

# TRANSLATIONS OF NON-RUSSIAN SOVIET LITERATURE IN ESTONIAN BOOK PRODUCTION (1940s–1980s)

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**Summary.** *This paper explores the dynamics of publishing of non-Russian Soviet literatures in Soviet Estonia, establishing the output of titles and the most popular source literatures. The analysis follows the position of Soviet national literatures during four periods in political history: the Stalinist years, the Thaw, Stagnation, and Perestroika. The study uses statistical yearbooks, bibliographies, archival material, as well as research literature as sources. The publishing of Soviet literature was strongly regulated by the publishing authorities and dependent on ideological directions. The analysis demonstrates that the proportion of the non-Russian Soviet literatures started to increase during the Thaw period, but the peak of its production was reached during the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s due to official pressure. The total number of source literatures was 49, demonstrating the diversity of translation production, although they were represented equally. The top source literatures were Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian. The interest of the literary circles and reading audiences in the translations was rather weak, although the top authors attracted the attention of the more intellectual segment of readers.*

**Keywords:** *publishing, translations, Estonia, Soviet era, Soviet national literatures.*

## Ne rusiškos sovietinės literatūros vertimai Estijos knygų produkcijoje (1940–1980)

**Santrauka.** *Straipsnyje tiriama ne rusiškos sovietinės literatūros leidybos dinamika sovietinėje Estijoje, atskleidžiami leidinių skaičiai ir populiariausi literatūros šaltiniai. Analizuojama vadovaujantis keturių politinės istorijos etapų prieiga: stalinizmo metai, atšilimas, stagnacija ir perestroika. Tyrime pasitelkiami statistiniai metiniai raštai, bibliografijos, archyvinė medžiaga, mokslinė literatūra ir šaltiniai. Sovietinės literatūros leidybą stipriai reguliavo leidybos procesui vadovaujantys valdžios organai, o pats procesas buvo priklausomas nuo ideologinių nuostatų. Tyrime atskleidžiama tai, kad ne rusiškos sovietinės literatūros ėmė daugėti atšilimo laikotarpiu, o viršūnė pasiekta XX a. aštuntajame dešimtmetyje ir devintojo dešimtmečio pradžioje. Literatūros šaltinių iš viso buvo 49 – tai rodo vertimų įvairovę, nors kartu jų pateikimas buvo ir tolygiai pasiskirstęs. Populiariausi literatūriniai šaltiniai buvo latvių, lietuvių ir ukrainiečių kūryba. Literatūrų ir skaitovų domėjimasis vertimais buvo palyginti mažas, tačiau patys populiariausi autoriai traukė ir intelektuallesnių skaitytojų dėmesį.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** *leidyba, vertimai, Estija, sovietų laikotarpis, tautinė sovietų literatūra.*

## INTRODUCTION

Although the Soviet propaganda used to characterize the Soviet Union as a happy family of brotherly republics, nations, and peoples, not all brothers were equal. The Russian people emerged as the dominant group in the Soviet ideological construction since the mid-1930s, but especially after the Second World War. In the toast to the Russian people at a reception in honor of Red Army commanders in the Kremlin on May 24, 1945, Stalin called Russians the most outstanding nation of all the nations forming the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth, the glorification of the Russian people and culture was widespread also in Estonia, which had been incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940. A similar national policy, where Russians occupied the role of “the elder brother,” remained intact practically during the whole Soviet period.

1 ANNUS, Epp. Ma tõstan klaasi vene rahva terviseks: sotskolonialismi diskursiivsed alustalad. *Methis*, 2017, no 20, p. 6–13. ISSN 1736-6852 (print).

This policy had a direct impact on the functioning of the literary field in the Soviet Union and the development of the concept of multinational Soviet literature. According to Evgeny Dobrenko, the process of “unification” of different literary traditions began in the early 1920s, but it was between the 1930s and 1950s that the initial Bolshevik Marxist international doctrine was transformed into the chauvinistic Stalinist Great-Russian cultural policy favoring the Russian language and literature.<sup>2</sup> The emergence of the Soviet literature as a multinational phenomenon during the Stalin era included an interaction between Russian and national literatures through an extensive translation industry, various cultural campaigns, publishing and book trade policies. The development of the literary canon and stylistic likeness was promoted by translating works of national literatures into Russian.<sup>3</sup>

A special Translators’ Section of the Writers’ Union was formed soon after the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, and the translators had their own First All-Union Conference of Translators in January 1936. The keynote speech delivered by theater critic Iogann Altman focused on translation from “the languages of the peoples of the USSR,” corresponding to the recently established discourse of the “friendship of the peoples,” pertaining to the Stalinist nationalist policy.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Russian language obtained a special role of a literary *lingua franca*, a mediator in the communication of literatures and readers. For this reason, the total number of translations (literary and non-literary) into Russian exceeded the total number of translations made into all other languages of the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

However, in his letter to the editor of the Azerbaijani central newspaper of the collective farms from November 19, 1934, Maxim Gorky argued it would be ideal if all the literary works of the national literatures would be translated into all the languages of the Soviet people.<sup>6</sup> Although this vision never fully materialized, the works of the non-Russian writers were read in the Soviet republics

2 DOBRENKO, Evgeny. Soviet Multinational Literature : Approaches, Problems, and Perspectives of Study. In *Literary Field under Communist Rule*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018, p. 7. ISBN 9781618119773.

3 Ibid., p. 9.

4 WITT, Suzanna. Socialist Realism in Translation: The Theory of a Practice. *Baltic Worlds*, 2016, 4, p 52. ISSN 2000-2955.

5 KAMOVNIKOVA, Natalia. The consciousness of necessity: translation of national literatures in the Soviet Union. *Translation Strategies and State Control*. Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2017, p. 54. *Acta Slavica Estonica IX*. ISBN 9789949776818 (print).

6 GORKY, Maxim. Pismo k redaktoru aserbaidjanskoi kolhoznoi gazety. *Pravda*, 1934, 17 Dec.

not only in the Russian language, but also, or more predominantly as translations into the national languages, published by the local publishing houses.

This paper concentrates on the translations of non-Russian Soviet literatures published in Soviet Estonia. The term used to denote these publications in the official Soviet statistics of print production was “the literatures of the other Soviet nations.” The statistical data on translations was presented in three different categories: translations of Russian literature, translations of the literatures of the other Soviet nations, and translations of foreign literature.

The aim of the paper is to explore the development of the position of the translations of non-Russian Soviet literatures in the Estonian book production during different historical periods of the Soviet era in the context of the changing sociocultural situation as well as to establish the reception of the translations. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To establish the title output of the non-Russian Soviet literatures in Estonia in 1944–1990 and its proportion in the total production of translated belles-lettres;
- To identify the position of different source literatures among the translations of non-Russian Soviet literatures;
- To examine the factors influencing the publishing of these translations;
- To establish the volume of literary criticism about the translations of non-Russian Soviet literatures in print media;
- To study the popularity of the translations of non-Russian Soviet literatures among readers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of the literary translation in the Soviet Union has been treated by many researchers representing the Western scholarship during the recent years. These writings principally concentrate on the translations of foreign literature into Russian, mentioning the intra-Union translations from the various national languages rather briefly or casually. Brian James Baer has written several studies on the role of translations in the development of Russian literature that include insights into the Soviet period.<sup>7</sup> Writing about the trans-

7 BAER, Brian James. *Translation and the Making of Modern Russian Literature*. New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2015. 208 p. ISBN 9781628928020; BAER, Brian James. Literary Translation and the Construction of a Soviet Intelligentsia. *Translation Studies: Critical Concepts in Linguistics*. Vol IV. London & New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 230–247. ISBN/ISSN 9780415344227.

lation practices in the Soviet Union, Baer argues that the significance of the intra-Union translation as an official ideological project was somewhat overshadowed, as priorities during the post-Stalinist Thaw period moved to new source contexts in emerging socialist countries in the Third World, giving visibility to works from Africa, Latin America, and the Far East.<sup>8</sup>

Susanna Witt has explored both the practices of Soviet translation as well as the formation of its theoretical basis.<sup>9</sup> In her articles on the Russian interlinear trots (podstrochniki), Witt draws attention to the colonialist attitudes toward the national cultures, as intermediates were widely used in the translations from most of the languages of the peoples of the USSR into Russian and often also in translation between these languages.<sup>10</sup>

Baer and Witt refer to translation as a major vehicle for Stalin's nationalities policies in their joint introduction to the collection of articles "Translation in Russian Contexts: Culture, Politics, Identity,"<sup>11</sup> arguing that within the Soviet empire, translation emerged as an important "channel for colonization," disseminating central works of Russian and Soviet literature as well as the classics of Marxism-Leninism and select works of world literature (generally rendered from Russian) into the many languages of the USSR. At the same time,

- 8 BAER, Brian James. From International to Foreign: Packaging Translated Literature in Soviet Russia. *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 2016, vol. 60 (1), p. 49–67. ISSN 0037-6752.
- 9 WITT, Susanna. Socialist Realism in Translation: The Theory of a Practice. *Baltic Worlds*, 2016, 4, p. 52–58. ISSN 2000-2955 (Print); WITT, Susanna. Sovetskaya shkola perevoda – k probleme istorii kontsepta. In PILD, Lea (ed.). *Translation Strategies and State Control: Acta Slavica Estonica IX*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2017, p. 36–51. ISBN 9789949776818 (print); WITT, Susanna. Arts of Accommodation: The First All-Union Conference of Translators, Moscow, 1936, and the Ideologization of Norms. In: BURNETT, Leon; LYGO, Emily (eds.). *The Art of Accommodation: Literary Translation in Russia*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013, p. 141–184. ISBN 9783035304725.
- 10 WITT, Susanna. Between the Lines: Totalitarianism and Translation in the USSR. In: BAER, Brian James (ed.). *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts: Literary translation in Eastern Europe and Russia*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011, p. 149–170. ISBN 9789027224378; WITT, Susanna. The shorthand of Empire: Podstrochnik practices and the making of the Soviet literature. *Ab Imperio*, 2013, no 3, p. 155–190. ISBN: 5894231108; WITT, Susanna. Institutionalized Intermediates: Conceptualizing Soviet Practices of Indirect Translation. *Translation Studies*, 2017, no 10(2), p. 1–17. ISSN 1478-1700 (print).
- 11 WITT, Susanna; BAER, Brian James. Introduction: The Double Context of Translation. In: BAER, Brian James; WITT, Susanna (eds.). *Translation in Russian Contexts: Culture, Politics, Identity*. London: Routledge, 2018, p. 11. ISBN 9781138235120.

however, translation was being carried out on a massive scale in the opposite direction with the aim of creating a Russophone canon of Soviet literature.

Natalia Kamovnikova has studied the work of literary translators in Moscow and Leningrad through interviews,<sup>12</sup> providing also information on the means of control of Soviet publishing, censorship, and its impact on translations, the attention given to the publications of translations in the publishing process, the working conditions of translators, as well as the translations of poetry. The issue of censorship has been treated in more detail by Samantha Sherry.<sup>13</sup>

Kamovnikova has also dedicated an article to the study of the subordinate position of national languages and their translations in relation to the Russian language on the basis of statistical data and officially issued recommendatory lists of the works of national literatures.<sup>14</sup> The total number of translations (literary and non-literary) into Russian exceeded the total number of translations made into all other languages of the Soviet Union, demonstrating its status and prestige. The lists of recommended works, in their turn, were affected by the regulations on ideology issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and misrepresented the national literatures. Looking at the strengthening position of the Russian literature and language over the decades, Kamovnikova concludes that a steady movement of the state toward a well-structured and well-subordinated society required a similar consolidation on the level of language, literature, and, therefore, translation. This is why the initial plans of increasing the share of translations into national literatures were gradually erased from the common memory.<sup>15</sup>

The translation processes in Soviet Estonia have been studied by Daniele Monticelli and Anne Lange.<sup>16</sup> Taking into account the constraints and possi-

- 12 KAMOVNIKOVA, Natalia. *Made under Pressure: Literary Translation in the Soviet Union, 1960-1991*. Amherst ; Boston : University of Massachusetts Press, 2019. ISBN 9781625343413.
- 13 SHERRY, Samantha. *Discourses of Regulation and Resistance: Censoring Translation in the Stalin and Khrushchev Era Soviet Union*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015. ISBN 9780748698028.
- 14 KAMOVNIKOVA, Natalia. The Consciousness of Necessity: Translation of National Literatures in the Soviet Union. In PILD, Lea (ed.). *Translation Strategies and State Control: Acta Slavica Estonica IX*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2017, p.52-68. ISBN 9789949776818 (print).
- 15 KAMOVNIKOVA, Natalia. The Consciousness of Necessity, p. 65-66.
- 16 MONTICELLI, Daniele; LANGE, Anne. Translation and Totalitarianism: The Case of Soviet Estonia. *The Translator*, 2014, no 20, p. 95-111. ISSN 1355-6509; MONTICELLI, Daniele. Totalitarian Translation as a Means of Forced Cultural Change: The Case of Post-

bilities of the sociohistorical situation and using statistical data, they present a multilayered analysis of the different aspects of the translation process, highlighting the points of translational resistance to totalitarian monologism. The analysis of different examples of cultural agency and usage of the loopholes of the system reveal the dialogical and distinct potential of translations.

Anne Lange has explored this potential in more detail in a case study on the literary supplement of the monthly magazine of the Estonian Writers' Union "Looming," titled "Loomingu Raamatukogu" (The Library of "Looming"), which issued mostly translations. Established during the Thaw period in 1957, the series was a calculated attempt to widen the horizons of the reading public and to introduce mostly contemporary literature on as wide a scope as possible, both geographically and thematically.<sup>17</sup>

The writings on the topic from the Soviet period were mainly propagating overviews, but the literary scholar Sergei Issakov has analyzed the situation in publishing the translations of Soviet national literatures thoroughly in the series of articles published in the cultural weekly newspaper.<sup>18</sup> The thesis on the Georgian-Estonian literary contacts during the Soviet era by Maria Miresashvili includes an overview about mutual translations, establishing that the translation of books intensified especially since the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>19</sup>

Ellen Dovgan's Master's thesis about the translations of Ukrainian belles-lettres into Estonian in the 1940s till the 1990s was already written in independent Estonia. The analysis of the translation process is based on Peeter Torop's socio-semiotic approach. The usage of a wide range of source material, as well as interviews with translators, provides rich material about the topic.<sup>20</sup>

The historical overview about the translations of Latvian and Lithuanian literature in the Estonian book production by Aile Möldre includes the treatment

war Soviet Estonia. In: CHALVIN, Antoine; LANGE, Anne; MONTICELLI, Daniele (eds.). *Between Cultures and Texts. Itineraries in Translation History*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011, p. 187–200. ISBN 9783631617441.

17 LANGE, Anne. Editing in the Conditions of State Control in Estonia: the Case of Loomingu Raamatukogu in 1957–1972. In: PILD, Lea (ed.). *Translation Strategies and State Control: Acta Slavica Estonica IX*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2017, p. 155–173. ISBN 9789949776818 (print).

18 ISSAKOV, Sergei. Tõlked NSVL rahvaste kirjandusest: pilguheit minevikku ja tulevikku. *Sirp ja Vasar*, 1979, 22. juuni; 29. juuni; 6. juuli.

19 MIREASHVILI, Maria. Gruzinsko-estonskie literaturnye vzaimozvyazi (1960–1980 gg.): avtoreferat. Tbilisi: Tbilisskiy Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 1987.

20 DOVGAN, Ellen. Tõlgitavuse sotsiosemiootilistest parameetritest (ukraina-cesti ilukirjandustõlgete alusel): [unpublished Master thesis]. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikool, 2005. 185 p.

of the Soviet period, presenting statistical data on the translations by titles and genres as well as the most popular authors and prolific translators.<sup>21</sup>

## METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The study is based on a statistical analysis of the title output of translated books, which enables to establish the dynamics of the publications through periods, the proportions of the different source literatures, and the most popular source literatures among the non-Russian authors. The statistical data is studied in the political and sociocultural context of the different periods of the Soviet era. In order to study the process of the publishing of translations, the corresponding archival collections of the National Archives of Estonia have been examined (ERA.R-1765 Translation Section of the Writers' Union of the Estonian SSR; ERA.R-1589 Editorial Office of Translated Belles-lettres of the Estonian State Press; ERA.R-2286 State Publishing Committee of the Estonian SSR).

In the study of reception the approach is also mainly statistical, aiming at establishing whether the translations of the other Soviet literatures were reviewed and thus introduced to readers. The attitude of readers can be established by the presence of these works in various rankings of the favorite reading matter compiled by libraries and social scientists.

The statistical approach is widely used in book history. As Simon Eliot has stated, the subject of book history is rooted in the material world, in artefacts which are characterized and understood, in part, as countable quantities. Publishing statistics provide the broader context, inevitable for the interpretation of individual case studies.<sup>22</sup> The statistics on translations is also of interest for translation history. Among the basic components for viewing translation history, the Estonian literary scholar and semiotician Peeter Torop names the synchronic-receptive component, which includes statistical and sociological issues, connected with the publications of translations as well as receptive and critical materials. According to Torop, the main task of translation culture lies in transforming consumption into reading, reading into storage, and print production into a fact of culture.<sup>23</sup> The statistical data on the number of transla-

21 MÖLDRE, Aile. The Baltic Book Contacts: Translations of Latvian and Lithuanian Literature in the Estonian Book Production. *Knygotyra*, 2010, vol. 54, p. 301–319. ISSN 0204–2061.

22 ELIOT, Simon. Very necessary but not quite sufficient. *Book History*, 2002, vol. 5, p. 283–284. ISSN 1098-7371 (print).

23 TOROP, Peeter. Tõlkekultuur ja tõlkeaasta. In TOROP, Peeter. *Kultuurimärgid*. Tartu: Ilmamaa, 1999, p. 73. ISBN 9789985878484.



tions in book production, the proportions of source literatures, the circulation of translated books, and publications of reprints characterize the inclusion of the translations in the target culture and enable to understand the connection between translation culture and cultural policy. The existence and character of receptive and critical materials demonstrate the position of translations in the memory of readers.<sup>24</sup>

The statistical data on the translations from different source languages in Estonia, including mainly book titles, has been elaborated on the basis the statistical yearbooks of Estonian print production of the years 1961–1990.<sup>25</sup> The Estonian national bibliography database (<https://erb.nlib.ee/>) was used to elaborate the data on translations.

The statistical analysis is divided into four historical periods, elaborated on the basis of the periodization of the Soviet era by the Estonian historian Lauri Vahtre<sup>26</sup> and based on political history and history of mentality. For the clarity of statistics, the starting or ending years of the periods have been specified and modified when necessary: the Stalinist period (1944–1955), the Khrushchevian Thaw (1956–1968), the Brezhnevian Stagnation (1969–1987), and the period of the Perestroika (1988–1990). Independence was regained in August 1991, and by that time, the publishing sector was already functioning without the pressure of censorship and by the rules of market economy.

The study on the diversity of book industry, elaborated by the French researchers Françoise Benhamou and Stéphanie Peltier, measures the three properties of diversity – variety, balance and disparity – according to the categories of individual books: the title, the genre, and the original language. The latter dimension can be used to characterize the output of translations. Book diversity increases in direct proportion to the number of different original languages available, the extent of equality of their representation, and their linguistic distance.<sup>27</sup>

Data on the critical reviews on the literary works by non-Russian Soviet writers was gathered from the publications of the official analytical bibliography

24 TOROP, Peeter. Tõkeloo koostamise printsiibid. In TOROP, Peeter. *Kultuurimärgid*. Tartu: Ilmamaa, 1999, p.55–56. ISBN 9789985878484.

25 *Eesti trükitoodangu statistika 1961–1990*. Tallinn: Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 1963–1993.

26 VAHTRE, Lauri. Nõukogude aja periodiseerimisest. In *Muinasaja loojangust omariikluse läveni. Pühendusteos Sulev Vahtre 75. sünnipäevaks*. Tartu: Ajalookirjanduse Sihtasutus Kleio, 2001, p. 384. ISBN 998591788X.

27 BENHAMOU, Françoise, PELTIER, Stéphanie. How should cultural diversity be measured? An application using the French Publishing industry. *Bibliodiversity*, 2011, January, p. 14–15 [interactive]. ISSN 2650-0205 [accessed 20 August 2019]. Access through Internet <https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/-bibliodiversity-journal,290-?lang=fr>.

on the years 1944–1990, issued as a current bibliography of articles and reviews in 1948–1990.<sup>28</sup> The material from earlier years was consolidated in retrospective yearbooks.<sup>29</sup>

The data on the readers' attitude toward literary works by non-Russian Soviet authors is rather scarce. During the Stalinist years, the real opinion of the reading public about the print production was of no interest to the authorities, and no sociological studies were allowed. The situation changed only during the Thaw. In Estonia, a survey among the readers of public libraries was carried out in 1966.<sup>30</sup> The next major study from 1979–1984 concentrated on the formation and development of book demand.<sup>31</sup>

### A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF NON-RUSSIAN LITERATURES IN SOVIET ESTONIA

The proportion of books translated from the different national literatures of the Soviet Union has been presented in Table 1 in comparison with the translations of Russian literature, foreign literatures, and the original works in the Estonian language.

The “Russians first” policies were especially apparent during the postwar Stalin years (1944–1955) when the translations from Russian even slightly exceeded the number of publications of original Estonian works. Daniele Monticelli has characterized this period using the term “totalitarian translation,” when translations had a strongly hegemonic position in book production and only one source language and culture dominated among translations. The early Sovietization of Estonia relied on the forced introduction of the cultural patterns of socialist realism, in which translation from Soviet (mostly Russian)

28 *Eesti NSV Raamatukroonika: Riiklik Bibliograafia 1948-1949*. Tallinn: Eesti NSV Riiklik Avalik Raamatukogu, 1948-1950; *Retensioonide kroonika 1950-1953*. Tallinn: Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus, 1951-1954; *Artiklite ja retensioonide kroonika : Eesti riiklik bibliograafianimestik 1954-1991*. Tallinn : Eesti Rahvusraamatukogu, 1955 – 1995. ISSN 0135-2474 0571-2068.

29 *Artiklite ja retensioonide kroonika 1944/1945*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1972. 779 p.; *Artiklite ja retensioonide kroonika 1946*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1975. 735 p.; *Artiklite ja retensioonide kroonika 1947*. Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1979. 752 p.

30 *Eesti NSV rahvaraamatukogu lugeja 1967*. Tallinn: Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi nim. Eesti NSV Riiklik Raamatukogu, 1970. 319 p. Nõukogude Eesti raamatukogundus, 4.

31 *Kultuur. Kommunikatsioon. Raamatusube*. Tallinn: Eesti NSV Kultuuriministeerium, 1988. 178 p. Nõukogude Eesti raamatukogundus, 17. ISSN 0206-2771.

TABLE 1. Publications of belles-lettres (adult and children) in the Estonian language in 1944–1990.

	1944–1955	1956–1968	1969–1987	1988–1990	In all
	Number of titles/ Percentage of belles-lettres/ Titles per annum	Number of titles/ Percentage of belles-lettres/ Titles per annum	Number of titles/ Percentage of belles-lettres / Titles per annum	Number of titles/ Percentage of belles-lettres / Titles per annum	
Translations of Russian literature	568 43% of all titles 47,3 titles per annum	488 22% of all titles 37,5 titles per annum	650 17% of all titles 34,2 titles per annum	54 7% of all titles 18 titles per annum	1760
Translations of the other Soviet literatures	85 6 % of all titles 7,3 titles per annum	156 7% of all titles 11,6 titles per annum	410 11% of all titles 21,4 titles per annum	29 4% of all titles 9,6 titles per annum	680
Translations of foreign literature	136 10 % of all titles 11,3 titles per annum	677 31% of all titles 52,0 titles per annum	953 25% of all titles 50,1 titles per annum	196 26% of all titles 65,3 titles per annum	1962
Estonian literature	546 41% of all titles 45,5 titles per annum	885 40% of all titles 68,0 titles per annum	1806 47% of all titles 95,0 titles per annum	465 63% of all titles 155 titles per annum	3702
Total number	1335	2206	3819	744	8104

literature played a central role.<sup>32</sup> Peeter Torop has characterized the translations of the Russian literature as compulsory, whose aim was to contribute to assimilation.<sup>33</sup> However, beside contemporary works, many masterpieces of Russian classical literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were first introduced to the Estonian readers during these years as well.

32 MONTICELLI, Daniele. Totalitarian Translation as a Means of Forced Cultural Change, p. 190–191.

33 TOROP, Peeter. Tõlkesund. In SARAPIK, Virve; KALDA, Maie; VEIDEMANN, Rein (eds.). *Kohandumise märgid*. Tallinn: Underi ja Tuglase Kirjanduskeskus, 2002, p. 199. ISBN 9985865138.

At the same time, the proportion, as well as the number of, the literatures of the other Soviet nations was marginal (85 titles), six times smaller than the output of translations of Russian literature and even smaller than the number of the translations of foreign literature.

The authors from the other Soviet nations were selected mainly among the Laureates of the Stalin Prize, who were published in a special series issued in 1948–1955, thus clearly reflecting the forced selection of the publisher. Another genre with more numerous translations were fairy tales, issued in separate publications and collections.

The following period of the Thaw was marked by a notable increase in the number of translations of foreign literature, which exceeded the volume of translations from Russian (Table 1). An important turning point was connected with the creation of “Loomingu Raamatukogu,” the supplement to the literary magazine “Looming,” which consisted of book-length paperback volumes. So far, translated fiction books were issued exclusively by the only publishing house in Estonia, Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus (Estonian State Press). The supplement was treated as a magazine, and so it did not have to obtain preventive authorization of its yearly and 5-year plans from Moscow, as was the case with the state publishing house.<sup>34</sup> The first staff of “Loomingu Raamatukogu,” who had worked in 1957–1972, published 526 titles and provided the Estonian readers with a representative choice of high-quality translations of world literature; 101 of the titles were translated from Russian (direct and indirect translations), followed by translations from English (85 titles), German (51 titles), French (37 titles), and Finnish (25 titles). The magazine also published a small number (25 titles) of translations of different Soviet national literatures.<sup>35</sup>

The data on the total output of fiction (Table 1) demonstrates that the proportion of the translations of the other Soviet national literatures increased during the Thaw years, although still occupying a rather modest position. The publishing of these translations was prompted by various communist party guidelines and official regulations. The XXII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1961 adopted its third program, which emphasized the convergence of nations during the construction of communism, but admitted that the deletion of national differences, especially lingual differences, is a long-term process.<sup>36</sup> The formation of international Soviet culture was now based on getting to know

34 LANGE, Anne. Editing in the Conditions of State Control in Estonia, p. 158.

35 Ibid., p. 160, 163.

36 *Nõukogude Liidu Kommunistliku Partei programm: Vastu võetud NLKP XXII Kongressi poolt*. Tallinn, ERK, 1963, p. 103–107.

the other nations, including through translations. After the decade of one-sided orientation on Russian literature, it basically opened up the possibility to diversify the selection of the literature from the other Soviet republics.

However, it was not always easy for the publishers to find suitable – that is high-quality and of interest to the Estonian reader – works for translation or to refrain from merely meeting the statistical requirements about the proportions of source literatures and covering all the republics. This issue was addressed during the meetings of the advisory council by the editorial office of translated literature of the Estonian State Press. For example, while discussing the series “The Book of the XX Century” during a meeting in 1963, the council members were of the opinion that several books by the writers from the Soviet republics (for example, Karelian Antti Timonen, Turkmen Berdi Kerbabayev) were rather weak. However, it was obligatory to introduce the literature from brotherly republics, even if there were no top works available.<sup>37</sup> Officially the preference had to be given to the authors who were appreciated by the republican communist leaders or were laureates of the Lenin, Komsomol, state or republican prizes, reflecting the latent hierarchical system in cultural policy. Estonian writer and translator, one of leaders of the Writers’ Union of the Estonian SSR Vladimir Beekman has recalled that the ideological targeting of the publishing of Soviet literature was very vigorous.<sup>38</sup> The council documents indicate that the members did not fully trust official recommendatory lists or reviews. In order to find acceptable works for translation, each member of the council was instructed to gather information on a certain national literature.<sup>39</sup> Various sources were used to find data, including periodical press, correspondence with writers’ unions of other Soviet republics, visits to the republics to make personal contacts with the local literary circles. Although several translators became competent experts of different Soviet literatures in the following decades, the scarcity of information on the whole range of national literatures remained a problem.<sup>40</sup>

37 *Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus. Tõlkeilukirjanduse toimetuse ühiskondliku nõukogu protokoll 9. jaan. 1963.* Tallinn. National Archives of Estonia. Coll. ERA. R-1589. Inv. 13. F 107. p. 8–9.

38 LIHK, Kadri. Vladimir Beekman: Nõukogudeaegset kirjanduselu ei saa hinnata must-valgelt. *Hommikuleht*, 23. dets., 1994.

39 *Eesti Riiklik Kirjastus. Tõlkeilukirjanduse ühiskondliku nõukogu koosoleku protokoll nr 2, 15. jaan. 1962.* Tallinn. National Archives of Estonia. Coll. ERA.R-1589. Inv. 13. F 107. p. 24–25.

40 *ENSV Kirjanike Liidu tõlkekomisjoni koosolekute protokollid ja kirjavahetus 12.jaan.– 7. okt. 1977.* Tallinn: National Arcives of Estonia. Coll ERA.R-1765, Inv. 1, F 519, p.17; ISSA-KOV, Sergei. Tõlked NSVL rahvaste kirjandusest: pilguheit minevikku ja tulevikku. *Sirp ja Vasar*, 1979, 22. juuni.

When the political atmosphere changed at the end of the 1960s, the national policy concentrated on the creation of a new historic community, the Soviet people. In the cultural field it meant increasing attention to the literatures of the Soviet republics. In Estonia, the requirement to intensify the publishing of translations of the brotherly literatures was based on the resolution of the fifth plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Estonia „The objectives of international education in the light of the 24<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party (1971)“ from 1973.<sup>41</sup> The reports from the State Publishing Committee of the Estonian SSR to the department of propaganda of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Estonia explain the changes in the output of translated fiction, pointing out that the increase of the proportion of the translations of the other Soviet literatures was achieved at the expense of reducing the number of titles of foreign literature.<sup>42</sup> The statistical approach to the publishing of translations was criticized by the long-time editor of the magazine “Loomingu Raamatukogu” Otto Samma, but defended, for example, by the literary scholar Sergei Issakov for the sake of diversity, openness, aesthetic education, and internationalism.<sup>43</sup>

The requirements of new proportions of translations also concerned the magazine “Loomingu Raamatukogu.” Its new editor had to reorient the publication to the translations of the works by authors of brotherly nations.<sup>44</sup> In fact, the content of the magazine did not become quite so one-sided. For example, from the 31 titles issued in 1974, 12 titles (39%) represented foreign literature (mainly from capitalist countries), 11 titles (35%) were works by Estonian writers, and the works of Russian and other Soviet nations were both represented by four titles (13%). But the orientation on noteworthy contemporary works and the selection that could balance on the verge of acceptance by censorship was lost.

Actually, the title output was considered less important indicator than the print run of publications. High average print run of books was a source of

41 ENSV Riiklik Kirjastuskomitee. Kirjavahetus EKP KKga internatsionalistliku kasvatuse küsimustes. 6. märts 1974. Tallinn. National Archives of Estonia. Coll. ERA.R-2286. Inv. 2-s. F 21. p. 1-2.

42 ENSV Riiklik Kirjastuskomitee. Öiend vennasrahvaste kirjanduse väljaandmise kohta EKP KK propaganda osakonnale 28. mail 1973. Tallinn. National Archives of Estonia. Coll. ERA.R-2286. Inv. 1. F 508. p.9–10.

43 ISSAKOV, Sergei. Tõlkeid NSV Liidu rahvaste kirjandustest, 22. juuni, 29. juuni.

44 ENSV Riiklik Kirjastuskomitee. Öiend vennasrahvaste kirjanduse väljaandmise kohta EKP KK propaganda osakonnale 28. mail 1973. Tallinn. National Archives of Estonia. Coll. ERA.R-2286. Inv. 1. F 508. p. 10.

special pride, used to demonstrate the wide distribution of books among the Soviet people. Thus, the growing role of the literature of brotherly nations is manifested in their larger print runs. If the average print run of a translation from the other Soviet literatures had been 14 700 copies in 1971, then by 1981 it had grown to 32 500 copies. At the same time, it was the foreign literature that was issued with the highest average print run – even in the Soviet publishing it was inevitable to manage profitably and the revenues from foreign belles-lettres were necessary for covering the losses from subsidies to political publications, textbooks, etc. A sharp decline in the print runs of the translations of the other nations of the USSR in 1982 (only 17 000 copies in average) was obviously due to the pressure to review the expenses of publishing in the conditions of a stagnating economy. Since the end of the 1970s, adjustments were made in issuing of loss-making publications and, for the first time after decades, the prices of certain types of publications were raised in 1976 and for all publications in 1981.<sup>45</sup>

Since 1988 the publishing system in Estonia started to change. The State Publishing Committee of the Estonian SSR was liquidated, and new publishing houses were established. The pre-censorship of belles-lettres in the publishing house Eesti Raamat (The Estonian Book) and of the magazine “Loomingu Raamatukogu” stopped in 1989.<sup>46</sup> The publishing production of these years represents the transformation from the state monopoly to freedom of publishing and market economy. On the one side, the books issued in these years still included the results of the slow Soviet-era publishing cycle, but on the other hand, the new publishers speedily started to publish freely selected content. In the publishing of translations, it meant an increase of foreign translations and a decrease of translations of Russian as well as other Soviet literatures (Table 1).

#### THE SOURCE LITERATURES OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE OTHER SOVIET NATIONAL LITERATURES

A closer look to the composition of the translations of the literatures of the other Soviet nations enables to establish the diversity of these publications. Table 2 uses the concept of source literature instead of language, as indirect translations through the Russian language were rather widespread,

45 MÖLDRE, Aile. *Kirjastus ja raamatulevi Eestis aastail 1940–2000*. Tallinn: TLÜ Kirjastus, 2005, p. 154. ISBN 9985583477.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 123.

especially during the first decades of the Soviet era. The number of literatures of the Soviet nations represented in the book production was rather large – 49 literatures in total, whereas the number of different national literatures in the Soviet Union has been estimated to be 78.<sup>47</sup>

TABLE 2. Source literatures of the translations of the other Soviet national literatures.

Source literature	Number of titles				Total number
	1944–1955	1956–1968	1969–1987	1988–1990	
Latvian	17	30	75	6	128
Ukrainian	21	25	27	3	76
Lithuanian	3	15	49	3	70
Byelorussian	4	11	26	2	43
Georgian	6	9	23	1	39
Armenian	5	9	22	1	37
Kazakh	4	4	23	–	31
Uzbek	1	8	16	1	26
Moldovan	–	5	18	1	24
Kirghiz	1	5	15	3	24
Tadzhik	2	4	16	–	22
Azerbaijan	3	1	11	3	18
Turkmen	1	2	8	–	11
<b>Others</b>	7 (5 source literatures)	21 (15 source literatures)	65 (34 source literatures)	4 (4 source literatures)	97

Their representation, however, was not even. The nationalities of the USSR were officially ranked into a hierarchical system of four ranks, each representing a different level of statehood. The union republic was the highest level accessible to a Soviet nationality.<sup>48</sup> The official expectations of the translation activities also focused on the literatures of the republics that were reflected in the number of publications. On the whole, the number of Soviet source litera-

47 DOBRENKO, Evgeny. Soviet Multinational Literature: Approaches, Problems, and Perspectives of Study. In JURGUTIENĖ, Aušra; SATKAUSKYTĖ, Dalia (eds.). *Literary Field under Communist Rule*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2018, p. 5. ISBN 9781618119773.

48 TADEVOSIAN, E. V. The Constitutional Basis of Soviet National Statehood. *Soviet Anthropology and Archeology*, 1987, vol. 26, 3, p. 3–19.



tures increased considerably over time, growing from 17 different literatures in the 1940s–1950s to 47 in 1969–1987 (Table 2).

In the list of source literatures, the literatures of the other Baltic republics and Ukraine occupy the leading positions. The book contacts with Latvia go back many centuries, and the publishing of translations from Latvian became regular since the end of the 1920s.<sup>49</sup> As to the Lithuanian literature, it had been relatively distant to Estonian readers during the independent Republic of Estonia (1918–1940), where no books translated from Lithuanian were published,<sup>50</sup> although translations in periodicals and articles about Lithuanian culture were issued at a growing pace since the mid-1930s. According to the opinion of the Estonian historian Külle Arjakas, closer ties between the three Baltic nations were established in the Soviet prison camps, fostered by the feeling of sharing the same fate.<sup>51</sup>

The other Soviet literatures were more or less unknown to the Estonian reader before the Soviet era. For example, Ukrainian literature had been represented only with one fairy tale in the pre-war book production. Being among the largest Soviet republics and, besides, a Slavic republic, intensive translation of Ukrainian literature started already during the Stalinist period. Especially since the 1970s, the range of the literatures widened considerably, and besides the literatures of the titular nations of the republics, included numerous smaller literatures, for example, Finno-Ugrian, the small nations of Siberia (Chukchi, Koryak, Itelmen, Tuva) and of the Caucasus (Chechen, Ingush, Avarian, Adygy, etc). The Estonian writer and translator Arvo Valton has stated that translating from small languages increased their prestige in the colonial empire and offered interesting original literature to the target culture.<sup>52</sup>

These literatures were represented only with a couple of titles, mostly translated from the Russian language. According to Issakov, indirect translations via Russian accounted for 40% of the translations in the 1970s.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the linguistic diversity is much narrower, and neither is the representation equal between all the source languages. However, direct translations gradually became the

49 MÖLDRE, A. The Baltic Book Contacts, p. 308.

50 Ibid., p. 309.

51 ARJAKAS, Külle. Balti koostöö: minevik, olevik, tulevik. *Diplomaatia*, 2007, 9. Febr., no 2, p. 20–21. ISSN 2228-1606.

52 PCHELOVODOVA, Nadezda. Arvo Valton tõlkijana ja kultuuride vahendajana. [unpublished Master thesis]. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikool, p.27–28.

53 ISSAKOV, Sergei. Tõlked NSVL rahvaste kirjandusest: pilguheit minevikku ja tulevikku. *Sirp ja Vasar*, 1979, 6. juuli.

norm, at least for the titular languages of the republics since the 1960s, when novice translators often specialized on a region or a language, including the Oriental languages. This also helped to alleviate the lack of reliable information, as the translators developed personal contacts and were able to read and evaluate the original texts.

### THE RECEPTION OF THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE OTHER SOVIET LITERATURES

The activity of reviewing the works by the non-Russian Soviet writers changed over time. One third of all the titles were reviewed during the Stalinist era, whereas at least four-five articles were devoted to the works awarded the Stalin prize. Obviously, it was not enough to publish these books, but it was necessary to propagate them in the press, issuing ideologically biased writings. However, as the production of belles-lettres was small at the time, a large proportion of the new publications were reviewed. Especially the books by Estonian authors were widely treated in the press. For example, the novel *The Windy Beach* (1951) by Aadu Hint was reviewed in 13 articles.

During the Thaw period, when the production of brotherly literature increased, a smaller proportion of these books was treated in the press (12%), mainly the works by Latvian and Lithuanian authors. Similar relative passivity continued during the next decades. Actually, the scarcity of reviews during the 1960s–1980s did not characterize only the literatures of brotherly nations, but translations on the whole. Thus, little was done to promote these books among readers. In all, 16% of the translations of the other Soviet literatures published in 1944–1990 were reviewed. Of course, due to censorship, literary critics also had to adapt to the Soviet system and could not always express their views directly and openly.

The attitude of the audience to the translations of the literatures of the other Soviet nations was not too enthusiastic. The situation can be illustrated with the comment by a well-known Estonian writer and translator Ain Kaalep. He and Harald Rajamets had translated the poetry collection *Kobzar* (1961) by Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko and were very disappointed that people did not queue up to buy it. They explained it with Russophobia and an inability of the readers to distinguish between the Russian and Ukrainian literatures. When the translators told their friends about the role of Shevchenko in the Ukrainian culture and encouraged them to read the book, those who did, liked it.<sup>54</sup> Prejudice toward the

54 DOVGAN, Ellen. Tõlgitavuse sotsioseemiootilistest parameetritest, p. 65.

Soviet literature among readers has been mentioned also by the literary scholar Sergei Issakov in his overview about the translations of the Soviet literatures.<sup>55</sup>

The sociological research on reading habits carried out since the 1960s shed light on the popularity of the literatures of brotherly nations more concretely. The survey among the readers of public libraries from 1966 established that 68% of respondents had read older works by Russian and other Soviet authors, and 32% had not, while only 45% had read contemporary works.<sup>56</sup> The Latvian writer Vilis Lācis was the third most popular author (25.7% of respondents named him amongst their favorites), being the only writer from the other Soviet republics among the 40 most popular writers.<sup>57</sup> His popularity was based on the success of his novel *The Fisherman's Son*, written in the mid-1930s, which was first published in Estonia in 1938, during the independence, and reprinted five times until 1987. According to the findings of the survey, this novel was the most popular literary work from Russian and other Soviet literatures among the readers of public libraries.<sup>58</sup>

The next major study from 1979–1984 on book demand used four authors in order to establish the popularity of the other Soviet national literatures. The respondents were asked if they had books by the Kyrgyz author Chinghiz Ajtmatov, the Lithuanian author Jonas Avyžius, the Moldavian author Ion Druță, and the Georgian writer Nodar Dumbadze in their home library. These were all outstanding writers, although not all widely known in Estonia. Ajtmatov could be an exception, as at least his novel *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*, issued in Estonian in 1983, achieved wide media coverage, with at least four reviews and several interviews, which was further amplified by theater productions based on the novel, having a strong impact on the audience of the time.

Still, only 37% of the respondents possessed at least one book by these writers, placing the literature of the other Soviet nations almost at the end of the

55 ISSAKOV, S. (1979). Tõlked NSV Liidu rahvaste kirjandustest: pilguheit minevikku ja tulevikku. – *Sirp ja Vasar*, 6. juuli.

56 MAIMIK, Peeter. Lugemine pensionieas. In *Kultuur. Kommunikatsioon. Raamatusuhe*. Tallinn: Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi nim. Eesti NSV Riiklik Raamatukogu, 1988, p. 113–114. Nõukogude Eesti raamatukogundus, 17.

57 MARTIS, Helle. Rahvaraamatukogude lugejate lemmikirjanikud. In *Eesti NSV rahvaraamatukogu lugeja 1967*. Tallinn: Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi nim. Eesti NSV Riiklik Raamatukogu, 1970, p.275. Nõukogude Eesti raamatukogundus, 4.

58 LAGLE, T. Vene ja teiste nõukogude rahvaste kirjanduse lugemisest ning hindamisest. In *Eesti NSV rahvaraamatukogu lugeja 1967*. Tallinn: Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi nim. Eesti NSV Riiklik Raamatukogu, 1970, p. 219. Nõukogude Eesti raamatukogundus, 4.

ranking (the Estonian literature treated at school being at the top with 89% and the little-known older Estonian prose the last with 35%).<sup>59</sup> The other question established that merely six percent of the respondents were willing to buy books by the authors of the other Soviet nations. However, the division of the respondents into segments demonstrated that 81% of the most active readers, characterized by knowledgeable, selective, varied reading, owned works by these authors, and 22% of them were willing to buy new books.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the most intellectual group of readers was rather responsive and appreciative of these translations, while the wider audience remained indifferent or even repelling. This corresponds to the widespread orientation on the Western patterns of intellectual and material culture. As expressed by Baer and Witt, for the “last Soviet generation” translations of Western fiction contributed to the creation of an “imaginary West” similar to rock music and film described by Alexei Yurchak.<sup>61</sup>

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The volume and range of the translations of the literatures of the other Soviet nations varied through the different periods of the Soviet era. Beside what Peeter Torop has named the compulsory translations of the Russian literature,<sup>62</sup> the other Soviet literatures occupied a marginal position. The Thaw period marked the enlivening of the publication of translations from the Soviet literatures but, compared to the translations of foreign literature and translations from Russian, they still remained in the background.

Baer has identified the rise of translations from Africa, Latin America, and the Far East in the Soviet Union during the Thaw period<sup>63</sup> and translations from these literatures entered also the Estonian book production in the 1960s. However, the focus of the Thaw period in Estonia was clearly on Western literature. It was only during the 1970s and 1980s, when ideological pressure on the

59 LAURISTIN, Marju; VIHALEM, Peeter. Raamatusuhte tüübid. In *Kultuur. Kommunikatsioon. Raamatusuhe*. Tallinn: Fr. R. Kreutzwaldi nim. Eesti NSV Riiklik Raamatukogu, 1988, p. 21. Nõukogude Eesti raamatukogundus, 17.

60 Ibid., p. 23.

61 BAER, Brian James; WITT, Susanna. Introduction: The Double Context of Translation, p. 12.

62 TOROP, Peeter. Tõlkesund, p. 199.

63 BAER, Brian James. From International to Foreign: Packaging Translated Literature in Soviet Russia, p. 49–67.

book industry intensified, that the other Soviet national literatures were mobilized to fill the gap left by the exclusion of Western literature. Their number and proportion in the book production obtained special importance in reporting of the branch. The greater the number of the Soviet literatures that were translated, the more satisfaction it brought to the official circles.

The wide range of source literatures demonstrated a notable diversity of translations. At the same time this was partly due to the quest for statistical indicators. Actually, the Soviet period introduced to Estonian culture a wide variety of unknown literatures of nations included in the Soviet Union. With the exception of Latvia, none of the other Soviet nations had belonged to the traditional translational orientation of Estonia. Within the necessary proportion of the Soviet literatures, publishers could select the works relatively freely up to a certain point, where the ideological requirements could not be avoided. Thus, the tradition of translating Latvian literature was preserved, and translations of Latvian authors outnumbered all the other Soviet literatures. Among the other more favored source literatures were Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and others belonging to a cultural area close to Estonia. It was easier to find works that could be attractive to the readers from these literatures, and there were also more translators who knew these languages. According to Peeter Torop, the self-regulation of culture is preserved even during occupations,<sup>64</sup> which, in case of the translating activities of the studied period, was realized through the agency of publishers and translators. Despite the compulsory propagandistic category of translations, the search for valuable works and securing the high quality of translations was considered an aim to strive for.

The preference of the literatures of the neighbouring republics was also characteristic of Latvian book production. The statistical yearbooks of Latvian print production from the Soviet era demonstrate that the largest number of translations published in the 1960s–1980s represented Lithuanian literature, followed by Estonian and Ukrainian works.<sup>65</sup>

Still, the overall range of translations in Estonia was much wider. There was special interest in the literatures of Central Asia and Kazakhstan since the 1960s, when several translators specialized in the languages. The works from smaller literatures were partly translated via Russian or intermediates. The publications of one or two translations during the whole Soviet period might

<sup>64</sup> TOROP, Peeter. Tõlkesund, p.199.

<sup>65</sup> *Latvijas PSR prese : statistisko datu krājums*. Rīga : Latvijas PSR Valsts bibliotēka, 1963–1989; *Latvijas PSR prese, 1956–1975 : statistisko material krājums "Latvijas PSR preses bronikas" pielikums*. Rīga: Latvijas PSR Valsts Grāmatu palāta, 1979.

seem to have little significance or impact, but the introduction of smaller literatures and languages was important for their survival in the atmosphere of Russification. This aspect was recognized also by translators, for example, Arvo Valton has included support and mission among the functions of translation.<sup>66</sup> Thus, the selection of the works from the Soviet national literatures was characterized by ambiguity, including different layers and receiving different reactions. It was formed due to sociopolitical and cultural factors, where the administrative pressure and regulations interacted with the agency of publishers and translators.

The works by Soviet authors were actively discussed in the press only during the Stalinist period, when the newspapers and magazines were supposed to treat at least the books by Stalin prize laureates. Since the Thaw period, the attention of literary critics to the Soviet literature faded, but this was not exceptional, as the translated books were seldom reviewed. In order to follow the changes in the critical response to the works by non-Russian Soviet writers in more detail, the statistical approach should be combined with content analysis in future research.

Thus, rather scarce information was provided about the novelties by the Soviet authors. The lack of interest in the Soviet authors characterized also the wide circles of readers, eager to distance themselves from the Soviet realities. The interest of wider audiences focused on Estonian and Western authors; this was partly due to the political background and sociological factors. Still, the more knowledgeable reader segments received the best works by Soviet authors openly and with interest. As a result, the task of translation culture, expressed by Peeter Torop as transforming consumption into reading and the print production into a fact of culture,<sup>67</sup> was only partly achieved with the literature of the other Soviet nations. The loss of administrative control over publishing during the Perestroika led to a dramatic decrease of the translations of the literatures of the former Soviet nations since 1988.

66 PCHELOVODOVA, Nadezda. Arvo Valton tõlkijana ja kultuuride vahendajana, p. 27–28.

67 TOROP, Peeter. Tõlkekultuur ja tõlkeaasta, p. 73.

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20. *ENSV Riiklik Kirjastuskomitee. Öiend vennasrahvaste kirjanduse väljaandmise kohta EKP KK propaganda osakonnale 28. mail 1973*. Tallinn. National Archives of Estonia. Coll. ERA.R-2286. Inv. 1. F 508. p. 9–10.

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