

Otherwise

Stories you want to hear about Other Books

Whither Left?

Why are communist parties so indifferent to minority politics and the just demands of the identity politics? This was the question that came to the centre stage during the discussion on “*Mappila and Comrades*” written by NP Chekkutty and published by Other Books early this year. The event was the release of the book organised by MN Vijayan Samskarika Kendram on September 6 at Vedi, Kairali Theatre, Kozhikode which was bursting at the seams, bespeaking the dissatisfaction of people with the way the Marxist party is heading towards in Kerala.

The event had the presence of eminent personalities remarkable for their critique on Marxist political stand regarding Muslims and identity politics. Professor PK Pokkar, Dr Fazal Gafoor, KS Hariharan of CMP, Dr MK Muneer, Adv. Najma Thabsheera, Dr Auswaf Ahsan and NP Chekkutty.



Journalist NP Chekkutty, who authored “*Mappila and Comrades*” speaks at the launch of the book at Vedi, Kairali Theatre, Kozhikode. Seen on the dais are Dr Auswaf Ahsan, Dr MK Muneer, Dr Fazal Gafoor, Dr PK Pokker, and Advocate Najma Thabsheera

As a publisher who has attempted to chronicle the history and active present of Mappilas, Other Books wanted to know how the left discoursed on Mappila politics. This thought germinated in “*Mappila and Comrades*” written by NP Chekkutty. The book, we hope, will contribute to the discussion on how the left converses on gender, minorities, racism, caste, migrants, and Zionism.



Dr Auswaf Ahsan
Managing Editor, Other Books



New Year Gifts

The year is drawing to a close. Other Books, which has been blessed by creative minds on our journey, is all set for welcoming 2015, with more than half a dozen titles. The books are being in the final stage of the bridal make-up before they are seen off to the press.

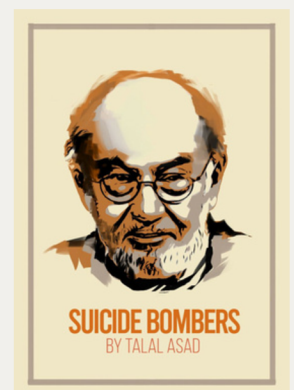
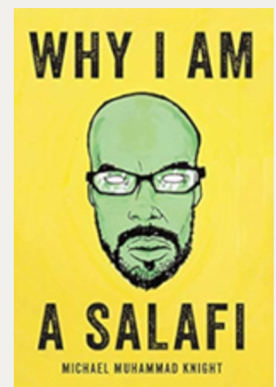
Those who read about Kerala politics, the left, and Muslims are not unfamiliar with CK Abdul Aziz. A well-read politician and a politically-active reader—though not an oxymoron on these days, CK—as he was fondly and critically abbreviated—has submitted a tome to us, **Malabar Lahalayum Fanatic Mappilayum**, the end product of his year-long study on Mappila rebellion. How different interlocutors—Gandhi, for example—viewed the rebellion and what are the understudied aspects of their intervention? How can one freshly and critically evaluate the role of different actors—Ali Musliyar and Variankunna—in the Mappila rebellion? This is the thought he shares with us in the book, which at our current estimate is 600-page long! It is a challenge to bring a huge book out in this financially-challenging time. But CK deserves our reading. And Mappila rebellion needs to be interpreted again and again in fresher lights.

Dr Sanal Mohan, director of Kerala Council of Historical research, is an eminent historian who have studied the intricacies of slavery, race, and caste in Kerala. Other Books is fortunate enough to be in the radar of distinguished scholars like Dr Sanal. He has approached us with the request to publish his study on Karikkottakari, which is town located in north Kerala and is renowned for the settlement of migrant Christians. The proposed book is titled “Puthiya Akasham, Puthiya Bhumi: Karikkottakkariye aspadicha nireekshanangal [New sky and New Earth: Observations based on Karikkottakkari].

Three much-awaited translations will also be published by other Books by the end of this year. Michael Muhammad Knight’s witty, if incisive, exploration of what Salafism is a book--**Why I am a Salafi (Tr. Njan Salafi)**--we are looking forward to. The title is autobiographical and a Muslim Intellectual’s expedition into the world of books on Islam. His satirical comment on our over reliance on written texts on understanding a phenomenon—which is Salafism all about—may help readers expand their calling of reading to uncharted marginal spaces. Talal Asad keeps asking provocative questions. **On Suicide Bombing** is his discourse-altering question on why the western media and analysts are prejudicial and skewed in their narratives on Islamic extremism. The book, published 17 years ago, is still relevant, when the war clouds gather above West Asia.

In 2012, Frances Harrison, British journalist who worked with BBC, wrote a book on Sri Lanka’s war against Tamil Elam—**Still Counting the Dead**. The incident was seen through one angle—LTTE’s use of ‘terrorism.’ However, Frances Harrison’s account tells us what was untold regarding the much-televised world event. We can see how a majoritarian state used systemic violence against its minorities.

We are proud to announce two projects, too—in fact, to reannounce the second one. The first is the yet-untitled English book on Kerala Muslim women’s interactions in the cyber space on diverse topics. The project, spearheaded by Simi Najuma Salim, is the result of ethnographic research on how Muslim women have become active in the public sphere. The second title is the project on a select few Kerala mosques. When mosques are being renovated for much space, their historical, architectural, and cultural values are not being preserved. The project aims to collect and archive these features of the mosques in the form of coffee-table book.



In Memoriam

We are saddened by the demise of our friends. We remember some of them who have recently departed us

None disputes the role of Abdul Gafoor Majeed Noorani aka **AG Noorani**, lawyer and constitutional expert, as a chronicler of India's social and political history at a time when the Hindutva forces have attempted to malign its rich traditions of diversity, pluralism, and secularism. He had earnest commitment to knowledge and history. He kept writing on several issues using the age-old format of book reviews. His breadth of knowledge is well testified by the fact that no book with historical significance evades his critical scanner. He found, loved, and wrote about **Tuhfat al Mujahiddin** published by Other Books. He was humble enough to spare us time to interview him. People without any prejudice and a skewed vision of India's past will miss Noorani Saheb. We miss him more.



VV Abdul Shukoor was a lone warrior in the sphere of alternative publishing. He started Ashyam Books. Under the banner, he has published a book on Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, an anthology of memoirs on the great writer. He also published into Malayalam the translation of Abdulla Yusuff Ali's English commentary on the Quran. He published the first volume of the project and was in the process of writing the second volume, when he departed us. Other Books has the font memory of Shukoor visiting our store and engage with us in long drawn-out conversation on alternative publishing and writing.

Velayudhan Panikkassery was the writer and translator whose translation of **Tuhfat al-Mujahiddin** was the first ever, and hence much-read, rendering of the work in Malayalam. He was a close friend of ours as a historian who sought collaborations with everyone who explored the history of Mappilas. He read us, critiqued us, and guided us with so much affection.

