

ETHIOPIA:
THE ROAD TO COMMUNISM
WITH SOVIET HELP

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INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia entered 1974 as a 2,000-year-old monarchy, seemingly firmly controlled by the aging Emperor Haile Selassie I. By September of that year, a clandestine organization of junior officers had deposed the Emperor and established a radical provisional military government. A decade later, on September 12, 1984, that same committee of officers, or better: those who had survived, announced the establishment of the Ethiopian Worker's Party, a communist party modelled on the CPSU, for the eventual transfer of state power. From a country which held a "special relationship" with the United States, Ethiopia became a country entirely dependent on the Soviet Union and its allies for military and political support.

What happened? How, why, and by what means did the Soviet Union become involved in this feudalistic African country? Why did the United States lose its influence? Could America have maintained Ethiopia in the Western sphere of influence? How close are the ties between Ethiopia and the USSR, and what prospects or obstacles are there to the furthering of those ties?

Ethiopia's revolution can be an important case study, for these ten years, 1974-1984, show in practice the successful implementation of a Soviet policy to capture influence in a Third World country which previously had been dominated by Western interests. Whether that policy was reactive,

opportunistic, geopolitical, or lucky will be examined later in this paper; what is important is that it was a successful policy. Ethiopia also symbolizes American inability to support a traditional ally and is proof that no matter how secure our relations with a Third World country may appear, that country may undergo a radicalization at some time towards the Soviet Bloc.

This paper will concentrate on Soviet relations with Ethiopia; the manner in which the USSR pursued and obtained its "special relationship" with Ethiopia; how the United States came to be displaced; why the Soviet Union was interested in Ethiopia; and, what the future prospects are ^{for} their relationship.

BACKGROUND TO 1974

The United States and Ethiopia

The U.S. relationship with Ethiopia until 1974 was founded mainly on one thing, the lease of the Kagnev Communications Center site near Asmara in Eritrea. The site, because of its location on a high plateau near the Equator, was an important link in a global communications network that the U.S. developed in the 1950s. In 1953 a lease was signed with Ethiopia for the proposed facility in exchange for military assistance and training for a period of twenty-five years.

A Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) was set up to oversee the training of the Ethiopian armed forces. By 1970 MAAG consisted of one hundred military advisors and six civilian technicians and was responsible for the training of four divisions, twenty-four thousand men. Kagnev Station was then staffed by 1800 personnel and their 1400 dependents.¹

Through 1974 Ethiopia had received \$180 million in military assistance, the largest amount from the U.S. to any country in Africa.² Over twenty-five thousand Ethiopian soldiers had

¹Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence In The Horn Of Africa (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 49, Citing U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee On Foreign Relations, United States Security Commitments And Agreements Abroad, Part 8, Ethiopia, Hearings, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, June 1, 1970, Senate Report.

²Ibid., p. 51.

received some training in the United States,⁴ including Mengistu Haile Mariam who twice had been in the U.S. for ordnance training.⁵ By 1974 Ethiopia fielded a large, well-trained army, the second largest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Economic aid to Ethiopia from the U.S. was also substantial, \$228 million through 1970.⁶ Many Ethiopian students, educated partly by Peace Corps volunteers, had studied in the U.S. The Peace Corps contingent in Ethiopia was the largest on the continent and was heavily involved in primary education until 1970, when it was withdrawn from those school duties because of increasingly radical student demonstrations against its involvement.⁷

In 1973 Haile Selassie visited Washington to obtain expanded military aid to compensate for the growing Somali buildup ~~to the south~~ under the sponsorship of the Soviet Union. He returned to Addis Ababa with promises of \$12.5 million in grants, \$11 million in credits, and \$5 million in cash purchases for arms the next year. This was far below his shopping list of \$500 million,⁸

⁴Edgar O'Ballance, Tracks Of The Bear (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1982), p. 118. *Presidio*

⁵David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia: Empire In Revolution (New York: Africana, 1978), pp. 134-135. On page 167 the authors mention that the American Embassy had reports that Mengistu bore a grudge against the U.S. for a racial incident that occurred during his training there. ~~There has been found no other evidence to confirm this.~~

⁶Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 49. Citing U.S. Security Commitments.

⁷Paul Henze, "Getting A Grip On The Horn," In The Pattern Of Soviet Conduct In The Third World (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 158-159, Edited by Walter Laquer. Henze mentions that this was a widespread phenomena in countries with Peace Corps contingents and remains as yet unstudied.

⁸Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 50.

but significantly above the level of \$9.5 million received as a grant in 1973.⁹ Clearly, the United States was responsive, but not overly so.

Thus, entering 1974, Ethiopian-American relations were based mainly on one thing, military support in return for *the* Kagnew Station.¹⁰ However, advancing technology had brought the U.S. to the point where Kagnew would no longer be needed. In October 1973 it was announced that the facility would be closed before 1978.¹¹ The stage was set for the lessening of U.S. interest in Ethiopia and the resulting deterioration of our relationship with that country.

⁹Bereket Habte Selassie, Conflict And Intervention In The Horn Of Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), p. 138. Citing Fred Halliday, "U.S. Policy In The Horn Of Africa: Aboullia Or Proxy Intervention?," Review Of African Political Economy (September, 1978).

¹⁰Ethiopia also occupies an important geographic location on the entrance to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. It was also an important counter to Soviet-supported countries as Somalia and Egypt. *such*

¹¹Paul Henze, "Russians And The Horn: Opportunism And The Long View," Unpublished paper prepared for The Council On Foreign Relations (February, 1979), p. 16.

The Soviet Union And Ethiopia

Until 1974, the Soviet Union was much less visible than the United States in Ethiopia, which was only natural given our lease relationship. Diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union had been resumed at the legation level in April 1943 and then raised to embassy level in May 1956. In 1947 the Soviet Red Cross opened a hospital in Addis Ababa. Haile Selassie paid a state visit to Moscow in July 1959, the first African head of state to have done so, and returned with a \$100 million loan.¹² Selassie's intention at the time seems to have been to play off Moscow against Washington, in order to get more aid from a reluctant U.S. Congress. The Emperor was successful as the American commitment to train and equip the Ethiopian army was increased from three to four divisions.¹³

In 1962-63 a polytechnical institute, a gift of the Soviet Union, for one thousand students was opened in Ethiopia.¹⁴ At first it was staffed partly by Americans, due to a shortage of Russians able to instruct in English, but was later manned completely by Russians.¹⁵ An oil refinery, Ethiopia's only one, was set up in Assab on the Red Sea coast in Eritrea and

¹² Charles B. McLane, Soviet-African Relations (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1974), pp. 42-47.

¹³ Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 27.

¹⁴ Anatolii Gromyko, "Soviet-Ethiopian Ties," Soviet Law And Government, v.19, no.3 (Winter, 1980-81), p. 89.

¹⁵ McLane, Soviet-African Relations, p. 42.

Forward
Soviets

began operations in 1967. This was another gift of the Soviet Union, an obsolete facility appropriated from Rumania after World War II, set up in Baku, and then again set up in Ethiopia,¹⁶ probably the world's most travelled refinery.

The Soviet Union also engaged to some extent in clandestine support for the Eritrean rebels in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Paul Henze described a variety of channels through which this aid made its way to the guerillas, mostly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.¹⁷ Ethiopian students studying in the West were also targets for communist propaganda to promote an Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Movement (EPRM). They were then used to increase student agitation within Ethiopia.¹⁸

On the surface then, Soviet-Ethiopian relations until 1974 appeared respectfully cordial. The Soviet Union, however, seems to have been making the most of any chance that it could get to exert a destabilizing influence on Ethiopian society. ~~There~~ has not yet been found ~~any~~ evidence linking the Soviets to the events leading to the revolution in 1974, but in the words of Henze, "clandestine encouragement and guidance--if successful-- can hardly be expected to produce evidence, especially when carried out by experienced Soviet or East European operators."¹⁹

¹⁶Henze, "Russians And The Horn," p. 3.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12., and Henze, "Getting A Grip," pp. 156-7.

¹⁸Paul Henze, "Communism And Ethiopia," Problems Of Communism, v.30, no.3(May-June, 1981), p. 59. See also his "Getting A Grip," pp. 158-9. Henze seems to be the only scholar on the Ethiopian revolution to have pointed out these connections.

¹⁹Henze, "Getting A Grip," p. 163.

The Soviet Union's few economic projects in Ethiopia, its^{its} staffing of a technical institute, clandestine support for the Eritrean insurgency, and^{its} propaganda targeted at students abroad may at first glance indicate that Soviet influence in Ethiopia was minimal; however, when you place these activities in a large population that is ninety-five percent illiterate, the limited opportunities that the Soviets had were targeted at the important elements of Ethiopian society.

Possibly the main channel through which the Soviet Union exerted a destabilizing effect on Ethiopia was by its military support for President Numeiry of the Sudan and Siad Barre of Somalia.

TABLE 1

ARMS DELIVERIES TO SUB-SAHARAN STATES
(Millions of Dollars)

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Ethiopia	16	15	14	14	13	12	33	52	430
Somalia	16	15	0	28	53	109	77	105	80
Sudan	32	61	7	28	13	36	0	5	10

SOURCE: Edward Laurance, "Soviet Arms Transfers In The 1980s; Declining Influence In Sub-Saharan Africa," in Arms For Africa, ed. Bruce Arlinghaus (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983), p. 41, Citing U.S. Arms Control And Disarmament Agency, World Military Expenditures And Arms Transfers, 1969-1978.

NOTE: The figures for Somalia represent Soviet arms deliveries. The Sudan received Soviet arms until 1976. Ethiopia received U.S. arms through 1976.

The Soviet relationship with the Sudan, until the 1971 communist coup attempt, was a major avenue through which the Soviet Union was able to support the Eritrean rebels and kept an unfriendly

keep

neighbor on Ethiopia's western border. The Soviet Union had been providing military aid to Somalia since 1963. The years 1972 and 1973 brought a significant increase in the level of that aid. Given the Somali commitment to an irridentist policy of militarily reclaiming their ethnic lands which included the Ogaden region of southern Ethiopia, Ethiopia was also faced with guerilla warfare in the South. As a result, Ethiopia was surrounded by hostile Soviet-supported neighbors and forced to combat guerilla insurgencies in both the North and the South.

Haile Selassie's trip to Washington in 1973 for increased U.S. military aid is proof that the Soviet Union's support for Ethiopia's neighbors was having a destabilizing effect on Ethiopia.

By 1974 Soviet-Ethiopian ties were, on one level, formally correct and, at another level, subtly destabilizing.

China And Ethiopia

A brief note here is in order on Ethiopian-Chinese ties, since a factor in explaining the later motivation of the Soviet Union to establish an overwhelming presence in Ethiopia may have been to end those ties.

Chou En-Lai's visit to Ethiopia in January 1964 did not result in diplomatic relations, because of well founded suspicions of Chinese support for the Eritrean guerillas. In 1970 relations were established and ^{were} followed by a state visit by Haile Selassie to China the following year. Selassie successfully reached an agreement with the Chinese to cease their support for the Eritrean guerillas and also obtained an eighty-four million dollar loan for rural electrification and irrigation projects.²⁰

By the onset of the revolution in Ethiopia, there did exist the possibility of ~~an~~ increased Chinese in Ethiopia.

²⁰ McLane, Soviet-African Relations, pp. 42-43.

EARLY STEPS IN THE REVOLUTION
1974-1976

Domestic Developments

Next, we turn our attention to the revolutionary developments within Ethiopia over three years, 1974-1976. By presenting just the internal unfolding of the revolution, then overlaying that with, first, the American response and, then, the Soviet one, we can observe the development of Soviet-Ethiopian ties in these crucial years and perhaps notice a pattern.

✓ Mutinies and unrest in the Ethiopian army because of harsh service conditions, low pay, spiraling inflation, and a resulting strike by taxi drivers, student and teacher demonstrations over educational reform and high prices, drought and famine coupled with administrative ineptitude, and uncertainty over the upcoming monarchical succession, are a number of factors²¹ which led to general unrest in Ethiopia and the resulting "February Revolution" of 1974. On February 27, 1974 Prime Minister Akilulu Habte-Wold, who had held his position for fifteen years, resigned and was replaced by Oxford-educated Endelkachew Makonnen.²²

²¹ Patrick Gilkes, "Ethiopia- A Real Revolution?," The World Today, v.31, no.1 (January, 1975), pp. 15-17.

²² David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 30.

Confusing Mr. Tucci - sounds like it's all about the army

Two weeks later the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU) organized a three day general strike,²³ the first successful general strike in Africa's history. Wildcat strikes and demonstrations by Muslims, Christians, and students followed, as the emperor's position of unquestioned authority seemed to be weakening. Order was finally restored in late April when Makonnen obtained the support of the military through a coordinating committee of officers.²⁴

In June a group of junior officers, all under the rank of major, decided to disassociate themselves from the former committee and its policy of cooperation with the government. They formed the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army (the Dergue). It was initially believed to consist of 120 representatives who were led by Mengistu Haile Mariam and Atnafu Abate.²⁵

One month later the Dergue moved to establish a more liberal government by arresting Makonnen and appointing a new prime minister.²⁶ Finally, on September 12 Haile Selassie was deposed.

Three days later the Dergue established the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) with Aman Andom as chairman to govern Ethiopia. The civilian cabinet was left virtually intact, as there was no one to assume its administrative functions.²⁷

²³Ibid., p. 3. According to the Ottaways, pp. 22-23, by 1974 CELU numbered about 83,000 in a population of roughly 30 million and was strongest among white collar workers.

²⁴Ibid., p. 4. ²⁵Ibid., pp. 52-53. ²⁶Ibid., p. 55.

²⁷Ibid., p. 58. This is only a very condensed version of

Aman or the Council?

What's that?

What followed this assumption of power by the Dergue was a vivid example of divide, co-opt, coerce, and eliminate-your-opposition tactics, which resulted in the eventual emergence of Mengistu as unquestioned leader of Ethiopia in February 1977. The first organization to come under attack by the Dergue was CELU. The proclamation that accompanied the deposition of the emperor had also banned strikes and unauthorized public meetings. Preparing for a broader role in the government, CELU leaders were suspicious of the military government's intentions and threatened a general strike. The Dergue responded by arresting the top leadership of the union, which effectively silenced it temporarily.²⁸

Dissension within the Dergue surfaced in the following months, culminating in a shootout on the night of November 23 in which Chairman Andom was killed resisting arrest. That same night sixty political prisoners, largely former ministers, were executed. Teferi Banti was elected the new chairman of PMAC five days later.²⁹ Reportedly, the disagreement within the Dergue centered on three issues: the political prisoners, on which Andom opposed execution in principle; the form that the ruling

events occurring in Ethiopia during these three years. It is not merely a condensation of the Ottaway's account. There are other accounts of these events including: John Markakis and Nega Ayele, Class And Revolution In Ethiopia; Raul Vivo Valdes, Ethiopia's Revolution; Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, The Ethiopian Revolution; and René Lefort, Ethiopia; An Heretical Revolution. Most accounts of the revolution appear either too sympathetic and uncritical of the revolution or too critical and inaccurate. The Ottaway's account seems the fairest and most accurate.

²⁸Ibid., p. 59. ²⁹Ibid., pp. 61-62.

Give full bibliog. info

committee should take, on which Andom felt that a smaller, more workable junta should be set up; and lastly, the question of the Eritrean rebellion, on which Andom, being an Eritrean, favored a negotiated settlement.³⁰ Having settled its internal problems, the Dergue next moved against Eritrea, dispatching a five thousand man unit of reinforcements to crush the rebellion, which they have been unsuccessful in doing to date.³¹

The Dergue had also to contend with the continued radical behavior of students and teachers. As a result of continuing student demonstrations in September over their exclusion from the government, the Dergue declared that the university and the last two years of high school would not reopen. The students were ordered into the countryside to prepare the peasantry for the Dergue's new government.³² In December the National Work Campaign for the Development Through Cooperation (ZEMECH) was officially launched to prepare the peasants for the upcoming land reform.³³ The students would be the means ~~to~~ educating the peasantry, and they soon began to arrive in the countryside.

The day before ~~the~~ ZEMECH was launched, December 20, the Dergue announced that its motto Ethiopia Tikdem, "Ethiopia First"

³⁰Suzanne Katsikas, The Arc Of Socialist Revolutions (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1982), pp. 131-132.

³¹David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 61.

³²Katsikas, The Arc, p. 131.

³³Raul Valdes Vivo, Ethiopia's Revolution (New York: International Publishers, 1978), p. 119.

which had been declared in July, meant "equality, self-reliance, the dignity of labor, the supremacy of the common good, and the indivisibility of Ethiopian unity." This hebrette seawinet (Ethiopian socialism) certainly appears to have been a "homespun ideology"³⁴ designed to meet the unique conditions of Ethiopia that contained as yet no apparent symptoms of Marxist-Leninist thought.

Early 1975 brought nationalization of most of the private sector, when 101 banks, insurance companies, and enterprises were brought under state control from the small private sector that had previously existed.³⁵ In March a radical land reform that nationalized all rural land was promulgated, and the formation of new peasant associations was announced.³⁶ In one bold maneuver, this destroyed the old feudalistic order, the basis of power of the aristocracy, and gave the students something to work for in the countryside.

Meanwhile tensions continued within CELU, as factions fought over what course of action the union should take in its dealings with the government. This internal struggle provided the Dergue with a convenient excuse to close CELU headquarters in May.³⁷

³⁴David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 63.

³⁵Michael Chege, "The Revolution Betrayed: Ethiopia, 1974-1979," Journal Of Modern African Studies, v.17, no.3 (September, 1979), p. 370.

³⁶David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 67

³⁷Ibid., p. 106.

All urban lands and dwellings were nationalized that July, and urban dweller associations, kebelles, were formed for administrative and governing purposes.³⁸ Also that summer a clandestine radical party of Marxist intellectuals, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), emerged and began circulating a newspaper. This movement would come to figure prominently in the ensuing ideological debates concerning the formation of a political party.

A state of emergency was declared by the Dergue on September 30 after an employee of the Ethiopian airline was caught distributing CELU demands to form a political party and threats of a general strike. A wave of arrests of teachers, students, and union officials followed, totalling fifteen hundred civilians.³⁹ Teachers and students had become more critical of the Dergue that summer, fearing educational reform and the continued closing of the schools. Students had also been agitating amongst the peasantry to arouse them against the military government.⁴⁰

CELU had been effectively destroyed after its abortive confrontation with the military, and in December the Dergue formally disbanded it and proclaimed a new All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU), which was under government control.⁴¹ Another decree was then issued that strengthened and expanded the activities of the peasant associations in the rural areas.⁴²

³⁸Ibid., p. 78. ³⁹Ibid., p. 111. ⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 108-109.

⁴¹Ibid., 111.

⁴²Vivo, Ethiopia's Revolution, p. 121.

This decree also established a pyramidal organizational structure from the national to the district level. The lack of trained administrators would prevent this structure from immediately operating effectively.

A secret "Political Bureau" was formed by the Dergue sometime that December and entrusted with the task of beginning a political party. French-educated Haile Fida, who had recently returned from abroad and opened a book store selling Marxist-Leninist works, was appointed the chairman of this committee.⁴³ Beginning in February 1976, a surprisingly free atmosphere of ideological debate prevailed in Ethiopia, which eventually split the radicals into two groups.⁴⁴ The EPRP propounded the position that socialism could only be achieved through a mass democratic movement, headed, of course, by themselves, and demanded that the military hand over all state power. The Political Bureau argued that the present military government could be used to achieve socialism immediately and that support of the Dergue was necessary.⁴⁵

After months of debate, Mengistu appeared on Ethiopian television April 20 to announce a National Democratic Revolution and the establishment of a Socialist Ethiopia based on the principles of scientific socialism.⁴⁶ Ethiopia was not yet a true socialist country, but it is significant that the Dergue was now openly expounding the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 118.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 120.

A Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA) was set up ~~at~~ ^{it was} the same time ~~as the announcement to~~ begin the process leading to the formation of a political party.⁴⁷ A new Political Bureau, led by Haile Fida and Negede Gobeze, was to head the new office.

In May 1976, the Dergue, spurred by Mengistu and Abate, organized a massive peasant march on Eritrea to wipe out the rebels. It ended in failure. At the same time, Chairman Bante ~~had~~ announced a new nine-point Eritrean policy with the hopes of negotiating a settlement.⁴⁸ The power struggle culminated in a July purge. The Dergue also reorganized into a three tier system based on the Soviet model: a congress, a forty man central committee, and a seventeen man standing committee. The positions occupied within the standing committee, in decreasing order of power, were: Chairman Terefi Bante, Secretary General Alemayehu Haile, First Vice-Chairman Mengistu, and Second Vice-Chairman Atnafu Abate.⁴⁹

One question that remains unanswred about this period is ~~just~~ what exactly was going on within the armed forces? No scholar seems to have even hinted at any developments of widespread discontent in the military. Given the large scale expansion of the army to maintain civil order and supress the revolts in Eritrea and the Ogaden and given that Ethiopian society was in a state of flux and disorder, ~~then~~ why didn't the Ethiopian military experience similar disruptions? How did

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 121.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 141-142.

First in regard to what? Add something here

page 19.

the Dergue control its military forces? Another question that we might ask is, whether the Dergue in emasculating its opposition was merely responding to their challenge or was instead carrying out a preconceived plan of action to achieve total domination of Ethiopia?

First, the land reform and nationalization decrees seem to have been a sine qua non that went along with the deposition of the emperor. In that sense then they were planned and undertaken to destroy certain elements of Ethiopian society. Knowing that these were only junior officers with some military training, How did they possess the ability to draft such detailed and all-encompassing radical reforms? Certainly there must have been some outside influence helping them.

Second, the Dergue did not negotiate with any elements that manifested grievances against their rule. They may have borrowed some of their opponents ideas, but they were inflexibly committed to their rule and to their path of transforming Ethiopia along the lines of "scientific socialism." In this respect they also exhibit characteristics of a planned march to power, in that all groups that were identified as oppositionary were crushed when the moment was ripe, and not before. The Dergue would have only risked defeat if it had tried to eliminate all opposition in one swoop. They had learned well the lessons of the Bolshevik rise to power.

Third, the Dergue did exhibit aspects of a planned consolidation of power in the manner in which it tried to establish

Not clear

channels of control over Ethiopian society. The formation of both peasant associations and neighborhood associations in pyramidal administrative structures shows that the Dergue was consciously trying to form its own revolutionary mechanism to bypass and replace the existing state apparatus.]

(The debates on the formation of a political party and on its role in the government also shows that the Dergue was planning to form a party as another base of support, but it would be on their terms and their's alone.

Thus if the Dergue was never seriously challenged for control of the Ethiopian state, it was because they had carefully planned and consolidated their rise to power.

The American Response

The first reaction of the United States to the events transpiring in Ethiopiaⁱⁿ 1974-1976, might aptly be labelled as indifferent. The events in Vietnam, of Watergate, and in Angola held our pre-eminent attention, not those in backward Ethiopia. In January 1974 the American ambassador to Ethiopia became ill and left his post. He was not replaced until March 1975, when Arthur Hummel, Jr. assumed the post. Hummel remained in Ethiopia until the following July. Again the post was vacant until June 1978 when Frederick Chapin arrived in Addis Ababa. Chapin lasted until 1980, when he too left unreplaced. Thus, throughout these critical years, the United States was without ambassadorial representation in Ethiopia for significant periods of time, a true indication of our interest in the country. Also, our recognition of the growing technical obsolescence of Kagnev Station and of the impending transfer of those facilities to Diego Garcia left the United States with no real basis for close interest in Ethiopian affairs.

The U.S. government did not in effect "oppose the Dergue's reforms of 1975, since United States business had no major economic interests to fall under the Dergue's nationalization programs." Additionally, the U.S. was uncertain as to the Dergue's political orientation⁵⁰ and should have recognized the need for reform in the feudalistic Ethiopian economy.

⁵⁰Katsikas, The Arc, p. 151.

In the Spring of 1975, following a major guerilla offensive on the city of Asmara in Eritrea, the Dergue requested from the U.S. emergency military aid of twenty-five to twenty-seven million dollars for ammunition. The situation was critical, yet the American government did not approve the aid until that fall and then for only \$11.6 million.⁵¹ The United States did continue to provide economic and military aid to Ethiopia during these years. *Which years? figures*

TABLE 2

U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA
(Millions of Dollars)

Year	Grants	Sales
1970	10.49	-
1971	11.76	-
1972	10.64	-
1973	9.44	-
1974	11.72	7.44
1975	12.99	22.13
1976	7.28	135.34

SOURCE: Bereket Habte Selassie, Conflict And Intervention In The Horn Of Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), p. 138. Citing Fred Halliday, "U.S. Policy In The Horn Of Africa: Aboulia Or Proxy Intervention?" Review Of African Political Economy (September, 1978).

The figures show that the U.S. was willing to provide continued military aid, but in the form of sales, not outright grants, which indicated a wary approach to the new regime. According to Colin Legum, Washington saw "the limited supply of arms to Ethiopia as serving three purposes: a means of checking a further Soviet arms buildup in Somalia, a discouragement to the Dergue from looking to Moscow for substantial military aid, and

⁵¹ David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 167.

support for pro-Western elements in the Dergue who were engaged in resisting the communists."⁵²

Thus the United States continued to provide some aid to Ethiopia but essentially adopted a disinterested wait-and-see attitude. The American government did not make any significant attempts to influence the course of the Ethiopian revolution nor did it make any effort to understand that revolution.

⁵² Colin Legum, "Angola And The Horn Of Africa," in Diplomacy Of Power, ed. Stephen Kaplan (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 613.

A broad statement. What are you going to do?

The Soviet Reaction

How did the Soviet Union officially react to the Ethiopian revolution?

Soviet naval diplomacy was at work when the destroyer Dalnevostochniy Komsomolets paid a six day visit to the port of Massawa in Eritrea on February 13-19, 1974.⁵³ Moscow radio reported that during these days tension was running high in Ethiopia and there was unrest in the military. A commentary attributed the "acute political situation" to "unsolved social, economic, and ethnic problems."⁵⁴

By July Pravda recognized implicitly the vanguard of the revolution, when it stated that the "armed forces are firmly resolved to carry through reform, relying on the support of the masses. The armed forces have already taken the first steps in this direction."⁵⁵

Then in early September, TASS lauded "the process of awakening the national democratic forces of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is freeing itself from the social order oppressing and paralyzing the country."⁵⁶ Radio commentary also called attention "to the fact that there has been no outside interference in Ethiopian affairs at this stage" and pointed out that "there

⁵³ Foreign Broadcast Information Service- Soviet Union (FBIS-SOV), February 12, 1974, p. H1.

⁵⁴ FBIS-SOV; February 26, 1974, p. H1; February 28, 1974, p. H1; March 4, 1974, p. H3.

⁵⁵ "Step By Step," Current Digest Of The Soviet Press (CDSP), v.26, no.30(August 24, 1974), p. 27. A translation of Pravda, July 27, 1974.

⁵⁶ FBIS-SOV, September 3, 1974, p. H4-5.

Hereafter cited as

is still another aspect to events in Ethiopia. They are indicative of a tendency in Africa toward replacing outdated concepts by new and more progressive ones."⁵⁷

Announcing the deposition of Haile Selassie, TASS commented unenthusiastically, "that at any rate Ethiopia appears to be on threshold of changes that will gradually break up its traditional political structure."⁵⁸ It appeared that Moscow did not know what to make of the new regime.

The next significant commentary on events in Ethiopia appeared in Pravda in August 1975, when it was announced that "Ethiopia is planning to create in the near future a national political party based on the support of the workers, the peasantry, and the progressive intelligentsia."⁵⁹ I would assume that this last category included the Dergue. Interestingly, this Soviet commentary appeared before the Dergue actually formed, or announced, a committee to begin the process of forming a political party.

The first important visit by an Ethiopian delegation to Moscow, since the revolution, occurred in July 1976. Mogus Wolde-Michael, chairman of the economic subcommittee of PMAC, led the delegation, which was received by Alexei Kosygin, Andrei Gromyko, Boris Ponomarev, and Ivan Arkhipov.

⁵⁷ FBIS-SOV, September 5, 1974, p. H1.

⁵⁸ FBIS-SOV, September 18, 1974, p. H1.

⁵⁹ "Nationalization Of Rural Property," CDSP, v.27, no.33 (September 10, 1975), p. 16. A translation of Pravda, August 16, 1975.

Identify them

all of Pravda?

The Soviet side remarked that the people in the USSR salute the positive changes and progressive reforms in Ethiopia and follow with sympathy the Ethiopian people's efforts toward social rejuvenation of their country.

The Soviet side expressed its readiness to send a group of experts in the immediate future for purposes of joint studying with the appropriate Ethiopian organization areas for mutually advantageous economic and technical cooperation.⁶⁰

There is no mention of either Mengistu or Leonid Brezhnev being involved at this point, nor does the above announcement show any real Soviet commitment yet to Ethiopia. Wolde-Michael, who led the delegation, was later killed in the February 3 purge that signalled Mengistu's final rise to power.

Marina Ottaway reported that with the Soviet Union's rising interest in Ethiopia, Soviet lecturers on Marxist-Leninist ideology began appearing at Addis Ababa University in late summer 1976.⁶¹

In December Moscow extended \$100 million in military assistance to the Dergue.⁶² This represented a sharp turnabout from September 1974, when the Dergue had rejected a tentative offer from the Soviet Union to replace the United States as Ethiopia's supplier of arms.⁶³

⁶⁰"Ethiopian Delegation Visits USSR," CDSP, v.28, no.28 (August 11, 1976), p. 15. A translation of Pravda, July 14, 1976.

⁶¹Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 106.

⁶²U.S. Congress, House, Committee On Foreign Affairs, Soviet Policy And United States Response In The Third World, Committee Print (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 58.

⁶³Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 613.

Which years? Don't make your reader
remember something 20 pages back, page 27.

Summary

Very little has been written on Soviet activities toward Ethiopia during these three years. Certainly, Soviet attention was largely preoccupied with Angola; however, once the USSR was assured that the U.S. would not intervene there, Soviet interest in Ethiopia picked up as evidenced by the delegation visit and the offer of military supplies in 1976.

Should we take Marina Ottaway's statement as a correct appraisal of the situation in Ethiopia? As an eyewitness, she wrote; "there is no evidence that it [the Soviet Union] was involved behind the scene. It is possible that there were contacts early on between Dergue members and the Soviet Union, but there is no evidence that they were in any way decisive."⁶⁴

Au contraire, one should reply. Any student who has studied the Bolshevik rise to power, Stalin's consolidation of that power, or the imposition of communism on the countries of Eastern Europe after World War II cannot help but be struck by the marked similarities with the Ethiopian case. If most of the Dergue were graduates of the Holetta Military School, which was a one year school for non-commissioned officers, then their educational background was probably not broad enough to have exposed them to Marxist-Leninist thought. However, once in power, the Dergue did not develop into a right-wing military dictatorship, as is the case in many military coups, but instead moved increasingly toward the left, ie. they became more "progressive."

⁶⁴ Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 103.

influence?

page 28.

I would argue that the Soviet presence is evident in the nationalization and land reform decrees, both in their extent and in their attempt to develop a new administrative structure circumventing the state apparatus. The tactics used by the Dergue to consolidate power and to eliminate any opposition also bear the Soviet imprint.

A closer, more critical analysis of these years is required before a definitive statement can be made about the role of the Soviet Union in guiding the Ethiopian revolution. Let me say that this period does bear an uncanny resemblance to other communist seizures of power, including the most famous, the Soviet one. Whatever we decide, the question becomes moot as we move into our next period, 1977-1978, when the Soviet Union intervened massively and dramatically.

Who's he? If you use his name, identify him,
Somebody important?

page 29.

THE REVOLUTION IN PERIL
1977-1978

Somalia and The Sudan

one writer,
According to ~~Mohammed Ayoob~~, "Soviet involvement in the Horn has evolved partly from its involvement in the Middle East conflict, partly from its desire to find counterweights to U.S.-supported regimes in Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia, and partly determined by its newly acquired active role in the Indian Ocean and its desire to find facilities on the Indian Ocean littoral."⁶⁵ The first opportunity to come the Soviet's way was Somalia, when in 1963 ~~they~~ outbid a Western military aid offer of eighteen million dollars by offering thirty million. China, simultaneously, was offering a twenty-three million dollar economic loan.⁶⁶ In 1968 Somalia and Ethiopia opened tentative negotiations in order to reduce border tensions, but that ended when Siad Barre, who was committed to ~~militarily~~ reuniting all ethnic Somalis in one nation, ascended to power in the fall of 1969. As a result, Somali-Soviet ties grew closer.⁶⁷ The following year, all U.S. aid to Somalia was cut off, because ships flying the Somali flag had been delivering supplies to

⁶⁵ Mohammed Ayoob, "The Horn Of Africa," in Conflict And Intervention In The Third World, ed. Mohammed Ayoob (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 142.

⁶⁶ Roy Lyons, "The USSR, China, And The Horn Of Africa," Review Of African Political Economy, no.12 (May-August, 1978), p. 9.

⁶⁷ Henze, "Russians And The Horn," pp. 4-5.

Which one?

Awkward
North Vietnam,⁶⁸ which led Somalia into further dependence on the Soviet Union.

Identify him
During a state visit by N. Podgorny to Mogadishu in July 1974, Somalia signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, the first black African state to do so. The Soviet Union wrote off much of the previously accumulated Somali debt and in return received basing rights in the port of Berbera, at an airfield near Mogadishu, and at a communications facility near Kismayu.⁶⁹ The USSR also provided Somalia with petroleum and was involved in some economic projects.⁷⁰

The Soviet investment in Somalia was estimated to have reached \$450 million by 1977,⁷¹ of which more than \$300 million in military aid was sent after the Ethiopian revolution.⁷² If the Soviet Union was in fact guiding the Dergue along a communist path, the Soviets were also arming Ethiopia's southern neighbor, Somalia *which* was committed to military action to reclaim the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. By 1976 approximately four thousand Soviet military and civilian advisors were in Somalia.⁷³

⁶⁸Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 70.

⁶⁹Steven David, "Realignment In The Horn: The Soviet Advantage," International Security, v.4, no.2(Fall, 1979), p. 72.

⁷⁰Lyons, "The USSR, China, And The Horn," p. 10.

⁷¹Arthur Gavshon, Crisis In Africa (New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 267.

⁷²Henze, "Getting A Grip," p. 168. Citing USACDA, World Military Expenditures, 1970-1979. See also Table 1 on page 8.

⁷³Henze, "Communism And Ethiopia," p. 61.

By the mid-1970s ^{the USSR}

Berbera complex comprised a deep water port, housing for about 1500 persons, a communications facility, storage facilities for an estimated 175,000 barrels of fuel, an airfield eventually to have 13,000 to 15,000 feet of surfaced runway, and a facility for the handling and storage of tactical missiles.⁷⁴

Why did the Soviets continue to pour military aid into Somalia, especially after the Ethiopian revolution? Somalia was not being seriously threatened by any of its neighbors at the time, in fact it was Somalia that was doing the threatening. Without Soviet arms, Somalia could never have developed to such a position. Perhaps, the Soviets offered to brake Somali intentions in return for some sort of concessions from the Dergue, and that may have been the reason for the ^{Dergue's} trip to Moscow in July 1976. There is no evidence, however, that anything was agreed to then between the two countries, as the Somali buildup continued and no Soviet-Ethiopian arms deals were reported.

Already though by the end of 1976 there were a few signs that the Soviet-Somali relationship was not quite ~~so~~ perfect. There were reports that the Somalis felt that the Soviet advisors were far from ideal guests in their country, ~~that they~~ were dissatisfied with having to purchase inferior Soviet-made goods, and ~~that they~~ were unhappy with the meager Soviet economic aid program.⁷⁵ Another indication of the strange

⁷⁴David Albright, "Soviet Policy [In Africa]," Problems Of Communism, v.27, no.1 (January-February, 1978), p. 30. Citing the International Institute For Strategic Studies, Strategic Survey, 1976.

⁷⁵David, "Realignment In The Horn," p. 76.

nature of their relations was the congressional field trip to Somalia in mid-1975 at the request of Siad Barre to examine and determine the extent of the Soviet facilities at Berbera. Was the refusal by the Soviets to allow access to the facility a signal from Siad Barre to the U.S. he wanted a change, or was it a ploy to get further aid and concessions from the Soviets? Whatever we decide, the Soviets could not have been too pleased to find U.S. congressmen poking around their naval weaponry.

Another sore spot in Somali-Soviet relations was Somalia's membership in the Arab League. Somalia had joined the League in February 1974, the first non-Arabic state to do so, under the sponsorship of Saudi Arabia. This was before the Treaty of Friendship had been signed with the USSR.⁷⁶ The Soviet Union became increasingly sensitive to rumours of Saudi proposals to lure Somalia away from the Soviet Union. Arab aid to Somalia was significant, especially after ^{the} entry into the Arab League.

TABLE 3

ARAB AID TO ETHIOPIA
(Millions of Dollars)

<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
5.5	123.7	90.8	41.4	345.9

SOURCE: Robert and Panda Mertz, Arab Aid To Sub-Saharan Africa (Munich: Kaiser-Grunewald, 1983), p. 281.

Despite these possible seeds of discontent, the relationship remained mutually advantageous with the Soviet's access to bases

⁷⁶ Ibid.

in Somalia assured and with Somalia's continued supply of Soviet weaponry guaranteed.

The Sudan also played some role in the events of the Ethiopian revolution and thus merits brief mention. The Soviet Union had previously exerted some degree of influence in the Sudan. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the Soviets were able to aid the Eritrean rebels through the Sudan, and after Numeiri rose to power in 1969 Soviet presence in the Sudan further increased. By 1970 there were approximately two thousand Soviet military advisors in the country.⁷⁷ An attempted coup by the local communist party failed in 1971, and relations with the USSR soured somewhat. Numeiri, however, remained dependent on the Soviet Union for military supplies.

The last item to be mentioned about the Sudan is an attempted Libyan coup against Numeiri in July 1976. That year the Dergue approached Libya about ceasing ^{its} Libyan support for the Eritrean rebels. Colonel Khadafy agreed, with the stipulation that Ethiopian territory be used as a training and staging area for the upcoming coup attempt. It nearly succeeded, but with the failure Numeiri decided to openly support both the Eritrean guerillas and the Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), which was the conservative opposition to the Dergue operating in northwest Ethiopia.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Henze, "Russians And The Horn," pp. 5-6.

⁷⁸ Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 113.

War on the Horn of Africa

The events of these two years, 1977 and 1978, might easily be termed the highpoint of the Ethiopian revolution, not from an internal aspect, but because of the pre-eminent role that the superpowers played in responding to and shaping the course of events on the Horn of Africa. The Dergue, surrounded by increasingly hostile countries and denied appropriate American support, turned to the Soviet Union for aid, and the Soviets responded massively. Somalia, bound by a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union and dependent on it for military aid, attempted to turn to the West for aid during its offensive against Ethiopia. Somalia was denied that aid but still abrogated the treaty with the Soviets, despite losing all Soviet military aid. Did the Soviet Union actively perpetuate the crisis on the Horn, thereby leading Ethiopia into alliance with the Soviets?

On February 4, 1977 Mengistu emerged as the new chairman of the Dergue. According to a TASS statement of the same day, a fascist coup, led by a number of prominent Dergue members, was exposed and prevented from seizing power by Mengistu.⁷⁹ The announcement by the Soviet press was notable for both the speed with which it was issued, its accuracy as it accurately named the slain persons, and its labeling as a fascist coup the purge of the chairman, general secretary, and others of the Dergue. The Ottaways suggest that the role of the Soviet Union in

⁷⁹FBIS-SOV, February 4, 1977, p. H1, TASS statement of February 3, 1977.

Mengistu's seizure of power remains unclear, especially in view of the fact that within twenty-four hours Mengistu received both a personal message of congratulations from Fidel Castro and assurances of support from the Soviet Ambassador Anatolii Ratanov.⁸⁰ The speed of this recognition by Castro, Ratanov, and TASS broadcasts leaves little doubt that the Soviet Union was not uninformed of Mengistu's intentions and was prepared to support him.

It was now the turn of the United States to recognize Mengistu, and on February 25 the Carter administration, singling out ~~Argentina, Uruguay, and Ethiopia~~ for human rights violations, announced a reduction of U.S. aid, ~~to Ethiopia~~. Military grants were cancelled, but not ten million dollars of military sales.⁸¹ In the first weeks of March the first thirty Soviet tanks arrived in Ethiopia from South Yemen, the first signs of the December ^{secret} agreement to provide military aid.⁸²

Castro arrived in Addis Ababa on March 14 with plans of forming a "progressive alliance" of countries on the Red Sea, including Ethiopia, South Yemen, Djibouti, and Somalia. The leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia met in Aden two days later.⁸³ Bereket Habte Selassie stated that in a later personal interview, Siad Barre mentioned that the two leaders did not meet face to face, but instead Castro and Podgorny acted as

⁸⁰ David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 168.

⁸¹ Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 615.

⁸² Henze, "Russians And The Horn," p. 24.

⁸³ Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 611.

~~running~~ intermediaries.⁸⁴ The discussions failed, but the presence of both Castro and Podgorny would indicate the significance with which the Kremlin approached the idea of a federation. If it had been achieved, then the Soviets would have had a tremendous political success by obtaining domination of the Straits of Bab-el-Mandab and the Western Indian Ocean.

By mid-April more than one hundred tanks and armored personnel carriers had arrived directly from the Soviet Union.⁸⁵ The United States, not willing to take a back seat to events in Ethiopia, on April 19 informed the Dergue that MAAG was being halved and that an early termination of the Kagnew lease was desired. The Dergue responded within four days by expelling the entire MAAG unit and giving the U.S. ninety-six hours to close Kagnew Station. A Naval Medical Research Unit was also ordered to leave. This chain of events continued in May, when the U.S. retaliated by informing the Dergue that it was reducing its diplomatic staff in Ethiopia by half. The Dergue agreed but insisted that the reduction be made within one week. The U.S. next stopped all military sales to Ethiopia.⁸⁶ Thus by the end of spring U.S. interest in Ethiopia was practically nonexistent, and the Soviet Union had the opportunity to step in.

Meanwhile, the first fifty Cuban advisors had arrived in

⁸⁴Selassie, Conflict And Intervention, p. 201.

⁸⁵David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 168.

⁸⁶David, "Realignment In The Horn," p. 75.

Ethiopia on April 17.⁸⁷ The situation was becoming increasingly tense for Ethiopia, as Sudanese troops were active on the western border, Eritrean rebels fighting in the North, and Somali guerillas in the South. The Dergue accused the United States of withholding previously purchased arms, and turned to Moscow for aid.

Mengistu was in Moscow the first week of May and was received by Leonid Brezhnev, Gromyko, and F. Ustinov.⁸⁸ On May 6 a Declaration on Principles of Friendly Relations Between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Socialist Ethiopia was signed by Podgorny and Mengistu. Besides paragraphs about the strengthening of scientific and technical cooperation, on the renunciation of the use of force, and on the need to lessen international tension, paragraph nine read: "The two sides will not enter into any agreements or undertake other actions that are incompatible with the aims of this declaration."⁸⁹ The joint communique issued at the end of the visit mentioned three other documents that were signed: a Protocol on Economic and Technical Cooperation, an Agreement on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation, and a Consular Convention. The communique also affirmed that "the Soviet side supported the measures taken by

⁸⁷ Ballance, Tracks Of The Bear, p. 120.

⁸⁸ "Mengistu Meets Brezhnev, Gromyko, And Ustinov," CDSF, v.29, no.18(June 1, 1977), p. 10. A translation of Pravda, May 7, 1977.

⁸⁹ "Declaration Of Friendship," CDSF, v.29, no.18(June 1, 1977), p. 11. A translation of Pravda, May 9, 1977.

the PMAC aimed at the democratic resolution of the nationalities question," force is the Dergue's policy. There is one other interesting statement in the communique:

The Soviet Union and Socialist Ethiopia, proceeding from the premise that the Red Sea is a body of water crossed by major international sea-lanes, oppose attempts by certain countries to establish control over the Red Sea in violation of the legitimate rights of the other states and peoples of that region and to the detriment of the interests of international navigation.⁹⁰

What is referred to here is the fear that Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, and Egypt were trying to turn the Red Sea into an Arab lake, which would have seriously affected Soviet shipping through the Suez Canal. Thus the Soviet Union was involved in the Horn of Africa and made its switch to Ethiopia partly to secure Ethiopia's strategic location. The paragraph quoted from the Declaration above is also significant in that it appears to be as close as one can get to an alliance without a formal document.

More importantly, an agreement for military aid of \$500 million was obtained by Mengistu.⁹¹ The magnitude of the amount involved indicated the importance of Ethiopia to Moscow's plans, as it far exceeded the Soviet investment in Somalia over twenty years. Nimrod Novik postulated that the deal was partly financed by Libya, where Mengistu stopped on his return from Moscow, and that the arms would be drawn from the stockpiles

⁹⁰"The Communique," CDSP, v.29, no.18(June 1, 1977), p. 10. A translation of Pravda, May 9, 1977.

⁹¹Marina Ottaway, Soviet And American Influence, p. 114.

of weapons that the USSR had stored in Libya.⁹²

The Sudanese government reacted violently to the news of the Ethiopian-Soviet relationship. Numeiri expelled the last Soviet military advisors in the country, terminated the supply arrangement with the Soviets, requested ^{that} the Soviet Embassy staff be cut in half, concentrated troops on the Ethiopian border, and contracted for an arms deal with the West that was financed by Arab backing. Moscow responded in June by ordering all Sudanese diplomats to leave the Soviet Union.⁹³ Thus the Soviets were willing to risk their relationship with the Sudan, and eventually Somalia too, to gain influence ~~within~~ Ethiopia.

At this point the United States tried to re-entangle itself in the Horn. President Carter announced that he was trying to improve relations with Somalia and dispatched a secret emissary to Mogadishu in mid-June. Dr. Kevin Cahill is said "to have assured Barre that increased Somali backing for the Ogaden guerillas would not be opposed by the United States."⁹⁴ Then on July 12, Barre met with Numeiri and flew on to Riyadh for a three day visit, where he presumably received offers of

⁹² Nimrod, Novik, On The Shores Of Bab Al-Mandab (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, Monograph no. 26, 1979), p. 34. Perhaps the offer of Libyan financing was a gesture of good will after Ethiopian cooperation in the failed 1976 coup attempt.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 35. Citing USSR And Third World, v.7, no.3; and U.S. Congress, House, Committee On Armed Services, Report Of The Delegation To Africa, 96th Congress, 1st Session, 1980, p. 23.

⁹⁴ Katsikas, The Arc, p. 154. Citing Jim Paul, "Struggle In The Horn," MERIP Reports, no.62 (November, 1977).

\$300 million annually from Saudi Arabia and arms from Egypt and the Sudan. When Barre returned to Somalia, the Ogaden erupted in all-out war, and a gradual reduction in Soviet military advisors in Somalia was begun.⁹⁵

At the same time Soviet arms were pouring into Ethiopia at the rate of five plane-loads a week.⁹⁶ The United States on July 26 stated that it was ready "to join other governments in providing military assistance for Somalia to reduce its long-standing reliance on the Soviet Union."⁹⁷ The Americans, British, and French qualified this announcement by saying that the arms could only be used for defensive purposes, but the Somalis had heard what they wanted to hear. By August Moscow was becoming irritated with the Somali refusal to agree to some type of peaceful settlement. President Barre, the General Secretary of Somalia's socialist party, flew to Moscow at the end of August and met with Kosygin, Gromyko, and M. Suslov, but no Brezhnev.⁹⁸ The mission failed as Moscow refused to lessen its support to Ethiopia.

On September 1 the U.S. sealed Somalia's fate, when it announced that it would not supply arms to Somalia nor allow any third party to transfer U.S. arms.⁹⁹ The New York Times the next day reported a further Ethiopian-Soviet arms agreement which was valued at \$385 million and included forty-eight

⁹⁵Novik, On The Shores, p. 36.

⁹⁶Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 615.

⁹⁷Novik, On The Shores, p. 36. Citing the New York Times, July 27, 1977.

⁹⁸Ayoob, "The Horn Of Africa," p. 157.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 154-155.

Put much earlier, when mentioned, he is first

Give name, not initial.

advanced MiG fighters.¹⁰⁰ This deal was announced after the Soviets must have learned about the U.S. decision not to supply arms to Somalia. The Soviet Union, knowing that Somalia could not obtain military supplies from anyone but the USSR, must have believed that they were in a strong position to exert pressure on Somalia and to demand that the Somalis withdraw from the Ogaden and agree to a peaceful settlement. The Soviets would then be in a strong position in both countries. The Somali offensive continued in the Ogaden, but the Ethiopian army stiffened, and a stalemate ensued.

Then on October 19 the Soviet ambassador in Addis Ababa announced that the Soviet Union had ended its supply of arms to Somalia.¹⁰¹ At the end of the month Mengistu flew to both Havana and Moscow. When he returned, the numbers of Cuban advisors in Ethiopia increased from 150 to 400.¹⁰²

Mengistu's deputy was purged on November 12.¹⁰³ Three months earlier Haile Fida and other members of the Political Bureau of POMOA had fled Addis Ababa, were later captured, and then executed by the Dergue. These two events signalled the end of the Dergue's attempt to form a political party for the time being, as Atnafu

¹⁰⁰"New Soviet Arms Deal Reported," New York Times, September 2, 1977, p. 2; U.S. Congress, Soviet Policy And U.S. Response, p.58, also mentions that tanks and missiles were involved in the deal.

¹⁰¹Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 618.

¹⁰²Richard B. Rennek, "Soviet Policy In The Horn Of Africa: The Decision To Intervene," in The Soviet Union In The Third World: Successes And Failures, ed. Robert H. Donaldson (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), p. 139. Citing New York Times, November 15, 1977.

¹⁰³Henze, "Russians And The Horn," p. 28.

Abate, who was executed, was reportedly sympathetic to radical appeals to form a political party.¹⁰⁴ Soviet complicity in the internal maneuverings on the formation of a political party provided its own proof, when in May 1978 the Soviets with Cuban help tried to smuggle Negede Gobeze who was a colleague of Haile Fida into Ethiopia via South Yemen.¹⁰⁵ Mengistu discovered the plot and sent Gobeze back out of the country along with the Cuban ambassador and most of his staff. A new Soviet ambassador soon arrived in Addis Ababa.

*What
purge?* The day after the purge, Somalia abrogated its Treaty of Friendship with the USSR and ordered the Soviets out of Somalia. Four days later General V.I. Petrov, Deputy Comander-in-Chief of Soviet Ground Forces, arrived in Addis Ababa.¹⁰⁶ Also present was General Grigorii Barisov who had been in charge of Soviet military aid in Somalia.¹⁰⁷ The stage had been set for the ensuing airlift of Soviet arms to Ethiopia.

Before the onset of the airlift, sources estimated that there were approximately one hundred Soviet and four hundred

¹⁰⁴The internal Ethiopian maneuverings to form a political party are both complex and confusing. What does appear clear is that Fida and Gobeze had some connection to the Soviet Union and that the Soviets tried to influence this process. I mention these events here to show that the Dergue was continuing its Soviet-style consolidation of power by eliminating all opposition "salami" style.

¹⁰⁵Henze, "Communism And Ethiopia," p. 58.

¹⁰⁶Henze, "Getting A Grip," p. 173.

¹⁰⁷Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 624.

Cuban military advisors in Ethiopia,¹⁰⁸ By this time promises of Soviet aid totalled \$850 million, the sum of the May and September agreement.

The air/ and seallift that occurred next was an impressive demonstration of the Soviet Union's ability to intervene in the Third World. Supplies and manpower were shipped to Ethiopia to decisively tip the scales in favor of the Dergue. The Soviets used over 225 planes, An-12 (Cub) and An-22 (Cock), which was about twelve percent of the entire Soviet transport fleet, to airlift material from bases in southern Russia.¹⁰⁹ The airlift began on November 26 and used three different major air routes by filing false flight plans and by overflying anti-Soviet countries' airspace. One estimate put the number of flights at fifty per day at the height of the airloft.¹¹⁰ Novik estimates that "more than sixty-one thousand tons of equipment, including MiG fighters, T-34 tanks, medium field and anti-tank guns, heavy mortars, SAM-7s, medical supplies, food, and petroleum were shipped into Ethiopia."¹¹¹

A sizeable seallift was also undertaken by the Soviets. Between thirty and fifty Soviet and Bulgarian ships passed through the Suez Canal and unloaded their supplies, including

¹⁰⁸ Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 620.

¹⁰⁹ Ayoob, "The Horn Of Africa," p. 159.

¹¹⁰ Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 621. Citing a U.S. State Department source in the Washington Star, January 17, 1978.

¹¹¹ Novik, On The Shores, p. 44.

tanks, aircraft, missiles, and 122mm artillery.¹¹²

Suddenly in mid-January the airlift ended with three thousand Soviet, Cuban, and East German personnel, ¹ ~~in Ethiopia~~.¹¹³ *the arrival of*

Pravda provided an explanation about the level of assistance to Ethiopia for the Soviet people on January 19.

The truth is the Soviet Union for its part did everything possible to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia. However, when the Somali leaders, contrary to common sense and to the efforts of true friends of the Somali people, began military operations. . . . The Soviet Union, as always in such cases, sided with the victim of the aggression and provided appropriate material and technical assistance.¹¹⁴

By early February sources estimated ^{there to be} three thousand Cubans and one thousand Soviets in Ethiopia, but ^{more} ~~the~~ Cubans were still arriving by sea. By the end of the month the number of Cubans had reached eleven thousand.¹¹⁵ Estimates placed twelve to fifteen thousand Cuban, and fifteen hundred Soviet personnel in Ethiopia by March.¹¹⁶

President Carter sent David Aaron to Addis Ababa in February to ensure that ^{the} Ethiopian forces would not violate the territorial integrity of either Djibouti or Somalia after

¹¹² Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 622.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ "No Soviet Military Aid To Ethiopia," CDSP, v.30, no.3 (February 15, 1978), p. 11. A translation of Pravda, January 19, 1978.

¹¹⁵ Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 623. Citing the International Herald-Tribune, February 7, 1978.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. Citing the Daily Telegraph, February 25, 1978.

You haven't mentioned that at all. You skip over the war. (1978)

page 45.

their approaching victory.¹¹⁷ Once the Somalis had withdrawn from the Ogaden region on March 9, another U.S. delegation, headed by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Richard Moose, was dispatched to Somalia. Moose returned unsuccessful in his attempt to obtain a firm commitment from Barre to respect Ethiopian and Kenyan territory.¹¹⁸

With Somali regular forces driven out of the Ogaden and with Somalia relegated to a long guerilla war, Ethiopian troops moved to the offensive against the Eritrean rebels while the Cubans remained stationed in the Ogaden. Seven years later the situation is still much the same. In Eritrea the situation reached a stalemate after the Dergue recaptured the major cities but was unable to crush the rebellion in the countryside. The Soviet and Cuban troops in Ethiopia did not fight in combat against the Eritrean rebels¹¹⁹ but did man support positions.

Having committed so much military aid to Ethiopia, the Soviet Union must have felt the need for some recompense; and so, on March 16 an economic protocol was signed in Addis Ababa that provided for the construction of grain elevators, cold storage facilities, and agricultural machine repair stations. Two days later the New China News Agency was closed in Addis Ababa.¹²⁰

Where?
For whom?

¹¹⁷ Henze, "Russians And The Long View," p. 29.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 31.

¹²⁰ USSR And Third World, v.9, no.2,3(1978), p. 21.

Confusing! As reward to the USSR, the USSR built grain elevators, etc, for Ethiopia!

Mengistu visited Moscow in early April, most likely to review the situation with some satisfaction and possibly to get the Soviets and Cubans involved in Eritrea. Mengistu explained his visit as only the "strengthening and consolidation of rapidly developing fraternal relations between the peoples and governments of Ethiopia and the Soviet Union."¹²¹ However, the two governments still did not strengthen their relationship by formally signing a Treaty of Friendship.

Seven months later Mengistu paid another friendly visit to the Kremlin, met with Brezhnev, Kosygin, Gromyko, ^{and} Ponomarev, and returned to Addis Ababa with the coveted Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union.¹²² Four articles of the Treaty are of importance:

Article 6: The high contracting parties will consult with each other on important international questions directly affecting the interests of the two countries.

Article 7: In the event that a situation arises that creates a threat to peace or breaks international peace, the high contracting parties will immediately seek to contact each other with a view to coordinating their positions in the interest of eliminating the threat that has arisen or restoring peace.

Article 10: In the interests of ensuring the defense capability of the high contracting parties, they will continue to cooperate in the military field.

Article 11: Each of the high contracting parties declares that it will not enter into an alliance or take part in any grouping of states or in actions or measures directed against the other high contracting party.¹²³

¹²¹ FBIS-SOV, April 7, 1978, p. H1.

¹²² "The Communiqué," CDSP, v.30, no.46 (December 13, 1978), p. 11. A translation of Pravda, November 28, 1978.

¹²³ "The Declaration," CDSP, v.30, no.46 (December 13, 1978), pp. 10-11. A translation of Pravda, November 28, 1978.

From

You're assuming E. didn't do it voluntarily

page 47.

Presumably, it was Article 11 that the Soviet Union ^{later} used to ensure Ethiopia's ~~rejection~~ ^{vote against} of the U.N. resolution condemning the Afghanistan invasion. Article 10 provides the guarantee of military support that Ethiopia needs. It could also be used by the Soviets in an attempt to obtain basing rights in Ethiopia. Article 6 implies that Ethiopia in reality is no longer a nonaligned country, as the Dergue is to consult with the Soviet Union on important international questions. That consultation is evident in the communique issued at the end of Mengistu's visit. The ~~Joint-Communique, in turn,~~ condemned the Peking leaders' "hegemonistic aims" and their "crude and chauvinistic pressure against" Vietnam, attacked the imperialists' support of the "antipopular rascist regimes in the southern part of the [African] continent," and "noted with concern the exacerbation of the situation on the Ugandan-Tanzanian border."¹²⁴

Thus, by November 1978 the Soviet Union had forged a new relationship ~~on the Horn of Africa~~ with Ethiopia. Just what exactly was the price that they had to pay in those two years?

¹²⁴"The Communique," CDSP, pp. 11-12.

TABLE 4

THE COST TO THE SOVIET UNION TO
SUPPORT ETHIOPIA 1977-1978

Major Weapons Delivered in 1977:

4 An-26 short haul transport planes
15 Mi-8 helicopters
24 MiG-21 fighter planes
6 MiG-23 fighter planes
40 BMP armored personnel carriers
31 T-34 light tanks
50 T-54 tanks
100 T-55 tanks
large numbers (at least 1000) AT-3 anti-tank missiles
large numbers (at least 500) SA-3 SAMs
large numbers (at least 1500) SA-7 SAMs

Major Weapons Delivered in 1978:^a

10 Mi-6 helicopters
15 Mi-8 helicopters
46 MiG-17 fighter planes
24 MiG-21 fighter planes
50 T-54 tanks
100 T-55 tanks
30 T-70 tanks
large numbers (at least 1000) AT-3 anti-tank missiles
large numbers (at least 500) SA-3 SAMs
large numbers (at least 1500) SA-7 SAMs

The Military Personnel Deployed in Ethiopia:

1977: 500 Soviet and East European, 100 Cuban
1978: 1400 Soviet and East European, 16,500 Cuban

Economic Technicians In Ethiopia:

1977: 250 Soviet and East European, 250 Cuban, 400 Chinese
1978: 650 Soviet and East European, 500 Cuban, 250 Chinese

Ethiopian Students Being Trained Abroad:

1977: 1,385 in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe
1978: 1,530 in the Soviet Union and 665 in Eastern Europe

Economic Credits and Grants to Ethiopia:^b

1977: \$23 million from Eastern Europe
1978: \$45 million from Eastern Europe

The Weapons Cost:^c

1977: \$440 million
1978: \$1,100 million

SOURCES: (a) Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (London), World Armaments And Disarmaments, SIRPI Yearbook, 1977, p. 261; 1978, p. 212. (b) U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Communist Aid Activities In Non-communist Less-developed Countries, 1977, pp. 3, 10, 11, 5; 1978, pp. 4, 14, 17, 7. (c) USACDA, World Military Expenditures And Arms Transfers, 1971-1980 (Washington: USACDA, 1983), p. 89.

The cost of the Soviet change of alliances was unquestionably high, and the figures do not include the lost investment in Somalia and the Sudan. Why it was worth the cost to the Soviet Union to support the Dergue will be examined in the next chapter.

SHIFTING ALLIANCES

The Failure of the United States

In a sense it is correct to say that the U.S. presence in Ethiopia originally drew the Soviets into the Horn of Africa to counter that presence and to destabilize the region. It is also true that the American government did relatively little to deny the Soviets the opportunity of establishing an overriding presence in Ethiopia after the revolution had begun.

The impending closure of Kagnew Station did somewhat lessen Ethiopia's significance to the U.S., but Ethiopia still remained in a strategic location regarding the Suez Canal and the Middle East. Was Washington obsessed with construction of a new base on Diego Garcia and thus insensitive to the events on the Horn? At one point in 1976, the former American ambassador to Saudi Arabia charged the U.S. administration with ignoring Saudi offers to help reduce the Soviet presence in Berbera, because removal of that base "would have weakened the administration's case on Diego Garcia at a time when the U.S. Congress was considering appropriations for the base."¹²⁵

It is also true that the United States did find itself in a dilemma of sorts, faced with an increasingly radical Dergue, but Washington acted unenthusiastically towards the Dergue and

¹²⁵Ayoob, "The Horn Of Africa," p. 155. Citing the New York Times, May 5, 1976.

Why but?

its reforms. Washington posted no ambassador to Ethiopia for crucial periods of time, January 1974 to February 1975 and July 1976 to June 1978. Since there were no significant American business concerns involved in the Dergue's nationalizations,¹²⁶ that should not have been the reason for the cooling of U.S.-Ethiopian relations. Washington must have also recognized the need for some reform of the feudalistic rural order. The Dergue's land reform did not collectivize agriculture on a socialist model; Plots were redistributed on an individual basis. The Dergue's rural reform should not have been an excuse to undermine our relations with Ethiopia.

Did the Marxist nature of the regime preclude closer American ties to Ethiopia? The Dergue did not display a rigorous anti-American policy, nor an avowedly Marxist stature, in the immediate months after seizing power. The Dergue was radical and in a sense "progressive," but Marxist rhetoric was not truly evident until the April 1976 pronouncement of adopting scientific socialism and establishing a Socialist Ethiopia.

The Dergue's appeals to the United States for emergency aid in the Spring of 1975 and for a resumption of some aid in September 1977 prove that there must have been still some support within the Dergue for ~~a~~^{the} maintenance of ties with the United States, after all most of the officers had been trained by American advisors, had used American equipment, and had spent

¹²⁶Katsikas, The Arc, p. 151.

time in the U.S undergoing training. It was American reluctance that helped to provide the excuse for Mengistu's final rise to power. Washington's reaction, then, to events on the Horn indicates that it did not understand them, nor could it formulate a policy to deal with those events.

On the pretext of human rights violations, it was the Carter administration that ceased aid to Ethiopia at the point when the Dergue was most vulnerable to enemies on three borders. Could the United States have been indirectly, trying to topple the Dergue by denying it support? ~~That, however,~~ ^{it} failed as the Dergue conveniently turned to the Soviet Union for support. On the actual question of human rights violations, a study of the domestic turmoil and violence seems to show that both the Dergue and opposition groups were often equally responsible for the violence and terror of the revolution.

Next, Washington mistakenly signalled approval to the Somalis for their campaign in the Ogaden. That approval was later withdrawn when Somalia reached a critical point in its offensive. For a variety of reasons the West finally refused to arm the aggressive Somalis; [↓] the socialist character of the regime, their refusal to break completely their ties to Moscow, fear of congressional disapproval after Angola, pressre from the Jewish lobby on Capitol Hill, and our refusal to destroy a traditional U.S. ally,¹²⁷ which we did anyway. If Washington would not arm the Somalis to attack Ethiopia, then Why would

¹²⁷Ayoob, "The Horn Of Africa," p. 153.

Washington not provide arms to Ethiopia to repel the Somali neighbors? Was this America's policy of "disinterested neutrality?"

Once the Soviet Union intervened on Ethiopia's side, there was in fact little the Carter administration could do but adopt a policy of neutrality toward the conflict; for, ironically, in international law the Soviets "were on the right side of the line"¹²⁸ in upholding the principle of the inviolability of international frontiers.

Was Washington's policy of "cautious restraint" toward the Horn a pragmatic approach given our inability to change the outcome of events there? Novik points out that two of President Carter's errors were in adopting "the naive approach of dealing with African problems on their own terms and not in the context of East-West relations" and on the basis of analogy with Vietnam, assuming that involvement on the Horn would be prolonged and drain Soviet resources.¹²⁹ The Carter administration was also divided internally on what type of policy to adopt.¹³⁰

Thus the United States made no significant effort to understand or to influence the events in revolutionary Ethiopia. It is true that at the time U.S. capability to intervene militarily in the Third World was sharply limited. As an example, ~~Stephen~~

¹²⁸ Gavshon, Crisis In Africa, p. 265.

¹²⁹ Novik, On The Shores, p. 59.

¹³⁰ Two schools of thought existed in the Carter administration as to how to deal with events on the Horn and in the Third World. Zbigniew Brzezinski represented the "globalist" school and Cyrus Vance and Andrew Young the "Africanist" school. See Bereket Habte Selassie, Conflict And Intervention In The Horn Of Africa, pp. 132-137.

~~Kaplan pointed out that~~ in February 1978 when the Dergue took to the offensive, the Soviet Union had stationed twenty-seven ships in the area. The United States had no carrier group in the Indian Ocean and only three destroyers nearby.¹³¹ Our ability to intervene economically or politically, especially prior to 1977, should not, however, have been limited. It was in effect limited by Washington itself. The Soviet Union was also limited in its ability to intervene, because of its preoccupation with the situation in Angola.

"The prime feature of the U.S. predicament in respect to the Horn of Africa during 1977," writes Henze, "was an extreme lack of flexibility, compounded by shallowness of political perspective."¹³² By the close of 1978, the end of U.S. involvement in Ethiopia was an established fact. The next six years of the Ethiopian revolution will be examined before drawing any final conclusions about the U.S. predicament, but first we must examine why the Soviets intervened in support of the Dergue and why so dramatically.

¹³¹Stephen Kaplan, "The Third World," in Diplomacy of Power, ed. Stephen Kaplan (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1981), p. 201.

¹³²Henze, "Getting A Grip," p. 175.

The Soviet Success

The dramatic decision of the Soviet Union to support the Dergue in late 1977 "appeared like changing horses in mid-stream and transformed completely the nature of politics in the Horn."¹³³ V. Sofinsky, head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry Press Department, in a televised speech on February 3, 1978 explained the significance of the Horn for the Soviets.

The Horn of Africa is first and foremost of military, political, and economic significance. The importance of the area lies in its location at the link-up of the two continents of Asia and Africa. There are a lot of good sea ports in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Moreover, there are sealanes which link oil-producing countries with America and Europe.¹³⁴

To maintain a presence in this important area, the Soviet Union established close relationships, based largely on military terms, with first Somalia and then Ethiopia.

Edward Laurance developed eight possible objectives of Soviet foreign policy that is based on military arms transfers. These eight points will provide a suitable framework for trying to understand why the Soviet Union intervened to support the Dergue.

1. Establish presence, gain a voice in affairs of recipient country
2. Undermine or neutralize Western influence in developing world particularly as it relates to the supply of raw materials
3. Extend the Soviet defense perimeter and capability to project military power
4. Enhance internal security of allies and clients.

¹³³Ayoob, "The Horn of Africa," p. 156.

¹³⁴Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 610. Citing the New China News Agency, March 14, 1978.

5. Support insurgencies and wars of national liberation consistent with Soviet ideology
6. Encourage domestic communist movements, particularly those developing in the general direction of the Soviet model
7. Promote Soviet leadership in the communist world while preempting or reducing Chinese influence
8. Improve balance of payments¹³⁵

What exactly was the Soviet position in Somalia before the change of alliances? The Soviet Union exerted some degree of influence in a nation of roughly three million Muslim nomads and of approximately 250,000 sq. miles to the south and southeast of Ethiopia. The USSR enjoyed access to the port facilities at Berbera and Kismayu and the use of interior airfields from which patrols of the Indian Ocean were conducted using long range Tu-95 aircraft.¹³⁶ The Soviet base at Berbera also could have been used as a counter to the developing U.S. base on Diego Garcia, ~~at the Indian Ocean Arms Limitation Talks (NATI).~~¹³⁷ By 1977 it was estimated that the Soviets had invested upwards of \$450 million in military aid to Somalia (see above, p. 30). Economic aid ~~from the Soviets to Somalia~~ totalled \$154 million through 1977.¹³⁸ Siad Barre had also formed a socialist party in Somalia under the watchful

¹³⁵Edward Laurance, "Soviet Arms Transfers in The 1980s; Declining Influence In Sub-Saharan Africa," in Arms For Africa, ed. Bruce Arlinghaus (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983), p. 49.

¹³⁶Novik, On The Shores, p. 42.

¹³⁷Remnek, "Soviet Policy In The Horn," p. 131.

¹³⁸U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, National Foreign Assessment Center, Communist Aid Activities In Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1977 (Washington: Docex Project, 1978), p. 5.

eye of the Soviets.

Of overriding importance though, the Soviet Union had armed, trained, and helped to expand the Somali army in full light of the Somali commitment to irridentism and of the fact that Somalia was not threatened by her neighbors. The Soviets for their part received a full blown war in Ethiopia, destabilized Ethiopia and the Horn, and assumed a position of influence in Ethiopia.

What the Soviets had received from Ethiopia by the end of 1978 was a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, the semi-stabilization of the situation in Ethiopia, an anchorage for a floating dry-dock that had been towed from Berbera to the Dahlac Archipelago, and a roughly \$1.7 billion arms debt. This debt does not include some of the costs borne by the USSR itself, nor does it take into account the pitifully weak economy of Ethiopia.

For Moscow Ethiopia provided the opportunity to establish a firm foothold on the Red Sea, as "only Ethiopia could keep this waterway from becoming an 'Arab Lake' dominated by conservative and moderate Arab countries hostile to the Soviet Union."¹³⁹ The Suez Canal is important to the Soviets and to Eastern Europe for both commercial traffic and naval deployments. Ethiopia had a population of about thirty million on a territory of approximately 450,000 sq. miles, and Addis Ababa was the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which makes Ethiopia an important location for obtaining a voice in

¹³⁹David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 169.

African affairs. By the end of 1978, the Soviet Union had established an anchorage in the Dahlac Archipelago, mostly a waterless sandbar fifty miles off the coast of Eritrea and in the Red Sea shipping lanes. According to Legum, Ethiopia offered far greater advantages: "two ports far superior to Berbera and Mogadishu, the reasonable chance to one day dominate Djibouti, and a potentially rich country, holding a strategically important position."¹⁴⁰ Ethiopia also had Lake Tana which is the source of much of the Nile River's water.

Why then this switch of alliances? In the larger context of the Middle East situation, perhaps the Soviet Union possessed some other ulterior motive. On November 19, 1977 six days after Somalia abrogated its Treaty with the USSR, Anwar Sadat made his historic trip to Jerusalem which effectively excluded the Soviet Union from further Egyptian-Israeli negotiations to reach a ^{peace} settlement. In view of Sadat's earlier relations with the Soviet Union, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that a "Libyan-Ethiopian axis" was planned "that could serve Soviet designs aimed at undermining President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and his Arab allies."¹⁴¹

AWK (What will applying Laurance's foreign policy objectives to the change of alliances yield?

1. Establish presence: the Soviet Union had established a dominant position in Somalia, but it had been unable to dominate

¹⁴⁰ Legum, "Angola And The Horn," p. 629.

¹⁴¹ David and Marina Ottaway, Ethiopia, p. 169.

a Soviet writer

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by force. In the end the Soviets chose not to support the Somalis. In February 1979 G. Tanov^{an} provided ~~the~~ interesting rationale for ~~the~~ Soviet support of the Dergue in its war against the avowedly Marxist Eritreans. It was claimed that the Soviet Union:

backed the Eritreans' struggle at the time when Ethiopia was ruled by Haile Selassie and ~~that~~ it has changed its stand in the recent period. The Le Matin editor evidently confuses the 'struggle for secession' with the 'struggle for independence.' The Eritrean secessionists are trying to sever the region from Ethiopia, and this has nothing to do with the 'struggle for independence,' which, incidentally, that country has already won. . . . the struggle against British colonialism and imperial satraps cannot be equated with subversive activity against the popular revolution.¹⁴²

6. Encourage domestic communist models: Siad Barre led a socialist party in Somalia, whereas in Ethiopia attempts to form a revolutionary party had been unsuccessful. Mengistu did, however, lead the Dergue on a path remarkably resembling a Soviet model.
7. Diminish Chinese influence: Before the switch there was some Chinese presence in Somalia, but there was no significant Chinese interest in Ethiopia.
8. Improve the balance of payments: In both countries the Soviet Union had little hope of doing this, because of the weak economies and massiveness of the aid. Ethiopia was perhaps a little better off with its coffee exports.

¹⁴²G. Tanov, "At Odds With Logic," New Times(Moscow), no.8(February, 1978), p. 14. It should be remembered that the Soviet Union did not peacefully solve its nationalities problem.

Was the Soviet Union actually pursuing Ethiopia all along and was Somalia just a tool toward that end? If so, then the idea of a "progressive federation" and the mass scale of the airlift have to be explained in that scenario. By March 1977 when Castro made his attempt to form the federation, Soviet arms were not yet fully committed to Ethiopia. Ethiopia had still not yet completely broken its supply arrangement with the U.S., though the implications of President Carter's February statements were obvious. The Soviet Union must still have perceived Somalia as entirely dependent on it for weapons. Thus the attempt at a federation should not be seen as a no-lose gamble but instead as power politics and an attempt to exert Soviet influence, which the Soviet Union perceived that it had regarding the two parties. The Soviet Union had been discreetly cultivating its influence with the Dergue and at the time of the federation proposal believed that it could draw Ethiopia into a Soviet-manufactured alliance. The Soviets were wrong, but by May after the cutoff of U.S. aid the Soviets could extract a Declaration of Friendship from Ethiopia in return for promises of substantial military aid. The Soviets had armed ~~the buildup of~~ the Somali army, hoping to pressure Ethiopia and to ensure that Somalia remained reliant upon the USSR. Somalia did not remain dependent upon the Soviets and did not buy their federation proposal. The federation attempt was a Soviet misperception of the reality of the extent of their influence in Somalia and Ethiopia. It is proof that an opportunity

existed in the period 1974-1977 for the U.S to have constructively involved itself in Ethiopia. Ethiopia was not lost to us. We lost it. The federation attempt also shows that the Soviet Union had been in intimate contact with the Dergue for some period of time and that the Soviets perceived that their influence was great enough to push through the federation.

Why such a massive arms commitment and at such speed? The quantities involved far exceeded immediate Ethiopian needs, its ability to absorb them, and the Dergue's ability to pay for them. Another odd fact was that many Soviet cargo planes were launched empty from their bases.¹⁴³ Was the airlift only a gigantic military exercise, a demonstration to the West? In the international arena, the airlift asserted the capability of the Soviets to intervene in a Third World country with considerable power. For the Dergue it was designed to strengthen pro-Moscow elements. The speed of the airlift may have been connected with the mid-November purge of Abate and a wave of violence and unrest that swept the cities of Ethiopia. The scale of the airlift, indebting Ethiopia to Moscow, indicated the length to which Moscow would go to advance its influence in a Third World country. If Mengistu requested such a massive aid operation, then he must have needed the Soviet and Cuban advisors to solidify the Dergue's regime in Ethiopia much in the manner that Eastern Europe needed the Red Army to establish the Soviet model after World War II. It is proof that the

¹⁴³Novik, On The Shores, p. 44.

Doesn't make sense

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Dergue was pursuing ~~SOME~~ bastardized form of sovietization.

Whatever the cost was, by the end of 1978 the Soviet Union had established a formidable, discreetly cultivated presence in a strategically located country and was in an excellent position to shape the coming events in Ethiopia. *Whether*
~~If~~ the Soviet Union was successful is the next subject to be examined.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ETHIOPIA
1979-1984

Introduction

Instead of presenting the events of this period chronologically, an area approach will be adopted that will lay the basis for a final evaluation of the nature of the Ethiopian-Soviet relationship.

These five years will be covered in three broad areas: internal political developments, economic relations with the Soviet Union and the West, and foreign relations between the two countries. Then some specific developments within Ethiopia will be examined: Soviet and Cuban advisors in Ethiopia, mechanisms through which Moscow can exert influence in Ethiopia, and the famine. The significance of these years lies in the September 1984 announcement of the formation of a communist party and of the intention to establish a people's republic based on the Eastern European model.

Internal political developments

First, in 1978 there were two events that continued the Dergue's systematic extension of power over Ethiopia. The first congress of the All-Ethiopian Peasant Association (AEPA) had been held in April 1978. This congress finally institutionalized the peasant associations, which had been relatively autonomous up to this date. The AEPA is a tiered system of local, district, provincial, regional, and national associations and provides the Dergue with a bureaucratic monolith to extend its power into the rural areas.¹⁴⁴ Also late in 1978, in fulfillment of a requirement of "scientific socialism," the Dergue issued a "Proclamation to provide for the establishment of the National Revolutionary Development and Central Planning" and set up a Central Planning Supreme Council for management of the nation's economy.¹⁴⁵

Then in September 1979 the Dergue announced the formation of a "Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia" (COPWE). The first congress of COPWE was held the following June and was attended by approximately 1700 delegates.¹⁴⁶ The seven man executive committee consisted of seven Dergue members. The organization was patterned on the familiar Soviet

¹⁴⁴ Lyons, "The USSR, China, And The Horn," p. 23.

¹⁴⁵ Edmond Keller, "The Ethiopian Revolution: How Socialist Is It?" Journal Of African Studies, v.11, no.2 (Summer, 1984), pp. 59-60.

¹⁴⁶ "Ethiopia," Africa Contemporary Record (ACR), v.3-1, p. B185. (1980-81), p. B185.

model of congress, central committee with ninety-three full and thirty alternate members, and the executive committee of seven members. Congresses were scheduled to be held every two years, and central committee plenary sessions were to be held every six months. Of the ninety-three full members of the central committee, seventy-nine were military or police.¹⁴⁷

COPWE was by no means a mass organization. All members were individually screened. During Mengistu's visit to Moscow at the end of October 1980, his first visit in over two years, Ethiopia's leader explained COPWE's unique membership, when he said that "we are doing everything in our power to ensure that only tested and true communists join the ranks of our party."¹⁴⁸ The Dergue had already created the bureaucratic monolith to control the peasantry, the trade union, and the economy; and, with a party being actively pursued now, it would not be much longer until another Soviet satellite was launched.

In the summer of 1981 the Dergue, heartened by the successes of the first two one-year plans, announced the launching of its first ten-year plan with a heavy emphasis on industrial development.¹⁴⁹ The following February the second COPWE Congress was held with fifteen hundred delegates attending.¹⁵⁰ Still not enough

¹⁴⁷Keller, "The Ethiopian Revolution," p. 62; and "Ethiopia," Information Bulletin, v.20, no. 17-18(September, 1982), pp. 41-44.

¹⁴⁸"Mengistu In USSR," CDSP, v.32, no.45(December 10, 198), p. 12. A translation of Pravda, October 28, 1980.

¹⁴⁹Keller, "The Ethiopian Revolution," p. 60.

¹⁵⁰Peter Schwab and Thomas Henriksen, "Ethiopia," Yearbook On International Communist Affairs, 1982, pp. 16-18.

to form a mass party, but the training of cadres was continuing. Arey Yodfat suggested that Mengistu was

. . . likely to delay the formation of a party for fear that the establishment of such a party would give the Soviet Union more control of the country through the 'political cadres' they had trained, and that a party apparatus would take over the ruling of Ethiopia and weaken Mengistu's grip on power.¹⁵¹

In 1982 the Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association (REYA) with a membership of reportedly three million youths aged fourteen to thirty began a regular exchange of delegations with the Komsomol and was admitted into the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Another revolutionary organization, the Ethiopian Revolutionary Women's Association (REWA), claimed a membership of five million.¹⁵² The Soviet pattern showed itself in the formation of these organizations in Ethiopia.] *Amk*

Plans now called for the Dergue to unveil its new party at the third COPWE Congress scheduled for September 1984, the tenth anniversary of the revolution. On September 7, 1984 1,742 delegates gathered in Addis Ababa for the congress and were welcomed by Mengistu with a seven hour speech. The Soviet delegation to the congress was led by Grigorii Romanov.¹⁵³ The Worker's Party of Ethiopia was formally established four days later, as Mengistu announced the membership of the Politburo

¹⁵¹ Arey Yodfat, "Ethiopia; Pressure For Political Reorganization," Soviet Analyst, v.11, no.21 (October 27, 1982), p. 3.

¹⁵² G. Galperin and V. Platov, "Revolutionary Transformation In Ethiopia," International Affairs (Moscow), no.6 (June, 1982), p. 61; and R. Strzhizhovsky, "Ancient Ethiopia Builds A New Life," International Affairs (Moscow), no.2 (February, 1982), p. 119.

¹⁵³ David Ottaway, "Ethiopia Prepares To Transfer Power From Military To Communist Party," Washington Post, September 7, 1984, p. A21.

and the Central Committee. Seven members of the Dergue were in the eleven-man Politburo, and twenty-four were in the 136-man Central Committee. Party membership was estimated at thirty thousand of which about half were paid party workers ~~who~~ that had been to the Soviet Union or East Germany for ideological and organizational training.¹⁵⁴ The fate of PMAC, however, remained uncertain, as it was not abolished at the time.

In a brief, highlighted manner, deliberately excluding the continuing guerilla warfare in Eritrea and the Ogaden, some of the important steps taken by the Dergue in their consolidation of a Soviet-style state have been noted. The Soviet imprint is easily seen.

¹⁵⁴David Ottaway, "Ethiopia Forms Its First Party," Washington Post, September 11, 1984, p. A16, and "Ethiopian Communist Party Is Set Up With Mengistu At The Helm," New York Times, September 11, 1984, p. A4.

The economics of debt

The most significant feature of Soviet-Ethiopian economic relations is that they are insignificant. Through the period 1954 to 1979, communist economic aid extended to Ethiopia amounted to the following: USSR, \$225 million; Eastern Europe, \$95 million; and China, \$100 million.¹⁵⁵ The pre-1977 figures were: USSR, \$105 million; Eastern Europe, \$19 million; and China, \$85 million.¹⁵⁶ Thus, over three years, 1977-1979, the following values of communist economic aid was extended to Ethiopia: USSR, \$110 million; Eastern Europe, \$76 million; and China, \$15 million. The Soviet bloc total was \$186 million, of which \$95 million was extended by the Soviet Union in 1979. After 1979, there are no officially released figures on communist aid, but in December, 1981 the New York Times reported a figure of \$250 million over the last three years, 1979-1981.¹⁵⁷ Thus, over the two years of 1980 and 1981, \$155 million in economic aid was credited to Ethiopia. Through the end of 1981, the Soviet bloc had promised \$354 million in economic aid to Ethiopia.

The Soviet Union also incurred another significant cost in its relationship with Ethiopia, namely, supplying oil. In 1981 Moscow supplied Ethiopia with 320 million barrels of oil at eight dollars a barrel below cost.¹⁵⁸ This theoretically was a

¹⁵⁵CIA, Communist Aid Activities, 1954-1979, p. 18.

¹⁵⁶CIA, Communist Aid Activities, 1976, p. 11.

¹⁵⁷Pranay Gupte, "Ethiopians' Links To Soviets Strained," New York Times, December 21, 1981, p. A7.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

loss to the Soviet Union of \$2.4 billion. If Ethiopia's estimated average oil consumption is about 300 million barrels, and if the USSR continued to provide oil to Ethiopia at below cost, say only five dollars below cost, then Moscow loses an average of about \$1.5 billion on Ethiopia each year. Over the seven year period, 1978-1984, the total loss would be \$10.5 billion. It is no wonder that the Soviets have expressed reluctance to sign a long-term supply contract with Ethiopia for its oil. ?

Ask [This large sum also make logical the agreement signed between the two countries to cooperate in prospecting for oil and gas in Ethiopia during Kosygin's visit to Addis Ababa in September 1979.¹⁵⁹ Kosygin's statement is worth quoting for the insight that it provides on the nature of their relationship. He said that, "another problem is that Ethiopian natural resources have been inadequately surveyed so far. We have rich experience in this field and can provide the necessary assistance."¹⁶⁰

It doesn't take much of a mathematician to figure out the general trend from the following Ethiopian trade statistics. The Soviet Union runs a sizeable balance of trade in its favor towards Ethiopia. Calculations yield an average of about sixty million per year and growing in the Soviets' favor. This does not benefit the Soviets directly as the Ethiopian currency is unconvertable; but, because of their indebtedness to the

*Explain
Is it really
in its
favor*

¹⁵⁹S. Sergeev, "An Important Landmark In Soviet-Ethiopian Cooperation," International Affairs(Moscow), no.12(December, 1979), p. 89.

¹⁶⁰Boris Asoyan, "Alexei Kosygin: Good Prospects For Cooperation," New Times(Moscow), no.39(September, 1979), pp. 4-5.

the Soviet Union, the Dergue bartered an undisclosed amount of their coffee crop to the noncoffee-drinking Russians in late 1980. The Ethiopians had carried out a similar deal for \$63 million with the East Germans. The East Germans promptly sold that coffee on the world market, which drove down the cost of coffee and hurt Ethiopian exports.¹⁶¹

TABLE 5

ETHIOPIAN TRADE
(Millions of Dollars)

	Imports			Exports		
	Total	U.S.	U.S.S.R.	U.S.S.R.	U.S.	Total
1976	355.24	36.86	4.79	.80	91.52	280.88
1977	351.61	35.51	6.47	.03	85.75	332.83
1978	455.43	27.00	3.53	6.03	94.91	306.10
1979	567.43	66.42	11.04	28.19	118.91	417.55
1980	722.08	55.50	139.01	39.22	77.11	424.73
1981	738.60	56.62	150.26	2.10	80.21	388.92
1982	685.56	47.19	127.72	1.73	99.91	400.18

SOURCE: International Monetary Fund, Direction Of Trade Statistics, 1983 (Washington: IMF, 1983), pp. 161-162.

Now that we have some figures for economic aid, trade, and oil, we will attempt to calculate the arms debt to the Soviet Union and then arrive at the total cost of Moscow's support of the Dergue. The value of the arms transferred to Ethiopia through 1980 is easy enough: 1977, \$440 million; 1978, \$1.1 billion; 1979, \$210 million; and 1980, \$480 million.¹⁶² This

¹⁶¹Pranay Gupte, "Ethiopian Civil War Hurts Economy," New York Times, July 10, 1980, p. A4.

¹⁶²USACDA, World Military Expenditures, 1971-1980, p. 89.

gives a total of \$2.23 billion. A 1985 estimate put the arms debt at \$3 billion, which is realistic considering five years of continuing guerilla warfare that the Dergue has fought. ¹⁶³

Before calculating a final figure for the Ethiopian debt to the Soviet Union, it should be remembered that there is no value on the room and board of advisors in Ethiopia which the Dergue must pay, for the cost of transporting equipment to the USSR for repair, or on the costs of the air and sea lift. There have been reports of the Dergue's dissatisfaction with the poor durability of Soviet-made equipment and of the departure of Cuban soldiers because the Dergue could not afford their upkeep. ¹⁶⁴

Because of the weak Ethiopian economy, assume that the Soviet Union has to bear the entire cost of its transfer to and support of the Dergue through 1984.

TABLE 6

ETHIOPIAN DEBT TO THE SOVIET UNION
(Millions of Dollars)

Arms debt	3,000
Trade deficit	-420
Soviet bloc economic credits ^a	354
Oil subsidy ^b	10,500
Tenth anniversary celebration cost	<u>200</u>
Net Loss to the Soviet Union	13,634

NOTES: (a) Assumes that no new credits were extended to Ethiopia in 1982, 1983, or 1984. (b) Assumes a conservative figure of \$1.5 billion per year for seven years.

¹⁶³ Ulrich Meister, "Ethiopia: Diagnosis Of A Famine," Swiss Review Of World Affairs, v.34, no.11(February, 1985), p. 14.

¹⁶⁴ Gupte, "Ethiopians' Links," p. A7; and Remer Tyson, "Impoverished Ethiopia Said To Send Home 2,000 Cuban Troops," Washington Post, January 8, 1981, p. A18.

Since the figure is this large, and this is a very conservative estimate, it might prove interesting to examine the formal economic relations between the two countries. During Kosygin's visit to Ethiopia in September 1979, protocols were signed for the expansion of the Assab oil refinery, for research in agricultural engineering, for the building of a tractor assembly factory, and for oil and gas prospecting.¹⁶⁵ The following year during Mengistu's visit to Moscow, two more projects were added to the list, the agricultural development of the Gambela Valley in southwest Ethiopia and a cement plant.¹⁶⁶ By the close of 1980, the only project to have gotten off the ground was the modernization of the gold mine at Adola.¹⁶⁷ In May of 1982 construction began on a textile mill, financed by the East Germans and Czechs.¹⁶⁸ That December contracts were signed for a hydroelectric station, the tractor plant, the cement plant, and the agricultural project.¹⁶⁹ Two years later Moscow Radio was lauding Soviet-Ethiopian economic cooperation by citing work on a hydroelectric station, tractor plant, agricultural repair shop, and forty other major projects.¹⁷⁰ Economic cooperation seems to have proceeded at a rather slow pace.

¹⁶⁵Sergeyev, "An Important Landmark," p. 89.

¹⁶⁶FBIS-SOV, November 13, 1980, p. J2.

¹⁶⁷David Ottaway, "Red Star Over Ethiopia," Washington Post, December 4, 1980, p. A1.

¹⁶⁸"Ethiopia," Africa Diary, no.22(May 28-June 3, 1982), p. 3.

¹⁶⁹David Albright, "The USSR And Africa In 1982," Africa Contemporary Record, v.15(1982-83), p. A160.

¹⁷⁰FBIS-SOV, March 28, 1984, p. H2.

(seem to indicate that the S.U.)

Regarding the development of the Ethiopian economy, the Soviet Union by ~~proof of~~ these few projects had accomplished ~~rather nothing.~~

little

(Ethiopia is a prime example of the Soviet ability to project influence in the Third World.)

The USSR possesses impressive capability to exert its ideology and to supply arms, but it is unable to substantially aid in the

True?

development of the recipient country's economy. Ethiopia's economy has gone nowhere, and her dilemma is hardened by the

fact that there is no substantial aid flow from the West to fill the gap. From the Soviet point of view, at least Cuba

in return for Soviet aid

can provide sugar and combat troops, what exactly does Ethiopia offer them, or what will Ethiopia offer them?

One wonders if the USSR has gotten its money's worth.

This sentence seems out of place.

Too negative: The USSR has aided many countries' economies - Aswan dam in Egypt, steel mill in India, etc.

The formality of foreign relations

Prime Minister Kosygin led a delegation to Ethiopia for the fifth anniversary celebration of the Ethiopian revolution in September 1979. While there he discussed the prospects of continuing, fruitful economic cooperation and joined with Mengistu in taking a common stand on such major foreign policy issues as the Middle East, the SALT talks, and China.¹⁷¹

In demonstration of its solidarity with the people of Afghanistan, the Ethiopian government voted against the U.N. resolution denouncing the Afghanistan invasion in January 1980.

Ethiopia was joined by only the Soviet Union, South Yemen, Grenada, the CMEA countries, and Afghanistan.¹⁷² That year Soviet Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, Comander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, personally inspected the Soviet Union's new facilities in the Dahlac Archipelago. Among the facilities available in the islands were the floating dry-dock from Berbera, a runway, warehouse, fuel storage tanks, and piers.¹⁷³ Obviously these

new facilities were in no way comparable to those that the Soviet Navy had enjoyed in Somalia, but it was home.

The American ambassador to Ethiopia returned to Washington that summer. Another series of American maneuvers in Ethiopian politics had begun in February 1979, when the U.S invoked the Brooke Amendment, because the Dergue was in arrears on its

¹⁷¹Sergeyev, "An Important Landmark," p. 89.

¹⁷²David Albright, The USSR And Sub-Saharan Africa In The 1980s (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 14.

¹⁷³"Ethiopia," Africa Contemporary Record, v.13(1980-81), p. 187.

79
Victims
How
so?
Explain

Foreign Military Sales (FMS) obligations by more than one year, and cut off all aid to Ethiopia. Some humanitarian aid was allowed to continue. Then in July Washington invoked the Hickenlooper Amendment, because the Dergue had not compensated Americans for property nationalized in Ethiopia. This gave the administration legal authority to retaliate. The following spring when Mengistu heard of U.S. overtures to Somalia, he requested that the American ambassador be recalled. Since July 1980 Washington has posted no ambassador to Ethiopia.¹⁷⁴

Mengistu travelled to Moscow in October 1980 and had the distinct pleasure of exchanging honors with Brezhnev. Brezhnev presented Mengistu with "The Order of the October Revolution," and Mengistu presented Brezhnev with "The Order of the Star of Honor of Socialist Ethiopia." Their mutual agreement on matters of international importance appeared in the communique issued at the close of the visit.¹⁷⁵ Mengistu went to Moscow again in October 1982 and April 1984.

The Tripartite Alliance of Libya-Ethiopia-South Yemen was formed August 19, 1981,¹⁷⁶ and by the following summer Ethiopia *also* had ~~Treaties of Friendship and Cooperation~~ with East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Irving Kaplan and Harold Nelson, eds., Ethiopia, 3rd Ed., (Washington: Department of the Army, 1981), pp. 224-225.

¹⁷⁵ "Mengistu In USSR," CDSP, v.32, no.45(December 10, 1980), p. 14. A translation of Pravda, November 12, 1980.

¹⁷⁶ "Ethiopia," ACR, v.15(1982-83), p. B158.

¹⁷⁷ Galperin, "Revolutionary Transformation," p. 65.

Foreign relations between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union were now formal and proper. In international relations Moscow had gained a supporter; but, if Moscow's motive in backing the Dergue had been in some way based on the assumption that Ethiopia was a ~~strategically located~~ country with which to gain a voice in African or Middle Eastern affairs, then Moscow has been mistaken. The economic weakness of Ethiopia, the refusal of the Dergue to negotiate with the Eritrean rebels, and Ethiopia's continuing support of the Soviet Union in international affairs seems to have destroyed any semblance of Ethiopian credibility in African affairs, ~~that Haile Selassie may have once wielded.~~
~~From a critical point of view,~~ the Dergue appears to be a puppet that is following Moscow's lead both internationally and domestically.

Mechanics of influence

There are many mechanisms with which the Soviet Union can operate to exert influence on the development of Ethiopia. In this chapter the following will be examined: Soviet and Cuban advisors, the training of Ethiopians, and cooperative agreements between organizations in the two countries.

The first method through which the Soviets can exert their influence on events in Ethiopia is the presence of Soviet and Cuban advisors. At the close of 1979 the total of troops and advisors stationed in Ethiopia was 15,500¹⁷⁸ which broke down into 1250 Soviet bloc military and 1500 economic advisors and 13,000 Cuban soldiers and 450 economic technicians. Western reports vary over the next four years, but an average opinion would put the Soviet presence at two thousand advisors and the Cubans at ten thousand. If we place these advisors into the framework of the Ethiopian army, then an estimate about the level of penetration of the Soviets into Ethiopia can be obtained. One thousand Soviet advisors in a 250,000 man Ethiopian army, yields one Soviet to every 250 Ethiopians. Given that this is a rough estimate, we can still safely maintain that the Soviets have advisors down to battalion level in the armed forces, which

¹⁷⁸CIA, Communist Aid Activities, 1954-1979, pp. 13, 21.

¹⁷⁹Gupte, "Ethiopians' Links," p. A7; "Ethiopia," ACR, v.15(1982-83), p. B157; "Soviet Bid For The Horn," Intelligence Digest: Political And Strategic Review, April 1, 1985, pp. 7-8.

is the level of influence that the Soviets had in Somalia. Thus the Soviet Union has the opportunity to exert influence equivalent to what it had in Somalia in a larger country with greater potential, and troop presence is an important mechanism through which the USSR can try to exert influence on Ethiopia.

Another method of trying to influence the development of Ethiopia is by training Ethiopians. One means is by educating Ethiopian students in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Since 1976 the number of Ethiopians studying in the Soviet bloc has steadily risen: 1976, 1,255; 1977, 1,385; 1978, 2,195; and in 1979, 3,400 of which 1600 were in the Soviet Union.¹⁸⁰ A TASS statement of 1981 put the number of Ethiopian students in the USSR at 2,000 with an additional 400 planned for ~~next~~ year.¹⁸¹ 1996? The upward trend was continuing and was proof that a protocol and five-year agreement for professional training¹⁸² were being effectively implemented.

Educating Ethiopians in Ethiopia is a complement to training them abroad and is just as effective in instilling in them respect for the Soviet model. Thus, the signing of protocols to cooperate in the sphere of vocational and technical instruction, to expand a polytechnical institute, and to establish another

¹⁸⁰ CIA, Communist Aid Activities, 1976, p. 10; 1977, p. 11; 1978, p. 18; 1954-1979, p. 23.

¹⁸¹ USSR And Third World, v.11, no.1-2(1981), p. 35. A TASS statement of October 31, 1981.

¹⁸² USSR And Third World, v.10, no.2-3(1980), p. 58 and "Ethiopia," Yearbook On International Communist Affairs, 1981, p. 323.

How do you know?

technical institute¹⁸³ should be seen as the Soviet Union "cooperating" in the training of young Ethiopians in the proper ideals.

Although ideological training can to some extent be provided in the guise of a polytechnical school, an institute for training and organizing political cadres is a much more credible asset to a regime trying to build a communist party from scratch, ~~in a communist state.~~ Yekatit '66 School was such an institution. It was first set up by the Soviets in 1976 and staffed by Soviets, East Germans, and Ethiopians. All leading cadres of the mass organizations passed through the school,¹⁸⁴ including many COPWE members.

Besides education as a means of exerting Soviet influence in Ethiopia, the last method to be covered is cooperative agreements between parallel organizations. Brezhnev remarked in November 1980 "that favorable conditions were being created for fruitful ties" between COPWE and the CPSU.¹⁸⁵ His suggestion was later put into practice, when an agreement was signed between the two parties in October 1982, and an agenda was agreed upon for the next two years.¹⁸⁶ The exchange of delegations between the REYA and the Komsomol began in 1982 (see above p. 67), and also an agreement was reached between Pravda and Serdo Ader that December for joint cooperation.¹⁸⁷ Ethiopia had also been taking part

¹⁸³FBIS-SOV, August 21, 1981, p. J1, "Ethiopia," ACR, v.15 (1982-83), p. B163, and FBIS-SOV, March 28, 1984, p. H2.

¹⁸⁴"Ethiopia," ACR, v.15(1982-83), p. B131.

¹⁸⁵"Mengistu In USSR," CDSE, p. 12

¹⁸⁶A. Usvatov, "USSR-Ethiopia: Friendship And Understanding," New Times(Moscow), no.43(October, 1982), p. 7.

Identify

Sudden transition

in OMEA sessions as an observer since 1978.¹⁸⁸ During Kosygin's trip to Addis Ababa in 1979, it was agreed to cooperate in the area of central planning.¹⁸⁹ This was almost a year after Ethiopia had set up its Central Planning Supreme Council. In March 1983 GOSPLAN Chairman N. Baibakov flew to Addis Ababa to help Ethiopia with the implementation of its first ten-year plan.¹⁹⁰

** * * * **

This period of the consolidation of the socialist revolution in Ethiopia seems to have been neglected by most scholars in favor of the pursuit of mystical rationalizations of the Soviet Union's dramatic turnabout on the Horn of Africa. The period ~~after~~ ^{from} the airlift of 1977 to the present day merits closer examination on the single important fact that it is ~~the~~ a practical attempt to erect a communist state from nothing. The framework that has been sketched out above is only that to date, a skeleton. It has not been fleshed out yet to the extent that would be found in a mature socialist state. It has not been yet, because there was no party with which to control the structures.

Ethiopia is an unique example. Most communist regimes once they rise to power can at least trace some roots to an

¹⁸⁷"Ethiopia," ACR, v.15(1982-83), p. E163.

¹⁸⁸ Galperin and Platov, "Revolutionary Transformation," p. 65.

¹⁸⁹Asayan, "Alexei Kosygin," pp. 4-5.

¹⁹⁰USSR And Third World, v.13, no.1-2(1983), p. 21.

incipient or indigenous movement. Ethiopia cannot. Another interesting fact is that Ethiopia has already experienced its purges, before its party ever achieved state power.

If the Dergue is able to continue on its revolutionary path towards a Soviet-type state, both Western and Soviet scholars will have to do a lot of rethinking about the principles of the Leninist path to power.

What I have tried to show in the years 1979 to 1984 is the wielding of Soviet influence to mould an incipient communist state without a communist party, without a political heritage even, into a communist state, based on the Soviet model. The institutions created by and the actions carried out by the Dergue over these years should be proof that the Soviet Union was successful in its task.

It doesn't really have a genuine
Comm. party yet,

Famine

The extent of the famine in Ethiopia is a well known fact. It is not necessary to cite statistics on Western relief aid; for, it has been extensive, and the amounts are publicly known. The question is, Just what kind of response has the Soviet Union taken to aid the famine-stricken people of Ethiopia, given its preeminent role in Ethiopia?

Some of the charges being leveled at the Soviet Union and the Dergue are unsettling and may bring to mind an image of the Soviet Union in the very early 1930s, but for each charge there is always a counter-charge. When, however, accusations like the following do appear, someone must wonder about the truth, especially in light of ~~the nature of the regime:~~ ^{these facts:} a military operation against the peasantry; sales of relief aid on the open market with the profits used to pay off the USSR;¹⁹¹ Eritrean rebels denied relief aid; millions spent on anniversary celebration while ~~millions~~ ^{people} starve;¹⁹² and manipulation of the masses through resettlement programs.¹⁹³

The Soviet Union and its allies have given relatively little in relief aid: 4.7 million rubles in 1979;¹⁹⁴ 12,000 tons of wheat, 8 tons of food and medical supplies, 50 trucks,

¹⁹¹"Ethiopia," ACR, v.15(1982-83), pp. B153-B157.

¹⁹²Meister, "Ethiopia," pp. 12-15.

¹⁹³"Soviets Bid For The Horn," pp. 7-8.

¹⁹⁴Gromyko, "Soviet-Ethiopian Ties," p. 90.

50 water tankers, and 10 water pumps in 1980;¹⁹⁵ 6,000 kg. of powdered milk and medicine in 1982;¹⁹⁶ and 300 trucks and \$3 million worth of rice in 1984.¹⁹⁷

Though my research has certainly missed something, when the Soviet Union wants to let the world know that it has done something, the trumpets blare. Well there is no fanfare sounding through 1984. So we will have to be satisfied with silence as the true indicator of the Soviet relief effort.

¹⁹⁵USSR And Third World, v.10, no.4-5(1980), p. 98.

¹⁹⁶"Ethiopia," ACR, v.15(1982-83), p. B163.

¹⁹⁷New York Times, November 4, 1984, p. IV:24.

CONCLUSION

Am In reviewing the developments ~~within~~ these ten years in Ethiopia, one striking characteristic stands out, that for as close as the American-Ethiopian relationship may have been at one time, this period is dominated by the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. America had been completely displaced from any position of influence in Ethiopia. The ten years of revolution brought the Dergue and Ethiopia a long way across the political spectrum from monarchy to communism. The costs have been documented; the maneuverings have been explained; and a conclusion has been reached that communism does exist in Ethiopia under the Soviet's tutelage. It is still a very young communism, but it is firmly on the road to a matured Soviet-style democracy with the USSR as a knowledgeable guide. What remains now is to draw brief conclusions about the role of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Ethiopia in the ten years of the Ethiopian revolution.

The United States

Why did the U.S lose Ethiopia as a traditional ally? First, it was not because the Dergue was avowedly anti-American from the start. William Schaufele, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, in testimony before a Senate subcommittee in August 1976 stated that the Dergue's actions were not systematic opposition to the United States and that the Dergue was not anti-American. He said,

Certainly in the press there are attacks on the United States but by and large the government, although it is attempting to set up some kind of a leftist or socialist system in Ethiopia, however unfocused or disorganized it may be, is not systematically or instinctively anti-United States. . . .I don't find that the government, despite its sometimes inconsistent attitudes, is basically anti-United States.¹⁹⁸

The Dergue became vividly anti-American later, after the U.S. gave them the excuse by denying it aid and other mistakes.

Second, America cannot argue that ^{it} had no capability to intervene in the Horn of Africa. Granted military intervention was impossible, but Washington did have the capability to intervene with our economic and political power. These far outweigh anything that the Soviets possess, as the Soviet's inability to supply even minimal economic assistance to Ethiopia was shown earlier.

Third, the U.S could not maintain that Ethiopia no longer possessed any strategic value with the upcoming closure of Megeneth Station. Ethiopia's location is an important one

¹⁹⁸ Selassie, Conflict And Intervention, p. 139. Citing Halliday, "U.S. Policy In The Horn Of Africa."

in respect to Israel, Egypt, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Suez Canal, and Ethiopia is not too distant from the Persian Gulf. Besides any geopolitical motives for the U.S to maintain its ties to Ethiopia, there should have been the more important motive of strategic psychology.

Washington proved by its actions and inactions during these ten years that it was unable to understand any of the events occurring on the Horn of Africa. The United States adopted a policy of nonintervention, or disinterested neutrality towards Ethiopia. It did criminally little to constructively influence the course of events in Ethiopia or to oppose the meddling influence of the Soviet Union on those events. It may perhaps be symbolic of American resolve that we learned our lesson in Vietnam, then in Angola, again in Ethiopia, once again in Afghanistan, then finally on a tiny island in the Caribbean demonstrated that we had learned our lesson.

The Soviet Union

Earlier in this paper the rationale for the Soviet switch of alliances in 1977 was discussed. In view of the high cost borne by the Soviets since that decision, Why were the Soviets willing to switch, What have they gained, and Was the cost worth it? These questions have often been covered by other scholars, who seem to disagree on minor technical points. I believe that the question is unimportant. Instead, What have the Soviets created? The continued Soviet support to a regime over eight years at enormous cost and despite disagreements proves that the Soviet Union values its creation more than the costs involved.

The Soviets found in the Dergue a government willing to follow Soviet prescriptions, something that they did not have in Somalia. The creation of a loyal communist state from the ground up will be a tremendous achievement for the USSR.

To sum up Moscow's success, irrelevant of the cost: (1) they have gained a dominant position in a large, populous, and strategically located country; (2) they have considerably aided the establishment of the framework through which a communist party, which was recently created with Soviet help, can eventually take over the reigns of the government; (3) they have a loyal ally in African affairs; and (4) at the same time that they were aiding the formation of a Soviet-style framework in Ethiopia, they were displacing the U.S and casting doubts on our ability to defend a Third World ally.

Socialist Ethiopia

Ethiopia under the guidance of the Dergue and the USSR has made the swing from monarchy to communism. Why? The Dergue is silent on explanations. What this paper has tried to prove is that the consolidation of power by the Dergue bears the Soviet imprint unmistakably which indirectly indicts the Soviet Union. Given the historical and social background of Ethiopia as it entered 1974, there is no possible way that a communist state could have been created there without outside help. Ethiopia under Mengistu is a maturing communist state. What the future bodes for Ethiopia and its neighbors once Eritrea is subdued, the famine ended, and communism consolidated looks like trouble.



Charles T. Evans
July 9, 1985

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