the issues in the Soviet Union. Malayalam literary figure N. V. Krishna Varyar openly supported Khrushchev after the 20th Party Congress report. However, he continued to be close with the party (Ganesh 2021).

Similarly, M. Govindan supported the Khrushchev report and wrote an article titled *Sakhav Khrushchev Abhivadyangal (Greetings Comrade Khrushchev)* in 1956 (Govindan 2020). M. Govindan was a poet and a critical thinker of Kerala who intellectually engaged in the debates on the Soviet Union until his demise in 1989. He was passionate about Lenin and was a critic of Stalin. He wrote about the needful engagements of religion and Marxism to reduce exploitation in 1948. Govindan's Malayalam articles also included Lenin's love for Beethoven's music in 1959. M. Govindan has written a story of Mahabali's visit to Moscow on an *Onam* day. Emperor Mahabali happily chooses to go to Moscow rather than come to Kerala on *Onam*. What made him attracted to go there was the equality in the Soviet society. He

wrote this in 1988 during *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*¹⁸, but he believed that the Soviet society was equal to or better than Kerala (Govindan 2020).

The Malayalam writer and literary critic Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai's early writings mentioned that "if there is a heaven in the world that is the Soviet Union" (Perova 2019). Later, he became a staunch anti-Stalinist but remained close with the Communist Party. The Hungarian-born British author and former communist party activist Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon*, a collected work of the ex-communist activists titled *Naked God* and other previously banned literary works from the USSR, became attractive and influential to the masses in Kerala (CPI(M) 2020: 126). The anti-communist stories of C. J. Thomas titled *Vishavriksham (Poisoned Tree)* and M. Govindan's *Nerchakkozhi (Vowed Chicken)* were the byproduct of these anti-Stalinist narratives (Ibid).

Pirappancode Murali, a cultural activist and CPI(M) leader, shared his memories of a Stalin Memorial Club that he organized in his village Pirappancode, Trivandrum. The club was inaugurated by the then Kerala Chief Minister EMS Namboodiripad in 1957. The club was started in his school with 120 student members and later expanded among the villagers. They had Stalin memorial lectures, free academic tutorial classes and welfare activism among the villagers. Murali (2022) mentioned that the club was initially a protest by him and his friends against the international anti-Stalin campaign by Nikita Khrushchev. The news of the removal of Stalin's body from the Lenin Mausoleum was a shock for him. In his childhood, Murali became an admirer of Stalin and his role in building the USSR as a great nation by hearing the speeches of local Communist Party leaders Pirappancode Sreedharan Nair, Gopala Pillai and Karunakaran Nair. The readings were also helpful; books such as the Malayalam translation of Stalin's biography by Henri Barbusse published by Mangalodayam, the Malayalam biography of Stalin by Nalangal Krishna Pillai and the *Soviet Diary* by A. K. Gopalan. Later the History of CPSU(B), Foundations of Leninism and *Marxism and the National Question* by Stalin. He was inspired and became a staunch Communist Party activist by hearing the speeches of the Communist Party leader and the then Member of Parliament A. K. Gopalan after he arrived from the Soviet Union. When Murali became a Communist Party member

¹⁸When Mikhail Gorbachev became elected as the head of the Soviet Union he launched *perestroika* (restructuring) to reorganize the economy and *glasnost* (openness) to create an open and free political atmosphere. This made the collapse of the centralized administrative system faster and ultimately the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

in 1962, the party advised him to dissolve the Stalin Memorial Club and concentrate more on party activism. Murali was not happy to dissolve the club, but as a responsible and lenient party worker, he obeyed the leadership (Murali 2022).

The Kerala leaders' strong belief in the ideas of the Soviet leaders' is one of the major sources of energy behind their committed work. This has resulted in the grass-root level mass base of the Communist Party in Kerala. An important incident to quote here is Ambassador M. K. Bhadrakumar (2021) recollects his memory of the Communist leader T. V. Thomas's visit to Moscow in 1976-77. Bhadrakumar (2021) remembers:

I explained to TV that the visit entailed a fairly tiring walk on the Red Square, but he insisted that the very purpose of his visit - first and only visit to Moscow for the Communist veteran - was to pay homage to Lenin's embalmed body. As we were taking leave of the mausoleum, I spotted a TV leaving something in a corner. TV was lost in thoughts, and we didn't speak till we reached the central committee hotel. As we alighted, sensing my curiosity, perhaps, he said it was a ring, and added something to this effect: 'I gave everything to the Communist movement, including my marriage (Gaouriyamma 2020).¹⁹

5.3 Revolutionary Publications, Ideas and Use of Folk Culture for Mass Awareness Generation in the Working-Class Movement

The progressive writers actively took part in the working-class movements. P. Keshavadev was responsible as the Secretary of the Travancore Labour Association and the editor of its mouthpiece, *Thozhilali* (The Worker). He penned down his revolutionary ideas in *Thozhilali* out of inspiration from the Russian Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union (Keshavadev 2017). Indeed, many prominent Malayalam writers and political activists contributed their writings to *Thozhilali*, which became an organ to spread Marxist ideas. *Thozhilali* weekly published Kadamangalam Pappukkutty's poem titled *Velakkarude Pattu* (Song of the Workers) in 1935 (Malayalam era – 28 *Thulam* 1111).

Time calls us to stand firm hand in hand,
The path for the forward march is all clear now.
There goes the grand train of revolution
Come on, Comrades! Enough have we suffered
The cruelty and hunger of this wicked world... (Pappukkutty 1935: 01; Isaac 1985:

12)

¹⁹K. V. Thomas and K. R. Gauri Amma are the most celebrated political couple in Kerala. They were married when both were ministers in the 1st Kerala cabinet in 1957. When the split occurred in the Communist Party in 1964 Gauri Amma went along with the CPI(M) while Thomas stood with the CPI. This political divide and personal disagreements led to their separation.

The workers of Alappuzha considered Pappukkutty as their class poet and honoured him at the 7th annual conference of the TLA (TLA 1937). In his forward to Pappukkutty's collected poems named *Kadathuvanji*, Kerasi Balakrishna Pillai called him as 'Mayakoviski of Malayalam' (Pillai 2011). Kadamangalam Pappukkutty talked about the social planning of the Indian society as similar to the Soviet society (Siddeek 2019). The *Thozhilali* weekly covered a significant proportion of international issues, especially on the Soviet Union, the International Communist Movement and the principles of Marxism, Leninism and the sequence from *The Capital* by Karl Marx were serialized (Balaram 2010). K. Ramadas had written three articles as a series in *the Thozhilali* newspaper on the thoughts of socialism. The *Thozhilali* 08 October 1936 mentions a poem titled *Workers Hand*, which concluded with these words

This world will see the dawn of revolution;
The world, sustained by the labour of the
-workers are seeing the dawn of revolution (Jeffery 1984: 1162).

These literary works of the 1930s show the rooting of working-class ideology in the cultural arena. The awareness of the Russian Revolution made the working class confidently fight for their rights. Most of the poor workers are from oppressed communities and at the receiving end of the caste atrocities. In the early 20th century, the downtrodden sections considered religious conversion to Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism etc., as a mode of protest against caste oppression. Later the arrival of communism and the class-based movement of trade unions changed the scenario. In his younger age, trade union leaders like R. Sugathan practiced Buddhism, P. K. Bava associated with Islam for a short period, and K. C. Kuttan alias Sardar Jai Singh advocated the Sikh religion (Raghavan 1979; Isaac 1985).

The news of the revolutionary developments in Russia gave them new hope, which gradually led these people to lose trust in religious conversions. Subsequently, the people have drawn toward communist ideology. The workers started to identify themselves as an exploited group, a class rather than caste or religion. Importantly the slogan *Destroy Nair Rule* changed into *Destroy Capitalism!* This marked the caste and communal outrage to class conflict (Jeffery 1978). The strong campaigns and slogans on the working-class power and their rights made the workers believe that Lord Rama could not protect them from these social realities. Still, Comrade Lenin could have better chant slogans for his ideas, as the real heaven is Soviet Russia

because there is equality (Jeffery 1984). When the workers' strike occurred in the Alappuzha coir factories in 1934, new working-class slogans took birth.

“Capitalist! - We want our wages in money.

If we ask for the wages, will you attack us?

Capitalist! We want our wages in money.”

“Victory to the Revolution”

“Workers of all Countries Unite” (Jeffery 1978: 159; Raghavan 1979: 42)

The *Thozhilali* published features on the growth of the library movement in the USSR, Soviet land reclamation and hydroelectric project, beautification of Moscow and peaceful path to socialism in Sweden, etc., and covering the strikes in South India and health conditions in Alappuzha etc. The editorials called for workers' and peasants' solidarity to achieve responsible government in Travancore. Robin Jeffery quotes *Thozhilali* newspaper 26 May 1938 and mentions a script of a skit where the central character announces, “A public organization is not enough. Revolution, that's what we need, we must put down all the notables; we must unite all workers” (Jeffery 1984: 1162). The Left movement focused on the ideas of the social reform/renaissance, socialism, the October Revolution and the Soviet Union.

In the first initial stages of the socialist movement, the activists attempted to build a wider political unity by linking towns and villages, class and castes, peasantry and proletariat. A Gramscian term of ‘national popular will’ emerged in the 1930s. So the early Communists in Kerala practiced the thought of their contemporary Antonio Gramsci without reading him (Gramsci 1971; Mannathukkaren 2013). The Communists viewed cultural intervention as part of their class-based political agenda and linked it with the universal project of emancipation (Namboodiripad 2009; Dirlik 2019; Mannathukkaren 2013). This cultural intervention through songs etc. was not simply imitating the Soviet Union but incorporating the indigenous and folk culture of the people. The communists took inspiration from the renaissance movement, but it was not simply an extension of the anti-caste struggle of the social reform movement. The common masses radically spread a new political term, ‘class.’ The oppressed communities like Ezhavas and Pulayas moved away from expressing their caste identity and started considering themselves the working class. This was a kind of dual project for social reform and political democratization (Jeffery 1984; Kumar 2000; Desai 2006; Venu 2001).

The songs with a mixture of folklore and expressing political emancipation were new and attractive to the working class who were going through multiple forms of struggles in their life. T. S. Thirumunbu a political activist became popular through his songs and called “Singing Sword” by EMS Namboodripad (Namboodiripad 2009; Kurup 2020). *The Red Flag Song* was written by him and has become the most influential poem among the working-class –

Rise, rise in the midst of sky
Above, above the auspicious Red Flag (Kurup 1998: 83).
His poems projected the Soviet Union as a new symbol of revolution.

Throughout the world, it reverberates
The thunder of the cannons of Revolution...

(and)

Russia, the pet child of November Seventh

Determines the destiny of the world extensively... (Kurup 1998: 84–85; Mannathukkaren 2013: 498).

Several literary figures have branded these songs as *Padappattukal* (marching songs) and mocked that they have no literary content. However, in each trade union meeting, these songs sung, and they became part of the plays by the working class. Initially, the workers wholeheartedly welcomed these songs. The trade unions successfully organized the cultural programs and the plays. A large group of workers and peasants, including women and children, would stand until late at night to watch these cultural programs. This gave a massive boost and immense confidence to the communist leaders to organize their movements (Mannathukkaren 2013). These songs propagated revolutionary thought, sometimes not directly on the Soviet Union but similar ideological thought in the Indian and Kerala context. The Gandhian leadership of the Congress Party had a compromising and cooperating attitude with the feudal-caste leadership. The party has also taken a position for not intervene in the princely states, and their struggle was limited to the protests against British rule. At the same time, the communists introduced a language that rivaled not only against British imperialism but also opposed the Indian feudal traditions. A new tradition of songs that spoke about factory strikes and worker’s and peasant’s struggles emerged from this movement (Azad 2000).

Slaves, we are not,
Rest we shall not,
The fight we shall unshaken...
Rest we shall not
Until we get the

Power and rights
Entitled to us (Andalat 1987: 183; Mannathukkaren 2013: 500).

The peasants and the factory workers had made to ensure the oral transformation of these songs to the next generations.

Those who write
In their own blood the
New history of
Independent India
Those who fly the
Bloodied-flag
In the battle of the
Oppressed people (Azad 2000: 212; Mannathukkaren 2013: 500).

The communist leader and poet KPG Namboodiri's (Soviet Land Nehru Award winner) poems on the Soviet Union were much more popular among the working class (Surendran 2018; Baby 2020). His poem titled *Naniyude Chintha* (The Thoughts of Nani), written in 1941, was famous among his poems. The main character in this poem, Nani, is a downtrodden women labourer struggling with oppression, poverty and hunger. From somewhere she gets to know about the Soviet Union, a workers' state, she dreams of going to where a complete eradication of exploitation and poverty has occurred (Namboodiri 1974: 81-82).

I have heard of a land called Soviet
I would like to go there someday...
Over there one does not suffer the pangs of hunger
Nor the shame of oppression day after day
That I wasn't born there, I rue most sorely
In Soviet land pure and holy (Menon 1994: 175; Namboodiri 1974: 81-82)

When the opponents, especially the patriotic sections, criticized the poem *Naniyude Chintha* (1974: 83-85) KPG wrote his response in another poem in 1943 titled *Naniyude Marupadi (Nani's Response)* in which he wrote:

Make my country as great as the Soviet land
Then I will sing patriotic songs about our nation always²⁰ (Namboodiri 1974: 85; Rajeevan 2016).

A poet and Communist Party activist KPG Namboodiri have written many poems and writings on the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union and Soviet leaders. The socialist ideas of the great Indian poets like Tagore, Munshi Prem Chand and Sarojini Naidu greatly influenced by him (Namboodiripad 1974: 02). Other than the

²⁰Translated by the author.

spiritual and romantic thoughts, KPG concentrated more on the material realities of the people's life. Indeed, his poems reflected the influence of the Soviet Union and international working-class movements. KPG's poems also tried to find the pro-working-class nature of the Indian anti-imperialist nationalism, including the ideas of its leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Jawaharlal Nehru (Namboodiripad 1974: 08).

KPG's poems like *Lenin Dinam (Lenin Day)*, *Naniyude Chintha (Nani's Thoughts)* in 1941, *Naniyude Marupadi (Nani's Replay)* in 1943, *Naniyude Kathu (Nani's Letter)* in 1945, *Lenin Dinathil (In Lenin Day)* in 1951, and *November Ezhu (November Seventh)* in 1951 are direct propagations of the ideas of Russian Revolution, Soviet Union and Lenin (Namboodiri 1974). KPG's translation of *Lenin* by Mayakovski and its introduction discussing Mayakovski's life and poetry is also his major contribution to the Soviet-inspired literature in Malayalam. Still, the leaders of the Communist Parties, as well as the critics, used to mention KPG's lines "*Soviet Ennoru Nadundethre; Pokan Kazhinjengil Enthu Bhagyam*" (There is a land called Soviet; how lucky if I could go there) in their writings and speeches (Baby 2020; Sreekumar 2013).

In the 1930-and 40s, the language of Communism/Russian Revolution became a trademark of various working-class/down-trodden movements. When the liquor ban took place in Malabar in 1947, the toddy-tapping workers (mostly from the Ezhava or Thiyya community) lost their jobs and daily lives. The situation led them to form a union of the toddy-tapping workers. Their announcements came through various pamphlets, and one among them, titled *Pattinigadha (Starving Song)*, proclaimed that "Comrades, the united voice of the upcoming revolution will destroy the upper hand of the exploiters. Let us bravely struggle and pass through all the blood channels" (Menon 1993: 323). Another one, titled *Vishappinte Vili (Call of Hunger)*, is a sharp criticism against the bourgeoisie's government that destroyed the daily life of the workers. In 1949, along with the Communist Party, various toddy-tapping workers' unions also banned. However, when the election took place in 1951, the leaders of this movement elected to the legislative assembly and proved their mass base (Menon 1993: 323).

5.4 The Soviet-inspired Imaginations and Socialist Realism in the Malayalam Literature

The early literary figures in Malayalam were deeply influenced by the Sanskrit language and its traditions in their writings. From the 1920s onwards, changes started to occur in the aesthetic sense of the Malayalam writers, and European influence came into their creative thoughts. Kesari Balakrishna Pillai was one of the beginners of this trend, and it was further developed by Joseph Mundassery (Namboodiripad 1998). Similarly, the movement for democratic literature emerged during the period of the First World War and its aftermath. A new section of writers, poets and journalists used their literary intervention to serve the people's struggle for freedom. The great Malayalam poet and literary figure Vallathol Narayana Menon is an example of this (Namboodiripad 2017: 70). The ideology of world socialism and its repercussions in the field of culture influenced this new group of writers, especially in the years of the global capitalist economic crisis in 1929. This period in Malayalam Literature reflected the life and realities of the common person. Poets like Edappalli Rakhavan Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna Pillai and novelists like P. Keshavadev and ThakazhiSivasankara Pillai were the pioneers of this movement (Namboodiripad 2017: 71).

The strike waves of 1934-36, the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and its subsequent transformation to the Communist Party in 1939, the peasant movements in Malabar and the workers' movement in Travancore-Cochin in the 1930s, altogether led to a sudden shift in the Malayalam literary field. Their repercussions can be felt in this period's stories, poems and plays (Namboodiripad 2017: 71). Writers like S. K. Pottakkat, P. O. Kuttikrishnan (Uroob) and the next generation literary figures like M. T. Vasudevan Nair, Cherukad Govinda Pisharady and S. L. Puram Sadanandan etc. also embody this new trend of writings which is realistic and true to the life (Devadas 2017: 406). In poems and songs, Vayalar Rama Varma, P. Bhaskaran, and ONV Kurup etc. were part of the same trend. In plays, Thoppil Bhasi, Ponkunnam Varkey, Cherukad, K. T. Muhammed, P. J. Antony, Vaikkam Chandrasekharan Nair and Eroor Vasudev represented a similar trend (Devadas 2017: 406-07). Most of these writers admired Soviet authors like Gorky, Mayakovski, Sholokhov etc. A general perception during this period was that literature was flourishing in the Soviet Union. The communists raised the same

argument against a few orthodox writers who said there is no space for literature in an industrialized society (Devadas 2017: 407).

The period of 1930 to the 40s witnessed the poems of well-known Malayalam literary figures praising the ideology and symbols of communism. Changampuzha Krishna Pillai sang: “*Let me tell you the philosophy of the sickle*” (Gopalakrishnan 1987: 147). Changampuzha had written several symbolic songs representing the picture of the Soviet Union. He was first attracted to Communism when he was a worker at the Darasmal coir factory at Alappuzha. The influence of communist ideology is visible in his poems until the end (Sanu 2019). Several of his poems propagated communist thoughts like *Vazhakkula (Banana Stock)*, *PavangaludePaattu (Song of the Poor)* and *Thozhilali (Worker)*, *Avararu? (Who are they?)*, *Njangal (We)* etc. Changampuzha’s Communist/Internationalist lines of the poems include

Take the sickle for our fight
Join together for the fight against hunger
Tomorrow’s new world will be-
A better world in the hands of the united working-class...²¹ (Sanu 2019).

Changampuzha often uses the word *Sakhakkale* (Comrades) in his poems. During the Second World War, he urged people through his poetry that, without wasting much time; we should support the Russian Red Army (Sanu 2019: 159). Changampuzha emotionally writes that the philosophy of sickle will liberate the people, and Karl Marx should be respected in our poems (Sanu 2019: 159). Changampuzha was invited to the inaugural address of the Young Writers conference as part of the second conference of Purogamana Kala-Sahitya Sanghadana in Kottayam in 1945. He made a keynote speech by praising the USSR, the Soviet writers, the Communist Party and the allegation of communist propaganda in literature. He mentioned that there is nothing wrong with propagating communist ideas in any form of literature because the former proposes the liberation of human life. The Communist Party is ultimately working for the betterment of the life of the common masses. Hence, there is nothing worrisome about the spread of such progressive thoughts in the literature.

The speech also praised the Soviet writers like Gorky, Sholokhov etc. and called the Malayalam writers incapable of comparison with them (Pillai 2021). The Soviet literature is a true example of the writers’ love for the nation, and Malayalam

²¹Translated by the author.

literary figures lack the same (Pillai 2021). But sometimes, his disagreements with the Communist Party were also expressed in his poems (Sanu 2019: 160-161). In his long poem, *Padunna Pishashu* written in the 1930s, he sarcastically mentioned Stalin's moustache, a symbolic criticism of Malayalee communists and their admiration of the Soviet Union and Stalin (Pillai 1998: 56; Nair 2019: 101). At that time, Stalin's moustache was quite popular in the villages of Kerala (Kunjahammed 2019).

Vallathol Narayana Menon, one of the great poets of Malayalam, has deeply admired the Soviet Union and its leaders. When the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin passed away, Vallathol wrote a poem titled *Stalin Ha* and expressed his deep admiration for Stalin and sorrow on his death. His lines mention, *Weep India; there is no other Stalin* (Menon 2004: 935). In this poem, Vallathol describes Stalin's struggling life and the merits of his rule, including his opposition to colonialism and his role in the Soviet Union becoming a prosperous country (Menon 2004: 937). Vallathol visited the Soviet Union in 1951, strengthening his admiration and attraction toward the USSR. After returning to India, Vallathol wrote a collection of poems titled, *Russiyil (In Russia)*. All the poems in this collection contain descriptions of the Soviet Union. In this collection, a poem titled *Leninte Shavakudeeram (The Lenin Mausoleum)* expresses his admiration of Lenin and mentions the great contributions of Lenin to the world and the making of Moscow into a great centre of the world (Menon 2004: 941-42). In both of these poems on Stalin and Lenin, the poet Vallathol compares them with the great Indian figures of Buddha and Gandhi and mentions the similarities in the goodness of these leaders.

The Malayalam poet and a professor in English literature, K. Ayyappa Paniker, have written his thoughts and critical remarks on the Soviet Union and its inspired imaginations in Kerala. In his review of Vallathol's poems, he critically noted the poet's praises of Stalin and registered his opposition to it (Paniker 1982: 54). Similarly, Ayyappa Paniker has severely criticised Socialist Realism and its proponents in Kerala, calling it rubbish theory. In the period between the Russian Revolution and the death of Lenin, the state did not purposefully intervene in the creative thoughts of the writers. But from Stalin's time onwards, the state strictly scrutinised the writers, which is reminiscent of medieval Europe's religious monarchy. Paniker quotes the names of the writers targeted by the Soviet state, like Boris Pasternak, Solzhenitsyn, Voznesenski, Yevtushenko and Ehrenberg etc. He discusses that Gorky and Mayakovski were aware of these problems in their later

lives but could not come out of this poisonous system. When he wrote this essay in 1965, Paniker believed in the changes introduced by Khrushchev and mentioned that the writers were relieved from the earlier orthodox system of the USSR as well as Eastern Europe (Paniker 1982: 251-52). Indeed at the same time, Ayyappa Paniker praised the achievements of the Soviet Union in his famous poem *Hey Gagarin* (Paniker 1974; Kumar 2021). Here, Paniker (1974: 86) can be seen praising and saluting the space travel of Gagarin after his successful comeback from space.

Vayalar Rama Varma, one of the great poets of Kerala, has been an admirer of Marxism, the Russian Revolution, and the Soviet Union. This is expressed in his several poems and songs. In a few of his poems like *Ninakku Maranamilla (You will Never Die)*, *Njungalude Muthassi (Our Grandmother)*, *Arival, Thalamurakalilode (Sickle, Through Generations)*, *Rakhtham Puranda Ganam (The Bloody Song)*, *Randu Thalamurakal (Two Generations)*, *Oru Mudravakya Kavitha (One Sloganeering Poem)*, and *Velichame, Nayikkoo (Hey Light, Lead Us)*, he is explicitly expressing revolutionary ideas (Varma 2016). The poem *Velichame, Nayikkoo (Hey Light, Lead Us)* was written by him at the time of the hundredth birth anniversary of Lenin in 1970. The lines of this poem were quite popular and have been quoted widely. In the poem, he writes that India will always remember Lenin as an inspiration. Lenin's thoughts will provide energy for India in her struggling times and guide her towards more scientific achievements. Vayalar stresses that as a poet, his raga and rhythm emerged out of the spark of the October Revolution (Varma 2016).

The well-known Malayalam poet G. Shankara Kuruppu wrote a poem titled *Chenkathirukal* in 1944 in praise of the fight of the Red Army against Nazi Germany (Ushakumari 1999). Being a non-Communist, he dreamed of the liberation of the colonial world with the aid of communism as was done in the Soviet Union. The translated version of the Malayalam poem *Chengathirukal* are,

Rejoice, heart, Rejoice!
 Beat the drums of victory
 For the Russian soldier.
 Not the urge to wage war,
 In the days of suffering,
 His sword gleams with the
 The desire for peace, the
 Love for humanism . . .
 That crescent moon on the
 Evening-sky that
 Captures light from the darkness

Will kiss its friend on the
Red flag.
Rejoice, heart, rejoice!
Throb under the spreading
Wings of world liberation (Mannathukkaren 2022: 197-98).

The poet Edassery Govindan Nair, in his post-independence poem *Puthan Kalavum Arivalum* (A New Pot and Sickle, 1951), makes the peasants sing the famous lines: “*Adhikaram Koyyanam Aadhyam Nam /Athinnu Melakatte Ponnaryan*” (*We should Harvest the Power First and Later the Paddy*) (Nair 1951; Chandrashekharan 1999; Gopalakrishnan 1987). Poet Vyloppilli Sreedhara Menon mentions his visit to Lenin Mausoleum in his poem *Makarakkoythu* (Harvest Month). There, he wrote that Kerala celebrates the festival of equality, Onam, once a year, but in the Soviet Union, every day is Onam (Menon 1980; Ushakumari 1999).

N. V. Krishna Warrior, one of the famous poets of Malayalam, in his poem titled *Hey Lenin*, mentions the great role played by Lenin in the life of the international working class and recalls him for the upcoming fights (Warrior 1976). An orally narrated song, in the Kerala villages, on saluting the martyrs of the Communist Party equates the martyrs with the Mythological characters in the Hindu scripts while also praising the Bolsheviks.

You the valiant swordsmen
Who fought for the rise of the poor,
Verily you aren't dead,
You are still alive in the proud hearts of many,
Like Abhimanyu, Arjuna's valiant son,
Never shall we forget, comrades
The royal path that you have trodden
We swear, with our clenched fists,
That death and dry hay are alike to us!
Never shall we rest till we liberate the land
And never shall we withdraw from the fight
Till Fascism is dead!
Hail to the Bolshevik heroes
We salute thee “Lal Salaam, Lal Salaam.” (Mannathukkaren 2022: 222-23).

ONV Kurup's lines on the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle are important to quote. He is propagating the Vayalar incident as Kerala's Paris Commune.

Kerala's Paris Commune!
That is Vayalar! Salute (Kurup 1991: 70; Chandrashekharan 1998: 67).

ONV Kurup was one of the most famous literary figures in Kerala who emerged as a well-known poet through his revolutionary songs in the popular plays by the communist drama club KPAC. Later, his poems and film songs gained huge popularity among the common masses. His Socialist Realism-inspired songs are *EthanuKayyur (This is Kayyur)*, *Nammalukoyyum Vayalellam (Our harvesting paddy fields)*, *Moolippattumayi Thambran Varumbam (When the landlord comes with a humming)*, *Vellaram Kunnile Ponmulam Kattile*, *Ponnarival Ambiliyilu Kanneriyunnole*, *Ennale Nattoru Njarukalallo* and *Nerampoy Nerampoy* etc. (Kurup 2006).

Similar to this, his socialist realistic poems include *Arivalum Rakkuyilum (Sickle and Nightingale)*, *Nashttapedan Vilangukal*, *Keralathinte Paris Commune (Kerala's Paris Commune)*, and *Ente Punnara Arival (My dearest sickle)*, etc. (Kurup 1991). His poems like *Kanneer Puranda Mannu* and *Dahikkunna Panapathrathil* propagated his admiration of Stalin. ONV's translations and studies on the Great Russian poet Pushkin are famous among the Malayalees. Kurup's (2006) book *Pushkin: Swathandrya Bodhathinte Duranthagadha (Pushkin: A Tragic Tale of the Consciousness of Liberty)* became popular. ONV Kurup's poems have a lot of influence from the Russian poet Pushkin (Panangad 2021).

Malayalam writer and literary critic Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai (1969: 61) has expressed his thoughts on Revolutionary Russia. When we hear the country name Russia, we will feel newness, differentness, energy and enthusiasm..... Now we are searching in Russia for the answers to the problems on the issues of religion, caste and politics..... Russia is the research lab on human civilisation today. The literature that came from Russia is an example of this. The imperialists are fearful and trying their level best to stop the spread of the ideas of Bolshevism. But, nobody can stop this as such ideas spread through the international circulation of Russian literature (Pillai 1969: 64). Is this a quote? If so, intend this.

Kuttippuzha (1969: 79), in his article on Maxim Gorky, mentions that Gorky is the *guru* (teacher) of revolutionary literature. No other literary figures described the havoc in the working-class life with this originality. Gorky has used his whole life for the reformation of oppressive humanity through his literary works. Maxim Gorky was influenced by the writings of the French writer Balzac. Tolstoy was also a major influence on him. But what differentiated Gorky's works from Tolstoy's was that the latter romanticised the struggle of the Russian rural agricultural workers instead of

developing a fighting spirit against the oppressors. Maxim Gorky is accredited for introducing and developing the concept of socialist realism, but he was never totally against romanticism. For Gorky, romanticism is acceptable for certain situations, but ultimately the man and his humanistic and progressive achievements should come at the centre of the literature (Pillai 1969: 80-82).

Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai (1950: 180-82) wrote an article titled “*Russiyile Chuvappu Sena*” (The Red Army of Russia), where he mentioned the pain of organizing a working-class army by the Soviet leaders like Lenin and Trotsky. Irrespective of the imperialist army of the West, the Red Army has a progressive and liberatory character. The army officials have to take a pledge to protect the working class, and they have to learn agriculture and theories of socialism. After the army service, they can contribute well to other fields. In their studies on international relations, the Red Army has given more priority to India and China. The ideology of the Red Army is progressive internationalism and helps to build a great human civilization (Pillai 1950: 187).

Kuttippuzha Krishna Pillai (1975: 85) wrote an article titled “*Matha Vyaparikal Russiyilekku*” (The Sellers of the Religion is Moving to Russia) in 1944. In this small piece, he discusses the business techniques of organized religions. Russia had first exposed the naked profit interests of the priests. The orthodox religious campaigners used to say that the end of religion will result in the end of humanity. They should look at the 25 years old the Soviet Union. Now, the advocates of the orthodox religion have no choice but to agree that the USSR has protected the world from the fascist gun of Hitler. Indeed after World War II, the Soviet authorities allowed the religious priests to run the churches without exploiting the people, and it was a democratic decision. But the religious leadership used this opportunity to spread false campaigns that still the Soviet people were believers. This was the narrative of the Arch Bishop of York, who recently visited Moscow and a few priests in Russia. But Stalin had never agreed to give these religious leaders any financial help from the state. The forceful religious practice under 18 is still a criminal act in the USSR. The groups that spread scientific temper against religious orthodoxy are also active in the Soviet Union. The churches were never completely shut down in the USSR. The new limited freedom given to religion was a tactical decision after WW II as part of the alliances with the religious leaders for defeating Fascism. But there is no opportunity to believe that Stalin would not entertain these people much (Pillai 1975:

86-87). This article was a response to the campaign of Christian missionaries and other right-wing sections on the post-war religious activities in the Soviet Union.

Kuttippuzha's (1969: 158-59) later thoughts on the progressive literature in Russia have changed. He mentions that Russian literature might have become more popular among the masses, but it could not produce world-renowned literary works after Gorky. Kuttippuzha (1969: 159) compares the situation of literature in Malayalam with Russian by sighting examples. Vallathol's poem *Mappu (Apology - 1922)* is a great progressive literary work. It has come before the intervention of the communists in literature. Now, the progressive literature is not reaching that level. There is an element of propaganda in most literary works, but it should be done indirectly. To prove his arguments Kuttippuzha (1969: 158) quotes Gorky's words, "the more the views of the author remain hidden, the better for art." The Soviet film *The Fall of Berlin* is a better example of ruining art for propaganda. The film projects Stalin as a god in the context of Soviet victory in the Second World War and ignores the other aspects, including the great role of Marshal Zhukov.

O. V. Vijayan, one of the prominent Malayalam writers, had written many political pieces on the Soviet Union and raised several discussions and debates in the Malayalee society. He was most critical in his writings on the Soviet Union. Earlier, Vijayan was a staunch admirer of Communism, and he wanted to write a novel to help the movement of the Communist Party in Kerala in the 1950s. He used to do the initial discussions on the novel with his friend and CPI leader P. T. Bhaskara Panikar and received a suggestion to write a novel with 'more Inquilab' (strong revolutionary spirit). But when the news came of the USSR intervention in Hungary and the execution of Imre Nagy changed the thoughts of O. V. Vijayan. He made up his mind to write a different novel, which led to the emergence of *Khasakkinte Ithihasam*, one of the modern classics of Malayalam literature (Kamalakaran 2020). From then onwards, he became critical of USSR.

Vijayan has penned down his strong opposition against the Brezhnev – Indira alliance in the period of national emergency in India. He mentioned the contradictions between the ideology of International Communism and the foreign policy of the USSR (Vijayan 2005: 427). In 1977 he wrote an article titled "Soviet Unionu Sthothram" (Praise the Soviet Union), where he discussed the complexities in the Indian politics led by the Indian National Congress and its leader Indira Gandhi and the role of the Soviet Union as a key factor for the developments in the Indian politics

(Vijayan 2005: 58-59). Indeed Vijayan was clear in his argument that the Communist Party in Kerala is unnecessarily carrying the baggage of the historical experiences of other communist countries.

The communist government elected in Kerala was an entirely different experience from what Marx and Lenin explained in the European context. But the communist movement in Kerala has not been able to react react to these circumstances organically. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin announced he was throwing torchlight toward the people. Indeed, the torchlight was meaningful in the Russian context, but we can better understand a spiritual lamp than the torchlight in India. We often forget this reality (Vijayan 2005: 441-42; Rajasekharan 2005: 36-37).

Vijayan has strongly criticised the supremacy of the USSR in the Indian communist party traditions. He accuses the right-wing communist party (CPI) of running as an advertising agency of the Soviet Union, where the CPI(M) is their competitor. This is simply sloganeering enslavement. At the same time, the Indian communists were intolerant of Euro-Communism, which came from Soviet traditions. The destruction of Euro-Communism was more inevitable for the Soviet communists than capitalists (Vijayan 2005: 428). Both the major pro-Soviet communist parties in India were aware of the Soviet love affair with Indira Gandhi's Congress Party and their growing fascist tendencies. Except for the veteran leader Dange, the right-wing CPI was aware of the dangers of the politics propounded by Sanjay Gandhi (Indira Gandhi's son). They discussed it in their party circles but hid it from the public. They should have acknowledged their faults and publically expressed them in front of the people. Then only could they have reclaimed their importance (Vijayan 2005: 428).

Vijayan sights the awaiting of Eastern communist nations and the Soviet Union on the coming back of Indira to power in India. He also reveals that the USA had supported the Soviet attack against Czechoslovakia, Soviet agreements on American intervention in Vietnam and the Soviet navy's cooperation with the movements of the American navy at the time of the Bangladesh war. Both these imperialist powers were enjoying their cooperation. But the poor communist villagers in Kerala did not believe these facts. Neither the USA had any interest in strengthening democracy in India, nor did the USSR have any interest in establishing socialism in India. However, both wanted a puppet nation to support and strengthen their imperialist interventions. These world powers' interests are different but they had a common interest in dividing the world into two parts as their sphere of interest.

Other than fighting each other, they were cooperating with secret agreements. Among them, the Indian territories were given to the USSR (for pressurising China) and the Indian Ocean to the USA (as compensation) as per the agreement (Vijayan 2005: 427-28).

Vijayan used to write his political pieces in Malayalam dailies and weeklies on the regime changes in Eastern Europe. He was very concerned about the Prague Spring and passionate about the political positions of their leader Alexander Dubcek. In Vijayan's opinion, what happened in Hungary and Czechoslovakia with socialist imperialism is repeated in Afghanistan. In all these situations, India has kept quiet in the name of non-alignment, and it is also the name of helplessness (Vijayan 2005: 431). But other than the European countries, Afghanistan is geographically close to India, and in feature, this tag of war between USA and USSR will gift a struggling period for us. To overcome this crisis, India should settle her fights with Pakistan and make a federation with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. This should be an entirely different unity than the Aryavarta or the Akhand Bharat concept by the Hindutva forces (Vijayan 2005: 432). In the suggestions and arguments of O. V. Vijayan, there is a search for pure Maxim in which he is hopeful on Albania as per his article (Vijayan 2005: 431). Vijayan is sharing the details of his life in the time of emergency and the immense criticism of CPI for supporting Indira Gandhi.

O. V. Vijayan shares his thought that if Stalin had visited India, the intellectuals here would celebrate it the same as a spiritual pleasure (Vijayan 2005: 436). He compared the Indian visits between Khrushchev in the mid-1950s with Brezhnev in the early 1980s. The visit of Khrushchev deeply touched the minds of the Indian people. But during Brezhnev's visit, the feeling of the warm brotherhood of the earlier period was lost. When a socialist and Janata Party leader, Madhu Limaye, visited Brezhnev, he got a message that India did not need a political opposition against Indira Gandhi. There is a proverb that the revolution will eat its children. Still, after eating its children, the revolution's hunger is not over and is turning towards its international comrades for eating them. Achutha Menon²² is an example of this sacrifice for Soviet communism.

²²Achutha Menon was a CPI leader and Kerala chief minister from 1969 to 1977. The Soviet Union had directed the CPI to continue their alliance with the Congress Party and the coalition state government in Kerala in the period of emergency. After tenure of 7 years, the government got re-elected but Menon lost all the interest to lead the government and stayed back without holding any power.

Soviet communism has taken the role of the Tsarist Empire. Their attack on Afghanistan and maintaining the boundaries of the Old Russian Empire is an example of this. Lenin's propagation after the Revolution was that the Russian working-class government would never claim the Tsarist Empire's territory. Later Lenin's idea has falsified. The Tsarist Empire's tensions and insecurities have similarly reflected in the Soviet geopolitics. The international working class solidarity has lost its importance through these acts. Vijayan claims that he still believes in the importance of the Indian communist movement. They have a role to play in the struggle against social oppression and poverty. But the communists should come out the parody their old slogans. The Indian communists never acknowledged the historical relevance of Euro Communism because of the enduring influence of Soviet tradition. But Brezhnev will not be going to acknowledge them because Indira Gandhi is real comrade of Brezhnev (Vijayan 2005: 437-38).

The early writings of O. V. Vijayan were pro to the communists. His story *Parayoo Father Gonsalves (Tell Me Father Gonsalves)* is an example of this. But his later writings were in search of Hindu spirituality, especially the *Vedanta* tradition. He tried to make his criticisms of Communism from that point of view (Bhasurendrababu and Rekhu 1986: 07). Initially, Vijayan tried to explain his criticism of communism through the Hindu spiritual concepts and argued for the necessity of the adoption of the Hindu spiritual thoughts in communism. His articles like *Oru Sindhura Pottinte Ormakku* and *Thiriyum Chumadum* are examples of this.

Several travelogues in Malayalam have also explained the Malayalee people's journeys and experiences in the Soviet Union. Initially, most of these travelogues helped to build positive imaginations of Soviet Land. The first travelogue on the Soviet Union in Malayalam was written by A. K. Gopalan (AKG) titled *Soviet Unionil Ente Anubhavgal (My Experiences in the Soviet Union)* in 1953. Later, he wrote two more pieces on Soviet travelogue titled, *Njaan Oru Puthiya Lokam Kandu (I Saw a New World)* in 1954 and *Ente Vidhesha Paryadanathile Chila Edukal (Pieces from my Foreign Travel)* in 1959 (Ganeshan 2018). A. K. Gopalan had visited Moscow as part of his medical treatment. Being the Communist Party leader and the leader of the Opposition in the Indian Parliament, Gopalan met Stalin (Gopalan 2020). AKG has mentioned this in his autobiography and has shared his experiences in the Soviet Union and with Stalin in his public speeches (Murali 2022).

There are other famous travelogues like *Russiyil (In Russia)* by Annie Joseph in 1956, *Soviet Diary* by S. K. Pottekkattu in 1957, *Soviet Unionil (In Soviet Union)* by C. H. Muhammad Koya in 1959, *Communism Kettippadukunavarude Koode (With the People who are Building Communism)* by EMS Namboodiripad in 1960, *Soviet Nattil Khrushchevnu Shesham (In the Soviet Land after Khrushchev)* by Pavanan in 1964, *Soviet NattilMoonnuAzhcha (Three Weeks in the Soviet Union)* by Dr K. M. George in 1964, *Soviet Unioniloode (Through the Soviet Union)* by V. R. Krishnayyar in 1971, *Leninte Nadu (Lenin's Place)* by P. V. Kunjiraman Nair in 1972, *Leninte Nattil (In Lenin's Place)* by P. Balagangadhara Menon in 1973, *Russiyile Kazhchakalum Anubhavangalum (Sights and Experiences in Russia)* by Dr M. V. Paily in 1980, *Beena Kanda Russia (Beena's Sights in Russia)* by K. A. Beena in 1981, *Bhadrayude Smathalangalil* by C. Radhakrishnan in 1984, *Soviet Nattil Veendum (Again in Soviet Union)* by Dr K. M. Geroge in 1989.

Most of these writings are in praise of the Soviet Union. Kerala's famous literary figure S. K. Pottekkattu, known for his travelogues, mentions after his return from the Soviet Union, "the Soviet Union is a research lab which successfully experimented with developing a great human life" (Pottekkattu 2019: 06). Malayalam writer and literary critic M. Leelavathi had gone to the Soviet Union to receive the Soviet Land Nehru Award. After returning to Kerala, she wrote a series of articles in *Kalakaumudi* magazine in 1977-78. The articles focused on what she saw as the emancipator change in the life of Soviet women (Leelavathi 2021). Leelavathi (2021) mentioned that village life in the Soviet Union was not as attractive as city life. But the women and the children had a much better life, and each factory had a kindergarten to take care of the workers' children.

5.5 The Socialist Realism in the Performing Arts

A noted intervention by the early communists of Kerala was propagating the ideology of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union through theatre. This has ensured a wide reach of the Soviet-inspired thoughts among the masses. The working class popularly received the plays performed in the streets and working fields. The theatre performances in Kerala were dominated by the translated versions of Sanskrit mythical stories until the 1920s. Even the early Malayalam plays adopted the Sanskrit style of drama (Appukkuttan 2000). The Tamil musical dramas and the Western-style prose dramas particularly played for the educated middle class in the 1930s (Menon

1979). The communists broke this tradition through their intervention in the new Malayalam plays along with folk songs. According to Mannathukkaren (2013: 495),

The communists altered the social consciousness of the masses through their sustained campaigns in the cultural sphere. A new genre of songs and the popular theatre was born, and it borrowed from folk culture. The communists tried to negotiate dualisms such as tradition/modernity and the universal/particular, with some success. Unlike many third world nationalist projects, which emphasized cultural difference, the communist project attempted to link cultural difference with the universal project of emancipation.

The play written by communist leader K. Damodaran named *Pattabakki* (Rent Arrears) in 1937 was the inauguration of socialist realism in Kerala (Damodaran 2020; Thomas 2017; Appukkuttan 2000; Elayidom 2012). Writer and activist C. J. Thomas called it the first political play in Kerala (Damodaran 2020; Thomas 2017; Mannathukkaren 2013). Several Communist Party leaders, including A.K. Gopalan, acted as characters in the play. The 1930s witnessed the beginning of democratization in the cultural performances that governed by the feudal upper castes as an art of pleasure. This conscious activity by the communists altered stage performances as a tool for socio-political change (Ramachandran 2000).

The play *Pattabakki* was the first attempt by the communists to mobilise the working class successfully. The play staged in hundreds of places, including public gatherings and party meetings. Irrespective of the criticism by some literary figures questioning the quality of the literature in the play, the common people have well received it. For them, , the language of the play was easy to understand, and the story was much related to the life experience other than the elite art forms (Damodaran 1975; Namboodiripad 2009; Ramachandran 2000). After his first play, K. Damodaran wrote the next drama *Rakhthapanam* (Draught of Blood), in 1939, and it was a direct demonstration of class war in Kerala's feudal social conditions. The drama projected the capitalists as inhuman and the workers at the receiving end of all the havoc created by the wealth accumulation of the capitalists. The heroes and the unionist workers were announce at the end of the play "we might die but our death will be the death of capitalism" (Mannathukkaren 2013: 503). These narratives gave a moral superiority to socialism/communism. Indeed these theatre performances articulated a progressive social change as its political agenda (Zarrilli 2000; Bijukumar 2019). It is also argued that the communist plays might be the first performing art directly watched by the agricultural workers of Kerala (Elayidom 2019).

According to EMS Namboodiripad (1990: 241):

Historically, the elite upper-caste domination of art had ensured that most of the performing arts could be performed only in temples and shrines or feudal mansions (from which the lower castes were excluded), as noted above. Examples were Chakyarkoothu, Patakam, Kathakali and so on. So the common folk had nothing to do with them. Art and literature are always governed by the ruling elites of a particular society. Thus, art forms such as Kathakali were products of the upper caste-feudal complex.

Adalat (1993: 53) states, “the exclusion of the lower castes from education and knowledge was the main form of domination exercised by the upper castes.” The cultural interventions by the communists in the 1930s radically altered this situation. The untouchables had accessed a new and democratic form of cultural performances in their native language along with political education against exploitation (Mannathukkaren 2013).

Later, there were a few counter plays staged by the writers who stood against the Communist Party. C. J. Thomas wrote plays like *Crime 27* and *Vishavriksham* (Poisoned Tree), which contain anti-communist narratives. P. Keshavadev, in his later life, was very critical of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. He wrote a play titled *Mazhayangum Kudayingum* (Rains there but Umbrella Opens here) (Nair 2019; Ganesh 2021). To counter the communist plays and the growth of socialist ideology, a section of pro-Congress writers made a few anti-communist plays. The Malayalam writer Mannikoth Ramanunni Nair alias Sanjayan wrote plays like *Sakhavinte Bleach* (Comrade’s Shave) and *Garhika Thozhilali Union* (Domestic Workers Union) are examples of the anti-communist narratives. However, until the 1980s, there was no counter plays set against Ningalenne Communistakki (You Made Me a Communist), a popular drama by Thoppil Bhasi. In the 1980s, Civic Chandran wrote a play *Ningalare Communistakki?* (Who have You Made as a Communist?) (Ganesh 2021).

The formation of the drama club KPAC (Kerala Peoples Arts Club) in 1950 from the inspiration of IPTA (Indian Peoples Theater Association – formed in 1943) at the national level was one of the important events in the history communist movement in Kerala. The KPAC’s first plan was to stage Dostoyevsky’s *Brothers of Karamazov* (Kuruppu 2006; KPAC 2015; Pazhayathu 2011). The Communist Party coordinated the club without controlling it. The KPAC created a ripple effect by creating similar kinds of drama clubs started by the artists associated with the KPAC (Menon 2001). The first staged play of KPAC was *Ente Makananu Sheri* (My Son is

Right) in 1951. The play narrated the ideological conflict between a conservative father and his son, a progressive student leader (Bijukumar 2019).

The most celebrated and well-known play of the KPAC was *Ningalenne Communistakki* (You Made Me a Communist) by Thoppil Bhasi in 1952. It was a story of a feudal farmer Paramu Pillai from an upper-caste Hindu conservative family who is becoming a communist with the influence of the agricultural workers belonging to the Communist Party (CPI(M) 2020: 123; Bijukumar 2019). This KPAC play popularized communism by being staged in every village and town of Kerala with more than 10000 performances (Menon 2001; Mohandas 2009).

One of the early communist leaders of Kerala, C. Unniraja (2017), noted the success and huge popularity of the play *You Made Me a Communist* among the people of Kerala. It has represented the reflection of a new cultural upsurge. He mentions “that drama electrified the entire villages of Travancore-Cochin. All artists hailed it as an art creation; it became a big mass movement. Such a drama staged continuously for three months, seen and enjoyed by tens of thousands of people is unprecedented in the history of the dramatic stage in Kerala” (Unniraja 2017: 109). Some allegations came against the play that it orients people to agitate against the government. Similar to K. Damodaran's plays, it also banned through the Dramatic Performance Act in 1953. The CPI led a mass movement with strong mobilizations against the act until the ban lifted (Mannathukkaren 2013).

The other successful communist plays by KPAC were *Mooladhanam* (Capital), *Puthiya Aakasham* (New Sky), *Puthiya Bhoomi* (New Earth), *Mudiyanaaya Puthran* (The Prodigal Son), *Nammalonnu* (We are One) and so on. The KPAC plays have included many songs that demonstrate socialist realism and often propagate the Soviet Union. These songs and slogans in the plays propagated to the agricultural workers to wage a strong resistance, especially to women, to fight against the socio-economic and sexual exploitation by the landlords. The KPAC Theater songs talked about the breaking of the imperialist chain by the working class, holding the red flag with a hammer and sickle and constantly dreaming for a new and better tomorrow (KPAC 2000).

The well-known Malayalam writer Ponkunnam Varkey was associated with KPAC. At the same time, famous poets composed the drama songs including Vayalar Rama Varma, ONV Kurup (winner of Soviet Land – Nehru Award and Pushkin Award) and G. Devarajan etc. The ideal model Soviet Union often reflected in these

songs (Mannathukkaren 2013; Bijukumar 2019). The KPAC sought to create a Malayalee identity by moving away from the plays' dominant Sanskrit and Tamil influences. It borrowed the ideas from various protest traditions, including national and international (Damodaran 2008). In Malabar, a popular drama troupe Kendra Kala Samiti (Central Cultural Club), was active and linked with the national leftist movement (Mannathukkaren 2013).

Similar to the plays, the *Kadhaprasangham* (a lyrical narrative of storytelling performance) has played an enormous role in giving a positive narrative of the Soviet Union. A notable performance of the same was done by Kedamangalam Sadanandan and V. Sambasivan (CPI(M) 2020; Devika 2021; Panangad 2021; Ranjith 2021; Sambasivan 2021). V. Sambasivan has often narrated international stories from the socialist world in his performances. His story, Anisya in 1963, taken from the *Power of Darkness* by Leo Tolstoy, is the first-ever international story staged in *Kadhaprasangam* (Sambasivan 2021; Kairali 2016; Sawparnika 2020). Another important story *Erupatham Nootandu (20th Century)* quotes several incidents from the Soviet Union (Sambasivan 2021). *The Rainbow* is one of his major performances adopted from a novel by the Polish novelist Wanda Wasilewska about the Russian villagers' resistance against the attack by the Nazi army at the time of the Second World War. His friend and communist trade union (CITU²³) activist Padmalochan suggested this story (Sambasivan 2015). Sambasivan's prominent storytelling performances include *Don Santhamayi Ozhukunnu (And the Quiet Flows of Don)*, *Anna Karenina*, *Kuttavum Shikshayum (Crime and Punishment)*, *Karamasov Sahodaranmar (Brothers of Karamazov)* etc. became well received by the public with huge gatherings. He narrated the stories with a pro-Soviet and left lenient attitude. Still, the audios and videos of the same circulate widely through social media. After the demise of V. Sambasivan in 1996, his elder son Vasanthakumar Sambasivan took over the mantle. Due to popular demand, Vasanthakumar still repeats the old Soviet stories (Kairali 2021).

For the communists, the role of cultural intervention is essential in communicating political ideology. In the Gramscian term, the sense of collective knowledge forming through encounters rather than philosophical reflections could see

²³Centre of Indian Trade Union (CITU) which is associated with CPI(M).

in the counter-cultural movements of the Left in Kerala. According to Jestrović and Parameswaran (2019: 04):

Culture is important for our understanding of workings of the Left ideas and movements and even more so, as a practice that makes visible how the inequalities of class are lived in everyday life and how they are reproduced over time. Even though their roots might be in the economic foundation, these structural inequalities can take many forms, permeating other spheres including gender, race, ethnicity, asylum and ecological issues. The notion of culture in the term 'cultures of the Left' is understood here as having an anti-hegemonic potential. Theatre and performance, in particular, are well suited to fulfill this potential as worksites of the Left that facilitate encounters through which the knowledge as a mobilizing force of social thought and political activism could be transmitted.

In northern Malabar, it is common to see that the temple shrine festivals also demonstrate symbolic of leftwing ideological programs. According to Dilip Menon (1994: 177), "instead of completely denying religion and rituals based on it, the communists worked with them." Bijukumar (2019: 5010) argues:

In Malabar, the northern region of Kerala, Communist parties patronized Teyyattam (Theyyam), a folk art performed by the Dalits, lower castes and tribes, which addressed the cultural practices of the lower castes. It is argued that by intervening in the subaltern cultural performance, the communists not only de-Bramhanised the art form but also made Marx and Theyyam inseparable identities of faith for them.

A tradition of Melas' (regional carnivals) has introduced as a new campaign model through cultural performances and party leaders' speeches. The Communist Party used these Melas' funds and political campaigns. After several reports from the authorities observed that, the Melas were propagating Communism, banned by the colonial government. Initially, these Melas made the Communist ideology and party much closer to the people, and a popular theatre movement emerged out of these local festivals in Malabar (Pavanan 1995).

In Travancore, the Alappuzha coir workers unions made a Workers Cultural Centre, waged many programs, and trained the workers with different art forms. During the struggling period of the Second World War, they staged an OttamThullal,²⁴ which comprised the story and songs of the starvation faced by the working-class (Mannathukkaren 2013). Similarly, the period of the Second World War created a booklet of songs titled Vallatha Kalam (Terrible Times) against the Japanese fascism. Within a day, 4000 copies of the booklets sold. The *Jappu Virudha Mela* (Anti-

²⁴A temple art form was developed by poet Kunjan Nambiar in the 18th century.

Japanese Carnivals) were organized in several places against Japanese fascism and various art forms like *Kolkkali*, *OttanThullal*, *Kaikottikali*, *Kummi*, *Kolattametc.*, were staged by the Communist Party (Chandrashekharan 2008). The newly introduced anti-fascist songs in Malayalam borrowed an internationalist and anti-imperialist tradition of the Brechtian war ballads (Damodaran 2008). This tradition strongly portrayed the Soviet Union as a symbol of liberation and resistance.

5.6 The Emergence of Peoples' Science Movements and a New Reading Culture

The mass discussions and debates over the Soviet Union and communist movements emerged among the people through the local libraries and reading rooms in the villages and small towns of Kerala in the mid-20th century. The Left created a layman's public sphere by organizing local libraries and a discussion culture. These libraries organized cultural clubs and local festivals. This helped to raise a strong public opinion in favour of the communists, and the Soviet Union became the main topic for discussions and debates. The culture of drinking tea and reading news papers loudly for others leads to the emergence of democratic political discussions. A new democratic culture emerged from these village-reading rooms and nearer teashops in Kerala (Menon 1992). Indeed the public library movement was part of spreading the pro-Soviet thoughts in Kerala's public sphere. The Malabar Vayanasala Sangham, established in 1937, played a vital role in developing the communist movement in Malabar.

The early leaders of the communist party like A. K. Gopalan, Moyyarth Sankaran, K. Damodaran, K. P. R. Gopalan and K. A. Keraleeyan were part of the library movement. This initially helped the communists to strengthen their mass base among the students and youth. The literature of the communist party reached widely through the library movement (Kumar 1996; Bijukumar 2019). Bijukumar (2019: 516) notes, "in postcolonial Kerala, library movements played a vital role in radicalizing civil society in particular and shaping Kerala modernity in general. Public libraries were integral to the public consciousness of Kerala and emancipated people from their traditional bondages." The libraries were enriched with evening classes, public meetings, discussions and political debates and published handwritten weeklies. As part of this movement, in 1958, the Kerala Gandhasala Sangham (KGS) (Kerala State Library Council) had established. The KGS started various literacy

campaigns all over Kerala. Such movements set an example of an alternative concept of modernity in a post-colonial society like Kerala.

Often the local libraries used to organize cultural events with songs and plays. The local communist activists dominated the organization of these festivals and created a new people public sphere that was above the religious divides and sharply mobilized the support for the Communist Party (Bijukumar 2019; Harikrishnan 2020). Initially, the communists in Kerala made the local libraries the centre of cultural activities (Bavakutty 1982; Bijukumar 2019). These spaces made the Soviet Union and Communism most favourite subjects attractive to the youngsters. These spaces include all the people irrespective of their political lenience, but ultimately the Left gained momentum out of it. The village libraries were mostly spaces for men. While there were no official restrictions for women, the villages' patriarchal family system never allowed women's active interference in these spaces (Harikrishnan 2020). The barbershops and toddy shops are the other two places where similar kinds of discussions take place. This culture largely diminished due to the growth of satellite television and gulf migrations in the 1980s and 1990s (Ranjith 2004). This has also resulted in a favourable atmosphere for the spread of capitalist and communal ideas (Harikrishnan 2020).

For the Malayalee community, the impact of 'print communism' rather than 'print capitalism' influenced society (Anderson 1983; Bijukumar 2019). More than 40 news dailies published in Kerala in the mid-20th century all of which had a wide readership (Woodcock 1967). The first Malayalam newspaper was *Deepika*, started by the Catholic Church in 1887 from Kottayam. Later, *Malayala Manorama* in 1890 from Kottayam and *Mathrubhumi* in 1923 from Kozhikode marked the era of popular newspapers. The news dailies have a wide acceptance and readership in Kerala than in any other state of India. The official mouthpiece of the CPI(M), the *Deshabhimani* daily (started as a weekly in 1942 and converted to a daily in 1946), has a huge circulation and is the third most widely read newspaper. But it reaches a much larger number of people than its actual circulation (Jeffery 2009). The CPI mouthpiece *Janayugam* started as a weekly magazine in 1947 and transformed into a daily in 1950. The undivided Communist Party started *Deshabhimani* and *Janayugam*, but after the split, both the parties divided the news dailies. On the wide readership of the Communist Party news daily, Selvyn Jussy (2005: 33-34-35) mentions:

Despite being the organ of the Communist Party (*Deshabhimani*), the successes reach, and readership is testimony to the penetration that the Party has had in the polity of Kerala....., the *Deshabhimani*, would be read out at the beedi (country cigarette) rolling centres. In a group of beedi rollers, one of them would be delegated, by rotation, the responsibility of reading the newspaper aloud while the rest of them continued with their task of rolling beedis. The reader would be provided with his wages as would be normally if he were to be rolling beedis. Socialist ideals were put to verse and sung during agricultural operations. Innovatively work and political education proceeded hand in hand.

In the independence scenario, the People's Science Movement's role in building a progressive society was very important in Kerala society. The organization working for scientific knowledge and progressive education, the Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishath (KSSP), founded in 1962. The KSSP took inspiration from the socialist model of the USSR. Its campaign, the 'Science for the People', was much popular among the people.

Similarly, several cultural clubs and community organizations were active in Kerala in coordination with the KSSP (Raman 2017). The KSSP had strongly rooted in Kerala in the 1960s and started sensitizing people on rationality, scientific temper and against superstitions. The KSSP is one of India's oldest and largest people's science movements. The slogan of KSSP, "Science for Social Revolution,, " came from its Soviet influence. The organization propagated that science should be a weapon in the hands of the oppressed and poor in their fight against exploitation, casteism and feudalism (Bijukumar 2019). The KSSP did not directly confront religion, but it worked to provide scientific ethos, secularism and progressive knowledge production among the people (Kannan 1990). The KSSP is working against the capitalists' monopoly over science and technology and popularizing the idea of "science for emancipation."

The KSSP asserted that science and technology are not simply for capitalist production and accumulation; they should be for the emancipation of human beings (Varughese 2018; Bijukumar 2019). The KSSP is not working as a fraternal organization of the Communist Parties, but the party supporters, sympathizers, and members are active in the organization. The KSSP used to publish books and journals, especially a good number of studies on the Soviet Union. M. P. Parameswaran, one of the most senior members of KSSP, translated the Soviet theory of nuclear reactors into Malayalam, but it was never published (Parameswaran 2019). The KSSP had initiated the research on increasing human happiness, how art leads towards the

revolution, environmentalism, decentralization etc. The KSSP had organized science cultural rallies and later science art rallies. It also proposed the idea of mother tongue medium schools and reducing rural-urban differences. Initially, the movement had a lot of inspiration from the Soviet experiments (Parameswaran 2019).

5.7 The Adoption of Soviet Literature and Culture in the Malayalee Society

The influence of translated Soviet literature, including the 19th-century Russian novel, deeply influenced Malayalee society. The most sold Russian literary work in Malayalam is Gorky's *The Mother* (Ganesh 2021; Panangad 2021). Most of the literary figures in Malayalam have influenced by the literature from the Soviet Union. The Malayalam-translated 19th-century Russian literature was widely spread in Kerala from the 1950s onwards (Eppan 2019). The translated Russian/Soviet literatures have been spread in Kerala like the Malayalam native writings. Tatiana Perova (2019) has noted that most Russian translations have come to Kerala. More than any others, Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai (1889-1960) had a great contribution to this field (Pavanan 2011). Kesari A. Balakrishna Pillai has translated 40 books by Anton Chekov (Perova 2019).

Kesari published the series of Chekov's translated stories in the 1950s, and it created good literary discussions over the period (Eppan 2019). Kesari had argued that the Russian literary figures like Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky came under realism. Kesari Balakrishna Pillai talked about a Manifesto for Kerala society (Siddeek 2019). He introduced the European literary debates on Proletarian Literature, Futurist Poems, and Revolutionary Novel etc. Kesari wrote that "the proletarian novel is a novel written by a downtrodden person about his or her societies. As per Trotsky's words, the birth of such novels in any society needs people's revolution, and that's why the same is mostly limited to Russia and Maxim Gorky is the classic novelist in this tradition" (Pillai 1947: 14). He also mentions the best example of a behaviouralist novel as Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don* (Pillai 1947).

Kesari's most loved Russian poet was Vladimir Mayakovsky, and when he reviewed Malayalam poet P. Bhaskaran's poem *Vayalar Garjikkunnu* (Vayalar's Thunder - 1946) made a comparison with Mayakovsky's poem *Karashow* in the context of a working-class revolution (Pillai 1957; Pavanan 2011). Kesari Balakrishna Pillai was exceptional in his attention to Soviet literature. In his biography titled

Biographical Notes, he notes, “Gorky’s technique is realism, an absolute sympathy with the downtrodden... He does not use the revolutionary Hauptman... Gorky’s works appeal more to bourgeoisie classes than proletariats, the proletariats, since it knows its viewpoints, have no necessity to read Gorky’s works to understand it” (Elayidom 2021: 20). Kesari has pointed out that the imposition of a single ideological narrative on the literature by Fascist Germany and Communist Russia will be a failure (Elayidom 2021). Kesari’s consciousness was attracted to the women’s lives in the newly emerged Soviet Union. He praised the equal rights to work for men and women at their equal right to property in the Soviet Union. But he mentioned that the Soviet Union was conservative regarding women's sexuality (Elayidom 2021).

The influence of *The Mother* novel by Maxim Gorky on the imaginations of Malayalees was huge. In a similar story, Malayalam writer and activist Cherukadu wrote a story titled *Muthassi* (The Grandmother), in which the propagandist woman takes a red flag and marches after her husband was murdered by the feudal state (Ganesh 2021). The generation in this period sought liberation from their havoc (Ganesh 2021).

Well-known Malayalam writer Thakazhi Shivashankara Pillai has mentioned that he was an admirer of the pre-Soviet Russian writers (Thakazhi and Madhavikutty 2017). He mentions that his works like *Thottiyude Makan*, *Randidangazhi* etc., came from the influence of Russian novels. With the invitation from the Progressive Writers Union, Thakazhi Shivasankara Pillai went to the Soviet Union in 1958 and delivered his speech quoting Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol etc. (Thakazhi and Madhavikutty 2017). N. K. Damodaran translated Dostoyevsky first in Malayalam. His first translation was titled *Adithattukal*, published by National Book Stall. His translations include *Karamazov Sahodaranmar* (*Karamazov Brothers*) and *NinditharumPeeditharum* (*Humiliated and Insulted*). Vayalar Rama Varma used the *NinditharumPeeditharum* title for one of his protest songs. N. K. Damodaran has mentioned that life’s deep complexities and realities been presented in Russian literature rather than Malayalam literature (Panangad 2021). In fact N. K. Damodaran made Dostoyevsky a Malayalee (Panangad 2021).

G. N. Panikkar’s *DostoyevskyudeKadha* (*The Story of Dostoyevsky*) and K. Surendran’s *DostoyevskyudeJeevacharithram* (*Biography of Dostoyevsky*) are two important works on Dostoyevsky’s life in Malayalam. Perumpadavom Sreedharan’s *OruSankeerthanam Pole* can be the most read Malayalam novel. The story narrates

19th century St. Petersburg and the love between Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Anna Grigoryevna (Sreedharan 2017). Sreedharan has written this novel inspired by Russian history and its rich literary tradition. When he wrote this novel, he had not even visited Russia but narrated St. Petersburg city and the life of Dostoyevsky excellently. The book has sold more than a hundred editions in Malayalam. Later several studies and documentaries on this novel have been published. Edappalli Karunakara Menon has translated the *War and Peace* of Tolstoy. Subhadra Parameswaran, Samadhanam Parameswaran Pillai's wife, translated Tolstoy's stories and Russian comics from Russian to Malayalam (Panangad 2021). C. N. Sreekandan Nair had tried to translate the anti-communist Russian novel *Doctor Zhivago* by Pasternak as part of the anti-communist protest *Vimochana Samaram* in Kerala. But he was not able to complete it (Panangad 2021). Later Muttathu Varkey translated it.

Malayalam writers who studied against the communist movement wrote a letter to the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to intervene in the Nobel prize to Pasternak. Nehru was very positive toward them and informed their concerns to the Nobel award authorities (Panangad 2021). The issue of the freedom of creative writing in the Soviet Union was noticed internationally due to the state's denial of the Nobel Prize for Boris Leonidovich Pasternak for the novel *Doctor Zhivago*. The novel raised critical views on the people's lives during the period of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. Indeed, the Western world purposefully projected this book becoming a best seller. When the issue rose internationally, a few writers from Kerala made a campaign and a statement in solidarity with Pasternak did not join the campaign too (Paniker 1982: 54). Anna Akhmatova's poems against the Soviet state were translated to Malayalam by Puthussery Ramachandran, a fellow traveller of CPI(M).

The Malayalam translations of the Russian literary works have huge popularity in Kerala. Among the available literature, the first Russian translated works in Malayalam are *Tolstoyiyude Neethi Kadhakal* (Tolstoy's Stories on Justice) which consists of six short stories published from Trivandrum in 1918 by A. Gopala Menon and *Upadesha Padangal* (Stories on Advice) published from Kollam by Paruthikkattu Gopala Pillai (Sreekumar 2021). Another was *Tolstoy Kadhakal* (Stories of Tolstoy) by Ambadi Ekkavamma, published in 1925. This was republished by the Indo-Soviet Samskarika Samiti (Indo-Soviet Cultural Council) in 1967 (Ekkavamma 1967). Malayalam poet Changampuzha Krishna Pillai translated a few Russian dramas titled

Karadi (Bear) in 1937 and *Vivahalochana (Marriage Proposal)* in 1949, and a collection of short stories titled *Poonilavil (In the Moonlight)*, was published in 1966.

The Progress Publishers of Moscow is established in 1931, and during the cold war period, they started a Malayalam branch in 1966. For this purpose, they appointed two Malayalam translators who were employees of the Soviet Information Centre, New Delhi. Translators employed by the publishers were creative writers too. K. Gopalakrishnan²⁵, his wife Omana, and their kids were taken to Moscow. They learned the Russian language under tutor Maria Polyakova. The *Raduga* (Rainbow) division was established for children's literature by the Progress Publishers (Kamalakaran 2018; Latheef 2019).

The soft power of the Soviet Union was projected in the Malayalee public sphere through the translated Russian literature and comics that came from Progress and Raduga publishers (Lal 2011). The translations of Gopalakrishnan and Omana have become the first modern children's literature in Malayalam. Mir Fictions published their translation of Science fiction. Folk tales, communist classics, and propaganda materials were translated and typeset in Moscow and distributed to various Left-wing publishers worldwide. In Kerala, it has been managed by the Prabhath Books, owned by CPI since 1955 (Prabhath 2017). They used to sell the books at a very low price, resulting in a great circulation of the same. The village libraries were the places with a number of Russian books, including Soviet comics and folk tales to the children (Bijukumar 2019; Sreekumar 2013; Harikrishnan 2020; Kumar 2021).

From the 1970s onwards, the youngsters came under the influence of Russian literature (Eppan 2019). The widespread Soviet literature created an ideological influence among the Malayalee writers that the literature should stand with the oppressed and poor (Eppan 2019). Magazines like Soviet Land, Soviet Union, and the comics like Russian Folklore Stories and Misha were very popular and easily available in Kerala. The 20th-century Russian writers like Ludmila Stefanova Petrushevskaya, Vera Panova and Mikhail Bulgakov, etc., are very popular in Kerala (Palit 2015; Eppan 2019). Since there was little opportunity to access the visual media, the children and adults accessed these village reading rooms more. The

²⁵Popularly known as Moscow Gopalakrishnan he was the editor of the Soviet review published by the Soviet Information Department.

bilingual readers believed that the Malayalam translation was often better than the English version because the Malayalam version communicated better (Latheef 2019).

The books effortlessly lifted the readers to a new landscape while the creative writings made the unfamiliar geography their backyard. Through such translations, the rural and urban landscapes of the USSR were identified as places in Kerala, and the farmers and labourers here are imagined as the same as Soviet people (Pillai 2013; Latheef 2019). The other major attractions of those books were the beautiful design, mostly hardcover, colour illustrations, high-quality papers and a much affordable price. Such quality papers and colourful illustrations were rarest in India until the 1980s (Sreekumar 2013; Latheef 2019). J. Devika (2021) says that during her childhood, she and her siblings used to fight for the Soviet Land magazine to cover the study books and the children's literature from the Soviet Union was the most attractive reading. More than this, it was amusing for the people how the Soviet Union could produce such kind of attractive children's literature (Devika 2021).

P. K. Rajasekharan (2017) mentions that his childhood readings were beautiful with Soviet children's literature which symbolizes a beautiful winter in his imagination. A tropical region like Kerala has no chance to experience a snowing winter, but the Soviet children's literature has created those imaginations among a generation of Malayalee kids. Rajasekharan (2017) recollects the Soviet authors' names as V. Suteev, Valentin Kataev, M. Bulatov, Yury Olesha and Aleksey Tolstoy. The translators of their books were Missis Unnikrishnan, Mavathu Prabhakaran and Cherukulam Prabhakaran etc. (Rajasekharan 2017). The village libraries were fully loaded with books from translated books from the USSR and USA. Indeed from these memories, we can observe that the Soviet books were more memorable and nostalgic for the people in Kerala. This could also have been because of the attraction towards socialism and equality in the post-colonial society.

Rajasekharan (2017) remembers a Lithuanian folk song as part of the comics. Most of the readers of the 1970s and 80s were unaware of the Cold War strategies of the USSR and USA and the soft power tactics in these books. When the kids were singing the Lithuanian folk song, they did not know that the USSR annexed the Lithuanian state. Everything from the USSR was simply Soviet or Russian for the readers here (Rajasekharan 2017). But ultimately, this literature gifted beautiful imaginations and nostalgia for a generation. Now the private publishers catch that market value and reprint and sail it without copyrights issues (Rajasekharan 2017).

The impact of Soviet comics on Malayali society is huge. It has attracted people's imaginations, especially among the generation born in the second half of the 20th century. According to Malayalam poet K. G. Sankara Pillai (2013), the Soviet comic storybooks had an evergreen impact on the childhood memories of his generation. They related every Soviet story to their village and people (Pillai 2013). Indeed the storybooks for children played a key role in building soft power and an attraction toward the Soviet Union. The stories gave dignity to the workers and accepted them as comrades. Even the attractive smell of the high-quality papers gave an impression that it was the smell of the Soviet Union and the smell of communism (Sreekumar 2013).

In-between an international conference in Geneva, Prof. J. Devika shared her memories of Soviet children's literature and its quoted places like Suzdal of Russia with her fellow conference partner from Russia. She was amused that even the Russian people do not quite remember those names (Devika 2021). But the translated Soviet literature has an evergreen impact on the collective memories of Malayalees who spent their childhood in the last half of the 20th century. Omana's last final major work was the direct translation of Dostoyevsky's *Anna Karenina* from Russian to Malayalam. She submitted it to the editor, but, USSR soon collapsed, and the Progress Publishers closed. This forced the Omana – Gopalakrishnan couple to come back to Kerala. Omana passed away in 2003, but later, Gopalakrishnan went to Moscow again, met the same editor, and asked for that old script. After a long search, he was told that it got burned after the publishing house was shut down (Gopalakrishnan 2010). The saddest part of this was that the Malayalam language lost such a great literary translation, and Moscow Gopalakrishnan passed away in 2011 (Kamalakaran 2018). The disintegration of the Soviet Union was the saddest experience for a generation of the Malayalee community because of the end of a reading culture (Sreekumar 2013).

Malayalam writer Asokan Charuvil (2021) mentions that his school named Purathissery Thuruparambu Karalam School became the centre for Indo-Soviet educational exchanges. Dr P. K. Gopalakrishnan, who was very close to the communist leader C. Achutha Menon, had coordinated the school's activities with the Soviet embassy. The then Indo-Soviet Cultural Society (ISCUS) Secretary Subrahmanya Sharma gave direction and support to maintain the school's activities in the late 1960s. The polio vaccine imported from the Soviet Union had been given to

the children. The Soviet Union sponsored the school library and lab. Both the CPI and the CPI(M) had joined with the activities of ISCUS (Charuvil 2021). Asokan Charuvil's village Kattoor in Thrissur had witnessed the opera and ballet from Soviet Kazakhstan. The d German Democratic Republic (GDR) delegations visited the Kattoor village frequently (Charuvil 2021).

A deep love for the Soviet Union emerged through Russian literature, Soviet publications and Communist Party campaigns, which made A. M. Shinas went and studied for his MBBS degree in the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1995 (Shinas 2021). But after coming to the Soviet Union, he lost that impression. Shinas (2021) remembers how upset he was when the Soviet Union had lost to Belgium in the 1986 football world cup before going to the USSR; however, he was indifferent to the Soviet defeat in the 1990 football world cup while he was there. As a history professor, Shinas is still nostalgic toward the Soviet Union and observed that Soviet life was much better than the current Russian life. Those Malayalees who studied in the USSR maintain their alumni associations and gatherings (Shinas 2021). A. M. Shinas (2021) and Biju Mohan (2021) said that when the Indio-Soviet friendship football matches took place at Trivandrum in the late 1980s, both hoped for the Soviet victory in the match because of their deep admiration for that nation.

Prof. KEN Kunjahammed, a well-known writer and orator of Kerala, noted, "I am an Indian citizen and a Russian human being. That is because of the intellectual tradition that we became a Malayalee and a Russian together" (Kunjahammed 2019). J. Devika (2021) mentions that when the Panchayat President ng inaugurated the works for a well in her village, he made a speech by mentioning the pro-poor policies of the Soviet Union compared with the construction of the well in the Panchayat. One among the popular Village Panchayat member from K. S. Ranjith's village in Kottayam, who is known as PT, used to mention the pro-poor developments in the Soviet Union in his every speech (Ranjith 2021).

Milton (2020) mentions that many local Communist leaders in his village Moothakunnam in Ernakulam district used to explain the great pro-people atmosphere in the Soviet Union in their speeches in the streets and in the party meetings. After hearing such speeches, the people would think they had visited the Soviet Union and witnessed these themselves.

J. Devika (2021) says that the attractive and good quality products from the USSR have also created a positive image of that country. Her brother had a good

camera from the Soviet Union. The Quality of the same was excellent and lasted long. The constructed image of the Soviet Union initially helped to build a better model of society in Kerala (Devika 2021). A quote from the novel *The Mother* about the dreams of an ideal society are much celebrated in Kerala: “There will come a time... when each will listen to his fellow as to music” (Gorky 1911: 185). This ideal communist worldview has been propagated in the political campaigns in Kerala and has been well received by the poor. The dream to construct this ideal world and its opposition initially led to many developments and social change in Kerala. This continues even after the disintegration of the USSR.

The Soviet Union has not simply an ideal world or the Promised Land for the communists. It has propagated in their political movements that the Soviet Union was successful in constructing an equal and just society, and we struggle to clinch the same in this land. . The activists and the literary figures narrated their themes attractively to construct this imagination among the common masses. Initially, the cultural intervention of the former has become an essential part of their political success. But not only the communists but the majority of the progressive writers and activists has also seen the Soviet Union as an ideal model for the nation. This has been reflected in their cultural interventions and activism.

Chapter 6

The Demise of the USSR and Post-Soviet Changes: The Contemporary Debates and Contestations in Kerala

This chapter covers the impact of the Soviet collapse in Kerala through the memories of the people, literature, and the mainstream print media reports. The chapter also includes the present influence of Soviet ideas and the Soviet nostalgia in Kerala, along with finding alternatives and the way forward after the Soviet demise. The disintegration of the USSR had a diverse effect on Kerala. Many were not able to emotionally accept the same. There were celebrations of the collapse, too, but even the critics could not deny the deep Soviet influence in Kerala. The chapter covers themes with various sections by analysing diverse areas.

6.1 The Soviet Collapse and its Reflections in Kerala

The collapse of the Soviet Union had a diverse effect on Kerala society. Different responses came from the political leaders, writers, media personnel and critics. The major news dailies covered the last days of the Soviet Union in Malayalam as headlines, prime reports, editorials and opinion pieces etc. Though there were narrow discussions on the Soviet disintegration in Kerala's public sphere, there was hardly a substantive interrogation of the political implications for communist politics in Kerala. The protests and regime changes in the Peoples Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Peoples Republic of Romania, Peoples Republic of Bulgaria, Albania, the movement by solidarity under the leadership of Lech Walesa in the Peoples' Republic of Poland and the fall of the Berlin wall in the German Democratic Republic were discussed and debated in the context of Soviet Union in Kerala. However, on a larger basis, these issues failed to create any deep impacts on Kerala's Communist movement (Elayidom 2019; Ganesh 2021; Nair 2021).

Although the disintegration of the Soviet Union generated a moral and psychological trauma among the communists of Kerala, there were limited material impacts on the society. The relevance of the Communist Parties was questioned by the former's political opponents, in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse disintegration. Still, they failed to create any strong electoral gains out of it. In the subsequent 1996

Kerala state assembly election, the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the Communist Parties, secured a comfortable victory against the then Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government. Nonetheless, the fall of the Soviet Union shook the utopian dream of an equal and just society in the communist narrations. This utopian motif was an effective part and parcel of the transformative project by the Left (Mannathukaren 2010). Regarding the late events in the Soviet Union, the stalwart communist leader from Kerala EMS Namboodiripad (1991: 4) mentions that

Those of us who did embrace Marxism-Leninism after the gigantic developments in the Soviet Union in the thirties and forties thought that what was happening in the Soviet Union was the essence of Marxism-Leninism. That however was only a half-truth. As Lenin himself had pointed out in his day, all countries and peoples would march towards socialism but not in the same manner. The socialist ‘experiment’ in the Soviet Union was a mixture of the general and the concrete. To raise the concrete to the level of the general was the fallacy into which many of us fell.

Parameswaran (2019) argues that the political actions in the 1960s and 1970s created an impression that Socialism means simply imitating the Soviet Union. Nissim Mannathukkaren (2022: 55), while analysing the limitations of the international tradition of the Kerala style of Communism, argued that “it (Kerala) did not look to the West only (or the Soviet Union), as in modernization projects, or to the indigenous past, as in traditionalism.”

When analysing the Soviet collapse, the CPI(M) took a position against Gorbachev’s theory of Humanism over Class Struggle. The Gorbachev-initiated policies of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* were evaluated as violating the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. A sudden opening of a closed economy and welcoming capitalism initially leads to a complete system collapse. At first, the Communist Parties and the Left intelligentsia in Kerala thought that the *perestroika* and *glasnost* were going to bring a positive democratic change in the USSR. But later, everyone realized that what initially happened was simply a move toward capitalism (Kumar 2021; Nair 2021).

Similarly, the communists in Kerala viewed the crisis in Eastern Europe was because of inner-party conflicts (Nair 2021). The CPI(M)’s leadership publicly expressed their disgust over Gorbachev’s policies. In one such instance, the CPI(M) leader V. S. Achuthanathan mocked Gorbachev on the regime changes in Central and Eastern Europe in a public rally at Kottayam. Moreover, regarding the Eastern

republic's demand for independence from the USSR, Achuthananthan ridiculed them by saying, "*Uncle Gorbachev, please give Freedom., Freedom...!*" (Ibid). There was also an interpretation among the leadership of the left parties that the news of the Soviet disintegration was a political agenda by the Western media (Devika 2021). M. P. Parameswaran (2019) points out that the Indian communist parties hardly approached the experience of the Soviet collapse seriously.

Former Indian Diplomat in Soviet Union M. K. Bhadrakumar (2021) mentions that almost everybody has failed to calculate the fall of the Soviet Union, including the Indian intelligence agencies. So were the communists in Kerala. Bhadrakumar (2021) contest the argument of the inevitable collapse of the Soviet Union. A general perception among the Soviet people was that a lot of changes would take place in the USSR, but most of them expected that the Soviet system would be unaffected by these changes (Bhadrakumar 2021; Ranjith 2021). Therefore, a sudden collapse was unbelievable and unexpected.

Malayalam writer Benyamin's (2020) Vayalar Award-winning (2021) novel *Manthalirile Erupathu Communist Varshangal (The Twenty Communist Eras of Manthalir)* is based on real events among his family members and villagers in Pathanamthitta district of southern Kerala. When the story progresses through the late 1980s, the central character, a student (actually the author himself), listens to an argument from the younger brother of his grant father that the Soviet Union's *perestroika* and *glasnost* mean the people understood the evil sides of the Communism. The novel also quotes the words of a young CPI(M) activist who came back from Moscow after his medical treatment. He mentions that the people he met in Moscow expressed that the USSR was moving away from communism (Benyamin 2020).

The CPI leader Rajaji Mathew Thomas (2021) says he has been a frequent visitor to the Soviet Union since 1984. Being the vice president of WFDY (World Federation of Democratic Youth), he visited and stayed in various parts of the Soviet Union and the Socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe. While travelling in various parts of the socialist world and interacting with people, he understood that the system would not last long. Nonetheless, the leaders of CPI in Kerala never got convinced by his arguments. They were in a utopia where the Soviet Union was infallible (Thomas 2021).

Various ideological streams differently interpreted the disintegration of the Soviet Union in Kerala. Among the Left-wing groups, some sections argued that the collapse of the Soviet indicated the destruction of the Stalinist model. In contrast, other sections believed such arguments were merely the conspiracy of pro-Gorbachev groups. The capitalists announced it as a failure of the planned economy. The political opponents, like the Congress, termed it the fall of Communism (Ranjith 2021). The high proximity of CPI towards CPSU in its policy directions caused more appalling injuries for the former in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's disintegration. A CPI member said, "The demise of Soviet Union is similar to someone taking away my pillow during my sleep" (Ranjith 2021). K. A. Beena (2022) mentions that still, the CPI is living in its past. They were not able to come out of the old nostalgic Soviet times. The CPI state committee office (MN Smarakam) still looks like they are in the 1970s (Beena 2022). The CPI leader C. Divakaran (2022) states that the USSR promoted the CPI mainly because of the latter's opposition to the Chinese Communist Party since the CPSU and CCP were not on good terms. The USSR hardly provided anything for the CPI to work for social change in India. The CPSU has used the CPI as their drumbeaters. The excessive love of the CPI towards the CPSU had led to such a trap. These were understood as the late truths (Divakaran 2022).

P. Rajeev (2021) argues the collapse of the Soviet Union had strengthened the apolitical and anti-socialist elements; moreover, the Congress-led state government started focusing more on neoliberal reforms. This intensified the struggles and protests in Kerala's streets. The Koothuparamba (in Kannur) protest²⁶ against the privatization of education and the killing of five DYFI²⁷ (Democratic Youth Federation of India) activists in a police firing on 25 November 1994 are an example of this (Ibid). Udaya Kumar (2021) mentions that he felt bad about the collapse of the Soviet Union even though he was critical of that system. More than the disintegration of the USSR, he identified the celebration of the anti-communists and capitalists in Kerala as much more problematic and irritating. That symbolised the upcoming

²⁶ The martyrdom of five youths named K. K. Rajeevan, K. V. Roshan, K. Babu V. Madhu, and Shibulal. On 25 November 1994, the DYFI organized a protest against the educational policy of granting a government quota of merit seats to the management for celling it as their private quota. The decision has taken by the then UDF government led by the Congress Party in Kerala. When the DYFI protesters blocked Minister M. V. Raghavan on the road the police resorted to firing (The News Minute 2018).

²⁷ The Democratic Youth Federation of India was formed in 1980. It's a youth political organization which is constitutionally independent but ideologically and organizationally with the CPI(M).

danger – the strengthening of the right-wing and the turn towards a unipolar capitalist world (Kumar 2021).

The collapse of the Soviet Union provided an opportunity for the Communist Party's political opponents to criticize them. While the all India leadership of the Congress Party was more sympathetic towards the Soviet Union, the Kerala unit of the party took a diverging position, a more vehement anti-Soviet political line, as communists were their immediate political opponents. Moreover, Congress tried to appease the church and Islamic groups in the state, which are demographically substantial in numbers, by mixing the rhetoric on religion, atheism and communism. The idea of communism (including materialism) was considered antithetical to these sematic religions' values (Sivadaan 2021).

The Communist parliamentarian V. Sivadasan (2021) remembers an incident witnessed by him in his childhood at his village Parakkandam in Kannur; the Muslim League had pasted posters all around the town with the words "*Andharicha Soviet Unionum Marxisathinum Aadharanjalikal*" (condolence to the death of the Soviet Union and Marxism) and they continue the campaign that relevance of the Communist Party is lost forever. In response, the CPI(M) filled the village wall with posters worded "*Marxisathinu Maranamilla*" (Marxism never dies). The CPI(M), particularly in public meetings, emphasizes that the collapse of the Soviet Union is because of their practical failure and not the failure of Marxism progressive writers' (Sivadasan 2021). This led to heated debates among the people in public places, including tea shops, libraries, markets, etc., and sometimes led to inter-party clashes and scuffles in villages. In villages, Sivadasan recollected CPI(M), organizing huge rallies chanting the slogans like "*Maranamilla Maranamilla Marxisathinu*" (Marxism will never die) and "*Communism Neenal Vazhatte*" (Long Live Communism) (Ibid).

In this context, the communist leaders frequently reiterated Martin Niemoller's poem:

First they came for the Communists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Communist
Then they came for the Socialists
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Socialist
Then they came for the trade unionists
And I did not speak out

Because I was not a trade unionist
Then they came for the Jews
And I did not speak out
Because I was not a Jew
Then they came for me
And there was no one left
To speak out for me (Niemoller 2022).

Moreover, he remembers that, through reading Soviet children's literature and studying the development of science and technology in the USSR, most of his classmates at the school were emotionally attached to the Soviet Union and became very sad while hearing about its collapse (Ibid). However, V. Jain (2022) also remembers that when the Soviet Union fell, people like him loved Soviet literature. Moscow Radio (Malayalam channel) felt a huge disappointment and a big gap. Until 1991, the political campaign 'one-third of the world is socialists' was routinely employed by left student organizations on Kerala's campuses (Ranjith 2021). They projected Lenin as a key icon, and his ideas and quotes were quite popular (Ibid). In the late 1980s, they heard from the CPI(M) leader Suresh Kurup that he could not find a pen without ink leak in the Soviet shops on his last visit. This was shocking news for those who imagined the USSR as a magical land (Ibid).

The Soviet collapse negatively impacted the attraction of youth towards the Communist Parties (Ibid). During the field visits, the leadership of communist student groups in the 1990s acknowledged that they used to conduct intra-organizational critical discussions on the Soviet collapse. Even the communist student groups and congress party's student wing Kerala Students Union (KSU) used to physically confront each other on campuses over heated arguments on Soviet Union's collapse (Ranjith 2021).²⁸ Further, KSU launched a campaign called *Nirthoo ningalude othalanga varthamanam, Lokam keezhmel mariyunnu* (Stop your toxic talks, the world is radically changing). The SFI initiated a counter-campaign against this by mentioning that the Soviet collapse would not have any long-lasting impacts on Kerala and that Marxism-Leninism would survive all these difficult times (Rajeev 2021; Ranjith 2021). The Mathrubhumi daily on 4th October 1991 reported the reflections of the Soviet Union's collapse in the then on-going students' union elections in Kerala University's colleges. There were posters on the campuses on the

²⁸In one such instance, in Baselius College, Kottayam, KSU-SFI clashes turned into physical fight.

reactivation of churches in Moscow, the emergence of neoliberal economic policies and the end of Communism in the Soviet Union (Mathrubhumi 04/10/1991).

Moreover, these developments never politically affected SFI and continued to set big victories in the campus union elections in Kerala (Rajeev 2021). P. Rajeev (2021), an SFI leader at the time of the Soviet collapse, said they campaigned that the fall of the Soviet Union was not because of Marxist ideology but the wrong practical implementation. When the opponent groups raised the issue strongly on the campuses, the SFI projected the achievements of Socialism, including Science, Cinema and victory against Fascism. Many international problems were raised and discussed on the campuses during this period. Initially, SFI took the lead in these debates, which also profoundly strengthened its organisation (Ibid).

P. Rajeev (2021) mentions that the CPI(M) responded to the campaigns against the Soviet collapse and that the USSR has failed in practically implementing Marxist ideas. The party campaigns among the people had stated that the existing developments in the world could not go reverse. The socialistic achievements in society and the scientific achievements in science and technology by the Soviet state will remain in the world. There were discussions among the students and activists on the everlasting achievements of the USSR (Rajeev 2021). The rethinking after the Soviet disintegration created structural changes in the party organization of the CPI(M). The conference reports of CPI(M) were started to include the sections like Socialism and Contemporary World Analysis (Ibid). The program of the party was restructured with the policy of democratic decentralization. The secretaryship (held by a person) was limited to three times. A Control Commission was elected to deal with the complaints inside the party (Ibid). Moreover, the discussions on an Indian model of Communism became stronger inside the party. The various discussions that emerged inside the party after the Soviet collapse strengthened the organization and the growth of the membership (Ibid).

6.2 Report of Soviet Demise in Mainstream Print Media in Malayalam

The mainstream print media in Malayalam has reported the Soviet collapse in detail and published the stories with their narrations. This section contains a detailed content analysis of Kerala's newspapers, including Malayala Manorama, Mathrubhumi and Deshabhimani, the oldest dailies with massive geographical coverage, from October

1991 to January 1992, during the peak time of Soviet collapse's reporting, unfolds the ideological approach of Malayalam mainstream Media towards the Soviet Union.

Mathrubhumi

The *Mathrubhumi* is a daily began its publication in Kozhikode in 1923. It is one of the oldest and most popular newspapers founded by K. P. Keshava Menon as part of the anti-colonial movement of the Indian National Congress. This daily is the second most circulated newspaper in Kerala. It is largely known as the newspaper of the Malayalee cultural elites. The *Mathrubhumi* reported the events of the Soviet disintegration with great enthusiasm. The news from the Soviet Union came as headlines, prime reports, editorials and opinion pieces etc., for many days.

The *Mathrubhumi* editorial on 20 December 1991 titled "An International Collapse" expressed its sorrow on the upcoming official dissolution of the Soviet Union. The editorial sights the internal issues are the prime reason for this collapse. Simply granting freedom to each republic has never going to solve the issues. The editorial raises its concerns and doubts on the nationality question in the republics, management of nuclear weapons, mutual sharing of food crops and oil, price rise and black marketing and people's suffering at the peak of the wintertime. The editorial also mentioned that the old generation has suffered much more than this in the period of the Tsarist kingdom. Indeed they got liberated with the Russian Revolution. But now, the people are again facing starvation in the warmth of the rejection of Communism. Finally, the editorial raises the question of which ideology will save the masses from poverty and starvation. "Is Western capitalism capable to answer it?" (*Mathrubhumi* 20/12/1991). Therefore, the *Mathrubhumi* editorial expresses a mixture of feelings, including the achievements of the Russian Revolution, problems during the time of collapse and the suspicion about the upcoming neoliberal reforms.

On 25 December 1991, the *Mathrubhumi* daily reported the popular uprisings in various cities of the Soviet Union against Yeltsin and his team for their acts that led to the dissolution of the USSR. The report mentions people's protest against neoliberal reforms, privatization, price rise, etc., under the Yeltsin regime (*Mathrubhumi* 25/12/1991). The *Mathrubhumi* gave a headline on the fight inside the parliament building in Georgia and the wave of protests by thousands of Communist Party supporters in St. Petersburg and Moscow. The protesters in Russia raised the Soviet flags and the pictures of Lenin and demanded the resignation of Yeltsin. They

were led by the Communist Party leaders Viktor Alksnis and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (Mathrubhumi 24/12/1991).

The removal of the Red Flag and the hosting of the flag of the Russian Federation in the Kremlin became a front-page story with a photo titled “*Kremlinileni Russian Pathaka*” (Now onwards the Russian Flag in Kremlin) (Mathrubhumi 27/12/1991). The official dissolution of the Supreme Soviet and the resignation of Gorbachev got reported as the headline on 27 December 1991 (Mathrubhumi 27/12/1991). The same edition also reported an official statement by Harkishan Singh Surjeet, the then general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The CPI(M) accused Gorbachev as the main culprit behind the collapse of the first Socialist country in the world. Surjeet mentioned that his party would learn the lessons from the collapse of the USSR, and the CPI(M)’s ideological commitment to Socialism and Marxism-Leninism would stay strong. The party expressed its hope upon the people and the communists of the former Soviet republics that they will continue the struggle for democracy, freedom and socialism (Mathrubhumi 27/12/1991). The *Mathrubhumi* also quoted the clarification of Alexander Kadakin, the diplomat from the Russian embassy, that the Russian Federation will not change its stand on Kashmir and that it is an internal matter of India (Mathrubhumi 28/12/1991).

K. Mohanan of CPI(M) and C. Unniraja from CPI wrote two notable opinion pieces in *Mathrubhumi*, reflecting the Communist Parties’ political take on the Soviet collapse, respectively. There were opinion pieces on the responsibility of Gorbachev on the disintegration. The CPI’s take on Gorbachev differed from what the leader Unniraja (1991) expressed in *Mathrubhumi*. The CPI positively viewed the 20th Party Congress of CPSU and the report against Stalin. The base of the collapse lay in undemocratic acts in the name of socialist nation-building and the crushing of federal principles by Stalin (Unniraja 1991). The Unniraja is praising Gorbachev for his policies on ending the cold war, arms rising and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The CPI has viewed the changes brought by Gorbachev as reinventing democracy in the Soviet Union (Unniraja 1991).

Unniraja (1991) blamed that there was no reasonable effort from the CPSU to correct the mistakes of Stalinism even after the 20th Party Congress. The CPI(M) leader K. Mohanan (1991), in his article in *Mathrubhumi*, mentioned that there was a wrong understanding of the Marxist theory that prevailed in the Soviet Union. The

socialist stage of the Soviet Union had progressed a lot concerning the full fill of the people's basic needs, including food, cloth, shelter, medicine and education. But this was not enough progress to go to the stage of Communism. But such wrong calculations have come during the period of Brezhnev. Another thing is that the Soviet leaders thought that the Socialist stage would eventually transform into Communism without any effort. These are the big theoretical and practical mistakes made by the CPSU (Mohan 1991).

Many innovations and changes took place in the latter half of the 20th century, but the Soviet Union failed to understand it in the global scenario. Initially, they lost a practical understanding of the Marxist ideology. Finally, the Gorbachev regime announced that considering the global realities around the world, there be economic changes in the name of Perestroika. Similarly, new policies were introduced in the name of Glasnost in administration and party structure. The fraternal parties welcomed this with the understanding that nation-building in the present scenario need not be strict like a war period. But Gorbachev's speech at the 70th-anniversary celebration of the October Revolution in 1987 clarified his plans. Gorbachev has stated that the contradiction between Capitalism and Socialism is over. So he simply wanted to move toward capitalism and leave the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and the Russian Revolution (Mohan 1991).

The economy's immediate transformation towards an open market system has resulted in black marketing, scarcity, price rise, hoarding, inflation, etc. The new market society has also witnessed the growth of communalism and separatism. So the capitalist world's accusation of the defeat of Marxism-Leninism and Socialism is completely wrong, and the ultimate reason behind the fall of the Soviet Union is the naked rejection of Marxism-Leninism (Mohan 1991).

Here the *Mathrubhumi* daily expressed a mixture of feelings on the Soviet collapse. The Malayalam dailies largely depend on the international media and news agencies for their reports from abroad. These limitations are visible with a lack of clarity on various global issues. The *Mathrubhumi* take different and contradictory positions in report on similar topics. But the daily largely maintained a pro-Soviet position in its editorial without criticising the capitalist world.

Malayala Manorama

The *Malayala Manorama*, one of the oldest newspapers in Kerala, has founded by Kandathil Varghese Mappillai from Kottayam in 1888. The newspaper enjoys its highest number circulation among the Malayalam dailies. The *Malayala Manorama* daily's political reporting o is famous for its anti-Communist positions and standing along with the powerful Orthodox Church and Congress party. These positions are highly reflected in its news contends on the Soviet collapse. The *Manorama* has published the highest number of editorials, news reports and opinion pieces on the events of the USSR disintegration.

The *Manorama* editorial on 13 December 1991 discusses how the Communist approach failed to address nationality and language questions in the USSR. The *Manorama* says now it is proven that our Gandhian ideology is better to resolve these issues even though it is considered an old approach. The editorial continues that the political resolutions of the Communist Parties in India show that they are still not mature enough to learn from the Soviet collapse. The Marxists are putting all the blame on Gorbachev. But in reality, the Communist/Stalinist iron carton was broken by people marching towards freedom. They have broken the cage and come out (Manorama 13/12/1991).

The *Manorama* daily has reported the coming back of K. Gopalakrishnan after completing his 25 years in the Malayalam section of Progress Publishers, Moscow. Gopalakrishnan discussed the on-going price hike and scarcity of food in Moscow. According to him, the people in Moscow buy 1.30 roubles per egg, but now the governmental store sells it for 2.50 roubles, and the private vendors and farmers sell it for 15 to 20 roubles per egg. The citizens are forced to stand in a queue of 200 to 300 people to buy bread and egg. The former Soviet republics refuse to sell the food crops to each other. The farmers in the collective farms were not ready to sell their food crops to the state because of the fear that the state might not provide subsidies in the future.

Gopalakrishnan shares that after the failed coup, he had struggled a lot to get the food items. The average monthly income of a Russian citizen is 300 roubles, which does not increase as per the on-going price hike. The price of food crops ose three times, and so did the scarcity of food. The period of price hikes also witnessed high rates of unemployment. Only the newly emerged millionaires and their professionals can live in better conditions. They are receiving five to eight-time

bigger payments than the government salary. Even though Gopalakrishnan was hopeful of Gorbachev that he could only do something better for the people (Manorama 10/12/1991).

On 15 December 1991, *Manorama* reported on the developments in the money exchange market in the background of Soviet disintegration. Now in Russia, we will get five roubles for one rupee. But in India, the exchange rate is RS. 30. 83 for a rouble. The exchange rate of an American dollar is 1100 roubles in Russia. Indeed the Indian exchange rate with a dollar is only 25 rupees. In such a situation, the Russians are collecting Indian rupees to convert them into dollars. For this purpose, they sent the collected rupees through Eastern Europe to the West Asian republics, where many Indians lived densely. From there, they collect dollars and send them back to Russia (Manorama 15/12/1991). . On their way to Japan and India, Russian ship workers will purchase electronic equipment, clothes, liquor, medicine, etc. From the Russian ports, these items will be bought by the mafias at minimum rates, and later, they sell these at much higher rates to the public (Manorama 15/12/1991). During this crisis, theft became common phenomenon in Russia (Manorama 15/12/1991).

On 19 December 1991, the *Manorama* daily presented a special issue on Soviet disintegration. The translation of the headline can be read as “The Soviet Union is going to Vanish: The Red Flag will be taken down on 31 December” (Manorama 19/12/1991). The front-page stories include the commonwealth agreements, management of nuclear armaments, Gorbachev’s resignation letter, etc. The other page’s stories included stopping Aeroflot flights because of the energy deficiency; the Baltic States will join NATO etc. (*Manorama* 19/12/1991). The editorial on the special issue was also about the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The editorial starts with a discussion on the formation of the commonwealth and later *Manorama*’s factual findings on the collapse. The editorial states that whatever the ideology, no power can continue to survive by suppressing the people’s will. Most people expected major changes in the Soviet Union during the Gorbachev period, but none predicted the USSR’s total collapse (*Manorama* 19/12/1991).

The regime changes in Central and Eastern Europe did not lead to strong domestic civil conflicts. But in the Soviet Union, the scenario was different. The collapse also witnessed regional fights, ethnic clashes and communal movements. These developments made everyone understand that the Soviet Union was not merely a nation but consisted of diverse nationalities (Manorama 19/12/1991). The earlier

nationality uprisings faced the forceful suppression of Stalin and were continued by his successors until Gorbachev. Gorbachev's application of peaceful methods was never acceptable to the Stalinists inside the party. They had attempted for a coup to capture the power. This made the situation worse, and everything went out of control. After the coup, even Gorbachev became helpless to prevent the collapse (*Manorama* 19/12/1991).

An opinion piece by P. P. Mathew expressed similar views of the editorial and news reports. Mathew praises Gorbachev a lot, especially for his peaceful reforms. At the same time, he supported Yeltsin's argument that Gorbachev to accelerate the neoliberal policies implementation. In the Soviet collapse special edition, *Manorama* published two anonymous opinion pieces written in the name of M, and O. K. The M's opinion piece finds Yeltsin as better than Gorbachev, despite his reservations and suspicion. This opinion piece indirectly targeted the Communists in Kerala by creatively employing the term *Sakhav* (Comrade) to mention the name of CPSU leaders (*Manorama* 19/12/1991). The opinion piece by O. K. discusses the character and the history of the authoritarian Communist regime in the Soviet Union. This piece labelled the Soviet Union as an imperialist state and Gorbachev as a great leader who peacefully allowed freedom for the republics (*Manorama* 19/12/1991).

To continuously project the greatness of Gorbachev, *Manorama* published a news report on a medical student Reena Wilfred from Kollam, Kerala, who wrote a letter to Gorbachev congratulating his effort on nuclear proliferation along with America. In response to her letter, Gorbachev sent a gift; a bronze memento pictured a flying pigeon with an olive leaf, through the Soviet consulate in Madras. Reena was again honoured in a public gathering in Kollam, Kerala, and the authorities announced that she could do her higher education in the Soviet Union. After completing her pre-degree, Reena went to Russia to study medicine. The report ends by saying that now Reena is studying in a new Russia without her dear Gorbachev's leadership (*Manorama* 22/12/1991).

The same edition also consists of a story on a comparison between Raisa Gorbacheva, wife of Gorbachev and Anastasia Yeltsina (Naina), wife of Yeltsin. Naina is not leading a posh life like Raisa, and she is very humble and simple. When Naina went to Rom with Yeltsin, instead of visiting posh jewel and textile shops like Raisa, she went to a small textile shop and brought a few clothes for her grant children before leaving Roam (*Manorama* 22/12/1991).

The *Manorama* has reported that nobody is coming from the Commonwealth to attend the upcoming CPI(M) party congress. The party General Secretary Surjeet responded that since there is no CPSU, we will invite them after rebuilding their party (*Manorama* 27/12/1991). One news report mentions that India has a debt of 10 billion dollars (26000 crore rupees) to the USSR in trade-related matters. Now India is confused about whom they will repay the amount to since the USSR is not there. Reserve Bank Governor S. Venkitaramanan responded that we should agree with all the post-Soviet republics about their due share. But the other issue is that the rouble's exchange rate in India is 45 rupees, but in Russia, we can get several roubles for a rupee (*Manorama* 27/12/1991). This news report is also stating a confusing remark that the central government is not responding to the Reserve Bank Governor's call to develop new agreements with Yeltsin because of the pressure and presence of Indian Communists like Jyoti Basu (the then Bengal Chief Minister and CPI(M) leader) because they are still considering Gorbachev is their leader (*Manorama* 27/12/1991).

Moreover, *Manorama* published its third edition on the Soviet collapse on 27 December 1991. This time it was mostly an exclusive reporting on Gorbachev's great leadership. The editorial is titled "A Unique Leadership has changed the History." The 'ideal' leadership by Gorbachev liberated the people from the evil powers of the Soviet Union, which was built on cruelties by leaders like Lenin and Stalin. There is a comparison between Gorbachev's thrown out of powers with the electoral defeat of Winston Churchill after the Second World War. There is an expression of sympathy for Yeltsin's scathing criticisms of Gorbachev. Throughout the editorial, Gorbachev is highlighted as a great leader of peace, cooperation and democracy. The editorial concludes by saying that Gorbachev has to lead the generations toward a prosperous era, and his position in history will be among the forefront of the legendary leaders of the world (*Manorama* 27/12/1991).

The *Manorama* reports that it will be a hard time for Lenin's dead body because the people are demanding its removal from the Red Square. Fewer people are visiting the Lenin Mausoleum these days (*Manorama* 23/12/1991). This edition also reports on the upcoming party congress of both CPI and CPI(M) and their discussions about the Soviet disintegration. It has been reported that the CPI(M) allowed voting in the election of new state leadership. The report quoted the words of EMS Namboodiripad, the then General Secretary of the CPI(M), that the members of the state conference had voted three times in the four-step election for the new state

committee (Manorama 23/12/1991). Another report mentions the discussions within the CPI about the N. E. Balaram Committee Report on the restructuring of the party organization. The *Manorama* reports that the major suggestions of the committee are that the party should take part in all the protests for social justice and equality along with Marxism-Leninism, remove the concept of working-class internationalism and change the policy of democratic centralism.²⁹ A member of the committee and CPI leader A. B. Bardhan made his dissent note on it. Similarly, the majority of the central and state committees were against the Balaram Committee's recommendations (*Manorama* 23/12/1991).

The well-known Malayalam poet ONV Kurup's statement on Stalin was published in *Manorama* on 27 October 1991. In a symposium organized by the Purogamana Kala-Sahitya Sangham (Progressive Art-Literature Organization), ONV urged that we should not discredit Stalin. Stalin's enormous contributions to building the Soviet Union as a great nation of the working class, particularly the victory against fascism that protected the whole world, including India, amid the Second World War, cannot be discredited (*Manorama* 27/10/1991). Similarly, the Soviet Union had helped and supported India in our difficult times. Marxism leads the generations toward a progressive life, and its importance cannot be downplayed (*Manorama* 27/10/1991).

While the one-sided political reporting was progressing, the *Manorama* was helpless to under-report Kerala's huge loss in trade in the absence of the USSR. Indeed, the collapse of the Soviet Union has become jeopardy for India in export-trade relations. Especially the trade payments were made in rupees to help India. The *Manorama* reports that Kerala will suffer most from Soviet collapse because our major export items like pepper, cashew, tea powder, handlooms, and coir products had a great market in the USSR (*Manorama* 15/12/1991). On 22 December 1991, *Manorama* reported that the collapse of the Soviet Union badly struck Kerala with an export loss of 7,000 tone pepper and 7,000 tone cashews.

Along with this, the export of tea powder is also at stake (*Manorama* 22/12/1991). It was unclear whether to continue the trade on the rupee – rouble payment system. The price fall of Pepper happened because of the loss of the Soviet market. Soviet Russia was India's biggest export of pepper, and brought 19,437 tons

²⁹The Leninist party organisational system will discuss each matter and the decision will be taken as per the majority vote and it will be binding over everyone.

of pepper in 1990-91 (Manorama 30/12/1991). The new market-oriented economy in Russia and other republics might not continue the former trade agreements with India (Manorama 22/12/1991).

Meanwhile, in a shocking surprise, *Manorama* reports that the new Russia is moving towards Pakistan, and they will support the Pak stand on Kashmir (Manorama 24/12/1991). In an official visit to Pakistan, the Vice President of Russia, Alexander Rutskoy, responded to the Pakistan Times, the official newspaper of the Pak government, that the United Nations assembly should decide the self-determination of Kashmir as per its resolutions. This was a diametrically opposite position compared to the soviets, who considered Kashmir an integral part of India. *Manorama* also reported that the foreign affairs and the defence departments of Pakistan and Russia might develop a mutual cooperation, a huge setback for India (Manorama 24/12/1991).

The *Malayala Manorama* had strived to provide a positive picture of the collapse of the Soviet Union and hope for the emerging neoliberal reforms. The *Manorama* is also putting their effort into giving counter-arguments against the narratives of the CPI(M) on the Soviet collapse. Since the destruction of the Socialist regimes in Europe, Gorbachev was projected as a great leader by the capitalist world and was awarded, the Nobel Prize for peace in 1990. The *Manorama* replicated similar narratives. *Manorama's* narrations indicate that the coup attempt by the CPSU leaders against Gorbachev made the situation worse and it was a prime reason for the disintegration of the USSR.

But in contestation to this view, S. Sankar (1999: 377) mentioned that the developing countries in Afro-Asia were confused with the coup in Moscow. Still, they were sympathetic toward the coup, including countries like India. The official position of the CPI on the Soviet collapse has not accused Gorbachev's role as a prime reason. *Manorama's* Soviet collapse special issue dated 19 December 1991 contains news reports, opinion pieces and editorials expressing uniform or similar political and analytical stands. These reports lack diverse representation of opinions or different analytical standpoints. It is important to note that *Manorama* has not given any space for a news report or an opinion piece containing differences of opinion with their editorial stand. This makes *Manorama* different from other major Malayalam news dailies and a whole propaganda mouthpiece against the Soviet Union.

Deshabhimani

The *Deshabhimani*, the mouthpiece of CPI(M) in Kerala, the undivided Communist Party started it from Kozhikode in 1942. After the split in the Communist Party, the *Deshabhimani* was taken over by the CPI(M). The *Deshabhimani* enjoys the third position in circulation among the Malayalam news dailies. The studies show that the readership of *Deshabhimani* is much bigger than its actual circulation (Jussy 2005; Jeffry 2009). The various reports and analyses of the daily on the Soviet disintegration show the political views of the CPI(M), and the party's responses against the allegations came from the opposition.

The *Deshabhimani* daily covered the events of the Soviet collapse in detail with analytical articles reflecting the party positions. On 20th December 1991, the news daily reported Yeltsin's interest in joining NATO. The report also mentioned that the Russian embassy in India became the first embassy of the republic to host a Russian Flag instead of the Red flag (*Deshabhimani* 20/12/1991). On 25th December 1991, the news daily gave a headline on the spread of protests in the Soviet cities against the dissolution of the USSR. It also reported on the growing competition between the USA and other Western countries to get Soviet technological information.

The *Deshabhimani* viewed the Soviet technological advancements in science and technology, military-industrial complex and many other fields as better than the capitalist countries and critiqued the capitalist countries for not recognizing these aspects. The daily considered the mutual competition amongst the Western countries to capture the technological knowledge from the USSR as self-exposing their hypocrisy (*Deshabhimani* 25/12/1991). They reiterated the Chinese Communist Party's statement that Gorbachev was behind this collapse. What Gorbachev brought in the name of reconstruction of Socialism ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union (*Deshabhimani* 27/12/1991).

The *Deshabhimani* daily reported the discussion of the CPI(M) delegation with the Chinese Communist Party leadership in Beijing. On the collapse of the Soviet Union, the CCP and the CPI(M) shared similar positions (*Deshabhimani* 3/10/1991). Both the Communist Parties analysed the situation as not the collapse of Marxism-Leninism but the Soviet leadership. The Communist movement should build according to the national situation of a country. In another striking report on Vietnam titled "Vietnam will not drop its socialist path," *Deshabhimani* praised the success of

the socialist healthcare system in Vietnam (Deshabhimani 20/12/1991). In Vietnam, health treatments and medicines are public goods and free.

Moreover, they operate several medical journals to create proper health awareness. The government will not allow any advertisements from private companies for medicine marketing (Deshabhimani 20/12/1991). The reference to Vietnam helped the *Deshabhimani* to continue a communist imagination amongst the masses in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse. The switch to other communist nations, including Vietnam and China, is a notable effort to sustain a communist hope in Kerala's popular imagination.

The *Deshabhimani* published an interview of I. K. Gujral, the former foreign minister and ambassador to the Soviet Union (later the Prime Minister of India), with Malayalam poet and journalist Prabha Varma. Gujral mentions that the disintegration of the USSR occurred not because of the national interest but because it was a top-level leadership's decision. India cannot expect to continue a great friendship with the newly formed independent republics, similar to the former Soviet Union. This will be a hard time for India without a great supporter like the USSR. But there are possibilities for new engagements, including trade and industrialization. Our diplomats should understand that the Central Asian republics can contribute well to the development of India. The saddest part of the story is that the necessary good studies on these regions are neither in our foreign affairs nor in the academia. We blindly follow the West's studies, and it's time to change it (Deshabhimani 28/12/1991). Former Chief Minister of Kerala, P. K. Vasudevan Nair of CPI in a seminar organized by the University College, Trivandrum, stated that the collapse of the Soviet Union would be a great setback for the third world countries. The USSR had enormous contributions to developing third-world nations (Deshabhimani 20/12/1991).

The *Deshabhimani* (3/10/1991) quotes the words of CPI(M) leaders Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Jyoti Basu that the Chinese Communist Party leadership is hopeful of overcoming the present crisis soon. China is receiving foreign capital investments not because of turning toward capitalism but as an experiment to build a better socialist society as far as this experiment gave good results for the country. Verities of goods are available in China, but the situation in the Soviet Union was different. Even before the present crisis, the nation has faced a lack of essential goods and services (Deshabhimani 3/10/1991).

The *Deshabhimani* has reported a seminar organized by the Trivandrum Press Club on the international relevance of the events in the Soviet Union. The then KPCC president A. K. Antony accused his party of Stalinist tendencies in Congress, and this should be addressed and resolved. If the Stalinists continue in the party, there is no future for the Congress. The crisis in the Soviet Union is because of Stalinism. By saying the Stalinist tendencies in Congress A. K. Antony indirectly meant his opponent and the then Kerala Chief Minister K. Karunakaran's leadership. Antony urged that we don't need socialism or capitalism. We need democratic socialism propounded by Nehru. The Communist Parties should dissolve, and the cadres should either join other parties or should form a social democratic party (*Deshabhimani* 1/10/1991). The news report ends with quoting the words of P. K. Vasudevan Nair and EMS Namboodiripad from the same seminar. PKV has said that what Congress did in the name of Nehruvian Socialism is build capitalism. EMS Namboodiripad was hopeful about overcoming the present crisis and the growth of Socialism in the future (*Deshabhimani* 1/10/1991).

EMS Namboodiripad in his article in *Deshabhimani* on 27 December 1991 as part of the CPI(M) Kerala state conference had made certain important points on the party organization in the light of the Soviet collapse. He had stressed the topic of the internal democracy of the Communist Party. The major problem with the party structure was that if someone got elected as secretary, whether it was good or bad, that person would continue the position until their death. The power holding of the secretary was unlimited. These kinds of issues related to the undemocratic structure had badly struck the Communist Parties all over the world including India. Now the Communist organizations are working to solve these issues.

According to Namboodiripad (1991), what we witnessed in the USSR was the ideological deterioration of Communism in the name of restructuring and strengthening. The basic idea of Marxism is a class struggle but what the CPSU leadership did is that they tried to replace the idea of class struggle with human values. Being one of the important fraternal organizations of the CPSU, the CPI(M) had firmly criticized this act (Namboodiripad 1991). Gorbachev has also left the ideas on the vanguard of the working class, dictatorship of the proletariat and the working class internationalism but all of these are continues to be part of the ideology of the CPI(M) (Namboodiripad 1991). The Soviet leadership made the dictatorship of the

proletariat into the dictatorship of the party, which eventually became the dictatorship of the leadership.

Similarly, the leadership of the international communist movement has concentrated in a few socialist countries or even one country. Irrespective of addressing these issues Gorbachev had tried to replace the class struggle as a core idea of Marxism. This fault line has been agreed upon and followed by the leadership of the Communist Parties of Europe. The consequences of this mistake have affected all the fraternal Communist Parties all over the world (Namboodiripad 1991). According to Namboodiripad (1991), the CPI(M) has taken a strong critical stand on the revisionist approach by Gorbachev since 1987. What the CPI(M) meant for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the democratic rule dominated by the workers and peasants. And the working class's internationalism is meant for the solidarity of the nationalism of the working classes all over the world.

So, what the CPI(M) is doing is struggling against the revisionist acts of both the earlier and later Soviet leadership. Organizationally the CPI(M) is trying to re-establish the internal democratic system without replacing democratic centralism, an essential part of observing and maintaining the democratic structure of the party. For the effective working of the democratic centralized party system, internal democracy is vital. At the same time, the Party will not allow the formation of groups inside the organization. There will be freedom for free and fair opinion and the right to vote for electing the leadership.

The *Deshabhimani* had published an article by I. V. Das titled “Nathuram Vinayak Godse and Mikhail Gorbachev.” Here I. V. Das has compared the words of Godse after the killing of Mahatma Gandhi and “I have completed my mission” which Gorbachev similarly expressed after signing the decree on the dissolution of the USSR. The killing of a nation is the worst crime than killing a national leader. So Gorbachev's crime will be remembered forever and tagged as a renegade and killer of a great nation in history. He had also expressed that the ownership of the Red Flag does not particularly belong to Russia alone; the struggling masses worldwide will raise it again. Das is optimistic that in the future, the Kremlin will again host the red flag (*Deshabhimani* 24/12/1991).

In another opinion piece in *Deshabhimani*, Das (1991) replies to the *Manorama* editor-in-chief K. M. Mathew, Congress party leader A. K. Antony and the far-right Hindutwa leader P. Parameswaran. Das (1991) is sighting that all these

anti-communist persons are adopting the arguments of American President George Bush (senior). Das (1991) is confronted with the argument put forward by P. Parameswaran that the *Bharathiya Vicharadhara* (The Thought of Bharat) is the alternative against Socialism and Capitalism. His 'Thought of Bharat' is *Varnashrama Dharma* (The Varna System), simply feudal system of discriminatory caste tradition by the narrow minded Hidutva ideology (Das 1991). While countering the official American argument on the victory of democracy and humanism, I. V. Das (1991) sights the US invasion of Iran and the brutal killing of thousands of people. The opinion piece ends with a sentence that all these hypocrites have no right to say about democracy or humanism because they are the real enemies of the same (Das 1991).

K. Mohanan had written a piece in *Deshabhimani* on Gorbachev and his resignation titled "*Charithra Thalile Karimazhi Kolam*" (A Dark Effigy in the Chapter of History). The article appeared a day after the news of Gorbachev's resignation from the post of President of the USSR. The article begins with a statement that "Gorbachev is resigned from a non-existing presidential post of a non-existing Soviet Union" (Mohanan 1991). The Soviet Union was built over the sacrifice and bloodshed of a lack of people within 60 years. Gorbachev made it's collapsed within six years. By doing this, Gorbachev maligned his people. Such kind of betrayal has started by Khrushchev. What Khrushchev did in the name of rejecting Stalin strengthened the attacks against the Socialist system (Ibid).

The capitalist media and their campaign missionaries effectively used it. It was true that the Soviet Union faced an economic crisis. , To resolve this, Gorbachev begged in front of the capitalist nations. Untimely, this led him to cut the nation into pieces and surrender it to capitalism. The capitalist media are praising Gorbachev that withdraws after completing his mission. Initially, his mission was to take his great nation into the graveyard and bury it. Indeed, imperialism needed this. Even though Hitler, Mussolini and American imperialism failed, Gorbachev did it from inside (Mohanan 1991).

The *Deshabhimani* tried to present the party narrative in front of its readers. It has also taken a special effort to counter the criticism raised by the opponents of Socialism/Communism in the context of the Soviet collapse and the popular anti-communist thoughts of the period. The *Deshabhimani* also critiques the other Communist narratives on the Soviet collapse, especially from the CPI. This is giving a

clear picture of the debate, discussions and defence of the CPI(M) in this historical conjuncture.

6.3 The Reflections on Soviet Collapse in the Malayalam Literature

Several literary works in Malayalam have covered the demise of the Soviet Union as key theme. The fictions *Russia* by M. Mukundan, *Pithirtharppanam* by M. Sukumaran, *Nalamlokam* by N. S. Madhavan, *Aakasham Nilathu Veenukidakkunnathu Pole* by Asokan Charuvil and *Seethanidra* by K. A. Beenaare some of the works that published the Soviet disintegration a central theme with nostalgic, emotional, and romantic narratives.

M. Mukundan's (2020) short story named *Russia* was published in 1994, and it's a love story of Govindan from Kerala and Russi from Punjab. The term Russi refers to Russia in Hindi. The love between Russi and Govindan progressively unfolds when they are together in Delhi. Whenever Govindan falls ill and suffers severe depression, Russi will reach there quickly to take care of him. But in-between, Govindan is ignoring Russi and going back to Kerala. After a long time, the middle-aged Govindan returns to Delhi to search for Russi, but he sees her bungalow collapse. Finally, Govindan finds Russi in an old age home where she was struggling with illness but takes her along. By narrating the deep and lovely relationship between Govindan and Russi the author M. Mukundan subtly invites the readers into India-Russia relations. The Soviet support and aid during India's nation-building process and the withdrawal of the post-Soviet Russian regime make this story's sub-text. In the end the story that conveys the necessity of moving together between India and Russia.

The story *Pithirtharpanam* by M. Sukumaran narrates a tragic end of an ex-radical communist activist. After exiting an extreme-left political organisation, the central character struggles to lead his family life as a tutorial college teacher. The story progresses through the narration of their life by his daughter, a tenth-standard student. When the protagonist heard about the collapse of the Soviet Union, he became very upset and disturbed to the extent that he stopped attending the tutorial classes. He is expressing a few words of thoughts and disappointments to his daughter on the Soviet collapse and further developments. But as a school student, she does not understand anything. One day after returning from the traditional religious customs of his ancestors, he ends his life by committing suicide (Sukumaran 2014). As an

ideologically committed person, he could not take the collapse of the USSR, leading to his suicide.

N. S. Madavan's story *Nalam Lokam (Fourth World)* is a narration of a Malayalee aviator Govindan Kutty's travel to space along with Igor Bakunin from Leningrad in a Soviet aircraft. After spending three months in the aircraft, they shared many stories, especially about the communist experiences in Kerala and the Soviet Union. Bakunin shares Stalin's autocratic rule and violence against people, including his father's killing. However, Govindan Kutty shares the liberator image of Stalin in Kerala, which worked as the motivation of the communists, including his father and comrades who faced brutal suppressions at the beginning of their movement. After such and such discussions and long attempts to connect their messages to the earth, finally, they are getting a message from a control room that now the Soviet Union is no more. They could not land in any of the republics, since none of them is interested in receiving Soviet aircraft including a person from the third world. Finally, Bakunin announced his move to the Fourth World, going out of the aircraft and moving into space (Madhavan 2020).

There is a discussion in this novel among the old generation communist activists on the late 1980s developments in the USSR. They allege that Gorbachev is the sole culprit behind the issues in USSR and made the third-world nations orphaned. With his anger, one communist activist mentioning Gorbachev is anti-Marx similar to the biblical notion of anti-Christ. After the news of Gorbachev's demise, these discussions are coming back to the mainstream debates in Kerala.

Asokan Charuvil (2020), in his story *Aakasham Nilathuveenu Kidakkunnathu Pole (Feels the Fall Down of the Sky)* in 1992, narrates the life of a school teacher Mukundan who belongs to a Hindu backward (Ezhava) family. Being a Communist Party activist, Mukundan involves actively in the working class movements and is concerned about the international developments related to the Socialist world. This story gave us a clear picture of the life of an ordinary communist activist in Kerala villages who is negotiating the religious customs as well as the Communist Party activism. Mukundan is deeply upset about the collapse of the Soviet Union; he felt it equivalent to the collapse of sky, and soon these uncontrolled emotions made him to face a cardiac arrest (Charuvil 2019). Asokan Charuvil's other stories like *Anthikkadu Ethra Jannymar Undu? (How Many Jennys are there in Anthikkadu?)* in 1996 and *Jalajeevitham (Life in Whater)* are also contains the narrations on Soviet Union.

K. A. Beena's (2012) story *Seethanidra* (Cold Sleep) is describing a father and his son's travel to Russia after the Soviet fall. The old aged father is eager to see Lenin when he read about an upcoming referendum to decide the cremation of Lenin's body. The old man was upset when he read the news on the discussions for cremating Lenin's body. He mentioned to his son that he want to see 'Comrade Lenin.' At the Lenin Mausoleum in the Red Square, Moscow, he is shouting 'Lalsalam' (Red Salute) when he saw the Lenin's body and this has made the security officials upset. After came out of the Mausoleum he is asking to the tourist guide about the ballot box of the referendum and expresses his desire to vote on it (Beena 2012). This story narrates the life and the thoughts of an ordinary Communist Party follower in Kerala.

There were several travelogues written by the Keralites when they visited the Soviet Union at its last stage and in the post-soviet times as well. This includes the well-known Malayalam writers to the ordinary people. Among these books many receives state awards, a wide readerships and subsequent editions. The Soviet nostalgia of the Malayalees are depicting in these travelogues.

Pavanan wrote his second travelogue on the Soviet Union in 1984, when he visited as part of Soviet Land – Nehru Award reception. The travelogue, *Oru Yathrayude Anubhavangal (Experiences from a Journey)*, pictured the Soviet Union, especially Moscow and Georgia, on a positive political canvas (Pavanan 1984). Punaloor Rajan a well-known photographer and writer in Kerala has written his travelogue *Mahayudhathinte Murippadukal (Scratches of a Great War)* in 1985, discussing his experiences while travelling through the Second World War memorial places in the Soviet Union and commemorated the Soviet fight against the Nazis. The forward to this book was written by a well-known Malayalam writer Vaikom Muhammed Basheer. The book also won Soviet Land – Nehru Award.

N. V. Krishna Warrior, a prominent literary figure, poet and journalist in Kerala, wrote a book titled *Puthiya Chintha Soviet Unionil (The New Thoughts in the Soviet Union)* in 1989. This is initially a travelogue discussing what he witnessed in the USSR in the late 1980s as socio-political and economic changes in the period of perestroika and glasnost in detail. The book discusses the political developments in the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia along with his visits' experiences. Warrior (1989) earned his primary experiences when he went to the former Soviet states as an Indian journalist. He was able to do several discussions along with the

ministers, political activists and bureaucrats. The book also discusses the emerging trends of communalism, new developments in the media, the emergence of the Swami Vivekananda Society and ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) in Soviet states and the issues of nuclear proliferation among the members of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. In-between, Warrior (1989) also notes the connection between the Estonian language (Finno-Ugrian group) and the Dravidian group of languages and the need to study it (Warrior 1989: 49).

Malayalee Olympian Bobby Aloysius wrote her travelogue in 2003 after the Russian visit. The book *Swapnam Nilacha Russiayil (Russia after the End of Dreams)* represents nostalgia for the Soviet Union. She visited Russia and stayed there for one and a half years as part of her training as a high jumper. She shares her memories with various photographs, including her meeting with late communist Moscow Chandran's family in Russia. The book discusses the crisis in people's lives after the Soviet fall. The author mentions that she witnessed the killing of a great culture in post-Soviet Russia (Aloysius 2004). The travelogue by the Malayalam journalist T. N. Gopakumar titled *Volga Tharangangal (Ripples of Volga)* in 2010 also discusses his experiences with the moral and economic crisis in post-Soviet Russia. The book looks at the former Soviet Union positively. This book was awarded the best travelogue in Malayalam by Kerala Sahitya Akademi in 2011.

The well-known Malayalam travelogue on the Soviet Union named *Beena Kanda Russia (The Russia That Beena Saw)* was published in 1981. This book is a memoir of a fourteen years old girl named Beena who participated in the Artek International Young Pioneer Camp in the Soviet Union in 1977 (Beena 2015). The travelogue first published in *Mathrubhumi Weekly* as sections in 1978. Beena and her travelogue are important figures related to the Soviet-inspired imaginations of the Malayalees. The book had a huge popularity among the people, and even after 40 years, subsequent editions appear. Beena's dear friend in the Pioneer Camp, a Thajikistani girl named Mihrin (Mihrunnisa), appears as one of the story's most nostalgic and popular characters. In between, Beena has lost her contact with Mihrin. Later Beena's translated letters to Mihrin has published by *Mathrubhumi.com*. Immediately after Beena, started publishing her letters she received more than five thousand emails and her mail account got crashed (Beena 2022).

There was a documentary named *Never Land* on Beena's travelogue and her friend Mihrin made by a Thajikistani student Sharofat Abrova at Film and Television

Institute of India (FTII), Poona (Abrova 2016). Finally, the news reached Mhirin in Thajikistan through a family gathering. These stories were published by *Mathrubhumi Sunday Supplement* in 2010 and 2016. They had planned a joint documentary with Beena and Mhirin, but due to the unstable situations in her country Mhirin fled to an unknown place, and the project was unable to start (Beena 2022).

On the occasion of the book's 40th anniversary, another collection of memoirs discussing the book's influence upon people was published. This book *Beena Kankda Russia @40: OruPusthakam Pala Vayanakal (Beena's Sights in Russia @40: One Book, Different Readings)* is edited by a journalist Geetha Bakshi. Sixty people, including well-known writers, activists, journalists and other personalities, shared their memories and the deep influential role of this book in their life, especially at a young age. The forward to the book has written by the journalist Venkatesh Ramakrishnan. The writings in this book show the great influence of Beena's travelogue on the people who don't have much children's literature, television and the impossibility of a long trip in the 1970s and later. This popular travelogue produced a positive image of the Soviet Union, especially among the young generation.

In one of its chapters, Bipin Chandran, a famous film scriptwriter in Malayalam, shares his memories of the Soviet collapse when he was a high school student. He was saddened by the demise of the Soviet Union, as intense as the passing news of his father (Chandran 2022). The Soviet magazines had also greatly inspired him in his childhood. For Bipin Chandran, the book by K. A. Beena helped him shape a positive image of the Soviet Union. In his memories of *Beena Kanda Russia*, Chandran discusses Russian life's socio-economic and political crisis in the post-Soviet scenario. Being a book lover, Chandran (2022) collected many old magazines and books published in the Soviet Union.

The well-known Malayalam writer K. Satchidanandan published a travelogue on his experiences in Russia when attending the international seminar on "Pushkin at the Beginning of the 21st Century" at the Institute of World Literature Moscow, in 2000. Here Satchidanandan (2015) mentions the words of a college student named Tania, who came to take care of him as part of the seminar organising committee. When he asked about Russian life after the Soviet Union, Tania replied that "we lost the social security and stability. The old generations are in disappointment. Now we have more freedom than the older generation and we can choose our way of life but we do not know which way" (Satchidanandan 2015: 37). The Institute's professor

Alexi Shagin responded to his question that the popularity of Gorbachev remains outside of Russia. He is a week fellow. But Yeltsin was the representative of the American-sponsored Russian mafia. And the Communist Party has the majority in Duma.

Still, there are different factions inside the party like Stalinists, Social Democrats and Liberals (Satchidanandan 2015: 40). The travelogue has discussed the strong re-emergence of Christianity in post-Soviet Russia. Satchidanandan (2015: 42) mentions that there was no verity of products in the shops in the Soviet period when the people had their buying capacity. Now there are a lot of attractive items all around, but people do not have the money to buy them. The disagreements of Gorky with the Soviet regime are discussed through an interaction with a tourist guide at Gorky's home. While Satchidanandan was asking about the popularity of Mayakovski and Blohin today, Shagin answered that still; they hold huge followers for their poems. The conference has discussed the international relevance of Pushkin against neoliberalism and the far-right upsurge. This travelogue is a ten days story of an academic visit from 14 to 23 May 2000.

The well-known Malayalam writer Punathil Kunhabdulla went to Russia in December 1999 and published his first travelogue *Volgayil Manju Paiyumbol (When Volga Snowing)*, 2000. He starts by discussing the moral crisis in Russia after the Soviet fall, spending time with the new generation of Russians, travelling to historical places, visiting the Indian diaspora and his versions of the history of Soviet Communism. Since there is no winter season in Kerala, the Russian winters were highly romanticised in the travelogues, stories and children's literature on the Soviet Union. A. M. Shinas has written his experiences in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s in his book *Russia Mannil Veena Nakshathram (Russia: The Fallen Star on the Earth)* in 2007. Here Shinas discussed his personal experiences with the Soviet Union when he went there as a medical student in the late 1980s. He shares a lot of personal experiences during the period of the Soviet collapse while he was in Armenia as a medical student. His experiences with his Soviet friends, teachers, long travels, and university and hostel life make this small book rich.

Malayalam fiction writer G. R. Indugopan went to Russia as part of an Indian delegation invited by Russia in 2017. He was chosen as a delegate by the Russian Cultural Centre, Trivandrum. This paved the way for his travelogue on Russia-tilted *Spasiba* in 2018. The book critically examines Soviet history, but he notes the

instability in post-Soviet life, even among the young generations. Indugopan discussed his experiences in travel, interacting with people, and visiting places and his versions of Soviet communism.

Malayalam writer Paul Zacharia went to Moscow, St Petersburg and Siberia in 2020 and published his travelogue. The book *Randu Yathrakal (Two Journeys)* critically looks at the Soviet history and argues that the post-Soviet governments of Yeltsin and Putin were much better than the USSR. But most of the book mentions the Soviet Union, especially the history of Siberia. More than a travelogue, the book narrates the author's version of the history of the Soviet Union. One other travelogue depicting the positive views on Soviet Russia is *Neva muthal Volga vare (From Neva to Volga)* by S. Sarojam. This recent book on Russian travel is published in 2021. The influence and popularity of Soviet history among the Keralites are great incentives for these writers to concentrate more on Soviet history in their narrations.

The public in Kerala also popularly read the opinion pieces of the well-known Malayalam writers. These write-ups included discussions on the final developments in the Soviet Union as well as the collapse of the USSR. The Malayalam writer and journalist P. K. Balakrishnan (2019: 367) wrote an article in 1989 in the context of the democratic transition in the name of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the Soviet Union. He argues that there is no uniform democracy anywhere in the world. After the Revolution, there was no model of a communist government and administration, even at the theoretical level, that had not prevailed in front of Lenin and his comrades. After the Chinese Revolution, the Soviet model was there for the Chinese communists even though they are not completely adopted that system. After the Second World War, except Yugoslavia, all the other Eastern European communist governments were in control of the USSR.

On the other side, Vietnam had an entirely different history of struggles other than these European countries. Balakrishnan (2019) states that the demands for adopting Western model democracies in the other states are wrong. For example, Balakrishnan (2019: 371) cites that the Soviet Union's industrialization, technological advancements and resources are much better than western countries. Now, most of the then-Soviet population were born and brought up after the Russian Revolution. Therefore, they lacked those historical experiences.

In addition, they lived only inside the Soviet undemocratic systems and did not get an opportunity to communicate with the other parts of the world. They

experienced oppression from the Stalinist system. In the Soviet educational system, whatever its syllabus may be, the Soviet children enjoyed highly developed educational institutions and classrooms. Unlike in India, where the school teachers are the poorest and college teachers are landlords, the Soviet teacher's salary is more or less equal to the school and college. The Soviet citizens are an educated generation. They have studied at least till the higher secondary level. None of the countries in the world has achieved this until now. Gorbachev wanted to change the Soviet system through his *perestroika*, but he and his fellow leaders could not be able to explain its feature. Indeed the Leninist Soviet system never had any clear predictions of its feature. It had developed according to concrete realities. Certainly, Balakrishnan (2019: 373) is very positively looking at the changes in the USSR during the period of *perestroika*.

Malayalam literary figure and cartoonist O. V. Vijayan wrote an article in 1985 titled *Thiriyum Chumadam* in *Kalakaumudi* weekly as a strong criticism against Marxism in the context of Soviet Communism. There were debates and discussions in response to Vijayan's arguments. Political leaders, writers, and both sympathizers and critics of Communist Parties have participated in this discussion (Isaac 2012). As a critic of O. V. Vijayan and his followers, Bhasuredrababu and Rekhu wrote a book *Mandabudhikalude Marxist Samvadam (The Marxist Debate of the Stupid)* in 1986. The book critiques the anti-Marxist stands of O. V. Vijayan and his followers, especially on their Hindu spiritual narratives against Communism.

Many senior political leaders and intellectuals responded to the allegations of O. V. Vijayan in his opinion piece. C. Achutha Menon, Pavanan, Anand, C. P. Achutan, N. E. Balaram, M. G. S. Narayanan, M. K. Kumaran, K. P. Vasu, Nithya Chaithanya Yati, M. Rasheed, P. Chandramohan, Dasthakeer, K. P. Kosala Ramadas, P. A. Vasudevan, N. Damodaran, P. K. Gopalakrishnan, K. Satchidanandan and M. V. Devan have participated in this debate. In his article, O. V. Vijayan has also responded to the various reactions of different personalities. These authors shared their positive and negative comments on the Soviet Union. Indeed an article by O. V. Vijayan in a Malayalam periodical on the relevance of Marxism and the Soviet Union has invited many responses. This can be seen as a phenomenon in Kerala in any debate related to the Soviet Union and Marxism. Many literary figures and intellectuals used to participate in such discussions along with a wide readership.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Vijayan's article, "Prathyayashasthrathinadiyile Villalukal", discussed the supremacy of bureaucracy in the USSR in the context of the book *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* by the Yugoslavian communist leader Milovan Djilas. This political piece discusses the ethnic issues and nationality crisis in the USSR. These issues initially led to the collapse of the Soviet Union (Vijayan 2005: 234-85). Vijayan's (2005: 389-90) memoir titled "Yugoslovakya" is a satire against the internationalism of the communists. In this essay, he mentions his discussion with the Croatian Ambassador in New Delhi on the political developments in the socialist blocks of Eastern Europe.

O. V. Vijayan expressed his deep sorrow on the collapse of the USSR. In his political piece in 1998 titled *Oru Communistukarante Bhavi (The Future of a Communist Comrade)* mentioned the collapse of the Soviet Union was the Greatest Catastrophe in human civilization. No researchers or journalists can measure its depth. After the disintegration, the people experienced what they reached from Stalin's jails to MacDonald Hamburger. This is the cultural shame of the 20th century. The liberators who can overcome this cultural failure will lead tomorrow's world. For O. V. Vijayan, when the Russian naval force aimed their cannon against the winter palace during the Russian Revolution, is the most romantic moment of the 20th century (Vijayan 2005: 40).

The writings and discussions of these literary figures and activists are examples of the deep influence of the Soviet Union among them. The travelogues in the 1980s to post-Soviet Russia show the continued love affair of Malayalees with the Soviet Union. The collapse of the USSR has become the saddest part of their socio-political life even though many among them are critical to that system. The literary narrations of the catastrophes and the Soviet collapse in Malayalee life have become best sellers with subsequent editions.

6.4 The Present Reminiscences of Soviet Cultural Influences

The present reminiscences of Soviet cultural influences among the Keralites are important to note here. Several news reports on various events related to the Soviet influence in Kerala. There are institutions, book shops and websites, republication of old Soviet books, and nostalgic reports on old Soviet lovers are popular in the public domain. There are places in Kerala with Soviet names. Similarly the Malayalee people with Soviet names are in good number among the old and present generations.

When socialists all over the world were commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 2017, *The Washington Post* published a story with the headline “A Communist Success.” The news report was on Kerala, and it is mentioned that the CPI(M) has found unexpected success in Kerala by creating an entirely different set of communist practices such as revolution and seizure of means of production (Jaffe and Doshi 2017). The article that came in online was titled “One of the few places where a communist can still dream.” The report sight the survival of a communist government in the period of neoliberal reforms, right-wing assertions, the emergence of gulf money, a new middle class and the condition of fiscal deficit.

In another story, a photographer and an anarchist, John Banning, had travelled and took photographs of the Communist Parties of five countries, including Russia, Italy, Portugal, Nepal and India, on the occasion of the hundred years of the Russian Revolution. There he mentions, unlike the European Communist Parties, the Communist Party in Kerala, India, is well established and growing strong. But he also expresses that it is not a revolutionary party but works in a social-democratic style (Banning and Williams 2017). On the occasion of a seminar as part of the 23rd Party Congress of the CPI(M) in Kannur in April 2022, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Stalin,, has addressed the people. His speech became much more popular, and he said

The relationship between the Dravidian parties and the communists dates back to the beginning of the last century. It was Periyar who translated the Communist Manifesto into Tamil in 1922. We (Tamizhians) had a tradition to name kids after the Russian revolutionaries...After all, my name is Stalin. Do I need to state anything beyond this to prove our relationship? (Asianet News 9/4/2022; Mahaprashasta 2022).

His father and the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Karunanidhi, named his four days old son Stalin in a public meeting when he heard about the demise of Joseph Stalin in 1953. In the context of the Russian war against Ukraine, many discussions and debates have occurred in Kerala. Many of the popular arguments in social media came with sighting the History of the Soviet Union and its consistent support for India in her fight against imperialism and post-colonial nation building. After the demise of the last President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, popular discussions emerged in Kerala society on the history of the Soviet Union and the role of Gorbachev in the collapse of the USSR (Ganesh and Amal 2022; Sudhakaran 2022).

Several Malayalam websites, including *Aa Pazhaya Russian Pushakangal* (*Those Russian Books of Yester Era*), allow free access and download to the scanned copies of old Soviet magazines³⁰. It received wide acceptance, mostly from those who spent their childhood with Soviet children's literature. The children of the 1970-80s had an enormous love for the Soviet Union, which developed by studying the USSR's scientific developments and space technologies in the school classrooms. The children's literature came from the Soviet Union and was an important reason (Sivadasan 2021). This website and literature have huge popularity among the people. Anil from Wayanad had made a big collection of Soviet books in his book shop named *AFRC Books* in Kalpetta town. He made a reading room to sit and read, and those interested could buy the old Soviet prints at an affordable price (Anil 2018).

The 'Lenin Balavadi' (Lenin Nursery), a pre-school founded for children in 1983 in Vazhuthacadu, Trivandrum by S. Sharma, P. T. Bhaskara Panicker, K. N. Pai, Pushpita John and others. It is one of the earliest institutions in Trivandrum city to introduce learning through play (George 2015). The pre-school started as an offshoot of the Lenin Clinic, established in 1969 as one of the oldest clinics to administer oral polio drops in Trivandrum city. Being the name of Lenin, the institution is not for organising any political activities. The institution actively organises cultural programs, film screenings and gatherings among people.

The Russian Cultural Centre in Kerala started to build in 1969 and was inaugurated in 1975 as Soviet Cultural Centre named Gorky Bhavan. It was the fifth such cultural centre opened by the Soviet government. The Gorky Bhavan has a great role in promoting the Soviet culture in Kerala. For promoting the Russian language and culture, the Centre made enormous efforts among the people of Kerala (Nair 2015). Many people had nostalgic memories in the Gorky Bhavan of attending programs, watching Russian moves and reading Soviet books etc. (Varkey 2018; Kumar 2021).

The Eisenstein Film Festival, in memory of the Soviet film director Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein is one of the popular events by the Soviet Cultural Centre, and the library had a lot of good books and study materials (Kumar 2018). Many people used to go and attend these programs. But in the period of the Soviet fall in 1991 the Cultural Centre was closed. The library of the Centre had dumped all of their

³⁰The Website was created in 2013 by Sajid A. Latheef an English assistant professor from MES College, Mampad.

books outside. The local people who knew about the centre's precious reading collections came and took away the books in sacks (Varkey 2018).

In 1998 Ratheesh C. Nair was appointed as the centre's director by the Russian embassy and reopened it in 2000 as Russian Science and Cultural Centre (Roshni 2022). Now the Russian House, Trivandrum, is very active in organising university seminars, providing Russian language courses, organising Russian film screenings, gatherings, talks and cultural programs etc. One of the attractive events of the Centre was the gathering of the Malayalees with Russian names. Ratheesh C. Nair (2015) says that around 250 people in Kerala have Russian names, and annual programs used to be attended by approximately sixty people. There the older generations to the younger generations with Russian names used to participate in the function (*The New Indian Express* 2017).

The Soviet/Communist-named people are much more common in Kerala, even among new-born babies. Malayalam writer and orator KEN Kunjahammed (2019) mentions that the Russian names are very common among the Malayalees because of their political tradition. For example, Pavel is there in my village. V. Jain's (2022) elder sister was named Jamila by the family after the Soviet novel *Jamila* by Chingiz Aitmatov. There are a large number of people with Russian names in Kerala, especially with the name of Communist leaders. In November 2021, the news came from the Trissur district about a wedding of Engels. His elder brother Lenin and two other comrades from the same locality, Marx and Ho Chi Minh, attended the function (Guardian 2017; Aljazeera 2017). The news has been reported internationally. Four months before, in June 2021, there was a similar kind of wedding in the neighbouring state Tamil Nadu where Socialism was the groom, and his elder brothers, Communism, Leninism and Leninism's son Marxism attended the function (*Aljazeera* 2021).

The students with Soviet names are very common in the register book of schools and colleges and in our friend circles. The Russian names are common like Nadezhda, Nilovna, Valentina, Lena, Olga, Natasha, Ila, Sasha, Tania, Inessa, Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Gorky, Gagarin, Gorbachev, Pavel, Pushkin, etc. Similarly, multiple places in Kerala are known as Moscow Kavala (Moscow Street) in Kottayam, Soviet in Kodungallur and Red Square in various places etc. Clubs are named as Moscow youth club in Kunnankulam, Volga hotel in Thalassery, Anastasia Beauty Centre in Kochi and Lenin Cinemas in Trivandrum etc. A cosmopolitan

attitude has emerged in the society through these international imaginations spread by the communists in the Kerala society (Devika 2021).

The media publish many popular stories about the Malayalees who spent their lives in the Soviet Union. The nostalgic style stories mention Moscow Gopalakrishnan and Omana, the couples who translated most of the books from the USSR for the Malayalees (Kamalakaran 2018; Salim 2021; Vasudev 2013). Several popular Malayalam book publishers including DC Books, Mathrubhumi Books, SPCS, Prabhath Book House and Chintha Publishers etc. are reprinting the old Malayalam books by Progress Publishers and Raduka Publishers. The copies of the same are selling widely (*The Hindu* 29/4/2013).

Thomas Zacharias alias Kolat Chandrashekar (Moscow Chandran) was a communist who escaped to the USSR in the time of Kolkata Thesis of the Communist Party in 1949. He was arrested along with Jyoti Basu when he was working in Kolkata in the space research centre as well as a Communist Party activist. Later he escaped from jail, fled to London, and from there to Moscow. In Moscow, Thomas met Stalin and took his advice in 1953 (John 2018).

Later as, Kolat Chandrashekar, aka Moscow Chandran, started working in the Moscow radio Malayalam division. The Malayalam channel of Moscow Radio was popularly heard in Kerala. Chandran married a Russian named Helena, alias Ella. Chandran became the dear friend of most Malayalees who came to Moscow, including political leaders and writers and became the local guardian of the Malayalee students in Moscow. He passed away in 1983, but his Russian wife Ella and daughter Karina passed away in 1983, but his Russian wife Ella and daughter Karina still receive Malayalee friends in Moscow. Karina did her PhD on coalition politics in India, a case study of Kerala (John 2018). The popular Malayalam media are publishing such stories today with wide readers among the old and new generations who enjoy Soviet nostalgia.

Many public events used to happen in Kerala on various international issues on several platforms. However, an allegation came recently that there are no public sentiments against Russia in the context of the Ukraine war. It has been analysed that the old Soviet/Russian love of the Malayalee public is one of the reasons behind this. The Malayalees are under the influence of the old inspirational, nostalgic poem *Soviet Ennoru Nadundathre (There is a Land Called Soviet)* – a poem by KPG Namboodiri - now the people are using it as a proverb (Mohan 2022; Namboodiri 1974). But

some anti-war programs were organized in various parts of Kerala by the Left youth organizations (Deshabhimani 4//3/2022). These are the few among many examples of Soviet love in the present Malayalee life.

6.5 The Post-Soviet Socialism, Alternatives and the Way Forward

The sudden demise of the USSR and the growth of neoliberal reforms worldwide have catalysed the socialist and communist parties globally. Western scholarship on communism has wholeheartedly welcomed the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was expressed as the inevitable necessity of the death of Communism. For them, Communism simply means statism as equal to authoritarianism (Jowitt 1992; Williams 2009). For the US scholarship on Communism, the idea of democratic Communism is antithetical. Now, for many scholars, the global alternative against capitalism is various social movements in the world (De Sousa 2006; Williams 2009). Many such scholars raised scepticism about the virtues of political parties and their importance (Hart & Negri 2001; Holloway 2002). An unchallengeable growth of neoliberalism has created international and national inequality, environmental degradation, poverty and unemployment (Chandrasekhar 2001).

The subversion of the existing socialism after the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe has radically turned towards a more market-oriented system as elsewhere in the globe. They made strong criticisms against the centrally planned systems. But the market socialists have failed to show a model of an egalitarian market-driven system. It has proved that the egalitarian socialist model can't be achieved under capitalism because the wealth and ownership have always concentrated in a few private hands. Initially, the market socialist model only does little to prevent the concentration of assets in the hands of public firms (Chandrasekhar 2001).

At the same time, theoretically, a centrally controlled system of a strong state is more capable of dealing with emergencies. But there are dangers of excessive centralization of economic and financial power, arbitrary decision-making, and bureaucratization (Chandrasekhar 2001). The question of who controls the socialist state and how is initially determining the destiny of socialism. There is no blind economic law that one particular action could take the socialist society in an advanced direction (Chandrasekhar 2001). The socialist state can collapse with both external

and internal strain. The aided external strain can undoubtedly be a capitalist environment generating imperialism (Chandrasekhar 2001).

There were several factors in the 20th century to decrease the influence of Marxism in the global scenario. The demise of the Soviet Union, the move to market capitalism by Vietnam and China, the dominance of identity politics over class-based issues in social movements, the rise of postmodernism with anti-Marxist conceptions of power in academia, marginalization and alienation. Similarly, the liberal political theorists and neoclassical economists in the post-cold war period declared that there was no alternative to neoliberalism, and the Marxist ideas were dead (Williams 2013). But as a political organization, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) challenged this school of thought and demonstrated the necessity of political organizations by envisioning an egalitarian and democratic alternative (Williams 2009). New sources of inspiration are behind the revival of Marxism in the 21st century.

It sights the importance of the democratic form of emancipatory projects, capitalism's ecological limits, capitalism's present crisis, and the lessons learned from the early failures of communist experiments. The new Marxism of the 21st century is made with fundamentally new approaches which draw inspiration from other anti-capitalistic traditions, including ecology, feminism, indigenous traditions and anarchism (Renton 2004). The Venezuelan version of Socialism in the 21st Century, the Bolivian indigenous peoples' movements, the participatory budgeting that happened in Brazil, the anti-austerity movements in Greece and Spain, the Arab spring and the democratic decentralization of Kerala, India by the Communist-led government can be seen as examples (Williams 2013). These egalitarian and democratic movements against capitalism are providing an alternative that another world is possible. It means the plurality of approaches is the source and strength of new Marxist theory and praxis (Williams 2013; Satgar 2013).

In Kerala, the CPI(M)'s project is an example of a participatory democracy other than the liberal notion of representative democracy or the 20th-century Marxist notion of vanguard democracy. This is important in the new context (Kaul and Kannangara 2021). While doing this, the CPI(M) remains a vanguard organization by name (Williams 2013; Satgar 2013). This change is a redefining of democracy as the democracy by the people. This is a new model of direct democracy with non-elite participatory character (Satgar 2013). Indeed Euro-communism's critique against the model of vanguard democracy of the USSR has not put forward any argument for a

direct democratic system or the participatory democratic model other than representative democracy. Socialism as a social change can only happen 'socialism from below.' This is neither the representative democracy by the social democrats nor the vanguard democracy of Stalinism (Draper 2004; Renton 2004).

The CPI(M) in Kerala has tried to rethink the socialist vision and their radical democratic politics since the early 1990s. When the CPI(M) held its 14th Party Congress in 1992, where the fundamental questions on Democracy, Socialism and Marxism were asked (CPI(M) 1998). The Left parties in Kerala have tried to organize civil society around class-based issues. The Communist Parties in Kerala mobilized the redistributive reforms, creating a social life equal to the Western development models. Indeed the physical quality of life is comparable with the so-called developed nations, irrespective of their low per capita income and slow economic growth (Williams 2009). The CPI(M) had changed its world view from the Soviet-style of state-centred Socialism to a -society-centred vision of Socialism connected to a new radical democratic model. This vision of socialist democracy is placed participatory democratic politics at its centre (CPI(M) 1998).

For democratizing the socio-economic and political realms, the CPI(M) adopted the policy of decentralization as its primary mechanism (Namboodiripad 1994). These developmental initiatives are aimed at the participatory local governmental bodies like Grama Sabhas (village councils) in each stage of the development process (Isaac and Heller 2003). The democratic decentralization is reforming and strengthening the process of central planning and a transitional phase (Chandrasekhar 2001). Particularly the decentralization in Kerala is an alternative against market socialism and central planning. This idea of participative exercise advocated by the reformist left with a mass support has making it truly historic (Chandrasekhar 2001).

Since 1967 the CPI(M) had made a statement that the party views the government as an instrument for intensifying the struggles of the people for democracy, wages, land, and against the anti-poor policies of the central government (CPI(M) 1997). As per this thought, the party must use the state as an agent of change. The CPI(M) had argued that under Socialism, there are at least three forms of property relations that would exist, which are owned by the state itself, cooperative and collective ownership and individual ownership (CPI(M) 1990; Williams 2009). Indeed the party analysed the failure of the planned economy of the Soviet Union

(CPI(M) 1990). The ideological resolution of the party acknowledged that it had overstated the imminent collapse of capitalism and underestimated the tendencies of the capitalist system and the potential of technological revolutions (CPI(M) 1998). To counter the growing market penetration, the CPI(M) envisioned a socialist economy by giving a central role to ordinary citizens in various economic activities. This policy promotes cooperatives where the production is for the needs of the people without simply aiming the profit (CPI(M) 1998; Isaac 1994).

The CPI(M), the ruling Communist Party in Kerala, highlighted the democratic potentials inherent in socialism and aimed at radical democratic and egalitarian alternatives. Indeed it is the dominance of civil society over the economy and institutions of the state and participatory democracy at its centre (Williams 2009). The campaign for democratic decentralization has been put forward by the state planning board, which was accepted and implemented through the 1997 budget by the Left Front government (Tharakan and Rawal 2001). The process of democratic decentralization is the most radical development in the history of Kerala after the independence and the formation of the state (Namboodiripad 2020).

The idea of decentralization has a dialectical relationship with the political struggles through the formation of the peoples' planning campaign and socio-political mobilization (Tharakan and Rawal 2001). According to the then Kerala finance minister Dr T. M. Thomas Isaac (2001: 16) "It can also be argued that national governments by their very nature would be unwilling to give up power to the lower levels and therefore decentralisation would have to be a response to demand from below. The authoritarian centralised state is so alienated from society that it can't provide a stimulus for change." Thomas Isaac (2001) also mentions that when the parliamentary democracy is extended to the district and local levels will create the possibility of direct participation of the people in the day-to-day governance. This kind of grassroots democracy will help mobilise and protect the interests of the weaker sections.

Few among the organisers of the democratic decentralisation campaign have even romantically dreamed of a different version of the Soviet Commune style development of the Kerala Village Panchayats (Isaac 2022). According to Franke and Chasin (2000: 11):

Kerala's radical experiment comes at a crucial historical juncture itself. The collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialism has been followed by a

rapidly expanding assault on many of the welfare gains of the mid to late 20th century. The service sector of many 3rd world countries is under attack from World Bank and IMF Structural Adjustment Programs. Decentralization is offered to create more efficient use of dwindling state resources, but decentralization alone may have limited effects in counterbalancing the loss of state support.

As part of the idea of decentralization, the CPI(M) led state government in Kerala spends 40 per cent of its finance on local government institutions for developmental institutions and community development programs. The involvement of communities and cooperatives in the deliberation of this project is remarkable (Williams 2013). In this way, the state leads the direct democracy to the economic sphere from the political sphere. Initially, this process had happened while using the strong cadre base and organizational support of the CPI(M). Four thousand pages of training materials were made, and thousands of activists were trained at the ground level. Indeed this sets a radical example of direct democracy and a 21st-century Marxist imagination (Williams 2013).

In a period of an increasingly fascist-capitalist world, the imposition of harsh neoliberal reforms is a common scenario in the global political economy. Such a context-building democracy from below is a much-needed political action (Satgar 2013). Democratic Marxism consists of the transformative historical project that is just opposite to the subaltern style of using finance neoliberal capitalism to advance change (Satgar 2013).

The criticisms against the policy of democratic decentralization by the Marxists have also taken place. Indeed it was focused on the arguments like decentralization is an imperialist agenda, and it is similar to the policy of decentralization by the World Bank. Prabhat Patnaik (2004) argues that the democratic decentralization propagated and implemented through the Peoples' Plan campaign in Kerala by the Left Democratic Front government fundamentally differs from the capitalist agenda of decentralization. According to Patnaik (2004):

The “decentralization” agenda of the Left is a means of carrying class-struggle forward, of buttressing the class-strength of the rural poor by developing institutions where they can, in principle, assert themselves directly and hence more effectively, the “decentralization” promoted by the imperialist agencies has precisely the opposite objective, of blunting class-struggle, of encouraging a scenario of “obedient-and-suppliant-villagers-being-patronized-by-NGOs”, and of substituting the concept of the “Rights” of the people by the concept of “Self-Help.”

This policy is giving strength to the rural poor to assert themselves will come into conflict against the prevailing property relations except where radical land reform had already taken place. This underscores that democratic decentralization is a part of the dialectics of class struggle (Patnaik 2004). The democratic decentralization adopted by Kerala provides training for the working class in the art of responsible financial management and bookkeeping, etc. Lenin highlighted that one of the reasons behind the weakness of the working class in revolutionary Russia was the absence of bourgeois management principles. It is hopeful for overcoming this absence to build a socialist society in future Kerala (Patnaik 2004).

Isaac (2001) mentions when we compare the result of the implementation of the democratic decentralization, the resources for the weaker sections, SC/ST and women, have increased to 30 to 40 per cent. Thus the democratic decentralization policy became an initial post-Soviet development in the communist ruling state of Kerala. According to K. N. Ganesh (2013), the working-class struggle and progressive political movements developed a counter-hegemonic resistance that brought back the struggle for socialism after the setback in the Soviet Union. This is discovering an optimistic hope for the working class.

The influence of the Soviet Union in Kerala stands not only as a political ideology but also as a cultural ideology as well. Both the political and cultural influence of the Soviet Union is alive in the public sphere of Kerala even after the disintegration of the USSR. The various themes of this chapter tried to research the effect of the late Soviet developments and the post-Soviet impacts on Kerala. The literature, personal experiences, governmental policies and socio-political developments in Kerala today show the evergreen presence of the Soviet-inspired imaginations in the cultural public sphere and intellectual and political arena.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Conclusions and Findings of the Study

The inspiration provided by the Russian Revolution and the Soviet state gave an impetus to socialist elements in the Indian freedom movement and a socialist leaning to nation-building in the initial decades after independence. The news of the Russian Revolution of November³¹ 1917 gave a boost to the Indian freedom struggle; leaders were inspired by and adopted socialist and anti-imperialist ideas. While the anti-colonial struggle in India had various streams within it, the pro-working-class ideas of the Soviet model were attractive to the leaders at the forefront of the struggle. The Russian Revolution and Communism became synonymous in India. The British colonial forces were vigilant about spreading Marxist ideas in the national movement and tried to prevent its further spread. But that was not sufficient to stop the Indian freedom fighters from taking great interest in the revolutionary developments in Russia.

The political leadership of the freedom movements had different takes on the Bolshevik Revolution. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi were skeptical about the ideas of the revolution. Nevertheless, many major leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B. R. Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose, Sheikh Abdullah, and social reformers and literary figures like Periyar and Rabindranath Tagore admired the Russian Revolution. The Soviet development model projected in India as an alternative model against the Western capitalist and imperialist model.

The Communist Party of India formed in 1920 in Tashkent with the help of the Soviet Union. At first, the Indian National Congress was an umbrella organization of the freedom fighters, and the Communists worked with them in the struggle for freedom from British colonial rule. Indeed, the founders of the Communist movement like M. N. Roy and others also got the same direction from the Communist International and Lenin. The Communists were the first to place the demand for *Poorna Swaraj* (complete independence) from the British at the Ahmedabad session of the INC in 1921. Later in 1925, the Communist Party set up its organization on

³¹Until 1918, Russia used the old Roman-style Julian calendar, according to which the date of Russian Revolution was 25 October 1917. As per the new Gregorian calendar, the date of the Revolution was 7 November 1917.

Indian soil at Kanpur, and actively participated in the freedom struggle. The British charged them with several conspiracy and sedition cases; the party has banned, and its leaders jailed. The movement made its strongholds among factory workers and peasants.

However, the socialist ideas that came through the Soviet Union influenced the Indian National Congress and various regional parties that announced themselves as socialists. The first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, tried to build India with socialist elements with the help of the Soviet Union. Stalin was not convinced with the politics of the then Indian state. However, since the Khrushchev era, the Soviet Union wholeheartedly welcomed the Indian government leadership and maintained a very friendly relationship with India. The contributions of the Soviet Union played a major role in India's nation-building process. This continued until the demise of the USSR.

Simultaneously, the relationship between the Indian Communist Parties with the Soviet Communist Party also progressed. The Soviet Union was well aware of the socio-political situation in India and keenly observed the work of the CPI. The CPSU wanted to be supportive of post-colonial societies. The Soviet Union did not want to entertain much of the Western world for bilateral trade. They wanted to be close to the Congress leadership to gain Indian support on international forums, and for mutual trade and cooperation. The USSR has backed and supported India in her wars with Pakistan and China in the 1960s and 1970s and used the veto power in the UN Security Council to protect India against the US backed resolutions. The CPSU wanted the Congress Party to continue in power and directed the CPI to be supportive of them. The compulsion from the CPSU for the CPI to work with the Congress became one of the primary reasons for the split in the Communist Party of India. The over-dependence and excessive affinity towards the CPSU determined the fate of the CPI. The CPI(M) took a different position and became critical of the Soviet Union since its formation in 1964. But the party continued its ideological commitments to Marxism-Leninism and to the Russian Revolution. The CPI ended up in a complete denial of Stalin, similar to the Soviet line since Khrushchev. The CPI(M) was not ready for a total denial of Stalin and has continued to consider him as one of the major leaders of International Communism, although it made certain critical remarks about several of his acts.

After Nehru, Indo-Soviet relations became much stronger during Indira Gandhi's period. Brezhnev wholeheartedly supported her government and provided aid for many developmental projects. The military pilot Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian to go to space as a cosmonaut in the joint Soviet-Indian space flight in 1984. The Indian space research developed with the Soviet support. The post Nehru period also witnessed the silent support of India for the Soviet interventions in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, similar to Nehru's support of the Soviet intervention in Hungary. However, the two governments' mutual relations made the USSR support the internal emergency in India in 1975. The Indira Gandhi government added the word 'Socialism' to the preamble of the Indian constitution in 1976.

Later, the Indian state and the CPI extended their full support to *perestroika* and *glasnost* the restructuring and opening up initiatives by Gorbachev. At first, the CPI(M) was positive toward these changes, but later the party ideologically came out against Gorbachev's policies and termed them capitalist measures. The collapse of the Soviet Union was an unexpected development for the Indian state and the Communist Parties. India's exports and imports, its defense sector, and its developmental projects have adversely affected by the Soviet collapse. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) – which was close to the USSR – lost its focus with the collapse of the socialist bloc. The people of India were deeply saddened by the Soviet demise.

The leaders of the anti-caste, social reform movements in Kerala were hopeful about the ideas that emerged from the Russian Revolution. They found a deep connection between the thoughts of the Russian Revolution, the struggles in Kerala for equality in society, and the fight against the social evils prevalent in Kerala. In 1921, Lenin noticed the uprising of the Mappila Muslim peasants in Malabar against the British and feudal lords, and asked the Indian members of the Communist International to study it. The organized working-class movement began in Kerala in the 1930s. The radicalized common masses took up a new political term, 'class.' A group of socialists inside the Indian National Congress had started a fraction named the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in 1934, and they tried to organize the workers and peasants. Most leaders of the CSP in Kerala were pro-Soviet.

Trade union movements had been active in Kerala since the 1920s. These workers had socialist leanings, but they had not become organized class movements. The workers and peasants organizations of this period had a spiritual, moralistic worldview, and hence had a compromising attitude toward the feudal landlords and

factory owners. The life of the poor workers continued to be miserable. But from the late 1930s onwards, the character of these movements changed, and they organized serious protests and struggles against exploitation, for wage increase, for reduction of working hours and for better social status. The workers started to identify themselves as an exploited group, a class rather than in terms of caste or religion. The energy behind these struggles were provided by the leaders of the Congress Socialist Party, who started a secret fraction of the Communist Party inside the CSP. Their main attraction toward Marxism was the Russian Revolution, the Leninist party organization and the powerful Soviet state under Stalin. The Communists introduced a language which not only confronted British imperialism but also opposed the Indian feudal traditions. The vast majority of Congress Socialists in Kerala joined the Communist Party after the official formation of the CPI's Kerala unit in 1939 at Kannur.

The theoretical understanding of the leaders of the Communist Party was not clear during the 1930s. But from the 1940s onwards, they grew closer to the Bolshevik line of Communism. After the official formation of the Communist Party in Kerala, working-class struggles against the feudal system adopted methods that are more violent. The Kayyur, Karivellur struggles and the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle in the 1940s are examples of this. A major criticism against the communists in this period was that they were trying to bring a Russian model of revolution into Kerala. The Calcutta Thesis of the CPI in 1948, which proposed the violent overthrow of the bourgeois government, led to the CPI being declared illegal. Nevertheless, the Calcutta Thesis or the CPI's refusal to support the Quit India Movement in 1942 did not significantly affect the mass base of the Communist Party in Kerala.

Before the formation of the state of Kerala, the Communist Party won the elections to the Malabar District Board in 1954. The CPI had been demanding the linguistic reorganization of Indian states, which included the demand for the formation of a state of Malayalam speakers by merging Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The official formation of the Kerala state in 1956 and the first Kerala legislative assembly elections in 1957 marked the formation of the world's third-ever democratically elected Communist Party-led government.³²

³²After San Marino in 1945 and British Guyana in 1953.

Some Communist leaders said that this would herald a parliamentary road to socialism in India. This brought international attention to Kerala, and several scholars evinced interest in studying the developments in the state. The growth of Communism in Kerala and the policies adopted by the first Communist Ministry, including land reforms and the education bill, upset feudal and religious-conservative sections who in turn tried to oust the Communists from power. This led to the *Vimochana Samaram* (Liberation Struggle) by upper caste groups, some religious groups and the Congress Party. They pressurized the Congress-led central government, which dissolved the Communist ministry in 1959 using the special powers of the President of India. The then Chief Minister and Communist Party leader EMS Namboodiripad termed these protests by the anti-communist groups as akin to the civil war after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

The split in the Communist Party in 1964 seriously affected the class-based struggles developed by the Indian Communists over many decades. The Soviet Union played an important role in this split. However, the CPSU never thought that the CPI would become the ruling party in India. Based on this view, the CPSU persuaded the CPI to go along with the INC for the benefit of the Soviet Union. This was unacceptable to many inside the CPI, and it became a prime reason for the split in the party. Later the CPI worked under the direction of the Soviet Union, while the CPI(M) adopted a path independent of the CPSU. Indeed, the independent political line of the CPI(M) won majority support among the mass base of the Communist Party in Kerala.

The international developments in the Socialist world in the 1950s, such as Khrushchev's report against Stalin in the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU and the intervention by the USSR in Hungary in 1956, led to heated debates and conflicts inside the Communist Party in India. Similarly, the Prague Spring of 1968 and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 as also led to differences of opinion in various party committees. But ultimately, both the CPI and the CPI(M) stood with the CPSU.

At the national level, the Congress Party leadership was close to the Soviet Union, and tried to develop a mixed economy in India with some socialistic features. But in Kerala, the strong presence of the Communist Party and the powerful conservative religious and caste sections inside the party made the Congress state unit oppose socialist ideas. The hard work of the Left greatly contributed to what became

later known as the Kerala Model of Development, with Kerala achieving human development indicators that are comparable with those of developed countries despite having a much lower per capita income compared to such countries. The collapse of the Soviet Union emboldened the sections opposed to Communists in Kerala to raise strong objections against the very existence of the Communist Parties. But other than an emotional impact on cadres, the movements of the Communists in Kerala were unshaken.

Most writers and literary figures in Kerala in the 20th century wrote positively about the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union and Lenin. This gave a moral high ground for the Communist Party among the educated sections and the middle class at the beginning. In the villages, Communist activists communicated their ideas through folk songs, plays, and by connecting their arguments with the ideas of the social reform movement and even myths. The cultural interventions by the communists among the rural poor resulted in the Communists' emancipatory ideas gaining wide acceptance. The Communists viewed cultural interventions as an integral part of their class-based political agenda and linked it with the universal project of emancipation.

The Left movement focused on the ideas of social reform/renaissance, socialism, the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. There were many songs and slogans by the early Communist activists in the ordinary language of the working class. The compromising attitude of the second-generation leaders of social reform organizations towards the ruling classes brought the downtrodden sections closer to the Communist Party. The performance of Communist plays in 1937 inaugurated socialist realism in Kerala. The plays and songs introduced by the Communist activists were mocked by a few prominent writers as lacking in literary content and as mere marching songs. Nevertheless, the acceptance and popularity of such plays and songs among the common masses were huge and helped the Communists to gain ground support.

These works portrayed the Soviet Union as an ideal world, an equal and just society. Kerala society, on the other hand, was ridden with exploitation, an extremely harsh caste system, feudalism, and colonial oppression during this period. The imagination of an equal society free of exploitation attracted the common masses. Communist leaders like EMS Namboodiripad (1999) successfully compared the Malayalee mythological stories with the ideas of the Russian Revolution. He propagated the idea that the Communists were working to create an equal society,

similar to *Maveli Nadu*, the land ruled by the righteous mythological king Maveli/Mahabali . The *Maveli Nadu* theory has also been projected as an anti-thesis against the upper caste Brahmin narrative of Kerala being their land – the so-called *Parashurama Khetram*.

The left-wing section of the literary figures also argued that in the Soviet Union, people need not wait for an annual festival like Onam for them to celebrate equality. King Mahabali should go to Moscow rather than Kerala to see a land where people are equal (Menon 1980; Govindan 2020). Communist interventions with Soviet-inspired imaginations tried to build a counter-culture against the existing feudal and caste traditions. The communists organized *Melas* (carnivals), *Kadhaprasangam* (a lyrical, narrative storytelling performance), plays, and folk songs to mobilize people and to gain mass support. The presentation of a universal project of emancipation in common people’s language helped Marxism – which was an alien thought for the Malayalee downtrodden masses – to take root in Kerala. The emergence of a new national-popular will in the 1930s made the Malayalee communists practice the thoughts of their Italian contemporary Antonio Gramsci without knowing about his writings (Mannathukkaren 2013).

The evolution of ‘Purogamana Kala Sahitya Sangham’ (Progressive Arts and Literary Organization), a cultural organization that emerged out of the inspiration from the Union of Soviet Writers, led to an organized cultural movement. From the beginning of this movement, there were several controversies about Socialist Realism, especially questions about state/party interventions in the creative thoughts of writers. Some writers in Kerala registered their disagreements with the Soviet/Communist literary policy on directing the writers, and moved away from the party. Later the party recognized the problems with this policy, and some writers returned to party platforms. Later, many progressive writers and cultural activists joined the peoples’ science movement – the Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP). The KSSP is an independent science and cultural organization that emerged out of Soviet-inspired imaginations in the 1960s, and its positions are mostly in alignment with those of the organized Communist Parties.

Books from Soviet Russia were crucial in the development of the Communist movement in Kerala. The Malayalam books that came from Moscow as part of Soviet cultural diplomacy played a major role in stimulating a new reading culture in the villages of Kerala. The Malayalam versions of the Soviet little magazines contributed

immensely to building the imaginations of the children in Kerala during the period from the 1970s to the collapse of the Soviet Union. All these literary works, along with their propaganda narratives, constructed a fantasy about the Soviet Union. The children of Kerala during this period did not have many children literature and entertainment to turn towards. The Malayalam literature that came from the USSR filled those gaps. These are among the most nostalgic memories for the generations who are above 30 years old today. The translation of Gorky's *The Mother* is one of the most read novels in Malayalam. In fact, a quote from the novel about the dreams of an ideal society is much celebrated in Kerala: "There will come a time... when each will listen to his fellow as to music" (Gorky 1911: 185). Such Soviet-inspired imaginations for constructing an ideal, Utopian world played a key role in constructing a popular will against a highly unequal and oppressive system.

For the communists in Kerala, the collapse of the Soviet Union was an event that caused mental trauma rather than something that had a direct political impact. The disintegration of the USSR was unbearable for those with socialist leanings – including those among them who were critical of the socialist system in the Soviet Union. Even vocal critics of the Communist Party like M. Govindan (2020) used to say, even in the late 1980s, that the Soviet Union had an equal society. The left movement in Kerala had worked foregrounding the dream of constructing an equal society. This Utopian motif was an effective part and parcel of the transformative project led by the Malayalee communists.

A critical analysis of the Soviet collapse was done by the leadership of the organized communist parties. The CPI(M) analyzed that the ahistorical analysis of Stalin by the Soviet leadership since Khrushchev and the capitalist reform policies by Gorbachev were the prime reasons for the collapse. EMS Namboodiripad (1991) noted that it "was only a half-truth" to say "that what was happening in the Soviet Union was the essence of Marxism-Leninism". On the other hand, the CPI explained that Gorbachev tried to save the nation, but he was late (Unniraja 1991).

When the Soviet Union was passing through its last stages, the CPI leadership was not ready to accept that the system was going through a crisis (Thomas 2021). Many, including the Indian state, did not foresee the USSR's disintegration, and it came as a shock to them. People, movements, and organisations belonging to various ideological streams in Kerala developed their own narratives on the Soviet collapse.

The critical analysis of the CPI on the Soviet interventions in India came much later (Divakaran 2022).

After the demise of the USSR, the Congress-led government concentrated more on neoliberal economic reforms, and far-right parties like the BJP emerged stronger. These developments led the Communist Parties to wage more struggles against the far-right. In Kerala, members of opposition parties entered into arguments with activists of the Communist Parties, which escalated into local fights and scuffles in many places. The mainstream print media in Malayalam analysed the Soviet collapse from their own points of view, publishing analytical opinion pieces, and often reproducing reports from international news agencies. The CPI(M) mouthpiece *Deshabhimani* tried its best to narrate the party viewpoint. The news and analytical pieces in other major Malayalam dailies like *Malayala Manorama* and *Mathrubhumi* lacked genuine critical analysis, and failed accommodate diverse opinions.

The emotional and mental impact of the Soviet collapse on Malayalees has become the theme of several literary works. Literary figures in Malayalam like M. Mukundan, N.S. Madhavan, M. Sukumaran, Asokan Charuvil and K. A. Beena have narrated the mental traumas of the socialists in Kerala through their stories very well. The travelogues by Malayalee writers who travelled, after the Soviet collapse, to countries which were part of the erstwhile Soviet Union show the continued love affair of Malayalees with the Soviet Union. The forty year old popular travelogue *Beena Kanda Russia (The Russia That Beena Saw)* still remains popular. Along with new editions of this book, another book that contains the memoirs of the readers of this travelogue has also been published.

The Malayalam literary figure K. Satchidanandan's (2015) travelogue shows that the Soviet Union was much better than present-day Russia. Most of the travellers, including those who are in favour of the Soviet system and those who are against it, search for historical places and people related to Communism. This provides a picture of their intellectual relationship with the Soviet Union. The Malayalam literary figure O.V. Vijayan (2005) has described the collapse of the USSR as the greatest catastrophe in human civilization.

Many reports on the Soviet ideological and cultural influence in Kerala still appear in national and international media outlets. There are popular websites where old Soviet Malayalam books, magazines, and comics published by Progress Publishers and Raduka Publishers can be read and downloaded. There are also

popular book shops which sell old Soviet books. Various clubs, institutes, shops, film theatres etc. with Soviet names are common in Kerala. We often find places with Soviet names. The people who have Soviet names are common among Malayalees. The Soviet Science and Cultural Centre named Gorky Bhavan in Trivandrum had a great role in spreading the Soviet-inspired imagination among the people. After the disintegration of the USSR, it re-established itself as Russian House and organized many cultural events and gatherings.

The Malayalees who spent their lives in the USSR and worked with the CPSU and the Soviet government are remembered in popular news features by the media. Such reports share nostalgic memories of people like Moscow Gopalakrishnan who worked at Progress Publishers and Moscow Chandran who worked with Moscow Radio. Recent news analyses argued that the love affair of Malayalees with the Soviet Union could be a reason for there being fewer anti-war campaigns against Russia's war in Ukraine.

The post-Soviet alternatives put forward by the Left in Kerala can be found in the People's Planning Campaign and the Democratic Decentralisation policy. This model is different from the model of capitalism celebrated by Western scholars who wholeheartedly welcomed the Soviet collapse. The post-Soviet world has also seen the dominance of identity politics over the foregrounding of class-based issues in social movements, and the rise of postmodernism with anti-Marxist conceptions of power in the academia.

The post-Soviet transition has also made Vietnam and China move toward market-oriented socialism. The Communists in Kerala adopted an approach that is different from these models, and tried to build a democratic model without excessive centralisation of power. This stands in contrast with the arguments of US scholars who never accepted that a democratic model of communism could exist. Within limitations, the CPI(M)-led governments in Kerala made efforts to contest the capitalist world's post-cold war doctrine that there is no alternative to neoliberalism.

This new model of democracy put forward by the Communists has been termed "participatory democracy". This is an entirely different model from the representative democracy promoted by capitalists and social democrats, and the Soviet notion of vanguard democracy (Williams 2013; Satgar 2013). If socialists can bring social change, it should come from below – that would not be state-centric

socialism, but people-centric socialism. Eurocommunism also does not suggest an alternative democratic model like this against the capitalist form of democracy.

The new policies of the Left in Kerala strengthened local self-government institutions like Village Panchayats. The CPI(M)-led state government in Kerala transfers 40 per cent of its plan funds to local self-government institutions – funds that the local governments can spend to develop infrastructure, for community development programmes, and so on. This policy promotes cooperatives where the production is to meet the needs of the people and not just for profits. The process of democratic decentralization is the most radical development in the history of Kerala after land reforms. Pro-capitalist policymakers also project an idea of decentralisation, but the democratic decentralization championed by Kerala's Left Democratic Front government is fundamentally different from it. This democratic decentralisation is very much a part of the dialectics of class struggle.

7.2 Hypotheses Validation

The study finds its first hypothesis, “The Russian Revolution, the formation of the Soviet Union and its working-class political ideology influenced the ideological and political imaginations of the Kerala people to build a socialist society based on equality”, is proven right. The chapters and the concluding remarks of this study deal with this issue and find that the Utopian notion of equality that emerged out of the Russian Revolution strengthened both the anti-caste movements and working-class movements in Kerala. This has given an ideological orientation to the socio-political and anti-imperialist struggles of the people and their march towards freedom from English colonialism.

The study's second hypothesis, “Soviet literature and socialist realism have influenced Kerala's cultural public sphere and imaginations”, has also been proven correct. The concerned chapters and the study's findings give a clear picture that the influence of Soviet literature is deep in Kerala society, and that socialist realism strongly influenced many generations of modern Kerala. The propagation of ideas of liberation from caste and class oppression has been symbolically carried out through Soviet-inspired literature and performing arts in Kerala.

7.3 Concluding Remarks

The search for alternative models against the exploitative and oppressive social system made the progressive sections of Kerala reach out towards the ideas of the Russian Revolution and Marxism. This shaped the modern political discourse in Kerala. For the poor, Communism held out the hope that it would be the political movement that can end the oppression they face. The early communist activists endured state oppression, suffering and underground life by hoping for a Marxist/Soviet notion of a better tomorrow. The construction of socialist imagination by the communists reconstituted a popular common sense and built a new vocabulary of institutions and rights, taking them into the vernacular. No ideology will reach the masses without going down to their consciousness and common sense. This Gramscian understanding has made the difference between the Left in Kerala and the Left in other Indian states.

Oppressed communities like the Ezhavas/Thiyyas have gradually risen to prominent leadership positions in the Communist Party, but the Dalits are yet to reach that level. Recognizing this weakness, the party started organising a special platform for Dalits and Adivasis by forming a new front named Pattikajathi Kshema Samithi (Scheduled Caste Welfare Organisation, PKS). However, Kerala is unique in terms of a radicalised historical development trajectory which entailed mobilising the peasantry and the working class. This differentiates Kerala from other Indian states and most other development models in the Global South. The Kerala experiment by the CPI(M) is similar to what Marta Harnecker (2007) talks about the socialist experiments carried forward by the Left in Latin America to build another possible world against capitalism.

The democratic project of the Left considers the people as the driving force of 21st-century socialism. T. M. Thomas Isaac (2022) discusses Kerala's genuine alternative to neoliberalism as the Nava Kerala or New Kerala model. This strategy is different from old-style Soviet imitations. This model envisages trying to build a socialist alternative suited to Kerala's social conditions, and aiming for a better future. Communism is an ideology which is optimistic about the future, even in periods of hard struggles. So the hard work to build a people's democratic model is helping them to march forwards to a better tomorrow.

7.4 Further Areas of Research beyond the Scope of the Study

The possible areas of further research after this study include the development of Soviet nostalgia in the 21st century and the new socialist model that emerged out of the experiences of the Soviet model in Kerala. The memories of the Soviet period are still alive among a large section of people in Kerala, even though the generations are changing. Now the Soviet Union and its leaders are looked at critically, but the overall image of the USSR in India is still positive. The present influence and the diverse impacts of Soviet thoughts in India and Kerala should be deeply studied and analysed. Soviet legacy and influence are not time-bound. The present good relationship with India and Russia is also a continuation of the old legacy. This can be studied in a historical context. The Soviet influence on the women's leadership in Kerala can also be studied in the context of female communist leaders like Rosamma Punnoose, K. R. Gauri and Susheela Gopalan. The Soviet influence on minority communities in Kerala like Muslims and Christians can be an interesting topic of research. Studies of the influence of Soviet ideas on various communities (castes) would also be relevant. The influence of the Soviet Union on the backward and Dalit communities in Kerala is also a relevant topic to study. India's and Kerala's connections to Soviet republics other than Russia would also be an interesting topic to study. Similar to Kerala, the Soviet ideological and cultural influence can be found in diverse forms in other Indian states such as Assam, Bengal, and Bihar. This can be studied in the regional context.

References

(*indicates the primary sources)

- *Abrova, Sharofat. (2016), "Never Land - Documentary on K. A. Beena visit to Soviet Union 1977 Part 2", *K. A. Beena Youtube Channel*, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWmS9OI3vvU&t=43s>.
- *Abrova, Sharofat. (2016), "Never Land - Documentary on KA Beena visit to Soviet Union 1977 Part 1", *K. A. Beena Youtube Channel*, URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TH6q_gGsGWI&t=6s.
- *Aljazeera (2021), "Communism, Leninism to attend brother Socialism's Indian wedding", *Aljazeera*, 11 June 2021, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/11/communism-leninism-to-attend-brother-socialisms-indian-wedding>.
- *Aljazeera (2021), "Marx and Lenin watch Engels wed in southern India's Kerala", *Aljazeera*, 17 November 2021, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/17/marx-lenin-engels-wedding-kerala-southern-india-offbeat>.
- *Aloysius, Boby (2004), *Swapnam Nilacha Russiayil (Russia after the End of Dreams)*, Kottayam: Current Books.
- *Ammu, K. R. Gauri (2019), personal conversation, Alappuzha, 29 November 2019.
- *Anil (2018), personal conversation, Kalpetta, 16 December 2018.
- *Asan, N. Kumaran (1963), *Duravastha (Tragic Plight)*, Trivandrum: Prabhath.
- *Asianet News (2022), "My name is Stalin. Do I need to state anything beyond this to prove our relationship?", *Asianet News*, 09 April 2022, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4shZvVlqRQs>.
- *Ayyappan, K. (1981), *Sahodarante Padhya Krithikal (Poems of Sahodaran)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Baby, M. A. (2020), personal conversation, New Delhi, 01 January 2020.
- *BBC (2012), "How Stalin's daughter defected in India", *BBC News*, [Online: web] Accessed 16 August 2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-15936172>.
- *BBC (2012), "Stalin's daughter Lana Peters dies in US of cancer", *BBC News*, [Online: web] Accessed 17 August 2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-15931683>.
- *Beena, K. A. (2010), "Nashttappetta Mihrin, Ne Madangi Varumo?(Missed Mihrin, will You come back?)", *Mathrubhumi Sunday Suppliment*, 22 August 2010.

- *Beena, K. A. (2012), *Seethanidra*, Kottayam: Current Books.
- *Beena, K. A. (2015), *Beena Kanda Russia*, Current Books: Kottayam.
- *Beena, K. A. (2016), “Oh Mihrin”, *Mathrubhumi Sunday Suppliment*, 31 January 2016.
- *Beena, K. A. (2022), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 30 May 2022.
- *Benyamin (2020), *Manthalirile Erupathu Communist Varshangal (The Twenty Communist Eras of Manthalir)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Bhadrakumar, M. K. (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 08 November 2021.
- *Bhasi, Thoppil (1999), *OlivileOrmakal (Memories in Hiding)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House.
- *Census Commissioner (1931), *Census of India: Travancore, XXV*, Delhi: Government of India, 283-87.
- *Chandran, Bibin (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 23 December 2021.
- *Chandran, Bipin (2021), “Madura-Manohara-Manojna Russia”, in Geetha Bakshi (ed.), *Beena Kankda Russia @40: OruPusthakam Pala Vayanakal*, Kottayam: Nostalgia Publications.
- *Chandran, Bipin (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 23 December 2021.
- *Charuvil, Asokan (2019), *ThiranjeduthaKadhakal (Selected Stories)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Charuvil, Asokan (2021) personal conversation, Thrissur, 07 April 2021.
- *Communist International (1977), *The Congress of the Peoples of the East: Baku, September 1920*, in Brian Pearce translated Stenographic Report, London: New Park Publication, [Online: web] Accessed 22 June 2022, URL: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/baku/cpe-baku-pearce.pdf>.
- *CPI (M), (1978), *The Resolution for the 10th Congress*, Calcutta: National Book Agency.
- *CPI (M), (1998), “Peoples Democracy Editorial: Soviet Arms Aide to Pakistan (July 14, 1968)” in Jyoti Basu et al. (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Calcutta: NBA.
- *CPI (M), (1998), “Politburo Statement on Afghanistan Foil the Game of U.S. Imperialists - 1st January, 1980”, in Jyoti Basu et al. (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Calcutta: NBA.

- *CPI(M) (1990), “On Certain Political-Ideological Issues Related to Developments in Some Socialist Countries: Central Committee Resolution 28–31 May,” *Documents of the Communist Movement*, Calcutta: National Book Agency.
- *CPI(M) (1997), “The New Situation and the New Tasks Confronting the Party’, Central Committee Resolution 1967”, *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Vol. XI (1965–1967), Calcutta: National Book Agency.
- *CPI(M) (1998), “Resolution on Certain Ideological Issues: Congress Resolution, Madras, 3–9 January 1992”, *Documents of the Communist Movement*, Vol. XXIV, Calcutta: National Book Agency.
- *CPI, (1978), *Documents of the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of India*, New Delhi: CPI Publications.
- *CPIM, (1968), *Political Organizational Report*, New Delhi: Communist Party of India (Marxist).
- *Damodaran, K. (2020), *Pattabakki (Rent Arrears)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Malappuram District Library Council.
- *Deshabhimani (1991), “Competition for Capturing Soviet Technological Information”, Trivandrum, 25 December 1991.
- *Deshabhimani (1991), “CPI(M) and the Chinese Communist Party Shares Similar Opinion”, Trivandrum, 03 October 1991.
- *Deshabhimani (1991), “Gorbachev is Behind the Collapse: China”, Trivandrum, 27 December 1991.
- *Deshabhimani (1991), “Spread of Protests in Soviet Cities”, Trivandrum, 25 December 1991.
- *Deshabhimani (1991), “Stalin Inside the Congress”, Trivandrum, 01 October 1991.
- *Deshabhimani (2021), “Mukhaprasangam: Malabar Kalapathe Bhayakkunnavar” (Editorial: Those who Fear the Malabar Rebellion), *Deshabhimani*, 26 August 2021, URL: <http://www.deshabhimani.com/editorial/malabar-rebellion-kerala-history/965311>.
- *Deshabhimani (2022), “Yudha Virudha Rallyumayi DYFI” (DYFI with Ant-War Rally), *Deshabhimani*, 04 March 2022, <https://www.deshabhimani.com/news/kerala/news-malappuramkerala-04-03-2022/1005186>.
- *Devika, J (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 3 March 2021.
- *Divakaran, C. (2022), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 12 January 2022.
- *Divakaran, C. (2022), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 12 January 2022.
- *Ekkavamma, Ambadi (1967), *Tolstoy Kadhakal (Stories of Tolstoy)*, Ernakulam: Indo-Soviet Samskarika Samiti.

- *Elayidom, Sunil (2019), personal conversation, North Paravoor, 12 December 2019.
- *Election Commission of India (1960), *Report on the General Elections to the Kerala Legislative Assembly, 1960*, New Delhi: Election Commission of India.
- *Ganesh, K. N. (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 07 February 2021.
- *George, K (1939), *Report of the board of conciliation of Trade disputes In the Mats and Matting Industry*, Thiruvananthapuram: Government of Travancore.
- *Gopakumar, T. N. (2012), *Volga Tharangangal (Ripples of Volga)*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.
- *Gopalakrishnan, K. (2010), “Gopalakrishnan and Omana has translated 200 Russian books”, *New Indian Express*, 19 January 2010, [Online: web] accessed 19 June 2017, URL: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/2010/jan/19/gopalakrishnan-has-translated-200-russian-books-161920.html>.
- *Gopalan, A. K. (2020), *Ente Jeevitha Kadha*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- *Gorky, Maxim (1911), *The Mother*, New York and London: D. Appleton and Company.
- *Gorky, Maxim (2020), *Amma (The Mother)*, Translated by K. Gopalakrishnan, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.
- *Government of India (1968), “India and Foreign Review, Vol. 5, 6”, *Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting*, Page 5.
- *Indugopan, G. R. (2018), *Spasiba*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Isaac, T.M. Thomas (2020), “On the First Statement in the First Budget of LDF Government under Pinarayi Vijayan”, [Online: web] *Deshabhimani*, Accessed 21 September 2020, URL: <https://www.deshabhimani.com/from-the-net/sree-narayana-guru-statue-thomas-issac/896567>.
- *Jaffe, Greg and Doshi, Vidhi (2017), “One of the few places where a communist can still dream”, *Washington Post*, 27 October 2017, URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/the-place-where-communists-can-still-dream/2017/10/26/55747cbe-9c98-11e7-b2a7-bc70b6f98089_story.html?tid=usw_passupdatepg.
- *Jain, V. (2022), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 17 May 2022.
- *Jayachandran, CICC (2018), personal conversation, Ernakulam, 18 May 2018.
- *Kairali News (2021), “Inauguration of Sambasivan Memorial”, *Kairali News*, [Online: web] Accessed 05 February 2021, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/kairalinews/videos/1118294398610883>.

- *Kairali, Online (2016), “20th Death Anniversary of V. Sambasivan”, *Kairali Online*, [Online: web] Accessed 17 April 2020, URL: <https://www.kairalinewsonline.com/2016/04/25/47719.html>.
- *Keshavadev, P (1972), “Viplava Mudravakyam” (Revolutionary Slogan), in *Ormakalude Lokathil* (in the World of Memories), Kottayam: National Book Stall.
- *Keshavadev, P. (1949), *Red Volunteer*, Palakkad: Vellinezhi Publishing House.
- *Keshavadev, P. (1972), *Ormakalude Lokathil (In the World of Memories)*, Kottayam: National Book Stall.
- *Keshavadev, P. (2010), *Keshavadevinte Sampoorana Kritikal (Collected Works of Keshavadev)* Vol. I, Calicut: Poorna Publications.
- *Keshavadev, P. (2016), *Keshavadevinte Sampoorana Kritikal (Collected Works of Keshavadev)* Vol. II, Calicut: Poorna Publications.
- *Keshavadev, P. (2017), *Ethirppu (Hostility - Autobiography)*, Thiruvananthapuram: DC Books.
- *Keshavan, C. (2015), *Jeevitha Samaram (Life Struggle – Autobiography)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kaumudi Public Relations.
- *Koya, C. H. Muhammed (1975), *Soviet Unionil (In Soviet Union)*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- *KPAC (Kerala People’s Arts Club) (2000), *KPAC Nataka Ganangal (Songs from KPAC Plays)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhat Book House.
- *Kumar, Udaya (2021), personal conversation, New Delhi, 09 December 2021.
- *Kunhabdulla, Punathil (2019), *Volgayil Manju Paiyumbol (When Volga Snowing)*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.
- *Kunhaman, M. (2020), *Ethiru: Cheronayudeyum Ayyappanteyum Makante Jeevitha Samaram (Hostility: the Life Struggle by the Son of Cherona and Ayyappan)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Kunjahammed, KEN (2019), “Russian Sahithyavum Rashtreya Keralavum” (Russian Literature and Kerala Politics), Speech delivered on 13 December 2019 at International Academic Seminar on Russian Literature in Kerala History and Malayalam Language, Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram.
- *Kurup, ONV (1991), *Aadhyakala Kaithakal (The Earlier Poems)*, Trivandrum: Chintha Publishers.
- *Kurup, ONV (2006), *Manikyaveena (Precious Veena)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Kurup, ONV (2006), *Pushkin: Swathanthrya Bodhathinte Duranthagatha (Pushkin: A Tragic Tale of the Consciousness of Freedom)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Kuruppu, Janardhana (2006), *Ente Jeevitham (My Life)*, Thrissur: Current Books.
- *Latheef, Sajid A. (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 08 February 2021.

- *Lawrence, M M (2018), personal conversation, Ernakulam, 18 December 2018.
- *Loksabha Debates (1956), February 23, Vol. I, number 8, col. 817.
- *Loksabha Debates (1956), March 20, Vol. II, number 27, cols. 304-48.
- *Madhavan, N. S. (2020), *N. S. Madhavante KadhakalSampoornam (Complete Stories of N. S. Madhavan)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Madhavan, N. S. (2020), *N. S. MadhavanteKadhakalSampoornam*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “Editorial: The Soviet Union is Dispersed and Destroyed” Trivandrum, 13 December 1991.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “Hard Time for Lenin’s Dead Body”, Trivandrum, 23 December 1991.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “Naina is Specifying Policy”, Trivandrum, 22 December 1991.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “Price Rise: The Soviet Population Struggling”, Trivandrum, 10 December 1991.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “Prostration on the Sanity of Gorby”, Trivandrum, 22 December 1991.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “Soviet Fall Struck on Cashew and Pepper”, Trivandrum, 22 December 1991.
- *Malayala Manorama (1991), “We should not Discredit Stalin: ONV”, Trivandrum, 27 October 1991.
- *Mathrubhumi (1935), “Report of the Proceedings of the First Meeting of CSP”, December 17, 1935.
- *Mathrubhumi (1991), “Editorial: An International Collapse”, Trivandrum, 20 December 1991.
- *Mathrubhumi (1991), “Fight inside the Georgian Parliament Building; Protests in Russia”, Trivandrum, 24 December 1991.
- *Mathrubhumi (1991), “Now onwards the Russian Flag in Kremlin”, Trivandrum, 27 December 1991.
- *Mathrubhumi (1991), “Spread of Protests in Soviet Streets; Gorbachev will Resign Today”, Trivandrum, 25 December 1991.
- *Mathrubhumi (1991), “The Campus Election is Today”, Trivandrum, 04 October 1991.
- *Mathrubhumi (1991), “The Russian Stand on Kashmir will remain the same”, Trivandrum, 28 December 1991.
- *Menon, P. Balagangadhara (1973), *LeninteNattil*, Kottayam: NBS.

- *Menon, Vallathol Narayana (2004), *Vallathol Kavithakal (Poems of Vallathol)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Menon, Vyloppilli Sreedhara (1980) *Makarakkoythu (Harvest month)*, Thrissur: Current Books.
- *Milton (2020), personal conversation, North Paravoor, 17 August 2020.
- *Mohan, Biju (2021), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 09 October 2021.
- *Mukundan, M. (2020), *Russia*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Murali, Pirappankode, personal conversation, 03 March 2022, Thiruvananthapuram.
- *Nair, Edassery Govindan (1951), *PuthankalavumArivalumPoothappattum*, Calicut: Poorna Publications.
- *Nair, V Karthikeyan (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 12 February 2021.
- *Nair, V. Kartikeyan (2019), “Keynote Address”, Speech delivered on 11 December 2019 at International Academic Seminar on Russian Literature in Kerala History and Malayalam Language, Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram.
- *Namboodiri, KPG (1974), *Kavi Kalathiloode*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- *Namboodiri, KPG (2018), *KPG Namboodiri: Sampoorana Krithikal (Collected Works of KPG Namboodiri)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- *Namboodiripad, EMS, (2016), *Athmakadha*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publications.
- *Niemoller, Martin (2022), “FIRST THEY CAME – BY PASTOR MARTIN NIEMÖLLER”, *Holocaust Memorial Trust*, [Online: Web] Accessed 15 January 2022, URL: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/first-they-came-by-pastor-martin-niemoller/>.
- *Palat, Madhavan K. (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 22 December 2021.
- *Panangad, Pradeep (2021), “200th Birthday of Dostoyevski and 112th Birthday of N. K. Damodaran”, Speech delivered on 20 March 2021 at Gorky Bhawan (Russian Cultural Centre, Kerala), Thiruvananthapuram.
- *Panangad, Pradeep (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 28 March 2021.
- *Pappukkutty, Kedamangalam (1935), “Velakkarude Pattu” (Song of the Workers), *Thozilali*, Alappuzha: TLA, Malayalam Era - Thulam 28, 1111.
- *Pappukkutty, Kedamangalam (1953), *KadathuVanji(Boat)*, Kottayam: NBS.
- *Parameshwaran, M. P. (2019), personal conversation, Thrissur, 27 December 2019.
- *Patnaik, Prabhat (2017), personal conversation, New Delhi, 10 November 2017.

- *Pavanan, (1965), *Soviet Nattil Khrushchevinu Shesham*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- *Pavanan, (1984), *Oru Yathrayude Anubhavangal (Experiences from a Journey)*, Madras: Sreevedi Books.
- *Perova, Tatiana (2019), “Inaugural Address”, Speech delivered on 11 December 2019 at International Academic Seminar on Russian Literature in Kerala History and Malayalam Language, Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram.
- *Pillai, Changampuzha (1998), *PadunnaPishashu*, Trivandrum: Prabhat Book House.
- *Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna (1937), *Karadi (Bear)*, Trissur: Mangalodayam.
- *Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna (1949), *Vivahalochana (Marriage Proposal)*, Trissur: Mangalodayam.
- *Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna (1951), *Kalakeli (Cultural Festival)*, Trissur: Mangalodayam.
- *Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna (1966), *Poonilavil (In the Moonlight)*, Trissur: Mangalodayam.
- *Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna (2021), *Changampuzhyude Sahitya Chinthakal*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhat Book House.
- *Pillai, Kallayil Rakhavan (2019), personal conversation, Alappuzha, 16 September 2019.
- *Pillai, TakazhiShivasankara (1967), *Two measures of rice (Translation of the Malayalam Novel - Randidangazhi)*, Translated by Shakoor, Bombay: Jaico.
- *Pisharady, Govinda Cherukad (1974), *Jeevitappata (Autobiography)*, Thrissur: Current Books.
- *Pravda (1955), “On the Occasion of Jawaharlal Nehru’s Visit to USSR”, *Pravda*, 7 June 1955.
- *Radhakrishnan, M. G. (2017), personal conversation, New Delhi, 29 July 2017.
- *Rajan, Ayisha (2015), “OruMakaludeAshrudhara (Tears of a Daughter)”, *Jeevitha Samaram*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kaumudi Public Relations.
- *Rajan, Punalur (1985), *Mahayudhathinte Murippadukal (Scratches of a Great War)*, Kottayam: Current Books.
- *Rajeev, P. (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 16 April 2021.
- *Ramachandran, Puthussery (2017), *Thilacha Mannil Kalnadayayi (Autobiography)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- *Ramankutty, V. (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 28 March 2021.
- *Ranjith, K. S. (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 10, April 2021.

- *Rejikumar, J. (2015), *Selected Speeches of the Freedom Fighters*, Vol 1, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Archives.
- *Rejikumar, J. (2016), *Selected Speeches of the Freedom Fighters*, Vol. II, (ed.), Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Archives.
- *Salam, Lal (2019), personal conversation, 09 November 2019.
- *Sambasivan, Sambath V. (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 18 April 2021.
- *Sarojam, S. (2021), *Neva muthal Volga vare (From Neva to Volga)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- *Satchidanandan (2015), *KizhakkumPadinjarum*, Trissur: Green Books.
- *Sekhar, N. C. (2018), *Agniveedhikal*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- *Servants of India Society (1945), *Food Famine and Nutritional Diseases in Travancore 1943-44*, Coimbatore: Serve India Kerala Relief Centre.
- *Shinas, A. M. (2021), personal conversation, Thrissur, 04 April 2021.
- *Siddeek. M. A. (2019), “Russian Sahithyavum Indian Rashtreyavum” (Russian Literature and Indian Politics), Speech delivered on 13 December 2019 at International Academic Seminar on Russian Literature in Kerala History and Malayalam Language, Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram.
- *Sivadasan, V. (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 19 April 2021.
- *Sreedharan, Perumpadavom (2017), *Oru Sankeerthanam Pole*, Kollam: Sankeerthanam Publications.
- *Sreekumar, P. K. (2021), personal conversation, via phone, 05 November 2021.
- *Sukumaran, M. (2014), *M. Sukumarante KadhakalSamboornam*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- *Surendran (2021), personal conversation, Thiruvananthapuram, 10 March 2021.
- *The Economist (2015), “Like manna from heaven”, *The Economist*, 03 September 2015, [Online: web] Accessed 03 September 2015, URL: <https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2015/09/03/like-manna-from-heaven>.
- *The Guardian (2021), “Guests at a Kerala wedding included Marx and Lenin. Guess the groom’s name?”, *The Guardian*, 16 November 2016, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/16/guests-kerala-wedding-marx-and-lenin-guess-the-grooms-name-india>.
- *The Hindu (2013), “Bedtime stories of Russian folklore back on shelves”, *The Hindu*, 29 April 2013, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/bedtime-stories-of-russian-folklore-back-on-shelves/article4663986.ece>.
- *The New Indian Express (2017), “Stalin? I’m Lenin...”, *The New Indian Express*, URL:

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/thiruvananthapuram/2017/jul/22/stalin-im-lenin-1631876.html>.

*The News Minute (2018), “24th anniversary of Koothuparamba firing: When a protest turned into a killing”, *The News Minute*, 25 November 2018, URL: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/24th-anniversary-koothuparamba-firing-when-protest-turned-killing-92194>.

*Thomas, Rajaji Mathew (2021), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 09 November 2021.

*Thomas, Rajaji Mathew (2021), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 09 November 2021

*Times of India (1992), New Delhi, 28 August 1992.

*TLA (1937), *Thozhilali Visheshal Prathi* (Special Edition of Thozhilali), Alappuzha: TLA.

*Varkey, Shaji (2018), personal conversation, Trivandrum, 20 December 2018.

*Varma, Vayalar Rama (2016), *ValayarKrithikal (Literary Works of Vayalar)*, Kottayam: DC Books.

*Venu, K. (2019), personal conversation, Thrissur, 24 December 2019.

*Vijayan, Pinarayi (2016), “Sree Narayana Guru is not a spokesman of any religion or caste says Pinarayi Vijayan”, [Online: web] *Asianet News*, Accessed 30 December 2017, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P13hXYcxjkw>.

*Warrior, N. V. Krishna (1976), *N. V. yudeKrithikal (Literary Works of N. V.)*, Kottayam: SPCS.

*Wilson Centre (n.d.), “Notes of the Discussion of Comrade A.A. Zhdanov with Comrade S.A. Dange, Member of the CC of the Communist Party of India,” September 06, 1947, *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Translated by Tahir Asghar, URL: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/119260>.

*Yechuri, Sitaram (2020), “Communists first to demand Poorna Swaraj, says Sitaram Yechuri”, *Times of India*, [Online: web] Accessed 18 October 2020, URL: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/78729733.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst.

*Zacharia (2021), *RanduYathrakal (Two Journeys)*, Kottayam: DC Books.

Adhikari, G. (1971), *Documents of the history of the Communist Party of India: 1917-1922*, Vol. I, New Delhi: People’s Publishing House.

Agarwal, Prabal Saran and Harshvardhan (2021), “When Stalin Invited Bhagat Singh to Soviet Union”, *NewsClick*, URL: <https://www.newsclick.in/When-Stalin-Invited-Bhagat-Singh-to-Soviet-Union>.

Ahmed, Farzand (1988), “CPI: A Party Shake-up in an Indian Version of Glasnost”, *India Today*, New Delhi, 30 November 1988, Online Web:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/indiascope/story/19881130-cpi-a-party-shake-up-in-an-indian-version-of-glasnost-797935-1988-11-30>.

Aiyappan, A (1965), *Social Revolution in a Kerala Village: A Study in Culture Change*, New York: Asia Publishing House.

Ajayan, T. (2017), “Midterm Election in Kerala in 1960 and the American Government”, *History and Sociology of South Asia*, 11(2): 1–9.

Alexander, KC (1968), *Social Mobility in Kerala*, Poona: Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute.

Alexander, KC (1973), “Emerging Farmer-Labour Relations in Kuttanad”, *EPW*, 8 (34): 1551-60.

Ali, Tariq (2017), “How Lenin’s love of literature shaped the Russian Revolution”, *The Guardian*, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/25/lenin-love-literature-russian-revolution-soviet-union-goethe>.

Amal, P. P. (2021), “Post-Soviet Democratization: A Historical Analysis on the Baltic States”, *Vijnana Kairali - Kerala Bhasha Institute*, 53 (1): 67-74.

Amal, P. P. (2021), “The Beginning of Soviet Influence in the Malayalee Imaginations”, *Sahityalokam - Kerala Sahitya Akademi*, 50 (5): 49-64.

Amal, P. P. (2022), “The Historical Relations of the Russia-Ukraine War”, *Vijnana Kairali - Kerala Bhasha Institute*, 54 (5): 40-51.

Ambedkar, B. R (2017), *Budha or Karl Marx*, [Online: web] Velivada, URL: <https://velivada.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/buddha-or-karl-marx-book-in-english.pdf>.

Amma, K. R. Gauri (2010), *K. R. Gauri Amma: Athmakadha (Autobiography of K. R. Gauri Amma)*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.

Andalat (1987), *Rekhyallatha Charitram (History without Documents)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.

Andalat (1993), *Purogamana Sahityavum Communistukarum (Communists and Progressive Literature)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.

Anderson, Benedict (1983), *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.

Appan, K. P. (2021), *Charithrath Aagadhamaakkiya Guru (The Guru who Made the History Deeper)*, Kottayam: DC Books.

Appan, K. P. (2021), *Charithrath Aagathamakkiya Guru*, Kottayam: DC Books.

Appukkuttan, P (2000), “Keraleeya Rangavediyude Oru Noottandu” (One Century of Theatre in Kerala), in M. N. Vijayan (eds.), *Nammude Sahityam, Nammude Samooham (In Our Literature, Our Society)*, Vol. II, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy.

- Arnold, David (1977), *The Congress in Tamilnad: Nationalist Politics in South India, 1919-1937*, New Delhi: Manohar Book Service.
- Athreya, Venkatesh (1989), “Perestroika and the Third World: The Changing Status of the Concept of ‘Neocolonialism’”, *Social Scientist*, 17 (7/8): 28-36.
- Azad (2000), “Thozhilali Varga Samarangalum, MalayalaSahithyavum” (Working Class Struggles and Malayalam Literature), in M. N. Vijayan (eds.), *NammudeSahityam, NammudeSamooham (Our Literature, Our Society)*, Vol. 1, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy.
- Baby, M. A. (2019), “Dr. V. V. Velukkutty: CommunistayaNavodhana Nayakan”, in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor VelukkuttyArayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Baby, M.A. (2016), “Karivellur Struggle Anniversary”, [Online Web] Accessed 29 May 2020, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rV56jvAgIA>.
- Balakrishnan, E. (1998), *History of the Communist Movement in Kerala*, Trivandrum: Kurushekhtra Publications.
- Balakrishnan, P. K. (2019), *P. K. BalakrishnanteLekhanangal (Essays of P. K. Balakrishnan)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Balakrishnan, Thengamam (2019), “DheeranayaPathradhipar”, in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor VelukkuttyArayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Balaram, NE (2010), “Keralathile Communist PrasthanamAadhyanalukal” (First Days of the Communist Organization in Kerala), Antony Thomas (ed), *NE Balaram: Collected Works*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House.
- Banning, Jan and Williams, Zoe (2017), “On your Marx: meet the modern-day communists”, *The Guardian*, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/14/on-your-marx-meet-modern-day-communists->
- Bavakutty, M. (1982), “Library Movement in Kerala”, *International Journal of Libraries and Information Studies*, 32 (1): 251-255.
- Berlin, Michel J (1980), “India Supports Soviet’s Afghan Position in UN Debate”, *Washington Post*, 12 January 12 1980, URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/01/12/india-supports-soviets-afghan-position-in-un-debate/17dd1eb5-93f9-44bf-9f95-ecda7285843c/>.
- Bhadrakumar, M. K. (2021), “The Gouri Amma I Know”, *Rediff.com*, URL: <https://www.rediff.com/news/column/mk-bhadrakumar-the-gouri-amma-i-knew/20210512.htm>.
- Bhagat, K.P. (1962), *The Kerala Mid-Term Election of 1960: the Communist Party’s Conquest of New Positions*, Bombay: Popular Book Depot.

- Bhamberi C. P. (1969), "Nahru and Socialist Movement in India (1920-47)", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 30 (2): 130-148, [Online: web] *Jstore*, Accessed 24 January 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41854319>.
- Bhaskaran, P. (1946), *VayalarGarjikkunnu* (Vayalar's Thunder), Trivandrum: SPCS
- Bhasthi, Deepa (2015), "By the book: reflections on an Indian childhood reading Soviet hardbacks", *The Calvert Journal*, [Online: web] Accessed 29 May 2015, URL: <https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/4172/reflections-on-an-indian-childhood-reading-soviet-books>.
- Bhasurendrababu and Rekhu (1986), *Manthabudhikalude Marxist Samvadam (The Marxist Debate of the Stupid)*, Manganam: PusthakaPrasadaka Sangham.
- Bhattacharjee, Manash Firaq (2020), "Tagore's Prophetic Vision in 'Letters From Russia'", *The Wire*, [Online: web] Accessed 17 April 2021, URL: <https://thewire.in/history/rabindranath-tagore-letters-from-russia-soviet-union>.
- Bhattathiripad, V. T. (2019), "V T Yude Sampoorana Kruthikal", Kottayam: DC Books.
- Bhattathiripad, VT (2013), *My Tears, My Dreams – KinavumKaneerum*, Mini Krishnan (ed), Translated by Sindhu V Nair, New Delhi: Oxford.
- Bhattathiripad, VT (2019), *KannerumKinavum (tears and dreams)*, Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books.
- Bijukumar, V. (2019), "Pungent Irrationality and Troubled Modernity in Kerala", *History and Sociology of South Asia*, 13 (1): 19–35.
- Bijukumar, V. (2019), "Radicalised civil society and protracted political actions in Kerala (India): a socio-political narrative", *Asian Ethnicity*, 20 (4): 503-521, [Online: web] Accessed 01 June 2020, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2019.1601005>.
- Brands, William (1972), "Moscow and South Asia", *Problems of Communism*, 21 (3): 12-31.
- Breman, Jan (1999), "Industrial Labour in Post-Colonial India I: Industrializing the Economy and Formalizing Labour", *International Review of Social History*, 44 (2): 249-300.
- Breman, Jan (1999), "Industrial Labour in Post-Colonial India II: Employment in the Informal-Sector Economy", *International Review of Social History*, 44 (3): 451-483.
- CDS and UN (Centre for Development Studies and United Nations) (1977), *Poverty, Unemployment, and Development Policy: A Case Study of Selected Issues with Reference to Kerala*, Bombay: Orient Longman.
- Chakrabarti, Gautam (2019), "From Moscow with love: Soviet cultural politics across India in the Cold War", *Safundi*, 20 (2): 239-257, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533171.2019.1579475>.

- Chandra, Bipan (1971), “Lenin on National Liberation Movements”, *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, 27 (40), 40-56, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/097492847102700105>.
- Chandrasekhar, C. P. (2001), “Democratic Decentralisation and the Planning Principle: The Transition from Below”, *Social Scientist*, 29 (11/12): 41-56.
- Chandrashekar, M. R. (1998), *Communist Kavithrayam (The Communist Trio of Poets)*, Thrissur: Current Books.
- Chandrashekar, M. R. (1999), *Keralathile Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanathinte Charitram (The History of Progressive Literature Movement in Kerala)*, Kozhikode: Olive Publications.
- Chatterjee, Choi (2017), “Imperial Subjects in the Soviet Union: M.N. Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, and Re-Thinking Freedom and Authoritarianism”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 52 (4): 913-934, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009417716754>.
- Chattopadhyay, Gautam (2010), *Subhas Chandra Bose and Indian Communist Movement*, New Delhi: People’s Publishing House.
- Chengappa, Raj (1991), “CPI (M) assailed for welcoming hard-liners’ coup, but refuses to budge from Marxist dogmas”, *India Today*, New Delhi, 15 September 1991, Online Web: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19910915-cpi-m-assailed-for-welcoming-hardliners-coup-but-refuses-to-budge-from-orthodox-marxist-dogmas-814822-1991-09-15>.
- Chenoy, Anuradha M. and Upadhyay, Archana (2021), “Introduction: Hundred Years of the Russian Revolution—Its Legacies in Perspective”, in Chenoy, Anuradha M. and Upadhyay Archana (eds.), *Hundred Years of the Russian Revolution: Its Legacies in Perspective*, Palgrave Macmillan, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4785-4>.
- Chenoy, Kamal Mitra (2021), “Russian Revolution and the Global South”, in Chenoy, Anuradha M. and Upadhyay Archana (eds.), *Hundred Years of the Russian Revolution: Its Legacies in Perspective*, Palgrave Macmillan, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4785-4>.
- Chereshneva, Larisa (2021), “India-Russia Diplomatic Engagement: The Stalin Years”, in Chenoy, Anuradha M. and Upadhyay Archana (eds.), *Hundred Years of the Russian Revolution: Its Legacies in Perspective*, Palgrave Macmillan, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4785-4>.
- Cheriyann, P. J. (1999), “Radical Political Movements in the Twentieth Century”, in P. J. Cheriyann (eds.), *Perspectives on Kerala History: The Second Millennium*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala State Gazetteers.
- Choudhury, Rahul Roy (1991), “Indian Navy: Arms in the Future”, *Indian Express*, Chandigarh, 11 October 1991.

CIA, Report. (1962), “Indian Communist Party and Sino-Soviet Dispute”, [Online: web] Accessed 19 May 2016, URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/esau-15.pdf>.

Core, Cambridge (2011), “The Roy Lenin Debate on Colonial Policy: anew Interpretation” [Online: web] Accessed 27 October 2019, URL: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-asian-studies/article/roylenin-debate-on-colonial-policy-a-new-interpretation/5C194B408A1BD2A9CD632CD4EB9BC845>.

CPI(M), Charithrarachana Samithi (2018), *Keralathile Communist PartyudeCharithram (The History of the Communist Party in Kerala)*, Vol. 1, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.

CPI(M), Charithrarachana Samithi (2020), *Keralathile Communist PartyudeCharithram*. Vol. II 1940 – 1952 (*History of the Communist Party in Kerala*. Vol. II 1940 – 1952), Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.

Crowley, Thomas (2014), “The Many Faces of the Indian Left”, *Jacobin*, 05 December 2014, Online Web: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/05/the-many-faces-of-the-indian-left/>.

D’Souza, Radha (2018), “The October Revolution and the Anti Colonial Movements in South Asia”, *EPW* (43): 46-58.

Damodaran, K (1972), *Pattabakki: Nadakam (Rent Arrears: Drama)*, Kottayam: National Book Stall.

Damodaran, K (1984), “The Tragedy of the Indian Communism”, Tariq Ali (ed), *The Stalinist Legacy*, London: Pelican Books.

Damodaran, K. (1975), “Memoir of an Indian Communist”, *New Left Review*, 93 (1): 31-59, [Online: web] Accessed 19 January 2017, URL: <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i93/articles/k-damodaran-memoir-of-an-indian-communist>.

Damodaran, Sumangala (2008), “Protest through Music”, [Online: web] Accessed 22 May 2020, URL: http://www.india-seminar.com/2008/588/588_sumangala_damdaran.htm.

Daniyal, Shoaib. (2015), “As CPI and CPI-M Mull Merger, a Short History of how they Split Up in the First Place”, [Online Web] Accessed 23 February 2017, URL: <https://scroll.in/article/722209/as-cpi-and-cpi-m-mull-merger-a-short-history-of-how-they-split-up-in-the-first-place>.

Das, I. V. (1991), “From George Bush to K. M. Mathew”, *Deshabhimani*, 8 October 1991.

Das, I. V. (1991), “Nathuram Vinayak Godse and Mikhail Gorbachev”, *Deshabhimani*, 24 December 1991.

- De Sousa Santos, B. (2006), *The Rise of the Global Left: The World Social Forum and Beyond*, London: Zed Books.
- Demaitre, Edmund (1963), “Soviet-Indian Relations-Neutralism and Communist China”, *The Russian Review*, 22 (4): 400-409.
- Desai Manali (2001), “Party Formation, Political Power, and the Capacity for Reform: Comparing Left Parties in Kerala and West Bengal, India”, *Social Forces – Oxford Journals*, 80 (1), 37-60.
- Desai, Manali (2005), Indirect British Rule, State Formation, and Welfarism in Kerala, India 1860–1957, *Social Science History*, 29 (3): 457–488.
- Desai, Manali (2006), *State Formation and Radical Democracy in India, 1860–1990*, London: Routledge.
- Deshpande, Ashwini (2000), “Does Caste still Define Disparity? A Look at Inequality in Kerala, India”, *American Economic Review*, 90 (02): 322-25.
- Devadas, M. S. (1991), *ThirenjeduthaPrabandhangal (Selected Essays)*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Devadas, M. S. (2017), “Report on the State of Literature and the Literary Trends and on the work of Communist and Progressive Writers in Kerala”, in Sudhi Pradhan (ed.), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India (1943-64)*, Vol. II, Calcutta: NBA.
- Devika, J (2010), “Egalitarian Developmentalism, Communist Mobilization, and the Question of Caste in Kerala State, India”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 69 (30): 799-820.
- Devika, J. (2012), “Migration, transnationalism, and modernity: Thinking of Kerala’s many cosmopolitanisms”, *Cultural Dynamics*, 24 (2-3): 127-142.
- Dileep, M. S. (2000), *Varkkiyude Velipadukal (The Revelations of Varkey)*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Dirlik, Arif (2019), *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*, New York: Routledge, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429495953>.
- Draper, Hal (2004), *Socialism from Below*, Alameda: CA: Center for Socialist History.
- Dreze, J and Sen, A (1995), *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dutt, Bishnupriya (2019), “October revolution, echoes of the past: Lenin in popular sites and theatre”, *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, [Online: web] Accessed 23 September 2020, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682761.2019.1654312>.
- Dutt, Utpal (2009), *Towards a Revolutionary Theatre*, Kolkata: Seagull.
- Dyakonov, Severyan (2013), *Soviet cultural diplomacy in India, 1955-1963*, MA Dissertation Canada: Concordia University, URL:

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Soviet-cultural-diplomacy-in-India%2C-1955-1963-Dyakonov/>.

Dyakonov, Severyan (2015), *Soviet cultural diplomacy in India, 1955-1963*, Concordia University: Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Elayidom, Sunil P (2021), “Eni KesariyePadichuThudangam” (Now Let Us Start to Study Kesari), *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 98 (44), 10-25.

Elayidom, Sunil P. (2020), “K. Damodaran OruAntharikaVimarshakante Orma”, e-mail to the author, 23 September 2020.

Eppan, Isaac (2019), “MalayalaSahithyathile Russian Yugam” (The Russian Era of Malayalam Literature), *Samskarika Malayalam*, [Online: web] Accessed 17 May 2019, URL: <https://www.samakalikamalayalam.com/malayalam-vaarika/essays/2019/may/17>.

Eudin, Xenia Joukoff and North, Robert C. (1957), *Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927, A Documentary Survey*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Farooqui, Amar (2017), “October Revolution and National Movement in India” in Vijay Prashad (ed.), *Red October: The Russian Revolution and the Communist Horizon*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.

Fenech, Louis E. (2002), “Contested Nationalisms; Negotiated Terrains: The Way Sikhs Remember Udham Singh ‘Shahid’ (1899-1940)”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 36 (4): 827-870.

Fic, Victor M (1969), *Peaceful transition to communism in India: Strategy of the Communist Party*, Bombay: Nachiketa Publications.

Fic, Victor M (1970), *Kerala: Yenan of India: Rise of communist power, 1937-1969*, Bombay: Nachiketa.

Franke RW and Chasin B (1989) *Kerala: Radical Reform as Development in an Indian State*, San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.

Franke, R. W, and B. H. Chasin (1991), “Kerala State, India: Radical Reform as Development”, *Monthly Review*, 26 (4): 1–23.

Franke, Richard W. and Chasin, Barbara H. (2000), “The Kerala Decentralization Experiment: Achievements, Origins, and Implications”, Paper presented at the International Conference on Democratic Decentralization, 23-28 May 2000, Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram,

Ganai, Naseer (2017), “Sheikh Abdullah’s New Kashmir Manifesto Was a Cut and Paste of Stalin’s Constitution for Soviet Union”, [Online: web] Accessed 30 July 2021, URL: <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/sheikh-abdullahs-new-kashmir-manifesto-was-a-cut-and-paste-of-stalins-constituti/298388>.

Gandhi, M. K. (1961), *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* Vol. 5, New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India.

- Ganesh, K. N. (2000), “Malayala Sahithyathinte Samskarika Bhoomishastram” (The Cultural Topography of Malayalam Literature), in M. N. Vijayan (eds.), *NammudeSahityam, NammudeSamooham (In Our Literature, Our Society)*, Vol. II, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy.
- Ganesh, K.N. (2013), “P. Govinda Pillai”, *Social Scientist*, 41 (3/4): 81-84. [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed in 08 August 2017, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23610473>.
- Ganesh, K. N. and Amal, P. P. (2022), “How the Soviet Union Collapsed”, *Biju Mohan YouTube Channel*, [Online: web] Accessed 1 September 2022, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dExxlZP1xM>.
- Ganeshan, V. (2018), “Soviet Unionte Pathanavum Malayala Yathra Vivaranavum” (The Fall of the Soviet Union and the Malayalam Travelogues), *Pluttog*, [Online: web] Accessed 03 December 2018, URL: https://pluttog.blogspot.com/2018/12/blog-post_3.html.
- Ganguli, Sreemati (2009), “Indo-Russian Relations: The Making of A Relationship 1992 - 2002” *Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies*, Page 43.
- Geetha, V (1990), “End of Century Socialism”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 25 (39): 2220.
- George, K. M. (1972), *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature*, New Delhi: Sahitya Academy.
- George, K. M. (2011), “Introduction”, in K. M. George (ed.), *Aadhunika Malayala Sahithya CharithramPrasthanangaliloode (The Modern History of Malayalam Literature through Associations)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- George, Liza (2015), “The fun school for tiny kids”, *The Hindu*, 21 January 2015, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/features/metroplus/society/the-fun-school-for-tiny-kids/article6808432.ece>.
- Ghosh, Ajoy (1954), “Answers Questions on Communist Policies” *New Age*, 12 December 1954.
- Ghosh, Ajoy (1955), “Communist Answers to Pandit Nehru”, *New Age*, 05 December 1955: 25.
- Ghosh, Paramita (2017), “From Russia with love: How the Bolshevik revolution impacted India’s leaders”, *Hindustan Times*, [Online: web] Assessed 19 November 2017, URL: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/from-russia-with-love-how-the-bolshevik-revolution-impacted-india-s-leaders/story->
- Gopalakrishnan, K. K. (2011), “When the Gods Came Down” *The Hindu*, 05 November 2011, [Online: web], *The Hindu*, Accessed 08 September 2019, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/when-the-gods-came-down/article2594449.ece>.

- Gopalakrishnan, P. K. (1987), *Purogamana Sahitya Prasthanam: NizhalumVelichavum (Progressive Literature Movement: Shadow and Light)*, Thrissur: Sahitya Academy.
- Gopalan, A. K. (1954), *Ente Vidhesha Paryadanathile Chila Edukal*, Kozhikode: KairaliShankaramangalam Ltd.
- Gopalan, A. K. (1976), *In the Cause of the People*, Madras: Sangam Books.
- Gopalan, A. K. (2021), “Malabaril Marichuveena Mappilamare Orkkanam” (We should Remember the Martyr Mappilas of Malabar), *Dool News*, [Online: web] Accessed 24 August 2021, URL: https://www.doolnews.com/ak-gopalan-s-speech-on-malabar-revolt-1921.html?utm_source=doolnews&utm_medium=related.
- Gough, K. (1967), “Kerala politics and the 1965 elections”, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 8 (1): 55–88.
- Govindan, KC (1938), “ThiruvithamcoreLabourAssociationte Charitra Samgraham (A brief History of Travancore Labour Association)” *ThozhilaliViseshalPratai (Mal.)*, P.3.
- Govindan, KC (1981), “Vadappuram PK Bava” (Mal.), *ThozhilaliMithram*, 01 (07): 17.
- Govindan, KC (1986), *Memories of an Early Trade Unionist*, Thiruvananthapuram: Centre for Development Studies.
- Govindan, M (2020), *Puthiya Manushyan Puthiya Lakam: M. GovindanteChinthakal.Vol. II(New Man New World: Thoughts of M. Govindan)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Govindan, M (2020), *Puthiya Manushyan Puthiya Lakam: M. GovindanteChinthakal.Vol. 1 (New Man New World: Thoughts of M. Govindan)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, New York: International.
- Gujral I K, (2006), “India’s Response to the Soviet Military Intervention in Afghanistan”, *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, Vol. 1: No.1, 123-131.
- Gupta, Bhabani Sen (1981), “Communism and India: A New Context”, *Problems of Communism*, 30 (4): 33-45, [Online: web] Hein Online, Accessed in 26 August 2020, URL: https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?public=true&handle=hein.journals/probscmu30&div=38&start_page=33&collection=journals&set_as_cursor=1&men_tab=srchresults
- Guru, Gopal (2009) “‘Rejection of rejection’: Foregrounding self-respect”, in Gopal Guru (eds.) *Humiliation: Claims and Context*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Guru, Gopal (2015), “Foreword to the Book”, in Satheese Chandra Bose and Shiju Sam Varughese (eds.), *Kerala Modernity*, Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan.

- Haithcox, John P. (1963), "The Roy-Lenin Debate on Colonial Policy: a New Interpretation", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 23 (1): 93-101, [Online: web] Jstore, Accessed: 23 January 2018, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2050635>.
- Haithcox, John P. (1963), "The Roy-Lenin Debate on Colonial Policy: a New Interpretation", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 23 (1): 93-101, [Online: web] Jstore, Accessed: 23 January 2018, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2050635>.
- Haksar, Nandita (2017), "100 years on: How the Russian Revolution inspired India", Scroll.in, [Online: web] Accessed 26 April 2020, URL: <https://scroll.in/article/855423/100-years-on-how-the-russian-revolution-inspired-india-lit-the-fire-of-numerous-workers-struggles>.
- Haksar, Nandita (2017), "All for the cause", *india-seminar.com*, [Online: web] Accessed 04 December 2018, URL: https://www.india-seminar.com/2017/697/697_nandita_haksar.htm.
- Hardgrave, Robert L. (1970), The Marxist Dilemma in Kerala: Administration and/or Struggle, *Asian Survey - Elections and Party Politics in India: A Symposium*, 10 (11): 993-1003, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 27 April 2017, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642819>.
- Harikrishnan, S (2020), "Communicating Communism: Social Spaces and the Creation of a "Progressive" Public Sphere in Kerala, India", *tripleC*, 18(1): 268-285, [Online: web], Accessed 22 February 2020, URL: <https://www.triple-c.at/index.php/tripleC/article/view/1134>.
- Harnecker, Marta (2007), *Rebuilding the Left*, Delhi: Daanish Books.
- Harriss, J. (2001), *Depoliticizing Development: The World Bank and Social Capital*, New Delhi: Leftword.
- Hart HC and Herring RJ (1977), "Political conditions of land reform: Kerala and Maharashtra", in R E Frykenberg (eds.), *Land tenure and peasant in South Asia*, Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Hart, M. and A. Negri (2001), *Empire*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Heller, P (1999), *The Labor of Development: Workers and the Transformation of Capitalism in Kerala, India*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Heller, Patrick (1999), *The Labour Development: Workers and Transformations of Capitalism Kerala, India*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Heller, Patrick (2000), *The Labor of Development: Workers and the Transformation of Capitalism in Kerala, India*, Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Heller, Patrick (2020), "The age of reaction: Retrenchment populism in India and Brazil", *International Sociology*, 35(6) 590-609, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580920949979>.

Herring, Ronald J (1983), *Land to the tiller: The political economy of agrarian reform in South Asia*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Herring, Ronald J (1988), “Stealing Congress’s Thunder: The Rise to Power of a Communist Movement in South India”, in Kay Lawson, Peter H. Merkel (eds.), *When Parties Fail: Emerging Alternative Organizations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hilger, Andreas (2008), “The Soviet Union and India: the Years of Late Stalinism”, *Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP)*, [Online: web] Accessed 19 November 2020, [URL:https://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll_india/intro_stalinee91.html?navinfo=56154](https://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/coll_india/intro_stalinee91.html?navinfo=56154).

Hilger, Andreas (2011). “Building a Socialist Elite? – Khrushchev’s Soviet Union and Elite Formation in India”, in Jost Dülffer and Marc Frey (eds.), *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Holloway, J. (2002) *Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today*, London: Pluto Press

Horan Robert C, (1983), “Afghanistan and Soviet Indian Influence Relationship”, *Asian Survey*, March: 244-260.

Horn, Robert C. (1983), “Afghanistan and the Soviet-Indian Influence Relationship”, *Asian Survey*, 23 (3): 244-260.

Hunter, Thelma (1972), “Indian communism and the Kerala experience of coalition government, 1967–69”, *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, 10 (1): 45-70.

Imam, Zafar (1966), “The Effects of the Russian Revolution on India 1917-19”, in S. N. Mukherjee (ed), *The Movement for National Freedom in India*, London: Oxford University Press.

Imam, Zafar (1987), “*Colonialism in East-West Relations: A Study of Soviet Policy towards India and Anglo-Soviet Relations: 1917-1947*”, New Delhi: Patriot Publishers.

Isaac, T. M. Thomas (1994), “The Left Movement in Kerala: Lessons of the Past and Challenges of the Present,” *International Congress on Kerala Studies Documents*, Vol. I, Thiruvananthapuram: AKG Centre for Research and Studies.

Isaac, T. M. Thomas (2001), “Campaign for Democratic Decentralisation in Kerala”, *Social Scientist*, 29 (9/10): 8-47.

Isaac, T. M. Thomas (2012), *VimochanaSamarathinteKanappurangal (The Other Sides of the Liberation Struggle)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.

Isaac, T. M. Thomas (2022), “On P. V. Aniyam”, Facebook Post, 06 April 2022, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/thomasisaaq/posts/564941318320479>.

- Isaac, T. M. Thomas (2022), *Kerala: Another Possible World*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Isaac, T. M. Thomas and Heller P. (2003) “Democracy and Development: Decentralized Planning in Kerala”, in A. Fung and E. O. Wright (eds.), *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, London & New York: Verso Press.
- Isaac, Thomas (2012), “Manthabudhikalude Marxist Samvadam” (The Marxist Debate of the Stupid), *thomas-isaac.blogspot.com*, URL: http://dr-tm-thomas-isaac.blogspot.com/2012/08/blog-post_27.html.
- Isaac, Thomas T.M. (1985), “From Caste Consciousness to Class Consciousness Alleppey Coir Workers during the Inter-War Period” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 20 (4): 05-18.
- Isaac, Thomas T.M. (1986), “The National Movement and the Communist Party in Kerala”, *Social Scientist*, 14, (8/9): 59-80.
- Isaac, Thomas TM (2016), *Alappuzhayude Samara Patha (Struggle Roots of Alappuzha)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Israel, J (2009), *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Iyer, V. R. Krishna (1966), *Communist Rajyangaliloote*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Iyer, V. R. Krishna (1971), *Soviet Unionil*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Iyer, V. R. Krishna (2019), “Dr.VelukkuttyArayan a Remembrance”, in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor VelukkuttyArayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Jaffrelot, Christophe (2003), *India’s Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Low Castes in North Indian Politics*, Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Jeffery, Robin (1978), “Status, Class and the Growth of Radical Politics, 1860-1940” in Robin Jeffery (eds.) *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely State*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jeffery, Robin (1984) ““Destroy Capitalism!’: Growing Solidarity of Alleppey’s Coir Workers, 1930-40” *Economic and Political Weekly*, 19 (9): 1159-1165, Jstor [Online: web] Accessed: 12 February 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4373437>.
- Jeffrey R (1992) *Politics, Women and Wellbeing: How Kerala became a Model*, Houndmills: Macmillan Press.
- Jeffrey, Robin (1976), *The Decline of Nair Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847–1908*, Delhi: Manohar.
- Jeffrey, Robin (1978), “Matriliny, Marxism and the birth of the Communist Party in Kerala 1930–1940”, *Journal of Asian Studies*, 38(1): 77–98.
- Jeffrey, Robin (2003), *Politics, Women and Well Being: How Kerala became a “Model”*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- Jeffrey, Robin (2009), "Testing Concepts about Print, Newspapers, and Politics: Kerala, India, 1800-2009", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68 (2): 465-489, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 16 February 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20619735>.
- Jestrović, Silvija & Parameswaran, Ameet (2019), "Worksites of the left", *Studies in Theatre and Performance*, [Online: web] Routledge, Accessed 10 May 2020, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682761.2019.1654307>.
- John, Antony (2018), "Moscowyile Chandra Shobha", *Manorama Online*, 14 July 2018, URL: <https://www.manoramaonline.com/news/sunday/2018/07/14/mosco.html>.
- Joshy, P. C. and Damodaran, K., (1975), *Marx Come to India*, New Delhi: Manohar Book Service.
- Jowitt, K. (1992), *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jussy, Selvyn (2005), "A Constitutive and Distributive Economy of Discourse: Left Movement in Kerala and the Commencement of A Literary Moment", *Social Scientist*, 33 (11 &12): 29-42.
- Kaimal, PKV (1976), "A Theoretical Study of the Punnapra - Vayalar Struggle - 1946", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 37: 387-388.
- Kamalakaran, Ajay (2018), "How a Malayali couple brought Russian literary magic to Kerala", *Manorama Online*, [Online: web] Accessed 30 June 2018, URL: <https://www.onmanorama.com/news/columns/keralaspora/2018/06/30/omana-moscow-gopalakrishnan-russia.html>.
- Kamalakaran, Ajay (2020), "How the Hungarian Revolution of TOI impacted Malayalam literature", *Manorama Online*, [Online: web] Accessed 18 October 2020, URL: <https://www.onmanorama.com/lifestyle/keralaspora/2020/10/18/hungarian-revolution-influence-on-mal-literature-magucal-realism.html>.
- Kamat Research Database, "Biography: AK Pillai", [Online: web] Accessed in 19 June 2020, URL: http://www.kamat.com/database/biographies/a_k_pillai.htm.
- Kannan, K. P. (1988), *Of Rural Proletarian Struggles: Mobilisation and Organisation of Rural Workers in South-West India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kannan, K. P. (1990), "Secularism and People's Science Movement in India", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 25 (6): 311-313.
- Kapur, Aksah (2009) "India's Path Was Paved by Soviet Fall", *The New York Times*, New York. 19 November 2009, Online Web: <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/20/world/asia/20iht-letter.html>.
- Karat, Prakash (1972), "Review - Kerala: Yenana of India, Rise of Communist Power 1937-1969 by Victor M. Fic", *Social Scientist*, 1 (1): 71-77, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 27 April 2017, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3516191>.

- Karat, Prakash (1976), "The Peasant Movement in Malabar, 1934-40", *Social Scientist*, 5 (2): 30-44.
- Karat, Prakash (2017), "Gorbachevian Reforms: Dismantling the Communist Party (1991)" in Vijay Prashad (ed.), *Red October: The Russian Revolution and the Communist Horizon*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Katju, Vivek (2021), "50 years of Indo-Soviet treaty: New Delhi, Moscow remain committed to each other's territorial integrity", *The Tribune*, URL: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/50-years-of-indo-soviet-treaty-294975>.
- Kaul, Nitasha and Kannangara, Nisar (2021), "The Persistence of Political Power: A Communist 'Party Village' in Kerala and the Paradox of Egalitarian Hierarchies", *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-021-09411-w>.
- Kaushik, Devendra (1974), *Soviet Relations with India and Pakistan*, Delhi: Vikas Publication.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta (1979), *The Split in the Communist Movement in India*, PhD Thesis, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- Kaviraj, Sudipta (2013), "On State, Society and Discourse in India," in James Manor (ed.), *Rethinking Third World Politics*, New York: Routledge.
- Kerala Sahithya Academy (2011), "Forward to the Book", *October Viplavavum Malayala Sahithyavum* (October Revolution and Malayalam Literature), Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Keraleeyan, K. A. (1962), *Keralathile Karshaka Prasthanthinte Laghucharithram* (A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala), *an Interview by A. K. Potuval*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhat Book House.
- Keshavan, Thazhava (2019), "Dr. Velukkutty Arayan and Vaikom Satyagraha", in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor Velukkutty Arayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Klatt, W. (1972) "Caste, Class and Communism in Kerala", *Asian Affairs*, 3 (3), 275-287.
- Kochunarayanan, T. K. (2016), "Edasseri Govindan Nair: Life of a Poet - Documentary (Malayalam), [Online: web] YouTube, Accessed 19 May 2019, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-rZqxzl7i1g>.
- Kohli, Manorama (1993), "Disintegration of the Soviet Union: Implications for India", *India Quarterly*, 49 (3): 85-100.
- Komarov, E. N. (1970), "Mahatma Gandhi and the Revolution", *India Quarterly*, 26 (4): 368-388, Jstor, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45069633>.
- Komarov, E. N. (1976), *India Soviet Sahakaranam (India Soviet Co-operation)*, Madras: Vijay Publications.

- Komarov, E. N. (1976), *Indo: Soviet Co-operation: Historical Background and Present Day Developments*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Koshy, Ninan (1968), *Caste in the Kerala Churches*, Bangalore: The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society.
- KPAC (2015), “KPAC History Background”, [Online: web] Accessed 29 November 2017, URL: <https://kpacdrama.com/history>.
- KPAC Kerala (2011), “KPAC – The Origins”, [Online: web] Accessed 29 November 2017, URL: <https://kpackerala.wordpress.com/2011/07/22/kpac-the-origins-of-the-movement/>.
- Kripalani, JiwatramBhagwandas (1959), *Voice of Vvigilance: Speeches of Acharya J.B. Kripalani*, New Delhi: Law Pub.
- Krishnan, TV (1971), *Kerala's first communist: Life of "Sakhavu" Krishna Pillai*, New Delhi: Communist Party of India.
- Kumar, Anil A.V. (2000), *Thiraskritha Charithrathinu Oru Aamukham (Foreword to a Discarded History)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Kumar, P. K. G. (1996), “Total Literacy Campaign in Kerala: A Sociological Analysis”, M. Phil. Dissertation, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.
- Kumar, Saurav (2019) “How Russian Revolution Inspired Undivided India’s Literary, Political Figures”, *NewsClick*, [Online: web] Accessed 07 November 2019, URL: <https://www.newslick.in/Russian-Revolution-Inspired-Undivided-India-Literary-Political-Figures>.
- Kunhaman, M (1996), “Kanneerinteyum Kinaavinteyum Naalukal” (The days of tears and hopes), *India Today* (Malayalam), 24 December 1996.
- Kunhaman, M. (2001), “Asthamikatha Sooryan” (The Sun that Does Not Set), C. Anoop (eds.), *Red Salute (Lal Salaam)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Kurup, K. K. N. (1994), “The Intellectual Movements and Anti-Caste Struggle in Kerala”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 55 (1994), 673-677.
- Kurup, K. K. N. (1989), *Agrarian Struggles in Kerala*, Trivandrum: CBH publications.
- Kurup, K. K. N. (1998) *Nationalism and Social Change: The Role of Malayalam Literature*. Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Kurup, K. K. N. (2020), “Nationalism, Kayyur Riot and EK Nayanar”, [Online: web] Accessed 15 May 2020. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/100004066091360/videos/2066921460120037/?extid=X93p9byPgUiy286S>.
- Kurup, K. K. N. (2021), *MalabarilaeKarshikaKalapam – 1921(The Malabar Peasants Revolt - 1921)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhat Book House.

Kurup, O. N. V. (2000), "Aamukam" (Foreword), *KPAC Nataka Ganangal (Songs from KPAC Plays)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhat Book House.

Kusuman, K. K. (1973), *Slavery in Travancore*, Trivandrum: Kerala Historical Society.

Lal, Amrit. (2015), "40 Years on, those 21 Months of Emergency", [Online: web] Accessed 13 August 2018, URL: <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/40-years-on-those-21-months-of-emergency/>.

Lal, Amrith (2011), "Soft Power of the Soviet Union" *The Economic Times*, Trivandrum, 10 March 2011, [Online: web] Accessed in 12 November 2019, URL: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/opinion/et-commentary/the-soft-power-of-the-soviet-union/articleshow/7667872.cms>.

Lal, Chaman (2013), "Gadar Party: The Centenary Year", *EPW*, 48 (29): URL: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2013/29/web-exclusives/gadar-party-centenary-year.html>.

Lal, Chaman (2019), *Bhagat Singh Reader*, New Delhi: Harper Collins.

Lal, Chaman (2021), "Bhagat Singh, India's Che Guevara: Talking to Chaman Lal", *Student Struggle*, URL: <https://studentstruggle.in/bhagat-singh-indias-che-guevara-talking-to-chaman-lal/>.

Latheef, Sajid A. (2019), "Idyll and Ideology: An Overview of Soviet Literature for Children in Malayalam", *Sahapedia*, [Online: web], Accessed 26 July 2019, URL: <https://www.sahapedia.org/idyll-and-ideology-overview-soviet-literature-children-malayalam>.

Lazitch, Branko and Drachkovitch, Milorad M. (1972), *Lenin and the Comintern*, Vol. I, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

Leelavathi, M. (2021), "Soviet Unionil" (In Soviet Union), *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 99 (3): 52-59.

Lefebvre, Henri (1991), *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell.

Lefebvre, Henri (2009), *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, in Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (eds.), Translated by Gerald Moore, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lenin, K.M. (2017), *Grandhashala Prasthanam Keralathil*, Palakkeezhu Narayanan (eds.), Trivandrum: Kerala State Library Council.

Lenin, V. I (1975), "Better Fewer But Better", *Selected Works, Vol. III (in 3 volumes)*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.

Lenin, V. I. (2008), "The War in China" in Victor Jerome (ed.), *V. I. Lenin Collected Works - 4*, translated by Joe Fineberg and George Hanna, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [Online: web] From Marx to Mao, URL: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%204.pdf>.

- Lenin, V. I. (2009), “Development of Capitalism in Russia”, *Lenin Collected Works – 3*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [Online: web] Marx to Mao, URL: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%203.pdf>.
- Lenin, V. I. (2010), “Inflammable Material in World Politics”, in translated and edited by Andrew Rothstein and Bernard Isaacs, *Lenin Collected Works- 15*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [Online: web] From Marx to Mao, URL: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%2015.pdf>.
- Lenin, V. I. (2011), “Imperialism, as a Special Stage of Capitalism”, in George Hanna (ed.), *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, translated by Yuri Sdobnikov, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [Online: web] Marx to Mao, URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/cw/pdf/lenin-cw-vol-22.pdf>.
- Lenin, V. I. (2013), “Initial Variant of RSLDP CC Proposal to the Second Socialist Conference”, in Yuri Sdobnikov (ed.), *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. XXXVI, translated by Andrew Rothstein, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [Online: web] Marx to Mao, URL: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%2036.pdf>.
- Lenin, V. I. (2013), “Lecture on the Proletariat and the War”, in Yuri Sdobnikov (ed.), *V. I. Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. XXXVI, translated by Andrew Rothstein, Moscow: Progress Publishers, [Online: web] Marx to Mao, URL: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%2036.pdf>.
- Lenin, V. I. (2015), “To N. I. Bukharin”, *Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. XLV, [Online: web] Marx2Mao, Accessed 20 December 2021, URL: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/Lenin%20CW-Vol.%2045.pdf>.
- Lenin, Vladimir (1971), *Between the Two Revolutions*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Liebau, Heike (2017), “Chattopadhyaya, Virendranath”, in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson (eds.), *1914-1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, issued by Freie Universität Berlin, Berlin 2017-12-14. DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.11202.
- Lieten, Georges Kristoffel (1979), “Progressive State Governments: An Assessment of First Communist Ministry in Kerala”, *EPW*, 14 (1): 29-39.
- Lieten, GK (1982), *The First Communist Ministry in Kerala, 1957–9*, Calcutta: KP Bagchi & Co.
- Lindberg, Anna (2001), “Class, Caste, and Gender among Cashew Workers in the South Indian State of Kerala 1930-2000”, *International Review of Social History*, 46 (2): 155-184, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 16 February 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44583479>.
- Lyusternik, Eve (2019), “Maxim Gorky and the National Liberation Movement in India”, in Ilasain Manian and V. Rajesh (eds.), *The Russian Revolution and India*, Delhi: Aakar Books.

- Madhavan, E (2011), *Swathandrasamudayam (Free Society)*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Madhavan, K. (2014), *A Village Comes to life: The Story of Madikkai*, Translated by P. Radhika Menon, Bengaluru: Darpan.
- Mahaprashasta, Ajoy Ashirwad (2022), “‘After All, My Name Is Stalin’: In a Speech at CPI(M) Congress, a Roadmap to Counter BJP”, *The Wire*, 11 April 2022, URL: <https://thewire.in/politics/stalin-dmk-cpim-left-bjp>.
- Mannathukaren, Nissim (2010), “The Conjuncture of Late Socialism in Kerala: A Critique of the Narrative of Social Democracy,” in K. Ravi Raman (eds.), *Development, Democracy and the State: Critiquing Kerala Model of Development*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Mannathukaren, Nissim (2011), “Redistribution and Recognition: Land Reforms in Kerala and the Limits of Culturalism”, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38 (2), 379–411.
- Mannathukkaren, Nissim (2013), “The rise of the national-popular and its limits: communism and the cultural in Kerala”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 14 (4): 494-518.
- Mannathukkaren, Nissim (2022), *Communism, Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Theory: The Left in South India*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Manning, Julian (2022), “What Made Raj Kapoor Russia’s Favourite Comrade?”, *Homegrown*, [Online: web] Accessed 21 April 2022, URL: <https://homegrown.co.in/article/800665/what-made-raj-kapoor-russia-s-favourite-comrade#:~:text=And%20it%20was%20during%20this,a%20smile%20on%20their%20face>.
- Mansing, Surjith (1965), “India and the Hungarian Revolution”, *India Quarterly*, 21 (2): 138-155, Jstor, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45069045>.
- Marxists.org (n.d.), “Minutes of the Second Congress of the Communist International: Fourth Session July 25”, [Online: web] Accessed 24 April 2018, URL: <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch04.htm>.
- Melinda Books (2014), V. Sambasivante Thiranjedutha Kadhprasangangal (*Selected Story-Telling of Sambasivan*), Thiruvananthapuram: Melinda Books.
- Melkonian, Markar (2016), “A Marxist Postmortem of Soviet Socialism), translated by A. M. Shinas, *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 94 (1): 36-45.
- Melton, J. Gordon (2020), “Theosophy: Religious Philosophy”, *Britannica*, [Online: web] Accessed 11 January 2022, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/theosophy>.
- Menon, Ambadi Narayana (1917), “Bhandhanasthayayirunna Russia” (Russia was Imprisoned), *Athmaposhini*, 8 (3-4).
- Menon, C. Achutha (1944), *Soviet Nadu (Soviet Land)*, Thrissur: Mangalodayam.

- Menon, C. Achutha (1979), “Introduction”, in Thoppil Bhasi (eds.), *Capital*, translated by K. T. Rama Varma, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy.
- Menon, C. Achutha (2009), *C. Achutha Menon Sampoorana Krithikal (Collected Works of C. Achutha Menon)* Vol. 4, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House.
- Menon, C. Achutha (2011), “Introduction to the Book”, *October Viplavavum Malayala Sahithyavum* (October Revolution and Malayalam Literature), Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Menon, C. Achutha (2012), *C. Achutha Menon Sampoorana Krithikal (Collected Works of C. Achutha Menon)* Vol. 9, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhath Book House.
- Menon, Dilip (1992), “Conjunctural Community: Communism in Malabar, 1934-1948”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 (51/52): 2705-2707; 2709-2715.
- Menon, Dilip M (1993), “Aanandathilninnu Vilakkilekku: Madhyavum Malabar Samoohavum, 1900-1940” (From Pleasure to Ban: Liquor and Malabar Society, 1900-1940), in KT Ram Mohan (eds.), *Kerala Padanangal 3*, Translated by PT Thomas, Kochi: Chithira Printers & Publishers.
- Menon, Dilip M (1994), *Caste, Nationalism and Communism in South India: Malabar 1900 -1948*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Menon, Dilip M (1998), “Being a Brahmin the Marxist Way: E.M.S. Namburipad and the Pasts of Kerala”, *Research in Progress Papers: History and Society (Centre for Contemporary Studies, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)*, 3 (27): 01-30.
- Menon, Nandgopal R. (2001) “Path-Breaking Plays”, *Frontline*, 18 (10): 27–28.
- Menon, Nivedita (1998), “Women in Trade Unions: A Study of AITUC, INTUC and CITU in the Seventies”, in Sujata Gothoskar (eds.), *Struggles of Women at Work*, Delhi: S Chand & Company Ltd.
- Menon, Panambilly Govinda (1944), *Avatharika – Soviet Nadu (Forward – Soviet Land)*, Thrissur: Mangalodayam Publishers.
- Menon, Sreedhara A (1997), *Kerala and Freedom Struggle*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Menon, Sreedhara A (1999), “Ozhivakkamayirunna Durantham (Avoidable Disaster)”, *Matrubhumi Weekly*, August 01-07: 10-13 & 47.
- Menon, Sreedhara A (1999), “PunnapraVayalar”, *Matrubhumi Weekly*, July 25-31: 06-11 & 57.
- Mitrokhin, L. V. (1977), *Friends of the Soviet Union: India’s Solidarity with the USSR during the Second World War in 1941-1945*, New Delhi: Allied publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Mohanan, Abhilash (2022), “Putin + Hitler = Putler”, *Mathrubhumi News*, 26 February 2022, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Umq4AIGS92o>.
- Mohanan, K. (1991), “Soviet Collapse is a Self Defeat”, *Mathrubhumi*, Trivandrum 27 December 1991.

- Mohandas, Vallikavu. (2009), *KPAC yude Charithram* (History of KPAC), Kottayam: National Book Stall.
- Mohanty, Arun. (2015), Six Decades since Nehru's First Official Visit to USSR, [Online: web] Accessed 18 April 2016, URL: https://www.rbth.com/arts/2015/07/02/six_decades_since_nehrus_first_official_ussr_visit_44003.
- Mudassery, Joseph (2004), *MudasseryKritikal (Writings of Mudassery)*, Thrissur: Current Books.
- Mukherji, Abani (2022), "The Moplah Rising, 1922", in Nitheesh Narayanan and Vijay Prashad (eds.), *The 1921 Uprising in Malabar: A Collection of Communist Writings*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Murali, Chandavila. (2015), *CPIM Roopekaranam Oru Charithram* (A History of the Formation of CPIM), Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Nair, A. Balakrishnan (1994), "The Dynamics of Kerala Politics", *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 55 (3): 251-60.
- Nair, Edassery Govindan (2015), "Puthankalavum Arivalum by Edassery, music given and rendered by V.K. Sasidharan", in Harikumar E YouTube Channel, [Online: web] Accessed 19 May 2019, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyxWLPWKRrE>.
- Nair, R Ramakrishnan (1965), *How Communists Came to Power in Kerala*, Trivandrum: Kerala Academy of Political Science.
- Nair, Ramachandran K (2006), *The History of Trade Union Movement in Kerala*, New Delhi: Manak Publications.
- Nair, Ratheesh C. (2015), "40 years of RCSC in Trivandrum", *Russia Beyond*, 11 November 2015, URL: https://www.rbth.com/economics/cooperation/2015/11/11/40-years-of-rcsc-in-trivandrum_539279.
- Nair, S. Guptan (2019), *Changampuzha: Kaviyum Kavithayum (Changampuzha: Poet and Poem)*, Shreshta Publications: Pulimoodu.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1935), *Welcome Address* (Radical Conference, 15 December 1935), Shoranur: Udyabhanu Press.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1952), *The national question in Kerala*, Bombay: People's Publishing House.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1957), *Kerala on the March*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Government Publications.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1959), *Twenty-eight months in Kerala: A retrospect*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1968), *Kerala: past, present and future*. Calcutta: National Book Agency.

- Namboodiripad, EMS (1970), *EMS Athmakadha (Biography of EMS)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1976), *How I became a communist*, Translated by PK Nair, Trivandrum: Chintha Publications.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1991), “‘An Experiment That Failed’?”, *Social Scientist*, 19 (12): 3-19, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed in 22 January 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3517648>.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1991), “Reformation of the Party: Organizational and Ideological”, *Deshabhimani*, 27 December 1991.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1992), *Achutha Menon VyakthiyumRashtreeyavum (Achutha Menon as a Person and as a Politician)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1994), “Presidential Address,” *Kerala Studies Congress Documents*, Vol. I, Thiruvananthapuram: AKG Centre for Research and Studies.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1997), “The Communist Contribution to the Theory and Practice of Indian Politics” in Jyoti Basu (eds.), *Documents of the Communist Movement in India*, Calcuta: NBA.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1998), “1917”, in P Govinda Pillai (eds.), *Collected Works of EMS Namboodiripad*, Vol. I, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1999), “Onnekal Kodi Malayalikal” (One and Quarter Crore Malayalies), in P Govinda Pillai (eds.), *Sampoorna Kritikal (Collected works of EMS)*, Vol. VI, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (1999), “Socialism Ennal?” (Why Socialism), in P Govinda Pillai (eds.), *Collected Works of EMS Namboodiripad*, Vol. III, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2009), *Communist Party Keralathil (Communist Party in Kerala)*, Trivandrum: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2012), *Asanum Malayala Sahithyavum (Asan and Malayalam Literature)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2012), *EMS nteThiranjeduthaPrasangangal (The Selected Speeches of EMS)*, in C Baskaran (eds), Trivandrum: Chintha Publications.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2013), “PurogamanaSahithyamEnnaleEnnu Nale” (Progressive Literature Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) in Chintha Publishers (eds.), *Purogamana Kala-Sahithya Sangham Nayarekhakal (Documents on Progressive Art-Literature Association)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2017) *Keralathile Communist Prasthanam: Udbhavavum Valarchayum (The Communist Organization in Kerala: Emergence and Growth)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.

- Namboodiripad, EMS (2017), “The Struggle for Peoples Democratic Literature in Malayalam”, in Sudhi Pradhan (ed.), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India (1943-64)*, Vol. III, Calcutta: NBA.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2017), *Oru Indian Communistinte Ormakkurippukal (Memoir of an Indian Communist)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2017), *TheranjeduthaPrabandhangal (Selected Essays)*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Academy.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2019), “Doctor Velukkutty Arayan”, in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor Velukkutty Arayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2020), “Kerala Experiment: Planning from Bellow and Above”, *The Frontline Years*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Namboodiripad, EMS (2020), “People’s Plan: The Why and How of a Massive Exercise in Kerala”, *The Frontline Years*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Namboodiripad, EMS, (1997), *Malayala Sahithyathil Marxisavum Ethiralikalum (Marxism and its Opponents in Malayalam Literature)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chitha Publishers.
- Narasimhan, Sakuntala (2017), “From Moscow to Princeton”, *The Hindu*, [Online: web] Accessed 20 August 2019, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/from-moscow-to-princeton/article19434801.ece>.
- Narayan, Jayaprakash (1936), *Why Socialism?*, Delhi: All India Congress Socialist Party.
- Narayanan, Nitheesh and Prashad, Vijay (2022), *The 1921 Uprising in Malabar*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.
- Narayanan, Sunil (2018), “Mukha PusthakaVarabhalam” (Face Book Weekly Observation), [Online: web] Accessed 18 April 2021, URL: <https://sunilen.wordpress.com/2018/07/07/>.
- Navas, K. (2021), “Malabar Samaravum Edathupakshavum” (Malabar Struggle and the Left), *Dool News*, [Online: web] Accessed in 26 August 2021, URL: <https://www.doolnews.com/malabar-revolt-and-left-movement-nawas-k-writes-632.html>.
- Nayudu, Swapna Kona (2017), “‘When the Elephant Swallowed the Hedgehog’: The Prague Spring & Indo-Soviet Relations, 1968”, *CWIHP Working Paper 83*, Online Web: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/when-the-elephant-swallowed-the-hedgehog-the-prague-spring-indo-soviet-relations-1968>.
- Nayudu, Swapna Kona (2017), “Four Visits and a Funeral”, *Wilson Centre*, [Online: web], URL: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/four-visits-and-funeral>.

- Nazeer Mohamed (2013), "A memoir with the Enlightenment legacy", *The Hindu*, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/a-memoir-with-the-enlightenment-legacy/article4712278.ece>.
- Nazeer, Mohammed (2013), "A Memoir with the Enlightenment Legacy" *The Hindu*, Chennai, 14 May 2013, [Online Web] Accessed 17 June 2020, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/books/books-reviews/a-memoir-with-the-enlightenment-legacy/article4712278.ece>.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1929), *Soviet Russia: Some Random Sketches and Impressions*, Delhi: Lala Ram Mohanlal.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1945), *Soviet Russia: Some Random Sketches and Impressions*, Bombay: Chetana.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1949), *Glimpses of World History*, London: Lindsay Drummond.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1962), "Presidential Address to the National Congress, Lahore, December 1929", *India's Freedom*, London: Unwin Books.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1962), *An Autobiography*, Bombay: Allied Publishers.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (2004), "Death of Marshal Stalin", *Revolutionary Democracy*, [Online: web] Accessed 15 October 2021, URL: <https://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv10n2/nehru.htm>.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (2007), "Tribute to Stalin", *Marxists Internet Archive*, [Online: web] Accessed 15 October 2021, URL: <https://www.marxists.org/subject/stalinism/1953/stalin.htm>.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (2008), *The Discovery of India*, New Delhi: Penguin Random House India.
- Nossiter, T. J. (1978), "State-level politics in India, 1975–1977: The emergency and its aftermath in Kerala", *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 16 (1): 38-59.
- Nossiter, T.J. (1982), *Communism in Kerala: A Study in Political Adaptation*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Nye S, Joseph Jr. (2004), *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs.
- Omvedt, Gail (2008), *Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India*, Delhi: Penguin.
- Oommen, MA (1975), *A study of land reforms in Kerala*, New Delhi: Oxford and IBH.
- Oommen, MA (1985), *From Mobilization to Institutionalization: The Dynamics of Agrarian Movement in Twentieth Century Kerala*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Oommen, MA (1990), *Essays on Kerala Economy*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

- Oommen, TK (1971), "Agrarian Legislations and Movements as Sources of Change", *EPW*, 10 (40): 1571-84.
- Osella, F and Osella C (2000), *Social mobility in Kerala: modernity and identity in conflict*, London: Sterling.
- Overstreet, Gene D. and Windmiller, Marshall (1959), *Communism in India*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Overstreet, Gene D. and Windmiller, Marshall (1959) *Communism in India*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Palat, Madhavan K. et al. (1994), "What Russia Means to India: Discussion between Nikhil Chakravartty, A.K. Damodaran", *India International Centre Quarterly*, 21 (2/3): 69-86.
- Panakkal, Abbas (2021), "Aa Ajjatha Photoyum British Charithra Nirmithiyum; Caption Hariyude Lekhanam Veendum Vayikkumbol", *True Copy Think*, [Online: web] Accessed 18 November 2021, URL: <https://truecopythink.media/credibility-of-french-magazine-featuring-malabar-rebellion-should-be-questioned-for-its-pro-colonial-stand>.
- Paniker, A. Ayyappa (1974), *Ayyappa Pakikerude Krithikal* (Literary Works of Ayyappa Paniker), Navadhara Publishing Cooperative Society: Trivandrum.
- Paniker, A. Ayyappa (1982), "Vallatholinte Kavaya Paramaryam" (The Literary Tradition of Vallathol), *Ayyappa Panikerud eLekhanangal 1950-80* (Esseys of Ayyappa Panikkar 1950-80), Kottayam: DC Books.
- Panikkar, K. N. (1978), "Agrarian Legislation and Social Classes: A Case Study of Malabar", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13 (21): 880-888, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 21 August 2021, URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/4366665>.
- Panikkar, K.M. (1918), "Oru Noothana Yugamo?" (A New Era?), *Athmaposhini*, 10: (10-11).
- Panikkar, K.N. (2008), "General President's Address: Culture as Site of Struggle", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 69 (2008): 1-18.
- Parayil, Govindan and Sreekumar, T.T (2003) "Kerala's experience of development and change", *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 33 (4): 465-492.
- Parayil, Govindan, (2000), *Kerala: The Development Experience: Reflections on Sustainability and Replicability*, London: Zed Books.
- Patnaik, Prabhat (2001), "Alternative Paradigms of Economic Decentralisation", *Social Scientist*, 29 (9/10): 48-59.
- Patnaik, Prabhat (2004), "A Theoretical Note on Kerala-Style Decentralized Planning", *Macro Scan*, URL: https://www.macrosan.org/fet/apr04/fet140404Theoretical_Note_1.htm.

- Patnaik, Prabhat (2014) “Lenin, Imperialism, and the First World War”, *Social Scientist*, 42 (7/8): 29-46.
- Patnaik, Prabhat (2016), “The Theoretical Significance of the October Revolution”, *Peoples Democracy*, 40 (45): URL: https://peoplesdemocracy.in/2016/1106_pd/theoretical-significance-october-revolution.
- Pavanan (1995), *Keralam Chuvannopol (When Kerala Turned Red)*, Kottayam: National Book Stall.
- Pavanan (2011), *October Viplavavum Malayala Sahithyavum (October Revolution and Malayalam Literature)*, Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Pavithran, P. (2002), “Feudalisathinte Thakarachayum Avashistangalum” (The Collapse of Feudalism and its Remains), M. N. Vijayan (ed.), *Our Literature, Our Society (NammudeSahityam, NammudeSamooham)* Vol. 3, Thrissur: Kerala.
- Pazhayathu Blog Spot (2011), “Then and Now: Musicians of 1950 Kerala Drama Company - KPAC”, [Online: web] Accessed in 29 November 2017, URL: <https://pazhayathu.blogspot.com/2016/01/musicians-of-1950-kerala-drama-company.html>.
- Peking Review (1963) “The Truth about how the Leaders of CPSU have allied themselves with India against China”, *Peking Review*, Peking: November 8.
- Pemmaraju, Gautam (2022), “The Many Revolutionary Romances of Virendranath ‘Chatto’ Chattopadhyaya, the Anti-Colonial Exile”, *The Wire*, 04 May 2022, URL: <https://thewire.in/history/virendranath-chatto-chattopadhyay-romances>.
- Persits, M. A. (1973), *Revolutionaries Of India In Soviet Russia: Mainsprings Of The Communist Movement In The East*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Persits, M. A. (1973), *Revolutionaries Of India In Soviet Russia: Mainsprings Of The Communist Movement In The East*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Pillai, AK (1924), “Lenin”, *Swadeshahimani*, Thiruvananthapuram: October 1924.
- Pillai, K. G. Sankara (2013), “Avatharika: Pandu Pandu, Ennum” (Forward: Once upon a Time and Today), K. Sreekumar (ed.), *Soviet Nattile Bala Kadhakalum Nadodi Kadhakalum (The Comics and Folk Tales of the Soviet Union)*, Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books.
- Pillai, Kesari A. Balakrishna (1947), *Novel Prasthanangal (Novel Movements)*, Kottayam: Current Books.
- Pillai, Kesari A. Balakrishna (1957), *Sankethika Niroopanangal (Analytical Reviews)*, Trivandrum: Mangalodayam.
- Pillai, Kesari Balakrishna (2011), *Kesariyude Sahithya Vimarshanangal (The Literary Criticism of Kesari)*, Kottayam: SPCS.

- Pillai, Krishna (1998), *SakhakkaleMunnottu (Comrades Go Ahead)*, in Andalath (ed.), Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers. (P: 175)
- Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna (1950), “RakhthaSena”, *Navadarshanam*, Thrissur: Mangalodayam.
- Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna (1969), “Maxim GorkiyudeSahitheeyaDarshanam”, *KuttippuzhayudeThiranjeduthaUpanyasangal*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna (1969), “Russian Sahithyam”, *KuttippuzhayudeThiranjeduthaUpanyasangal*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna (1969), *KuttippuzhayudeThiranjeduthaUpanyasangal (Selected Essays of Kuttippuzha)*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna (1975), “MathavyaparikalRussiayilekku”, *Yukthi Viharam*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Pillai, Kuttippuzha Krishna (1975), *Yukthi Viharam*, Kottayam: SPCS.
- Pillai, Mohanadasan G (1988), “Punnappa - Vayalar: The National Working Class Revolt”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 49: 402-405.
- Pillai, P. Govinda (2011), *K. Damodaran: Porum Porulum*, Kottayam: NBS.
- Pillai, P. Govinda (2019), “Ananya SadharananayaNavodhana Prathibha”, in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor VelukkuttyArayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Prabhath, Books (2017) “Prabhath Book House”, [Online: web] Accessed 22 January 2017, URL: <https://www.facebook.com/303400689784483/posts/572535902870959/>.
- Pradhan, Sudhi (2017), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: 1937-47*, Vol. I, Kolkata: National Book Agency.
- Pradhan, Sudhi (2017), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: 1943-64*, Vol. III, Kolkata: National Book Agency.
- Pradhan, Sudhi (2017), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India: 1947-58*, Vol. II, Kolkata: National Book Agency.
- Prasad, Vijay (1997) “Review: Caste, Nationalism, and Communism in South India: Malabar 1900-1948 by Dilip M. Menon”, *International Journal of Hindu Studies*, 1 (3): 623-624, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed in 16 February 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20106515>.
- Prasad, Vijay (2017), “From Russia with love: How the Bolshevik revolution impacted India’s leaders”, Paramita Ghosh (ed.), *Hindustan Times*, [Online: web] Assessed 19 November 2017, URL: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/from-russia-with-love-how-the-bolshevik-revolution-impacted-india-s-leaders/story-bTGWOUQFS1PkvXmmV4LadN.html>.
- Prasad, Vijay (2017), “From Russia with love: How the Bolshevik revolution impacted India’s leaders”, Paramita Ghosh (ed.), *Hindustan Times*, [Online: web] Assessed 19 November 2017, URL: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india->

[news/from-russia-with-love-how-the-bolshevik-revolution-impacted-india-s-leaders/story-](#)

Prashad, Vijay (2017), "Introduction", in Vijay Prashad (ed.), *Red October: The Russian Revolution and the Communist Horizon*, New Delhi: Left Word Books.

Pratap, Raja Mahendra (2004), *My Life Story (1886-1941): Raja Mahendra Pratap*, Vol. I, Delhi: Low Price Publication.

PTI (2017), "Russia's romance with Raj Kapoor lives on, 29 years after his death", *The Hindu*, [Online: web] Accessed 27 June 2021, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/movies/russias-romance-with-raj-kapoor-lives-on-29-years-after-his-death/article19485846.ece>.

Puri, Bharati (2011), "Traveller on the Silk Road: Rites and Routes of Passage in Rahul Sankrityayan's Himalayan Wanderlust", *China Report*, 47 (1): 37–58, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/000944551104700103>.

Pylee, M. V. (1985), *Russiaile Kaazhchakalum Anubhavgalum*, Kottayam: DC Books.

Raghavan, Puthuppally (1979), *Sakhavu Sugathante Jeeva Charithram (Biography of Comrade Sugathan)*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhatam Printing and Publishing Company.

Rai, Lakshman (1995), *Soviet Policy Towards Anti-Colonial Movement in Asia: A Case Study of Comintern and India, 1919-1943*, PhD Thesis, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Rajagopal, R (2019), "A Mad House Reminder", [Online: web] *The Telegraph*, Accessed 31 December 2019, URL: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/a-madhouse-reminder/cid/1731905>.

Rajasekharan, P. K. (2005), "Aamukham" (Forward), in P. K. Rajasekharan (ed.), *O. V. Vijayante Lekhanangal*, Kottayam: DC Books.

Rajasekharan, P. K. (2017), "Valameen Kalppikkunnu, Njan Ichikkunnu", *Bookstalgia*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.

Rajeedrakumar (2011), "Ormakalkkenthugandham (Smell of Good Old Days): In Conversation with V. R. Unni", *Mathrubhumi*, [Online: web] Accessed 09 April 2021, URL: http://archives.mathrubhumi.com/nri/features/article_234830/.

Rajeev, P. (2020), "Decades Before U.N Proclamation, Soviet Union Released Postal Stamp on Women's Day; These Images Hold Enduring Memories – P Rajeev", *Deshabhimani*, URL: <https://www.deshabhimani.com/english/news/kerala/decades-before-un-proclamation-soviet-union-released-postal-stamp-on-women-s-day-these-images-hold-enduring-memories-p-rajeev/1750>.

Rajeevan, T. P. (2016), "EthraPrathibhakale Nammal Kuzhichu Moodanam? Veendum Vasantham Varan!" *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 94 (1): 10-21.

- Rajendran, C.P. (2011), “Forward to the Book”, *October Viplavavum Malayala Sahithyavum* (October Revolution and Malayalam Literature), Thrissur: Kerala Sahithya Academy.
- Raju, S. V. (2021), “Masani and Swatantra Party”, *Centre for Civil Society*, URL: <https://ccs.in/masani-and-swatantra-party>.
- Rajyasabha Debates (1959), Pt. 2, Vol. 25, No. 10, Col. 2206, November 27.
- Rakhavan, V. V. (1972), *Leninte Nattil*, Thiruvananthapuram: Prabhat Books.
- Ram, Tulsi, (2014), “International Communist Movement Before and After the Soviet Union”, Lecture delivered 15 September 2014 at the Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University: New Delhi.
- Ramachandran, V. K. (1997), “On Kerala’s Development Achievements”, in Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen (eds.), *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ramachandran, V. M. (2000), “The Modern Malayalam Theater: A Brief Survey”, in P. J. Cheriyan (eds.), *Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Council for Historical Research.
- Ramamurti, P (1954), “Drive US Out of Asia!”, *New Age*, July 18: 14.
- Raman, K Ravi (2017), “Subaltern Modernity: Kerala, the Eastern Theatre of Resistance in the Global South”, *Sociology*, 51(1): 91–110.
- Ramankutty, V. (2020), “In Conversation with Dr.V. Ramankutty”, *Kaumudi TV*, [Online: web], Accessed 06 January 2020, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxT9c5gdmeY>.
- Rammohan, KT and Raman, KR (1988), “Kerala workers rises against Indian big capital: A report unfinished on rayon workers struggle”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 23 (27), 1359–1364.
- Ranjith, K.S. (2004), *Rural Libraries of Kerala*, Thiruvananthapuram: Centre for Development Studies, [Online: web] CDS, Accessed 18 December 2019, URL: <http://www.cds.ac.in/krpcds/publication/downloads/78.pdf>.
- Rao, M. Venugopala (1976), *Friends and Partners: Five Years of Indo-Soviet Treaty*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Rao, R. V. R. Chandrasekhara (1978), “The Janata Government and the Soviet Connexion”, *The World Today*, 34 (2): 70-76, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 29 March 2018, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40395035>.
- Ray, Hemen (1969), “Changing Soviet Views on Mahatma Gandhi”, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 29 (1): 85-106, Jstor, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2942525>.
- Remnek, Richard B. (1975), *Soviet Policy Towards India*, New Delhi: Oxford: IBH Publishing Co.

- Renton, D. (2004), *Dissident Marxism: Past Voices for Present Times*, London and New York: Zed Books.
- Roshni, R. K. (2022), “Distant lands brought up close”, *The Hindu*, 10 January 2022, URL: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Thiruvananthapuram/distant-lands-brought-up-close/article61690214.ece>.
- Rothermund, Dietmar (1969), “India and the Soviet Union”, *AAPSS*, 386 (1): 78-88, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/000271626938600108>.
- Roy, M. N. (1922), *India in Transition*, University of California Internet Archive, [Online: web] Accessed 19 December 2021, URL: <http://archive.org/details/indiainttransition00roymrch>.
- Roy, M. N. (1964), *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Private Limited.
- Rudolph and Rudolph (1991), “Breakup of Soviet Union Leaves India Shaken”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, New Delhi, 09 August 1991.
- Rudolph, LI and Rudolph (1967), *The Modernity of Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rudolph, Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph (1991), “Breakup of Soviet Union Leaves India Shaken”, *The Christian Science Monitor*, New Delhi, 07 August 1991, Online Web: <https://www.csmonitor.com/1991/1007/07182.html>.
- Runov, Y. F. (1980), *SawmanasyathinteyumSawhrithathinteyumDoothan (Envoy of Goodwill and Friendship)*, Madras: Soviet Nadu Office.
- Sager, Peter (1966), *Moscow's Hand in India*, Berne: Swiss Eastern Institute.
- Sahni, Bhisham (1986), “The Progressive Writers’ Movement”, *Indian Literature*, 29 (6): 178-183, [Online: web] *Jstor* Accessed 18 February 2018, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24159089>.
- Sakkaria, Paul (2020), “Interview with Sitaram Yechury during 100th Anniversary of Communist Party in India” (Malayalam), [Online: web] *Manorama Online*, Accessed 17 October 2020, URL: <https://www.manoramaonline.com/news/editorial/2020/10/17/>.
- Salim, K. A. (2021), “Athbhuthangalude Russian Manjukalam” (The Wondering Russian Winters), *Suprabhatham*, 11 January 2021, URL: <https://suprabhaatham.com/5463456-2/>.
- Sambasivan, Vasanthakumar (2015), *SambasivanumKadhaprasangaKaalavum (Sambasivan and the Era of Kadhaprasangam)*, Kottayam: NBS.
- Sambasivan, Vasanthakumar (2018), *SambasivanteJeevitharekha (Life of Sambasivan)*, Kollam: Vasanthakumar Sambasivan.
- Sankar, S. (1999), *Soviet UnionteUdaysthamayangal (The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union)*, Trivandrum: Pen Books.

- Sankaran, Thayyat (2000), *Asan Navodhanathinte Kavi (Asan, the Poet of Renaissance)*, Kottayam: SPSS.
- Sanu, M. K. (2019), *Changampuzha Krishna Pillai: NakshathrangaludeSnehabhajanam*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Sanu, MK (1980), *Sahodaran Ayyappan (Brother Ayyappam)* (Malayalam), Kottayam: DC Books.
- Sanu, MK (1980), *Sahodaran Samudayam (Brotherhood Community)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Sardesai, S. G. (1967), *India and the Russian Revolution*, New Delhi: Communist Party Publication.
- Sarkar, Sumit (1993), "E. P. Thompson", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 (39): 2055-2057.
- Satgar, Vishwas (2013), "Conclusion", in Michelle Williams and Vishwas Satgar (eds.), *Marxisms in the 21st Century: Crisis, Critique and Struggle*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Sawparnika, Nirmal (2020), "Prasanga KalayudeRajashilppi" (Royal Carpenter of the Art of Speech), [Online: web] Accessed 23 April 2020, URL: <https://varthatrivandrum.com/varthatrivanrumlatestnews99096/>.
- Schoenfeld, Benjamin N (1995), "Kerala in Crisis", *Pacific Affairs*, 32 (3): 235-248, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed 01 April 2020, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3035113>.
- Sen, Amartya (1999), *Development as freedom*, New York: Anchor Books.
- Sen, Amartya, and Jean Dreze (1989), *Hunger and Public Action*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, Mohit (1974), "Emerging Rift in Kerala CPI(M)", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 9 (42): 1770, [Online: web] Jstor, Accessed in 08 August 2017, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4364092>.
- Senterla, Mary (1991), *Indo-Soviet relations 1971–1980: a study of the impact of the treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation on bi-lateral relations*, PhD thesis, Kottayam: Mahatma Gandhi University, URL: http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/396/7/07_chapter%201.pdf.
- Sharma, Chattar Singh (1959), *India and Anglo Soviet Relations (1917-1947)*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Shinas, A. M. (2007), *Russia Mannil Veena Nakshathram (Russia the Fallen Star on the Earth)*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.
- Shinas, A. M. (2016), "LokatheMattimarichuMaranjupoyaRashtram", *Mathrubhumi Weekly*, 94 (1): 22-35.

- Shinas, A. M. (2020), *EllavarumIndiakkarPaksheKudiyettakkar (All are Indians but Migrants)*, Kottayam: Sahithya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society.
- Shukla, P.K. (1997), “Imperialist War to People’s War: Communist Strategy, 1939-42”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 58 (1997): 555-563, Jstor, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44143960>.
- Siddiqui, Kalim (2017), “The Bolshevik Revolution and the Collapse of the Colonial System in India”, *International Critical Thought*, 7 (3): 418-437, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21598282.2017.1355743>.
- Singh, Navtej (2007), “Reinterpreting Shaheed Udham Singh”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42 (48): 21-23.
- Singh, S. Nihal (1986), *The Yogi and the Bear: Story of Indo-Soviet Relations*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Sivadasan, P. (2021), “1921; Kalapamennu Vilikkappetta British Virudha Swathanthrya Samaram” (1921; The Freedom Struggle against British has called as Revolt), *Dool News*, [Online: web] Accessed 25 August 2021, URL: <https://www.doolnews.com/reasons-behind-malabar-rebellion-dr-p-sivadasan-writes-632.html>.
- Sivaswami, K. G. and et al. (1945), *Food, Famine and Nutritional Diseases in Travancore 1943-44*, Coimbatore: Serveindia Kerala Relief Centre.
- Skaria, Ajay (2015) Ambedkar, Marx and the Buddhist Question, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38 (3): 450-465, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2015.1049726>.
- Sreekumar, K. (2013), “Aamukham: Soviet EnnoruNadundathre Pokan Kazhinjengil Enthu Bhagyam!” (Introduction: There is a Land Called Soviet Union, How Lucky if I could go there), K. Sreekumar (ed.), *Soviet Nattile Bala Kadhakalum Nadodi Kadhakalum* (The Comics and Folk Tales from the Soviet Union), Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books.
- Sreerekha, MS (2010), “Challenges before Kerala’s landless: The story of Aralam Farm”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45(21): 55–62.
- Stein, Arthur (1967) “India and the USSR: The Post-Nehru Period”, *Asian Survey*, 7 (3): 165-175, Jstor, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2642235>.
- Stein, Arthur (1967), *India and the Soviet Union: Nehru Era*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Sudhakaran, Sudeep (2022), “Marxistukal Gorbachevine Padikkanam: Oru Jagrathayayi”, *TrueCopy Think*, [Online: web], Accessed 31 August 2022, URL: <https://truecopythink.media/sudheep-sudhakaran-about-mikhail-gorbachev>.
- Sundar, Pushpa (1989), “Protest through Theatre—The Indian Experience”, *India International Centre Quarterly*, 16 (2): 123–138.

- Surendran, M. R. (2018), “KPG Kaalam Kathortha Kavi” (KPG the Poet of a Period), [Online: web] *Deshabhimani*, Accessed 10 January 2018, URL: <https://www.deshabhimani.com/articles/kpg-namboothiri/698307>.
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1960), *Letters from Russia*, Calcutta: Visva Bharati.
- Tagore, Soumyendranath (1932), *Peasants Revolt in Malabar: 1921*, Culcutta: Ganavani Publishing House.
- Teltumbde, Anand (2018) “Ambedkar’s socialism: some reflections”, *India Seminar*, [Online: web] Accessed 19 July 2021, URL: https://www.india-seminar.com/2018/701/701_anand_teltumbde.htm.
- Thakazhi and Madhavikkutty (2017), “Thakazhi and Madhavikkutty Interview”, [Online: web], Accessed 19 June 2018, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJ7KyPDwRmk>.
- Tharakan, P. K. Michael and Rawal, Vikas (2001), “Decentralisation and the People's Campaign in Kerala”, *Social Scientist*, 29 (9/10): 1-6.
- Tharamangalam, Joseph (2010) “HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AS TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE”, *Critical Asian Studies*, 42 (3): 363-402, [Online: web] Accessed in 15 August 2020, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2010.507390>.
- Tharamangalam, Joseph (2019), “Cooperativism and Solidarity Economies in Cuba: Socialism Is Dead, Long Live Socialism”, *EPW*, 54 (26-27): 73-79.
- The News Minute (2017), “On Washington Post’s front page, Kerala takes centre stage as ‘a Communist success’”, *The News Minute*, URL: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/washington-posts-front-page-kerala-takes-centre-stage-communist-success-70769>.
- Thomas, C. J. (2017), *C. J. yudeLekhanangal (The Articles of C. J.)*, K. M. Chummar and Jose Karimpana (eds.), Thrissur: Kerala Sahitya Akademi.
- Thozhilali (1936), Poem, October 8, 1936, in Robin Jeffery quotes 1984.
- Thozhilali (1938), Skit, May 26, 1938 in Robin Jeffery quotes 1984.
- Throner, Daniel (1980), *The shaping of modern India*, New Delhi: Allied.
- Times of India (1957), “M N Govindan Nair at a Press Conference”, *Times of India*, New Delhi: 18 March 1957.
- Unniraja, C. (1991), “For the Continuation of the Social Achievements of the Soviet Union” *Mathrubhumi*, 28 December 1991.
- Unniraja, C. (2017), “Cultural Upsurge in Kerala”, in Sudhi Pradhan (ed.), *Marxist Cultural Movement in India (1943-64)*, Vol. III, Calcutta: NBA.
- Upadhyay, Archana (2021), “Russian Revolution in Perspective: Reflections on Its Impact on the Indian Freedom Struggle”, in Chenoy, Anuradha M. and Upadhyay

Archana (eds.), *Hundred Years of the Russian Revolution: Its Legacies in Perspective*, Palgrave Macmillan, URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4785-4>.

Urfi, Abdul Jamil (2018), “Remembering the Soviet Books for Children in the Cold War Years”, *Caleidoscope*, URL: <https://www.caleidoscope.in/nostalgiphilia/remembering-the-soviet-books-for-children-in-the-cold-war-years>.

Usha, K. B. (2005), “Political Empowerment of Women in Soviet Union and Russia: Ideology and Implementation,” *International Studies* (Sage, New Delhi), 42, (2): 141-165.

Usha, K. B. (2012), “Political Empowerment of Women in Soviet Union and Russia: Ideology and Implementation,” in Stephen White and Cerwyn Moore, eds., *Post-Soviet Politics*, Vol. III, *Polity*, London: Economy and Society (Sage Publication Ltd), , pp. 211-236.

Ushakumari, G. (1999) “Russian Viplavathinte Swadheenam Malayalathil” (Influence of Russian Revolution in Malayalam), *Sahithyalokam*, 24 (3): 81-85.

Usmani, Shaukat (1977), *HISTORIC TRIPS OF A REVOLUTIONARY (Sojourn In the Soviet Union)*, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.

USSR Embassy India (1986), *Dialogue between Trusted Friends: Official friendly Visit by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev to India*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Vadakkan, Joseph Fr. (2015), *Ente Kuthippum Kithappum*, Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books.

Vaidyanath, R. (1969), “Soviet Studies in India”, *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 11 (2): 145-155, [Online: web] *Jstor*, Accessed 14 February 2018, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40866223>.

Varughese, S. S. (2002), “People’s Science Movements: A Study on the Ideological Orientations of Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad”, M. Phil. Dissertation, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Varughese, S. S. (2018), *Contested Knowledge: Science, Media and Democracy in Kerala*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Vasudev, Rajaram (2013), “Sree Moscow Gopalakrishnan and Sreemati Omana”, *Those old books of Soviet Union*, 30 August 2013. URL: <http://booksofsovietunion.blogspot.com/2013/08/blog-post.html>.

Vasudevan, Hari (1999), “Soviet Icon for India”, *The Statesmen*, [Online: web] harivasudevan.com, Accessed 17 January 2021, URL: <https://harivasudevan.com/sites/hari/files/document/2.%20A%20Soviet%20Icon%20for%20India%2C%20The%20Statesman%20Festival%20Number%2C%20September%201999.pdf>.

- Vasudevan, Hari (2010), "Introduction: Indian Perspective on the History of the Former Soviet Union", *Writing History in Eurasia: The Soviet State and After*, Kolkata: Towards Freedom, URL: <https://harivasudevan.com/sites/hari/files/document/11.%20%20Writing%20History%20In%20Eurasia%2C%20The%20Soviet%20State%20and%20After%2C%202010.pdf>.
- Vasudevan, Hari (2013), "The Soviet Study of India 1917-1947. A Report on the Soviet Archives Project, Calcutta", in Suchandana Chatterjee (ed.), *Image of the Region in Eurasian Studies*, New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Vasudevan, Hari (2017), "More than Just Communism", *The Telegraph*, 01 January 2017, URL: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/more-than-just-communism/cid/1517836>.
- Venu, K (2017), *Oru Kamyoonistukarante Janadhipathya Sankalpam (The Concept of Democracy by a Communist)*, Calicut: Mathrubhumi Books.
- Venu, K. (2001), EMS: Dharshanika Rashtriya VilayiruthalinuOruAamukham (EMS: A Foreword to a Philosophico-Political Evaluation), in C. Anoop (eds.), *Lal Salaam (Red Salute)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Vijayan, O. V. (2005), *O. V. VijayanteLekhanangal*, P. K. Rajasekharan (ed.), Kottayam: DC Books.
- Vijayan, Pinarayi (2013), "MalabarileMuslingalumEdathupakshavum" (Muslims of Malabar and the Left), *Deshabhimani*, [Online: web] accessed 19 November 2017, URL: <https://www.deshabhimani.com/articles/general-news/360921>.
- Vijayan, Pinarayi (2014), "Muslims of Malabar and the Left", *The Marxist*, 30 (1): 42-53.
- Vijayan, Pinarayi (2019), "Ariyappedathe Poya SamoohyaParishkarthavu", in M. A. Baby (ed.), *Doctor VelukkuttyArayan*, Thiruvananthapuram: Chintha Publishers.
- Wangchuk, Rinchen Norbu (2018), "Why Russia Loved Raj Kapoor", *The Better India*, [Online: web] Accessed 22 January 2019, URL: <https://www.thebetterindia.com/166762/raj-kapoor-russia-bollywood-news/>.
- Warrior, N. V. Krishna (1967), "Malayala Sahithyathinte Abhivrythikkuoru Panjavalasara Padhathi", in N. V. Krishna Warrior (ed.), *Pariprekshyam*, Thrissur: Current Books.
- Warrior, N. V. Krishna (1986), "Puthan Kalavum Arivalum", in N. V. Krishna Warrior (ed.), *N. V. yude Sahithya Vimarshanam*, Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi Books.
- Warrior, N. V. Krishna (1988), "Chakshu Sravana Galasthamam Darduram", *Velluvilikal Prathikaranangal*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Warrior, N. V. Krishna (1988), "Leonid Brezhnev" (1982), *Velluvilikal Prathikaranangal*, Kottayam: DC Books.

- Warrior, N. V. Krishna (1989), *Puthiya Chintha Soviet Unionil (The New Thoughts in the Soviet Union)*, Kottayam: DC Books.
- Weiner, Myron and Field, John O (1975), *Studies in Electoral Politics in the Indian States*, Vol. IV, New Delhi: Manohar Book Service.
- White, Stephen (1984) "Soviet Russia and the Asian Revolution, 1917-1924", *Review of International Studies*, 10 (3): 219- 232, Jstor, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20097013>.
- Williams, Michelle (2009), "Reimagining Socialist Futures in South Africa and Kerala, India", *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 44(1): 97–122.
- Williams, Michelle (2013), "Introduction", in Michelle Williams and Vishwas Satgar (eds.), *Marxisms in the 21st Century: Crisis, Critique and Struggle*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Williams, Michelle (2013), "Marxism and democracy: Liberal, vanguard or direct?", in Michelle Williams and Vishwas Satgar (eds.), *Marxisms in 21st Century: Crisis, Critique and Struggle*, Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Wilson Centre (n.d.), "Record of a Conversation between Stalin and representatives of the Indian Communist Party, 9 February 1951", *History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive*, Translated by Gary Goldberg, URL: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113938>.
- Windmiller, Marshal (1956), *Indian Communism and New Soviet Line*, London: Pacific Affairs.
- Wishon, Jeremiah (2013), "Soviet Globalization: Indo-Soviet Public Diplomacy and Cold War Cultural Spheres," *Global Studies Journal*, 5 (2): 103-114.
- Woodcock, George (1967), *Kerala: A Portrait Of The Malabar Coast*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Yeshudas, R. N. (1977), *British Policy in Travancore, 1805-1859*, Trivandrum: Kerala Historical Society.
- Yurchak, Alexi (2003), "Soviet Hegemony of Form: Everything was Forever, until it was no More", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45 (3): 480-510.
- Zarrilli, P. B. (2000), "Political Theatres, Postcoloniality, and Performance Theory", in L. Goodman and J. de Gay (eds.), *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*, London: Routledge.