

**RESTRUCTURING THE
SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP:**

**A CASE STUDY IN ASYMMETRIC
EXCHANGE**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the dynamics of exchange operating in special relationships initially formed and largely sustained on an amicable basis between two states of vastly unequal power. The claim is made that the weak state is likely to be adversely affected in the longer term by the persistence of negative patterns of asymmetric exchange, despite the accrual of considerable benefits. To test the validity of this proposition, selected theoretical perspectives on exploitation and manipulation are examined and applied to the analyses of political, military, economic and development issues arising in respect of the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship in the Brezhnev and Gorbachev periods.

The findings indicate that the dynamics of asymmetric exchange are much more complex than originally envisaged. The Soviet-Ethiopian relationship involved far more than the changing interests of officials whose interests and priorities were sometimes compatible and sometimes conflicting. A special relationship developed between ruling elites in these two sovereign states in the Brezhnev era, largely as a consequence of Cold War competition and ideological bonding. Although evidence indicates that Mengistu's administration had a lot to do with the relationship's progression, the negative patterns of asymmetric exchange that subsequently developed adversely affected Ethiopia more than they did the Soviet Union. These patterns persisted after Gorbachev assumed power, and the adverse impact lingered on after both sovereign states had fragmented.

The complex dynamics and adverse impacts of asymmetric exchange are not unique to the Soviet Union and its relationship with non-capitalist states like Ethiopia. In this thesis, Cold War conditions may have largely determined the process of pattern formation, but the findings indicate that similar patterns have been demonstrated in relationships between powerful and weak states in the past and they continue to appear in the present.

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List of Abbreviations

10YDP	10 Year Development Plan of Ethiopia (1984/5 to 1993/4)
3YDP	Three Year Development Plan of Ethiopia (1986-1989)
Abiotawi Seded	Revolutionary Flame, a military-dominated socialist party.
AETU	All Ethiopian Trade Union
AMC	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
CELU	Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions
CMEA	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, also known as Comecon
COPWE	The Commission to Organise a Party of the Workers of Ethiopia
CPSC	Central Planning Supreme Council of Ethiopia
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
Derg	Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police and Territorial Army
EAETS	Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics
ECMC	Ethiopian Coffee Marketing Corporation
EDORM	Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement
EPDM	Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ETGVT	Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
ETPMG	Ethiopian Provisional Military Government
EUP	Ethiopian Unity Party
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
FRELIMO	National Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
MEISON	Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake (All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement)
MLVP	Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party
MPLA	Marxist-oriented People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MPLA PL	MPLA Party of Labour
NBE	National Bank of Ethiopia
NCCP	The National Commission for Central Planning in Ethiopia
NEP	New Economic Policy
OPDO	Oromo People's Democratic Organisation
PC	Producer cooperative
PDRE	People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
PIP	Public Investment Programme of the Ethiopian government.
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
PNDR	Programme of the National Democratic Revolution
RADC	Revolutionary Administrative and Development Committees
RENAMO	Mozambique National Resistance Movement
SC	Service cooperative
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNITA	Union for the total independence of Angola
WPE	Workers Party of Ethiopia

INTRODUCTION.

This thesis aims to explore the dynamics of exchange operating in special relationships initially formed and largely sustained on an amicable basis between two states of vastly unequal power. The claim is made here that the weak state is more likely to be adversely affected in the longer term as a consequence of the persistence of negative patterns of asymmetric exchange than the strong one, despite the accrual of considerable benefits.

Certain historical features render the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship particularly appealing as a case study. First, at the onset of the relationship, prospects for good relations between ruling elites in these two sovereign states were facilitated by circumstances in history largely perceived to be similar. In both countries, revolution and the toppling of well-established hereditary monarchies had brought about radical changes. In addition, a feudal peasantry had comprised the largest stratum of the population in both states after the revolution. Moreover, modernisation had constituted a top priority for heads of state immediately thereafter. Second, as a consequence of territorial expansion and empire consolidation undertaken by powerful monarchs before the revolution, post-revolutionary officials in both states found it necessary to strengthen national controls in order to retain pre-revolutionary boundaries. Third, ruling elites in the two states had historical precedents for developing stronger ties of cooperation in the 1970s, as a consequence of Russian interests in the Red Sea region in Tsarist times and cooperative ventures undertaken with Menelik II to stave off Italian efforts to conquer the Ethiopian empire in the late 1800s.

The story of their relationship is well known and will not be described in detail in this thesis. Nevertheless, main change points are outlined briefly below to facilitate the reader's understanding of the discussions that follow. After the Ethiopian revolution in 1974, Soviet opportunities for establishing special relations with Ethiopian elites in line with the principles of socialist orientation were strengthened, as a direct result of conflicting interests between American and Ethiopian officials. Despite a sharp decline in ideological affinities during the

Gorbachev era, the special relationship between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia lingered on for around fifteen years, until Mengistu's administration collapsed in May 1991. Thereafter, the relationship was stripped of its special associations, and relations between the new generation of Ethiopian revolutionary ruling elites and Gorbachev's administration were normalised, just a few months before the demise of the Soviet Union.

In this thesis, political, military, economic and development concerns in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship are examined with a view to explaining the changes that transpired over the fifteen year period and the dynamics of asymmetric exchange operating within the relationship. In respect of the changes, I argue that the prevailing interests of ruling elites drove the relationship. The broad outlines of this argument are that Soviet and Ethiopian officials pursued their own national interests and the special relationship existed only as long as it remained useful to both parties. In the heyday of the rhetoric of socialist orientation and Marxist/Leninist ideals, the national interests of the Brezhnev administration and Mengistu's military government did not conflict overtly. Consequently, ruling elites in both states were able to smooth over quite large differences. In the Gorbachev period, the compatibility of their national interests declined markedly, as a consequence of the following factors: the emergence of a radical new leadership in the Soviet Union, accompanied by a substantial modification of the existing ideology; a famine crisis of international proportions in Ethiopia, and substantial changes in the conduct of East-West relations. Over time, the priorities of the ruling elites in both states changed, and their national interests diverged. Eventually, chiefly as a consequence of two different social orientations, their national interests came into sharp conflict. However, a final rupture was avoided. New ruling elites emerged in Ethiopia, and Soviet-Ethiopian relations were re-established on a non-partial basis.

The situation becomes more complicated, however, when one attempts to explain the dynamics of asymmetric exchange within the relationship. Under the terms of the Friendship Treaty concluded in 1978 and technically still in force after Mengistu's administration collapsed in 1991, the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship was supposed to be a mutually beneficial and cooperative arrangement, conducted on a most favoured nation basis, and the sovereignty of each state over its own internal affairs was supposed to be guaranteed. The theory was good, but the practice

unlikely, given the vast disparity in their resource capabilities.

In the era of Brezhnev and his successors, Ethiopian officials in particular benefited from access to Soviet military technology, centralised structures for political and economic administration and assistance for large-scale development projects, at the considerable expense of their Soviet suppliers. Over time, however, Ethiopia was more adversely affected by the patterns of asymmetric exchange that developed than the Soviet Union, as a consequence of Mengistu's reliance upon Soviet prescriptions for political, military, economic and development progress.

Given this unequal state of affairs, one might think it safe to conclude that Gorbachev's administration with its radical prescriptions for reform significantly reduced the adverse effects associated with asymmetry. However, the evidence does not support this view. To begin with, the negative patterns of asymmetric exchange observable in Brezhnev's day continued to flourish for a significant portion of the Gorbachev era. When the changes finally occurred, Gorbachev's package of liberalisation and de-ideologisation, aimed at opening up relations with Third World states, had the unintended effect of leaving Ethiopia's ruling elite even more vulnerable in terms of political, military, economic and agricultural development than they had been under the old Cold War order.

In the following chapters, facets of the relationship that relate directly to these two arguments are examined. In Chapter One, changing Soviet perspectives and policies about socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia are reviewed. Especially important are the propositions that Soviet analysts and officials viewed socialist orientation as a positive way forward and that ideas for restructuring the conduct of relations with non-capitalist states credited to Gorbachev's administration had been formulated by Soviet Third World specialists well in advance of New Political Thinking.

In Chapter Two, some important dimensions of asymmetry customarily associated with powerful-weak relationships are explored. First, three explanations of asymmetric exchange particularly relevant to the case study are reviewed. Second, some prominent motives of weak states for undertaking special relationships with much stronger partners are outlined. Finally, I put forward my main arguments about the balance between exploitation and manipulation prevailing in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship.

In Chapters Three to Six, particular issues arising in respect of political, military and economic relations and the strategies advocated for development are examined. In each chapter, the changing features of the relationship are discussed to see what features of asymmetric exchange, if any, are demonstrated. In Chapter Three, special attention is paid to the changing character of political and ideological exchanges and the use made by Ethiopia's ruling elite of Soviet-styled strategies and structures for political organisation to gain their own objectives. Military aspects of the relationship are discussed in Chapter Four. Particularly important here are the ideas that military provision remained the linchpin of the special Soviet-Ethiopian relationship over the fifteen-year period and that Soviet military transfers and assistance markedly increased the potential for fragmentation in Ethiopia. In Chapter Five, I argue that the importance of economic relations in establishing and maintaining patterns of asymmetric exchange detrimental to Ethiopia's future development has been greatly underrated. As a consequence of the negative effects associated with trade, aid and debt, prospects for the Ethiopian population's future well being were severely diminished. In Chapter Six, the issue of Soviet influence over Ethiopian strategies for agrarian development is examined. Particularly important here is the idea that although Ethiopian elites had the final say in policy implementation, Soviet support for large-scale agricultural projects provided Mengistu's administration with a justification for overspending and diverting scarce resources from where they were most needed.

In Chapter Seven, I look at what happened when the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship was restructured and argue that negative patterns of asymmetric exchange persisted. Then the conclusions drawn from the Soviet-Ethiopian case study are examined to see if they can be used to explain Soviet relations with other non-capitalist Third World states. Finally, I consider whether the findings about the Soviet Union's relationships with friendly developing countries can be applied on a wider basis to explain the dynamics of asymmetric exchange in relationships between powerful and weak sovereign states generally.

CHAPTER ONE

CHANGING SOVIET PERSPECTIVES ABOUT SOCIALIST-ORIENTED STATES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief account of changing Soviet perspectives about socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia and the strategies recommended for maintaining relations and sponsoring development during the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras. In part one, particular attention is paid to the theory of socialist orientation and the prescriptions advocated for social progress in non-capitalist states before Gorbachev assumed power. In part two, I examine some changing views about the policies recommended by Soviet officials for maintaining relations with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia and approving their plans for domestic development in Gorbachev's time.

PART ONE: THE SOVIET UNION AND SOCIALIST-ORIENTED STATES DURING BREZHNEV'S TIME IN OFFICE.

Four conceptual developments helped to shape the conduct of Soviet relations with non-capitalist states like Ethiopia in the decade before Gorbachev assumed power: the theory of socialist orientation; changing views about the political dimensions of socialist transformation; standardisation in the patterns of exchange recommended under economic cooperation, and the re-evaluation of Soviet prescriptions traditionally advocated for socialist development in the Third World. As we shall see, Soviet ideas about domestic conditions in non-capitalist states and maintaining relations with radical socialist leaders later associated with Gorbachev's radical plans for reform were very much in evidence before he assumed power. Nevertheless, Soviet policies for maintaining relations with officials in non-capitalist states and the prescriptions for socialist transformation remained firmly committed to the notions of scientific socialism and two hostile, competing world systems.

The theory of socialist orientation.

In November 1967, Soviet analysts formally introduced the theory of socialist

orientation. According to the theory, developing countries that had professed allegiance to socialist goals, adopted anti-imperialist policies and rejected capitalist models of socio-economic development could be classified as socialist-oriented states.

In contrast to earlier theories of non-capitalist development, which had focused upon external relationships and largely ignored internal situations, the new theory recognised the importance of domestic factors and established some guidelines for states desiring to pursue non-capitalist paths of development. In socialist-oriented states, domestic and external policies were expected to be anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and, generally anti-capitalist.¹ Longer-term goals advocated the construction of Soviet-styled political, economic, and developmental structures to facilitate the transition to socialism.²

The theory of socialist orientation had some important consequences for the conduct of Soviet relations with Third World states. First, it provided Moscow with a mechanism for selecting developing countries likely to favour alignment with the socialist world system.³ Second, it provided a theoretical rationale to reshape Soviet assistance policies towards socialist-oriented states. Under the new theoretical guidelines, Soviet military aid became the dominant instrument of support, and ruling elites in socialist-oriented states were encouraged to emulate Soviet administrative structures and to follow Soviet prescriptions for domestic and external reform in preparation for entry into the world socialist system.

¹ The policies advocated for socialist-oriented states in the 1960s and 1970s closely resembled the action plan outlined in the 1928 Comintern programme for military-political transformation and socio-economic reform in colonized countries. In the 1928 plan, leaders of colonial countries were urged to overthrow foreign imperialism, to end feudalism and landlord bureaucracy, to secure national independence and political unification, to nationalise large foreign enterprises and private land holdings, and to establish a people's army (Light 1988:97).

² Brutents (1977, v 2:127) maintained that all socialist-oriented policies were fundamentally linked to each other. He also recognized that the rates of successful implementation in respect of each policy were likely to vary.

³ By 1979, three categories of non-capitalist countries had been officially recognized: the long-established socialist-oriented states, represented by Algeria, Burma, Guinea, PDR Yemen, Congo, Syria and Tanzania; the recently established socialist-oriented states, represented by Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique, Ethiopia and 'others' (like Afghanistan); and the socialist states that had successfully avoided capitalism, represented by Vietnam, Korea, Laos and Cuba (Light 1988:143).

Political and military dimensions.

The traditional approach to class analysis stressed the importance of the proletariat in the revolutionary process. This view undoubtedly complicated Soviet explanations of socialist transformation in Third World countries in the 1970s. In Ethiopia, for example, it was blatantly obvious even in Brezhnev's day that peasants comprised the bulk of the population and that the working class was far too small to have political significance in the foreseeable future.⁴ Since the proletariat could not act as the catalyst for initiating social change in non-capitalist states, Soviet analysts attempted to identify segments of the population capable of leading the revolutionary process towards socialist transformation. To this end, the roles of national elites, peasants and the intermediate strata were given serious consideration.

By the 1970s, Soviet analysts tended to regard local elites with considerable suspicion, especially when it came to assigning leadership roles in the process of socialist transformation. Previous experience in maintaining relations with Third World leaders in the Khrushchev era indicated that local ruling elites demonstrated a marked propensity for shifting ideological loyalties in order to gain nationalist objectives.⁵

Although they formed the largest and most exploited class in most Third World countries, Soviet analysts also demonstrated a great reluctance to allow the peasantry to assume the dominant role of guiding the revolutionary transformation. In the first instance, the existence of highly divergent social strata in peasant societies precluded the unification of classes traditionally deemed necessary for vanguard leadership. Second, peasant movements and revolutionary goals tended to be changeable and unpredictable. Third, the precise relationship between the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie remained unclear.⁶

⁴ See Brutents (1977) and Light (1988) on the developments and complexities associated with Marxist-Leninist analyses of class structures in Revolutionary Democracies.

⁵ Under Khrushchev, Soviet relations with first generation Third World clients were conducted on an inter-state basis, at the expense of local communist parties and other indigenous opposition forces. Soviet officials cultivated ties with individual nationalist leaders like Nasser, Sukarno, and Nkrumah, without much regard for the ideological character of the political structures and institutions beneath them. Nationalist elites subsequently turned out to be ideologically unpredictable and politically unreliable (Fukuyama 1987:28-29).

⁶ Brutents (1977, v 1:226) argued that the pace of social development in emerging post colonial states had been too rapid to allow peasants and the petty bourgeoisie to be adequately educated and influenced by the

Recognition of the intermediate strata as a vehicle for initiating social change provided a potentially satisfactory mechanism for explaining the dynamics of revolution in socialist-oriented states during Brezhnev's administration. More progressive Soviet Third World specialists like G. Mirsky maintained that transitional or intermediate class structures made up of diverse social elements existed in Third World states where capitalism had not been fully consolidated. By taking this point of view, a wide variety of classes could be accommodated into the revolutionary process (Light 1988:122).

The concept of the intermediate strata was also very important because it provided Soviet Third World experts with a mechanism for justifying interventions by military regimes in state political activities (Light 1988:123). The Derg's intervention in the political processes of the Ethiopia's imperial regime before the 1974 revolution and the radical political transformations implemented by the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) shortly thereafter, for example, were both welcomed by Soviet officials because of their potential for initiating social change.

In respect of military leadership, many Soviet third world analysts perceived that radical elements of the military intelligentsia could facilitate political developments in national democratic revolutions. Brutents (1977,v 1:246-251) predicted that the political importance of the military intelligentsia would increase sharply during the second phase of national liberation movements. He thought that armed forces in developing countries would have special opportunities for influencing and controlling domestic situations and that military establishments in socialist-oriented states would exert considerable power over political activities.

Soviet accounts of revolutionary change in socialist-oriented states also became more complicated in Brezhnev's time. Brutents (1977,v 2:134), for example, argued that internal conflict between different but simultaneously existing orientations probably constituted the normal state of affairs in revolutionary democracies. He thought that all the ideological orientations and the basic issues of revolutionary democratic policy were objectives of continuous overt and covert struggle. He argued that ongoing struggles reflected conflicts between different social orientations, rather than a natural contention of different viewpoints within a common political framework.

proletariat. He maintained that both classes were becoming actively involved in revolutionary processes that could develop into socialist orientation.

In the late Brezhnev era, more progressive Soviet third world analysts and officials also questioned the premise that socialist-oriented states would necessarily evolve in the direction of Soviet-styled scientific socialism. Some analysts examined issues associated with identity; others concentrated on evolutionary aspects; a third group examined the unintended consequences likely to occur when ruling elites of non-capitalist states advocated a 'declarative radicalism' like socialist orientation. In respect of identity, Karen Brutents (1977, v 1:226, 148) advanced the notion that the process of socialist orientation would display zigzag patterns of retreats, defeats and successes, due to mass class involvement in the revolutionary process. As a consequence of such zigzags, he argued that it could take a long time for national revolutions to determine their own social orientations. As regards evolution, Soviet editors of a research report on socialist orientation issued in 1982 concluded that, at best, socialist orientation represented only a 'preparatory pre-socialist stage' in development (Valkenier, 1987:25). In respect of unintended consequences, Soviet official Rostrislav Ul'yanovsky, the conservative deputy head of the Central Committee's International Department, argued in 1984 that adherence to a 'declarative radicalism' like socialist orientation could actually exacerbate difficulties in the socialist transformation process by triggering sharp internal opposition to the official regime (Fukuyama 1987:39).

In an effort to improve the utility of socialist orientation as a mechanism for drawing closer to scientific socialism, Soviet analysts recommended strategies for political organisation that provided Third World ruling elites with appropriate structures for implementing socialist transformation. Two of these were particularly important in the case of Ethiopia: establishing the dominance of the state in the socialist transformation process and the creation of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties (MLVP).

The national state was expected to occupy the dominant position in national liberation revolutions under the leadership of the intermediate strata. Brutents (1977, v 1:265), for example, maintained that the national state constituted the unique feature of class struggle in the new phase of national liberation revolutions. He thought that the state would serve as an instrument of anti-imperialist struggle and that it would implement major social transformation in the interests of the masses in socialist-oriented countries.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Soviet support for the establishment of Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Parties (MLVP) to supervise the process of socialist transformation in socialist-oriented states increased substantially. Many Soviet analysts and officials believed that socialist-oriented states would be more likely to remain on the non-capitalist path of development under vanguard party leadership. Brutents (1977, v2:233) stressed the importance of communist parties in consolidating support for the transformation effort. Parties were expected to embrace the masses and to influence the broader strata of the working class, peasantry and the intelligentsia with a view to consolidating all anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist forces into a single national front. Other supporters of MLVP strategies like B.N. Ponomarev argued that vanguard parties were necessary in socialist-oriented states because the policies implemented by revolutionary democrats tended to be inconsistent and contradictory. To counteract such defects, he recommended that political organisation be strengthened by creating vanguard parties, establishing strong party-state links with the masses, instituting effective cadre training programmes and strengthening political and military state structures (Light 1988:130).

The high hopes entertained for MLVP as a viable strategy for keeping non-capitalist states on target for socialist transformation remained largely unfulfilled at the end of the Brezhnev era. In 1984, R. Ul'yanovsky complained that MLVPs had actually incurred the hostility of the population in many countries as a consequence of poor party-organisational efforts and repeated failures to secure mass support for their socialist programmes (Fukuyama 1987:39). Despite greater doubt over the utility of MLVP strategies, however, Soviet analysts and officials demonstrated a marked reluctance to abandon vanguard party strategies altogether, even in the Gorbachev era.

Economic cooperation

In general, Soviet analysts and officials rhetorically supported the notion that trade links with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia should be conducted on a most favoured nation basis. They emphasised the importance of improving trade turnovers, as opposed to improving trade balances via a more equitable distribution of export and import exchanges. Analysts and elites alike justified granting preferential market access to socialist-oriented states for the purchases of key Soviet exports like fuel,

machinery and industrial products on the grounds that these particular exports would facilitate modernisation and engender economic growth in developing countries.

Trading policies with developing countries like Ethiopia were pragmatic and complex. Bilateral trading arrangements were often complicated by sophisticated preferential and barter trading exchanges. Of these, tied buying arrangements and the inclusion of grant elements in varying proportions were particularly important. In one commodity trade agreement with Ethiopia, for example, Soviet officials agreed to increase purchases of coffee, sesame oil, haricot beans, and other agricultural goods by about 50 percent, on the condition that Ethiopian purchases of Soviet machinery, vehicles, and petroleum products also increase by an additional 50 percent (Jinadu 1987:234).

In Brezhnev's time, Soviet analysts and officials also emphasised the importance of strengthening economic cooperation, as opposed to providing humanitarian aid or outright gifts.⁷ Soviet Third World experts and officials thought that the high grant content of Western economic aid to developing countries constituted conscience money for past exploitation. Since the Soviet Union had not participated in Western imperialism and colonialism, many Soviet analysts and officials took the view that no responsibilities for payments of high grant content had been incurred by socialist states (Bach 1985:269). Free gifts of Soviet aid to Ethiopia, for example, were extremely rare even on humanitarian grounds until reports of Ethiopia's famine crisis made global headlines in the fall of 1984.

Wide differentials in the composition of grant elements and ambiguities associated with the designation of favourable terms made it virtually impossible to assess accurately the level of assistance actually provided by Soviet officials to socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia. In the mid-1980s, seven categories of economic assistance were officially recognised in a list supplied to the Group of 77 during an UNCTAD conference. Two of the seven categories were allocated to grant arrangements (one 25% or more and one unspecified). The other five established

⁷ Moscow's first official disclosure of Soviet aid to developing countries did not appear until 1982. Estimates issued by officials at an annual ECOSOC meeting in that year put net aid contributions between 1976 and 1980 in the region of R30bn (c \$44bn at the official exchange rate): a figure representing something like one percent of the Soviet-GNP. No breakdowns of the economic assistance actually given to individual socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia were provided (Machowski 1987:126).

guidelines for specific transactions such as the purchase of Soviet personnel services abroad, the education of national cadres in developing countries, the transfer of technology and know-how, the conduct of foreign trade, and the extension of preferential marine transport tariffs (Bach 1985:269-275).

Under the umbrella of economic cooperation, Soviet officials commonly imposed the following conditions upon partner states. First, Soviet officials retained firm control over the quality and progress of development aid projects. Aid disbursements from Moscow remained tied to the purchase of Soviet goods and services throughout the duration of the project. Second, ruling elites in recipient states were expected to participate actively in the funding of most development aid schemes. Third, for most of the period, Soviet officials allowed loan repayments to be paid in local currency or goods. Finally, official Soviet repayment terms for development loans remained low in the pre-Gorbachev era, and, in some cases, appeared to offer better value than those operating in the West at that time. In 1982, for example, G. Kim maintained that repayment periods varied from 10-15 years, with a grace period of 1-3 years and that current interest rates remained in the region of 2-3 percent (Kim 1982:10; Bach 1985:269).

Prescriptions for development

Throughout the Brezhnev era, Soviet prescriptions for development in socialist-oriented states emphasised the importance of centralised planning and industrialisation in the modernisation process. In the mid-1970s, analysts like Brutents expected revolutionary democrats in socialist-oriented states to carry out socio-economic reforms aimed at significantly changing important aspects of social life. He maintained that rapid economic progress and an end to economic backwardness constituted the principal goals of revolutionary democratic regimes and that strategies to achieve these objectives should emphasise the importance of long-term, detailed planning. Ruling elites were also expected to end the domination of foreign capital in key sectors in the economy and to implement policies aimed at limiting the development of a wealthy local bourgeoisie (Brutents 1977, v 2:96-100).

Revolutionary democrats were urged to establish or to expand the control of the state and of cooperative sectors over property relations in order to create effective

instruments for capital accumulation, capable of providing funds for economic development and social undertakings. Once integrated, the state and cooperative sectors would provide the economic basis for the entire nationalist, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist policy of revolutionary democratic regimes (Brutents 1977, v 2:103,107-108).

In the early 1980s, prominent Soviet Third World experts like G. Kim and Anatoly Gromyko emphasised the importance of industrialisation in generating development in socialist-oriented states. Kim (1982:10), for example, maintained that industrial development and power engineering constituted top socialist priorities in extending aid to developing countries like Ethiopia. He estimated that over 50 percent of Soviet economic and technical aid had been spent on projects in these two areas. Anatoly Gromyko (1982:6-7) confirmed that the Soviet Union was still channelling support into certain basic industries: in particular, ferrous metallurgy, machine building, the production of chemicals and petroleum refining.

In the years immediately preceding Gorbachev's rise to power, however, concerns about the prescriptions that had been traditionally advocated for socialist-oriented development increased in respect of four issues: the pace of socialist transformation, the degree of involvement in the capitalist system, the constraints of backwardness, and prospects for bypassing the capitalist stage of development.

Empirical evidence indicated that traditional Soviet prescriptions for development had not facilitated the process of socialist transformation in non-capitalist states. Some analysts argued that the pace of transformation had been too rapid. They advocated slower, more balanced rates of change for socialist-oriented states.

Prominent analysts like Evgenii Primakov and Karen Brutents questioned the notion that non-capitalist states should avoid contact with capitalism. Primakov (1978) argued that besides the classic asymmetric dependency associated with exploitation and inequality, an ordinary dependency existed that affected all countries, as a consequence of the global nature of economic relations (Valkenier 1983:93-94). Brutents (1979) maintained that developing states could benefit from exposure to capitalism and proceeded to justify his position by arguing that two types of capitalism existed: 'national' (beneficial) and 'dependent' (harmful) capitalism. National capitalism was construed to be a progressive force capable of contributing to economic development. Dependent capitalism, on the other hand, was perceived to be a malevolent force that

nurtured and strengthened neo-colonial relationships (Valkenier 1983:93).

Soviet analysts also began to question traditional assumptions about the relationship between backwardness and exploitation. Traditionally, backwardness had been viewed as a by-product of imperialist exploitation inherent in the capitalist world system. Rymalov (1980:40), for example, maintained that backwardness was the logical outcome of the formation of the world exploitative system by international capital. He believed that capitalism had divided nation states into a small number of oppressor, great-power (imperialist), sovereign and privileged nations and a large number of oppressed, dependent and semi-dependent, non-sovereign nations. Analysts of this persuasion also supported the view that backwardness could be eliminated if developing countries adopted Soviet prescriptions for socialist development and opted out of the capitalist world system.

Theorists with more progressive points of view regarded backwardness as an independent phenomenon that persistently constrained development in Third World states. They claimed that it was an inherent impediment to permanent socialist transformation in developing countries. Anatoly Gromyko (1979:103), Director of the African Institute in the early 1980s, argued that that essential material prerequisites must be present in non-capitalist countries before socialism could begin to flourish.

In Brezhnev's time, the idea that socialist-oriented states could bypass the capitalist path of development was substantially eroded, as a consequence of the analysis of empirical data on developing countries. Many Soviet Third World specialists and officials concluded that developing states would remain linked to the capitalist economic system, regardless of political orientation. Recognition of this fact reduced the need for Soviet analysts to accommodate socialist-oriented states within the world socialist system (Valkenier 1983:73-74). Moreover, recognition that minimum levels of economic development were necessary for socialist transformation cast serious doubts on the notion that certain stages in development could be eliminated if substantial aid were provided by socialist states.⁸

In the late Brezhnev era, Lenin's theories on *mnogoukladnost* (multi-structural

⁸ Brutents (1977, v 2:131), for example, argued that as a rule it was necessary for countries pursuing non-capitalist paths of development to possess healthy economies with real prospects for efficient and profitable advancement.

society) were revived to help explain complex socio-economic configurations in socialist-oriented states. Under conditions of *mnogoukladnost*, old and new forms of production and management co-existed simultaneously, with the state acting as a regulatory agent between layers. This approach was particularly useful for explaining developments in decolonised states where capitalist forms of production had been introduced during colonialism. In some cases, new forms had been grafted on to earlier production forms; in others, capitalism had replaced the old systems entirely (Light 1988:135).

Although there were divergent views on the utility and application of *mnogoukladnost*, this mixed approach to economic development gained considerable momentum in the early 1980s. This was especially so with respect to the economic heterogeneity of developing countries, the existence of a global division of labour, and the recognition of local diversity in developing countries (Valkenier 1983:82-86).

On the eve of Gorbachev's rise to power, progressive Soviet specialists advocated liberalised strategies for development in radical socialist-oriented states containing a mixture of economic policies and structures, vaguely resembling Lenin's initiatives under the New Economic Policy. In the mixed economic model that appeared in the early 1980s, no single set of economic policies was prescribed for socialist-oriented states, but ruling elites were actively encouraged to seek foreign investment from capitalist nations and to conduct external relations within a single global economy (Valkenier 1983:102). Nevertheless, Soviet conduct towards socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia remained rooted in the ideological traditions of two competitive, mutually exclusive world systems. Objectives still focused upon preparing socialist-oriented states for entry into the world socialist system and the ultimate triumph of that system over capitalism. Despite this fact, new conceptual foundations were laid during the Brezhnev era that provided the basis of Gorbachev's radical reform programmes for restructuring the Soviet Union's relationships with socialist-oriented states.

PART TWO: GORBACHEV, NEW THINKING AND SOCIALIST-ORIENTED STATES.

In Gorbachev's time, traditional Soviet priorities for relationships with socialist-oriented states were eclipsed and ultimately undermined by the domestic necessity to implement economic growth and to improve relations with the United States.

Conceptual notions associated with New Thinking ultimately eliminated the ideological justification for Soviet officials to cultivate special relationships with radical leaders of developing countries electing to follow non-capitalist paths of development.

In the following sections, I identify some important ideas and representative spokesmen, before outlining the key points of Gorbachev's radical reform programme in relation to the Third World. In the final section I examine the impact of New Thinking upon Soviet views about socialist-oriented states and the strategies advocated for restructuring relations with them.

Important ideas and representative spokesmen.

Although traditional perspectives persisted throughout the Gorbachev era, the viewpoint of progressive analysts became increasingly widespread. More importantly, they became increasingly prominent in Gorbachev's administration, while those associated with the old order largely disappeared from public view. David Albright's account of the main schools of Soviet thought that existed in Gorbachev's time demonstrates this. Four trends were identified: revolutionary-democrats and pro-militarists, two schools that advocated traditional perspectives, and national-capitalists and economic integrationists, two schools that demonstrated more progressive approaches (Albright 1991:28). Although no perspective appears to have received the official, unqualified approval of Gorbachev's administration, the two progressive schools of thought had a significant bearing upon the restructuring of Soviet relations with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia.

Revolutionary democrats believed that the Soviet Union should continue to cultivate special ties with socialist-oriented states because they constituted the 'wave of the future'. They maintained that radicalisation was deepening in developing areas and that socialist-oriented states were bypassing capitalism successfully and progressing towards socialism, despite occasional zig zags in direction. They thought that

revolutionary democracies and vanguard parties would multiply, thereby increasing prospects for the creation of socialist-oriented states and full-fledged Communist parties.

Analysts of this persuasion like Grigorii Romanov, Boris Ponomarev, Rostislav Ul'yanovsky and Anatoly Gromyko thought that the Soviet Union should continue to provide assistance to socialist-oriented states, despite severe domestic economic constraints. They also believed that Soviet officials should continue to collaborate with the ruling elite of socialist-oriented regimes in building the military, governmental and party institutions deemed necessary to consolidate local authority. Collaboration along these lines was expected to strengthen structural relationships between the Soviet Union and developing countries and to expand Soviet prospects for advancement in Third World relations (Albright 1991:28-29). Their political influence, however, diminished markedly in the Gorbachev era. Romanov, Gorbachev's chief political rival as Cherchenko's successor, was ousted in 1985. Ponomarev and Ul'yanovsky lost important CPSU positions in 1986 (Albright 1991:29).

Pro-militarists were also in favour of continuing support for socialist-oriented states.⁹ They emphasised the importance of military rule in securing socialist transformation in developing countries and argued that a considerable number of military ruling elites had expressed the desire to implement major social transformation and were willing to develop close relations with the Soviet Union. Although they recognised the potential utility of vanguard parties, pro-militarists thought that the armed forces would be the dominant institutions in developing countries in the foreseeable future.

Strategists like Colonel E Rybkin, Major-General E. Dolgoplov and retired Lt-General Ivan Novoseletsky wanted to continue military assistance to pro-Soviet governments controlled by military regimes so that local leaders could defend themselves against domestic and external opposition. They also argued that Soviet military assistance would strengthen structural relations between the Soviet Union and progressive military regimes (Albright 1991:29-30).

National-capitalists, on the other hand, questioned the wisdom of providing

⁹ Albright (1991:30) maintained that in the 1980s only members of the Soviet military establishment still publicly articulated the pro militarist perspective.

assistance to states like Ethiopia. They believed that socialist-oriented states would remain in the minority, even in the distant future. They argued that most developing countries had already embarked upon capitalist or non-socialist paths of development and that capitalist or non-socialist phases would be completed prior to the initiation of socialist transformation. They tended to criticise existing socialist-oriented states on the grounds that local political elites had failed to implement internal social transformation or to demonstrate consistent approaches in foreign policy.

Analysts like Karen Brutents, Evgenii Primakov and Aleksandr Yakovlev argued that the Soviet Union should expand political and economic relations with Third World states in general, as opposed to cultivating closer ties with socialist-oriented states. They maintained that profitable relations with a wide-variety of states would reduce the risks of Soviet setbacks in the Third World. (Albright 1991:31-32). Their political influence increased markedly during Gorbachev's administration. Brutents became first deputy director of the CPSU International Department. Primakov, formerly head of the Institute of Oriental Studies and then IMEMO, served as one of Gorbachev's leading advisors and eventually became the Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet's Council of the Union (Albright 1991:30-32). Yakovlev, one of the main architects of glasnost and the political reforms of Perestroika, assumed charge of propaganda and academic affairs in the CC Secretariat in 1986 and, following the abolition of the CC Secretariat in 1988, became head of the new International Policy Commission (Sakwa 1990:13,16, 172).

Economic integrationists also downgraded the importance of maintaining relations with socialist-oriented states. They argued that most developing states had experienced low levels of economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s, regardless of ideological inclination. They maintained that economic difficulties could only be overcome by participation in a coherent system of global economic interdependence, and within that system, traditional distinctions between capitalist-oriented and socialist-oriented developing states were meaningless.

Analysts of this persuasion, such as Vadim Zagladin, Georgii Arbatov, Vladimir Kamentsev and Eduard Shevardnadze, maintained that the Soviet Union should strengthen economic ties with a variety of developing countries. They thought that the Soviet Union could become an important supplier of secondary technology, machinery

and manufactured goods for Third World states in general. They also believed that developing countries could acquire the skills and surpluses they needed for economic progress by exporting raw products to the Soviet Union and other socialist states, as well as to capitalist developed countries. They maintained that a global, economically interdependent system could improve prospects for long-term structural relationships between the Soviet Union and developing nations (Albright 1991:32-33). Their political influence also increased markedly under New Thinking. Zagladin retained a high position in the CPSU International Department and became a personal advisor to Gorbachev in 1988. Arbatov, Central Committee member, remained director of the Institute of the United States and Canada. Kamentsev, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, also became Chairman of the Council's Foreign Economic Commission. Shevardnadze, full Politburo member, served as Gorbachev's foreign minister from 1985 to 1990 (Albright 1991:33).

Gorbachev's reforms

When Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU in 1985, Soviet analysts and officials were already making concerted efforts to generate ideas for internal and external reform aimed at reversing the process of economic decline in the Soviet Union. Their ideas, in turn, exerted a profound influence on the prescriptions advocated for socialist-oriented development. The new prescriptions closely resembled the policies traditionally advocated by the dominant powers in the world capitalist system. It took time, however, to transform Gorbachev's radical prescriptions into policy.¹⁰ In the case of socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia, timing had a direct bearing on the balance of traditional and progressive elements sustained in the strategies recommended by Soviet officials for Ethiopia's internal development.

Mikhail Gorbachev outlined rough guidelines for perestroika and glasnost in

¹⁰ Sakwa (1990:8-11), for example, identified four phases in Gorbachev's reform effort: (1) from March 1985 to mid-1986, basic guidelines were formulated; (2) from mid-1986 to mid-1988, glasnost was emphasised in an effort to generate ideas and to acquire new understandings on the political changes necessary for economic and social modernization; (3) from mid 1988 to early 1990, the pace of economic and political reforms accelerated, more radical economic reforms were introduced, new political institutions were created, and society became more political, as a consequence of elections; (4) from early 1990 on, reforms efforts were dominated by shock economic strategies and the emergence of multi-party politics; additionally, CPSU controls over the process of perestroika were substantially weakened as a consequence of deep-rooted political restructuring.

December 1984, shortly before his selection as party leader in March 1985.¹¹ Perestroika (restructuring) was conceived as a long-term programme for socio-economic modernisation.¹² Implemented from the top down, the new strategy for economic progress was expected to improve the quality of Soviet economic and social life markedly by the year 2000. Initial reforms were geared to regenerate economic growth through the rapid increase of market participation and the downgrading of centralised planning. Glasnost (openness) was to provide the catalyst for the Soviet Union's progressive development.¹³ Through the relaxation of censorship, Soviet society was expected to learn from past mistakes and to develop new solutions to old problems. Under glasnost, new opportunities for critical analyses and creative thinking were expected to mobilise social participation in the reform process at the grass roots level.

Links between domestic and foreign policy were also strengthened,¹⁴ and the ideas associated with perestroika and glasnost were extended to form the basis of New Political Thinking. Gorbachev's new approach to international affairs emphasised the de-ideologisation of inter-state relations, greater reliance upon political means for resolving conflicts, participating in the international capitalist economy and prioritising universal values over class struggle. At the national level, respect for state sovereignty over domestic affairs was officially reaffirmed, thereby confirming the right of ruling elites in socialist-oriented states to exercise exclusive control over internal military, political, economic and development matters, without fear of external intervention.¹⁵ The primacy of national interests was also sanctioned, thereby confirming in theory the right of ruling elites to shape the national interests in practice, without regard to external or internal political opposition (Gorbachev 1987:221). In time, however,

¹¹ In a speech to ideological party workers on 10 December 1984, Gorbachev publicly advocated "Glasnost" (openness) and "Uskorenie" (acceleration), in conjunction with plans for radical economic and social transformation (Sakwa 1990:6-7).

¹² See Sutela (1991), Cooper (1991) and Sakwa (1990) on perestroika and Soviet economic reform.

¹³ See Sakwa (1990) and White (1990) on Glasnost.

¹⁴ See Pravda (1990) on linkage.

¹⁵ Gorbachev (1987:177) maintained that every nation was entitled to choose its own way of development, to determine its own fate and to dispose of its own territorial possessions, including human and natural resources.

universalist goals and nationalist aims conflicted and gave rise to certain problems in the Soviet Union's relationship with non-capitalist states like Ethiopia.

The New Thinking directives on newly liberated countries and socialist-oriented states set out in 1986 by the CPSU in the 27th Communist Party Programme reaffirmed traditional commitments but also demonstrated evidence of Gorbachev's new direction. CPSU guidelines still advocated the notion of developing a stronger world socialist system, but this was to be accomplished by establishing cooperative relations with capitalist-oriented developing countries. The Party still affirmed support for newly liberated countries struggling against neo-colonialism and imperialism, but the CPSU programme stipulated that relations with such countries would be based upon strict respect for their independence and equality. The Party confirmed that relations with revolutionary-democratic parties in newly liberated countries were deepening, but also sanctioned the cultivation of relations with any national-progressive parties adopting anti-imperialist and patriotic positions. The CPSU unreservedly stressed the Soviet Union's continued commitment to political and economic cooperation with socialist-oriented states, but maintained that each state should assume the primary responsibility for its own social transformation (CDSP, 1986, v 38, Special Supplement:20-22).

Eventually, Gorbachev's universalist rhetoric and radical prescriptions for domestic reform and improving relations with powerful capitalist states in effect eliminated ideological and practical necessities for the Soviet Union to cultivate special relations with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia. In this respect, the recognition of global interdependence, the de-ideologisation of inter-state relations, and the prioritisation of universal human values were particularly important.

Recognition of global interdependence

Gorbachev's official recognition of global interdependence fundamentally undermined traditionalist notions of revolutionary development and economic progress in socialist-oriented states. His new emphasis on the political resolution of international conflict made the Marxist-Leninist explanation for supporting national liberation movements and socialist-oriented governments engaged in regional conflict

obsolete.¹⁶ In line with perestroika, attempts to re-vitalise socialist economies through integration into the world capitalist economy invalidated traditional arguments that the Soviet Union should maintain preferential economic links with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia.

Political and military support

Gorbachev's new emphasis upon the political resolution of regional conflict challenged the traditional argument that revolutionary national liberation movements were socially progressive and should be supported by the Soviet Union. Progressive analysts like Tsaglov, Mirsky, Kolosov, Primakov and Arbatov also mounted convincing justifications for changing the old way of thinking. Tsaglov (1988:145) argued that evidence accumulated in the 1980s indicated that the highest wave for the world revolutionary process and socialist-orientation was over.¹⁷ He believed that internal drives for national liberation were actually social revolutions brought on by the evolution of antagonistic classes and that revolution matured within a given society, not in relations between the colonies and mother countries. For these reasons, he thought that Soviet analysts should concentrate on explaining the common problems encountered during the formation of revolutionary majorities: in particular, the regrouping of social forces, defending progressive achievements and establishing criteria for reliable, practical steps that should be taken by revolutionary democratic movements. He recommended that Soviet analysts rethink the entire theoretical concept of socialist-orientation, starting from the present alignment of class forces and their socially progressive potential. Georgi Mirsky (1988:136) also argued that anti-colonial struggles were over. He maintained that present realities failed to confirm the existence of any natural alliance between the proletariat of developed socialist countries and the working people of developing countries based on fraternal class solidarity.

¹⁶ Before Gorbachev, Soviet analysts saw no intrinsic merit in Third World stability. Revolutionary change and conflict were regarded as unavoidable and progressive. Regional conflict was viewed as the product of contradictions arising from imperialist attempts to impede the revolutionary process and national liberation struggles to acquire self-determination (MacFarlane 1989:6-7).

¹⁷ Tsaglov (1988:145-146) regarded ebbs and flows in world revolutionary waves as normal occurrences. He attributed the current ebb in socialist revolutionary activity to the rejuvenation of capitalism via technological innovation. He believed that the former appeal of socialism as a model could be restored only if its material production exceeded those levels attained by capitalism.

Andrei Kolosov (1990:36-39) claimed that Soviet military cooperation and arms deliveries, traditionally the heart of Soviet relations with friendly developing states, had actually escalated Third World regional conflict. He thought that Soviet support should be withdrawn completely from parties engaged in regional conflict and that the only real assistance Moscow should render was to promote a formula for rapid political settlement which would enable warring populations to determine what form of administration and government they preferred.

Analysts like Primakov and Arbatov also advocated new strategies for dealing with regional conflict. Primakov (1988:7) believed that conflicts between internal forces in newly developed countries had always been waged against the background of socialist and capitalist world systems. He thought that if extra-national elements were withdrawn, national reconciliation would probably occur. A study group convened by Arbatov in 1988, on the other hand, expressed doubts about the natural inclination of internal forces in newly developed countries to reconcile their differences without external intervention. The group concluded that Soviet-American co-operation in regional conflict management would be necessary to bring about national reconciliation in a substantial number of cases.¹⁸

The views of these progressive analysts, in turn, were reflected in official policy. During the Gorbachev era, Soviet officials increasingly advocated greater Soviet participation in mediation efforts between warring national liberation movements and regional consultations with the United States and the United Nations. In 1991, Gorbachev formally confirmed his intention to reduce military involvement in Africa and to increase the Soviet Union's diplomatic participation in the political resolution of conflict situations (USSR 1991:129-131).

Economic Cooperation

Gorbachev's official recognition of economic interdependence and the

¹⁸ In May 1988, results of a three-year joint study on the demilitarization of East-West competition were released by a group of Soviet analysts, led by Arbatov and American experts. The authors recommended that Soviet officials end traditional military support for national liberation movements and that American officials stop military activities aimed at overthrowing communist governments. They also urged both powers to agree formally not to send troops, proxy groups, volunteers or covert paramilitary forces into conflicts, nor to send more than about 200 military advisers to developing countries (*Washington Post*, 6 May 1988).

dominance of the world capitalist system eventually undermined traditional arguments that preferential arrangements should characterise economic relations between the Soviet Union and socialist-oriented states. Nevertheless, mixed views about economic cooperation prevailed for most of the New Thinking era. In the last two years of Gorbachev's administration, however, criticisms of Soviet economic relations with socialist-oriented states intensified, and new strategies aimed at ending preferential ties were adopted. Soviet views about economic relations with African states in the Gorbachev era demonstrate this.

In the early period of New Thinking, Lopatov (1987:110-111) maintained that the Soviet Union aimed to reduce the dependency of African states upon Western markets, but he also emphasised the importance of accommodating the interests of both groups of officials in each particular arrangement. With regard to trade, three aims were deemed to be particularly important: exchanging goods on a mutually beneficial basis, building trade relations based upon genuine equality and mutual respect, and conducting trade on a balanced basis. His review of Soviet attitudes towards the disbursement of humanitarian and development aid to African states at the time strongly implied that Soviet officials still favoured economic cooperation rather than charitable donation. He claimed that development aid was still viewed largely as a collaborative effort and that the central premise of economic cooperation rested in the notion that assistance should aim to promote self-reliance in recipient states.¹⁹ In his view, Soviet economic assistance to African countries still focused upon modernisation achieved by industrialisation. Consequently, more than 75% of all Soviet economic and technical aid destined to African states had been allocated to industry and energy (Lopatov 1987:139).

Lopatov (1987:126-181) also described six areas of Soviet assistance provision and listed some specific responsibilities that recipient states were expected to assume in project ventures. His observations strongly implied that the principal categories of development aid projects favoured by Soviet elites in Brezhnev day remained very much in evidence in Gorbachev's time. First, Soviet officials conducted planning exercises and were actively engaged in prospecting for energy sources. Second, they

¹⁹ In theory, anyway, Soviet organisations, as a rule, were only supposed to perform jobs that their partners in recipient states were unable to do at a given time in history (Lopatov 1987:126-129).

supplied equipment complexes, accessories, spare parts and materials that were not produced locally. Third, they provided specialists for the construction, assembly and maintenance of equipment. Fourth, they provided assistance for leaders to form national organisations to administer planning, construction and research activities and national geological services. Fifth, they provided training opportunities and facilities for local personnel. Finally, they sent advisors and consultants into individual African countries to advise on various development matters. In exchange, African governments were expected to hire and pay local workers, to acquire local building materials, to cover transport expenses for Soviet project materials from the port of entry to the local construction site and to underwrite various operating expenses associated with specific development projects.

During the same period, however, progressive views that advocated changing traditional approaches to economic cooperation gained considerable ground. In respect of trade, New Thinking strategists favoured cultivating economic ties with a wide variety of developing countries and a readiness to enter into trade relations with any country willing to cooperate on an equitable and mutually beneficial basis (Danilov 1986:52-54). In line with the new approach, considerable importance was attached to forming strong trading links with Third World capitalist-oriented states (Albright 1991:44-46; USSR 1990 and USSR 1991). The new policy guidelines, in effect, signalled an end to concessional trade exchanges that had formerly been justified on ideological grounds. Under the new system of mutually advantageous trade arrangements, Soviet officials were fully prepared to downgrade sales of goods and services deemed to be vital to ruling elites of socialist-oriented states if the costs became too high.

Similarly, New Thinking approaches undermined traditional policy frameworks for extending humanitarian and development aid to socialist-oriented states on the basis of common socialist affinities. In respect of humanitarian assistance, Gorbachev's administration became increasingly concerned about the food problem in African states. In addition to charitable aid given to Ethiopia (estimated at around US\$150 million) in the 1984/1985 famine, Lopatov (1987:153-161) claimed that the Soviet Union was providing additional assistance to combat famine in African states by improving water resource management and boosting agricultural production. Projects funded for this

purpose included the building of dams and various irrigation systems, land developments and setting up state agricultural and animal farms. As regards development assistance, Lopatov (1987:160) maintained that that New Thinking objectives envisaged increasing the value of agro-industrial projects to 20 percent of Soviet Union's total assistance to the region.

Soviet officials like Pyotr Koshelev (1987:33) pointed out that Gorbachev's new approach was geared towards combating the cause of backwardness, rather than remedying its results. To this end, four priorities for African agricultural development were established, and he claimed that Moscow was providing assistance to the Ethiopian government in respect of each one. First, governments were encouraged to recognise the importance of inaugurating new farmland and obtaining the comprehensive use of water resources. Second, leaders were urged to recognise the positive benefits of mechanised agriculture and the importance of building maintenance and repair centres for farm machinery and equipment. Third, considerable emphasis was placed upon constructing adequate storage and processing facilities and improving sea fishing. Finally, leaders were encouraged to train African farm specialists.

Soviet criticisms of Moscow's traditional approach to assisting non-capitalist states like Ethiopia had increased markedly by 1990. The change was clearly demonstrated in various assessments of the impact of Soviet assistance upon progressive internal economic development in the socialist-oriented states of sub-Saharan Africa. Analysts like Andrei Kolosov (1990:41) argued that countries which had relied primarily on Soviet co-operative economic links still remained unable to establish mechanisms for stable internal development, despite Moscow's assistance in setting up some major facilities and developing projects.

In an official report on foreign policy and diplomatic activity issued by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1990, shortcomings associated with Soviet assistance to African states under the umbrella of economic cooperation were identified. The 1990 report stated that New Thinking priorities included plans for restructuring a whole range of trading, economic, technological and scientific ties with African states, as a consequence of past shortcomings and miscalculations.²⁰ The

²⁰ Officials reported that the Soviet Union had concluded agreements on economic and scientific cooperation and trade with 37 African countries. Under the umbrella of these agreements, 348 major

report acknowledged that traditional approaches to assisting African states had been superficial, links between African and capitalist economies had been underestimated, and the tenacity of traditional modes of production had been greatly under-rated (USSR 1990:95).

Authors of the 1990 report also identified some important shortcomings in Soviet assistance policies. On the issue of suitability, analysts claimed that many of the projects had not been critically evaluated because they had been undertaken at the request of African leaders, eager for personal prestige. Since the economic bases of most recipient states were inadequately developed, many of the projects that had been implemented to facilitate African industrial and infrastructural development were of limited utility. Other shortcomings mentioned included the slow pace of construction, low technical standards and shortages of spare parts. As a consequence, Soviet officials argued that the economic effect of Soviet aid to sub-Saharan African was considerably less promising than originally envisaged (USSR 1990:96).

The declining importance attached to the provision of economic assistance to African states on ideological grounds was clearly demonstrated in the second official report on foreign policy and diplomatic activity issued by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1991. Soviet officials reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had abandoned the 'ideologised and predominantly spendthrift character' of assistance programmes in favour of a 'model of mutually beneficial links' (USSR 1991:130-131).

Under the new policy guidelines, the importance of development was eclipsed by a new emphasis upon increasing political assistance for conflict resolution and reducing the Soviet military presence in the region.²¹ Under the new guidelines for economic cooperation, Soviet officials planned to jettison old structures of economic cooperation and transplant trade and economic links with African states into a 'new, economically justified framework' (USSR 1991:129-131).

projects had been completed and an additional 300 were in the process of being built or designed (USSR 1990: 96).

²¹ In the 1991 report, officials of Gorbachev's administration confirmed that in 1990 the USSR had granted no further credits to sub-Saharan African countries for military assistance (USSR 1991:130-131).

The de-ideologisation of inter-state relations.

Gorbachev's decision to de-ideologise inter-state relations undermined traditionalist notions that socialist-oriented states should cultivate preferential political links with the Soviet Union and other states in the world socialist system. His recognition that governments in sovereign states were responsible for their own domestic development reduced Soviet responsibilities for underwriting radical political regimes with militaristic policies that also implemented controversial development schemes.

Lev Entin (1988), for example, maintained that African state formation was an exceedingly complex and difficult process. He thought that sovereign states, encumbered with enormous official bureaucracies, were being built in Africa before nations had been created, and he believed that the persistence of traditional structures, institutions, notions and ideals would impede the creation of national states. Entin acknowledged that some African socialist-oriented states had attempted to reorganise state machinery and to extend citizen participation, but he maintained that the radical progressive reforms originally envisaged had never materialised. He concluded that most African states were governed by autocratic regimes under the leadership of one individual who retained a monopoly of power as head of state and party leader.

Specialists like Kolosov (1990:37) also criticised the actions of autocratic leaders in socialist-oriented states. He argued that leaders who were involved in regional conflict were not actively pursuing political settlement. He believed that in many cases, political elites were actually at war with their own people. Kolosov doubted that autocrats who had co-operated with Soviet leaders before Gorbachev could respond positively to the ideological restructuring of inter-state relations advocated under New Thinking.

The new emphasis on state sovereignty also undermined traditional arguments that Soviet assistance was necessary for progressive social transformation in socialist-oriented states. There was an increased awareness that indigenous factors affected the socialisation process and a growing concern about the potential utility of Soviet prescriptions for socialist development in African states.

Entin (1988) argued that selecting appropriate models of social development in African states was constrained by the elitist composition of the ruling coalitions. He

argued that backwardness and rudimentary productive forces precluded the formation of diverse social strata. Consequently, ruling coalitions tended to be made up of political activists drawn from the intermediate (median) strata. He believed that the gaps between the political elites of the intermediate strata and peasants who accounted for 80 to 90 percent of the population remained extremely wide.

Entin (1988:47) maintained that even after development models were selected, opportunities for restructuring social processes in African states would remain limited as a consequence of adverse internal factors: in particular, the limited availability of material and financial resources, the lack of skilled personnel, the presence of traditionalist-oriented populations, and the tendency of ruling elites to advocate unviable plans of development. He believed that the inability of ruling elites to fulfil the expectations of the population would eventually diminish their internal social support and that those in power would respond by repressing public discontent, thereby alienating the vast majority of the population even further.

Polyakov (1990:84) was sceptical about the viability of New Thinking development rhetoric with its emphasis upon agricultural progress obtained through the peasantry. He believed that what had been presented to the world as perestroika was essentially Stalinism with a new face. He argued that despite a liberalised rhetoric advocating new models, Moscow's old principle of 'follow me' had changed very little. He claimed, for example, that Gorbachev's new found enthusiasm for privatisation in Ethiopia was basically a restatement of previous recommendations made by the World Bank and other international institutions. As regards the practical viability of Moscow recommending substantial policy changes favouring Ethiopian peasants, he argued that Soviet ministries were ill equipped to undertake new policy based research and would probably find it very difficult to discard old principles in favour of more pragmatic ones. In respect of Gorbachev's new veneration for the peasant sector, Polyakov argued that the Soviet Union was pushing a strategy of development upon Ethiopia which it had yet to try out on itself.

Alexei Kiva (1991:30-33) openly acknowledged the failure of the Soviet model of socialist orientation. He maintained that even the most progressive regimes associated with the model had eventually turned into military and police dictatorships. Kiva also believed that the Soviet model of 'barracks-type socialism' which had been

duplicated by many countries had actually bankrupted indigenous development efforts. He maintained that former Soviet leaders had been so enraptured with the myth of capitalism's limited utility for self-development and its certain replacement by communism that they had failed to notice the dead-end nature of the Soviet model. He attributed this oversight to '...ideology's dead letter distorting politics which, in its turn, distorted the economy and the nation's whole life'.

The prioritisation of universal human values.

Gorbachev's stress on universal humanitarian values and issues, in effect, challenged the wisdom of supporting ruling elites in socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia who continued to implement decisions that adversely affected segments of the population. Analysts like Andrei Zagorsky and Yuri Kashlev (1990:62-63) maintained that that advocates of New Thinking in the Soviet Union were becoming increasingly aware of the relationship that existed between a state's international prestige and the human rights policies practised by its ruling elite.

CONCLUSION

In the Brezhnev era, serious attempts were made to restructure traditional explanations about developing countries and Soviet priorities in Third World relationships. Innovative ideas like the theory of socialist-orientation were introduced in an effort to remedy past failures to develop an effective theory of socialist transformation, to design a viable model of socio-economic development and to secure permanent political commitment from revolutionary democrats for the Soviet Union and the world socialist system. For a time, Soviet appraisals of the global correlation of forces and the Soviet Union's increased military capabilities enhanced ideological and strategic prospects for the successful implantation of socialist-orientation in African states like Ethiopia, where radical revolutionary leaders had expressed a desire to pursue non-capitalist paths of development.

Subsequently, a number of Soviet analysts sought to explain anomalies that had been identified in respect of internal developments in socialist-oriented states. Although divergent viewpoints persisted, a general consensus gradually emerged in the analyses of the internal and external relations of non-capitalist states like Ethiopia. Of

these, the acknowledgement of an internationalised world market, the recognition of economic differentiation among developing countries, and the acceptance of a global division of labour were especially important.

Well in advance of Perestroika, traditional perspectives about the importance of economic links between socialist-oriented states and the Soviet Union were changing, largely as a consequence of the recognition of a global economy, a growing awareness of the positive benefits associated with capitalist transactions and the realisation that backwardness in developing countries could no longer be blamed exclusively upon imperialist ventures undertaken by capitalist states. Consequently, the theoretical foundations were laid for a different prescription of development in socialist-oriented states that ultimately affected the conduct of Soviet relations with ruling elites like Mengistu in Ethiopia. Although not generally applied in the pre-Gorbachev period, the mixed economic model later resurfaced as a prototype recommended for progressive economic development in socialist-oriented states in accordance with the principles of perestroika.

Despite considerable theoretical and tactical innovation, however, the practical conduct of Soviet relations with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia continued to be formulated in line with Marxist-Leninist notions of East-West rivalry and the ultimate triumph of the socialist world system. Prescriptions advocated for military, political, economic and social success continued to reflect the hostile, competitive nature of east-west relations. Consequently, throughout the Brezhev era, Moscow's preferred strategies for conducting relations with socialist-oriented states remained focused upon giving tactical advice to ruling elites aimed at consolidating state power through the centralisation of administrative structures and strengthening political ties through the creation of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties, providing military assistance to revolutionary democratic governments, conducting trade in line with the principles of economic cooperation, and providing development assistance for large-scale, collaborative ventures aimed at socialist transformation.

In Gorbachev's time, the radical restructuring of domestic and foreign policy under perestroika, glasnost and New Thinking had a decisive bearing on Soviet perspectives about developing countries and eventually provided the much-needed opportunity to downgrade the special involvement with socialist-oriented states like

Ethiopia. Soviet Third World analysts, of course, continued to hold divergent views about Moscow's involvement with the various categories of Third World states throughout the Gorbachev era, and the blending of traditional and progressive elements varied substantially. Nevertheless, approaches that advocated expanding the Soviet Union's relations with a wide variety of capitalist-oriented states and contracting existing relations with socialist-oriented states gained considerable ground. More importantly, analysts like Brutents, Primakov and Yakovlev who were associated with the new views became politically active and occupied important positions in Gorbachev's administration.

Ideas about global interdependence, the de-ideologisation of inter-state relations and the prioritisation of universal human values were particularly important in legitimising the changes. The recognition of global interdependence undermined the utility of supporting national liberation forces and socialist-oriented governments engaged in regional conflict and maintaining preferential economic links with socialist-oriented administrations. The de-ideologisation of inter-state relations removed traditional justifications for supporting radical political regimes that implemented controversial domestic programmes for socialist transformation. The prioritisation of universal human values eroded traditionalist beliefs that class conflict would initiate progressive social change and made it more difficult for the Soviet Union to support publicly the activities of ruling elites who implemented dubious policies in respect of the population.

In conclusion, Soviet analyses of domestic conditions and the conduct of relations with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia changed markedly over time. Officials, as well as analysts, recognised the need to take domestic complexities into account and to assess the interests of radical leaders in socialist-oriented states more carefully. Nevertheless, a confusing mixture of old and new theories and practices prevailed. As we shall see in the following chapters, the shifting balance between old and new views and recommendations made the restructuring of Soviet relations with socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia inevitable.

CHAPTER TWO

ASYMMETRY, INTERESTS AND EXPLOITATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines ideas about asymmetry, interests and exploitation. It begins at a general level by considering three perspectives on the dynamics of asymmetric exchange operating between powerful and weak partners, with a view to establishing some general criteria for analysing the patterns of exchange between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia. Part two looks at regional factors prompting African ruling elites to alter experiments in Marxist-styled socialism. In part three, issues specific to the case study are examined. I look at some contrasting opinions regarding asymmetry and exploitation in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship.

PART ONE: PATTERNS OF ASYMMETRIC EXCHANGE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN POWERFUL AND WEAK STATES.

Three views on the dynamics of asymmetric exchange generally operating in special relationships between powerful and weak states are particularly useful in considering the relationship between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia: Johan Galtung's ideas about Center-Periphery relations, Claude Ake's analysis of relations between bourgeois and proletarian states and the views of Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett about the consequences of capital intensive militarisation.

In 'A Structural Theory of Imperialism' published just a few years before the formation of the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship, Johan Galtung (1971) attempted to explain the dynamics of asymmetric interaction in bilateral relationships made up of powerful ('Center') and weak (Periphery) states. He was particularly interested in how the Center state dominated such relationships, even in the absence of purposeful intent. He assumed that interactions between powerful and weak states had value and that they could be classified as symmetric or asymmetric on the basis of the costs/benefits assessments rendered for each state in the relationship. Symmetric or equal interactions existed when interactions were deemed to benefit both states about equally. Asymmetric or unequal interactions applied when one state was deemed to benefit considerably more than the other.

Galtung (1971:303; 1980:119-121) was especially concerned with the dynamics of asymmetric interaction in bilateral relationships between Center and Periphery states. To explain them, he developed a model comprised of Center and Periphery states, each having its own center and periphery. According to Galtung, the Center state was able to penetrate the periphery state by establishing a bridgehead in the center of the Periphery.²² In order for the bridgehead to function, two conditions had to be met. First, a harmony of interests had to exist between the centers of the Center state and the Periphery state, and the bridgehead had to be kept at a high standard of living.²³ Second, the gap between the living conditions of 'haves' and 'have nots' in the Periphery state had to be greater than those in the Center state.²⁴ Once established, the bridgehead was expected to play a crucial role in the process of imperialism and to facilitate the penetration of the Periphery state via the Center state's ideology. Over time, the Periphery state would become dependent on the Center state, but the resulting dependency would be generated in accordance with the needs of the bridgehead. Consequently, the needs of the Periphery state would become synonymous with the needs of its ruling elite.

Galtung developed a system for classifying categories of imperialism based on his own ideas about the respective inputs provided by Center and Periphery states. He refused to assign priorities on the grounds that all categories of imperialism were equally important, any combination of categories could co-exist simultaneously and any single category could initiate the entire imperialist process. He identified six categories of imperialism: economic, political, military, communications, cultural and social.²⁵ Some of the views that Galtung (1971:309-311) held about political, military, economic and social imperialism are also useful for identifying the negative aspects of

²² Galtung (1971:304) thought that the center of the Periphery state would disengage from its own periphery and align with the center of the Center state. As a result, the Periphery state would become progressively less cohesive.

²³ Galtung (1980:119) maintained that a strong coupling between the centers of the Center and Periphery states was essential to the implementation of the penetration mechanism. His analogy was that the arrangement between centers should be like that between a very harmoniously structured couple who went up together and down together, sharing good and bad days.

²⁴ Galtung (1980:120) expected gaps between rich and poor to exist in both states, but he thought that the gap would be an abyss in a Periphery country.

²⁵ Galtung (1971:309-312) identified the first five categories in 1971. The sixth category, that of social imperialism, was discussed in his book, *The True Worlds*, 1980:127-131.

asymmetric exchange in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship.

Under conditions of political imperialism Center states furnished decisions and models, while Periphery states supplied imitators and obedience. He believed that in the name of modernisation and development, the centers of Center states had persuaded the centers of Periphery states (i.e., bridgeheads) to adopt Center models on the pretext that they possessed superior structures and cultures. Consequently, the centers in Periphery states attempted to reproduce structures and decisions imported from the 'motherland of liberalism' (USA) or the 'fatherland of socialism' (USSR) with more regard for their Center origins than their suitability for the Periphery.

In the case of military imperialism, Center states provided protection and the means of destruction, while Periphery states furnished the discipline and traditional equipment. He maintained that only Center nations had the technology to develop and to provide sophisticated weaponry. By overpricing the military hardware that they sold to Periphery states, Center states would be able to recoup financial losses if the prices of raw materials imported from the Periphery increased, especially when the centers of Periphery states were severely threatened. The centers of Center states also provided officers and military advisors to assist the centers of Periphery states in armed conflict. In contrast, the centers of Periphery states supplied the raw fighting power (rank and file soldiers) and less technologically advanced weaponry.

Under conditions of economic imperialism, Center states provided processing and the means of production, while Periphery states supplied raw materials and markets. He thought that economic relations between Center and Periphery states were likely to demonstrate patterns of asymmetric exchange, particularly in respect of concentration on trade partners, commodity concentration and economic dependence of the Periphery state on the Center state. He envisaged that the Periphery state would conduct most of its trade with its Center partner and that high levels of import and export concentration would probably characterise trade exchanges from the Periphery state to the Center. The Center state would remain relatively free to extend trade in almost any direction, but the Periphery state would become dependent on the Center, as a result of trade partner and commodity concentration. He also argued that trade between a particular Periphery state and its Center partner would account for a much higher percentage of the GNP for the Periphery than for the Center. As a consequence, the Periphery would become much more vulnerable to economic fluctuations and

demands than the Center.

In the case of social imperialism, Centers supplied model social structures, while Peripheries provided reinforcement through isomorphism. Galtung (1980:130) believed that time-lags between the prototypes constructed by model-makers and the models selected for replication by model-users were likely to occur, especially in respect of the transmission of ideological symbols.²⁶ He also thought that if social implantation actually took place, the end product fashioned by ruling elites in Periphery states would never replicate the original completely. The structures of the two systems would appear to be alike, but in reality, they would continue to function within two entirely different orders.

Galtung (1981:184-185) also argued that the Soviet Union's position of dominance and control over client countries constituted an example of imperialism. He maintained that imperialist relationships between the center of the Soviet Union and the centers of Periphery states could exhibit net flows of economic benefits directed away from the Center state as well as towards it and that such relationships could be economically impoverishing, as well as enriching, for Soviet ruling elites. He thought that Soviet officials might be willing to endure economic losses within an imperialist relationship in order to maintain military and political control. He also believed that social imperialism aptly described the Soviet Union's endorsement of its own socio-cultural pattern of development as a model for organising society in other states.

Three aspects of Galtung's theory are particularly appealing as means for testing the hypothesis that asymmetric patterns of exchange persisted in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. First, his view that a bridgehead in the Periphery state is needed to hold an asymmetric relationship together is interesting. The idea that ideological penetration from the Center state is facilitated by the Bridgehead and the notion that dependency is formed in line with the needs of the bridgehead, rather than the rest of the population, are useful for analysing this particular the case study. Second, his discussions about the patterns of asymmetric exchange operating under conditions of political, military, economic and social imperialism raise some interesting questions about the

²⁶ His illustration of the time-lag principle involved Brazilian tramworkers carrying banners supporting August Comte, one hundred years after the Center states had forgotten about him.

Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. To what extent did Moscow influence Mengistu's decision to introduce structures for political administration and a constitution that closely resembled those existing in the Soviet Union? Was Ethiopia really dependent upon Soviet military assistance? Did the economic exchanges really benefit the Ethiopians? Did Soviet officials unduly influence Mengistu's decision to implement large-scale development efforts aimed^{at} modernising the agricultural sector and the rural population? Finally, Galtung's charge that the Soviet Union assumed a dominant position over client countries raises an interesting question. Was the Soviet Union imperialistic in its relationship with Ethiopia, despite its non-imperialist philosophy?

Nevertheless, Galtung's theory has some serious limitations. His ideas about what Centre states do are interesting, but the theory is seriously deficient when it comes to explaining why leaders take certain kinds of actions in Periphery states like Ethiopia. Connections between the Bridgehead and the Center, for example, are made in isolation, without regard for the complex pressures that influence elites in developing states to form alliances with stronger states. His thesis of model emulation is intriguing but fails to factor in the Bridgehead's independent capability for selection and utilisation to achieve its own ends. The views expressed by Claude Ake (1978) and Wendt and Barnett (1993), provide some useful insights on these issues.

Claude Ake's theory was published in 1978, the same year as the Soviet-Ethiopian Friendship Treaty was agreed. As he was concentrating on Africa at the time, it is very likely that some of the events happening in Ethiopia shaped his views about radical revolutionary administrations.

Ake (1978:9-25) argued that the global economy had separated countries into two camps: bourgeois states, which possessed the instruments of labour by virtue of the ownership of capital and technology, and proletarian states, which possessed the labour power. He maintained that these divisions applied, regardless of ideological affinities. Consequently, he considered the Soviet Union to be just as much a bourgeois state as any developed country in the West, due to its ownership of technology.

Ake (1978:20-32) also believed that primary contradictions in the global economy arising in connection with the bourgeois and proletarian states constituted the major source of revolutionary pressure in Africa. He thought that bourgeois and

proletarian countries were engaged in a struggle of ever increasing intensity and that each camp utilised an ideology which reflected its own interests. Leaders of proletarian countries were preoccupied with exploitation, inequality and oppression. They viewed international relations in terms of imperialism, neo-colonialism and unequal exchange. In contrast, ruling elites in bourgeois countries stressed order, peaceful co-existence, peaceful change, stability, unity and the struggle between East and West. Their dominant ideology rested on the notion that that development had already been achieved in bourgeois countries. Consequently, proletarian states were encouraged to admire and to replicate the models provided by bourgeois countries, thereby reinforcing their secondary position in the global economic order.²⁷ In the 1970s, for example, Ake maintained that African ruling elites were being increasingly pressured to adopt foreign development ideologies.²⁸

Ake (1978:26-28) argued that the powers of ruling elites in proletarian states were much more limited than those exercised by leaders of bourgeois states. Although African ruling elites had acquired political power as a consequence of decolonisation, the ruling classes of bourgeois countries (patrons) had managed to retain economic power. Within the parameters of the patron-client relationship, African ruling elites were forced to function in dual roles as protectors of the interests of bourgeois countries and political governors of the African proletariat. Consequently, relations between patrons and clients reflected a curious mix of consensual and conflicting interests that exerted a negative impact on Africa's position in the global economy.

Ake (1978:71-76) also maintained that most African elites were under increasing pressure to adopt repressive policies, despite rhetorical commitments to

²⁷ As a consequence of over reliance upon external models of development, ruling elites neglected the development of indigenous strategies. This made them exceedingly vulnerable to changes in the international system, especially when radical changes in development prescriptions were recommended by officials in bourgeois states (Ake 1978:30-32).

²⁸ Ake (1993:242) maintained that pressures to adopt foreign development ideologies still prevailed in Africa in the 1990s. He believed that post-Cold War recommendations for the democratisation of African states constituted yet another example of pressures exerted on weak states to emulate models recommended by powerful states. He thought that indigenous efforts at African democratisation would focus on social and economic rights, rather than on abstract legal and political rights and that economic adversities in most African states would mandate considerable state intervention in the economy. He maintained that efforts at democratisation along these lines would overtly conflict with the values and interests held by sponsors of Western democratisation and that they would oppose indigenous remedies on the grounds that they were socialist. He believed that it was very unlikely that the process of democratization in Africa would be allowed to go its own way.

radical ideologies condemning exploitation and inequality. Initially, two strategies were favoured to improve economic performance: the direct use of coercive power for expropriation and economic centralisation. Over time, both strategies proved to be ineffective in containing growing pressures for revolution. The direct use of coercion failed to redress existing economic adversities because it generally alienated the rural population, exaggerated the importance of political power and ultimately retarded the development of the material base. Strategies for expropriation, where the state extracted tribute from the population via centralised state organs and government monopolies over the marketing of primary commodities, also failed to strengthen the material base, because they created a regressive form of capitalism.

Since economic expropriation had failed, Ake (1978:77-81) argued that African ruling elites in the late 1970s had only two options left for responding to increased revolutionary pressures on the continent: either meeting the political and social demands of the population or depolitisation. He thought that African elites would be disinclined to opt for strategies aimed at establishing social equality and well-being because their power would be dislodged, and, as a consequence of limited economic surplus and an underdeveloped material base, there could only be marginal improvements. He concluded that most African ruling elites would aim to depolitise domestic opposition. Under those conditions, revolutionary demands would be discouraged; political manifestations of domestic opposition would be prevented, and one party states or military regimes which behaved like one party states would reduce the active participation of the masses. Ake predicted that depolitisation would increase instability, internal violence, and underdevelopment in African states, because one party states or military regimes had no mechanism for dislodging rulers. Consequently, change could only be instituted by breaking the rules. Underdevelopment would intensify because of the tendency of military regimes to resort to booty capitalism that alienated the masses from ruling elites, precluded the mobilisation of the population and was not conducive to African development needs.

Ake's ideas are particularly helpful in identifying certain policies likely to be implemented by African heads of state in the late 1970s and early 1980s in response to external and internal pressures, regardless of capitalist or socialist alliances. In respect of development, for example, the notion that patron states, regardless of ideological persuasion, pressure client states to emulate approved strategies on the grounds of

superiority is particularly interesting, given Ethiopia's former relationship with the United States and Haile Selassie's capitalistic ventures undertaken in that period. Ake's description of the domestic policies likely to be implemented by African leaders in response to internal pressures are also important to consider. If his views are right, then policies aimed at economic centralisation, the augmentation of state power, the creation of one party states and the depolitisation of domestic opposition by military means constituted a normal response to internal crisis by African leaders in the late 1970s and early 1980s, rather than strategies imposed externally by a Patron state like the Soviet Union.

Two main problems exist with Ake's theory, however. In the first instance, like Galtung, he focuses on one side of the story at the expense of the other. The interests of ruling elites in Africa are carefully explained, but he ignores analysis of the dynamics operating in patron-client relationships. Second, Ake's theory does not accommodate change very easily. His ideas about the impact of external and internal pressures upon African leaders are interesting but they do not provide us with a framework for understanding increased complexities and a changing world order in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett's theory about asymmetry in capital-intensive militarisation provides a useful insight on this issue.

Two years after the demise of both Soviet and Ethiopian empires, Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett examined the dynamics of military exchange between strong and weak states in the late twentieth century. Wendt and Barnett (1993:336-341) believed that a fundamentally asymmetrical global military culture existed which was shaping Third World military development in different ways than would be the case if it were absent. They argued that the modern army, characterised by professionalism and technologism,²⁹ had become one of the most important symbols of the modern state. They also maintained that a global security culture had socialised third world elites to attach a high symbolic value to advanced weapons technology that could only be provided by powerful states in the international system.

Wendt and Barnett (1993:321-326) advanced the hypothesis that in the late 20th century ruling elites in weak and powerful states alike wanted to acquire capital-

²⁹ Professionalism concerned the actual military establishment, especially those parts that helped to keep ruling elites in place. Technologism referred to the symbolic valuation of advanced technology over alternative technology.

intensive militarisation, rather than labour-intensive militarisation.³⁰ However, they viewed threats to national security differently. In developed states, officials viewed national security threats as primarily external, while the leaders of most Third World states perceived national security threats to be internal. Consequently, the acquisition of capital-intensive militarisation exerted a decisive impact on the process of state formation in most developing countries because of its considerable potential for controlling domestic opposition.

In respect of state formation, Wendt and Barnett (1993:322) identified three structures of dominance shaping the national security interests of ruling elites in Third World states. First, dependence on a global economy tended to create weak regimes that viewed the bulk of the population as security threats, rather than assets. Second, dependence upon external security assistance tended to produce elites whose definitions of security reflected the concerns of their external patrons and ignored the needs of the resident population. Third, dependence upon a global military culture shaped Third World ruling elites' ideas about what should constitute a modern army, despite the exorbitant costs incurred in the process of modernisation.

Wendt and Barnett (1993:334-336) also maintained that Great Power authority had penetrated third world states to a considerable extent through the formation of hierarchical structures of informal empire. Within informal empires, interactions between sovereign states were characterised by the dominant or powerful state having a significant degree of de facto political authority over the security policies of the weak state and by the availability of local actors willing to act on behalf of the powerful state. Dominant states created informal empires either to secure a political base for economic expansion or to block the penetration of rival powers in geo-politically sensitive areas. By virtue of 'arms for influence' trade-offs, particular local actors gained the military means to assert power over rival contenders. Informal empires also adversely affected the process of state formation in weak states because local elites relied upon external military support to keep indigenous opposition under control, rather than resolving differences through political accommodation. Moreover, dominant states typically

³⁰ They defined capital-intensive militarisation (CIM) as the accumulation of capacity for organized violence (i.e., military build-up) through modern, advanced weapons systems and a small core of highly skilled soldiers. In contrast, labour-intensive militarisation (LIM) was defined as military build-up characterised by low levels of sophisticated weaponry and large-scale deployment of unskilled people's armies or militias.

adopted a two-pronged strategy for providing military assistance to Third World ruling elites that encouraged military dependency of the latter, even though this particular outcome was not always intended. The first tactic was to limit clients' access to weapons that might actually enable them to defeat or to deter military intervention such as weapons capable of mass destruction. The second tactic was to provide access to technologies that would encourage Third World ruling elites to divert scarce domestic resources towards the acquisition of capital-intensive militarisation.

The strength of the theory of militarisation offered by Wendt and Barnett rests in its potential for explaining the security motivations of ruling elites in powerful and weak states and describing the dynamics of modern military asymmetry. Its strength, of course, is also its greatest weakness. That is to say, the theory is specialised and can only be used to analyse the security dimension of the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship.

These three views of Johan Galtung, Claude Ake, Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett provide good starting points for the analysis of asymmetry and interests in relationships between strong and weak states generally, but they do not consider the consequences of ideological bonding and disengagement sufficiently. These issues are addressed in part two.

PART TWO: CHANGING AFRICAN INTERESTS IN SOVIET-STYLE SOCIALISM.

It is vital to consider how the interests of elites in weak states change. The changing responses of African elites to Marxist ideology and Soviet-styled prescriptions for state governance, for example, serve as useful indicators for charting some of Mengistu's responses in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship.

Ethiopia was not the only country in Africa to pursue and to abandon experiments in Soviet-styled socialism. Arnold Hughes (1992a:9-11) points out that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, African ruling elites in Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Tanzania and Zambia selectively applied Marxist-Leninist development strategies to facilitate modernisation and economic progress. These first-wave leaders in populist or African socialism, however, were selective in the Soviet-styled rhetoric and policy prescriptions that they adopted. They favoured centralised state structures, command economies, egalitarian social policies, anti-imperialist rhetoric and support for broad-based movements engaged in anti-colonial struggles, but ignored policies associated with scientific socialism, especially those that emphasised distinct class divisions, inter-class

conflict and the formation of Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties with explicit party programmes. First-wave experiments were largely unsuccessful. The Soviet-styled models that had been imported failed to increase productivity or to stimulate economic growth. Moreover, as a consequence of their populist affinities and the selective nature of their socialist experiments, proponents of African socialism received very limited support from the Soviet Union or China. As a result, most first-wave African socialist regimes had been swept away or retreated into isolation by the end of the 1960s.³¹

Hughes (1992a:10-11) maintains that African leaders in the 1970s attributed the failures of their experiments in Soviet-styled socialism to three shortcomings. First, they thought that too much importance had been attached to the idea of forming broad-based coalitions for socialist transformation. Second, they realised that opportunities for non-capitalist development had been severely constrained by a combination of domestic and external factors: in particular, high opportunism among leadership groups, low popular support for socialist ideas, weak state institutions and massive needs for Western economic assistance. Third, they recognised that that prospects for the successful implementation of African or populist socialism had been sharply reduced as a consequence of the very low levels of external assistance and support received from powerful socialist states like the Soviet Union and China.

Armed with this knowledge, Afro-Marxist regimes that appeared in the mid-1970s³² decided that that scientific socialism, with its clear-cut models for political, economic and social organisation, held out real prospects for modernisation and progressive development on the continent and could offset the shortcomings associated with earlier failures. Consequently, they were willing to use Marxist-Leninist rhetoric that emphasised distinct class divisions and inter-class conflict to establish vanguard parties with explicit party programmes and to strengthen the power of the state through the importation of Soviet political and economic administrative structures. In this way, they hoped to bring about progressive development and social modernisation and to

³¹ Three prominent first wave socialist regimes were swept away within as many years: Bella in Algeria (1965), Nkrumah in Ghana (1966) and Keita in Mali (1968). Others like Guinea opted for isolation (Hughes 1992a:9-10).

³² Hughes (1992a:9-11) maintained that two parallel routes towards a more orthodox Marxism emerged in Africa in the mid-1970s. The Afro-Marxist route was directly associated with military takeovers and revolutionary military regimes. The Afro Communist route was associated with indigenous movements that ultimately evolved along Marxist-Leninist paths. See also Simpson (1989) and Halliday (1983).

avoid the failures associated with their first-wave socialist predecessors. More importantly, by demonstrating a firm commitment to the principles of scientific socialism, African officials in socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia hoped to acquire development assistance provided by the Soviet Union and other socialist states.

Hughes's discussion of changing African interests provides an interesting account of the attempts made by leaders to alter Soviet-styled policies underpinned by Marxist ideology in ways that would secure their interests. It is equally vital, however, to consider why ruling elites in developing countries lost interest in Soviet prescriptions for progress. Here, Forrest Colburn's and Dessalegn Rahmato's analysis of the problems associated with implanting Soviet-styled socialism in Africa is particularly useful. Their discussion contributes substantially to the analysis of Soviet-Ethiopian relations, because it highlights some of the crucial structural constraints impeding Mengistu's efforts to implement socialist transformation and helps us to understand some of the reasons underlying his decision to abandon Ethiopia's experiment in scientific socialism in 1990.³³

Colburn and Rahmato (1992) claimed that Marxist leaders were unable to realise their socialist objectives as a consequence of several problems. To begin with, they believed that the majority of Third World revolutions had been fought to dislodge the old order, rather than to introduce socialism. Consequently, post-revolutionary regimes had to persuade, to force or to entice their populations to accept the changes mandated for socialist development. Another issue was that most developing countries had a limited capacity for economic development, but socialist prescriptions for economic progress had dramatically increased the state's responsibilities. Consequently, the costs incurred by post-revolutionary regimes in centralising state control over economic activity generally exceeded the benefits, because leaders inevitably lost political support whenever domestic economic conditions deteriorated. A third issue rested in the fact that most post-revolutionary regimes remained dependent on the generation of export revenue to pay for imports. The poorer the country adopting socialism was, the more dependent it tended to become upon external economic transactions.

³³ Colburn and Rahmato (1992:160) acknowledged that decision-making and leadership in revolutionary regimes were important, but their analysis centred on six structural propositions deemed to impede the successful implantation of scientific socialism in Third World states.

Colburn and Rahmato (1992) believed that widening gaps between modern and traditional sectors constituted another serious problem for post revolutionary governments. Contradictions in revolutionary equality were inherent in developing countries, and revolutionary governments had to allocate resources disproportionately in order to initiate economic recovery. Consequently, Third World elites tended to commandeer resources and to redirect them to the modern sector where the potential for productivity was deemed to be greatest, at the expense of the traditional sector where they were most needed. Strategies of this sort intensified agrarian problems because revolutionary socialist regimes invariably alienated peasant populations by raising taxes and enforcing collectivisation. Moreover, pro-socialist post-revolutionary regimes tended to favour the industrial sector and to inflict costly changes upon the peasant population.

Excessive reliance upon military means to control the population constituted the final problem analysed by Colburn and Rahmato (1992). They concluded that Third World revolutionary regimes almost always had to escalate military expenditure to stay in power. Leaders had to contend with escalations in domestic opposition, as a consequence of rising, unfulfilled political and economic expectations. Consequently, most ruling elites had to harden post-revolutionary policies in order to stay in power.

The analyses provided by Hughes, Colburn and Dessalegn Rahmato provide useful insights about policy problems associated with ideological bonding and ideological disengagement. In the case of Ethiopia, they provide some useful guidelines for identifying the pressures Mengistu faced after the revolution that were exacerbated by his decision to adopt Soviet-styled ideologies, structures and prescriptions to secure Ethiopia's modernisation.

PART THREE: ASYMMETRY IN THE SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP.

Part three examines the issue of asymmetric exchange or 'who exploited whom' in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. In particular, it looks at the restructuring of political, military and economic relations and whether or not the Soviet Union was responsible for Ethiopian policies for internal development. Each side of the argument must be examined carefully in order to determine the balance of exploitation/manipulation demonstrated in the Soviet-Ethiopian case.

Soviet interests

One view commonly found in the literature is that the Soviet Union exploited Ethiopia in order to pursue its own competitive interests and that Soviet ruling elites disproportionately influenced and adversely affected Ethiopian strategies for modernisation and progressive development. The Ethiopian Unity Party (EUP), for example, levelled charges of imperialism against the Soviet Union in 1987 that were also voiced by some Western specialists in African politics.

In a radio broadcast made just one month before the official launch of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) in September 1987, EUP spokesmen accused the Soviet government of committing a great violence to Ethiopia on a scale tantamount to invasion. They claimed that Moscow had turned Ethiopia into a colony. The Soviet Union was accused of overtly intervening in Ethiopian political, military, economic and development affairs and conspiring with the Derg to undermine the day-to-day progress of the people. On the political front, Ethiopian Unity claimed that Soviet officials were keeping an unpopular government in power and strengthening that regime's control over the Ethiopian population by allowing a carbon copy of the 1977 Soviet constitution to become legally binding. In military matters, Moscow was accused of escalating regional conflict in the Horn, making Ethiopia a depot for the export of second-rate Soviet arms and military equipment, utilising Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes and determining Ethiopian military policies.³⁴ Economically, Moscow was accused of expropriating raw materials to pay for arms transfers, providing unsuitable and unreliable equipment for Ethiopian farmlands, accepting famine relief donations (food and money) as payments for arms debts, and providing low levels of famine aid to populations at risk.³⁵ In respect of development, the Soviets

³⁴ EUP spokesmen claimed that high-ranking officials of the Soviet army approved and controlled Ethiopian military and political policies. They also maintained that the Soviets had secured special strategic concessions in Ethiopia, especially on the Dahlak islands, situated off the Eritrean coast. Similar complaints about Soviet military participation in Ethiopian affairs were also launched by the EPLF in 1988. In contrast to the charges leveled by Ethiopian Unity regarding second rate Soviet arms, EPLF spokesmen claimed that Moscow had provided the Ethiopian military establishment with large numbers of sophisticated weapons which had never been seen before in the region (BBC, *SWB*, 12 August 1987 and 13 May 1988).

³⁵ EUP spokesmen also maintained that gold from the Adola mines in Sidamo had been used as payment or collateral for Soviet arms purchases and that Moscow had sold machinery to Ethiopians which was unsuitable, often incorrectly assembled, highly prone to breakdown, and could only be repaired with Soviet spare parts (BBC, *SWB*, 12 August 1987).

were charged with destabilising Ethiopian society and destroying traditional Ethiopian cultural and religious values by the forcible implantation of Marxist-Leninist ideology (BBC, *SWB*, 12 August 1987).

These charges made by the spokesmen for Ethiopian Unity are particularly interesting because they reflected the views held by segments of Ethiopia's population resolutely opposed to Mengistu's administration. The criticisms seemed plausible, but to what extent were they valid? I shall be looking at the accusations in all four categories in more detail in the case study analysis that follows, but Western views about the exploitative nature of Soviet interests in political and military relations form the basis of discussion for the remainder of this section.

In respect of the political relationship between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia, two particular issues should be examined in more detail. First, is it the case that Soviet officials provided Ethiopian ruling elites with prototypes for centralised structures of governance that consolidated the power of one particular group of radical, post revolutionary elites over others? Second, did Soviet officials intend to strengthen political ties between the two states in an asymmetric manner by pressurising the Ethiopians to create and to sustain a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party (MLVP) that would be linked to the CPSU?

In general, Western analysts' criticisms of Soviet opportunistic designs to acquire political influence in Ethiopia through the dissemination of Soviet-styled socialist administrative structures are fairly muted. This is probably because replication was involved, and that makes it difficult to assess Soviet intentions to influence the Ethiopians.³⁶ Clapham (1988:230), however, maintained that Soviet officials attached particular importance to Ethiopia's emulation of Moscow's political model, because they expected Soviet-styled organisational structures to stabilise the regime and to facilitate its relationship with the Soviet Union.

In contrast, Western accusations that Soviet officials intended to moderate the activities of Ethiopian ruling elites by establishing a vanguard party linked to the CPSU are relatively common. Fukuyama (1987:24-35), for example, maintained that Soviet officials regarded the MLVP as a far more significant tactical innovation than any of the

³⁶ Hughes (1992a:11-12), for example, argued that African Marxist regimes had borrowed extensively from Soviet political language and institutional practices, but that Moscow had not physically imposed its form of government upon any Afro-Marxist state.

commonly noted policy instruments like proxy forces, a bluewater navy, tactical transport aviation and other military power projection capabilities that appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He believed that the potential for political organisation inherent in the creation of the MLVP was far more important to the Soviet Union than its ideological connections. In terms of political organisation, he claimed that Soviet officials viewed the vanguard party as a mechanism for stabilising revolutionary power and eventually establishing a pro-Soviet orientation in developing countries by virtue of its ability to provide the local regime with a firm organisational base. He also argued that Soviet pressures to form a vanguard party were most evident in Ethiopia. There ruling elites formed the Committee for Organising the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE) in 1979, largely in response to Soviet demands for initiating party-building efforts aimed at establishing the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE).

Colin Legum and Robert Patman also support the proposition that Soviet efforts to influence the establishment of the WPE, Ethiopia's Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, were considerable.³⁷ Legum (1987:240-243) maintained that Soviet officials regarded Ethiopia as the test case for MLVP strategies, designed to make the process towards socialist orientation irreversible through the creation of a vanguard party with strong Soviet connections. In support of this argument, he pointed out that the entire Soviet bloc provided extensive ideological training for Ethiopian officials and Marxist-Leninist cadres at home and abroad. Patman (1990:270) also claimed that Soviet elites considered the establishment of an MLVP necessary to ensure Ethiopia's continued progress towards socialism. To this end, the vanguard party was conceived as a political structure that would devolve Mengistu's power, enhance the role of Soviet trained cadres, and institutionalise the Soviet Union's position as Ethiopia's political patron.

In respect of the Soviet-Ethiopian military relationship, two issues are particularly important. First, did Soviet ruling elites increase the power of one particular group of Ethiopians after the revolution and subsequently ensure their tenure and their loyalty through the provision of substantial military assistance: in particular,

³⁷ In theory, MLVPs fulfilled four functions. First, they provided a way of forming revolutionary democratic alliances comprised of all classes. Second, they served as the focal point for organizational and ideological unity. Third, they facilitated the revolutionary transformation of society through cadre instruction in Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Finally, they provided links between developing countries and the world Communist movement (Albright 1983:217).

technologically sophisticated weaponry, skilled Soviet military advisors and well-equipped surrogate troops? Second, did Soviet strategies for the management of regional conflict in the Horn of Africa also include plans to establish a Pax Sovietica made up of highly militarised, competitive powers in the region?

In respect of military assistance, Colin Legum (1987:241) believed that Ethiopia became the testing ground for Moscow's surrogate-intervention strategy. He pointed to the high risks willingly assumed by the Soviets in backing the Ethiopian revolution, and he maintained that the size of Moscow's military commitment there in the late 1970s was larger than any undertaking in the Third World, excluding Afghanistan.

As concerns Soviet aspirations for expanded spheres of influence, Patman (1990:190-203, 264-265) maintained that Moscow's commitment to Ethiopia in the pre-Gorbachev era, at least, was strongly conditioned by Soviet aspirations to establish a pro-Soviet confederation in the Horn that conformed in principle to the notion of a Pax Sovietica.³⁸ Henze (1988:53-54) went a step further. He claimed that Soviet leaders wanted Africa to become a continent of states like Ethiopia or Angola. In this configuration, each state would form separate links to Moscow, and each would adopt a basic pro-Soviet orientation. After elites in African states had formed strong links with Moscow, lateral ties and international relations with other states and institutions would remain weak and would not infringe upon the links that had already been established with the Soviet Union. In respect of domestic conditions, Henze maintained that parallel structures of development would be implemented in African states. First peasants would be collectivised or employed on state farms, where they would be exploited as sources of wealth to sustain military and industrial expansion. Second, a growing urban proletariat would receive a larger share of scarce consumption goods as a consequence of fulfilling targets in five-year plans. Third, semi-permanent patterns of leadership would be established that would restrict change to narrow circles. Fourth, societies would operate for the benefit of a nomenklatura of bureaucrats, party officials and military officers. Finally, cultural and intellectual activity would be more rigidly circumscribed.

³⁸ Many authors support the idea that Soviet ruling elites wanted to establish a Pax Sovietica over the Horn. See also discussions set out in Erlich (1988), Pascoe (1988) and Henze (1988 and 1991).

Ethiopian priorities

The Ethiopian Unity Party may have powerful allies in its charges against the Soviet Union, but there are alternative views which support the hypothesis that Ethiopia entered into a relationship with the Soviet Union in pursuit of its own interests and subsequently exploited the Soviet Union in order to acquire military resources, blueprints for political organisation and mechanisms for dislodging feudal structures of economic production and social organisation. Explanations offered by Christopher Clapham, Marina Ottaway, Dawit Wolde Giorgis, Colin Legum, Adele Jinadu, Herbert Block, Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa demonstrate this.

In the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship, domestic considerations inside Ethiopia, in particular, had a direct bearing upon the processes of restructuring and asymmetric exchange. Christopher Clapham's analysis of Ethiopia's experiment in Soviet-styled socialism generally supports this premise. Clapham (1992b:106-111) maintained that Ethiopia's initial turn to Marxist-Leninist socialism and its subsequent abandonment was determined more by internal than external factors. Four factors prompting the turn to Soviet-style socialism were particularly important. First, Ethiopia and Russia had similar backgrounds in respect of empires and systems held in place by hereditary monarchs; consequently the solutions offered by Marxism looked promising initially because the problems seemed so similar. Second, Marxist-Leninist doctrine provided an approach to development that created new opportunities for sweeping out the old order. Third, Soviet-styled socialism offered the military regime a doctrine of multi-ethnic nation building. Finally, scientific socialism offered Mengistu and his officers an ideology and a structure of control for strengthening the power of the state.³⁹

Clapham (1992b:113-116) attributed Ethiopia's retreat from scientific socialism to the fact that all the attractions that Marxism/Leninism held out in the 1970s had either ceased to be relevant or had failed to work by the late 1980s. Ethiopia's centralised, socialist institutions had worked well enough in terms of their own internal structures, but they were unable to fulfil the objectives for which they had been created. Shortcomings were particularly apparent in respect of economic development --

³⁹ In respect of external incentives, Clapham (1992b:106-111) thought that two factors were particularly relevant. First, Ethiopian officials expected to access additional sources of international support. Second, they planned to increase the international and domestic prestige of the military government by interacting with other socialist states.

especially agriculture -- and in the methods advocated for achieving national unity. Clapham argued that the government's exploitative economic system had alienated the population and had increased levels of domestic opposition. As a consequence of economic failure, Mengistu turned to the West for economic assistance and acceded to capitalist-oriented demands to implement agricultural marketing reforms in 1987, in exchange for a comprehensive aid package aimed at improving peasant agriculture.

In looking at the political relationship from this perspective, it is important to examine the same two key issues relating to political structures and institutions identified previously in the argument about Soviet exploitation. In the case of Ethiopia, however, some analysts argue that Ethiopian officials took advantage of Soviet advice, interests, structures and institutions to obtain their own objectives. In other words, they replicated Soviet structures of political administration for the explicit purpose of strengthening the local state apparatus and formalising power,⁴⁰ and they took advantage of Soviet-approved vanguard party models and used the end product to extend control over their own population.

Marina Ottaway (1987:37, 40), for example, maintained that Mengistu's military regime was more interested in Marxist-Leninism as a blueprint for administrative structures than as an instrument of ideology. She argued that Soviet-styled socialism provided a model for the consolidation of state power that really did work under very difficult conditions. She also maintained that the PMAC was extremely successful in creating the political apparatus necessary to consolidate of central authority in a socialist state. Within a ten-year period, for example, Mengistu's military regime managed to construct organisational structures, establish parameters of authority, and implement policies for national economic reform.

In contrast to the views of Legum, Patman, and Fukuyama that emphasised the importance of Soviet influence over the creation of Ethiopia's WPE, Ottaway (1987:32-36) advocated the thesis that party building was a indigenous strategy initiated by the Derg in conjunction with other policies designed to provide political organisation. She claimed that the party was formed out of local need, rather than ideological conviction or subservience to the Soviet Union and that the Derg had been attempting to establish a national party since 1975, because of its potential utility as an effective instrument of

⁴⁰ See also Andargachew Tiruneh (1993:265-298) on the formalization of power enshrined in Ethiopia's 1987 constitution, modeled on the Soviet constitution of 1977.

control.⁴¹ She attributed differences between Soviet leadership and the PMAC in respect of the speed of party formation to the fact that Mengistu's government was determined to proceed cautiously in the new enterprise, rather than to risk failure. Ottaway viewed the implementation of the Soviet-styled party model in Ethiopia in 1984 as a successful move towards strengthening the centralised authority of Mengistu's regime, rather than a step taken to tighten links with the CPSU.⁴²

Dawit Wolde (1989:57-61), a former high-ranking official in the Ethiopian government, also claimed that Ethiopian elites exercised control within the Soviet-styled system of political administration. He maintained that Mengistu used Stalinist techniques of force, intrigue and manipulation within the centralised state apparatus to stay in power. The vanguard party also provided Ethiopian officials with a useful means of control. Although the WPE controlled the Ethiopian population, Mengistu exercised full control over the party.

Ethiopian security interests in the military relationship must also be taken into account before any meaningful assessments of restructuring or asymmetry can be made. In respect of security interests in the Horn in general, Legum (1987:233) maintained that it would be a profound mistake to regard local actors as merely passive victims, clients or unsuspecting agents of the superpower blocs. He argued that African leaders were skilfully exploiting East-West rivalries to enhance their own interests and that all major powers had been compelled to adjust their policies and interests in the region in order to address the interests of African ruling elites. In a similar vein, Ottaway (1984:182-185) argued that great powers exerted minimal leverage upon conflicts in the Horn. She maintained that great power successes in the region were dependent upon the compatibility of their goals with the goals of the regional powers involved.

In relation to exploitation in the Soviet-Ethiopian military relationship, Dawit Wolde Giorgis (Freedom House 1990:26) claimed that Mengistu had intentionally

⁴¹ In her analysis of Derg party building efforts from 1975 to 1984, Ottaway (1987:33-36) claims that two concerted attempts were made to form state parties out of indigenous political parties between 1975 and 1979, and both failed abysmally. The first attempt sought to unify mainline, competing socialist opposition groups such as the EPRP, MEISON, and POMOA. The second consisted of consolidation strategies designed to unite marginal, fragmentary socialist parties under the umbrella of the Union of Marxist-Leninist Organization (1979). According to Ottaway, party-building via Moscow's Marxist-Leninist vanguard party model, was the third such effort.

⁴² Ottaway (1987:33) thought that the party fulfilled three essential functions for Ethiopia's ruling elite: first, the country's socialist image gained credibility; second, new possibilities were opened to control the population; third, officials acquired additional protection against radical civilian groups.

fostered a relationship of dependence with the Soviet Union in order to acquire Soviet goods and services for the regime's security. In addition, Dawit (1989:61) maintained that models of Soviet military organisation had been deployed in the Ethiopian army to reduce the threat of military rebellion and that party members and cells existed at all levels of the military hierarchy.

The importance of economic transactions in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship has been generally underrated, particularly in respect of the patterns of asymmetric exchange they demonstrated. The reason why they are undervalued is that many analysts argue that Ethiopia continued to conduct the majority of its trade and aid dealings with capitalist states and institutions during the period under review. Clapham (1988:11), for example, maintained that post-revolutionary Ethiopia had undergone only a partial transformation, because existing Western-oriented trade links had been retained.

This may be true to some extent with regard to the sale of coffee, Ethiopia's major export. It is not the case, however, in respect of two categories of imports that Mengistu deemed to be crucial: namely, militarisation (the acquisition of modern weaponry and the provision of military advisors) and industrialisation (in particular, the provision of crude petroleum and large-scale machinery for modernisation). As we shall see in Chapter five, Ethiopian officials relied heavily upon Soviet imports in these two categories for almost the entire period.

In relation to aid, many analysts point out that Soviet contributions were meagre, as compared to those provided by Western donors. But they forget that Ethiopian ruling elites wanted support for large-scale projects aimed at modernisation: projects that Soviet officials were willing to underpin to a certain extent and that Western donors were exceedingly reluctant to finance throughout the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras.

Adele Jinadu (1987) supports the thesis that Ethiopia's approach to economic relations with the Soviet Union remained opportunistic and in line with the strategies traditionally favoured by imperial regimes in the past for cultivating economic ties with powerful states. Her explanation focuses upon Ethiopian efforts to downgrade the importance of the economic relationship and to spread the risks more globally. Jinadu (1987:234-237) maintained that the Soviet-Ethiopian economic relationship was already showing signs of strain and stress in the early 1980s. She argued that Ethiopian concerns about the burden of heavy arms expenditures were further exacerbated by the

paucity and inappropriateness of Soviet non-military assistance, in particular, development assistance and food aid. She claimed that as a consequence of the limited prospects for improving economic relations with the Soviet Union, the PMAC initiated overtures to Western donors and implemented a number of policies designed to improve Ethiopia's creditability to prospective capitalist donor states and institutions in the early 1980s. First, Ethiopian ruling elites began to look for loans in Western capital markets. Second, the Ethiopian government took measures to restore its eligibility for loans and assistance from the World Bank. Finally, the strategic emphasis in Ethiopia's ten-year development plan drafted in July 1981 was nominally shifted away from collectivisation and nationalisation, and roles were outlined for Western bilateral and multilateral economic assistance in the plan's implementation.

The extent of Soviet influence over Ethiopian development strategies is a highly contentious issue. The problem is that the accumulation of hard evidence about the degree of influence one state exerts over another state's development policies remains elusive, chiefly as a consequence of three factors: replication, showcasing and interpretation.

To state the problem of replication briefly, the copying of one state's structures and systems by the ruling elite of another state does not constitute cloning. Consequently, the external and internal dimensions of the original and the replication will never be identical. This factor is particularly important in cases where ruling elites in a weak state like Ethiopia replicate structures of political, socio-economic and agricultural development that have been championed in the past by a powerful state like the Soviet Union. This helps to explain why gaps are most likely to develop between the interests of originators and replicators when the originator rejects the old model and supports a new development prototype. Block (1983:240), for example, argued that regimes that were politically and ideologically close to Moscow had their own motives for imitating Soviet patterns. In many cases leaders of such regimes would 'out-Kremlin the Kremlin' in their zeal to please their overlords. In such cases, Moscow would attempt to brake their enthusiasm, out of fear that they would have to be bailed out.⁴³

Showcasing presents a slightly different problem. In this instance, it refers to

⁴³ See also Halliday (1989:106-107) regarding this phenomenon.

the idea that ruling elites in weak states may carefully adapt their development rhetoric and formal project plans to conform with wishes of powerful donors in a bid to gain financial assistance, but such strategies are only facades used to mask their own policy agendas. Holcomb and Ibssa (1990:9-10), for example, argued that Ethiopia was a colonising state and that imperialistic Ethiopian ruling elites had traditionally fostered dependence upon a strong imperial power in order to obtain foreign technology and skilled advisors. They claimed that over time Ethiopian regimes had developed showcasing techniques to foster dependence in asymmetric relationships. Under conditions of showcasing, carefully designed programmes and policies were presented to powerful partners to win their approval and to facilitate existing relationships. Holcomb and Ibssa concluded that in real terms, showcasing strategies were only facades that masked the real policy intentions of Ethiopian officials.

The best way to demonstrate the importance of interpretation (perception) is to examine some views expressed by analysts in respect of Soviet influence over Ethiopian strategies for agricultural development: in particular, collectivisation and resettlement. Dawit Wolde (Freedom House 1990:27), for example, maintained that the Soviets did not pressure Mengistu to collectivise. As evidence, he pointed out that Soviet officials had issued a statement in 1984 against the Derg's collectivisation policy.⁴⁴ He claimed that Mengistu was deploying Marxist-Leninist organisational strategies to increase his control over Ethiopian society. First, society was restructured into peasant associations, urban dwellers associations and collective farms. Second, party cells at multiple levels were introduced to control the Ethiopian population.

Divergent views about Resettlement expressed by Henze, Holcomb and Ibssa also demonstrate the proposition that the determination of influence in Ethiopian schemes resembling earlier Soviet projects hinges upon the particular interpretation. Henze (1989:31), for example, maintained that Mengistu's strategy for opening up new agricultural lands by massive resettlement schemes with the use of state-operated heavy equipment was modelled upon Soviet prototypes. He believed that Mengistu's colossal resettlement effort in the mid-1980s was essentially an imitation of Khrushchev's virgin lands programme of the 1950s. Henze (1985:94) skirted around the issue of Soviet

⁴⁴ He maintained that Mengistu's strategies had been influenced by North Korean examples. In respect of Mengistu's tactics for controlling agrarian populations, he argued that Ethiopian villagisation schemes, like Tanzanian 'ujamaa' projects, were mandated by the government, built by the peasantry and sustained by the villagers' own efforts. Also see Crouch (1987:39-53) on ujamaa.

influence, however, preferring instead to point out that Mengistu's resettlement plans reflected actual Soviet practice only in respect of their bias towards the formation of state farms and collectives and the fact that the plans entailed the forcible movement of the population.

In contrast, Holcomb and Ibssa (1990:365-370) ignored links to earlier Soviet models altogether. They argued that Mengistu's strategy of resettlement represented a continuation of tactics traditionally employed by Ethiopian ruling elites like Menelik and Haile Selassie. As evidence, they pointed out that the settlement studies which had been carried out under Haile Selassie became available to the Derg after the take-over. They maintained that Mengistu viewed resettlement as an important mechanism for controlling Ethiopian land and labour. Control was expected to be implemented in two stages: first, the dependency of resettled populations on the Ethiopian state was to be fostered; second, land policy was to be liberalised and the land given to resettlers in order to minimise their opposition to the regime.

Finally, in considering 'who exploited whom' in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship, it is important to consider the reluctance of Ethiopian ruling elites, in general, to relinquish sovereignty in relationships with powerful partners. Analysts Mulatu Wubneh, Johannes Abate, Bonnie Holcomb and Sisai Ibssa agree that Mengistu's motivations for cultivating alliances with powerful states like the Soviet Union and the United States differed little from the practices traditionally advocated by Ethiopian ruling elites. Wubneh and Abate (1988:163-164), in particular, maintained that finding a major power willing to provide ample military and economic aid had traditionally constituted the top priority for Ethiopian political elites, regardless of traditional or radical affinities.

Clapham, Erlich, Holcomb and Ibssa argue that Ethiopian ruling elites have traditionally demonstrated a reluctance to relinquish sovereignty in relationships with powerful states. Clapham (1988:222) pointed out that Ethiopia had demonstrated an inherent impenetrability throughout Haile Selassie's relationship with the United States and Mengistu's relationship with the Soviet Union. In 1992, he also argued that major Ethiopian opposition groups had used Marxist-Leninist ideology to gain their own objectives and that rises and falls in avowed commitment levels, plus the use of socialist organisational models by opposition groups over the years, indicated that

internal priorities had shaped the level of Marxist commitment to a considerable degree in Ethiopian opposition forces, as well as among Ethiopian officials. The TPLF, for example, had downplayed Marxist affinities and reversed all of Mengistu's socialist policies immediately after take-over in order to gain internal support.⁴⁵ Clapham's analysis implied that Ethiopian opposition groups, as well as Ethiopian ruling elites, had selectively applied ideologies originally generated in the Soviet Union to serve their own purposes and that both groups had demonstrated a readiness to abandon them when the political climate became too unfavourable.

According to Haggai Erlich (1988:130-139), Soviet leaders had been able to exercise very little control over Mengistu because they failed to understand Ethiopia's impenetrability and the geopolitical history of Ethiopian relations with powerful states, as traditionally evidenced in the policies of 'politica tigrina' --where outside agents recruited Ethiopian partners for purposes of internal subversion, as a consequence of Ethiopian fluid personal politics and the existence of many losers wanting to regain power -- and 'politica scioana' --where foreign powers attempted to promote economic, cultural and political influence through Ethiopian emperors.

Holcomb and Ibssa (1990:363-365) argued that the Ethiopian superstructure had remained intact under the Derg and that Moscow's relationship with Ethiopia and Mengistu's rhetorical commitment to socialist orientation had not really changed anything. They thought that the Derg's implementation of so-called state socialism constituted little more than a return to the old maderia land model of Menelik, under which all land had belonged to the crown.⁴⁶

Soviet and Ethiopian interests in combination.

As the preceding discussions have shown, any analysis of asymmetric exchange in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship must take the interests of ruling elites in both states

⁴⁵ In his analysis of the two major opposition groups, Clapham (1992b:111-112,116-118) indicated that the TPLF-EPRDF and the EPLF also differed considerably in their objectives and that each group used Marxist propositions in different ways to attain them. See Alex DeWaal (1994:28-36) for another account of contending forces.

⁴⁶ In contrast to Holcomb's and Ibssa's thesis of imperial continuity, Andargachew Tirunch (1993:289-298) argued that Mengistu's new autocracy had significantly changed the Ethiopian political culture. He claimed that a fundamental difference existed between Haile Selassie's paternalistic traditional aristocratic autocracy and Mengistu's 20th century totalitarian autocracy. He maintained that as a consequence of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution, a 20th century totalitarian dictatorship had replaced a feudal autocratic system.

firmly into account. Legum and Ottaway, for example, stressed the importance of considering the separate interests of ruling elites in each state. Legum (1984:10) argued that a proper perspective of the Soviet Union's encounters with Africa could only be formed if the individual objectives and interests of both Soviet and African parties were considered. He maintained that the best way to interpret Moscow's experience in Africa was to regard it as the dynamic interplay between converging and conflicting interests of both parties. Ottaway (1984:169) was particularly interested in security interests. She maintained that relations based on a compatibility of separate interests strong enough to allow trade-offs between military aid and access to military facilities was the most that global superpowers could expect in relationships with regional powers in the Horn.

Clapham and North, on the other hand emphasised the complex coupling of the two states in the relationship. Clapham (1988:228) visualised the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship as based upon an interlocking set of mutual interests. North (Freedom House 1990:29) described the relationship between Soviet and Ethiopian ruling elites as a bad marriage from which neither partner could escape. He argued that Gorbachev was reluctant to withdraw from the relationship, even though he disapproved of Mengistu's economic policies, because the Soviet Union still derived prestige and strategic strength from its relationship with Ethiopia. As for Mengistu's reluctance to abandon the partnership, North maintained that he was locked into the relationship because of his dependence on Soviet assistance.

CONCLUSION

All the perspectives outlined in this chapter are interesting in their own right. Their real importance to this thesis, however, rests in the questions they raise about the interests and dynamics of exchange actually operating within the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship and in their utility for locating patterns of asymmetric exchange particularly adverse for Ethiopia.

In respect of interests, analysts like Legum, Marina Ottaway, Clapham and North emphasise the importance of taking the separate interests and complex interplays of ruling elites firmly into account when analysing the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. I share this view, and their methodology forms a vital aspect of analysis in the next four chapters.

In respect of asymmetry, Galtung, Wendt and Barnett and Henze stress the notion that strong states guide the direction of exploitation. Proponents of this view would probably claim that the Soviet Union dominated the relationship and that Ethiopia became overly dependent upon the Soviet Union. In addition, Henze would claim that Soviet officials unduly influenced Ethiopian policies for socialist development and, by so doing, actually weakened prospects for Ethiopia's self-reliance. On the other hand, Ake, Ottaway, Holcomb and Ibssa remind us that the analysis of asymmetric exchange in relationships between strong and weak states is never so straight-forward. Exploitation is not just a one-way process. Ruling elites in weak states frequently take advantage of strong states to secure their own interests.

The charge that the strong state set the pace of exploitation, however, is probably the best starting point in this particular analysis of the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. The accuracy of such claims can be evaluated by examining facets of the relationship in the chapters that follow.

In respect of political relations, I shall investigate the claim that the Soviet Union took advantage of existing opportunities to expand its influence in Ethiopia. To achieve those ends Soviet officials had to strengthen the power of one particular group contending for recognition after the Ethiopian revolution. They were able to do this by implanting Soviet-styled administrative structures, introducing a Soviet-styled constitution and establishing a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, technically responsible to the CPSU.

In the discussion on military relations, I examine the accusations made by Ethiopian Unity spokesmen that the actions of Soviet officials actually escalated regional conflict in the Horn, made Ethiopia a depot for exports of Soviet military equipment, utilised Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes and heavily influenced the direction of Ethiopian military policies.

In the chapter on economic transactions, I take a closer look at trade transactions to see whether or not available evidence would support the claim that the exchanges were asymmetrical and benefited the Soviet Union more than Ethiopia. In addition, evidence about aid and debt will be examined to see whether there is any merit in the charges that Soviet aid to Ethiopia was inadequate and that Ethiopian dependence upon the Soviet Union increased as a consequence of Moscow's willingness to allow so much unpaid debt to accrue.

The chapter on agricultural development examines the charges made by Ethiopian Unity spokesmen that Soviet development prescriptions for Ethiopia's modernisation rooted in collectivisation, Marxist-Leninist ideology and the values of scientific socialism were devised to facilitate cultural penetration. These prescriptions undermined traditional Ethiopian cultural and religious values and destabilised Ethiopian society.

CHAPTER THREE

RESTRUCTURING POLITICAL RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the changes in Soviet-Ethiopian political relations from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s are examined. I start from the simple premise that officials in each state pursued their own separate interests and that political exchanges in the Brezhnev era were conducted on roughly equal levels, despite sharp differentials in the projection of global power. During Gorbachev's time, however, three issues increased in importance: the extent of influence exerted by the strong state over its weaker partner; the effects of pressures exerted by the United States upon the relationship, and the impact of a radical change in leadership in the strong state upon the relationship at a given point in history.

In Part One, the issue of balance between Ethiopian interests and Soviet influence in Brezhnev's time is addressed by looking at Mengistu's ideological commitment to Soviet-styled socialism and his decision to create a socialist vanguard party. I argue that the strengthening of political relations in Brezhnev's time was prompted more by the needs of Ethiopia's revolutionary military administration to control domestic opposition than by the desires of Soviet officials to intervene and to dominate Ethiopian internal affairs.

The central focus of the chapter rests in Part Two. Here, Soviet-Ethiopian relations in the Gorbachev era are analysed with a view to explaining significant changes in the level of political compatibility over the six-year period. I argue that real events triggered gaps between the interests of Soviet and Ethiopian ruling elites which widened markedly between 1985 and 1991. The changes ultimately turned out to be more costly for Mengistu's regime than they did for Gorbachev's administration, because of the Ethiopian leader's marked reluctance to adjust to new times and to relinquish the perceived benefits associated with old-fashioned notions of ideological bonding.

PART ONE: INTERESTS AND INFLUENCE IN BREZHNEV'S TIME.

Evidence about Soviet-Ethiopian political relations is inconclusive when it comes to assessing the balance between Ethiopian national interests and Soviet influence over Ethiopian ruling elites in Brezhnev's time. What can be ascertained is that the Derg's position in Ethiopia was weak after the revolution and officials needed external support to stay in power.

The take-over

In 1974, Ethiopia's military establishment mounted an organised campaign against Haile Selassie's imperial regime. In June, the Military Coordinating Committee secured a mandate from the armed forces to create the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army (the Derg). In September, the Derg stripped Emperor Haile Selassie of his powers and seized control of the Ethiopian government in the name of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC). In December, the PMAC introduced the 'ten-point programme' that incorporated nationalist, as well as socialist objectives (ETPMG 1974; Clapham 1988:45-46).

Initially, Ethiopia's new revolutionary administration raised some hopes for the rank and file of the population. Assisted by Marxist intellectuals eager to facilitate the building of a more progressive Ethiopian state, the Derg introduced some broad-based socialist reforms aimed at reducing the economic power base of Ethiopian aristocrats. In March 1975, peasant associations were created, and rural lands became government property under Proclamation 31/1975 (Mulugetta, et. al. 1978:159-172). In July, urban lands and extra houses were nationalised under Proclamation 47/1975 (Wubneh and Abate 1988:106-107). Kebelles (Urban dwellers' associations) were established shortly thereafter (Clapham 1988:130-136).

During 1975, dissatisfaction with the Derg's administration began to rise, largely in response to the PMAC's repressive tactics and the persistent refusal of officials to hold national elections. The Derg responded to public disapproval by intimidating organised resistance. To reduce the threat associated with mounting student unrest in urban areas at the end of 1974, Ethiopian officials sent some 50,000 university and high school students into the country to indoctrinate the peasantry on the revolution under the National Development Through Cooperation Campaign or

Zemacha (Clapham 1988:49-50). To prevent the emergence of an organised coalition of labour, government officials detained leaders of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labour Unions (CELU), banned strikes and, in December 1975, finally replaced the union with the All-Ethiopian Trade Union (AETU), their own institution (Wubneh and Abate 1988:53). To curtail prospects for a peasant uprising, the military government invested Ethiopian peasant associations with official powers to enforce rural land reform under the provisions of Proclamation 71 (Mulugetta, et. al. 1978:173-194).

In 1976, some of the more radical members within the Derg strengthened their positions, intensified their socialist rhetoric and introduced even tougher measures to protect their relatively weak status. On 20th April, shortly before Soviet officials indicated the first positive interest in providing assistance, the PMAC adopted the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution (PNDR), aimed at eradicating feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and imperialism and establishing a firm foundation for Ethiopia's socialist transformation (Wubneh and Abate 1988:205-210). In July, criminal codes were tightened. In September, retaliatory attacks were undertaken with the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement or Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake (MEISON) against the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP). In October, police powers were extended to include arbitrary rights of search and seizure, and, simultaneously, government security forces and the people's militia intensified mopping up procedures in the provinces. In December, PMAC members consolidated their positions by restructuring the administrative bureaucracy along the lines advocated formally by Soviet officials. In line with the new recommendations, the PMAC was divided into three bodies: a Standing Committee of seventeen members; a Central Committee of forty members, and a Congress made up of all PMAC members. General Teferi Banti became the PMAC chairman, the official Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Ethiopian military establishment, and Colonels Mengistu and Atnafu assumed the positions of first and second vice-chairman, respectively (Wubneh and Abate 1988:59).

The introduction of Soviet-styled, centralised bureaucratic structures in 1977 strengthened the PMAC's power over Ethiopian citizens in general, but administrative restructuring had the unintended effect of destabilising the internal hierarchy of the provisional government. Consequently, Mengistu re-established his authority over the PMAC by a surprise manoeuvre in February 1977 and confirmed his intention to engineer Ethiopia's socialist transformation in accordance with the principles of

scientific socialism. At that time, he announced that the course of revolutionary reforms in Ethiopia would be altered from a defensive to an offensive direction (*Izvestia*, February 5, 1977, in *CDSF* v 29, no 5:20).

The provisional powers of the PMAC acquired a more permanent character shortly thereafter. The Derg was incorporated into the General Congress; the 32 member Central Committee was invested with specific economic and diplomatic powers, and the Standing Committee was accorded the authority to administer political, legal and diplomatic affairs (Legum and Lee 1977:53-54). Mengistu now exercised full power over the entire political apparatus, as Chairman of the PMAC, the de facto Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

Once in control, Mengistu extended the PMAC's potential reach by creating civilian policing groups and by strengthening centralised control over administrative structures at national, regional and local levels. In the cities, Kebelles and workers' defence squads were recruited to serve as urban vigilantes. In rural areas citizens were recruited to serve in the peasant militia (estimated at 300,000). In addition, Revolutionary Administrative and Development Committees (RADC), introduced at national, regional, provincial and district levels, were subsequently empowered to raise money and materials for the elimination of internal and external enemies by any means available (Legum and Lee 1977:81; Wubneh and Abate 1988:66-67).

In 1977 and 1978, the PMAC's newly strengthened coercive powers were demonstrated in the Red Terror campaigns designed to reduce organised opposition in urban regions even further. This period was also characterised by high levels of compatibility in the Soviet-Ethiopian political relationship, as a consequence of the Ethiopian- Somali conflict.

Strengthening Soviet-Ethiopian relations

Reports from the Soviet media issued early in 1974 indicated that ruling elites and newspaper correspondents in the Soviet Union were monitoring indicators of political change in Ethiopia well in advance of the September revolution. Two articles in *Pravda* on 10th and 12th March by Vladimir Ozerov and Valentin Korovikov entitled 'Winds of Change over Ethiopia' and 'Working People's Victory', respectively, examined the 10th March strikes. Both writers considered signs of Ethiopian political unrest to be progressive, and both applauded the Ethiopian proletariat for participating

in the process of political change (*CDSP* v 26, no 10:21-22).

In 1975, Soviet news correspondents portrayed post revolutionary ideological and political developments in Ethiopia in a very favourable light. A. Nikanorov, for example, welcomed the socialist-oriented reforms that had been introduced in accordance with the political manifesto released on December 20 1974 and commented favourably on the Derg's avowal to seek a peaceful resolution of the Eritrean problem (*Izvestia*, 8 February 1975, in *CDSP*, v 27, no 6:19-20). V. Korovikov maintained that the Derg's nationalisation of rural and urban lands constituted the most important reform of the year. He also reported that the PMAC intended to create a national political party made up of workers, peasantry and the intelligentsia (*Pravda*, 16 August 1975, in *CDSP* v 27, no 33:16).

Soviet approval of the military government's revolutionary policies increased in 1976. In April, only a few days after the PMAC introduced the PNDR, Soviet officials applauded the revolutionary efforts of the Derg and referred to the status of true friendship which also implied a willingness to assist the PMAC in future endeavours (Legum 1987:241). In May, Korovikov reported that the new leaders of Ethiopia's National Democratic Revolution were actively drawing the masses into the reform and implementing a gradual transition from a military regime to a democratic system. The Derg, he claimed, had initiated efforts to create and strengthen mass organisations and political parties supportive of the National Democratic Revolutionary Programme (*Pravda*, 16 May 1976 in *CDSP* v 28, no 20:20). In July, high-ranking Soviet officials, including A. N. Kosygin (Politburo member and Chairman of the Council of Ministers), A. A. Gromyko (Politburo member and Minister of Foreign Affairs), B. N. Ponomarev (candidate member of Politburo and Secretary of the CPSU-CC), and I. V. Arkhipov (CPSU-CC member and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers) met an Ethiopian delegation in Moscow. Soviet and Ethiopian officials issued a joint communiqué promising to develop the relationship further. Brezhnev's administration also offered to send experts to Ethiopia to explore areas suitable for mutually advantageous economic and technical cooperation and to expand training programmes for Ethiopian national cadres (*Pravda*, July 14, 1976, as cited in *CDSP*, v 28, no 28:15). Soviet specialists visited Ethiopia to assess military and economic needs in October, and, in December, officials in the Soviet Union concluded an arrangement with the PMAC to provide arms assistance (Patman 1990:196).

Throughout 1977, Soviet news correspondents and officials supported Mengistu's more aggressive approach to socialist-oriented domestic reform. In May, Mengistu met Podgorny, Brezhnev and other officials in Moscow. During a dinner at the Kremlin Palace, Podgorny confirmed that the Soviets were pleased with the PMAC's decision to pursue a socialist-oriented path of development, and Mengistu reaffirmed his commitment to sweep away feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism in Ethiopia and to lay a solid foundation for the transition to socialism. At the end of the meeting, a Declaration of Friendship establishing friendly relations on a mutually advantageous basis was issued. (*Pravda*, 5-6 May 1977, in *CDSF*, v 29, no 18:9-11).

Soviet ruling elites strengthened political and ideological ties with the Mengistu administration on a more formal basis in 1978. In November, a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation was concluded. Under the provisions of the 20 year Treaty, ruling elites in both states agreed to strengthen friendly relations and to cooperate on political, economic, trade, scientific, technical, cultural and other matters, on the basis of equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs (*Pravda* 21 Nov 1978, in *CDSF*, v 30 no 46:11-12).

The formation of Ethiopia's Marxist-Leninist party.

The PMAC planned to create a national party capable of reinforcing government policy after the revolution. Ethiopian officials envisaged that the party should be strong enough to withstand political opposition and cohesive enough to oversee the implementation of official policy at local, regional and national levels. In this case, the Soviet-styled socialist features of Mengistu's national party were determined more by domestic political necessity than by the external pressures imposed by Soviet officials. The intense concern of the PMAC about the rise in popularity of indigenous socialist parties like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), inaugurated in August 1975, make this clear.

The EPRP was formally inaugurated as a proletarian party on 1st August 1975 (Legum and Lee 1977:44). Its prescriptions for Ethiopia's modernisation threatened the Derg's authority because they advocated the restoration of civilian rule as a pre-condition for the implementation of socialist reforms. To counter EPRP influence, PMAC officials initially backed a rival Marxist party, the All-Ethiopia Socialist

Movement (Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake or MEISON), led by Haile Fida.⁴⁷ Throughout 1975 and 1976, the Derg conducted extensive propaganda campaigns designed to discredit the allegedly Maoist intentions of the EPRP. In September 1976, MEISON officials launched a retaliatory campaign against EPRP leaders to eliminate the potential threat of a political take-over. During 1977 and 1978, the PMAC and MEISON jointly conducted Red Terror campaigns to counteract White Terror attacks attributed to the EPRP. In the campaigns, neighbourhood militias were recruited to root out EPRP members and supporters.

After the EPRP's powerbase was destroyed in Addis Ababa, the PMAC began to doubt MEISON's utility as a national political party for promoting official objectives. As a result, Mengistu's regime formed the Revolutionary Flame (Abiotawi Seded), a military-dominated socialist party that competed with MEISON for power. MEISON was eventually outlawed by Ethiopian officials, after an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the PMAC (Wubneh and Abate 1988:57). In December 1979, Mengistu's administration set about organising another national party. This time, a preparatory committee was convened: the Commission to Organize a Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (the COPWE). At the time, the COPWE happened to conform roughly to Soviet recommendations for organising a vanguard party.⁴⁸

In theory the COPWE was supposed to lay the groundwork for establishing a Soviet-styled vanguard socialist party in Ethiopia. In practice, it provided an effective mechanism for consolidating Mengistu's control over the population. First, the COPWE, like the PMAC, was organised into executive and central committees and a congress, and Mengistu presided over each of the three main organs. Second, PMAC officials and military representatives dominated the membership of COPWE executive and central committees. The Central Committee, for example, included the entire PMAC Central Committee, all of the cabinet ministers in the Mengistu administration

⁴⁷ Both parties advocated socialist transformation along Marxist lines, but there were important differences. MEISON recognized the right of ethnic groups to self-determination, but only within the confines of a united Ethiopia. EPRD officials supported the idea of grass roots revolution, and they acknowledged the right of various nationalities to secure self-determination by secession (Wubneh and Abate 1988:55).

⁴⁸ Six rival Marxist-oriented groups operated in the country before the COPWE was convened. Two parties, the EPRP and MEISON, were outlawed. The other four, including The Labour League (Wez Ader), the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization (MALERID), the Ethiopian Oppressed Revolutionary Struggle (ECHAT) and the Revolutionary Flame (Abiotawi Seded), supported the PMAC and were eventually absorbed by the COPWE (Wubneh and Abate 1988:57).

and around 70 representatives from the military (Wubneh and Abate 1988:60). Finally, the COPWE was legally empowered to exercise complete control over all political cadres, including the military (Clapham 1988:70-77).

In the early 1980s, the CPSU and the COPWE strengthened their links. In October 1982, Mengistu met with Brezhnev, A.A. Gromkyo, Chernenko and other officials in Moscow. Brezhnev and Mengistu signed an 'agreement on cooperation' between the CPSU and the COPWE (*Pravda* 17 October 1982, in *CDSP*, v 34, no 41:11-12). In March 1984, during a state dinner held in the Ethiopian leader's honour in Moscow, Chernenko, the new Soviet leader announced that the creation of an Ethiopian ruling vanguard party guided by the principles of scientific socialism was extremely important for the successful accomplishment of the urgent tasks of the revolution. Mengistu, in turn, recognised the importance of Soviet experience in party creation and claimed that existing ties and exchanges of experience between the COPWE and the CPSU were creating favourable conditions for the work of the future vanguard party (*Pravda*, Mar 30, 1984, as cited in *CDSP*, v 36, no 13:14-15).

The Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), Ethiopia's official Marxist-Leninist Vanguard Party, was finally inaugurated during the 10th anniversary celebrations of the Ethiopian revolution in Addis in September 1984. In his speech to the newly formed Ethiopian party assembly, Soviet Politburo member G.V. Romanov emphasised the importance of the WPE as an instrument for consolidating the revolutionary administration and for establishing the foundations for a new socialist society. He also maintained that the guidance of a vanguard party guidance was essential to ensure Ethiopia's transition from backwardness to socialist orientation. *Pravda* and *Tass* correspondents reported at the time that the WPE would assume responsibility for working out the details of directives for the new system of State administration and the creation of a People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (*Pravda*, 8 September 1984, in *CDSP*, v 36, no 36:9).

The WPE may have been duly approved as a socialist vanguard party by the Chernenko regime when it was established, but it is doubtful that Soviet officials had any influence over the selection of Ethiopian party officials. When one compares the membership of the COPWE and the WPE and the distribution of power within the framework of Soviet-styled structures, it is clear that future party decisions were much more likely to reflect Mengistu's personal political inclinations, than Soviet political

preferences. To begin with, membership of the WPE at decision-making levels remained firmly under PMAC domination and closely approximated that of the COPWE. Ninety-two percent of the full Central Committee members appointed to the COPWE in June 1980, for example, were still serving in the WPE Central Committee in September 1984 (Clapham 1988:74). Second, while it may be fair to say that the administrative structures and functions of Ethiopia's PMAC and the WPE overlapped in a manner similar to the Soviet system operating in Brezhnev's day,⁴⁹ supreme political power in Ethiopia in 1984 continued to be wielded by one person, rather than by a party-driven, oligarchic system such as the one that prevailed in the Soviet Union after Stalin.

Soviet political support for socialist oriented reforms implemented in Ethiopia after the revolution actually helped to consolidate the power of Mengistu's military regime in the pre-Gorbachev era. By taking advantage of Brezhnev's heightened political and military interests in the Horn in the 1970s, Mengistu was able to strengthen his position of power when Ethiopia's relationship with the United States declined. In respect of political ideology, Marxist-Leninism, with its anti-imperialist slogans, optimistic views about rapid, progressive development and clear-cut prescriptions for socialist transformation, offered Ethiopia's revolutionary military administration a unique opportunity to introduce radical strategies aimed at dislodging the old imperial order and modernising the Ethiopian state. As regards political control, the establishment of an Ethiopian socialist party in the mid 1980s in line with Soviet recommendations to create a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party provided the military regime with an effective organisation for monitoring and enforcing national policies at regional and local levels.

As discussed in Chapter two, Fukuyama, Legum and Patman maintained that Soviet pressures for vanguard party formation had a significant bearing upon the development and organisation of Ethiopia's Marxist-Leninist national party. However, Marina Ottaway's claim that the Derg built and organised a national party in accordance with its own, indigenous priorities more closely captures reality. Clearly, in this case, Mengistu's interests were served, more than those of Soviet officials.

⁴⁹ Wubneh and Abate (1988:60,62) provide useful diagrams on the Ethiopian governmental and party structures.

PART TWO: THE RESTRUCTURING OF POLITICAL RELATIONS AFTER 1985

Four stages in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship directly related to developments within Ethiopia can be used to illustrate the decline in political relations that occurred during Gorbachev's time in power. In the first stage, from 1985-1987, a positive balance in compatibility levels was sustained between Soviet and Ethiopian officials, despite the adverse pressures exerted by American officials. The two sides had a common interest in transforming Mengistu's military establishment into a civilian administration. In the second stage, in 1988, a precarious balance in compatibility was maintained. The relationship was not very much affected by Soviet involvement in the restoration of Ethiopian-Somali relations, but Mengistu's decision to expel international relief agencies from the northern regions of Ethiopia had a negative effect. During the third stage, in 1989-1990, the rapid pace of decline in political relations was triggered by events in Eritrea that substantially widened the gap between the interests of Soviet and Ethiopian elites. In the fourth stage in 1991, political relations were restructured and preferential exchanges removed, largely as a consequence of important domestic changes within Ethiopia: in particular, rising levels of organised opposition; the introduction of government reforms aimed at liberalising socialist structures; the decline in Mengistu's own power base, and the emergence of a Ethiopian leader eager to distance himself from the policies and practices associated with the previous administration.

Stage 1: 1985-1987

Between 1985 and 1987, exchanges between Soviet and Ethiopian officials reflected more or less the same ideological affinities that had characterised political transactions in Brezhnev's day in substantial measure, because the new Soviet views took time to filter down and both parties wanted to restore civilian rule in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, signs of impending change were apparent. Gorbachev's new priorities for improving relations with the United States under New Thinking, coupled with Reagan's renewed interest in Ethiopia in the mid-1980s, made the future restructuring of Soviet-Ethiopian political relations inevitable.

Ethiopia's transformation into a civilian administration.

In preparation for the transfer of power from a military regime into a civilian administration, the drafting of a constitution appropriate for Mengistu's new order played a crucial part in legitimisation. Ideological directions and administrative structures enshrined in the 1987 Ethiopian constitution relied heavily upon the 1977 Soviet constitution. Although Ethiopia's new constitution may have served the interests of both parties in some respects, the end product provided Mengistu with an effective mechanism for consolidating and amplifying power, more than it facilitated opportunities for Soviet penetration.

The ideological aims advocated and the organisational structures recommended for political organisation in the two constitutions were remarkably similar, particularly in respect of the functions allocated to political entities, the roles and responsibilities assigned to official bodies, party intervention in governmental affairs, and the policies advocated for accommodating the interests of multiple nationalities. This can be illustrated by comparing the two constitutions. First, administrative organs in both countries were supposed to function according to the principles of democratic centralism (USSR, 1977:Ch1 A3; PDRE, 1987:Ch1 A4). Second, Ethiopia's National Shengo and the Soviet Union's Supreme Soviet, the supreme organs of state power in the two states, were invested with roughly parallel powers, and the delegates to both bodies were elected to serve five year terms (USSR 1977:Ch12-15, A89-127; PDRE 1987:Ch9,A62-80). Moreover, the Soviet Presidium and the Ethiopian Council of State exercised similar executive responsibilities in respect of overseeing the legal system and treaty ratification (USSR 1977:Ch15 A121-123; PDRE 1987:Ch10 A82-83). In addition, Councils of Ministers in both states were officially recognised as the highest executive and administrative organs, and officials in both Councils were empowered to direct the activities of state ministries, to ensure the implementation of monetary and fiscal policy and to take legal measures deemed necessary for the welfare of resident populations (USSR 1977:Ch16, A128-136; PDRE 1987:Ch12, A89-A94). Third, in both constitutions, a high priority was placed upon party intervention in governmental affairs. In the Soviet case, the Communist Party was expected to form the nucleus of the political system. In Ethiopia, the Workers Party of Ethiopia was expected to become the guiding force of the State and the entire society (USSR 1977: Ch1 A6;PDRE 1988:Ch1 A6). Finally, both constitutions contained clauses advocating

equal rights for all nationalities, regardless of ethnic origin. (USSR 1977:CH6 A36; PDRE 1987:Ch1 A2).

However, some important differences also existed in respect of the contents of the two documents. Three of these were particularly important for the future conduct of Soviet-Ethiopian political relations. In the first instance, Soviet and Ethiopian officials were committed to different stages in socialist development. In the Soviet Union, the principal goal of the socialist political system rested in extending socialist democracy. For the Ethiopians, completing the national democratic revolution and laying down socialist foundations constituted the chief aims of political development (USSR 1977:Ch1 A9; PDRE 1987:Ch1 A1:3).

A second important difference rested in the distribution of power at top levels. In the 1977 Soviet constitution, an oligarchic power structure was favoured via the Presidium, which was supposed to function on behalf of the Supreme Soviet. In the Ethiopian document, vast powers were delegated to the PDRE President who also presided over the Council of State (the Ethiopian equivalent of the Presidium), and served as Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces (USSR 1977:Ch15, A119-124; PDRE 1987:Ch10-11, A81-88).

A third difference, which existed in theory, related to the different approaches taken with respect to managing the balance between central and regional control. In the Soviet constitution, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was defined as an integral, federal, multinational state formed on the principle of socialist federalism, as a result of the free self-determination of nations and the voluntary association of equal Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR 1977:Ch8 A70). In theory, under the provisions of Article 72, each Union Republic retained the right to secede from the Union.⁵⁰ In the Ethiopian constitution, however, the notion of a voluntary association of regions was not recognised, even in theory. The Ethiopian state was defined as a unitary structure, comprised of administrative and autonomous regions (PDRE 1987:A59). Under the provisions of the Ethiopian document, there was no legal possibility for representatives from regions like Eritrea to enter into negotiations with the Mengistu administration with a view to securing real autonomy or independence.

⁵⁰ In Article 75, however, the territory of the Soviet Union was defined as a single entity comprised of the various Republics, and the sovereignty of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics was recognized over all of its territory (USSR, 1977:Ch8 A75).

While it is fair to say that the Ethiopian constitution of 1987 closely resembled the Soviet document fashioned in Brezhnev's time, it is important to note that the Ethiopian document institutionalised the existing powers of Mengistu's administration, as opposed to offering new prospects for a more equitable distribution of power within Ethiopia under civilian rule. The existing power structure of the provisional military administration was carried over virtually intact into the new civilian administration. This remained the case, even after elections for representatives to the Ethiopian national assembly (Shengo) were held in Ethiopia during the summer of 1987. For example, all Politburo and Central Committee members formerly affiliated with the PMAC were elected to the Shengo (EIU 1987, *CR*, no 3:21-22).

As far as party organisation was concerned, essential organisational features of the CPSU were replicated in the administrative design of the WPE. This was especially so in respect of hierarchically designed administrative structures that facilitated the party's and the government's control over the population. First, both parties were organised into tightly controlled, hierarchically structured institutions on local, regional and national levels in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism.

Second, in theory, both held Party Congresses that convened every five years. In the case of the Soviet All Union Party Congress, delegations were supposed to reflect the interests of the populations in the various Republics having been elected in a series of complicated, upwardly tiered, hierarchical selections initiated at primary party organisational levels (Smith, G. 1992:110-111). In contrast, delegates to the Ethiopian Party Congress came from all regions and were supposed to represent the interests of the population at large (Wubneh and Abate 1988:61).

Third, at the middle level, Central Committees (CCs) in both parties were supposed to assume political responsibility in between Party Congresses. In practice, however, they were excluded from the highest levels of policy making. Both CCs functioned primarily as sounding boards for legitimating Politburo decisions. In the Ethiopian case, important party and government officials, influential civilians, and top military and police personnel formed the bulk of membership at the expense of workers and peasants (Wubneh and Abate 1988:61-64).

Finally, at the top level, Politburos in both parties represented Central Committee interests in theory but served as the principal decision-makers of party and state policy in practice. The internal workings of both Politburos remained secret.

Nevertheless, Politburo decisions made in the USSR were probably more collectively determined than those made by the Politburo of the WPE, as a consequence of Soviet preferences for oligarchic control after Stalin, as opposed to Mengistu's autocratic control over the chief institutions of Ethiopian party and government power, including the Politburo.⁵¹

Mengistu's administration may have replicated Soviet structures of party organisation, but the replications benefited the interests of Ethiopia's ruling elite more than CPSU officials. First, Soviet-styled organisational structures helped to retain Mengistu's monopoly of power over the government during the transition from military to civilian rule. Second, the hierarchical structures and the unitary character of the WPE sharply reduced prospects for disrupting the existing power balance by curtailing possibilities for alternative party channels. Third, the wholesale accommodation of PMAC officials into the WPE ruling elite amplified the political powers of the military regime in the new civilian administration. Finally, the inclusion of representatives from the armed forces within the party structure provided the military means to enforce the political will of Mengistu's administration.

Official party links between the CPSU and the WPE were actively encouraged by the Gorbachev and Mengistu administrations in preparation for the transformation to civilian authority in September 1987. In a joint communiqué issued on 12th November 1985, Soviet and Ethiopian officials recognised the growing importance of close connections between the CPSU and the WPE and expressed a joint desire to develop and to strengthen party ties (*Izvestia*, Nov 12, 1985, in *CDSP*, v 37, no 45:15).

In the transformation to civilian rule, closer party ties particularly served the interests of Mengistu's administration. First, Ethiopia's international position was strengthened as a consequence of affiliating with a far more powerful partner. In March 1986, for example, CPSU and WPE officials agreed to adopt a common approach on problems in the Middle East, southern Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and other regions, including the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. In addition, WPE representatives supported Soviet peace initiatives advocated by Gorbachev in January 1986 (TASS, 5 February 1986). Second, the access to CPSU networks offered

⁵¹ Politburo sizes in both parties were also similar. Throughout the 1980s, CPSU Politburo membership varied from 17 to around 24 (11-15 full and 6-8 non-voting member candidates). In comparison, the Politburo of the WPE in 1984 consisted of 17 members (11 full and 6 alternate members). (Smith, G. 1992:114-115; Wubneh and Abate 1988:61).

Ethiopian officials additional prospects for establishing long-term cooperation with other African socialist-oriented states. In May 1987, an agreement of cooperation between Frelimo and the WPE was signed in Maputo, Mozambique (BBC, *SWB*, 19 May 1987). Third, the WPE had little or no experience in devising strategies for socialist transformation. They needed advice and instruction that only the CPSU could provide. With this aim in mind, WPE representatives met a CPSU delegation in Addis in May 1987 to discuss participation in Marxist-Leninist ideological training and the prospective role of the mass media (BBC, *SWB*, 27 May 1987).

American proposals for Soviet-Ethiopian relations.

Gorbachev's new priorities for improving relations with the United States under New Thinking conflicted with Reagan's renewed interest in Ethiopia in the mid-1980s. His strategy for perestroika relied heavily upon the importation of current Western technological know-how, economic principles, business systems, and managerial strategies, which required an improvement in Soviet-American relations. Initially, however, efforts in this direction were seriously hampered by the Reagan administration's view that an improvement in East-West relations should coincide with the demilitarisation of Soviet relations with Ethiopia.

In October 1985, during the 40th anniversary session of the United Nations (UN), President Reagan proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union jointly undertake regional peace efforts in Ethiopia and four other Soviet-backed countries described as 'at war with their own people'. He outlined a three level strategy for Soviet-American cooperation in regional conflict resolution. First, regional talks were to be initiated at local levels by the warring factions. Second, after progress in these talks had been demonstrated, the United States and the Soviet Union would implement cooperative strategies aimed at enforcing lasting political solutions. All foreign military presence would be eliminated from the conflict zones and the flow of outside arms to warring parties would be restricted. Finally, the five countries would be welcomed back into the global economy, after signs of improvement became evident.⁵²

In 1985, Reagan's suggestions for involving Gorbachev's administration in

⁵² The other countries were Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola and Nicaragua (Associated Press, 24-25 October 1985).

regional conflict management were unfavourably received by Soviet and Ethiopian officials. On the Soviet side, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze failed to join in the 45 second round of polite applause that followed. On the Ethiopian side, Foreign Minister Goshu Wolde condemned Reagan's 'inaccurate and wholly unjustified reference to Ethiopia' and confirmed that Mengistu remained totally opposed to the idea of Ethiopia becoming the subject of future discussions between Soviet and American officials (Associated Press, 24-25 October 1985).

Prominent Washington officials continued to criticise Gorbachev's administration for its involvement in Ethiopian affairs.⁵³ Shortly before the Geneva Summit, Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker accused Soviet officials of exploiting internal divisions in the Horn and adversely affecting Ethiopian development in order to de-stabilise African governments in general. He claimed that Soviet influence had reduced Ethiopia to near vassalage and that Ethiopia had lost its chances for development and its internal stability under Soviet domination (Associated Press, 13 November 1985).

Despite American complaints regarding Soviet relations with Ethiopian officials, talks between Reagan and Gorbachev at the Geneva Summit went ahead towards the end of November.⁵⁴ Although issues related to Ethiopia and the Horn conflict were undoubtedly discussed, neither Soviet nor American ruling elites demonstrated the political will to formulate co-operative strategies for the management of Third World regional conflict. Nevertheless, Reagan and Gorbachev agreed to exchange views about regional issues on a regular basis (Associated Press, 21 November 1985).

During 1986, the year preceding PDRE formation, Soviet-American dialogue continued to improve, but no progress was made about managing the process of Third World conflict resolution. No substantive policy recommendations emerged from the Reykjavik meeting in October, although the same five Marxist-led countries identified by Reagan in 1985 formed the nucleus of discussion about Soviet-American

⁵³ During 1985, Gorbachev concluded several agreements with Mengistu and treated him with high regard during the Ethiopian leader's ninth visit to Moscow from 31 October to 9 November. During the October Revolution parade, the Ethiopian leader was allowed to stand on the podium with members of the Soviet Politburo (*Pravda* 2 November 1985, in *CDSP* v 37, no 45:14-15; Associated Press, 31 October and 9 November 1985).

⁵⁴ The Geneva Summit was the first meeting between Soviet and American leaders in six years.

cooperation in this area. (Associated Press, 9 October 1986).

Despite a general warming in Soviet-American relations between 1985 and 1987, the gains perceived by Soviet officials in respect of establishing a pro-Soviet civilian government in Ethiopia generally outweighed the temptation to agree to Soviet-American cooperation aimed at managing regional conflict in the Horn. Consequently, in 1987, at the risk of incurring American displeasure, Gorbachev officially confirmed his unwavering support for the just cause of the people of Ethiopia during talks with Mengistu held in Moscow in November and, one month later, sent a Soviet representative to Addis to brief Ethiopian officials on the results of the Washington Summit (TASS, 17 December 1987).

The joint decision to expand Soviet-American dialogue on regional conflict management in November 1985, however, directly affected the political behaviour of Ethiopian officials. Shortly thereafter, Mengistu stepped up efforts to improve relations with the Reagan administration. In December, he agreed to settle American compensation claims and to pay \$7.5 mn over a five year period for the 30 companies nationalised during the revolution (EIU, *QER* 1986, no 1:21). Five months later, Mengistu officially confirmed that a rapprochement with Washington would be welcomed (Associated Press, 19 May 1986).

To be sure, differences in the political interests of Soviet and Ethiopian officials appeared prior to PDRE formation. Nevertheless, between 1985 and 1987, they were largely obscured by mutually compatible interests in transforming Mengistu's military government into a civilian administration.

Stage two: 1988

In 1988, vestiges of the old relationship remained, but differences in the interests of Soviet and Ethiopian officials increased, as Gorbachev's New Thinking assumed more practical dimensions. This precarious balance can be demonstrated by reference to two events: the resolution of the Somali-Ethiopian conflict and Mengistu's expulsion of international relief agencies from Ethiopia in the spring of 1988.

Gorbachev's decision to improve relations with Somalia undoubtedly prompted Ethiopian and Somali officials to make some gestures towards reconciliation. Nevertheless, the impact of Soviet efforts to persuade ruling elites in the African Horn to resolve their differences remained marginal, in comparison to the pressures exerted

upon the two leaders by rising levels of domestic opposition.

In 1986, Gorbachev's administration initiated a concerted bid to improve relations with Somalia. Shortly before the Reykjavik Summit in October, Soviet officials announced the resumption of relations with Barre's administration. In June 1987, news commentators in Moscow reported that some parts of the Soviet-Somali trade and education agreements had been reinstated (BBC, *SWB* 27 June 1987). Gorbachev's enthusiasm for improving relations with Somalia and reducing conflict in the Horn region, however, was not shared by Mengistu's administration. During 1986 and 1987, Ethiopian and Somali officials demonstrated a mutual reluctance to resolve their dispute over the Ogaden territory, despite Soviet efforts to the contrary.⁵⁵ In April 1988, however, the two leaders finally settled their grievances, largely as a consequence of rising domestic pressures. Diplomatic relations were re-established, borders were demilitarised, war prisoners were returned, and official support for subversive groups engaged in cross-border operations was withdrawn over a four month period (EIU, *CR* 1988, no 2:17-18).

Soviet correspondents applauded the decision and used the case to argue the viability of Gorbachev's new strategy. No deep political rifts developed between Soviet and Ethiopian officials over Soviet efforts to secure the peaceful resolution of the Ethiopian-Somali conflict between 1986 and 1988, because compatible interests were not fundamentally challenged. Indeed, the peaceful resolution of conflict actually accommodated the separate interests of Soviet, Ethiopian and Somali political elites alike. Nevertheless, some important shifts in priorities occurred, particularly on the Soviet side. As a consequence of restructuring relations with Somalia, Gorbachev was able to set up some guidelines for limiting further Soviet intervention in Horn affairs. First, he confirmed a policy of non-intervention in the Horn region. Second, he promised continued diplomatic support for the peaceful resolution of the Ethiopian-Somali dispute.

⁵⁵ Grievances were rooted in traditional disputes over the Ogaden, a triangular-shaped region in Ethiopia that jutted into Somalia, which was inhabited largely by the Somali. Somalia's claim to the Ogaden was enshrined in that country's constitution, making negotiations virtually impossible. Ethiopia, on the other hand, refused to negotiate until existing state borders had been officially recognized by Barre's administration. In January 1986, Mengistu and Siad Barre met for the first time since 1977 at a drought summit in Djibouti and agreed to set up a joint committee to improve bilateral relations. The committee met three times during 1986 and 1987, but negotiations were generally unsuccessful (Keesing's, 30 April 1987).

In April 1988, however, Soviet-Ethiopian political relations were strained by Mengistu's decision to shut down international relief operations after insurgent activity increased in the northern regions. On 6 April 1988, Mengistu ordered all foreign relief organisations except UNICEF to cease operations in Tigre and Eritrea, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which operated across government and rebel-controlled areas and accounted for half of the aid workers withdrawn (Associated Press, 14 April 1988). The ICRC refused to turn its relief supplies in Tigre and Eritrea over to the Ethiopian Red Cross, and consequently, in May, ICRC relief workers were expelled from Gondar and Wollo provinces, as well (Keesing's, 30 November 1988). Mengistu's decision evoked a hostile reaction from the Reagan administration. American officials believed that the government planned to mount a massive military offensive in the northern provinces. In an effort to prevent this, Reagan proposed that Gorbachev should use his influence to persuade Ethiopian officials to resume relief operations (Associated Press, 21 April 1988).

To contain the adverse effects of co-operation between the Reagan and Gorbachev administrations, Mengistu attempted to cultivate the good will of both governments. In June, shortly before the Moscow Summit, he reaffirmed his commitment to an Ethiopian-Soviet relationship based on socialist solidarity and ideological unity, but he also stressed that Ethiopia's primary objective was to become self-reliant. In respect of Washington, Mengistu expressed the desire to restore Ethiopian-American relations, providing this could be accomplished on the basis of equality and mutual respect.⁵⁶ His efforts to play both ends against the middle, however, were not very successful. In the summer of 1988, Soviet-American dialogue on Ethiopia's domestic problems intensified. The situation was discussed at the Moscow Summit in June (BBC, *SWB*, 4 June 1988). One week later, Mengistu agreed to allow major relief operations to be implemented in government-held areas in the northern regions (Keesing's, 30 November 1988). Further discussions between Soviet and American officials on African regional issues were held at the Geneva meeting in July (TASS, 1 August 1988). However, no public statements were issued, possibly in deference to Mengistu's earlier insistence that the Gorbachev and Reagan

⁵⁶ Prospects for Ethiopian-American political relations improved marginally in the fall of 1988. This was due more to Ethiopia's election to the UN Security Council in October and George Bush's election to the American Presidency in November than to any conciliatory rhetoric voiced by the Mengistu administration (BBC, *SWB*, 7 June 1988).

administrations refrain from public discussions about Ethiopian domestic affairs.

The difference between Soviet and Ethiopian political interests widened after Mengistu's expulsion of relief agencies in April 1988. Changing attitudes to the relationship were particularly evident on the Soviet side. In May, Karen Brutents arrived in Asmara for talks with Mengistu on the Ethiopian-Eritrean situation, carrying a personal message from Gorbachev to the Ethiopian leader. The contents of the message were never publicly disclosed, but Soviet correspondents maintained that talks between Brutents and Mengistu had focused on conflict resolution, particularly the need to solve regional disputes by political means. They also reported that Brutents had briefed Mengistu on Gorbachev's current course of restructuring (BBC, *SWB*, 9 May 1988).

In July, Soviet officials informed Mengistu in Moscow that new thinking priorities had shifted (TASS, 26 July 1988). In the new order, universal human values would replace class-struggle as the basis of Soviet diplomacy (Woodby 1989:103-108). In addition, Gorbachev spelled out Moscow's new political priorities in its conduct of relations with Mengistu's administration. Although Soviet officials continued to support Ethiopian unity and territorial integrity in theory, considerable importance was attached to securing a just solution to the Eritrean problem (*Pravda*, 29 July 1988, in *CDSP*, v 40, no 30:26).

In December, a delegation from the Ethiopian Shengo was invited to Moscow to strengthen inter-state parliamentary ties and to receive instruction on the course of Gorbachev's new domestic political reforms.⁵⁷ During the sessions, Shengo members were briefed on the measures being taken to enhance the role of the people's deputies in the Soviet system, the changes proposed for the new Soviet constitution and the forthcoming elections for the people's deputies. They were also told about Gorbachev's new stress on humanising international relations. Ethiopian and Soviet delegates agreed that peace should be established in the Horn, and they concluded that inter-parliamentary contact would become an important new feature of Soviet-Ethiopian political relations (TASS, 28 December 1988). Soviet initiatives to improve relations with Ethiopian parliamentarians at the end of 1988 indicated that Gorbachev was losing patience with Mengistu's decisions and planned to cultivate political contacts with a

⁵⁷ The Shengo delegation, led by Debele Dinssa, WPE-CC member and PDRE Vice President visited Moscow, December 19-26 1988. Mengistu was absent from the proceedings (TASS, 26 December 1988).

broader representation of Ethiopians. This new direction gained additional credibility because Mengistu was absent from the proceedings.

Stage three: 1989-1990

Mengistu's failure to resolve the Eritrean conflict in 1989 and 1990 further diminished compatibility in the political relationship. Despite Gorbachev's efforts to persuade him to focus upon political solutions, the Ethiopian leader demonstrated a firm resolve to handle the matter via military means. Three developments illustrate this: plans to partition Eritrea, reluctance to negotiate terms for peace with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and refusal to share power with regional leaders. Let us examine these situations in more detail.

Partitioning Eritrea

As a consequence of Mengistu's radical proposal for partitioning Eritrea, the level of the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict intensified markedly, despite Gorbachev's increased interest in securing a peaceful solution to the problem. Moreover, complaints against Moscow's continued support for Mengistu's political intransigence levelled by the Eritrean resistance leader at the end of 1988 challenged the credibility of Gorbachev's New Thinking doctrine.

Prior to 1989, Ethiopian and EPLF officials refused to recognise any validity in their opposing claims, despite the fact that informal discussions between the two sides had taken place between 1982 and 1985.⁵⁸ EPLF demands remained firmly based on the notion of Eritrea's right to self-determination, while Mengistu refused to deviate from the axiom set out in the constitution that Ethiopia must remain a unitary state.

In 1987, this adverse state of affairs was exacerbated by Mengistu's decision to change the territorial boundaries of Eritrea. Inspired by Soviet ideas about ethnic considerations in regional planning, the Ethiopian Institute of Nationalities (established in 1983) carried out extensive research on re-districting along ethnic lines in the mid-1980s. As a consequence of its findings, the Shengo approved a plan for regional

⁵⁸ Ten informal meetings between Ethiopian and EPLF political elites reportedly took place between September 1982 and 1985. At the close of talks in September 1985, each side complained about the other. In the end, EPLF representatives maintained that further talks were contingent upon Mengistu's agreement to the presence of a mediating third party and his public announcement that the peace process was underway (EIU, *QER* 1985, no 4:16).

restructuring in September 1987.⁵⁹ Mengistu's proposed reform, in effect, dismembered Eritrea. First, the new region of Eritrea was to be divided into three zones: one catering for the Kunama inhabiting the southwest area; another accommodating the largely Christian, Tigrinya-speaking populations in the centre, and one situated in the North, encompassing a region of Tigre. Second, the Afar sections of Eritrea were supposed to become part of the new autonomous region of Assab (EIU, *CR* 1987, no 4:22). EPLF officials objected to the plan on grounds that the removal of Assab and the division of Eritrea along ethnic and nationality lines constituted an attempt to destroy Eritrean unity (Keesing's, 30 November 1988).

Between September 1988 and July 1989, Ethiopian officials intensified efforts to partition Eritrea. In September 1988, Mengistu announced that all new regional structures would be operational within the year (EIU, *CR* 1988, no 4:21). In December, he appointed former Derg officials to leadership positions in the new Eritrean region who were generally considered to be unsympathetic to the Eritrean cause, and he also discussed prospects for creating an autonomous Muslim region in Eritrea (EIU, *CR* 1989, no 1:21-22). In January 1989, the WPE central committee duly approved Mengistu's proposal for a separate Muslim region in Eritrea, and the proposal was placed on the Shengo's June agenda for ratification.⁶⁰

EPLF opposition to the plan, to the Ethiopian government and to Soviet support for Mengistu's activities increased markedly during 1988. During an interview in December, EPLF leader Isayas Afeworki complained that the new regional reforms had failed to address the crucial issue of separatism. He also criticised Gorbachev's policy on the grounds that continued Soviet support for Mengistu's administration and a unitary Ethiopian state were contrary to basic Eritrean rights to opt for independence, federation, or regional autonomy (BBC, *SWB*, 3 January 1989).

Negotiations

Negotiations between Ethiopian and Eritrean officials in 1989 were not successful. This was due primarily to Mengistu's refusal to consider EPLF demands,

⁵⁹ Under the new plan, the 14 existing regions were to be divided into 24 administrative regions and 5 autonomous regions: Eritrea, Tigray, Assab, Dire Dawa and the Ogaden. In autonomous regions, assemblies were directly accountable to the national Shengo, to the Council of State and to the President of Ethiopia, as well (EIU, *CR* 1987, no 4:22 and 1988, no 4:21; Keesing's, 30 November 1988).

⁶⁰ The proposal was approved during an extraordinary meeting of the WPE-CC, on grounds that the new Muslim region in Eritrea would constitute an expression of basic democratic rights (EIU, *CR* 1989, no 1:22).

despite considerable Soviet and American efforts to improve the quality of discussions. During the spring of 1989, officials in Gorbachev's administration intensified efforts to persuade Mengistu to resume talks with the EPLF. In April, Soviet diplomats in Washington confirmed that Gorbachev had refused Mengistu's requests for increased military support and debt rescheduling because of the inordinately large military expenditures incurred in combating domestic insurrection (*Washington Post*, 21 April 1989).

In the end, however, domestic necessity, rather than Soviet pressure, forced the Ethiopian leader to reconsider his position. Less than a month after an unsuccessful coup, Mengistu officially agreed to open unconditional negotiations with any party in Ethiopia.⁶¹ The Shengo went a step further in June 1989 and approved the Six Point Peace Plan for Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict resolution. Under the plan, talks would be held in public under the auspices of a mutually selected observer. In addition, negotiations between the government and opposition parties would embrace the notion that differences would be reconciled within a united Ethiopia (Associated Press, 5 June 1989).

Gorbachev's administration responded very favourably to the Shengo's decision to introduce the Six Point Peace Plan (BBC, *SWB*, 15 June 1989). Shortly thereafter, Soviet officials intensified their efforts to influence both parties to begin negotiations. In July, Y. Yukalov, the Director of the African Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met EPLF head Issayas Afeworki to discuss the situation. As a concession to Afeworki, Soviet officials rejected Mengistu's proposal to create an autonomous Muslim region in Eritrea (EIU, *CR* 1989, no 4:21). When a WPE-CC delegation visited Moscow in August to discuss prospects for expanded cooperation, Soviet and Ethiopian party representatives focused on the importance of improving dialogue on the Eritrean crisis.⁶²

⁶¹ Despite conciliatory rhetoric, Mengistu remained adamantly opposed to the idea of regional secession (BBC, *SWB*, 8 June 1989).

⁶² Simultaneously, American officials also intensified efforts to persuade the Ethiopians to open negotiations with the EPLF. In July, former President Jimmy Carter also met with Mengistu in Addis to discuss frameworks for negotiation. In August, Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen, the first senior American official to visit Ethiopia since the 1974 revolution, informed the Ethiopian president that better relations with the U.S. were contingent upon improved human rights policies and an imminent reconciliation with Eritrean separatists and Tigrayan autonomists (BBC, *SWB*, 29 August 1989; Associated Press, 27 July and 4 August 1989).

Gorbachev's efforts to influence the course of Ethiopian domestic affairs in 1989 in conjunction with American officials proved to be generally disappointing. In September 1989, the first round of official Ethiopian-EPLF negotiations was held in the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Marginal progress was made, but the talks concluded before consensus could be obtained on the agenda. A week later, Shevardnadze, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, and James Baker, the U.S. Secretary of State, discussed prospects for further negotiation at Jackson Hole, Wyoming (BBC, *SWB*, 25 September 1989). In November, the second round of Ethiopian-EPLF negotiations were held in Nairobi. In the course of the meeting international observers were selected, but prospects for success dimmed markedly, when EPLF leader Afeworki accused the Ethiopian government and Carter of delaying negotiations. Eventually, negotiations came to an end, despite considerable effort expended by Gorbachev's administration.⁶³

Sharing power in Port Massawa

Gaps between the interests of Soviet and Ethiopian ruling elites widened even more in 1990, as a consequence of Mengistu's reluctance to share power with the EPLF in the distribution of famine relief out of Port Massawa and his decision to continue bombing raids on the Port. Once again, the joint efforts of Soviet and American officials to persuade Ethiopian and Eritrean leaders to cooperate remained largely unsuccessful.

At the beginning of 1990, famine prevailed again in northern Ethiopia.⁶⁴ Although international donors recognised that high levels of conflict existed in the northern areas of Ethiopia, they believed that Port Massawa would remain under Mengistu's control and that it would continue to serve as the primary port for offloading emergency food aid in the northern regions. In February 1990, however, the EPLF defeated government troops at Port Massawa. Shortly thereafter, victorious EPLF officials offered to reopen the Port so that food supplies could be shipped into northern Eritrea. Mengistu rejected their offer at the time on the grounds that

⁶³ Both parties approved the notion of United Nations participation, but the UN Secretary General refused to become involved in Ethiopian-EPLF negotiations, unless requested to do so by the Security Council or the General Assembly.

⁶⁴ At the beginning of 1990, harvests in Eritrea were down to 20 percent of the norm. Tigray's harvests were reduced by half, from previous levels (EIU, *CR* 1990, no 1:31).

recognition of EPLF control in the region would undermine prospects for Ethiopian unity.

In response to the crisis, unprecedented levels of American-Soviet cooperation developed in the spring and summer of 1990. At the beginning of June, officials in both states agreed to cooperate on joint food airlifts in northern Ethiopia, particularly in the area of Asmara.⁶⁵ At the close of the June Summit, Bush and Gorbachev issued a joint statement confirming their intentions to cooperate and to pool Soviet and American resources to combat starvation. In addition, they also supported the idea of convening an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to settle conflicts in the Horn region (BBC, *SWB*, 6 June 1990).

Unfortunately, international relief agencies, as well as Soviet and American officials, underestimated the importance of accommodating the conflicting interests of Ethiopian and EPLF officials. In June, Mengistu tentatively agreed to allow Port Massawa to be used for unloading famine relief aid. In July, four technicians from the World Food Programme (WFP), acting on the assumption that the Ethiopian government's approval still sufficed for port inspection, arrived from Djibouti in an empty boat. The gesture offended EPLF representatives who exercised de facto control over Massawa. Although Soviet and American political elites exerted considerable pressure on Ethiopian and EPLF officials to work out a plan for sharing port management, relief operations in the northern Ethiopian areas were severely hampered between February and December 1990, as a consequence of the closure of Port Massawa (EIU, *CR* 1990, no 3:29-30). In December 1990, however, Ethiopian and EPLF political elites finally agreed to allow imports of emergency food aid into Massawa. WFP and USAID representatives were credited with successful mediation, and the efforts of Soviet and American officials to persuade Mengistu and the EPLF to re-open the Port and to resolve their differences were scarcely mentioned.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Under this proposal, US food would be transported on Soviet aircraft. The EPLF, however, opposed the idea of joint aid airlifts to Asmara (Associated Press, 3 June 1990; EIU, *CR*, 1990, no 3:26).

⁶⁶ Under the terms of the agreement concluded in December 1990, cargoes arriving in the Port had to be inspected by both warring parties. Half of the aid would be distributed by the Eritrean Relief Association, and the other half would be loaded on to trucks by the Ethiopians and shipped to Asmara (EIU, *CR*, 1991, no 1:26).

Stage four: 1990-1991

In the final two years of Gorbachev's and Mengistu's administrations, compatibility in the political relationship dropped sharply. At one level, relations declined partly as a consequence of the overriding priorities of both leaders to maintain domestic control over disputed regions. At another level, the relationship was substantially eroded by the overriding priorities of Soviet and Ethiopian officials to improve their own individual relations with the United States.

Soviet-Ethiopian relations were particularly affected in 1990 and 1991 by four developments taking place within Ethiopia. First, in the late 1980s, organised, pro-Marxist, insurgent organisations began to co-ordinate efforts to rid the country of Soviet influence. Second, in March 1990, Mengistu formally rejected his experiment in scientific socialism and announced his intention to implement a more modern development programme. Third, in April 1991, the Shengo proposed recommendations for government restructuring that included power sharing. Finally, Mengistu's resignation and the transitional government's subsequent take over during May and June of 1991 provided unique opportunities for the ruling elite in both states to normalise their relationship and to divest it of preferential ties.

As Soviet military support declined in the late 1980s, the level of organised resistance to Mengistu's administration in Ethiopia increased markedly. The most important factor in the new equation involved the coordination of efforts between the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), an umbrella group led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) (committed to Mengistu's removal from the government and greater autonomy within a united Ethiopia) and the EPLF (committed to Eritrean independence).⁶⁷

In 1989, the political threat to the Mengistu government posed by the EPRDF began to eclipse the long-term dangers associated with the Eritrean conflict. In March, the Third TPLF Congress resolved to remove Mengistu's administration from power and to end Soviet intervention in Ethiopian affairs. In addition, TPLF spokesmen indicated a willingness to cooperate with the EPLF and to support Eritrean demands for

⁶⁷ In April 1988, TPLF and EPLF officials agreed to restore relations and to coordinate active resistance campaigns against Mengistu's government. Prospects for coordinated efforts were further increased when EPRDF representatives introduced their first official programme in December 1988 (Keesing's, 30 November 1988; BBC, *SWB*, 1 August 1989).

self-determination. In July, two months after an unsuccessful coup, Central Committee members in the TPLF and EPDM (Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement) also agreed to co-ordinate their opposition efforts under the EPRDF umbrella. They urged all anti-Derg and anti-Soviet forces to form a common front and encouraged the Ethiopian people to intensify the struggle.⁶⁸ In December, the first EPRDF conference convened in Welo. In the course of negotiations, representatives from various parties approved a resolution to continue joint struggles against the Mengistu administration and against Soviet interventionists (BBC, *SWB*, 19 December 1989).

By the beginning of 1990, the rising level of militant, organised opposition to Mengistu's administration was apparent to Soviet officials. Given the sharp decline in Mengistu's military and political power, as compared to rival insurgent contenders, Gorbachev's administration could scarcely ignore increasing evidence that indigenous Marxist groups, eager to implement political reforms, were exceedingly anxious to oust Mengistu from office and to rid the country of Soviet influence.

In the late 1980s, Gorbachev's administration had become more insistent that perestroika ought to be introduced in Ethiopia. In March 1990, Soviet officials finally got their way. Ethiopian political elites produced a reform package that embraced notions associated with perestroika, as well as Western prescriptions for change. The nucleus of Mengistu's reform strategy rested in the formal renunciation of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the abandonment of Ethiopia's experiment in scientific socialism. Under the new ideology, Ethiopian political life would be restructured to reflect the democratic unity of all classes, nationalities and creeds (WPE 1990:42-43). The WPE was stripped of its Marxist-Leninist features and transformed into a nationalist party, the Ethiopian Unity Party (EUP), which would function as a popular party that embraced all Ethiopians, regardless of religion, sex, ideology or class.

Initially, Mengistu's administration attempted to establish a link between the reforms and Gorbachev's strategy for domestic recovery in the Soviet Union. In July 1990, for example, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dinka explained to reporters that the government was planning a future of perestroika, private enterprise, political competition and reconciliation. He also claimed that Gorbachev's reforms had

⁶⁸ The Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), a splinter group of the EPRP, operated primarily in Gondar and Wollo. Linguistically identified with the Amhara, the EPDM had supported TPLF activities for some time (BBC, *SWB*, 1 August 1989).

influenced the direction of Mengistu's reform efforts (Associated Press, 27 July 1990).

Mengistu's rejection of Soviet-styled socialism in exchange for something more modern, however, had an unintended effect. It removed the cornerstone that had established the basis for special links of political cooperation between Soviet and Ethiopian elites. For this reason, subsequent efforts to regain the good will of Gorbachev's administration by linking Ethiopian domestic reforms to perestroika remained largely unsuccessful. In fact, the level of Soviet-American co-operation intensified after Mengistu's rhetorical change in direction. In June 1990, American and Soviet officials confirmed their intentions to co-ordinate efforts more fully to secure peace in Ethiopia. They also declared that a new era of trust and cooperation had been initiated between the two superpowers (Associated Press, 3 June 1990).

As Soviet-American relations improved, constructive political dialogue between the Gorbachev and Mengistu administrations declined. Although overt hostility was avoided, relations between Gorbachev and Mengistu were characterised increasingly by political apathy on the Soviet side and growing antagonism on the Ethiopian side. In the Soviet Union, the magnitude of public dissatisfaction in Ethiopia with Mengistu's administration, coupled with mounting crises within the Soviet Union greatly reduced Gorbachev's interest in improving dialogue.

In the early months of 1991, political exchanges between Soviet and Ethiopian political elites slumped dramatically. The rift in the relationship was particularly apparent on Mengistu's side. In his last speech to the Ethiopian State Council on 19th April, Mengistu accused Soviet officials of opposing Ethiopian foreign policy. He also emphasised the need to end all vindictive measures undertaken by the Soviet Union against Ethiopia (BBC, *SWB*, 23 April 1991).

As relations with Gorbachev deteriorated, Mengistu accelerated his attempts to improve relations with the Bush administration. In February, he agreed to American participation in Ethiopian-EPLF negotiations.⁶⁹ In March, he tried to improve relations indirectly with Israel and the United States by agreeing to allow more of Ethiopia's Falasha population to emigrate to Israel (BBC, *SWB*, 20 March 1991). His efforts to exchange powerful partners, however, were ultimately undermined by political changes

⁶⁹ Chaired by Herman Cohen, Ethiopian-EPLF peace talks took place on February 21-22 1991. It was the first time an American official had officially mediated in discussions between the two parties (Keesing's, 28 February 1991).

inside Ethiopia. The real locus of Ethiopian political power was changing. Resolution One of the Third Extraordinary Session of the Shengo resolved to set up a common peace forum with all opposition parties and unified forces with a view to forming a transitional system capable of negotiating a lasting peace and determining the future political situation in Ethiopia.⁷⁰

The Soviet Foreign Ministry extended full support to the Ethiopian Parliament's new initiative in April 1991. Gorbachev's administration was willing to assist in promoting the creation of a broad and constructive political dialogue in Ethiopia. Foreign Ministry representatives also claimed that the Shengo Resolutions had opened up new possibilities for affecting the peaceful resolution of military conflicts in Ethiopia (TASS, 26 April 1991).

In May 1991, political ties between Gorbachev's and Mengistu's administrations were severed when Mengistu resigned and the EPRDF took power. In the first week of July, the newly formed Council of Representatives adopted the EPRDF charter for a two year transitional government, and Meles Zenawi was selected as the acting Head of State (BBC, *SWB*, 25 July 1991).

In the summer of 1991, a new pattern of Soviet conduct towards Ethiopian officials developed in response to the formation of a transitional government and to the demonstrations that had been staged against American involvement.⁷¹ First, Gorbachev strengthened cooperative links with Western European states that were also interested in establishing friendly relations with Zenawi's administration. In May, for example, Soviet and Italian officials formally announced their joint commitment to extend concrete support for the formation of a broad-based Ethiopian transitional government (TASS, 31 May 1991). Second, Soviet political elites established parameters for the conduct of political relations with Ethiopia's new ruling elite. In June, the Gorbachev

⁷⁰ Section A of the Shengo document contained proposals for altering the political status quo. Section B, however, stressed the importance of upgrading security measures in order to preserve the existing distribution of power (BBC, *SWB*, 24 April 1991).

⁷¹ After Mengistu left the country, US official Henry Cohen interrupted a meeting in London between EPLF officials and members of Mengistu's administration to urge the EPRDF to enter Addis and to establish order there. At the end of May, thousands of Ethiopians protested Washington's involvement in the EPRDF government takeover. Many felt that the official Ethiopian government had been pushed aside in order to make way for new blood deemed to be more compatible with American national interests and Third World priorities (Associated Press, 28 and 29 May 1991).

administration re-confirmed Soviet decisions to encourage constructive dialogue with all 'politically active and influential forces in Ethiopia' and to conduct relations with Ethiopia on the principles of mutual benefit (TASS, 3 June 1991).

The new Ethiopian government similarly re-adjusted priorities with a view to protecting the national interest. Although well known for his revolutionary, Albanian-styled Marxist views in Mengistu's time, Meles Zenawi adopted a more cosmopolitan approach in a bid to obtain more famine relief aid from capitalist donor states and international organisations and to secure additional economic resources for Ethiopia's future development. To that end, Ethiopian-American relations were re-emphasised, and experiments with Soviet prescriptions for Ethiopia's progressive development were finally abandoned.

CONCLUSION.

Before Gorbachev came to power Soviet-Ethiopian political relations flourished. Ruling elites in each state had different priorities, but political interests remained roughly compatible. Although there were differences in interests, they were confined to acceptable parameters, as a consequence of common ideological bonds formed in an era of Soviet-American rivalry.

Disparities in the power projections of the two states at international levels raised questions about the degree of domination exercised by the Soviet Union. In respect of political exchange, however, the strengthening of Soviet-Ethiopian political relations in Brezhnev's time was prompted more by the needs of PMAC officials to control its domestic opposition than Soviet intentions to exercise domination over Ethiopia's internal affairs. At a period of time characterised by the Derg's declining relationship with American officials and higher levels of ideological competition between rival superpowers, prospects for improving political dialogue between Soviet and Ethiopian ruling elites were facilitated by Mengistu's decision to adopt a Marxist-Leninist ideological perspective, to import Soviet-style administrative structures for strengthening state control over the population and to create a socialist party that conformed in theory to Soviet recommendations for vanguard parties in socialist-oriented states. By taking advantage of superpower rivalry, Mengistu was able to protect his position as Ethiopia's de facto political leader and to consolidate the power of the provisional military government.

During Gorbachev's time, however, the compatibility in the Soviet-Ethiopian political relationship declined sharply. The deterioration of political relations that occurred between 1985 and 1991 was triggered by real events that widened the gap between the interests of ruling elites in the two states. In this regard, it is imperative to note that changing levels of cooperation in the Soviet-American relationship directly influenced the pace of decline. Between 1985 and 1987, the level of political compatibility between Soviet and Ethiopian ruling elites remained relatively high, and their previous ideological links were retained. This was due primarily to the fact that it took time for New Thinking to filter into practice and the separate interests and aims of the Gorbachev and Mengistu administrations converged on the importance of creating a socialist Ethiopian state administered by a civilian government. To be sure, Soviet influence upon the Ethiopian political system was discernible, particularly in respect of the new constitution and WPE administrative structures. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that the interests of Ethiopia's ruling elite were served by replicating Soviet structures.

Between 1988 and 1991, the importance of cultivating a special political relationship declined progressively for ruling elites in both states, as a consequence of mounting domestic crises within each country and the conflicting priorities both leaders had to develop and to expand cooperative dialogue with the United States. In 1988, the year of transition, the picture remained mixed. On the one hand, Gorbachev's efforts to bring about the peaceful resolution of Ethiopian-Somali conflict posed no direct threat to Ethiopian sovereignty. In contrast, Mengistu's decision to expel international relief agencies from northern Ethiopia in April 1988 conflicted markedly with Gorbachev's commitment under new thinking to universal human values. During 1989, Mengistu's persistent refusal to search for a political solution to resolve the Eritrean problem substantially widened existing gaps in the political relationship. The pace of decline gained momentum during 1990 and 1991, particularly as a consequence of domestic changes within Ethiopia. In March 1990, the Ethiopian leader officially renounced his commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology, terminated Ethiopia's experiment in Soviet-styled socialism, adopted a nationalist ideology and agreed to implement some Western-oriented political and economic reforms that also conformed in some respects to perestroika. In 1991, however, shifting power balances within Ethiopia facilitated opportunities for the normalisation of Soviet-Ethiopian political relations. In May,

Mengistu resigned as President, the old government fell, and the EPRDF took control of Addis Ababa. When Meles Zenawi was elected as the new head of the transitional government, the Gorbachev administration extended full support and indicated a willingness to cooperate with the new administration.

In the case of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's desire to establish good relations with the United States and his willingness to cooperate with Washington in regional conflict resolution ultimately invalidated the old-fashioned patterns of preferential political exchange conducted on common ideological grounds under socialist orientation that had characterised Soviet relations with Mengistu in Brezhnev's time. In addition, the domestic crises within Ethiopia in the late 1980s effectively eliminated Soviet interests in cultivating political relationships with radical leaders like Mengistu, who opted for military, rather than political solutions. As regards Ethiopia, the special political alliance with the Soviet Union ultimately turned out to be more costly than beneficial for Mengistu's administration. The inability of his administration to replace military techniques of crisis management underpinned by Soviet military assistance with political tools more in keeping with the Gorbachev's new thinking and increased cooperation between Soviet and American officials, ultimately led to the general view that Mengistu's revolutionary military government with its past record of Soviet entanglements, like Selassie's imperial order with its past record of American entanglements, had become an anachronism.

After the new Ethiopian political elite gained power, both countries divested their relationship of any special political characteristics based upon ideological connections. Their bilateral relations were restructured in accordance with the principles of de-ideologisation and mutually advantageous political contact: the very same principles that Gorbachev had ranked so highly in his quest to implement progressive reform under New Political Thinking.

In respect of asymmetry and exploitation in the political relationship, available evidence does not support the claim that Soviet officials took advantage of crises in Ethiopia to exercise control over Ethiopian political affairs. A different, more complicated reality existed. Explanations by Ottaway, Dawit and Ake that emphasise the part played by Ethiopia's ruling elite in the process are particularly relevant. First, Ottaway's thesis that Ethiopian officials selected Soviet-styled centralised structures because they provided good blue prints for domestic political reorganisation in the

aftermath of domestic crisis provides some explanation about the instruments preferred by Ethiopian officials for crisis management after major political change. Second, the argument made by Ottaway and Dawit that internal pressures upon Ethiopian officials to create a national party were more important than external Soviet pressures draws attention to the importance of domestic priorities in shaping the conduct of Ethiopian officials. Finally, Ake's idea that post revolutionary African elites were increasingly pressured to select policies aimed at augmenting state power and creating one party states in order to facilitate administration, to contain domestic opposition and to stay in power really does help to explain Mengistu's initial attraction to Soviet-styled, centralised structures for political organisation and party administration in Brehnev's time and his subsequent reluctance to jettison those strategies.

At deeper levels, however, these explanations fail to eliminate concerns arising from the charges made by spokesmen for Ethiopian Unity in 1987 that the Soviet Union had unduly intervened in Ethiopia's political affairs and artificially prolonged Mengistu's tenure in power by providing Soviet military arms and assistance. In this case, Galtung's view that Centre states initially establish and subsequently maintain patterns of asymmetric exchange with Periphery states by forging links and establishing ideological connections with bridgeheads, may be simplistic, but his hypothesis has some merit. The claim that Soviet officials artificially prolonged the political life of one group of Ethiopian ruling elites through the provision of military support will, however, be discussed in more detail in the Chapter on military relations that follows.

CHAPTER FOUR

MILITARY DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP.

INTRODUCTION

Soviet-Ethiopian military ties strengthened markedly during Brezhnev's tenure in power and, in time, became the linchpin of the relationship. This gave rise to accusations like the ones made by the Ethiopian Unity party that the Soviet Union had escalated regional conflict in the Horn region, made Ethiopia a depot for second rate arms and equipment, used Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes and wielded substantial influence over the military policies of Mengistu's administration. These criticisms echoed Galtung's, Wendt's and Barrat's general views that dominant states created informal empires by making elites in weak states dependent on the provision of modern sophisticated weaponry, but to what extent were the claims made by Ethiopian Unity really true? To assess the balance between Ethiopian interests and Soviet influence in this chapter, I shall examine the changes that took place in the Soviet Union's military involvement with Ethiopia under Brezhnev and Gorbachev, make some comparisons about the weapons actually provided and see what use Mengistu actually made of Soviet arms provision.

During Gorbachev's time prolonged Soviet involvement proved to be extremely expensive. Nevertheless, the costs incurred by Ethiopia turned out to be greater, as a consequence of Mengistu's reliance upon Soviet military assistance to resolve domestic problems. Ultimately, military relations between the two states contributed to the process of Ethiopia's internal fragmentation. In addition, opposition forces became increasingly reliant upon foreign arms to resolve internal differences.

PART ONE: MILITARY RELATIONS BEFORE GORBACHEV.

Before Gorbachev came to power, Ethiopia's ruling elite, in particular, benefited from the military relationship because they gained access to regular supplies of relatively sophisticated modern weaponry and technological expertise. New opportunities to upgrade and to restock existing arsenals were sorely needed when Ethiopian security arrangements with the United States fell through.

Soviet military influence in Ethiopia

In this first section, I investigate Ethiopian Unity's claim that the Soviet Union escalated regional conflict in the Horn and used Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes. Before this can be done, some information about their earlier relationships must be examined. Four important factors prompted the military connections between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia: Russian-Ethiopian connections before the Cold War, constraints imposed by superpower competition in the region, opportunities created by the Ethiopian revolution, and, finally, Soviet intervention in Ethiopia's external and internal conflicts.

In the 19th century, Russian military officials demonstrated strategic interests in Ethiopia. In 1889, for example, a Russian Lieutenant named V.F. Mashkov proposed that Russia secure religious, military and economic control over Ethiopia in order to deter Egypt from bolstering the capabilities of the Ottoman Empire. He also recommended that Russia acquire a port on the Ethiopian coast capable of functioning as a base of operations for closing the Red Sea to British shipping (Henze 1991:68). Russian ruling elites provided military advisors and modern conventional weaponry to Ethiopian officials. During 1885 and 1886, Captain Leontiev served on Menelik II's special security council and probably advised on tactical manoeuvres in the Italian campaign, as well. Following Ethiopia's victory over Italy at Adowa in March 1896, the Tsar of Russia supplied Leontiev with rifles and ammunition destined for Menelik II's armed forces (Henze 1991:71).

In the aftermath of the Russian revolution, Soviet geo-strategic interests in Ethiopia declined, but some military interests in the country remained. In 1917 and 1918, some Czarist officers found refuge in Ethiopia. In 1935, the Soviet government offered verbal support for the Ethiopian cause after the Italian invasion. In 1943, the Soviet Union opened an embassy in Addis Ababa, and, in 1946, Moscow selected Ethiopia for its first foreign aid project after the Second World War, a hospital along the lines of the one built during Menelik's time (Henze 1991:65-89).

In the 1950s and early 1960s, Soviet efforts to re-establish security links with Ethiopian ruling elites were constrained by the development of good American-Ethiopian relations. In 1953, Haile Selassie concluded a twenty-five year mutual defence agreement with the United States. In exchange for the emperor's loyalty and

guaranteed access to Kagnew facilities for purposes of military intelligence, American officials agreed to expand Ethiopia's existing military arsenal and to provide some economic aid for development.

In an unsuccessful bid to dilute Haile Selassie's loyalty to Washington, Soviet officials offered a sizeable loan for development to the imperial government in 1959.⁷² However, the Soviet approach was thwarted in 1960 by the decision of American officials to increase arms shipments substantially. American-Ethiopian ties were strengthened even more in 1962, when officials in Washington denied Somalia's petition for arms assistance. Apparently, this policy was implemented on the condition that Haile Selassie would refuse all future offers of assistance from the Soviet Union (Legum and Lee 1977:10).

As a consequence of limited prospects for improving relations with Ethiopia, Soviet efforts to increase influence in the Red Sea region in the 1960s and early 1970s were directed towards establishing friendly relations with Somalia. Geo-strategic interests were initially prompted by the desire to extend naval networks and to counteract America's well-established presence in the Red Sea region.⁷³ Interests in Somalia and the region in general intensified, following Sadat's expulsion of Soviet military advisors from Egypt in 1972.

Although PMAC officials requested Soviet military assistance shortly after the take-over, arms were not supplied in any great quantity until 1976. In July of that year, PMAC Committee Chairman Captain Moges Woldes Mikael visited Moscow to discuss Ethiopia's security situation, and the first agreement on Soviet military supplies was signed (Halliday and Molyneux 1981:245; *Pravda*, 14 July, 1976, in *CDSP*, vol 38, no 28:15). In December, the Soviets agreed to supply the PMAC with \$100 million for military equipment, including T-34 tanks and artillery. Apparently, the offer was conditional upon the severance of American-Ethiopian military ties (Henze 1983:169-170; Korn 1986:19).

⁷² In 1959, Soviet officials extended a R400 million loan (US\$100 mn) to Haile Selassie for the installation of an oil refinery in the Port of Assab and the construction of a polytechnic institute in Bahir Dar (Wubneh and Abate 1988:181; Bach 1987:58).

⁷³ In 1960 (the year of Somali independence), Khrushchev's administration extended \$53 mn in aid to Somalia: the largest per capita credit extended to any foreign state in that year. Over the next 15 years, Soviet officials considered relations with Somalia important enough to provide well over half a billion dollars: an amount equivalent to everything the United States had spent in Ethiopia over a thirty year period (Legum and Lee 1977:11; Henze 1983:159).

Soviet intentions to supply arms to the PMAC were confirmed in the Spring of 1977. In March, the first Soviet cargo vessel carrying military supplies berthed at Assab (Legum 1987:241). In May, only twelve days after the closure of American military and information facilities in Ethiopia, Mengistu and Brezhnev signed a joint communiqué and agreed to issue a Declaration of Friendship. (*Pravda*, May 9 1977, in *CDSP*, v 29, no 18:10-11). Apparently, Mengistu also received assurances of full Soviet military support and an arms agreement worth \$400 million (Legum 1987:241). In June, the first supplies of Soviet tanks arrived in Ethiopia (Halliday and Molyneux 1981:246). By July, ample supplies of Soviet military arms and equipment were being shipped to Ethiopia, as well as to Somalia.

Unfortunately, Soviet security objectives to establish a Pax Sovietica in the region failed to take into account the importance of accommodating the conflicting security priorities of Ethiopian and Somali officials. Brezhnev attempted to preserve a stake in both countries, even after Somali irredentist incursions into Ethiopia's Ogaden region took place in July 1977.⁷⁴ Soviet interests in retaining the status quo declined sharply, however, when Somali officials appealed to the United States for additional arms assistance. In October, Brezhnev refused to supply additional arms to Siad Barre's administration, and, in November, the Somali leader responded by revoking the 1974 Soviet-Somali Friendship Treaty, terminating Moscow's access rights to Somali military facilities, severing diplomatic relations with Cuba and ordering all Soviet advisors out of the country.⁷⁵

Soviet strategies for assisting Mengistu in Ethiopia's military conflict with Somalia in 1977 resembled the policies that had been advocated for Angola in 1975. Copious quantities of modern Soviet conventional weaponry and military equipment were provided, as well as a sizeable number of military advisors, and several thousand Cuban troops and professional personnel. On 26 November 1977, two weeks after the expulsion of Soviet military advisors and other personnel from Somalia, Soviet air-and sealifts of military supplies, combat troops and advisory personnel began pouring into

⁷⁴ Somali troops invaded the Ogaden in July, and, by September, reportedly controlled 90% of the area. In August, the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with Afro-Asian Countries issued a statement advocating the peaceful resolution of conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia: the two "friends of the Soviet Union" (Patman 1993:114; *Pravda* 7 August, 1977, in *CDSP*, vol 29, no 32:15).

⁷⁵ An estimated 1678 Soviet advisers were expelled from Somalia in November 1978 (Patman 1993:114).

Ethiopia.⁷⁶ Over a six-week period, about one billion dollars worth of Soviet arms and equipment, around 12,000 Cuban combat troops and 1500 Soviet military advisers were transported into the country.⁷⁷

Soviet officials also provided Ethiopia's ruling elite with experienced military advisors. The First Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Ground Forces, General V.I. Petrov, was sent in to direct Ethiopia's military campaign (Patman 1993:114). In addition, some of the same Soviet advisors who had previously advised Somali troops must have provided tactical assistance to Ethiopia's armed forces. Largely as a consequence of Soviet expert military advice and extensive arms provision and Cuban troops, Mengistu's military forces were able to push Somali troops back across the border in the spring of 1978.⁷⁸

Shortly after the successful campaign against Somali troops in the Ogaden, Mengistu requested additional Soviet military assistance to defeat the Eritrean liberation army that controlled most of the principal towns in Eritrea.⁷⁹ The Soviet Union and Cuba agreed to back the PMAC at the time, even though officials in both states had previously supported the Eritrean National Liberation Movement. In July 1978, hundreds of Soviet advisors and about 2000 Cuban troops accompanied more than 100,000 Ethiopian troops into Eritrea. In November, Mengistu re-established control over urban areas in Eritrea, but only as a direct consequence of Soviet and Cuban military intervention.

Conditions for the future conduct of military relations were set out in the 1978 Friendship Treaty, officially approved in November 1978. Four aspects of the military provisions set out in Articles 10 and 11 were particularly revealing. First, only the designated ruling officials in each state were supposed to be privy to Soviet-Ethiopian

⁷⁶ Halliday and Molyneux (1981:246) maintained that Moscow's 1977-78 military airlift operation to Ethiopia was the largest venture of its kind ever attempted by the Soviet Union in the Third World until that time.

⁷⁷ Estimates of the actual number of Cuban troops engaged in the war effort vary. Patman (1993:114) claims that about 12,000 Cubans were shipped into Ethiopia. DeWaal (1991:76) puts the total number at 16,000.

⁷⁸ The first major Ethiopian-Cuban counter-offensive was launched in January 1978. Three months later, Somali troops returned to Somalia (Halliday and Molyneux 1981:246).

⁷⁹ Eritrean history, including disputes with Ethiopia, are discussed in depth by Trevaskis (1960). See also Halliday's and Molyneux's (1981) account of the Eritrean problem

military transactions. Second, the heads of both states agreed to cooperate on military matters, but only on the condition that the defence capabilities of both parties were ensured. Third, Soviet and Ethiopian officials agreed not to enter into any alliance nor participate in any state groupings deemed detrimental to the other party. Finally, both Heads of State agreed that they would not engage in adverse actions nor become involved in measures directed against the other (*Pravda* 21 November 1978, in *CDSF*, v 30, no 46:11-12).

For the Soviet leadership in 1978, the gains from a more formalised military relationship with Ethiopia were considerable. First, Moscow's military airlift operations in the Ethiopian-Somali war served as a valuable experiment in the mobilisation of military resources on a global level. Second, in exchange for one port (Berbera) located in Somalia, Soviet officials acquired access to naval docking facilities in the Dahlak Islands off Eritrea, limited access to the ports of Massawa and Assab situated in Eritrea, and prospects for some use of other Ethiopian air and land facilities.⁸⁰ Third, increased influence in Ethiopia, as well as in the People's Democratic of Yemen, reduced Soviet security concerns about the American- British base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean (Wubneh and Abate 1988:183). Fourth, by defending Ethiopia against Somali aggression, the Soviet Union gained the good will of the Organisation of African Unity, as well as many Third World countries.

As an added bonus, Soviet concerns about the prospects for American retaliation in response to Ethiopia's militarisation were minimised. First, Brezhnev's decision to intervene was legitimated by the fact that Mengistu had requested Soviet military assistance. Second, Soviet military participation in Ethiopian affairs remained restricted to the provision of advice and arms transfers. The actual fighting was left to Cuban combat troops and Ethiopian military personnel.⁸¹ Finally, Somalia's former status as a client state of the Soviet Union reduced American inclinations to support the unlawful invasion of Somali troops into Ethiopian territory.

In respect of Ethiopia, Soviet military assistance in the early 1980s helped the Derg to withstand the takeover bids initiated by regional rivals and domestic opposition

⁸⁰ Apparently, Soviet military personnel had some access to air and land facilities at Makele in Tigray, Debre Zeit and Dire Dawa (Patman 1993:115).

⁸¹ Halliday and Molyneux (1981:248) note that some officers took part in the fighting in late 1978, but Soviet advisors generally refrained from active combat.

groups. When 14,000 regular Somali troops invaded the Ogaden in August 1980, for example, Soviet-supplied Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships were instrumental in repelling the attack (Patman 1993:115). In 1982, Soviet officials supported government efforts to wipe out the EPLF in Mengistu's Red Star campaign. As a consequence of Moscow's timely intervention, Ethiopian troops were able to drive out militant opposition forces from most urban areas in Eritrea. The latter collaborative venture worked to further Soviet interests, as well, because it secured continued access to docking facilities in the Dahlak islands located in Eritrean waters.

While some evidence supports Ethiopian Unity's charge that the Soviet Union escalated prospects for conflict in the Horn and used Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes, the reality is far more complex. Military intervention by Soviet officials escalated prospects for internal conflict within Ethiopia, but it actually prevented a long, costly war between Ethiopia and Somalia. Soviet officials may have secured access to some Ethiopian facilities, but the costs escalated dramatically because the installations were located in Eritrea and Tigray, the main centres of insurgent activity.

Soviet arms provisions and the modernisation of Ethiopia's military arsenal.

This section examines whether there is any validity to the Ethiopian Unity's claim discussed in Chapter two that Soviet officials exploited Ethiopia by turning the country into a depot for exports of second rate military equipment. I argue that Ethiopian ruling elites gained substantially from the weapons supplied by Moscow in Brezhnev's time, because Soviet arms and equipment supplied at that time were modern and could actually be used to upgrade Ethiopia's existing arsenal of military supplies. Although I shall briefly address the issue of costs, I shall concentrate particularly on the quality and quantity of the weapons and equipment provided.⁸²

It is virtually impossible to make realistic estimates of Soviet expenditures and Ethiopian debts incurred in arms transfer costs during Brezhnev's time, despite the impressive appearance of quantitative assessments provided by organisations like the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). The reason is that real production and labour costs in the Soviet Union's highly centralised economy did not

⁸² Mark Kramer (1989:67-109) provides a concise review of Soviet arms transfers and military aid to Third World states.

translate into equivalent evaluations based on similar weapons produced in the West. It is also the case that Soviet military assistance was almost never a totally separate affair. Military and economic assistance arrangements were often lumped together and virtually impossible to separate. In addition, the proportion of free, concessional and full rates on arms transfers tended to vary. We do know, however, that Moscow's military assistance was often in the form of tied aid and notoriously difficult to price. Under tied aid conditions, free weapons were sometimes provided, but Ethiopian officials were expected to pay for technical maintenance, as well as for additional spare parts. Moreover, Soviet arms deliveries linked to a particular agreement tended to take place over extended periods of time. Consequently, the estimates rendered by external monitors frequently contained double counting errors. Despite these difficulties, records kept by organisations such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) provided considerable insight into the patterns established in respect of Soviet arms transfers to Ethiopia.

Accurate details remained elusive about the kinds and quantities of Soviet military equipment exported into Ethiopia. Small arms like rifles must have been provided, but they were difficult to identify and probably less interesting for external sources to monitor. Nevertheless, substantial numbers of weapons in this category must have been shipped to Ethiopia, and Ethiopian officials must have incurred costs in the operation.

In respect of more sophisticated weaponry, however, more data were accumulated. The register of weapons imported into Ethiopia from the Soviet Union during 1977 and 1978 maintained by SIPRI provided a good idea about certain categories of armaments shipped into the country during the Ethiopian-Somali War. SIPRI collected arms trade information on five categories of major weapons: aircraft; armour and artillery; guidance and radar systems; missiles, and warships (*SIPRI* 1978, 1979, 1987: explanations on trade registers). The data indicate that some of the weapons delivered to the Mengistu administration at the time were quite technologically advanced for the period.

SIPRI estimated that Soviet officials delivered around 115 modern combat or combat-adaptable aircraft to the Mengistu administration during 1977 and 1978. One hundred of those were jet aircraft: 46 MiG-17s, 48 MiG-21s, and 6 MiG-23's. The remaining fifteen were Mi-8 helicopters (*SIPRI* 1978:261 and 1979:212). A comparison

of the kinds of aircraft imported with SIPRI registers on aircraft output in the Soviet Union in the 1970s suggests that the Brezhnev administration supplied Mengistu's administration with some relatively sophisticated and disproportionately expensive combat aircraft. In respect of jet aircraft, for example, various versions of the MiG-17 and MiG-21 had been around since the 1950's, but the MiG-23 and K and L versions of the MiG-21 were products of the early 1970s.⁸³ Transport helicopters like the Mi-8 had been produced since 1960, but, by 1977, advances in Soviet technology were creating new opportunities for the utilisation of Mi-8s for combat purposes. In addition, the Soviet jets imported by Mengistu's administration must have been substantially armed. After 1960, most supersonic aircraft were equipped with missiles and other attack features like cannons, machine-guns, bomb loads and napalm tanks. By the 1970s, to all intents and purposes, combat aircraft were more like weapons systems than weapons carriers (SIPRI 1978:239).

A comparison of the types of Soviet combat aircraft exported into Ethiopia with aircraft shipped to very important Third World clients like Syria in the 1960s and 1970s also supports the claim that the Brezhnev administration placed a high priority upon supplying Mengistu's government with fairly modern aircraft. In the case of Syria, for example, MiG-15s and MiG-17s had been received since the late 1950s, but MiG-21s with Atoll air-to-air missiles were not delivered until around 1967. MiG-21s and MiG-23s were still being shipped to Syria in the 1970s: MiG-21 MFs in 1972, and MiG-23s in 1974 (SIPRI 1978:242).

Missiles shipped to Ethiopia from the Soviet Union in 1977-78 were generally of the anti-tank (AT) or surface-to-air variety (SAM). SIPRI estimated deliveries at 2000 AT-3s (Saggers); 500 SA-3s (SAM mobiles) and 3000 SA-7s (SAM portables for infantry)(SIPRI 1979:212). All three types of missiles were relatively modern: AT-3 Saggers entered production lines around 1965; SA-3s (SAMs) had been around since 1960, but SA-7s (SAMs) were only produced in bulk after 1966. During the 1970s, all three types were extensively deployed in third-world conflicts. In the 1973 Middle-East war, for example, the Soviet SA-7 became extremely popular because it was highly effective and extremely portable. SA-7s were subsequently deployed by guerrillas in

⁸³ The MiG-21s were being made in 1958, but versions K and L weren't added until around 1972. MiG-23 Flogger prototype flights and production dates were estimated at 1967 and 1970, respectively (SIPRI 1976:179).

Angola and Mozambique, as well (SIPRI 1978:243).

Shipments of armoured vehicles included tanks (T) and some armoured personnel carriers (APC). In the 1970s armaments in this category reflected more conventional Soviet lines of arms production. SIPRI estimates of Soviet armoured vehicle delivered to Ethiopia in 1977-1978 included: 31 T-34s (light tanks); 200 T-54s; 100 T-55s; 30 T-70s, and 40 BMP-40s (APC), plus an additional 150 M-47 tanks imported from Yugoslavia in 1977.⁸⁴ Soviet armoured vehicles shipped to Ethiopia in 1977-1978 demonstrated a judicious combination of old and new varieties. Main battle tanks like the T-54 and T-55 had been around since about 1949, while T-70s were relatively new, having entered production about 1971. Armoured personnel carriers like the BMP-1 and BMP-2 were mostly products of the mid-1960s (SIPRI 1976:195).

SIPRI registers of Soviet weapons imported into Ethiopia between 1979 and 1984 also support the premise that Soviet officials in the late 1970s and early 1980s were supplying newer weaponry with higher unit values. This is particularly evident in the provision of upgraded combat aircraft supplied between 1980 and 1984, particularly the Mi-24 and Mi-14 military attack helicopters and the MiG-25 fighter-interceptors. In 1980 ten Soviet Mi-24 helicopters were delivered (SIPRI 1981:221), while in 1984, two Mi-14 attack helicopters boosted Mengistu's existing helicopter arsenal (SIPRI:1985:396). Both were products of the 1970s and represented a technological advancement over previous helicopters.⁸⁵ During 1983/1984, Soviet officials reportedly delivered six MiG-25 fighter-interceptors to the Ethiopian government.⁸⁶ These fighter planes, also products of the 1970s, represented a significant technological advancement over earlier varieties of fighter combat aircraft like the MiG-17 and the MiG-21.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Several countries were licensed by the Soviet Union to produce Soviet weaponry. In most cases, such countries required permission from the Soviet Union to export weapons covered under the licensing arrangement. T-62 main battle tanks, for example, were being produced under Soviet license in Czechoslovakia in 1977 (SIPRI 1978:201).

⁸⁵ Although the prototype flight of the Mi-24 was believed to have taken place in 1971, A and B versions were not in production until 1973/1974, and C and D models didn't come on the assembly line until 1975 and 1976, respectively. Mi-14 helicopters were believed to be production in 1977 (SIPRI 1979:128-131).

⁸⁶ SIPRI (1984:238 and 1985:396) reported the delivery of six MiG-25's in the 1984 yearbook, as well as in the 1985 edition. These two listings may have covered the same shipment.

⁸⁷ Versions A and B of the MiG-25 were certainly in production by 1970, but the MiG-25M didn't reach

In contrast, Soviet exports of old fashioned conventional weaponry to Ethiopia appeared to be declining as an overall proportion of the costs incurred in expanding Mengistu's military arsenal. To be sure, old-fashioned tanks like the T-55's were still being imported into Ethiopia, but Libya, not the Soviet Union was apparently supplying them (SIPRI 1985:396). The decline, in part, was caused by the fact that the PMAC already possessed considerable reserves of old-fashioned conventional weaponry. The International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), for example, estimated that the Ethiopian government already possessed at least 700 towed and self-propelled guns and howitzers, mortars and air defence guns of various sizes (IISS 1981/82:61 and 1982/1983:66-67).

Ethiopian Unity's charge that the Soviet Union made Ethiopia dumping ground for second rate arms and equipment is not wholly correct. Many of the weapons provided were technologically sophisticated and very expensive to purchase. In this case, Wendt and Barnett's claim that ruling elites in developing countries would become dependent upon powerful arms suppliers because they wanted to modernise their arsenals seems to have more merit.

Mengistu's use of Soviet military assistance

Does the Ethiopian Unity's claim that Soviet officials heavily influenced the direction of Ethiopian military policies have any validity? It is probably fair to say that Soviet officials created the conditions that enabled Mengistu to rely unduly upon military solutions. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence to support the view that Mengistu retained control over Ethiopian military policy and the actual deployment of Soviet arms and equipment before Gorbachev assumed power.

American military assistance to the Ethiopian imperial government declined markedly on the eve of the Revolution.⁸⁸ In May 1973, Haile Selassie requested \$450 million in military equipment from the Nixon administration. With the exception of a squadron of F-SE fighter-bomber aircraft, some M60 tanks and naval patrol boats

the assembly lines until about 1975 (SIPRI 1976:179 and 1979:30).

⁸⁸ From 1953 to 1970, Ethiopia received around \$150 mn in U.S. military aid. Over 2,500 members of Ethiopia's armed forces, including Mengistu Haile Mariam, were trained in the United States. In addition, the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) co-ordinated military aid and provided on site training for Ethiopia's armed forces (Wubneh and Abate 1988:175).

supplied on a cash and credit basis, American officials denied his request on the basis that supplying such a massive military order would upset the fragile balance between Ethiopia and Somalia (Legum and Lee 1977:10; Patman:1990:139). They also informed the Ethiopian leader that the Kagnew Communications Facility had been earmarked for closure.

The initial reaction of American officials to the Derg's creation was optimistic. Anticipating that a moderate, stable government aligned with Western interests would emerge, U.S. officials approved a new programme of credits and cash sales worth about \$100mn for the purchase of American military equipment in the summer of 1974.⁸⁹ In December, American attitudes to the Derg became increasingly negative after the execution of General Aman and fifty-seven other top figures of the Imperial regime and the military government's refusal to provide compensation for confiscated American companies. Consequently, when the PMAC requested an American airlift of \$30 million in small arms and ammunition to combat increased hostilities in Eritrea in February 1975, U.S. officials in the State Department determined to limit arms transfers to the Derg to \$7 million (Korn 1986:14).

In 1976, American dissatisfaction continued to grow, but the Ford administration was reluctant to withdraw all military support from Ethiopia. In the Spring, American officials approved Ethiopian requests for two squadrons of F-5E fighter bombers and agreed to consider the Derg's request for an additional \$100 million in military supplies (Korn 1986:16). In August, however, the Congressional Sub Committee on African Affairs concluded that the United States could pressure the PMAC to stop human rights violations because of its position as the sole arms supplier to Ethiopia. Subsequently, the Ford administration terminated military grants to Ethiopia, but sales of military hardware on credit were continued (Wubneh and Abate 1988:176). In December, however, American-Ethiopian military relations were severely strained by the Derg's announcement that Ethiopia's new government was to be restructured along Marxist-Leninist lines.

Hostile exchanges between the U.S. government and the PMAC escalated markedly in 1977.⁹⁰ In February, U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance announced that

⁸⁹ In Haile Selassie's time, American military assistance to Ethiopia had been capped at about \$10 million per annum (Korn 1986:8).

⁹⁰ Legum and Lee (1979:52-54) provide useful information on the progression of hostilities.

aid to Ethiopia would be substantially reduced because of human rights violations.⁹¹ In April, the American-Ethiopian alliance was officially downgraded, following a U.S. national security review.⁹² In retaliation, the Derg demanded the immediate closure of every American installation in Ethiopia except the Embassy and the AID office (*Pravda*, 26 April 1977, in *CDSP*, vol 29, no 17:22). In April, the Carter administration responded to the PMAC's hostile action by suspending Ethiopia's Military Sales Credit Programme. In turn, the Derg ordered a two-thirds reduction in American Embassy Staff and the resident Marine Corps. In July, a U.S. foreign military aid bill omitting all previous provisions for Ethiopia was passed by the House of Representatives and forwarded to the Senate. Shortly thereafter, American officials terminated military assistance to Ethiopia. The freeze also covered arms that had already been purchased by the PMAC (Wubneh and Abate 1988:176).

As a consequence of the revolutionary government's alienation from the American military alliance in 1977, the Derg's position in Ethiopia was substantially weakened. Fortunately for Mengistu and his compatriots, the Soviet Union was willing to fill the vacuum.⁹³

Between 1976 and 1978, the Derg struggled to consolidate its power over the Ethiopian state. Soviet military assistance undoubtedly facilitated Mengistu's acquisition of power, especially during the two-year period before the signing of the Friendship Treaty. One case in point concerned the Red Terror campaign conducted by the PMAC to eliminate domestic opposition in urban areas, which took place during the Somali-Ethiopian war.⁹⁴ Soviet military assistance to combat Somalia's intrusion into the Ogaden helped Mengistu to mask the extent of domestic violence involved in the

⁹¹ Aid to Argentina and Uruguay was reduced on the same grounds (Legum and Lee 1977:69).

⁹² During Castro's visit to Addis Ababa in the spring of 1977, the two leaders issued a joint communiqué that condemned imperialism and imperialist puppets in the Red Sea region and advocated the co-ordination of progressive forces in anti-imperialist struggles. Shortly thereafter, U.S. officials intensified their efforts to disengage from Ethiopia (*Izvestia*, 16 April 1977, in *CDSP*, v 29, no 15:5; Legum and Lee 1977:92).

⁹³ In an interview for the *New York Times* conducted eleven years later, Mengistu claimed that he had been forced to lean toward the Soviet Union because U.S. officials had been unwilling to supply the arms ordered in 1977 (BBC, *SWB*, 1 December 1988).

⁹⁴ Dawit (1989) and DeWaal (1991) provide good accounts of the Red Terror campaign.

Red Terror campaigns.⁹⁵ In addition, Soviet assistance in repelling Somali troops helped to rally internal and external support for the PMAC in its fight against foreign invaders.

Mengistu's military resources were significantly expanded as a consequence of Soviet intervention in the Ethiopian-Somali war. After the war was over, his administration controlled all of the American military equipment received prior to Washington's withdrawal, plus substantial supplies of relatively new Soviet armaments and the added benefit of expert military advice provided by Soviet advisors. In addition, the number of Ethiopian military personnel was substantially increased, as a consequence of recruitment during the conflict.⁹⁶ Ethiopia's vastly extended military capability meant that Mengistu's administration was now able, as well as willing, to deploy substantial military resources in the battle to eliminate domestic opposition in rural as well as urban areas.

Mengistu also relied extensively upon Soviet-supplied weaponry and equipment to subdue domestic opposition in Northern Ethiopia in the pre-Gorbachev era. Evidence about the military campaigns conducted against the EPLF in Eritrea and the TPLF in Tigray between 1978 and 1984 demonstrate this.

To counter the threat of Eritrean insurgent groups claiming to control 90 percent of Eritrea, PMAC officials moved substantial numbers of Ethiopian military personnel previously deployed in the Ogaden into Eritrea (DeWaal 1991:113). Mengistu's strategy against the EPLF in general was two-pronged. First, enemy-held territory was subjected to sustained bombing by Soviet-supplied combat aircraft. Second, after substantial damage had been inflicted, Ethiopian foot soldiers, in combination with columns of armoured vehicles and modern conventional weaponry supplied by Soviet officials, were deployed against EPLF installations.

Between May 1978 and December 1979, the Ethiopian government launched four major military offensives against the EPLF in Eritrea. In each case, large quantities of sophisticated Soviet weaponry and large numbers of Cuban and Ethiopian troops were deployed. The first military offensive was launched in May 1978, only three

⁹⁵ Significantly, most of the Red Terror executions were over by March 1978, when the war between Ethiopia and Somalia ended.

⁹⁶ The regular Ethiopian army increased from 60,000 to 75,000, and troops in the people's militia doubled from 75,000 to 150,000 (DeWaal 1991:76).

months after the Ethiopian-Somali war had ended. Operating from the government's newly built airfield in Makele (Tigray), the Ethiopian airforce began bombing ELF and EPLF occupied areas in Eritrea. In July, ground offensives were launched, as well. As a consequence of newly amassed superior military resources and abundant Soviet military advice, the PMAC recaptured all of the towns in Southern and central Eritrea within a matter of weeks. The second offensive began in November 1978. Mengistu's planned objective was to drive all Eritrean forces out of the vicinity of Massawa and to recapture Keren. Once again, chiefly as a consequence of access to superior military resources, the Ethiopian government was able to drive EPLF insurgents out of their remaining urban strongholds in Eritrea. In the third and fourth offensives, however, Mengistu failed to defeat EPLF opposition forces, despite the government's disproportionately high allocation of scarce resources to complete the task.⁹⁷ Both offensives were launched against Nacfa in the Sahel, where the retreating EPLF had retrenched. In February, Ethiopian armed forces sustained high casualties and were unable advance further into EPLF-held territory. In December, Mengistu's troops were routed by the EPLF and forced to retreat back to the government's military headquarters at Afabet. The Ethiopian military establishment suffered high casualties, and substantial amounts of Soviet weaponry and equipment were lost on the Eritrean battlefield.⁹⁸

In 1982, Mengistu launched the Red Star Campaign in Eritrea in a concerted effort to eradicate EPLF forces from Eritrea. To achieve this aim, he moved the national capital temporarily to Asmara so that he could control the campaign. Although military tactics resembled those used in Eritrea previously, the destructive potential of Soviet-supplied weaponry and Ethiopian troops was more fully exploited. In the 1982 campaign, bombing raids took place day and night, and Soviet combat aircraft flown by Ethiopian pilots reportedly discharged cargoes of phosphorous and cluster bombs. More than 120,000 Ethiopian troops were also deployed in attacks on EPLF base areas: the

⁹⁷ The third offensive took place during January and February 1979, and the fourth was initiated in the following December (DeWaal 1991:113-116).

⁹⁸ During 1980 and 1981, no major military offensives were mounted by the Derg in Eritrea, but Government bombing raids continued in designated areas. Lack of government interest in retaking lost ground in Eritrea in this period was probably due to renewed concerns about Somalia engendered by the invasion of 14,000 regular Somali troops into the Ogaden in August of 1980 (DeWaal 1991:115-116; Patman 1993:115).

largest number ever deployed in Eritrea.⁹⁹ Ultimately, the enterprise proved too costly to sustain. The Red Star campaign was unofficially abandoned in June 1982 (DeWaal 1991:122). Mengistu's national security objective to eliminate Eritrean opposition remained unfulfilled, despite access to costly supplies of Soviet weaponry and equipment, professional military advice, and abundant Ethiopian manpower.

Mengistu's strategies for eliminating TPLF insurgency in Tigray differed in certain respects from those deployed in Eritrea. TPLF successes relied heavily upon the ability of combatants to move around freely and to obtain access to supplies and support in rural areas. Consequently, the government aimed to dislodge the TPLF by destroying rural market networks and intimidating the population in TPLF-controlled areas. These strategies relied heavily on Soviet combat aircraft and modern conventional weaponry.

To that end, Mengistu diverted sizeable military resources from Eritrea to Tigray in 1980,¹⁰⁰ and mounted two important campaigns between 1980 and 1983. The first campaign was launched in central Tigray between August 1980 and March 1981, the second between February and April 1983, not long after the failure of Red Star operations (DeWaal 1991:140). In both campaigns, Soviet fighter planes, helicopter gunships and ground weaponry, in conjunction with Ethiopian troops, were deployed against civilians, as well as armed insurgents.

Ethiopian government troops also conducted systematic bombing raids in Tigray after mid-1980. Reports issued at the time maintained that Soviet-supplied aeroplanes and helicopters inflicted high levels of damage upon the resident population. In several instances, phosphorous bombs were discharged on market places. Incendiary bombs were also dropped on fields and stores. Soviet helicopters and MiGs were also used to strafe populated market areas (DeWaal 1991:147-149).

By 1984, the mutual benefits envisaged in the Soviet-Ethiopian military alliance had decreased substantially for both sides. For the Soviet ruling elite, military provision to Ethiopia had become exceedingly costly. For Mengistu's administration, hopes of

⁹⁹ DeWaal (1991:117-118) claimed that nearly two-thirds of the Ethiopian army was stationed in Eritrea in 1982. The sheer number of soldiers in the area put severe pressures on local food resources. Consequently, the military regime had to airlift food to Asmara in order to feed the Ethiopian army.

¹⁰⁰ In 1978 and 1979, the TPLF took advantage of Mengistu's military engagements in the Ogaden and Eritrea to expand operations throughout rural Tigray. By 1980 spokesmen for the organisation claimed that the TPLF controlled 85 percent of Tigray (DeWaal 1991:139).

containing domestic opposition through reliance upon Soviet arms provision remained largely unfulfilled. In addition, Ethiopian debts had risen dramatically.

Before Gorbachev came to power, the evidence available supports the view that Mengistu used Soviet weapons and advisors, as well as Cuban troops to further his own interests, rather than yielding to Moscow's influence. However, by providing so much military assistance, Soviet officials fostered the conditions for Mengistu's administration to develop a preference for military, rather than political solutions.

PART TWO: THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE GORBACHEV ERA.

Compatibility in the Soviet-Ethiopian military relationship dropped sharply in the Gorbachev era. National interests diverged, security priorities conflicted and the special arrangement ceased to function. Like the progression of political relations, the pace of decline was irregular and linked to the transformation of Mengistu's military government into a civilian administration. The negative impact of declining relations was intensified by the fact that Soviet arms transfers to Ethiopia lost their technological edge, and the weapons that Ethiopian officials were able to purchase came mostly from surplus stocks of old-fashioned arms scheduled to be phased out of production in the Soviet Union. Despite marked declines in the quality and quantity of Soviet arms provision, however, Mengistu still persevered in his efforts to control domestic opposition by military might. As a consequence of his decisions, prospects were increased for Ethiopia's internal fragmentation.

Gorbachev's military disengagement from Ethiopia

Between 1985 and 1987, Soviet-Ethiopian military transactions carried on much as they had in Brezhnev's day. Gorbachev's administration continued to supply advisors, weaponry and military equipment to Ethiopia, roughly in line with previous levels. One difference, however, was that the new Soviet leader also made a concerted effort to improve relations with Somalia.

Although empirical evidence remained sketchy, military concerns and arms transfer agreements still ranked high on the agenda in the early Gorbachev era. During

Mengistu's visit to Moscow in November 1985, several agreements were concluded, and they probably included provisions for military supplies.¹⁰¹ In return, Soviet access to Ethiopian facilities situated in Eritrean waters was assured for a while longer.

Although Soviet transfers of military arms and equipment to Ethiopia continued, events in 1987 indicated that security arrangements were changing in line with New Thinking priorities to downgrade the provision of military support. On 2 March 1987, USSR Minister of Defence S.L. Sokolov met with Ethiopian defence minister Lt-General Gebre-Kidan Tesfaye in Moscow. Details of the conversation were not disclosed, but the number of high-ranking Soviet military officials in attendance indicated a growing concern about the situation in Ethiopia.¹⁰² In April, Gorbachev emphasised the importance of establishing peaceful co-existence in the Horn region (TASS 18 April 1987). In November, only two months after the PDRE's formal recognition, Soviet and Ethiopian officials concluded a new military agreement in Moscow. Although it was supposed to be worth about \$2 billion, with deliveries to be spread over a three year period, the expiration date was set for December 1990, with no provision for renewal (Patman 1993:122).

In 1988, New Thinking recommendations for demilitarisation acquired more practical dimensions. Gorbachev was reluctant to maintain Mengistu's military arsenal, chiefly as a consequence of military disengagement from Afghanistan and the heavy financial burdens incurred as a consequence of prolonged Soviet intervention in that particular civil war. In addition, developments within Ethiopia increased Soviet concerns about the wisdom of prolonging its military involvement. In March, EPLF and TPLF opposition forces defeated Ethiopian government troops on several occasions. At the battle of Afabet in Eritrea, the EPLF captured large quantities of Soviet weaponry supplied to the Ethiopian government under preferential conditions (EIU, *CR*, 1988, no 2:15-16). In the same battle, three senior Soviet military advisors were captured by the EPLF and taken as prisoners of war (TASS, 22 March 1988). A week later, TPLF forces

¹⁰¹ Order information compiled by SIPRI on Soviet weapons imported into Ethiopia between 1985 and 1990 supports this view. Apparently, orders for many Soviet weapons entering Ethiopia in this period originated in 1985 (SIPRI 1985-1992: trade registers).

¹⁰² In addition to Sokolov, four important Deputy Ministers of Defence also attended the meeting: the First Deputy, Army General P.G. Lushev; Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, Ye. F. Ivanovskiy; Commander in Chief of the Air Force, A.N. Yefimov, and Commander of the Armed Forces Rear Services, S.K. Kurkotkin (BBC, *SWB*, 10 March 1987).

drove Ethiopian troops out of four important towns in Tigray, resulting in a further loss of Soviet arms and equipment.

In 1989, signs of Gorbachev's intention to disengage from Ethiopian military entanglements became increasingly visible. In January, Soviet officials announced substantial cuts in the production of conventional weaponry. This decision directly affected the categories of weaponry that had been typically earmarked for export to Ethiopia since the late 1970s.¹⁰³ In April, unnamed Soviet officials in Washington reportedly claimed that Gorbachev had denied Mengistu's requests for increased military support, had refused his request for debt rescheduling and had restricted the flow of arms, spare parts, and the replacement of lost heavy equipment (*Washington Post*, 21 April 1989). In May, two weeks after an unsuccessful coup in Ethiopia, Gorbachev informed the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies that military spending was likely to be substantially reduced in 1990-1991.¹⁰⁴ In June, diplomatic sources reported that Soviet officials had already ordered the withdrawal of Soviet nationals from Northern Ethiopia (EIU, *CR*, 1989, no 2:25). In October, Youli Vorontsov, the Soviet deputy minister of foreign affairs, delivered a personal message from Gorbachev to Mengistu in Addis, which apparently confirmed that Soviet arms shipments would cease by the beginning of 1991. During November and December, Soviet officials stepped up deliveries of weapons and equipment, but these new provisions apparently fulfilled the terms set out in earlier agreements.¹⁰⁵

The pace of Soviet military disengagement from Ethiopia accelerated dramatically during 1990.¹⁰⁶ Reasons for withdrawal were certainly linked to Mengistu's reluctance to seek peaceful solutions to internal problems. In February, on the eve of the

¹⁰³ Aeroplane output was scheduled to decline by 23 percent and the manufacture of helicopters, by 60 percent. Tank and munitions production was projected to drop by 52 percent and 20 percent, respectively (SIPRI 1991:299).

¹⁰⁴ In 1989, Gorbachev disclosed that military spending in 1987-1988 had been frozen and that real military spending in 1989 would amount to R 77.3 bn (a figure four times higher than the officially stated defence budget of R 20.2 billion). He also announced that a proposal was under consideration for defence cuts of a further R10 bn (14 percent), which could take place as early as 1990-1991. Prior to this time, realistic assessments of defence spending by Soviet officials had always been kept secret for security reasons (SIPRI 1990:161-163).

¹⁰⁵ Sources in Ethiopia reported at the time that the port of Assab was clogged up with vessels unloading military hardware and munitions (EIU *CR* 1989, no 2:25 and 1990, no 1:29).

¹⁰⁶ Substantial reductions in all Soviet military expenditures, including military assistance, were introduced in 1990 (SIPRI 1991:139).

EPLF's take-over of Massawa, Soviet official G.I. Gerasimov announced the withdrawal of Soviet military specialists from Eritrea and all zones of military operation in northern Ethiopia. He explained that they had been assigned to Ethiopia for the express purpose of repelling external aggression, as opposed to participation in domestic conflict. Consequently, Soviet advisors would no longer be allowed to remain in potential combat zones (*Izvestia*, 8 February 1990, in *CDSP*, v 42, no 6:24).

In March 1990, adverse publicity on Ethiopia's indebtedness to the Soviet Union further undermined Gorbachev's motivations for continuing any existing lines of military exchange. On 1st March, *Izvestia* published figures about the USSR's foreign debtors. Ethiopia's total indebtedness to the Soviet Union, as of November 1989, was assessed at about 2.86 billion Roubles.¹⁰⁷ The public revelation of Ethiopia's position as a top Third World debtor to the economically ailing Soviet Union evoked criticisms from the Soviet media, particularly in respect of military debts incurred by Mengistu's administration.

On 29th March, *Izvestia* correspondent G. Ustinov argued against sustaining current levels of Soviet military involvement in Ethiopian internal affairs. He claimed that details about the EPLF's capture of three Soviet military advisors in 1988 had been withheld from the public out of fear that the released information would constitute Gorbachev's public admission that a Soviet military presence had been established in Ethiopia.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, he argued that Moscow had incurred substantial costs in underwriting the Mengistu administration and that military expenditures had accounted for the lion's share of Ethiopia's R2.86 billion debt. Although Soviet officials had originally agreed to provide emergency military assistance to Mengistu for the purpose of repelling external aggression, he pointed out that aid had continued long after Somali troops had left the Ogaden. He maintained that without Moscow's military resources, Mengistu's regime would be hard-pressed to defend itself against the EPLF and the TPLF. Finally, and very importantly, he stated that continued Soviet military assistance was prolonging the civil war in Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia, because Ethiopian troops

¹⁰⁷ Ethiopia was listed as one of Moscow's top 10 Third World debtors. The others were Cuba, Mongolia, Vietnam, India, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Algeria and North Korea (*Izvestia*, 1 March 1990, in *CDSP* 1990, v 42, no 9:9; BBC, *SWB*, 9 March 1990).

¹⁰⁸ Ustinov stated that two Lieutenant Colonels, Y. I. Churayev and Y.P. Kalistratov, and one interpreter, A.V. Kuvaldin had been captured taken by the EPLF at Afabet in 1988. He claimed that 13 more Soviet advisors would have been taken prisoners if they had not been rescued by Soviet helicopter crews. He maintained that he, like other Soviets citizens working in Ethiopia in 1988, had been aware of the facts but had not been allowed to disclose them (*Izvestia*, March 29, 1990, in *CDSP*, v 42, no 13:31).

and opposition forces were using the same Soviet weaponry to destroy each other. Ustinov concluded that it made no sense to continue providing military aid that was wasteful and ineffective to developing countries like Ethiopia.¹⁰⁹

In 1990, despite increased pressures for Soviet disengagement, Gorbachev's administration continued to demonstrate conflicting priorities about supporting long-standing allies whose power bases were being undermined by domestic rivals. On the one hand, Soviet officials showed a firm resolve to downgrade the military relationship. In March, for example, Soviet officials apparently refused to allow Antonov aircraft based in Ethiopia to be used to transport supplies to besieged Ethiopian troops in Asmara (EIU, *CR*, 1990, no 2:28). In April, Soviet military advisors began pulling out of Ethiopia, and the number dropped from about 1500 to around 600 (Patman 1993:124). On the other hand, Gorbachev's administration demonstrated a reluctance to slow down deliveries of weapons. In May, more supplies of Soviet weapons, explosives and other military armaments were reportedly offloaded in the Port of Assab (BBC, *SWB*, 14 May 1990).

By December 1990, however, anomalies had apparently been resolved. The Gorbachev administration released financial data about Soviet arms assistance, identified the principal Third World recipients and confirmed plans to reduce arms production in the categories of traditional weaponry normally exported to Ethiopia.¹¹⁰

In 1991, Soviet disengagement from the military relationship with Ethiopia was completed. In January, concessional prices for Soviet arms supplies were eliminated as a consequence of Gorbachev's decision to conduct all foreign trade, including arms deals, in hard currency after 1st January 1991 (SIPRI 1991:213-214). In March, the three Soviet military advisors captured by the EPLF in 1988 were handed over unharmed to the Soviet ambassador in Khartoum (TASS, 27 March 1991). During the spring, military facilities

¹⁰⁹ Ustinov claimed that the EPLF and TPLF had captured whole arsenals of arms and ammunition from Ethiopian troops in recent years. *Izvestia*, 29 March 1990, in *CDSP*, v 42, no 13:32).

¹¹⁰ In December, Soviet official I. S. Belousov publicly disclosed actual figures on Soviet arms exports for the first time. He reported that R56.7 bn worth of weapons and weapons technology had been exported during the last five years (R9.7 bn in 1990) and that R8.5 bn of the total amount had been exported free of charge. He also confirmed that Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, PDR Yemen, India, Vietnam, North Korea, Algeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola and Cuba were the main Third World recipients of Soviet arms transfers. Belousov also indicated that exports of weapons would decline markedly under the current 5 year plan: in particular, missiles by 64 percent; tanks and armoured personnel carriers by 25-30 percent; artillery by 48 percent; aircraft by 53 percent, and ships by 56 percent (BBC, *SWB*, 10 January 1991; SIPRI 1991:212).

on the Dahlak islands were evacuated, and most Soviet citizens were transported out of Ethiopia, following the EPLF's formal take-over of Eritrea and the surrounding territorial waters (TASS, 27 May and 3 June 1991). In May, Soviet officials disclosed the fact that seventy-five military advisors and specialists had been killed in Ethiopia (TASS, 21 May 1991). Soviet television newscasters at the time also reported that Mengistu had received about \$12 billion worth of Soviet military assistance over the years (BBC, *SWB*, 24 May 1991).

The level of compatibility in Soviet-Ethiopian military relations declined markedly while Gorbachev was in power. Efforts to disengage were particularly apparent on the Soviet side, and available evidence supports Patman's (1990) claim that eroded motives, declining opportunities and the political impermeability of targeted societies initiated the process of Soviet Union's disengagement from the Horn region.

The quality of Soviet arms provision under Gorbachev

Patterns of Soviet arms supply to the Mengistu administration changed markedly in Gorbachev's time. At first, Soviet military assistance to Ethiopia carried on much as it had in the early 1980s, despite the demilitarisation rhetoric of New Thinking. Supplies of costly, technologically advanced weaponry to Ethiopia continued, but large quantities of conventional, less expensive weapons were shipped, as well. In 1985 and 1986, for example, 12 more Soviet MiG-23s were reportedly delivered to the Mengistu government. During the same period, forty scout cars (BDRM-1's) and 40 T-55 tanks were also imported into Ethiopia (SIPRI 1987:245).

According to SIPRI, the pattern of Soviet arms provision to Ethiopia began to change in line with Gorbachev's aim to seek peaceful solutions to regional conflict in 1988 (the first year of Mengistu's civilian administration). Substantial amounts of Soviet weaponry were still being delivered, but the shipments consisted primarily of older conventional arms and equipment: in particular, artillery, armoured vehicles and tanks (SIPRI, 1989:249).

SIPRI records of Soviet arms delivered at the end of the 1980s increasingly resembled the weaponry that had been shipped to Ethiopia during 1977, with the noticeable absence of costly items like combat aircraft.¹¹¹ For example, no further

¹¹¹ In December 1989, *Izvestia* correspondents published a list of military assets in the Soviet arsenal. The

deliveries of fighter aeroplanes or military attack helicopters were reported after 1986. A large number of missiles were provided, but only the 80 multiple rocket launchers delivered between 1984 and 1989 could be said to be very innovative, and they may well have made by the North Koreans. There were, to be sure, 320 more AT-3 Sagers delivered between 1986 and 1989 to augment the 2000 AT-3s received 12 years previously. Moreover, copious amounts of older armoured vehicles were supplied between 1985 and 1989: in particular, 152 ex-national volksarmee T-55 tanks shipped from East Germany (which were either produced in the Soviet Union or under license in another Warsaw Pact country), two hundred Soviet scout cars and 360 armoured personnel carriers. Two hundred pieces of artillery, comprised of towed howitzers and towed guns, provided by Soviet were also reportedly imported into Ethiopia between 1985 and 1989 (SIPRI 1990:277).

To all intents and purposes, the Gorbachev regime ceased to provide new supplies of arms and military equipment by 1990. Perhaps the most notable arms cargo delivered to the Ethiopians in that year involved the final deliveries of the 380 T-55 tanks supplied by Czechoslovakia between 1985 and 1990, which were the same model as the ones supplied by Soviet officials in 1977-78.¹¹² In 1990, Mengistu ordered three sea-going vessels from the Soviet Union in anticipation of conducting future naval operations along the Eritrean coastline: one ocean minesweeper of the Natya class and two coastal minesweepers of the Sony Class. In 1991, however, SIPRI (1992:336 and 1993:503) reported that arrangements had been completed, but the vessels had never been delivered.

The Ethiopian Unity's claim that Soviet arms supplies imported into Ethiopia were second rate seems to have more merit in the Gorbachev period. Evidence collected by SIPRI indicates a real decline in respect of their technological edge, when compared against the weapons Mengistu obtained from the Soviet Union during the Brezhnev's time in power.

estimates provided at that time indicated the existence of huge stocks of 1970s conventional weaponry like the weapons shipped to Ethiopia: as, for example, 63,900 tanks; 76,520 armoured personnel carriers and 66,800 multiple rocket launchers (*Izvestia*, 16 December 1989, in SIPRI 1991:143).

¹¹² Reports on Omnipol in October 1990 indicated that arms deals had secured up to half of Czechoslovakia's foreign currency profits. One such deal, concluded with Mengistu, also involved the provision of a munitions factory in Ethiopia for the production of infantry weapons (BBC, *SWB*, 4 October 1990; SIPRI 1991:254).

The effects of Mengistu's reliance upon Soviet military assistance

In 1987, Ethiopian Unity accused the Gorbachev administration of determining Ethiopia's military policy. Available evidence suggests that party spokesmen failed to take the priorities and interests of Mengistu's administration sufficiently into account. Four important developments in Ethiopia were caused by Mengistu's excessive reliance upon Soviet military assistance in Gorbachev's time. First, the level of EPLF and TPLF resistance stiffened in response to Mengistu's decision to impose military control over the Northern regions, in preparation for the transformation into a civilian administration. Second, Mengistu's reluctance to abandon military campaigns in the Northern regions incurred prohibitively high costs for the newly created civilian administration. Third, his diminished access to Soviet military assistance reduced the survival prospects of his administration and created new opportunities for other military factions in Ethiopia to exercise power. Finally, his arsenal of Soviet-supplied weaponry ultimately facilitated the victories of his adversaries because they were able to capture so much of the government's supplies.

Mengistu's continued reliance upon Soviet arms provision to subdue internal opposition in the early Gorbachev era reduced prospects for the military government's successful transformation to civilian rule in 1987. Dependence upon military means rather than political solutions actually stiffened levels of domestic resistance against the revolutionary administration. Campaigns mounted against the EPLF and TPLF in the mid-1980s demonstrate this.

In the case of the EPLF, Mengistu mounted the heaviest military campaigns in Eritrea since 1978, during the Ethiopian famine of 1984-1985. Despite a vastly expanded army and a substantial military arsenal,¹¹³ Ethiopian troops failed to eliminate Eritrean secessionist forces. Mengistu's reluctance to abandon military solutions had the unintended effect of stiffening Eritrean resistance. Moreover, EPLF combatants continued to bolster their position because they captured large quantities of Soviet arms and equipment from Ethiopian military forces.

¹¹³ In October 1984, Ethiopian armed forces personnel were estimated at 60,000 new conscripts drafted and recently trained for combat, a regular army of 210,000 men and a militia army estimated at 170,000. In respect of weaponry, the Ethiopian army had at least 750 main battle tanks and 130 combat aircraft on hand at that time (DeWaal 1991:182).

In 1986 and 1987, the government's campaigns on the ground in Eritrea tapered off, but bombing raids conducted by Soviet-supplied combat aircraft continued (DeWaal 1991:184-186). In addition, the conflict acquired a new dimension. Emergency food relief convoys in Eritrea became targets and bargaining chips for EPLF and Ethiopian officials, alike.¹¹⁴ In December 1987, however, the EPLF finally broke through government troop installations around Nacfa in one of the largest battles of the twenty-six year-old civil war (Keesing's, 30 November 1988).

In the case of the TPLF, Ethiopian troops also intensified their efforts to eliminate TPLF threats in Tigray between 1985 and 1987. Mengistu relied upon the combined deployment of Soviet-supplied combat aircraft and ground forces equipped with Soviet weaponry in central Tigray (where famine prevailed), as well as in western Tigray (where surplus harvests existed). In addition, government forces conducted strafing and bombing raids on market towns and villages (DeWaal 1991:197-198).

As a direct consequence of Mengistu's aerial bombardment, TPLF resistance stiffened, and the tactics became more organised. Subsequently, guerrillas began to consolidate bases in Western Tigray and to establish control over the Ethiopian government's access routes to Sudan (DeWaal 1991:209).

Mengistu's reliance upon Soviet-supplied arms and equipment to resolve internal problems was not diminished by the restoration of civilian rule. In the late 1980s, however, dependence upon military means turned out to be an exceedingly costly proposition for his administration, especially when Soviet officials determined to cut provisions for military support.

In 1988, the Ethiopian government attempted to re-assert its authority over the northern regions. In February, brigades from the 6th and 17th divisions in Tigray were moved into Eritrea to bolster existing defences. On 19th March, however, despite the substantial increase in Ethiopia's military manpower, EPLF troops defeated Mengistu's northern command at the base of Afabet, destroying the Nadew Command. Between

¹¹⁴ The Eritreans maintained that the Ethiopians were shipping military supplies to Eritrea in food relief convoys. On these grounds, the EPLF attacked a convoy of 34 trucks south of Asmara (Keesing's reported 23 trucks) on October 23, 1987 and burned all of the vehicles. EPLF representatives said that three of the trucks had carried arms destined for Ethiopian troops, but the allegations could not be verified. Later on, though, EPLF accusations that trucks in some relief convoys had actually transported government weapons were verified. (Keesing's, 30 November 1988; DeWaal 1991:188-189).

10,000 and 20,000 Ethiopian troops were killed in the battle.¹¹⁵ As a consequence of heavy loss, all government troops were subsequently withdrawn from the vicinity of Keren, formerly Mengistu's key base in western Eritrea. Voice of the Broad Masses of Eritrea maintained that this was the first time the EPLF had captured such heavy weaponry (EIU, *CR*, 1988, no 2:15). Captured arms included BM-21 rocket-launchers; 130-mm artillery, 122-mm howitzers, anti-aircraft guns, light weaponry and 50-60 T-55 tanks (Patman 1990:300). In addition, EPLF forces also secured important ammunition and fuel depots (Andargachew Tiruneh 1993:367).

Mengistu's questionable decision to move troops from Tigray to Eritrea in February 1988 provided the TPLF with new opportunities to extend its power base. On 26-27 March 1988, it captured the key towns of Axum and Ende Selassie, and on 28 and 31 March, Ethiopian government troops retreated from Adua and Adigrat. By the end of March 1988, Mengistu's only remaining stronghold in Tigray was Makele, the regional capital (Andargachew Tiruneh 1993:369-370; Patman 1990:300).

Despite the obvious loss of control over the northern regions, Mengistu persevered in his efforts to destroy EPLF and TPLF resistance. In May, he imposed a state of emergency in Eritrea and Tigray and established exclusion zones 10 miles wide on either side of the Eritrean border. Bombing raids were made on rebel-held towns, reportedly using napalm and cluster bombs in civilian areas (EIU *CR*, 1988, no 3:20). In June, government troops temporarily regained partial control of urban areas in Eritrea and Tigray, but only because they acquired additional supplies of Soviet weaponry (*Washington Post*, 24 June 1988). Nevertheless, Mengistu remained unable to dislodge EPLF or TPLF installations in rural areas.

Enormous costs were incurred by Ethiopia's ruling elite in the 1988 campaigns to eradicate domestic opposition. Unit costs estimated by Eritrean broadcasters in September 1988 included the following (\$1.00=Et Birr 2.07): one 130 mm mortar bomb priced at \$1,441; one single artillery shell priced at \$971; one Brenn gun priced at \$237,850 and one raid by a single fighter-bomber jet priced at \$9,667. In terms of total expenditure during 1988, Western diplomatic sources estimated that the Eritrean war was costing Ethiopian ruling elites around eight million dollars a day (EIU, *CR*, 1988, no

¹¹⁵ In 1988, about 120,000 Ethiopian troops out of a total standing army of 313,000 were estimated to be deployed in Eritrea (Keesing's 30 November 1988; *Washington Post*, 1 April 1988; Andargachew Tiruneh 1993:367).

4:25).

In a report to the WPE-CC in November 1988, Mengistu confirmed that military expenses were placing a heavy economic burden upon the country. He also admitted that military spending since 1974 had increased by about 19 percent per annum. In addition, he announced that military expenditures in 1988 would consume about 50 percent of the annual budget (\$1.2 mn). He also confirmed that his administration could no longer rely upon Socialist countries for the provision of large-scale assistance because these states were so busy restructuring their own economies (Associated Press, 12 November 1988)

Mengistu's decision to withdraw Ethiopian troops from Tigray in February 1989 had important consequences for the future utility of his existing military arsenal.¹¹⁶ The Ethiopian army's only road access to Eritrea ran through Tigray. TPLF control over the region, in effect, split Mengistu's troops and his vast arsenal of Soviet weaponry in two. After the withdrawal of government troops, a considerable proportion of the Ethiopian army, together with copious supplies of Soviet military equipment were marooned in Eritrea.¹¹⁷ To make matters worse, Ethiopian troops were now needed to replace departing Cuban military troops who had formerly patrolled the Ogaden borders. On 7th September 1989, the opening day of peace talks with the EPLF in Atlanta, Georgia, Mengistu announced the withdrawal of all Cuban troops from Ethiopia. The evacuation of 3,000 Cuban military personnel began on the following day and was completed ten days later (EIU, *CR*, 1989, no 4:25).

In 1990-1991, obstacles impeding Mengistu's military manoeuvrability were formidable. First, Soviet arms agreements guaranteeing access to fresh supplies of weaponry and equipment were due to expire at the end of 1990, with no possibility for renewal. Second, a sizeable proportion of Ethiopian troops and copious quantities of valuable Soviet weaponry and equipment had been left in Eritrea and were now effectively marooned there. Third, the level of opposition within the Ethiopian

¹¹⁶ On 27 February 1989, the TPLF captured Makele, the Tigrayan capital. Reports alleged that the town was taken without firing a shot. Apparently Ethiopian troops had pulled out, following the take-over of Enda Selassie on the 19th of February (EIU, *CR*, 1989, no 2:25).

¹¹⁷ Thereafter, most supplies to Ethiopian forces in Eritrea had to be supplied by airlift (Andargachew Tiruneh 1993:370).

government's own military establishment were rising.¹¹⁸ Finally, lingering hopes that Soviet military personnel would intervene if the EPLF attacked Soviet support facilities situated in Eritrean waters, like the Dahlak Islands, were rapidly being extinguished by the harsh reality of Soviet military withdrawal from the region.

On 11 February 1990, the EPLF captured Massawa. At that time, large quantities of sophisticated Soviet weaponry were taken from the retreating Ethiopian armed forces. Ground arms seized by the EPLF in the encounter included technically sophisticated arms like multiple rocket launchers and anti-tank missiles, as well more conventional weapons like tanks and artillery (Patman 1993:123).

After the fall of Massawa, the Ethiopian government concentrated its efforts on other regions and increased attacks on territories taken over by the EPRDF. In March, rebel forces alleged that the Ethiopian government had used Soviet MiGs to drop Israeli cluster bombs on a grain stockpile in the Welo region (BBC, *SWB*, 5 April 1990). In May, on-site reports provided by Western journalist Neil Henry confirmed that Mengistu was still using Soviet MiGs to conduct frequent strafing raids and daytime bombings in Tigray. Henry also reported seeing scores of Soviet-made tanks and armoured carriers rusting in Tigrayan pasture lands, as well as spent artillery shells in village market squares (*Washington Post*, 16 May 1990).

In an effort to arrest the decline in military power, Ethiopian ruling elites attempted to secure military assistance from Israel, and, in 1990, Israeli officials confirmed that a few military advisors and some small weapons like rifles had been sent to Ethiopia.¹¹⁹ Although the precise scope of duties performed by Israeli military personnel was not detailed, some of the operations reported included the repair and maintenance of sophisticated Soviet machinery such as the MiG-21 and MiG-23 fighter-ground attack planes and training Ethiopian armed forces personnel (Associated Press, 4 October 1990; *Washington Post*, 10 February 1990). On more than one occasion it was rumoured that the Israeli government had supplied cluster bombs to

¹¹⁸ The TPLF took advantage of unrest in the Ethiopian army and formed two insurgent organisations for dissatisfied Ethiopian military personnel willing to operate under the EPRDF umbrella: the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) set up in April 1990, and The Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement (EDORM), established in May 1990 (Andargachew Tiruneh 1993:371).

¹¹⁹ Patman estimated that about 125 military Israeli instructors were assisting the Ethiopian military establishment and that Israeli officials probably supplied about 100,000 recycled Kalashnikov rifles to the Ethiopians (Patman 1993:124-125; Associated Press, 30 March 1990).

Mengistu's administration.¹²⁰ However, Ethiopian hopes for substantial, long-term military assistance from Israel failed to materialise. Apparently, Israeli military assistance in the 1990s, like Soviet military assistance in the 1980s, was contingent upon American tolerance and goodwill.¹²¹ By mid-1990, Israeli officials were officially downplaying military assistance to Ethiopia.¹²²

Despite the lingering presence of the Ethiopian armed forces in 1991, it was clear that the military balance in Eritrea and Ethiopia had shifted in favour of the EPLF and the EPRDF, under the direction of the TPLF. With the help of Soviet arms and equipment captured from the Ethiopians, the EPLF took over Eritrea. On 25 May, EPLF troops captured Assab and established control over Ethiopian port facilities and the oil refinery there (EIU, *CR*, 1991, no 3:30). Shortly thereafter, the Ethiopian garrison at Asmara, which had housed the 2nd Army Command, also surrendered to the EPLF (DeWaal, 1991:253). Consequently, under the leadership of Isayas Afewerki, new ruling elites in Eritrea gained access to a sizeable percentage of Mengistu's existing military arsenal because so much Soviet weaponry remained on the Eritrean side of the border.

A similar situation developed in respect to the changing distribution of power in Ethiopia. In May 1991, Mengistu resigned and fled to his private villa in Zimbabwe. Shortly thereafter, TPLF leader Meles Zenawi became the new revolutionary leader technically in charge of managing all of Mengistu's extant military resources, including the arms and equipment that had been provided by the Soviet Union, which still existed on the Ethiopian side of a newly fragmented state.

Mengistu's vast arsenal of Soviet supplied weaponry ultimately facilitated the victory of his adversaries because they were able to take advantage of the government's

¹²⁰ In 1990, it was rumoured that that Israeli funds had been used to finance an order for cluster bombs placed by the Ethiopian government with Cardoen, a Chilean arms manufacturer. The newly elected Chilean government eventually stopped Cardoen from exporting all of the 1,680 cluster bombs originally requested, but Cardoen later admitted that 25 percent of the bombs had already been sent to Ethiopia (EIU, *CR*, 1990, no 4:23-24; BBC, *SWB*, 11 October 1990).

¹²¹ Officials in Bush's administration were concerned by allegations that Israel had supplied cluster bombs to the Mengistu administration. In March 1990, U.S. State Department officials informed the Israeli government that they opposed any provision of Israeli military aid to Ethiopia (Associated Press, 22 January 1990 and 30 March 1990).

¹²² In June 1990, Reuven Merhav, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, admitted that the emigration of Ethiopian Falashas was important, but he said that this issue would not compel Israel to provide military aid to the Mengistu administration. Merhav also claimed that not one single Israeli military adviser had set foot inside Ethiopia since the official resumption of Ethiopian-Israeli relations (BBC, *SWB*, 8 June 1990).

supplies. More importantly, the redistribution of Soviet weapons increased future prospects for Ethiopia's internal fragmentation and instability.

CONCLUSION

Military transactions formed the linchpin of the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship. Relations between the ruling elite of these two states were sustained so long as their security interests remained compatible. During the Brezhnev period and immediately afterwards, Soviet officials still valued the theories of socialist orientation which predicted that military regimes and their armed forces would create opportunities for non-capitalist development. Moreover, trade-offs between military aid to Mengistu's administration and access to docking facilities located in Eritrean waters remained tolerable, despite some mutual recognition of diminishing benefits. During this time, the Ethiopian ruling elite, in particular, benefited from the arrangement because they were able to modernise, as well as to restock their existing military arsenal, after security arrangements with American officials fell through.

In the Gorbachev era, Soviet theories that military regimes would be the catalyst for the process of socialist orientation were largely discredited by the reality that local political elites had generally failed to implement internal social transformation. Consequently, Soviet and Ethiopian security interests diverged, in response to serious domestic crises in both states and a radical change in the prescriptions recommended for regional conflict resolution introduced by Gorbachev's administration. In the process, the precarious balance of benefits and costs that had been sustained in Brezhnev's day was destabilised.

Efforts to disengage from the military relationship were most apparent on the Soviet side. Between 1985 and 1987, the pace of extrication from military commitments to Ethiopia was slow. Soviet weapons continued to be exported to Ethiopia; Soviet advisors remained actively involved, and Cuban troops continued to guard the Somali border. During 1988 and 1989, the Soviet leader strengthened his resolve to withdraw from the situation. Soviet military supplies declined in quality and quantity; many advisors were sent home, and Cuban troops left the country. In 1990-1991, Gorbachev decisively opted out of the military arrangement. Official arms assistance agreements were terminated; Soviet advisors were withdrawn, and naval equipment was removed from the Dahlak islands.

The proposition that ruling elites in these two sovereign states ceased to have common interests is interesting, but it does not tell the whole story. The military relationship was appreciably more than the sum of the separate security interests of Soviet and Ethiopian ruling elites that were sometimes compatible but often conflicted. In respect of militarisation, an asymmetric relationship developed as a consequence of unequal access to significant military resources.

We have finally to evaluate the validity of the Ethiopian Unity's accusation that the Soviet Union exploited Ethiopia in the military relationship. Did Soviet officials really create the conditions requisite for negative patterns of asymmetric exchange to develop by making Ethiopia a depot for exports of Soviet military equipment, utilising Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes, heavily influencing the direction of Ethiopian military policies, artificially prolonging the political life of one group of Ethiopian ruling elites through the provision of military support and escalating regional conflict in the Horn region?

Some evidence supports the charge that Ethiopia became a depot for Soviet military exports. Galtung (1971) and Wendt and Barnett (1993) take the position that only Center states have the technology to develop and to provide sophisticated military arms and equipment. This view helps to explain why Ethiopian officials (i.e., the Bridgehead) were so attracted to Soviet offers of military assistance when American security interests declined and why Mengistu's administration ultimately became dependent upon Soviet arms provision to resolve internal problems. Wendt and Barnett's ideas about capital intensive militarisation provide additional insight into the negative aspects associated with dependency: namely, dominant states provide access to military technology that encourage ruling elites in Third World states to divert scarce domestic resources from where they are most needed towards the modernisation of military arsenals.

With regard to Ethiopian Unity's accusation that Soviet officials dominated the military relationship because they exploited Ethiopian territory for strategic purposes and exerted a significant influence upon the direction of Mengistu's military policies, the evidence suggests that a very different reality existed. Ethiopian elites exercised considerable control over the policies they selected for territorial access and regional conflict resolution. In support of this view, the arguments offered by Colin Legum, Marina Ottaway and Dawit Wolde Giorgis are particularly relevant. Legum's and

Ottaway's claim that leaders of powerful states exert a limited influence over the security affairs of their clients, unless their goals are compatible with those of local ruling elites, provides a plausible explanation for the repeated failures of Soviet and American officials to persuade Mengistu to abandon militarisation as a strategy for conflict resolution. Dawit's claims that Mengistu intentionally fostered a relationship of dependence on the Soviet Union to obtain goods and services for his regime also have considerable explanatory merit.

The final two accusations levelled against the Soviet Union, however, deserve more serious consideration. The evidence does support the claim that the Soviet Union, regardless of intention, intervened in Ethiopian affairs by providing military support which artificially prolonged the political life of Mengistu's administration and escalated prospects for conflict in the Horn region. In the process of modernising Mengistu's military arsenal, the military and communications technology provided by the Soviet Union dramatically increased the potential for fragmentation and destruction within Ethiopia. Moreover, as a consequence of capturing so much Soviet weaponry, militant Eritrean and Ethiopian opposition forces became just as adept as Mengistu's administration at using modern weaponry to control opposing segments of the population.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROGRESSION OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of economic relations in forming and maintaining the negative patterns of asymmetric exchange that developed between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia has been generally underrated. Evidence in the Soviet-Ethiopian case adds credibility to Galtung's claim that economic relations between Centre and Periphery states are likely to impact adversely upon the weaker state. Despite the stated intentions of Soviet officials to improve Ethiopia's prospects for self-reliance, the cumulative effect of their economic relationship increased Ethiopia's dependence on the Soviet Union and exerted a negative impact upon its prospects for future development. However, responsibility for Ethiopia's economic deterioration and rising indebtedness in the 1990s must be attributed at least equally to Mengistu's preference for negotiating special economic arrangements with Moscow, rather than spreading the risks more globally. In this chapter I examine trade, aid and debt issues in the Brezhnev period and then under Gorbachev.

PART ONE: TRADE, AID AND DEBT IN THE BREZHNEV PERIOD.

Ethiopian dependence upon Soviet economic exchanges increased during the era of Brezhnev and his immediate successors, but the rate of progression was uneven. In the early years, Ethiopia's risks were spread over a wider range of countries. In the four years immediately preceding Gorbachev's rise to power, however, economic dependence upon the Soviet Union increased markedly.

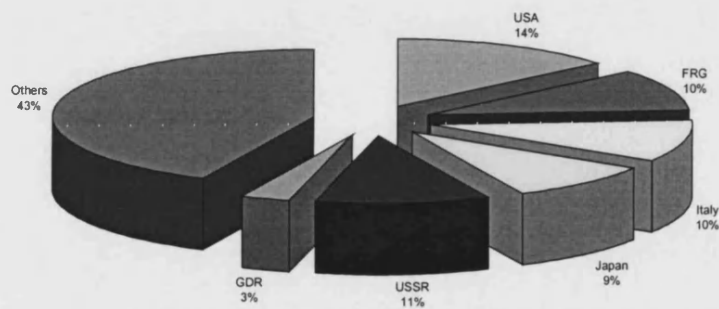
Trade relations.

In this section, I begin by comparing Ethiopian trade turnovers with the Soviet Union and major capitalist trading partners to determine percentage shares in value. Then some imbalances in trading patterns that developed

between the two countries are identified. Finally, I look at the limitations in comparative advantage inherent in exchanging Ethiopian unprocessed agricultural commodities for Soviet oil, manufactured goods and machinery.

It has often been stated that the Ethiopian government conducted most of its trade with the Capitalist developed countries in the pre-Gorbachev era and that trade exchanges with the Soviet Union remained insignificant by comparison. At one level, the data obtained from Ethiopian statistical sources about the period between 1976 and 1984 and represented in Chart 1 supports this view.

Chart 1
Ethiopian trade turnovers with major capitalist
and socialist trading partners 1976 - 1984
Birr 19.5 billion (US \$9.42 billion)



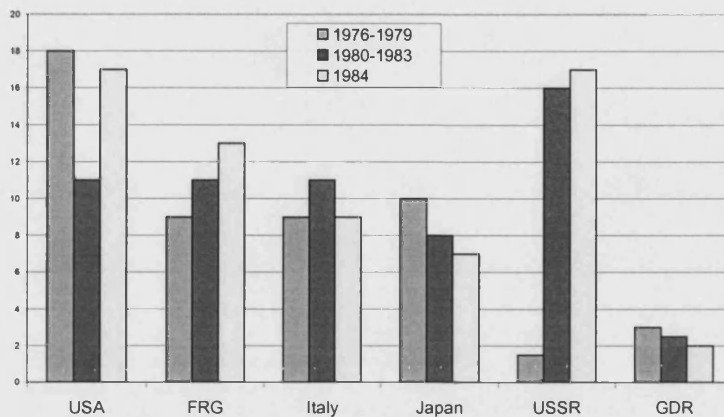
Data Sources: National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), *Annual Reports 1980-1984* and *Quarterly Bulletins 1991/1992 to 1993/1994*; *Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics, 1981-1990*.

As a percentage of the 19.5 bn Birr (BR) (US\$ 9.42bn) total trade turnover reported for the nine year period, trade exchanges with United States (14%), the Federal Republic of Germany (10%), Italy (10%) and Japan (9%) accounted for 43 percent of the total. In comparison, the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (the largest CMEA partner after the Soviet Union) accounted for only 11 percent and three percent of the total respectively,

between 1976 and 1984.

Within the nine-year period, however, Ethiopian trade turnovers with the Soviet Union in percentage terms increased significantly in the four years immediately preceding Gorbachev's rise to power. This trend is demonstrated in Chart 2.

Chart 2
Trade turnover comparisons for the periods
1976-1979, 1980-1983 and 1984

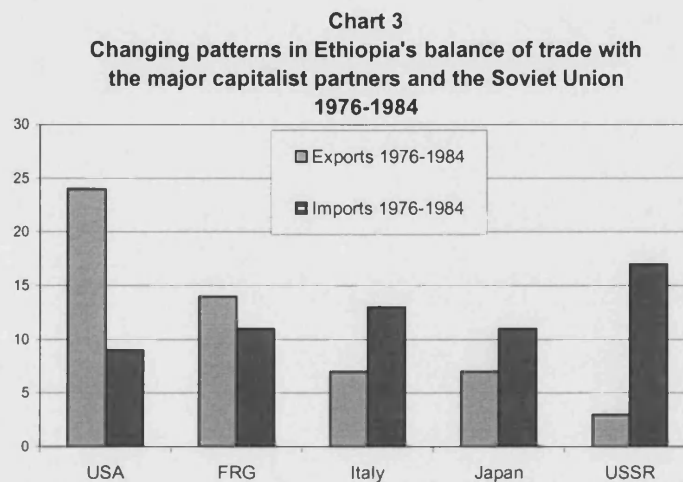


Data sources: NBE Annual Reports 1980-1984 and Quarterly Bulletins 1991/1992 to 1993/1994. Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics 1981-1990.

Between 1976 and 1979, Soviet shares of the total remained low. Trade turnovers with major capitalist partners accounted for 46 percent of the BR6.7bn (US\$ 3.2bn) total, with a breakdown as follows: the United States (18%), FRG (9%), Italy (9%) and Japan (10%). For the same period, trade turnovers with the Soviet Union accounted for only one and one-half percent of the total, while the GDR accounted for three percent. Between 1980 and 1984, however, the value of Ethiopia's trade conducted with the Soviet Union in percentage terms rose markedly. For the period 1980 to 1983, Ethiopian trade turnover values with all countries were reported as BR9.8bn (US\$4.73bn). Of this amount, transactions with the Soviet Union accounted for 16 percent of the total, as compared to the U.S. (11%), FRG (11%), Italy (11%), and Japan (8%). In 1984, the year of the

Ethiopian famine, trade turnover with the Soviet Union rose to 17 percent of the BR2.8bn total (US\$1.4bn), as compared to the U.S. (17%), FRG (13%), Italy (9%), and Japan (7%).

More importantly, a breakdown of statistical data on export and import values published by Ethiopian officials between 1976 and 1984 indicated that the direction of trade became unbalanced during Brezhnev's time. This pattern is demonstrated in Chart 3.

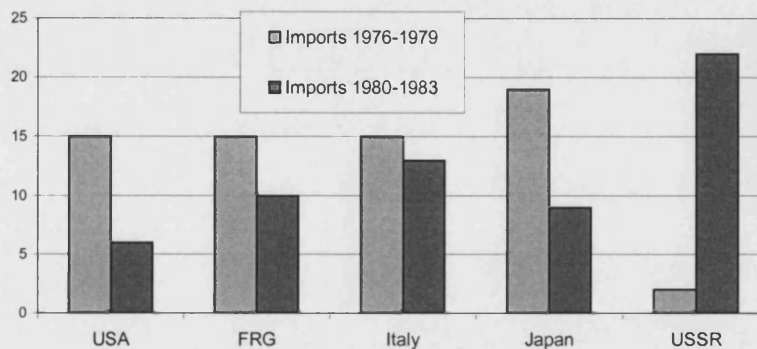


Data sources: NBE Annual Reports 1980-1984 and Quarterly Bulletins 1991/1992 to 1993/1994. Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics 1981-1990.

Exports continued to be channelled towards main capitalist trading partners. The United States (24%), West Germany (14%), Italy (7%) and Japan (7%), for example, accounted for 52 percent of Ethiopia's total export revenue earned over the period 1976 and 1984, estimated at BR7.2bn (US\$ 3.5bn), as compared to the Soviet Union's meagre share of three percent. In contrast, imports from the Soviet Union for the same period accounted for 17 percent of the total value of 11 billion Birr, as compared to the United States (9%); West Germany (11%), Italy (13%) and Japan (11%).

The changing distribution of Ethiopia's imported goods in percentage shares within the nine-year period is particularly interesting. This trend is demonstrated in Chart 4.

Chart 4
Ethiopian imports from the major capitalist trading partners and the Soviet Union, compared for the periods 1976-1979 and 1980-1983



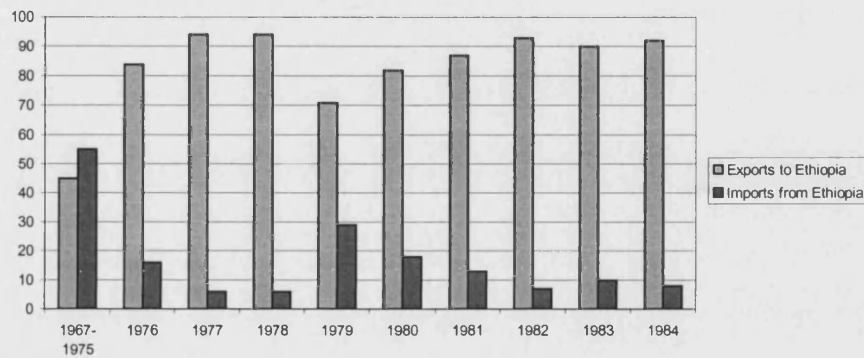
Data sources: NBE Annual Reports 1980-1984 and Quarterly Bulletins 1991/1992 to 1993/1994. Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics 1981-1990.

Over the period 1976-1979, imports from the Soviet Union still only accounted for a very small percentage of the total: about two percent of the BR2.6bn reported, as compared to the United States (15%), the FRG (15%), Italy (15%) and Japan (19%). For the period 1980-1983, however, Soviet percentage shares of Ethiopia's import market rose sharply to 22 percent of the total BR6.5bn reported, while percentage shares of the United States (6%), FRG (10%), Italy (13%) and Japan (9%) declined markedly.

Statistical data about Soviet trade turnovers with Ethiopia from 1976 to 1984 collected in *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya* certainly supports the view that the total value of trade between the two countries increased sharply during the nine year period. In 1976, for example, turnover between the two countries amounted to a mere 4.3 million roubles (R). In 1984, trade exchanges peaked at

a record R 221.9mn. Indeed, total trade values over the nine-year period apparently increased about 52 times, a rather impressive figure at first sight. The magnitude of increase in the trade turnover values reported, however, masked the facts that the value of goods exported from the Soviet Union into Ethiopia accounted for most of the rise and that trade exchanges between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia became increasingly unbalanced after 1975, despite the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status enshrined in the 1978 Friendship Treaty. This progression, expressed in percentage terms, is demonstrated in chart 5.

Chart 5
Soviet trade turnovers with Ethiopia, compared for the periods 1967-1975 and 1976-1984



Data sources: *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya*, trade statistics: 1967-1984.

When economic exchanges between the two countries were limited over the period 1967 to 1975, the balance between the value of Soviet goods exported to Ethiopia and Ethiopian goods imported into the Soviet Union remained roughly equal, averaging about 45 percent for exports and 55 percent for imports per annum, respectively. That is to say, the Soviet Union, on average, actually spent slightly more on goods imported from Ethiopia over the nine-year period when economic ties were loose, than it earned from items exported to that country. For the period 1976-1984, the value of goods exported from the Soviet Union into Ethiopia soared, while the value of items imported from Ethiopia slumped dramatically. Expressed in percentage terms, Soviet exports to Ethiopia accounted for 87 percent of the total trade turnover value reported, as compared to only 13 percent for Ethiopian goods imported into the Soviet

Union.¹²³

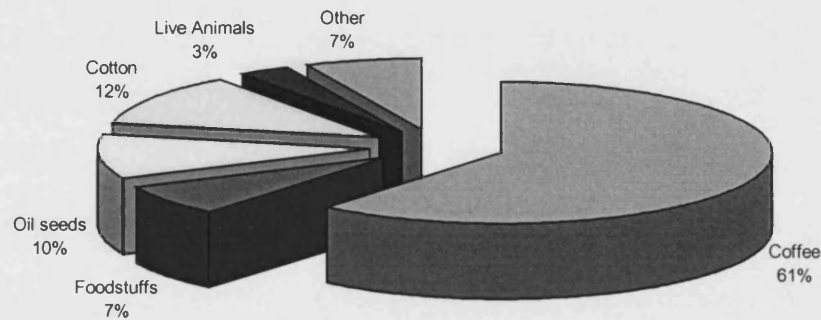
Significant rises in the value of Soviet goods were particularly noticeable in 1977, 1978, 1982 and 1984. In 1978, the year that the Ethiopian-Somali war ended and Soviet-Ethiopian friendship was declared, the value of Soviet exports climbed to R22.4mn, representing a substantial increase from the paltry R3.6mn recorded in 1976. In 1978, the year of the Friendship Treaty, Soviet exports nearly trebled in value over the previous year's figure to R64.2mn. In 1982, the year that the CPSU and the COPWE concluded a cooperation agreement (CDSP 1982, v 34, no 41:11-12), Soviet exports were valued at R182.3mn, representing an increase of R46mn over the 1981 figure. In 1984, the year of the WPE party's official launch, Soviet exports into Ethiopia reached a record high of R203.2mn (Vneshnyaia Torgovlya (1967-1984)).

Disparities in the kinds of goods that officials in each country had to offer the other cast doubts on the viability of mutually beneficial Soviet-Ethiopian trade relations sustained through comparative advantage. In terms of export and import exchanges, the unit values of Ethiopian coffee and other agrarian raw commodities simply could not offset the costs of Soviet oil, machinery and manufactured goods. An analysis of Ethiopia's Annual External Trade statistics (EAETS) based upon customs reports issued between 1981 and 1984 illustrates this fact.

In terms of Ethiopia's comparative advantage, exports to Soviet buyers in the early 1980s consisted almost exclusively of unprocessed agricultural goods. Chart 6 demonstrates this.

¹²³ Widening gaps in the directional imbalance of trade were reversed only in 1979, the year that the COPWE was formed. In that year, Soviet imports of Ethiopian goods accounted for 29 percent of the total trade turnover (Chart 5).

Chart 6
Ethiopian goods exported to
the Soviet Union, 1981-1984



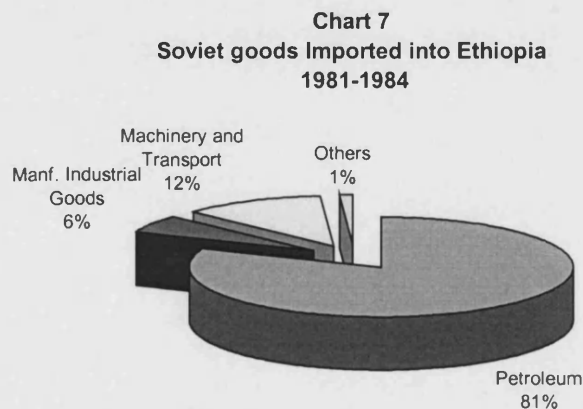
Data Source: Ethiopian External Trade Statistics, 1981-1984.

Ethiopian customs officials reported that the value of goods exported to the Soviet Union for the period 1981-1984 was about BR52mn (US\$ 25mn). Of this amount, five primary commodities accounted for 93 percent of the total: coffee, the primary export, (61%);¹²⁴ foodstuffs for animals (7%); oil seeds, oil nuts and kernels (10%); cotton (12%), and live animals (apes and monkeys only) (3%). Products like these were not in much demand on the Soviet domestic market, and Ethiopia was only one of many potential suppliers.

In the early 1980s, Ethiopia constituted a market for the kind of industrially oriented goods and products that had been produced in the Soviet Union and exported in bulk since Stalin's time. An analysis of Ethiopian customs statistical data on Soviet imports from 1981 through 1984 compiled according to entry code and published in the EAETS demonstrates this.

¹²⁴ According to Ethiopian customs reports, all of the coffee exported to the Soviet Union during the four-year period had been shipped in 1984.

Soviet goods imported by Mengistu's administration over the period were valued at BR1.6bn (US\$773mn), almost 31 times the value declared for Ethiopian exports destined to Moscow. As illustrated in Chart 7 below, three categories of imports accounted for 99 percent of the total: code 3, mineral fuels and lubricants (81%); code 6, goods manufactured for industrial purposes (6%), and code 7, machinery and transportation, including goods and services (12%).



Data Source: Ethiopian External Trade Statistics, 1981-1984

Crude petroleum imported under code 3 accounted for the bulk of Ethiopia's imports from the Soviet Union for the period 1981-1984, with a reported value of BR1.3bn (US\$628mn), or 81 percent of the total value of Soviet imports reported over the period. With the exception of 1981 when 13 percent of the crude oil was imported from Saudi Arabia, the Soviet Union supplied 100 percent of Ethiopia's reported crude petroleum imports. During the early 1980s, Ethiopian imports of crude oil dropped in value as a percentage of the total Soviet imports, from 92 percent in 1981 to around 70 percent in 1984. The decline, however, was offset by sharp increases in the import values of Soviet machinery and transport goods (code 7), which jumped from five percent in 1981 to 23 percent in 1984.

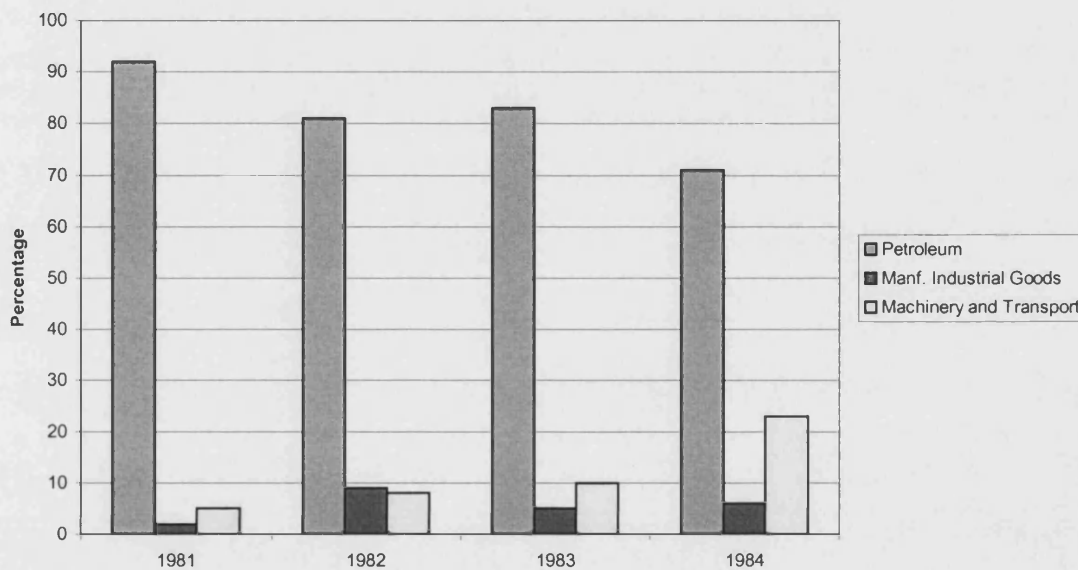
Manufactured goods for industrial purposes imported from the Soviet

Union under code 6 were valued at BR90mn (US\$43.5mn) or six percent of the total for the four-year period (Chart 7). Most of the items were earmarked for construction and/or industrial production, rather than consumer goods likely to be purchased by Ethiopians in local markets. Typical items and their reported values included: rubber (BR4mn); lime, cement and fabricated building materials (BR42.5mn); iron and steel bars (BR3.7mn); tubes, pipes and fittings (BR14.8mn); iron and steel castings and forgings (BR1.6mn); finished structural parts and storage (BR6.5mn), and metal storage containers (BR4.7mn) (*EAETS* 1981-1984).

Soviet goods and services imported under code 7, machinery and transportation, were valued at BR192mn (US\$92.8mn) or 12 percent of the total (Chart 7). Of this amount, machinery accounted for about seven percent, while transportation accounted for the five percent remaining (*EAETS* 1981-1984). Goods in this category were expensive. Machinery imports, for example, included items like civil engineering and construction equipment (BR13.7mn), agricultural machinery (BR1.8mn), tractors (BR1.7mn), steam and vapour generating boilers (BR1.1mn), pumps for liquids (BR3.4mn), mechanical handling equipment & parts (BR4.5mn), machine tools for working metal (BR2.1 mn), and equipment for distributing electricity (BR1.5 mn). In addition, unspecified machinery valued at BR70.2mn was imported under the subcategory 'other machinery and equipment, including parts'. Transport goods included items like road motor vehicles (BR10.5mn), other motor vehicles (BR36mn), parts and accessories (BR14mn), trailers and other vehicles (BR3.3mn), and aircraft (BR9.7mn) (*EAETS* 1981-1984).

Changes in the distribution of percentage shares between the three main categories of Soviet imports recorded by Ethiopian customs officials for the years 1981 to 1984 are demonstrated in Chart 8.

Chart 8
Changes in the distribution of percentage shares of
Soviet goods imported into Ethiopia
under codes 3, 6 and 7, 1981-1984



Data Source: Ethiopian External Trade Statistics:1981-1984

What all these charts and figures illustrate is that while it may be fair to say that Ethiopia's trade with major Western capitalist partners remained substantial, trade with the Soviet Union became increasingly important in the years immediately preceding Gorbachev's rise to power. Moreover, in the period under discussion, the direction of Ethiopia's trade became progressively unbalanced. Exports remained directed towards major capitalist partners, but import purchases increasingly reflected Mengistu's dependence upon Soviet supplied goods. It can also be argued that the kinds of goods exchanged were more conducive to establishing patterns of dependency than to establishing trading relations capable of flourishing on the basis of mutual gain. First, Ethiopia's exclusive reliance upon Soviet imports of crude petroleum encouraged dependency. In addition, Soviet goods exported to Ethiopia such as

machinery and vehicles had high values; consequently, they tended to be used to facilitate government policies aimed at militarisation and modernisation rather than to benefit the population directly. Finally, raw commodities offered for exchange by the Ethiopians were not in great demand on the Soviet domestic market.¹²⁵ Low unit value goods like Ethiopian coffee were unlikely to make significant inroads in the Soviet Union, given Russian preferences for tea and Soviet access to a number of other important coffee suppliers.

In respect of Soviet-Ethiopian trade relations before Gorbachev came to power, Galtung's points about trading partners and commodity concentration increasing the economic dependency of states like Ethiopia have some merit, but his explanations are overly simplistic. The imbalance of trade sustained between the two countries is the most important factor to consider, rather than the closed, exclusive exchange of trade between them. Over time, Ethiopia became dependent upon the Soviet Union for imports that Mengistu's administration deemed crucial to modernisation. Ethiopia's chief exports, however, remained securely directed towards the West.

Soviet aid in the Brezhnev era

Soviet economic assistance to Ethiopia for humanitarian and development purposes remained rather limited in the era of Brezhnev and his immediate successors, particularly when compared to the funding levels delivered by Western states and international organisations.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, Soviet aid should be examined. Ethiopian Unity, for example, accused the Soviet Union of providing an inadequate level of humanitarian assistance. Another issue worth considering is the appropriateness of Soviet development assistance.

In the autumn of 1984, Chernenko's administration became involved in international operations to provide emergency humanitarian assistance during

¹²⁵ Bloch (1983:241-242) maintained that Soviet officials had not made enormous efforts to trade with sub-Saharan countries because such countries rarely had what the Soviet Union really wanted. The USSR purchased coffee from Ethiopia, but coffee was a luxury, not a primary marketable item.

¹²⁶ About 90 percent of the one billion dollars supplied to Ethiopia for development purposes between 1971 and 1981 came from Western sources and the UN agencies. Three donors, the United Nations, the European Community, and Sweden provided 75 percent of that amount (Dessalegn Rahmato 1987:176).

the Ethiopian famine. In October, Western donors complained that the Soviet Union was providing too much military assistance and too little food aid. In December, Chernenko promised to channel substantially more humanitarian aid to Mengistu's administration (Associated Press, 12, 30-31 October and 17 December 1984). In terms of consumable goods, Soviet contributions in 1984 and early 1985 remained meagre. In November 1984, Soviet officials shipped 10,000 tons of rice to Ethiopia, believed to have originated in India, and, in the early months of 1985, they also provided medical supplies, tents and blankets (Associated Press, 2 January 1985; TASS, 29 December 1985).

In terms of logistic support, the Soviet Union's contributions were more significant: a contribution generally undervalued in the West at the time. In October 1984, Chernenko agreed to provide 300 trucks and some Russian truck drivers to assist in the distribution of food supplies (Associated Press, 31 October 1984; *Pravda*, 1 November 1984, in *CDSF* 1984, v 36, no 44:19). Soviet officials also supplied 12 Antonov-12s and 24 Mi-8 helicopters, complete with Russian crews to help transport food shipments piling up in the port of Assab (TASS 29-30 December 1985). In November, Soviet aircrews flying Mi-8 helicopters transported substantial supplies of wheat donated by the United States to designated areas of the country (Associated Press, 20 November 1984). In addition, Soviet aircrews actively participated in cooperative ventures such as Operation Tesfa, an airdrop jointly mounted by Eastern and Western states to deliver wheat supplies to remote Ethiopian villages.¹²⁷ In January 1985, officials in Chernenko's administration claimed that 70 percent of the total food aid shipped to Ethiopia was being transported by Soviet air and ground transport (Associated Press, 17 January 1985).

When considering Soviet approaches to the provision of emergency humanitarian aid in Chernenko's time, it is important to note that international exposure of the Ethiopian famine disaster by the Western media in 1984 must have prompted Soviet officials to rethink their traditional approaches to humanitarian aid, previously rarely given, and then only on a bilateral basis. At one level, it could be said that Soviet responses to the Ethiopian famine late in

¹²⁷ Operation Tesfa included air crews and planes supplied by the Soviet Union, Poland, the United Kingdom, West Germany and Ethiopia (Associated Press, 14 February and 24 June 1985).

1984 constituted the Soviet Union's first experiment in mobilising resources to be used in a large-scale famine relief effort involving Western-oriented international institutions and powerful capitalist donor states. Whatever the case, it is fair to say that the logistical support provided by Soviet officials in Ethiopia's 1984/1985 famine crisis provided a vital link in the distribution chain and partly offset the shortcomings associated with the insufficient provision of emergency food and medical aid.

Soviet officials seldom, if ever, gave free donations for development assistance to Mengistu's administration. They preferred to assist Ethiopia under the provisions of economic cooperation, because the transactions were supposed to benefit both parties.¹²⁸ In order to understand how the arrangement worked and the problems associated with this development approach, one must examine the administrative structures created for project assistance, the difficulties inherent in assessing the grant content of Soviet aid packages and the kinds of projects supported by Soviet officials.

Bilateral agreements aimed at facilitating economic and technical cooperation formed the basis for Soviet development assistance. Activities were administered by the Soviet-Ethiopian Commission on Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation and Trade, established in 1978, which remained under the supervision of the State Commission of the USSR Council of Ministers for Foreign Economic Links.¹²⁹ Economic protocols and projects approved by the Soviet-Ethiopian Joint Commissions in the pre-Gorbachev era reflected traditional Soviet preferences for strengthening key sectors in the partner country: in particular, heavy industry and the public sector. Agreements also frequently included provisions for a relatively high training component. A crucial problem with projects concluded under economic cooperation, however, rested in the fact that substantial time delays often occurred between the

¹²⁸ Quintin Bach (1985:269) maintained that all Soviet aid to developing countries, excluding fraternal assistance for disaster, came under the heading of economic cooperation.

¹²⁹ The agreement creating the commission was apparently signed in Addis in September 1978, during a visit paid by Soviet officials (*Pravda* 7 April and 21 September 1978, in *CDSF* 1978, v 30, no 14:16-17 and v 30, no 37:12, respectively; Filippov (1987).

approval and completion of Soviet assisted development projects.¹³⁰

Exactly how much economic aid did Ethiopia really receive for development from the Soviet Union in the era of Brezhnev and his immediate successors? The answer to this question remains elusive. First, Soviet officials rarely, if ever, disclosed financial data on individual transactions with specific recipient states. Consequently, even data meticulously compiled by Western experts on various projects were prone to error, particularly in respect of differentiating commitments from disbursements. Second, wide variations existed in the actual grant levels of Soviet economic assistance approved for different transactions. Fluctuations in this respect impeded efforts to determine the percentage of grant level within a given project.¹³¹ Third, Soviet aid packages normally included complicated provisions for the combination of goods and services, as well as conditions for barter or local currency repayments. Such complicated arrangements made it impossible to make accurate comparisons between the value of Soviet and Western aid provisions. Finally, levels of Soviet participation in jointly funded projects were not generally disclosed. Consequently, this made it difficult to rank Moscow's aid contribution against other Comecon members.

From 1977 to 1984, Soviet aid for Ethiopia's economic development tended to be project-oriented, and the projects tended to reflect the preoccupation of both leaders with large-scale efforts aimed at modernisation. Many of the more ambitious development projects initiated by officials in the era of Brezhnev and his successors, however, were not actually completed until Gorbachev's term in office (details in part two). First, to improve Ethiopia's agricultural performance, Soviet officials helped to fund the acquisition of machinery and farming inputs. Projects like the Nazareth tractor assembly plant were deemed to be particularly important. Second, to provide domestic power sources for Ethiopia's industrial growth, Soviet specialists conducted oil and gas

¹³⁰ Bach (1987:xix) maintained that the average time lag between agreements and disbursements of Soviet aid to all countries in the late 1960s was about four to five years.

¹³¹ The grant element in Soviet development assistance ventures tended to be lower than that provided by Western donors. Bach (1985:269) estimated grant elements in Soviet loans to be about 38%, as compared to 90% in Western counterparts.

explorations in the Ogaden and helped to build hydroelectric plants like the one constructed at Melka Wakane. Third, to increase Ethiopia's domestic potential for processing imported oil and oil products, oil refineries in Assab were endorsed for expansion. Finally, to facilitate industrial development, Soviet officials provided partial assistance for the construction of industrial plants, like the Mugher cement factory in combination with other Comecon member states (TASS, 28-30 December 1985).

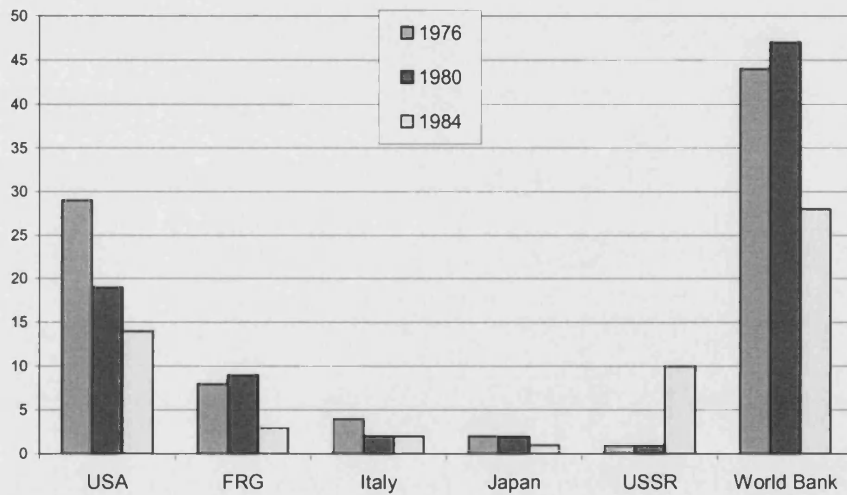
It is fair to say Soviet aid provisions in Brezhnev's time were insufficient either to redress Ethiopia's short-term crisis or to meet longer-term development needs. However, the Ethiopian Unity's charge that Moscow's humanitarian assistance was inadequate should be qualified. Although Soviet officials provided a low level of food aid to Ethiopia in the 1984/1985 famine crisis, they did contribute ample logistical support, a fact which was largely ignored by major capitalist donors at the time. In respect of development assistance, Mengistu's reliance upon Moscow's continued funding of large-scale, long-term projects did, in effect, reduce Ethiopia's options for developing a more multifaceted approach to development. In December 1984, however, the extent of damage sustained in this respect was partially obscured by the famine crisis.

Ethiopia's debt to the Soviet Union

Ethiopia's indebtedness to the Soviet Union increased markedly in the years immediately preceding Gorbachev's rise to power. A comparison of data published in the *Annual Reports* of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) between 1976 and 1984 demonstrates this. It is also interesting to note the high ratio of military debt to the whole.

In terms of Ethiopia's disclosed external debt, the Soviet Union occupied a relatively modest position in comparison to the most important multilateral and bilateral creditors acknowledged in the pre-Gorbachev era. However, that the position shifted upward markedly towards the end of the Brezhnev era. This trend is illustrated in Chart 9.

Chart 9
Ethiopia's outstanding debt to the major capitalist trading partners, the Soviet Union and the World Bank Group in percentage terms for the years 1976, 1980 and 1984



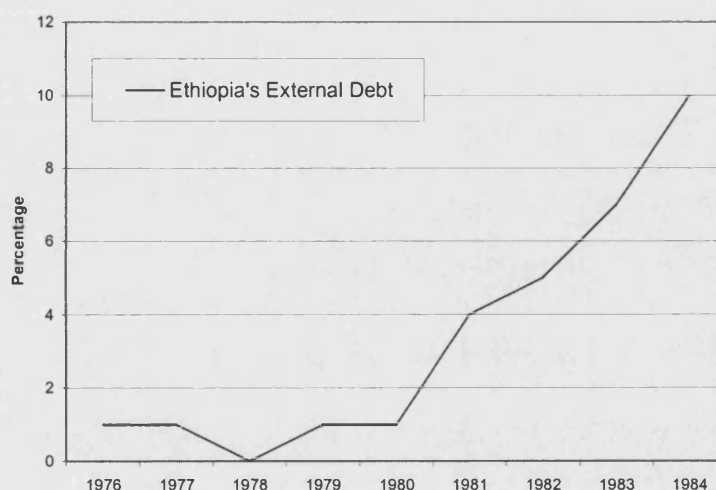
Data source: NBE Annual Reports: 1981, Table 24:91; 1983, Annex D.2:76; 1984, Annex 12:73.

According to NBE data, the Soviet Union occupied a fairly low position on the debt hierarchy for most of the Brezhnev era, as compared to other major trading partners. In 1976, Ethiopia's outstanding external debt stood at BR905.4mn (\$437.39mn). Officially declared debts owed to the Soviet Union accounted for only about one percent of the total, as compared to the U.S.(29%), the Federal Republic of Germany (8%), Italy (4%), Japan (2%) and the World Bank Group (44%). In 1980, outstanding debt increased to just under BR1.5bn (US\$725bn). Debts owed to the Soviet Union, still made up just one percent of the total, as compared to the U.S. (19%), FRG (9%), Italy and Japan (each 2%), and the World Bank group (47%). In 1984, however, total indebtedness more

than doubled to BR3.2bn (US\$1.5 bn). In that year, the Soviet Union' profile as an unpaid creditor changed markedly. Soviet shares increased to 10 percent of the total, as compared to the U.S.(14%), FRG (3%), Italy (2%), Japan (1%) and the World Bank Group (28%).

Another set of data, represented in percentage terms in Chart 10, demonstrates that the Soviet Union's share of Ethiopia's declared external debt increased markedly on an annual basis during the four years immediately preceding Gorbachev's tenure in power.

Chart 10
Ethiopia's increasing indebtedness
to the Soviet Union
1976-1984



Data Source:

1976 NBE Annual Reports 1981:91, Table 24
1977-1980 NBE Annual Report 1983:76, Annex D.2
1981-1984 NBE Annual Report 1984:73, Annex 12

Between 1976 and 1980, annual assessments of Soviet shares of Ethiopia's declared debt remained at or below one percent. Between 1981 and 1984, however, Soviet percentage shares increased on an annual basis, rising to four percent in 1981, edging up to five percent in 1982, climbing to seven percent in 1983 and gaining by an additional three percent in 1984.

Estimates of Ethiopia's total indebtedness to the Soviet Union are interesting, but what proportion of the debt can be attributed directly to

Mengistu's military spending? This issue remains problematic because officials in both countries elected not to release official financial details on military transactions.¹³² To compensate for shortfalls in primary information, government bodies and private agencies situated in other countries became, in effect, the gatekeepers of statistical data. The U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) was particularly active.¹³³

ACDA efforts to compile accurate data were substantial. Nevertheless, interpretations of the information collected tended to be based upon capitalist economic assumptions, while complexities inherent in Soviet-styled socialist exchanges were virtually ignored. Consequently, despite copious quantities of impressive statistical data, the validity of estimates on military debt rendered by agencies like the ACDA remained open to question.¹³⁴ A variety of Arab sources, for example, provided data indicating that figures provided by American gatekeepers had been substantially underestimated by factors of 1.5 to 2.0 or more (Becker 1987:69). Western analysts compounded the problem because they relied so heavily upon ACDA findings. Paul Henze, for example, relied almost exclusively upon statistics provided by the ACDA to support his very detailed and interesting comparative analysis of the effect of militarisation upon Ethiopia and other countries situated in the African Horn in the early 1990s (Henze 1991:93-132).

Jinadu's account of Ethiopia's military indebtedness to the Soviet Union in Brezhnev's time, however, can be introduced to demonstrate the level of finance involved and Moscow's concern over the arrears. In 1981, it was reported that Mengistu's administration had incurred a two billion dollar arms debt to Soviet officials.¹³⁵ Annual repayment interests on the debt were

¹³² The Soviet Union refused to provide any official information on Third World military transfers until 1989, and annual accounts issued by the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), the official state bank, did not include specific data on the actual expenditures incurred in the purchase of Soviet weapons.

¹³³ Paul Henze (1991:93) maintained that the annual statistical handbooks issued by the ACDA were the most comprehensive sources on military developments in the Horn region.

¹³⁴ Becker's (1987:67-74) concise account of the numbers problem in respect of data collected by various U.S. sources on Soviet arms transfers is particularly informative.

¹³⁵ According to Jinadu (1987:234), Soviet officials were so worried about the size of Ethiopia's unpaid military debt in December 1981 that they were only willing to provide Ethiopia with preferential prices for

estimated at around \$328 million.¹³⁶ Moreover, additional military debt appeared likely, as a consequence of Mengistu's financial commitments to maintain Cuban and Soviet troops stationed in the country.

Ethiopia's overall indebtedness to the Soviet Union increased markedly during the four years immediately preceding Gorbachev's accession to power. Although the upward trend can be substantiated, assessments of the actual debt incurred and the relative values ascribed to the figures by elites in both states remain subjects for debate. Nevertheless, the evidence available suggests that the largest proportion of Ethiopia's debt to the Soviet Union was probably incurred as a consequence of Mengistu's excessive spending on Soviet military goods and services.

By the end of the Brezhnev era, disadvantages in the Soviet-Ethiopian economic relationship were becoming more obvious. Benefits had declined substantially for both parties, but the costs were more keenly felt in Ethiopia. In respect of trade, two features had emerged that were particularly undesirable. First, Ethiopia's direction of trade had become increasingly unbalanced; exports remained directed towards capitalist states, but imports from the Soviet Union had increased markedly in value. Second, Mengistu's administration had become heavily reliant upon Soviet supplies of crucial imports deemed vital for Ethiopia's modernisation: in particular, crude petroleum, goods manufactured for industrial purposes, and machinery and transport items (including goods and services). As regards Soviet economic assistance, the limited amount of humanitarian and development aid, as compared to the prospects for support offered by capitalist donors, had been highlighted by Ethiopia's 1984/1985 famine. To make matters worse, most of the large-scale, ambitious ventures endorsed by Soviet officials during this time had yet to be finished. On the issue of debt, the Soviet share of Ethiopia's debt was growing larger, but Moscow was becoming less inclined to tolerate the growing pains of socialist-

fuel imports on a short-term basis.

¹³⁶ At that time, Ethiopian debt repayments to the Soviet Union were being made in cash instalments or through barter exchanges of valuable commodities like coffee and hides and skins. Jinadu (1987:234) maintained that Mengistu's difficulties in repaying the Soviet arms debt in the early 1980s were exacerbated by the downturn in world coffee prices and a lowered demand on the world market for hides and skins.

oriented states, as a consequence of serious financial decline at home.

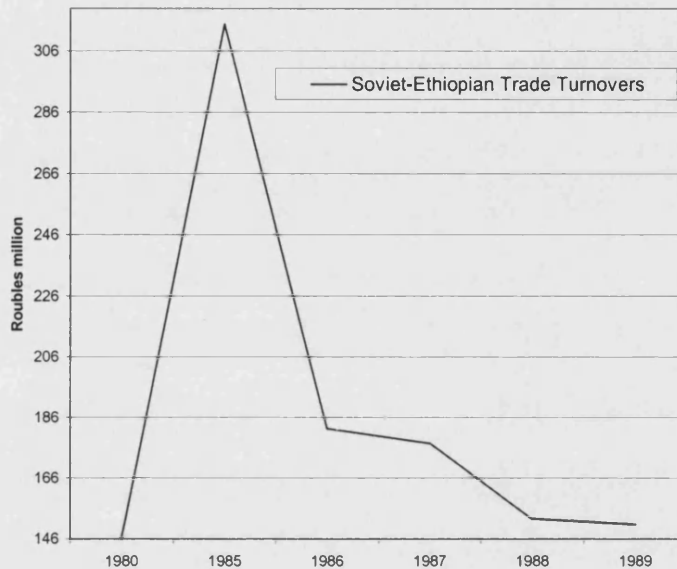
PART TWO: TRADE, AID AND DEBT IN GORBACHEV'S TIME.

In part two, priorities and practices of the two countries in respect of trade, aid and debt in the Gorbachev era are examined to see what changes, if any, took place under New Thinking. I argue that many of the patterns of economic exchange set up in Brezhnev's time persisted well into the new thinking era. Moreover, Gorbachev's strategies aimed at reshaping economic relations with all sovereign states on a de-ideologised, non-preferential basis and his subsequent encouragement of socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia to conduct economic relations in a similar manner had the unintended spin-off of worsening Ethiopia's economic position. However, responsibility for Ethiopia's adverse economic situation and rising indebtedness in the 1990s must be attributed at least equally to Mengistu's reluctance to adjust to new times.

Trade relations

Statistical data about Soviet trade turnovers with Ethiopia between 1985 and 1989 collected in *Vneshnyaia Torgovlya* and represented in percentage terms in Chart 11 support the generally accepted thesis that the total value of Soviet-Ethiopian trade exchanges declined markedly in Gorbachev's time.

Chart 11
Soviet trade turnovers with Ethiopia
from 1985 to 1989, in comparison to 1980
Roubles in millions



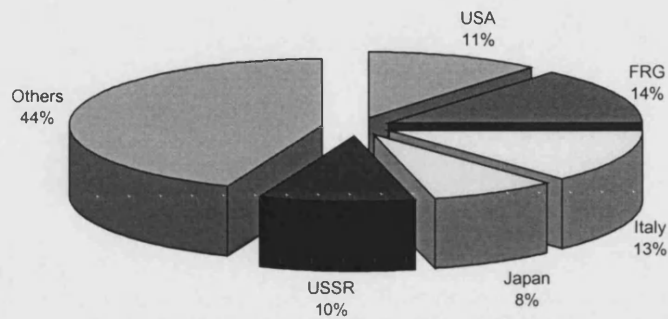
Data Source: *Vneshyaia Torgovlya*, Trade Statistics: 1960-1989

In 1989, for example, the trade turnover values between the two countries plummeted 52 percent from 1985 levels to 150.8 million roubles, only about 3 percent higher than the value declared in 1980. Nevertheless, the Soviet share of Ethiopian trade turnovers remained competitive with the four main capitalist partners for most of the period. An analysis of statistical data published by the NBE and Ethiopian customs officials, represented in Chart 12 demonstrates this.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Percentages in the following analyses are derived from statistical data published in the NBE's *Annual Reports*, 1980-1984 and *Quarterly Bulletins*, 1991/1992 and 1993/1994; *Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics* (EAETS) 1985-1990.

Chart 12

Ethiopian trade turnovers with the major capitalist trading partners and the Soviet Union for the period 1985-1991

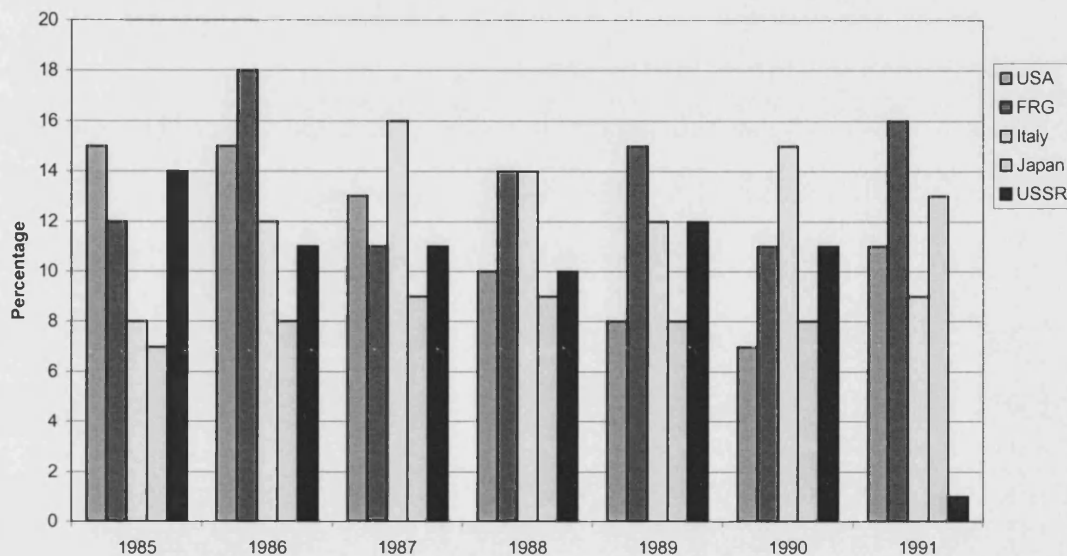


Data Sources: *Ethiopian National Trade Statistics*, 1985-1990; *NBE Quarterly Bulletins*, 1991/1992 to 1993/1994.

For the period 1985-1991, the value of Ethiopia's total trade turnover reported by Ethiopian officials rose to Birr 19.2 billion (US\$9.3bn), representing an 18 percent increase over the total of BR16.3bn (\$7.9bn) reported for the period 1978-1984. Of this amount, the Soviet Union's share of the total turnover value at 10 percent, represented a three percent decline from the previous period, but the overall share still compared reasonably well against the four main capitalist partners. Its 10 percent share surpassed Japan (8%), but fell below the U.S.(11%), West Germany (14%) and Italy (13%). Percentage shares for the 1985-1991 period, however, mask the uneven progression of annual decline. This trend is illustrated in Chart 13.

Chart 13

Annual percentage shares of the Soviet Union's trade turnover with Ethiopia, in comparison to the major capitalist partners, 1985-1991



Data Sources: Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics, 1985-1990; NBE Quarterly Bulletins 1991/1992 to 1993/1994.

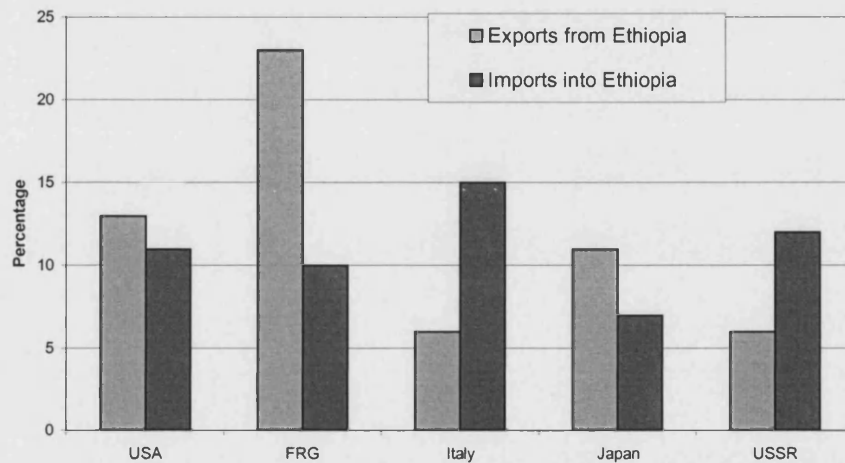
In 1985, when Soviet-Ethiopian relations were generally cordial, the Soviet share, at 14 percent of the total, was higher than FRG (12%) Italy (8%) and Japan (7%) and only marginally less than the U.S.(15%). In 1989, when stresses in the relationship were already apparent, the Soviet share at 12 percent of the total, was less than the FRG (15%), but equalled that recorded for Italy (12%) and exceeded the value shares recorded for the U.S. and Japan (each at 8%). In 1991, when relations between Gorbachev and Mengistu declined to their lowest ebb, Soviet turnover shares, valued at 11.4 million Birr (US\$5.5 mn), plummeted to less than one percent of the total trade value reported by Ethiopian officials in that single year.

Asymmetries in the direction of trade persisted in the Gorbachev era, as

compared to the major capitalist trading partners, but they narrowed slightly. This trend is illustrated in Chart 14.

Chart 14

Export-import comparisons in Ethiopia's balance of trade with the Soviet Union and the major capitalist trading partners for the period 1985-1991



Data Sources: Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics, 1985-1990; NBE Quarterly Bulletins 1991/1992 to 1993/1994.

Although the bulk of Ethiopian exports continued to be directed towards capitalist trading partners, slightly higher shares of export values were also recorded for the Soviet Union. The Soviet share of Ethiopia's total export value of BR5.2 bn (\$2,5mn) for the seven-year period 1985-1991 rose by two percent over the four percent recorded for 1978-1984. At six percent of the total, the Soviet share of Ethiopian export values for the Gorbachev period as a whole remained very low, as compared to the FRG (23%), the U.S.(13%) and Japan (11%), but equalled the share allocated to Italy (6%). In 1989, however, Ethiopian goods exported to the Soviet Union valued at BR 86.6 mn (US\$ 41.8 mn) accounted for nine percent of Ethiopia's total trade turnover value.

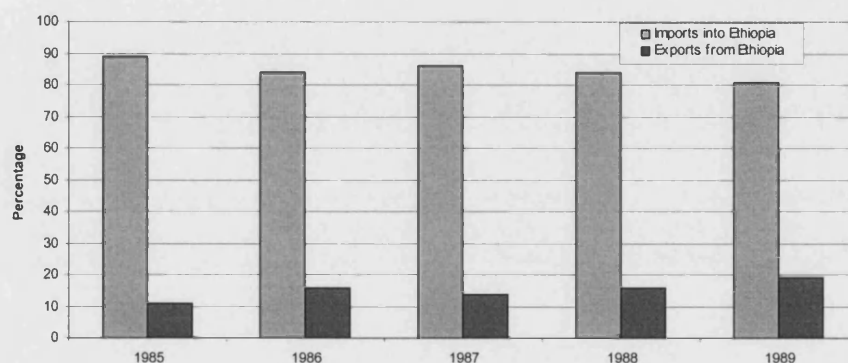
It is important to note that the Soviet Union's position as an import provider in Gorbachev's time remained very competitive as compared to other important trading partners, even though the value share of Soviet goods and services imported into Ethiopia declined substantially. The Soviet Union's share of Ethiopia's seven-year import total of BR13.5 bn (\$6.5 bn) declined to 12%, from 18% for the period 1978-1984. In comparison to the four major capitalist partners, however, its share was lower than Italy (15%), but higher than the percentage values reported for the U.S.(11%), FRG (10%) and Japan (7%). In 1991, however, Soviet import values plummeted to BR9mn (\$4.3mn), the lowest point since 1978. In that year, Soviet shares of Ethiopia's annual import value accounted for only one percent of the total, as compared to the United States (13%), FRG (11%), Italy (10%) and Japan (10%).

Trade imbalances between the two countries persisted during Gorbachev's time in power. An analysis of trade statistics published in *Vneshnayaia Torgovlya*, indicates that although gaps in the percentage shares of exports to imports in Soviet-Ethiopian trade turnover values narrowed slightly between 1985 and 1989, the balance of turnover values remained decidedly asymmetric.¹³⁸ This trend is demonstrated in Chart 15.

¹³⁸ Percentages derived from statistical data published in *Veshnayaia Torgovlya*.

Chart 15

Export-import comparisons in the Soviet Union's
trade turnover with Ethiopia
for the years 1985-1989



Data Sources: *Vneshyaia Torgovlya*, Trade Statistics 1960-1989

For the five year period, the total value of Soviet exports to Ethiopia declined to 85 percent of the total R835.7 mn recorded, representing a modest four percent drop from the previous turnover share of 89%, sustained for 1980-1984. In comparison, Ethiopia's share of the trade turnover only increased from 11 percent to 15 percent for the same two periods. To be sure, the distribution of turnover shares changed in Gorbachev's time, but only by four percent in respect of each state moving towards a more mutually beneficial exchange. According to statistical data set out in *Vneshnayaia Torgovlya*, the balance of trade from 1985 to 1989 still remained asymmetric and disproportionately directed in the Soviet Union's favour.

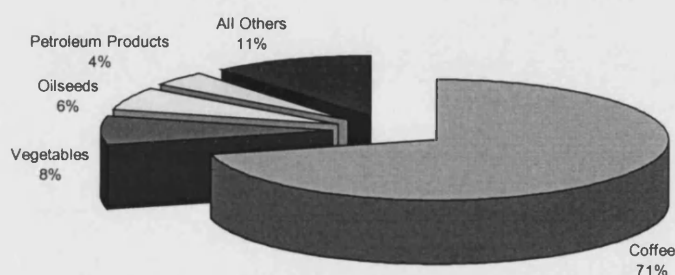
Although some changes in the pattern of trading relations emerged in Gorbachev's time, conventional transactions favouring the exchange of Ethiopia's raw commodities for the Soviet Union's manufactured goods and fuels for industrial development persisted. As under Brezhnev, Ethiopia's agricultural commodities like coffee, with their low unit values, still remained the dominant goods exchanged for higher unit value items like Soviet oil, industrial goods, machinery and transport vehicles. An analysis of statistical data on the goods exchanged published by EAETS customs officials between

1985 and 1990 demonstrates this.

Ethiopia's exports to the Soviet Union for the period 1985-1990 were valued at BR305mn (\$147.3mn). Of that amount, four commodities accounted for 89 percent of the total: coffee at 71 percent (valued at BR216mn or US\$104.3mn; fresh and frozen vegetables at eight percent (valued at BR24mn or US\$11.6mn; oilseeds at six percent (valued at BR19 mn or US\$9.2mn, and petroleum products at four percent (valued at BR13mn or US\$6.2mn). This breakdown is illustrated in Chart 16.

Chart 16

**Ethiopian exports to the Soviet Union
for the period 1985-1990**



Data Sources: *Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics, 1985-1990.*

Ethiopian trade statistics indicate that Mengistu's administration exported more coffee to the Soviet Union in Gorbachev's day than in prior times. Valued at BR153mn (\$73.9mn), exports of this particular commodity for the period 1985-1988 increased five fold over the total value of BR32mn (\$15.5mn) reported for the period 1981-1984. For the first four years of Gorbachev's administration, coffee accounted for 78% percent of the total value of all Ethiopian exports shipped to the Soviet Union. In 1989, the value of Ethiopian coffee shipped to Gorbachev's administration peaked at BR63mn (\$30.4mn), an amount equivalent to 21% of the total value of all Ethiopian

exports shipped to the Soviet Union reported for the period 1985 to 1990.¹³⁹ In 1990, however, no coffee shipments destined for Moscow were reported by Ethiopian customs officials.

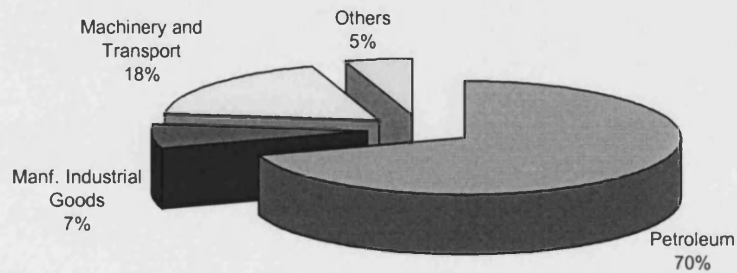
Under Gorbachev's administration, substantial values were also reported for new categories of Ethiopian exports shipped to the Soviet Union. Between 1985 and 1988, petroleum products from Ethiopia valued at BR13.2mn (\$6.4mn) were imported by Soviet officials.¹⁴⁰ Between 1988 and 1990, Gorbachev's administration imported fresh vegetables from Ethiopia valued at BR24.1mn (\$11.6mn). In 1990 alone, fresh vegetables accounted for BR13mn (\$6.3mn) or 59 percent of the total value of Ethiopian exports earmarked for Soviet consumption. In the same year, manmade woven textile fabrics and cotton fabric and alcoholic beverages, each valued at BR2mn (\$966,184), accounted for an additional 27 percent of the value of Ethiopian goods exported to the Soviet Union (EAETS 1985-1990).

For the period 1985-1990, Ethiopian imports of petroleum products (70%), goods manufactured for industrial purposes (7%) and machinery and transportation (18%) accounted for 95 percent of the value of goods imported from the Soviet Union, recorded at BR 1.73 bn (US\$836 mn)(EAETS 1985-1990). This breakdown is illustrated in Chart 17.

¹³⁹ 1989 was also the year when a world coffee glut prevailed, world coffee prices plummeted, and member states of the International Coffee Organization (ICO) failed to negotiate a new coffee agreement. ICO quotas were suspended, and, for several years thereafter, members were free to sell existing stocks wherever they could.

¹⁴⁰ Ethiopian customs officials reported no petroleum-related exports for the period 1989-1990.

Chart 17

**Soviet goods Imported into Ethiopia
for the period 1985-1990**

Data Source: *Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics, 1985-1990.*

In percentage terms, petroleum shares in the total value of Soviet goods imported into Ethiopia declined substantially in the Gorbachev era. For the period 1985-1988, for example, petroleum imports declined to 68 percent of the total value of Soviet imports, as compared to 81 percent recorded for the period 1981-1984 (EAETS 1981-1989).

Between 1985 and 1990, however, annual percentage shares of Soviet petroleum import values fluctuated in a rather unexpected way. This fluctuation is demonstrated in Chart 18.

Chart 18
Fluctuations in the value of Soviet
petroleum products imported into Ethiopia
1985-1990



Data Sources: *Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics*, 1985-1990.

In 1986, when world oil prices dropped, the percentage share of Soviet petroleum imported by Ethiopian officials plummeted to 52 percent. In 1990, when the two countries were finalising past economic commitments and downgrading trade activities, the percentage share of petroleum imports jumped to 81 percent.

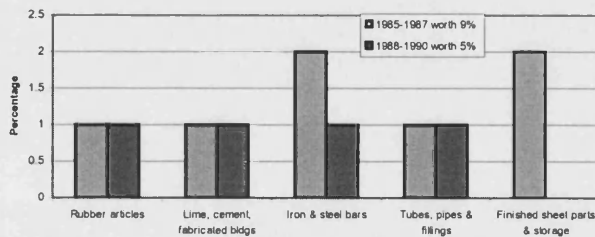
Although oil imports declined, Ethiopia remained reliant upon the Soviet Union for petroleum imports in the Gorbachev era. For five of the six years between 1985 and 1990, 100 percent of Ethiopia's recorded petroleum imports came from the Soviet Union.¹⁴¹

Ethiopia provided a market for Soviet goods manufactured for industrial purposes in Brezhnev's time and continued to do so in Gorbachev's day. As illustrated in Chart 17, the percentage share of those goods imported into Ethiopia for the period 1985-1990 under code 6 accounted for a respectable seven percent of the total value of Soviet imports. Within the period, import value shares were higher in the early years of New Thinking and declined substantially in the latter part of Gorbachev era. Percentage comparisons of the principle goods imported in both periods are set out in Chart 19.

¹⁴¹ In 1988, the Soviet Union provided 95 percent of Ethiopia's oil imports, and Kuwait supplied the

Chart 19

**Comparisons in the values of Soviet
manufactured industrial goods
imported into Ethiopia,
1985-1987 and 1988-1990**



Data Source: *Ethiopian Annual External Trade Statistics*, 1985-1990.

For the three-year period 1985 to 1987, Ethiopian imports of goods under code 6 accounted for nine percent of the value of Soviet goods imported. Five sub-categories accounted for two thirds of the nine percent total share value of goods in this category: rubber articles, including tyres at two percent; lime, cement and fabricated building materials at one percent; iron & steel bars, rods, angles and shapes at two percent; tubes, pipes and fittings at one percent, and finished structural parts and storage at two percent (EAETS 1985-1987).

In 1986, the year in which the percentage share of petroleum values dropped sharply and Ethiopian resettlement activities intensified, the value of manufactured goods imported into Ethiopia rose to 15 percent of the annual total. In that year unusually high imports were reported in two categories: (1) iron and steel bars, rods, angles and shapes and (2) finished structural parts and storage. Imports from these categories alone accounted for eight percent of the total value of Soviet imports recorded in that year (EAETS 1986).

As seen in Chart 19, over the three-year period 1988-1990, the percentage share of manufactured goods in the total Soviet import values

remaining five percent (EAETS 1988).

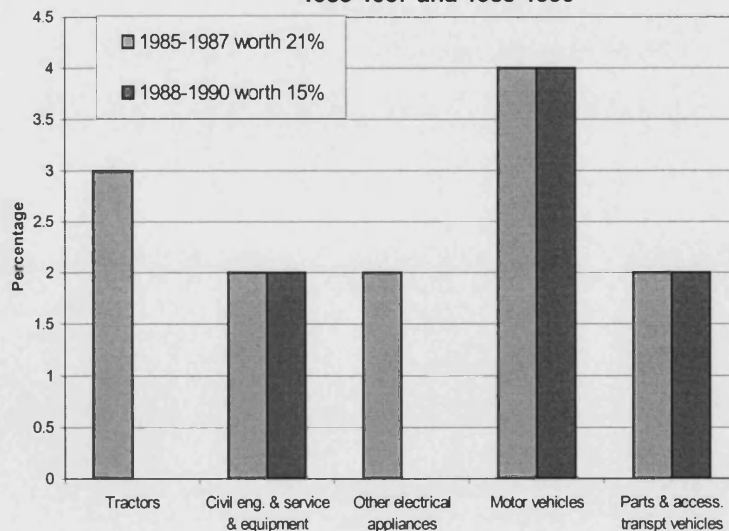
dropped to five percent. Imports of finished structural parts and storage dropped substantially, but the value shares of the other four main categories dominating exchanges for the period 1985-1987 remained constant, accounting for four-fifths of code 6 values.

In 1990, Soviet goods imported into Ethiopia under code 6 reached their lowest level for the six-year period. Of the four percent share recorded for manufactured goods in that year, rubber articles, including tyres at 7/10 of one percent and tubes, pipes and fittings at two percent accounted for almost three quarters of the total (EAETS 1990).

For the period 1985-1990, Soviet machinery and transport items imported under code 7 accounted for 17 percent of the total. Import values attained particularly high levels in the early years of Gorbachev's administration, but declined noticeably towards the end of the era. Percentage comparisons of the major goods imported are illustrated in Chart 20.

Chart 20

Comparisons in the values of Soviet machinery and transport goods imported into Ethiopia 1985-1987 and 1988-1990



Source: *Ethiopian External Trade Statistics, 1985-1990.*

For the period 1985-1987, the share value of machinery and transport items accounted for 21 percent of all Soviet goods imported into Ethiopia, as compared to 15% for the period 1988-1990. In the earlier period, five categories accounted for about two-thirds of the total values reported: tractors at three percent; civil engineering and contractors' equipment at two percent; 'other' electrical apparatus for making electricity at two percent; motor vehicles at four percent, and parts and accessories (for transport vehicles) at two percent. In the later period, only three of the five top categories recorded for 1985-1987 still retained their earlier percentage share values: civil engineering & contractors' equipment, motor vehicles, and parts and accessories (for transport vehicles). Value shares for these three categories accounted for over half of the total share value of Soviet machinery and transport items reported.

For the period 1988-1990, the drop in percentage share recorded for Soviet goods imported under code 7 applied primarily to machinery. The value share of transport items remained relatively stable. Machine imports for the period 1988-1990, for example declined to six percent of the total, from 13 percent recorded for the period 1985-1987. In comparison, the value share of transport items for the two three year periods remained about the same, increasing slightly from eight percent (1985-1987) to nine percent (1988-1990)(EAETS 1985-1990).

Some very important features of trade relations that had been established in Brezhnev's time persisted for most of Gorbachev's time in office. Three of these were particularly important. First, the Soviet Union's share of Ethiopia's total trade turnover values in percentage terms remained substantial and compared favourably with the levels sustained with major capitalist trading partners. Second, imbalances in trade directions, identified before Gorbachev assumed power, still persisted for most of the New Thinking era. Ethiopia's export trade still remained oriented towards capitalist partners, and imports from the Soviet Union still accounted for a disproportionate value of the trade turnover sustained between these two states. Third, the major categories of goods exchanged in Brezhnev's day continued to dominate the structure of trade in Gorbachev's time. Coffee, with its relatively low market value continued to provide the dominant commodity traded for Soviet oil and higher value goods,

and Ethiopia continued to provide a market for the disbursal of excess supplies of Soviet semi processed manufactured goods, as well as machinery and transport goods and services.

Humanitarian and development aid.

Two points are important to consider when discussing Soviet provisions of humanitarian assistance in the New Thinking era. First, it took a while to change tactics after Gorbachev assumed power. Second, important Western donor states and institutions influenced the type of change ultimately introduced. These observations can be illustrated by examining Soviet approaches to the provision of humanitarian aid to Ethiopia in the early years of Gorbachev's administration and comparing them to the strategies advocated in 1988, three years later.

Initially, Gorbachev's programme of famine relief to Ethiopia continued along the path advocated by Chernenko, his immediate predecessor. Relief assistance remained focused on the provision of logistical support, at the expense of large-scale shipments of food supplies and other emergency relief items. Soviet motor vehicles, aircraft and personnel continued to be provided through the 1984/1985 famine. In addition, the Gorbachev administration supplied copious amounts of fuel for air and ground transport operations.¹⁴²

Western states and international institutions continued to undervalue the importance of logistical support in emergency aid after Gorbachev assumed power. Consequently, his decision evoked negative responses from Western donors. To begin with, Soviet officials were accused of subordinating humanitarian concerns to military assistance.¹⁴³ To make matters worse, many donors complained about the Soviet Union's low level of food provision and objected seriously to the government's plan to allow Soviet aircraft and land

¹⁴² In September 1985, Soviet reporters maintained that the Soviet Union had shouldered the entire cost of supplying air and ground transport with fuel (*Izvestia*, 6 September 1985, in *CDSP* 1985, v 37, no 36:24).

¹⁴³ In January 1985, for example, eyewitnesses reported that the Soviet ship 'Captain Modest Ivanov' had been allowed to unload military supplies in Port Assab. The 'Baltic Skau', however, carrying 16,000 tons of Australian wheat, had been left standing off the port waiting for permission to discharge its cargo of free food aid (Associated Press, 24 January 1985).

vehicles originally intended for food delivery to be used to transport settlers to resettlement areas.

At the end of 1985, Soviet officials attempted to counteract criticisms levied by Western donors. They claimed that emergency food and relief supplies worth over \$120 million had been sent to Ethiopia in the 1984/1985 famine crisis. In addition, TASS reporters pointed out that Soviet donations to Ethiopian famine relief had included a mobile hospital situated at Asosa for the benefit of resettlers, baby food, medicines, blankets and tents, and well drilling equipment (TASS, 29 and 30 December 1985; *Izvestia*, 6 September 1985, in *CDSP* 1985, v 37, no 36:24).

Gorbachev's approach to humanitarian assistance changed markedly in Ethiopia's 1988 famine crisis. This time, high priority was assigned to the provision of large-scale emergency food aid. In January, Soviet officials confirmed their intentions to donate 250,000 metric tonnes of wheat to the Ethiopians and to send 200 tents to store the grain (Associated Press, 28 January 1988). In addition to the large food gift, the Soviets promised to airlift 15 tons of medicines, 10 tonnes of food concentrates and a ton of children's formula to Ethiopia (*The Washington Post*, 16 February 1988). For a short time, the Soviet Union became Ethiopia's largest food donor.

Two features of Gorbachev's food donation in 1988 differed markedly from the relief assistance provided by Moscow three years earlier. First, the food gift was relatively expensive. Soviet officials were already purchasing wheat from the United States for their own domestic consumption, as a consequence of a major crop shortfall. Consequently, the wheat earmarked for Ethiopia had to be purchased at considerable expense on the open market.¹⁴⁴

Second, Gorbachev's food gift in 1988, like the food gifts of many Western donors in the 1984/1985 crisis, was shipped to Ethiopian ports without any guarantee of logistical support. This action shed a new light on the relative importance of past Soviet efforts in this direction that had previously been so

¹⁴⁴ The precise source of the wheat was not clear. Patman (1990:296) maintains that it was reportedly purchased on the open market in Turkey at a price of \$80mn. Other writers thought that it could have come from Soviet domestic stocks or from Argentina. Some also believed that the wheat could have been part of a 300,000 tonne shipment that Soviet officials had recently purchased from Saudi Arabia (*The Washington Post*, 16 February 1988).

undervalued. Western diplomats stationed in Addis at the time estimated that it would cost an additional 25 million dollars to transport the 250,000 tonnes of grain to famine-stricken areas.¹⁴⁵

Gorbachev's food pledge of 250,000 tonnes in January 1988 was an extraordinarily large single contribution for one sovereign state to make,¹⁴⁶ but Soviet officials could neither meet all Ethiopia's famine needs, nor compete effectively with important Western donors in respect of the quantity and quality of the famine relief provided. Limitations were clearly demonstrated in two ways. First, although Gorbachev's strategy for providing emergency assistance more closely approximated the policies advocated by capitalist institutions and Western donors, the benefits of considerable logistical support that had been so freely provided three years earlier were dropped out of Ethiopia's assistance provision. Second, despite its size, the Soviet food gift was soon dwarfed by the pledges given by Western donors shortly thereafter. In February, for example, the United States pledged to provide 247,438 tons of food and to underwrite the total transport costs. In addition, another US\$ 6.6 million was promised to cover other transportation needs. Other Western nations also followed suit and promised to deliver an additional 441,454 tonnes of food (*Washington Post*, 16 February 1988).

Soviet assistance for several large-scale development projects that had been started before Gorbachev assumed power continued well into the New Thinking era, and this aid incurred costs as well as benefits. As New Thinking policies gained ground in the late 1980s, new Soviet projects became smaller in scale, and the level of funding declined accordingly. Analyses of twelve important development projects approved for funding (wholly or partly) by the Gorbachev administration demonstrate this. Discussion of the first six projects, which were large-scale industrial ventures, illustrate some of the difficulties associated with Soviet-assisted projects and support Robert Patman's (1993:127)

¹⁴⁵ Mikhail Botcharnikov, a Counsellor in the Soviet Embassy in Addis Ababa at the time of the Soviet pledge, confirmed that Gorbachev's administration had made no specific provisions for internal transportation of this particular grain shipment. The wheat donated by the Soviets in January was finally unloaded 6 months later in the port of Assab (*Associated Press*, 28 January 1988; TASS, 25 June 1988).

¹⁴⁶ The Soviet donation amounted to about 25% of the 1.05 million tonnes of grain that Mengistu had requested for 1988 (*Associated Press*, 28 January 1988).

view that Gorbachev's administration continued to underwrite economic aid packages that had been framed in the Brezhnev era. The last six projects reinforce the premise that most new endeavours for Ethiopia's development assistance in Gorbachev's time were considerably less ambitious than their earlier counterparts and therefore less advantageous for Mengistu's regime, as compared to the project assistance offered by Western donors.

Development assistance provided by the Soviet Union had its advantages and disadvantages. Because the projects often took so long to complete, it was not always possible to assess the balance. Soviet efforts to locate energy resources in Ethiopia's Ogaden region demonstrate this. Explorations began in 1977 and carried on into the early 1990s. On the basis of output from the first well sunk in the Ogaden in 1975 (Calub 1), Soviet engineers estimated that a natural gas deposit of 1.3 trillion cubic feet existed in the region. Consequently, between 1982 and 1984, oil explorations funded by a Soviet-Ethiopian technical assistance agreement were conducted over 10,000 square kilometres in the Ogaden desert. In 1984, the first of the four wells covered by the agreement was completed and subsequently closed off as a gas well. In 1986 a new contract was negotiated, and, in 1987, Soviet prospectors found a commercially exploitable natural gas deposit estimated at 25 billion cubic meters in Haraghe, situated in the south-eastern section of the Ogaden. As a direct consequence of Soviet assistance, the Ethiopian government was able to expand the scale of oil and gas exploratory activities substantially in the mid-1980s. Leading Western oil companies were also invited to take up leases along side Soviet officials and to engage in prospecting activities on selected lots in the region.¹⁴⁷

Soviet assistance in respect of locating energy reserves in Ethiopia had positive and negative implications. On the positive side, Soviets provided the skilled personnel and technology necessary for extensive oil explorations under concessional arrangements. Ethiopians received specialist training and actively

¹⁴⁷ In 1986, for example, twenty-five blocks or 349,500 square kilometres were opened for exploration by Western states: 15 blocks in the Ogaden; nine blocks in the Red Sea and one block in Gambela. Details about Soviet efforts to discover fuel reserves in Ethiopia are reported in the following sources: World Bank 1984, vol 2:44-45; EIU, *QER*, 1986, no 1:21, *CR*, 1986, no 2:26 and *CP 1986-87*, 1986:17; EIU, *CR*, 1987, no 1:28-29; EIU, *CP 1989/90*, 1989:18.

participated in project-related activities.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, Soviet activities in this direction probably raised the interests of Western oil companies in the venture. On the negative side, Ethiopian officials incurred considerable costs in the venture. They were expected to cover the local expenses incurred by Soviet engineers in prospecting activities. Under the protocol concluded in 1979, for example, Soviet goods were supplied for sale in the local markets in Ethiopia in order to cover the local costs incurred in oil and prospecting (Bach 1987:58). In addition, Gorbachev's administration apparently also wanted to preserve a stake in the action. When the Ethiopians determined to expand oil-related activities and to open various lots for bidding to Western interests in 1986, it was reported that at least one of the most valuable gas deposits had been cordoned off by Soviet officials and withdrawn from the lots originally offered to potential Western bidders (EIU *CR*, 1987, no 1:28-29).

Large-scale projects supported by the Soviet Union took a long time to complete. The Melka Wakane hydroelectric plant and the Nazret Tractor factor demonstrate this. Soviet officials agreed to provide assistance for the construction of the Melka Wakane hydropower station on the Wabe Shebele River in the Bale region in 1983. In 1985 Correspondent Z. Kadyzbekov reported that the plant was the largest hydroelectric station under construction in Ethiopia and considered it to be one of the most important construction projects currently underway. He estimated that the 153,000 kilowatt station, scheduled for completion in December 1987, would double Ethiopia's electricity supply (*Izvestia*, 6 September, in *CDSP* 1985, v 37 no 36:25). The dam was expected to be 1.8 kilometres long, 40 metres high and capable of accommodating a reservoir of 700 million cubic metres of water (EIU, *QER*, 1986, no 1:22). The Melka Wakane dam was officially opened in April 1988, some five years after Soviet approval had been secured for funding. Estimated at \$302mn, the total costs were shared between the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia (EIU, *CR*, 1988, no 3: 27).

¹⁴⁸ In December 1985, TASS correspondents reported that the Soviets had trained 25 Ethiopians to perform tasks on drilling machines. The newly trained personnel were assigned to perform duties on the Soviet seismic team, who were prospecting for oil and gas in the Ogaden (TASS, 28 December 1985).

The Nazret Tractor factory also took a long time to complete and to modernise. Plans to build a plant for the assembly and production of tractors were originally agreed under a Soviet-Ethiopian protocol concluded in September 1979. The Nazret Tractor Factory commenced operations in 1984. Shortly thereafter, Soviet officials agreed to expand the tractor factory and to give the Ethiopians a low interest loan of BR50mn (\$25mn) for that purpose (Associated Press, 26 December 1984). In 1987, some eight years after original plans had been formalised, World Bank analysts reported that the total plant investment amounted to Birr 17.3 mn, 150 workers were employed, and plant production capacity had been increased to 1000 tractors per annum (World Bank 1987:190).

Soviet development aid was also frequently extended in conjunction with aid provided by other CMEA countries, and reliable breakdowns of aid contributions remained elusive. Two examples demonstrate this: the Melka Wakane hydropower plant and the Mughher cement factory. As previously mentioned, the Melka Wakane hydropower plant was a collaborative assistance venture involving Soviet and Czechoslovakian personnel. About 400 Soviet and 100 Czechoslovakian experts were employed on the project. Soviet engineers undertook the site survey and supervised construction operations, while Czechoslovak technicians installed the generators (EIU, *CR*, 1988, no 3:27). Apparently, most of the equipment for the power station, however, had been provided by Czechoslovakia under a cooperative agreement concluded at the sixth session of the Ethiopia/USSR joint commission for economic, scientific and technical cooperation held in October 1985 (EIU *QER*, 1986, no 1:22). Precise details about the breakdown of funding, however, remained undisclosed.

The Mughher cement factory was also collaborative venture, but this time, Soviet and East German officials were involved. In 1980, Soviet officials agreed to provide economic assistance in the region of \$77 million (Bach 1987:58) to construct a cement works at Mughher capable of producing 300,000 tonnes of cement per annum. East Germans collaborated in the project, and the Ethiopians reportedly put up 75% of the investment capital. The factory was completed in 1985, but in May 1986, Mengistu's administration signed an agreement with the Skel Export-Import Organisation of East Germany to double

factory output. In 1987, about 500 persons were employed, and investment costs of the original project were valued at Birr 226 million.¹⁴⁹ As in the case of the Melka Wakene Dam, however, precise information on levels of Soviet assistance in the venture as a whole or in part was not forthcoming.

Some projects funded by Gorbachev's administration raised concerns about suitability and reliability. This was the case with the Assab Refinery, the Mughher Cement factory and the Nazret Tractor Factory. TASS reported in 1985 that the Soviet Union was in the process of modernising the Port Assab oil refinery, originally constructed with Soviet funds in 1959. In 1986 reports were received that Soviet specialists were completing expansion plans and that the existing production capacity of the Assab oil refinery would be boosted from production levels averaging 664,000 tonnes in 1981-1983 to 900,000 tonnes (EIU, *CP 1986-87*, 1986:17). In 1988, World Bank analysts questioned the wisdom of expanding production capability so significantly on the grounds that refining raw petroleum imports locally was unlikely to improve prospects for economic growth (World Bank 1988:36). Western analysts also argued that demand for processed petroleum products and the need for such a large refinery would probably diminish significantly if natural gas deposits in the Ogaden were fully developed (EIU, *CP 1989-90*, 1989:18).

In the same year, World Bank officials also expressed concern over the suitability of Mengistu's proposal to double the capacity of the Mughher factory in the Three-Year Development Plan (TYDP) project portfolio. They objected on grounds that expansion costs, estimated at around 120 million Birr, were excessive. They maintained that the cement industry was losing ground and that prospects for added profits from the venture were constrained by limited local demand. Analysts also complained about the fact that the Mughher expansion project, like many of the other Ethiopian projects, had not been accompanied by estimates of financial or economic profitability and that the stages of initial

¹⁴⁹ EIU agents (1991) reported that the new plant at the Mughher cement works had finally been completed. Apparently, very little, if any support for new plant construction was provided by Gorbachev's administration. According to reports, East Germany financed around 60% of the project, with the balance of funding provided by the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank. The \$70mn extension expanded plant capacity by an additional 250,000 metric tonnes per year and created jobs for around 200 people (EIU, *CR*, 1986, no 3:25-26; TASS 29-30 December 85; Clapham 1988:148-149; World Bank 1987:190).

preparation and appraisal had been bypassed, as well (World Bank 1988:28). Although the criticisms made by World Bank officials apply more to East German than to Soviet officials in this case, two issues about suitability are particularly relevant to the Soviet Union. First, some question exists as to the part Ethiopian locals actually played in prompting Brezhnev's initial support for this project in 1980. Second, in the 1988 report, World Bank officials provided no evidence to support the claim that Gorbachev's administration actually opposed East German plans to expand Mughher plant facilities.

Criticisms of suitability and reliability were also levelled against the Nazret Tractor Factory. In addition to production problems reported at the plant proper in 1987, Nazret tractors shipped to resettlement sites demonstrated a marked tendency to break down and were difficult to repair due to the lack of spare parts.

The final observation is that the level of Soviet contributions to CMEA ventures remained uncertain. Plans to develop a rail link connecting Addis Ababa to Port Assab illustrate this. In 1987, Soviet officials and representatives of other Comecon member states agreed in principle to provide assistance for the construction of an 850 kilometre rail link from Addis to port Assab during a session of the joint Ethiopian/Comecon Commission on Cooperation. Under the provisions, Comecon agreed to underwrite the construction of about 600 kilometres of track, install railway coaches and provide other equipment (EIU, *CR*, 1987, no 4:28). Before the project started, Mengistu solicited funds for undertaking an engineering study contract. Key Western donors, including the World Bank, opposed both the project and the feasibility study on grounds that building a road link and laying down a pipeline between the two points would be more sensible. Rail India eventually conducted the feasibility study, however, and concluded that the link would cost \$1.4 billion to construct. Although the track was only 850 kilometres long, 600 bridges, 30 tunnels and 24 viaducts would be required for completion.¹⁵⁰ In 1989 Comecon countries shelved the project on grounds that costs in relation to gains were prohibitively expensive (EIU, *CR*, 1989, no 1:29-30). Although the extent of Soviet

¹⁵⁰ World Bank analysts (1988:33) also criticised Mengistu's willingness to spend 14.5 million Birr on securing an engineering design study (EIU, *CR*, 1986, no 2:26-27 and 1987, no 2:27-28).

involvement in the project agreement remained unknown, the decision made by Comecon members to withdraw funding for the railway link must have cast doubt on future prospects for Soviet involvement in grandiose schemes aimed at modernising Ethiopia's transport infrastructure.

By 1988, changes in the provisions and funding levels of project support were clearly apparent. Six agricultural projects partly funded by the Gorbachev administration and described in the World Bank's review of Ethiopia's TYDP project portfolio issued in 1988 demonstrate the changes. Details of these projects are set out in the following table.

TABLE
ETHIOPIAN AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS
PARTLY FUNDED BY THE SOVIET UNION.

Project Description	Project Life (Years)	Total Cost (\$ mn)	Soviet Share %	Ethiopian Share %	Project Status
The Dira Dawa Horticultural Cold Store project	3	2.4	44	56	Funding firm Ongoing
The Nekempte Central Workshop project	3	5.4	55	45	Funding firm Ongoing
The Bale Central Workshop	3	5.5	39	61	Funding firm New
The Bahr Dar Central Workshop	3	3.4	0	100	Funding likely New
The Alwero Irrigated Farm	5	21.2	1	99	Funding firm Design stage
The Jijiga Ethiopia-Soviet Ranch	5	30.3	100	0	Funding likely New

Source of data: Ethiopia's TYDP project Portfolio, as cited in World Bank 1988:60-61.

First, smaller-scale projects, aimed at improving light manufacturing and increasing agricultural storage, replaced earlier, highly ambitious, large-scaled

schemes designed to facilitate modernisation. As demonstrated in the table on the preceding page, four out of the six Soviet projects identified by World Bank officials in 1988 aimed to create additional cold store or workshop facilities, and none of the four was projected to cost more than six million dollars.

Second, the completion times estimated for the newer projects funded by Gorbachev's administration tended to be shorter than for the ones that had been initiated in Brezhnev's day. As specified in the table on page 168, four of the six projects were supposed to be completed within three years. The other two projects had five-year project lives, but both were still in the initial stages of planning.

Third, financial arrangements for some new projects in the late 1980s implied that Ethiopian officials might be paying a larger share of the initial, outright project costs than they had in the Brezhnev era.¹⁵¹ In four of the six projects under discussion, Ethiopia's share of the costs accounted for more than 50 percent of the total. In the Alwero irrigated project, Mengistu's share of the operation was assessed at 99 percent.

Despite trends away from large-scale projects, Soviet assistance for Ethiopia's agricultural modernisation in Gorbachev's time continued to favour the state farm sector. In the World Bank's 1988 review of Mengistu's Three-Year Development Plan (TYDP) project portfolio, the Soviet Union was not credited with assisting any projects aimed at developing peasant farming (World Bank 1988:56-59). In respect of state farm development, however, the situation was different. Total Soviet assistance accounted for 20 percent of the total project aid for state farm agricultural development anticipated from all foreign donors, if one included the large Jijiga project worth \$30.3mn, which in 1988 had not yet received firm funding. Without the Jijiga project, however, firm Soviet project assistance for Ethiopian state farm agriculture in 1988 accounted for only three percent of the total.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ In real costs, the differences may not have been so great. In Brezhnev's time, for example, Ethiopian officials would probably have been expected to pay the local expenses incurred by Soviet technicians and engineers, in addition to putting up a share of the investment.

¹⁵² Under the Ethiopian TYDP project portfolio, the total value of projects designated for state farm agricultural development amounted to BR977.6mn (\$472.3mn). Of that amount, foreign donors were expected to contribute BR386.5mn (\$186.7mn) (World Bank 1988:60-61).

In conclusion, while it seems fair to say that patterns of Soviet assistance for Ethiopia's progressive development changed to some extent in the Gorbachev era, some of the old-fashioned approaches to project aid persisted well into the late 1980s. Reluctance to change directions, however, was probably due more to the fact that many of the highly ambitious schemes initiated in Brezhnev's day were not completed until Gorbachev's time.

Mengistu's legacy of debt to the Soviet Union.

The first precise reckoning of Ethiopian indebtedness disclosed by the Soviet Foreign Ministry was published in the Soviet newspaper *Chas Pik* on February 26 1990: just a few days before Mengistu officially confirmed his decision to introduce market reforms and to end Ethiopia's failed experiment in Soviet-styled socialism. As set out in the article, Ethiopia's total indebtedness to the Soviet Union on November 1 1989 amounted to 2.86 billion roubles.¹⁵³ As a percentage of the total debt owed to the Soviet Union in 1989 (estimated at R85.8bn), Ethiopian arrears at one percent of the overall total were not very important. As a percentage of the outstanding debt owed to the Soviet Union by developing countries at the time (R42bn), however, Ethiopia's debt, valued at eight percent was substantial.

Russian officials produced a second important assessment of debt outstanding incurred by Mengistu's administration in April 1992. Lev Mironov, Russia's Ambassador to Ethiopia announced that Ethiopia's indebtedness to the former Soviet Union, now scheduled to be collected by Russia, amounted to nine billion dollars. Of this amount, around \$800 million was owed for commercial and economic goods and services and about 10 times that amount in military debt. During the news briefing, Mironov also confirmed that discussions about repayment had yet to be scheduled between officials of the new Ethiopian government and the Russian Federation (Associated Press, 29 April 1992).

The importance of Ethiopia's indebtedness to the Soviet Union should

¹⁵³ Of this amount, R2.85bn was the principal; R51.7mn was written off, and R854.9mn was deferred for the period 1986-1989 (*Izvestia*, March 1 1990, in *CDSF* 1990, vol 42, no 9:9).

not be underrated, regardless of the fact that Mengistu's administration actually accumulated more debt in transactions with Western states and international institutions than in exchanges undertaken with the Soviet Union. There are three important considerations.

In the first instance, Ethiopia's rising debt to the Soviet Union limited Mengistu's prospects for establishing political authority through the acquisition and deployment of military arms. In respect of military debt, the cumulative costs of acquiring Soviet military goods and services over time eventually overwhelmed his administration. As preferential elements in the costing of Soviet goods dropped out under New Thinking, Ethiopians ruling elites became increasingly hard pressed to afford even the most conventional weaponry.

Second, increased indebtedness to the Soviet Union reduced Mengistu's prospects for implementing large-scale, grandiose development schemes aimed at modernising Ethiopia's agricultural and industrial sectors. As the debts mounted and economic assistance dropped out of the arrangement, Ethiopian access to Soviet technical expertise, supplies of spare parts and other goods deemed vital for project completion, maintenance and rejuvenation became increasingly limited.

Finally, Mengistu's legacy of debt to the Soviet Union survived the fall of both governments in 1991 to become an issue for concern for future generations. In December 1992, Alemayehu Dhaba, the Ethiopian Minister of Finance, confirmed that Ethiopia's debt to the Soviet Union, now payable to Russia, amounted to 3.2 billion roubles, including interest. Of this amount, Minister Alemayehu claimed that 2.8 billion roubles had been spent on arms and 400 million roubles had been applied towards Ethiopian development. Under the new terms, payment on the reduced debt, plus interest, was expected to commence after a six-year grace period and to continue for a further 25 years.¹⁵⁴

Minister Alemayehu's disclosure of the debt and its adverse implications for Ethiopia's economic recovery in 1992 also evoked considerable hostility from Ethiopia's new entrepreneurial class. In June 1993 correspondent Tesgaye

¹⁵⁴ It seems that a portion of Ethiopia's debt to the former Soviet Union originally due for repayment in 1989 had been cancelled (BBC, *SWB*, 5 January 1993).

Tadesse reported that Ethiopian businessmen were objecting to the idea that the present regime should be held accountable to Yeltsin's government in Russia for debts that had been incurred by Mengistu's administration to the former Soviet Union, particularly in respect of the military debt, which the Russians had estimated at seven billion roubles. According to Tadesse, Ethiopia's Minister of External Economic Cooperation, Abdulemejid Hussein, indicated that \$750 million was still owed to the Soviets for pure economic aid.¹⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

This chapter concentrated on three facets of the Soviet-Ethiopian economic relationship: trade, aid (including emergency and development assistance) and debt. The argument made here is that although trade, aid and debt incurred costs for both parties, Ethiopia's prospects for economic self-reliance, in particular, were adversely affected. This trend was set in motion in Brezhnev's time, but it persisted for most of the Gorbachev era.

In respect of trade, exchanges became progressively asymmetric and more costly, especially for Ethiopia. In Brezhnev's time, Mengistu developed an undue reliance upon Soviet imports deemed vital for Ethiopia's modernisation: in particular, oil, goods manufactured for industrial purposes, and machinery and transport items (including goods and services). This trend deepened in the early 1980s and persisted well into Gorbachev's time, remaining visible, even after the trade turnover value of the goods exchanged declined. When Gorbachev finally determined to cut costs and increase profits, the price of vital goods once supplied to Mengistu's administration at preferential rates became prohibitively expensive. In some ways, the evidence collected supports Galtung's idea that the Bridgehead's reliance on powerful trading partners and commodity concentration would create the conditions required to initiate dependence and to sustain asymmetric exchange. Other important factors must be considered, however: particularly, the presence of persistently unbalanced trade turnovers in relationships like the one between the Soviet Union and

¹⁵⁵ Ethiopian businessmen were pressuring the government not to repay the military debt on grounds

Ethiopia.

The limitations inherent in Soviet provisions of humanitarian and development assistance demonstrated in the era of Brezhnev and his immediate successors became even more apparent in Gorbachev's day, especially when compared to the contributions made by capitalist donors and international organisations. Soviet officials provided considerable logistical support in the 1984-1985 famine, but Western donors severely criticised both Chernenko's and Gorbachev's administrations for meagre emergency food provisions. When Gorbachev provided humanitarian assistance that conformed more closely to the criteria set by capitalist donors three years later, his large food gift was soon dwarfed by the combined food and transport offerings made by Western donors. Soviet assistance for Ethiopia's progressive development also demonstrated some serious shortcomings. Under New Thinking, levels of Soviet project funding diminished, and problems of complexity, appropriateness and utility increased in scale. A sizeable share of available funding was still tied up in the construction of large-scaled, highly ambitious projects that had been started in Brezhnev's time. Consequently, limited resources were available to repair and upgrade existing projects or to sponsor new ones. Moreover, the benefits of complex arrangements that had sometimes worked to Ethiopia's advantage under the umbrella of economic cooperation largely disappeared after Gorbachev came to power.

As concerns debt, prospects for Ethiopia's economic self reliance were further undermined as a direct consequence of increased indebtedness to the Soviet Union. In this particular equation, however, some part of the blame must be attributed to Soviet officials, because they continued to supply arms that escalated Mengistu's military expenditures. In time, Mengistu's excessive spending on military goods and large-scale development schemes combined with sharp trade revenue declines and multiple famine disasters precluded debt repayments in regular instalments, thereby allowing totals and outstanding interest to accrue to the Soviet Union.

The point must be stressed once again that the importance of economic relations in creating and maintaining the conditions for asymmetric exchange in

that the Soviet Union had intervened in the civil war with Eritrea (Reuters, 9 June 1993).

the Soviet-Ethiopian case has been generally underrated. The cumulative effect of Soviet economic relations with Mengistu's administration increased Ethiopia's dependence upon the Soviet Union and exerted a negative impact upon that state's prospects for economic self-reliance. This trend was initiated in the Brezhnev era and continued in Gorbachev's time. However, blame for this negative end result must be shared by Mengistu's administration for relying too much upon Soviet officials to provide the expensive arms and equipment deemed vital for Ethiopia's security and modernisation.

CHAPTER SIX**SOVIET INFLUENCE UPON ETHIOPIAN PLANS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT****INTRODUCTION**

In the name of Ethiopia Tikdem, the PMAC introduced broad-based, socialist-oriented agrarian reforms after the revolution. Later, Soviet-Ethiopian relations improved, and the appearance of Ethiopian socialism began to change. The new approach increasingly adopted infrastructures and control mechanisms generally associated with Soviet-styled strategies for agricultural development. Over time, however, Mengistu's efforts to modernise along these lines adversely affected agricultural output and the well being of Ethiopia's population.

In this chapter, I examine Ethiopian strategies for agricultural development to see if evidence supports the claim made by Galtung and Ake (Chapter two) that officials in Centre states like the Soviet Union reduce prospects for self reliance in weak states like Ethiopia because they have the power to persuade leaders to emulate foreign development models that are costly and inappropriate. The actual degree of intentional influence exerted by Moscow over Mengistu's development policies remains a matter for debate, but it appears that old-fashioned Soviet-styled socialist prototypes offered Ethiopian officials good opportunities for importing packaged strategies for development planning in Brezhnev's time.¹⁵⁶ However, Ethiopian elites exercised considerable power over the selection and adaptation of the development policies actually emulated, and they incurred considerable costs in the undertaking. During the Gorbachev era, Soviet prescriptions for Ethiopia's agricultural progress became progressively less easy to recognise, as similarities increased between the rhetoric of perestroika and capitalist development. Ethiopian elites were finally driven by severe domestic crises and the need to secure massive external resources to introduce

¹⁵⁶ The term 'packaged strategies for development planning' refers to the simultaneous implementation of several strategies aimed at large-scale social and economic transformation. Programmes like resettlement and villagisation, for example, included strategies for centralising control, tactics for initiating social change via vanguard party cadres, schemes for modernisation based upon large-scale mechanised farming, strategies for turning peasant farmers into agricultural labourers and plans for developing new agricultural regions.

showcase reforms¹⁵⁷ advocated by powerful, Western lending institutions like the World Bank. The crises, however, had been partly engendered by Mengistu's decision to channel existing resources towards large-scale, collectivist agrarian ventures that resembled earlier attempts to increase agricultural production and to modernise rural society in the Soviet Union.

PART ONE: SOVIET INFLUENCE UPON ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES UNDER BREZHNEV.

Moscow's prescriptions for socialist agrarian progress directly influenced the formation of Ethiopian agricultural development policy in the first decade after the revolution. Nevertheless, Ethiopian ruling elites wielded considerable power over the selection and adaptation of the strategies and structures that they emulated. First, some background details are provided about a few well-known socialist strategies and structures implemented by particular Soviet leaders for agricultural development in the Soviet Union before the Ethiopian revolution. Then, I examine some policies and practices implemented by Ethiopian officials that have features resembling these earlier Soviet efforts.

Soviet agricultural strategies after the Russian revolution.

For socialist-oriented states like Ethiopia, Soviet-styled approaches to the socialist transformation of agriculture offered blueprints for centralised administrative structures and strategies for controlling production that could be emulated and implemented at relatively short notice. In addition, some of them also had considerable potential for introducing rapid change and dislodging feudal peasant structures. As we shall see in the discussion that follows, these attributes were exceedingly attractive to Ethiopia's PMAC in the aftermath of their own revolution fifty years later, particularly in respect of five areas: land reform as a mechanism for controlling peasants; state farms as a means of modernising agricultural production; cooperative farms for

¹⁵⁷ Showcase reforms refer to development plans designed specifically to impress potential investors or lenders. Holcomb and Ibssa (1990:9-10), for example, claimed that that Ethiopia's dependence upon strong imperial powers in the past had caused officials to develop a systematic policy of showcasing. Under conditions of showcasing, carefully designed programmes and policies were formulated, which looked promising on paper but, in reality, were only facades.

restructuring rural production relations; centralised structures for administration and planning, and large-scale comprehensive schemes designed to expand output by modernising the basis of production and restructuring the social fabric of Ethiopia's rural population. The first four categories figured prominently in Ethiopian strategies for agricultural development between 1976 and 1984. Schemes in the fifth category were not emulated by Mengistu's administration to any significant degree until the end of 1984, shortly before Gorbachev assumed power.

Land reform

In the aftermath of the Russian revolution, land reform was vital to Bolshevik schemes for restructuring economic and social conditions.¹⁵⁸ At that time, peasant support was sorely needed, because the Bolsheviks were still very weak. Consequently, local peasants and village committees were allowed to implement the initial stages of Russia's land reform programme (Nove 1982:48-49). By allowing rich peasants as well as poor ones to participate in the initial redistribution process, Lenin's revolutionary government was able to contain threats of peasant opposition during the most vulnerable period of its existence.

Bolshevik decisions to alter this state of affairs were prompted by food shortages in 1918 and the government's inability to purchase sufficient grain supplies from the rural inhabitants to sustain the urban population. In response to impending crisis, the government expanded the powers of the Supply Commissariat (Narkomprod) to obtain and to distribute food. Thereafter, the regime began a systematic campaign to requisition grain from peasants forcibly, assisted by local divisions of the Narkomprod, workers' detachments and agents of the secret police (Nove 1982:59).

For the first ten years after the revolution, Bolshevik aspirations for the socialist transformation of Soviet agriculture were largely confined to rhetoric. Desires to institute a socialist framework for agricultural development were continually thwarted by the practical necessities of restoring order and stabilising agricultural production. Consequently, a decade after the revolution Soviet agricultural production still remained dominated by individual peasant farmers who tilled 98.3 percent of the

¹⁵⁸ Under the terms of the land decree issued on 8 November 1917 and enacted into law in February 1918, all land in Russia was nationalised and user-rights conferred upon the peasant tillers (Nove 1982:48).

cultivated land (Nove 1982:105-106). This state of affairs, however, was soon to change, given the low levels of production and the reluctance of peasant farmers to concede to government demands for urban food supplies.

State farms

After the revolution, state farms were highly favoured because they could be centrally controlled like Soviet industrial enterprises. During Stalin's time, however, they came to be regarded as too costly and inefficient, because wages and losses on state farms had to be absorbed by the government (Nove 1982:183-184).

After Stalin, state farms regained their former importance. Khrushchev determined that state farms constituted the ideal production infrastructure for cultivating new areas in his virgin lands scheme. He decided that collective farms everywhere were generally ineffective and substantially reduced the number in operation.¹⁵⁹ Brezhnev and his immediate successors, as well as Gorbachev, who was a member of the Politburo and the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU responsible for agriculture when Brezhnev was General Secretary of the CPSU, also continued to regard large, heavily mechanised state farms as the way forward. By 1985, state farms accounted for 387.7 million hectares of the total area under cultivation, as compared to 173.9 million hectares for collective farms (Medvedev 1987:364).

Cooperative farms

During Stalin's time, Soviet peasant farmers were collectivised on a massive scale in a very short period of time. In December 1926, the fifteenth congress approved the spread of collectivisation. In March 1927, officials decreed in favour of the TOZ (Association for the Joint Cultivation of Land), a very loose form of collectivism, wherein members were expected to own their own farm implements, most of their own livestock and to exercise substantial control over the land they tilled. Towards the end of 1928, Stalin's interests in collectivisation intensified, chiefly as a consequence of the government's prolonged inability to procure adequate grain supplies for feeding the

¹⁵⁹ Between 1955-1960, the number of collective farms (kolkhozy) dropped from 87,000 to 44,600, while the number of state farms (sovkhozy) rose from 5,134 to over 10,000. (Medvedev 1987:155, 161-202)

urban population. From 1929 to 1934, Stalin launched intensive campaigns to collectivise Soviet agriculture. By 1935, 94.1 percent of the crop area and 83.6 percent of peasant households had been collectivised (Nove 1982:149-152; 160-187).

Collectivisation campaigns and the establishment of producer cooperatives, two strategies associated with Stalin's collectivisation drive in the 1930s, were particularly attractive to Ethiopian officials forty years later. Stalin's tactics focused upon recruiting urban cadres to supervise operations in rural areas and using poor peasants to implement the collectivisation process. Cadres and poor peasants collected livestock and goods owned by private peasants and participated in enforcing the imposition of high mandatory grain quotas upon peasant farmers. They also helped to eliminate threats of organised rural opposition to the government by systematically undermining the credibility of more solvent, stable farmers (kulaks).

The essential features of producer cooperatives (kolkhozy) were established in Stalin's day, and most of them remained in existence in Gorbachev's time. Four features were particularly appealing for revolutionary administrations like Ethiopia's PMAC who needed to gain more control over agricultural production and independently minded peasant farmers. First, collective farms were officially regarded as voluntary endeavours. This strategy reduced government spending because individual members were required to pool their separate means of production and to contribute significantly to the Soviet Union's overall agricultural output with a minimum of state assistance (Nove 1982:241). Second, as a consequence of collectivisation, state and party officials gained more control over crop production and procurement on cooperative farms. Third, officials were able to restructure traditional patterns of labour. Members of cooperative farms were organised into clearly defined team units called *zvenos*¹⁶⁰, for example, and all kolkhoz workers were paid alike, in accordance with the workday unit or 'trudoden'¹⁶¹ fixed by the administrators. Finally, Soviet officials were

¹⁶⁰ In the 1930s and 1940s, the party favoured the link system or 'zveno' comprised of six to eight persons. In the 1950s the brigade consisting of up to 100 persons became the approved unit of organisation, but *zvenos* continued to exist within the brigade structure. In 1975-1976, Gorbachev introduced the autonomous link system, or 'Beznaryadnoe zveno' (wherein work was contracted and paid for on a start-to finish basis) in Stavropol (Nove 1982:305-306; Hosking 1985:394-395; Sakwa 1990:4; Medvedev 1987:353-357).

¹⁶¹ When the 'trudoden' was established, the party also determined that payment should be calculated on the basis of work done, not on the number of mouths to be fed in each household (Nove 1982:181,242; Medvedev 1987:183).

able to reduce substantially the costs and responsibilities associated with feeding collective farmers and state farm agricultural labourers. This was done by conferring user rights on the heads of households on collective and state farms to cultivate their own small private plots (between .25 and .50 hectare) and to exercise control over the disposal of surplus production.¹⁶²

Centralised administration and planning

In Stalin's time, centralised economic structures and command strategies for development planning worked fairly well for achieving short-term growth targets in industry, but persistently fell short of the mark in agriculture. Shortcomings in this respect, however, were partially masked by the intensity of Stalin's radical campaigns aimed at collectivisation in the 1930s and production losses sustained as a consequence of wartime adversities in the 1940s. Consequently, when Stalin died in the early fifties, it was impossible to assess whether or not the command model really could work if implemented in a more viable way because the structure was so closely associated with the crisis strategies that had been implemented by one particular individual.

Khrushchev's strategies for agricultural recovery aimed to increase output and to regulate procurement by decentralising power in long-established bureaucracies and setting up new centralised chains of command to function in their place. In 1958, for example, he dismantled Machine Tractor Stations (MTS), and mandated that individual collective farms purchase and maintain their own farming equipment (Medvedev 1987:176-180). In 1961-1962, he decentralised the authority of oblast party committees and set up the Territorial Production Administration, comprised of 1,000 units, to supervise agricultural production and procurement activities throughout the country (Medvedev 1987:188,190). Unfortunately, Khrushchev's efforts to exchange old existing chains of command for new ones ended in chaos. His attempts at agrarian reform had the unintended effect of reducing the level of agricultural production.

Under Brezhnev, restructuring the agricultural sector became a top priority. Between 1978 and 1982 (also important years for Ethiopia's ruling elite in terms of

¹⁶² In 1980, private plots only made up 1/500 of the area cultivated, but they accounted for 49% of potatoes, 15% of the vegetables, 14% of the meat, 6% of the milk and 6% of the eggs actually produced in the Soviet Union (Lane 1985:13).

setting up agricultural policy), Soviet organisational structures became more centralised and bureaucratic, and they demonstrated some extremely complex relationships.¹⁶³ In 1981, for example, the Commission of the Council of Ministers on Matters of the Agro-Industrial Complex (Agroprom) was given the responsibility for controlling all state and party activities relating to agriculture at the highest level. In addition, CPSU officials mandated that representatives of different ministries would be united into agro-industrial units at district (RAPOs), regional and republican levels (APOs).¹⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Brezhnev's efforts to reorganise administrative structures also failed to increase agricultural production significantly. In this case, reorganisation and further centralisation vastly complicated the whole system of agricultural administration.

Large-scale programmes for agricultural expansion and modernisation

Soviet officials also experimented with large-scale plans aimed at modernising the agrarian sector, increasing agricultural output and re-socialising the rural population. Although it is impossible to prove that their strategies directly shaped Mengistu's policies for resettlement and villagisation, evidence discussed later in this chapter suggests that Ethiopian officials were influenced to some degree by earlier Soviet experiments: in particular, the Virgin Lands and the Village Consolidation schemes introduced in Khrushchev's time.

Khrushchev introduced the 'Virgin Lands' scheme in 1954.¹⁶⁵ Under the initial scheme, 13 million hectares of virgin and fallow land located in northern Kazakhstan, southern parts of Siberia and southeastern sections of European Russia were opened for cultivation and planted in wheat. Later, land expansion targets were increased to around 28-30 million hectares (Nove 1982:332-333).

The principle aim of the Virgin Lands scheme was to bring more land into

¹⁶³ In November 1978, Gorbachev became the CPSU Central Committee secretary responsible for agriculture, and the Soviet-Ethiopian Friendship Treaty was concluded (Sakwa 1990:5; Medvedev 1987: 326-331).

¹⁶⁴ Medvedev (1987:328-329) claimed that the Commission of Agroprom was, in effect, a separate agricultural government with limited powers, which united all the ministries and state committees that had anything to do with agrarian matters.

¹⁶⁵ Khrushchev's virgin lands programme also helped to launch Brezhnev's political career. After his appointment as leader of the Kazakhstan programme (1954-1956), Brezhnev became a member of Khrushchev's exclusive circle of political acquaintances (Medvedev 1987:167-175).

agricultural production. Food supplies were to be increased by shifting the centre of wheat production from the Ukraine to more marginal farming areas located on the fringes of adequate rainfall belts. In turn, Ukrainian farmers were supposed to grow maize so that more livestock could be raised in central parts of the country. By restructuring the basis of regional agricultural production, Khrushchev hoped to increase supplies of meat and milk to feed the urban population (Hosking 1985:356).

The scope and pace of Khrushchev's virgin lands campaign was enormous. Between 1953 and 1956, the total amount of cultivated land in the Soviet Union was increased by 35.9 million acres: an area roughly equivalent in size to all the cultivated land in Canada (Nove 1982:333). Full-fledged campaign efforts were initiated in the spring and summer of 1954, and the Young Communist Organisation (Komsomol) recruited around 300,000 volunteers to work on projects and to harvest crops. Hundreds of new state farms covering tens of thousands of hectares were established, and vast quantities of tractors, combine harvesters and other farming machinery were transported to the new sites (Medvedev 1987:171). In addition, extensive construction projects for building homes, schools, shops and service facilities and transport networks were undertaken. An estimated 300,000 persons permanently resettled on designated sites in the newly cultivated areas (Nove 1982:333).

Initially, the programme flourished. Prospects for long-term increases in Soviet agricultural output and the eventual realisation of Moscow's procurement targets seemed excellent. In Kazakhstan alone, an estimated 20 million tons of grain were produced in 1956. As an added bonus, government procurement rates improved substantially, as a consequence of comparatively low population density in the virgin land areas. In Kazakhstan, for example, Soviet officials were able to purchase 80 percent of the 1956 harvest (Medvedev 1987:173).

Inspired by short-term successes, Khrushchev channelled valuable resources towards developing the virgin land schemes at the expense of other farming areas. Encouraged by initial results and prompted by the desire to increase production even more in the shortest time possible, Khrushchev ignored the sound advice of experts to mandate crop rotation and fertiliser application. Consequently, between 1960-1965, massive wind storms and substantial soil erosion damaged at least half of the virgin

lands in Kazakhstan (Hosking 1985:357). Moreover, his decision to channel preferential resource allocations to the virgin lands programme generated a severe agricultural crisis in the Soviet Union. In order to feed the population, Soviet officials had to sell gold supplies to buy grain on the international market. (Medvedev 1987:192-196).

Khrushchev's virgin lands strategy for increasing agricultural production in the Soviet Union in the 1950s turned out to be prohibitively costly and ultimately contributed to his undoing. Nevertheless, the part played by natural disaster in this endeavour probably allowed some Soviet analysts to overlook four important shortcomings in his scheme. First, Khrushchev underestimated the problems inherent in resettling people on a large scale and establishing effective logistical systems. Second, by concentrating valuable resources on grandiose schemes, he reduced prospects for improving output in other regions of the country. Third, by relying upon a single strategy for increasing agricultural output, he increased the potential for a major food crisis. Finally, as a consequence of overspending on the virgin lands programme, a substantial economic strain was imposed upon the Soviet Union's already overburdened economy.

Khrushchev also planned to resettle the rural population into large villages with urban amenities (agrogorad) so that rural inhabitants would be less inclined to migrate to urban areas. Although the full programme was never accepted, a scaled-down version known as the 'village consolidation policy' was eventually put into effect in some parts of the country (Pallot 1990:658-659).

Under village consolidation, Soviet officials envisaged that the rural population would be concentrated progressively into key settlements. The premise was that certain villages would be made large enough to be cost-effective, while small, remote and difficult-to service places would be left to die out. With that end in mind, many rural villages in the Soviet Union were officially evaluated and subsequently classified as viable or non-viable units (Pallot 1990:659). Viable villages were supposed to become a cross between towns and villages. They were also expected to provide a full range of urban services to collectivised agricultural workers situated in a rural setting. The optimal size of the new villages was set at between 1,000-2,000 inhabitants (Pallot 1990:658-659). They could also be settled quite quickly. In one area of the Ukraine, for

example, 1,700 villages were merged in a single three year period by shifting peasants' homes on sledges during the winter from old to new sites (Pallot 1990:659).

Three particular difficulties with Soviet village consolidation eventually resulted in the programme's fall from grace. First, relocation and new accommodation costs proved to be prohibitively expensive. Second, as a combined consequence of the mandatory withdrawal of state support from villages designated as unviable and the high level of inactivity associated with implementation, villages that survived after being adversely labelled were forced to function on very low means. Third, the very act of classifying certain villages as non-viable exacerbated the migration of youth to urban areas, thereby defeating the original purpose of the exercise (Pallot 1990:659-660).

Ethiopia's selective utilisation of Soviet strategies and structures.

What evidence is there to support the proposition that Ethiopian officials emulated earlier Soviet structures and strategies recommended for agricultural development in the Brezhnev era? First, let us examine the strategies advocated for land reform as a means for dealing with internal crisis after the revolution. Second, we should look at the Soviet-styled strategies and administrative structures introduced into Ethiopia after the strengthening of Soviet-Ethiopian ties: in particular, establishing a dominant state farm sector, creating a foundation for collectivised agriculture through the formation of producer and service cooperatives, strengthening state controls and centralised planning, and establishing state control over procurement, pricing, purchasing and marketing activities.

Land reform campaigns and peasant associations.

In the immediate aftermath of revolution, the strategies advocated by the Derg centred upon establishing indigenous socialism, achieved through self-reliance. Structures were less centralised, and peasants were freer. Nevertheless, the strategies aimed at land reform and controlling the rural population in Ethiopia bore a marked resemblance to the tactics advocated by Lenin's weak government after the Russian revolution. Similarities were particularly apparent in the Derg's agricultural campaigns and the creation of peasant associations.

In January 1975, Ethiopia's provisional military government (ETPMG)

launched the 'Development Through Cooperation: Work and Enlightenment Campaign'. Its purpose was to promote cooperation for the common good by disbursing campaign participants (Zemaches) throughout Ethiopia to organise and to politicise the population.¹⁶⁶ In March, land reform procedures aimed at fundamentally altering land ownership patterns and the structure of peasant production relations were initiated. In April, Proclamation no 31, 'Public Ownership of Rural Lands' became law. Rural land was nationalised; peasant associations were created, and individual peasants were allowed to farm up to 10 hectares of land (Mulugetta Bezzabeh, et.al., 1978:159-172.).

In August 1975, the ETPMG issued a progress report on the Campaign's activities. The report indicated that a high priority was accorded to implementing land reform and organising peasants into cooperative units, even before the formation of strong Soviet ties. As had been the case in the Soviet Union during Lenin's time, Ethiopian campaigners were instructed to inform and to explain the land reform proclamation to the public (especially people living in rural areas). They were also assigned responsibilities for organising and strengthening peasant associations at all levels, collecting information on land use, and carrying out land surveys. In addition, campaigners were expected to undertake studies on the organisational set-up of peasant associations and cooperatives, with a view to learning how they could become self-reliant and self-sustaining units of Ethiopian society. Campaigners also issued directives for the formation of farmers' associations and cooperatives (ETPMG 1975b:13-17,43).

The regime's campaign to generate Ethiopia's socialist transformation by indigenous means in 1975 was a costly venture. The National Development Campaign cost the ETPMG an estimated 50 million Birr, despite heavy reliance upon voluntary and conscripted labour (Muguletta Bezzabeh, et.al. 1978:64).

Peasant Associations (PAs) were also established under Proclamation 31 issued in April 1975. In effect, the PA became the new local government and was legally authorised to re-allocate land and evict tenants, to administer public property in the area, to establish judicial tribunals for land disputes, to establish marketing and credit

¹⁶⁶ Between January 1975 and June 1976, 51,657 university and high-school students, over 1280 military personnel and hundreds of civilian volunteers were despatched to the 437 campaign posts located in every administrative region in the country. During the campaign some of the most remote villages in Ethiopia were penetrated for the first time (Mulugetta Bezzabeh, et. al. 1978:67).

co-operatives and to undertake villagisation programmes.¹⁶⁷ PA powers were strengthened under Proclamation 71 in December 1975, when they acquired legal personalities and were officially invested with additional powers to implement the land reform proclamation: in particular, the right to form cooperative societies, women's associations, peasant defence squads and any other associations deemed necessary for the fulfilment of any particular PA's needs (Mulugetta Bezzabeh, et.al. 1978:173-194).

PAs remained an essential feature of the Derg's strategies for agricultural development after close ties were formed with the Soviet Union. Official statistics on PAs supplied by the Mengistu regime in 1982 demonstrated the importance still attached to PAs as mechanisms for regulating the behaviour of individual peasants. At the end of the Brezhnev era, 23,497 PAs with a total membership of 7,247,209 households were reportedly operating in rural Ethiopia (Hay and Griffin 1992:25).

The state farm sector.

Large, mechanised commercial farms were well established in Ethiopia before the 1974 revolution. The changes introduced by the Derg after Haile Selassie's demise, however, resembled the strategies that had been advocated for state farm development earlier in the Soviet Union.

During Haile Selassie's time, the commercial farm sector formed the linchpin of the imperial government's strategy for agricultural development. Large-scale, commercial farms were generally run as capitalist ventures, and a sizeable percentage of the commercial farming sector was owned and managed by foreign nationals or multinational corporations. Output tended to be high because these ventures were situated on prime land and received preferential resource allocations (Mulugetta Bezzabeh, et.al. 1978:90).

After the revolution, Ethiopian officials, like their earlier Russian counterparts, faced serious problems in managing the agricultural crisis, feeding the urban population and the armed forces, and providing work for displaced agricultural peasants and

¹⁶⁷ In 1975, 15,941 peasant associations, with a membership estimated at 3,334,550, already existed in Ethiopia. PA controls also extended beyond local levels. PAs at Woreda levels, for example, coordinated the functions of local PAs, while Awraja PAs, supervised the activities of Woreda PAs (ETPMG 1975a:164-166; ETPMG 1975b:16-17).

labourers. Consequently, their decision to nationalise the commercial farms and bring them under state control came as no great surprise. In May 1977, about the time officials signed the Soviet-Ethiopian Friendship Declaration, the ETPMG established the State Farms Development Authority to operate the existing commercial farms on new lines and to set up similar farms suitable for large-scale mechanised farming in other areas of the country. By 1978, more than ten state farm development corporations were already producing coffee, cotton, wheat, maize, teft, sorghum and pepper (Mulugetta Bezzebah, et.al. 1978:91-93; ETPMG 1984:3).

Ethiopia's state farm sector was heavily centralised and hierarchical. The system roughly resembled the Soviet-styled organisational structure advocated by Brezhnev's administration to increase agricultural productivity and efficiency in the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁸ The ETPMG created a four-tier, hierarchical structure. At the top level was the Ministry of State Farms Development (established in 1982), the chief policy making body. The second and third tiers were comprised of Corporations and Enterprises, respectively. On the fourth tier, at the bottom of the authority chain, was the individual State Farm.¹⁶⁹

Given reasonable access to Soviet technical advice and farm machinery and the positive performance records of large capitalist-run commercial farms in Ethiopia in the past, the ETPMG believed that Ethiopia's agricultural output would be substantially increased by expanding the state farm sector. To this end, Ethiopian ruling elites allocated an increasingly disproportionate amount of resources to state farm development in the pre-Gorbachev era. In 1978-79, for example, 56.2 percent of Ethiopia's total agricultural budget was allocated to State Farms. In 1982-1983, the allocation increased to 60.5 percent. In 1983, state farms received 95 percent of the

¹⁶⁸ Heavily centralised administrative structures also characterised Ethiopia's manufacturing sector. In 1979 the Ministry of Industry was created to oversee Public Enterprises. Under the Ministry, twelve Corporations were established. Each Corporation was assigned responsibility for administering several Public Enterprises. In 1984, 180 Public Enterprises provided 95 percent of the output in large-scale manufacturing and accounted for more than 60 percent of the total manufactured output (Mulatu Wubneh 1990:210; World Bank 1984, v 2:2).

¹⁶⁹ Within the state farm sector, coffee state farms were organised separately. Under the management of the Coffee Plantation Development Corporation, the eight state coffee farms were grouped into four enterprises: Limmu, Bebeke, Tepi and Arabagugu. Six of the eight farms were situated in Kefa (a resettlement area in the mid-1980s). Although coffee state farms encompassed an area of 12,000-15,000 hectares (ha), coffee was only being produced on 8541 ha of the area under State farm control in the early 1980s (ICO 1976-1991; Hay 1992:84).

regime's total allocation of improved seed, 76 percent of the fertiliser and 81 percent of the credit facilities (Dessalegn Ramato 1987:169; Mulatu Wubneh 1990:206).

Despite these subsidies and the benefits of Soviet technical advice, state farms failed to increase Ethiopia's agricultural output significantly. Between 1980 and 1985, output from state farms accounted for only about four to five percent of Ethiopia's total agricultural production (EIU, *CP 1989/1990*, 1989: 14).

Producer and service cooperatives.

The objectives, powers and duties of producer and service cooperatives were established under Proclamation no 71 (December 1975). Producer cooperatives (PCs) were expected to raise agricultural production and to improve the instruments of production.¹⁷⁰ As legal entities, PCs were responsible for controlling the members' main instruments of production, organising the members into collective working groups and paying members on the basis of the quality and quantity of the work rendered. PCs were intended to give priority to the interests of poor and middle peasants and to ensure that cooperative leaders came from these groups. They were also supposed to engage in continuous political education so that the political consciousness of the members would be enhanced (ETPMG 1975c:177). In contrast, Service cooperatives (SCs) were expected to provide their members with improved farming implements, to market their produce at fair prices and to supply consumer goods to cooperative members according to need. They were also responsible for instructing their members in socialist philosophy and instilling the virtues of cooperative work. SCs were supposed to function as important agents in the socialist transformation of agriculture. They were expected to pave the way for the successful establishment of agricultural PCs through the formation, promotion and consolidation of mutual aid teams (ETPMG 1975c:176).

ETPMG guidelines for the development of producer cooperatives were set out in June 1979, and they were implemented soon thereafter. Given the disappointing performance of state farms immediately after the revolution, producer cooperatives offered new opportunities for launching socialist agricultural development at a relatively low cost to the government. Ethiopian officials viewed the PC infrastructure

¹⁷⁰ Under Proclamation 71, an agricultural producers' cooperative society was deemed to be a society that had been established voluntarily by peasant associations (ETPMG 1975c:177).

as a mechanism for laying the foundation of socialist production in rural areas, a means for introducing modern farming technology and a preparatory device for the transition to large-scale agriculture.

Under the 1979 guidelines, PCs were supposed to operate on three tiers. On the bottom tier were the primary cooperatives (*malba*), where individual members were still allowed to own their own livestock and farming implements and to cultivate small, individual garden plots, measuring from quarter to a half a hectare. On the second tier were the secondary cooperatives (*welba*), where individual members were expected to hand over all of their privately owned livestock and farming implements to the cooperative, which, in turn, would own and administer almost everything, except the member's small garden plot. At the highest level were the completely collectivised cooperatives (*weland*), which Dessalegn Rahmato (1990:102) maintained roughly resembled the scheme of the Russian *kolkhozy* in the 1930s. *Weland* could only be formed, however, if two or more *welba* were joined together.

The ETPMG tried to promote collectivism and to increase output on cooperative farms by providing incentives to PC members and discriminating against independent peasants. PC members, for example, gained access to modern inputs such as fertiliser and pesticides at subsidised rates. They also benefited from government extension programmes, lower bank interest rates, and tax reductions. Members of large cooperatives acquired access to special credit privileges and the right to enter into contractual agreements with state enterprises. PCs had to be officially registered, however, before special benefits could be obtained.¹⁷¹

Despite government benefits, Ethiopia's cooperative membership figures remained low. Small-scale ventures failed to produce significantly more marketable surplus per capita than individual farmers. In both cases, farmers marketed only about 20 percent of their harvests. The rest was consumed at home (Dessalegn Rahmato 1990:104-105).

¹⁷¹ ETPMG requirements for cooperative formation at lower levels were quite broad. Any three people living in the same peasant association could form a simple cooperative. In contrast, official requirements for registered cooperatives were fairly rigid. Thirty members were required before cooperatives could legally be registered. After submitting the registration forms, members of larger cooperatives usually had to wait one or two years before they were legally entitled to claim any special benefits (Dessalegn Ramato 1990:102).

In the early 1980s Mengistu's efforts to increase peasant participation in collectivist institutions like producer and service cooperatives were only marginally successful. In 1982, 837 producer co-operatives, with a total membership of only 54,423 households cultivated 313,688 hectares of land. Of the 837 cooperatives in existence in April of that year, only 57 were officially registered. Service cooperatives fared slightly better. In 1982, 3679 service cooperatives, comprised of 16,680 peasant associations, registered a total membership of 5,054,892 households (Hay and Griffin 1992:26; Agit Ghose 1992:74).

Strengthening state controls and centralised planning

Although the 1975 Nationalisation Acts in Ethiopia provided a basis for socialist development by sweeping away the old imperial order, blueprints for long-term economic development were not included. In contrast to Haile Selassie's State-dominated economy, the Derg set about creating a framework for state centralisation along socialist lines.¹⁷² Although significant differences existed between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia in respect of the actual powers of the ruling elite to control all resources, strong arguments can be made to support Dessalegn Rahmato's idea that Mengistu's structure of economic management amounted to a command economy, despite the existence of a private sector.¹⁷³

The Derg's moves to consolidate State control over the planning of agricultural development gained momentum after 1975, as Soviet interests in Ethiopia's socialist orientation intensified. On the 20th April 1976, just two days before Soviet officials issued their first positive public commendation of the ETPMG, the military regime launched the Programme of the Ethiopian National Democratic Revolution. Objectives in the new programme demonstrated a much closer affinity with Marxist-Leninist development rhetoric. Emphasis was given to building a new people's Ethiopia, laying a

¹⁷² Dessalegn Rahmato (1987:165) maintained that a critical distinction existed between development strategies advocated by the Imperial government and the PMAC. The first advocated an open economy wherein the state assumed a disproportionately large role. The second focused on implanting a state-centred economy.

¹⁷³ Dessalegn (1987:164-165) offered two arguments. First, in industry, the State controlled virtually all medium and large-scale manufacturing, all large-scale trade and service enterprises, and all financial institutions. Second, in agriculture, state-agencies controlled the marketing and distribution of most agricultural products, and state farms received most of the resources requisite for improving agrarian output.

firm foundation for the transition to socialism and establishing a people's democratic republic (Wubneh and Abate 1988:205-210). In 1977, the year of the Friendship Declaration, the Central Planning Commission was established under Proclamation 128. In 1978, the year of the Friendship Treaty, the Central Planning Supreme Council (CPSC) replaced the Commission. Shortly thereafter the ETPMG launched the National Revolutionary Development Campaign to increase agricultural and industrial production. In 1984, the year that Ethiopia's vanguard party was formed, the National Commission for Central Planning (NCCP) replaced the Council (Proclamation 262). In conjunction with three autonomous agencies (the Central Statistical Office, the Development Projects Study Agency and the Mapping Agency), the NCCP assumed responsibility for economic development planning (Mulatu Wubneh 1990:201-202).

In respect of agricultural planning, decision-making powers remained concentrated at the top-most levels of the administrative structure. Decisions were made in the National Committee chaired by Mengistu, handed down to the Executive Committee, and forwarded to Territorial Planning Agencies, situated at regional, provincial, awraja (district) and woreda (sub district) levels. In theory, of course, the Territorial Planning Agencies also had the power to initiate development proposals, conduct comprehensive economic and social studies and supervise project implementation (Mulatu Wubneh 1990:201). In practice, however, the powers of territorial agencies were severely limited, as a consequence of the State's virtual monopoly over the allocation of significant resources.

State control over procurement and marketing activities

Mengistu's administration also introduced centralised structures that resembled Soviet-styled command entities to strengthen state control over procurement and marketing activities associated with domestic food supplies and primary exports. The Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) and the Ethiopian Coffee Marketing Corporation (ECMC) were particularly important.

The AMC was set up in 1976 and reflected Mengistu's preference for centralised and command-styled organisational structures. Initially, AMC operations were modest, and price controls were imposed rather arbitrarily. In 1979-1980, however, the powers of the Corporation were greatly extended in line with the ETPMG's growing need to

procure more food for urban dweller associations (kebeles), state enterprises and the army. Under the new arrangement, the AMC acquired the powers to implement a planned purchase and quota delivery system, to fix producer prices, to establish control over the private grain trade and to strengthen State controls over market-related activities in the public sector. In addition, the AMC also exercised control over the distribution and pricing of fertiliser. (Pickett 1991:119-121)

The AMC's system of setting fixed procurement prices for mandatory quota purchases also reflected the ETPMG's preference for centralised planning. A committee drawn from important Ethiopian ministries set prices. Once determined, they were applied uniformly across the country, without regard to differences in crop quality. Prices also tended to remain static. Farmgate prices set in 1980-1981, for example, were still the same in 1985, despite the rising costs of inputs.¹⁷⁴

The AMC aimed to strengthen the government's control over agricultural production. First, the AMC, in effect, controlled supply, because state farms and producer cooperatives were required to deliver all of their output to the AMC, and peasant farmers were subjected to high compulsory quotas (Eshetu Chole 1990:94). Second, the AMC set prices and operated two-tier pricing systems that discouraged private initiative.¹⁷⁵ In respect of cereals, for example, AMC officials paid personnel on state farms 20 to 50 percent more per unit value than peasant farmers. Third, the AMC controlled distribution (Pickett 1991:136). Regional movement of grain, for example, was severely restricted.

Centralisation policies were also well demonstrated in the ECMC's control over the procurement, marketing and export of coffee, Ethiopia's leading source of foreign trade revenue. Formed in 1978, the ECMC functioned as the State agency responsible for the procurement, processing and exporting of coffee. The ECMC, like the AMC, exercised exclusive purchase rights over coffee produced on state farms and coffee collected by service cooperatives. The ECMC also exercised a monopoly over all

¹⁷⁴ This situation remained virtually unchanged until 1988 (Pickett 1991:120).

¹⁷⁵ Private traders were allowed to engage in the grain trade on a limited basis but had to be licensed. They could purchase above-quota production directly from farmers, but, after sales transactions had been completed, they had to sell fifty percent of their purchases back to the AMC at fixed prices (Pickett 1991:120).

purchases and exports of 'washed coffee'.¹⁷⁶ In 1983-1984, the Corporation handled about 70 percent of Ethiopia's total coffee export, or about 1.58mn (60 kg bags), valued at BR1.3bn (\$628mn). In theory, the remaining 30 percent were allocated to 14 private traders for export. In practice, opportunities for private entrepreneurship in coffee trading were severely limited, as a consequence of the ECMC's strict export controls, auction regulations, and the stiff purchase and sales restrictions levied upon quality coffee (ICO 1976-1991).

The ECMC also exercised considerable control over the internal marketing, processing and storage of coffee on all levels. Fifty-one purchasing stations under the ECMC's jurisdiction were established in coffee producing areas to buy coffee from growers, cooperatives and traders. Thirteen purchasing centres were set up to control the activities of the 51 stations. In turn, four ECMC regional offices supervised activities of the 13 centres. In addition, the ECMC controlled over 110 processing plants and 120 warehouses (ICO 1976-1991).

In the mid 1980s, the ETPMG exercised considerable control over production and marketing activities of all producers and private traders in Ethiopia. Centralised agencies like the AMC and the ECMC demonstrated Mengistu's intention to strengthen state control over agricultural production, domestic marketing and the export of key crops. His policy remained in line with the heavily centralised administrative structures for managing the agrarian sector that had previously been adopted by Soviet officials in response to agricultural crises in the Soviet Union.

Ethiopia's Ten-Year Development Plan.

On the eve of Gorbachev's rise to power, Mengistu formally reaffirmed his intention to implement the socialist transformation of agriculture. His commitment was embodied in the final draft of the Ten Year Development Plan (10YDP), introduced in September 1984 to cover the period 1984/1985-1993/1994 (Dejene Aredo 1990:49-55). Adoption of the plan signalled the ETPMG's intention to abandon campaign-style socialist development strategies in favour of longer-term centralised planning.¹⁷⁷ The

¹⁷⁶ Most coffee beans in Ethiopia were only sun dried. Washed coffee was generally considered premium coffee and fetched the highest economic return (ICO 1976-1991).

¹⁷⁷ Prior to the implementation of the 10YDP, the provisional government had implemented six annual plans (Getahun Tafesse 1992:8).

new 10YDP was to serve as the main instrument in the management and guidance of Ethiopia's socio-economic transformation. The broad goals of the plan were to transform the economy by developing Ethiopia's productive forces and raising the living standards of the population. As set out in the 10YDP, socialist agriculture was intended to become the dominant sector in Ethiopia by 1994 (Getahun Tafesse 1992: 9; Mulatu Wubneh 1990:203).

Ethiopia's 10YDP for the socialist transformation of agriculture favoured the implementation of large-scale, costly undertakings. In respect of 10YDP targets for state farm expansion, the land area set aside for state farms was projected to increase from 2.8 percent of the total cultivated area (175,000 hectares) in 1984/85 to 6.4 percent (468,000 hectares) in 1994, despite the fact that existing levels of preferential resource allocations were barely sufficient to keep existing state farms minimally operational (Mulatu Wubneh 1990:206).

The 10YDP goals for enlarging the cooperative sector were even more ambitious. Under the 10YDP, cooperatives were supposed to increase from 1,147 in 1983/1984 to 15,344 in 1993/94. Correspondingly, the total number of members in cooperatives was projected to jump from 83,150 to 4.1 million over the same period. Expressed as a percentage of the total rural population, Mengistu's 10YDP targets for cooperative membership (estimated at only 1.2 percent of the population in 1983/1984) aimed to transform 52.7 percent of the rural population into cooperative farmers by 1993/94 (Getahun Tafesse 1992:20; Dessalegn Rahmato 1990:101-102).

The 10YDP also advocated the implementation of large-scale, comprehensive programmes such as resettlement and villagisation for expanding agricultural production and the socialist transformation of the rural population. Resettlement offered new opportunities for expanding the land area under cultivation and good prospects for establishing the socialist mode of production. As a justification, the 10YDP emphasised the need to reduce population pressures in the Northern highlands, where an estimated 78 percent of the population eked out a living on farmed-out land, by resettling citizens in sparsely inhabited, under-utilised areas situated in the lowlands and south-western parts of the country. Under the 10YDP, about 854,000 persons (194,000 families) were supposed to be resettled during the decade covered by the

10YDP. As regards villagisation, the 10YDP embraced the notion that Ethiopia's rural population would be better off if farmers living in scattered settlements were moved into designated villages in order to facilitate the provision of various social and economic services (Getahun Tafesse 1992:16).

The 10YDP advocated four general directions for Ethiopia's future agricultural development at the beginning of 1985. First, the socialist transformation of rural areas was to be accelerated. Second, smallholder farming was to be discouraged. Third, individual farmers were to be organised into producer cooperatives. Fourth, large-scale farming and mechanised agricultural production were to be gradually introduced (Dejene Aredo 1990:51). In respect of all these, Mengistu's administration was prepared to distribute scarce domestic resources preferentially in line with traditional, Soviet-styled recommendations for socialist agricultural development, despite recommendations made by capitalist donors to the contrary.

PART TWO: EMULATION IN ETHIOPIA'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1985.

Resemblances between Ethiopian agrarian policies and the agricultural strategies advocated by Soviet officials became less apparent in the New Thinking era, as similarities increased between Gorbachev's plans for agrarian progress and the capitalist reforms advocated by World Bank officials. However, Mengistu demonstrated a marked reluctance to abandon the high-cost structures recommended for socialist agricultural development that had been in vogue in Brezhnev's day. First, I look at the changes in Soviet support for Ethiopian agricultural policies that occurred while Gorbachev was in power. Then some of the strategies advocated by Mengistu's administration are examined.

Soviet support for Mengistu's agricultural policies.

The changing level of Soviet support for Ethiopia's socialist transformation under Gorbachev can be demonstrated by looking at the Soviet Gosplan report on Ethiopian agriculture and Moscow's continuing support for resettlement. The support offered in the early years can then be compared to the pressures for reform exerted by officials and media representatives in the Soviet Union later on in the Gorbachev era.

The Gosplan report.

Soviet officials were reluctant to abandon support for collectivisation and State-controlled agriculture in Ethiopia in the early Gorbachev era. Their criticisms focused more upon the pace and the method of implementation than upon the models emulated and the end goals envisaged.

In August 1985, Soviet advisers attached to Ethiopia's NCCP completed a critical review of agricultural development strategies for Mengistu's administration. The authors of the Gosplan report criticised the government's continued reliance on heavily centralised socialist agricultural policies but approved of Mengistu's long-term goal to collectivise. On one level, Gosplan recommendations seemed to constitute a significant departure from the Brezhnev's policies and to herald new directions in Soviet advice for improving Ethiopian agriculture.¹⁷⁸ At a deeper level, however, their continued approval for Mengistu's long-term collectivisation goals cast doubt upon the degree of change actually recommended.

This dualistic approach was particularly well demonstrated in the suggestions made for remodelling existing agricultural schemes. To begin with, Gosplan officials identified Ethiopia's main task in the mid-1980s as solving the problem of food supply. They maintained that this task could only be accomplished by boosting agricultural production. To this end, Ethiopian officials were advised to focus their efforts upon improving the output of individual peasants for the next three to five years, while simultaneously improving production rates on state farms and in peasant producers' cooperatives. Progressive strategies advocated by Gosplan analysts stressed the importance of providing production incentives for peasant farmers: in particular, subsidising inputs, such as fertiliser and establishing more flexible pricing policies for farm produce. Authors of the report even suggested that output might increase if formal legislation stating the rights and duties of individual farms were introduced (Gosplan 1985:A8-A.9).

¹⁷⁸ Paul Henze (1989:19-20) believed that the Gosplan report was conceived to serve three purposes: first, to persuade the Derg to abandon unrealistic goals and to slow down the pace of socialisation, without compromising the long-term objectives of establishing a Soviet-styled economic system; second, to absolve Moscow of the blame associated with the failures of past Soviet advice and previous Ethiopian economic policies; third, to distance the Soviet Union from any future decisions made by Mengistu regime likely to worsen Ethiopia's present economic predicament.

As a justification for Ethiopia's temporary enhancement of the private sector, the writers of the report drew upon Lenin's approach to a similar problem in the Soviet Union after the Civil War. They pointed out that Mengistu's official support for independent, small farmers might improve economic conditions in the same way that Lenin's strategies for assisting peasants and developing small-scale private industry had done under the New Economic policy. In line with Lenin's earlier thoughts on the matter, Gosplan analysts maintained that Ethiopia's capitalist development should be directed towards state capitalism, rather than be forbidden or arrested during periods of social transition. They argued that state capitalism could eventually be transformed into state socialism (Gosplan1985:A.8-A.9,A.50).

Gosplan's recommendations still reflected the ongoing support extended by Soviet officials for the socialist transformation of Ethiopia's agricultural sector. In respect of collectivisation, producer cooperatives and state farms were still deemed to be vital to Ethiopia's future agrarian progress. As regards, mechanisation, modern farming technology continued to be regarded as a vital strategy for improving agricultural output in all agricultural sectors, especially in the newly developed farming regions. To this end Soviet advisors stressed the importance of tractors and recommended that the Mengistu regime begin training programmes for machine operators.¹⁷⁹

Resettlement.

In the early Gorbachev period, Soviet officials still officially supported Mengistu's plan for expanding socialised agriculture through the implementation of resettlement and villagisation schemes.¹⁸⁰ Introduced as part of Mengistu's Drought Action plan in November 1984, both programmes resembled old-fashioned, prescriptions

¹⁷⁹ Along similar lines, authors of the report advocated the eventual amalgamation of small-scale private industries into producers' cooperative organisations, in keeping with policies deemed acceptable for '...creating the fundamentals of [a] socialist society' (Gosplan 1985:A.26, A.10, A.21, A.51).

¹⁸⁰ Initiated by Haile Selassie, Ethiopian resettlement programmes were endorsed by World Bank officials in a report issued in 1973. The Derg continued to carry out small-scale resettlement programmes until 1979, when they were suspended on grounds that the results had been unsatisfactory. Mengistu revived resettlement programmes in 1984 (Brüne 1990:26).

for Soviet-styled collectivised agriculture, especially when used in combination.¹⁸¹

Soviet support for resettlement was especially apparent between November 1984 and January 1986. Although help in other areas was also provided, Soviet efforts to assist in Ethiopian resettlement schemes centred upon the provision of logistical support. Officials in Gorbachev's administration continued to supply aircraft, aircrews, trucks and drivers for the transportation of settlers from famine-stricken areas in the north to resettlement areas situated in the west and south-western regions of the country and, aside from East Germany, was virtually the only government do so at that particular time. In December 1985, TASS correspondents claimed that Soviet pilots had evacuated at least 120,000 people from famine-stricken areas (TASS, 29 December 1985).

Soviet officials also transported food and provided medical assistance to the settlers living on new settlement sites. Soviet trucks ferried food from the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture's stores to resettlement areas. Kurt Jansson (1987:37), head of the UN relief program in Ethiopia in 1985, maintained that 300 Soviet trucks and 700 drivers had been specifically involved in this effort. In respect of medical assistance in resettlement areas, TASS reporters in December 1985 also stated that some 100,000 patients had been treated at the Soviet mobile hospital in the Asosa resettlement area (TASS, 29 December 1985).

Officially, Soviet approval for Ethiopian strategies to implement collectivised agriculture on a massive scale in resettled areas continued well into the Gorbachev era. In 1988, for example, Soviet radio newscasters criticised Western objections to Ethiopia resettlement schemes on grounds that the West's adverse responses to Mengistu's plans were aimed at changing Ethiopia's political direction and frustrating collective work projects. They argued that Mengistu's resettlement programme was not an ideological choice but an important task for development and saving lives. Radio Moscow newscasters then commended the Ethiopian government for saving thousands of lives in the northern famine zones, developing over 123,000 hectares of land between 1985 and 1987 and providing the opportunity for 600,000 people resettled in

¹⁸¹ Henze (1989:31) claimed that Mengistu's resettlement policies and the provision of state-operated heavy equipment for opening up new agricultural lands in the mid-1980s were essentially imitations of the strategies previously deployed in Khrushchev's virgin lands programme.

the western regions to become self-sufficient in food production (BBC, *SWB*, 3 and 16 March 1988).

This positive view of Mengistu's massive resettlement venture was reinforced at about the same time in a broadcast of an article written by *Pravda* correspondent Igor Tarutin. Tarutin considered resettlement and villagisation programmes to be the two central programmes for restructuring rural areas. He maintained that Ethiopian farmers were being provided with the necessary incentives to collectivise themselves into villages and to establish co-operative farms. Tarutin also believed that the success of resettlement and villagisation schemes would signal a bright future for Ethiopia (BBC, *SWB*, 16 March 1988).

Pressures for reform after 1987.

As perestroika developed in the Soviet Union, Soviet officials attempted to persuade Ethiopian officials to initiate some level of agricultural reform. These efforts were particularly apparent following Mengistu's decisions to remove aid workers from the north in May 1988. In July, Gorbachev discussed approaches to development with Mengistu in Moscow, and the two leaders agreed to initiate joint efforts to devise new and more effective forms of Soviet-Ethiopian co-operation that could take into account the long-term development plans of both countries. Three days later, Politburo member Nikolay Ryzhkov, then Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, briefed Mengistu on the current progress of perestroika in the Soviet Union. Ryzhkov advised Mengistu that the Soviet economy could only be put right if command administrative methods were rejected and replaced by new forms of economic management. He also emphasised the importance of finding an optimal blend between personal and public interests and giving scope to personal initiative in order to benefit socialism (BBC, *SWB*, 29 July 1988).

Accounts in the Soviet media accounts in August and September reinforced the view that Soviet officials were becoming dissatisfied with Mengistu's development strategies. In August, Aleksandr Krylov, a Soviet agricultural expert of the Far Eastern Scientific Centre of the USSR Academy of Sciences, talked about the problems of Ethiopian agriculture in an interview broadcast on Moscow radio. Krylov maintained that Mengistu's practice of setting very low agricultural prices had adversely affected

Ethiopian farmers and had created an imbalance in the goods exchanged between rural and urban sectors. He also stated that the regime's monopoly over the purchase of agricultural produce had created a bottleneck for food supplies destined for urban areas. Krylov concluded that Mengistu's decision in December 1987 to raise producer prices, to legalise private trade in staples and to issue licenses to traders to buy directly from farmers would increase Ethiopia's agricultural production (BBC, *SWB*, 17 August 1988). In September, during a report on Ethiopian Revolution Day carried live on Soviet television, correspondent A. Kraminov criticised the Ethiopian government for failing to create an 'effectively functioning economic mechanism' and warned about the dangers inherent in too much centralisation and bureaucratisation (BBC, *SWB*, 16 September 1988).

In March 1990, Soviet hopes that that Ethiopian officials would restructure Ethiopian agricultural policies more in keeping with Gorbachev's perestroika were realised. Mengistu officially jettisoned Ethiopia's experiment in old-fashioned, Soviet-styled socialism in favour of a New Economic Policy (NEP), which vaguely resembled Lenin's programme of the same name. In an article printed in *Pravda* about two weeks after the announcement, Soviet news correspondent Demidov reported that cooperatives were to be provided with new incentives. He pointed out that the Ethiopian State would continue to function as primary regulator of production, however, rather than leaving matters to the blind interplay of market forces. Demidov provided no assessments of the Mengistu's new development programme in the article, but he stressed the fact that Ethiopia's economic improvement was dependent upon concluding the civil war (*Pravda*, 23 March 1990: 6, in *CDSP* 1990, v 42, no 12: 27).

When Mengistu's administration finally collapsed in May 1991, Soviet news correspondents were quick to equate the shortcomings of the ousted Government's policies with Mengistu's predilection for earlier Marxist/Leninist socialist policies and to ignore the Perestroika aspects of the defunct administration's NEP. Correspondent L. Borovoi noted that the creation of a dominant State sector had failed to bring about economic and social well being for the majority of the population. He also observed that forced collectivisation had failed to reverse the negative decline in Ethiopia's annual agrarian output. As proof of Ethiopia's lagging agricultural performance, he pointed out that in 1991 Ethiopians still remained reliant upon imports for daily food

supplies (*Izvestia*, May 23, 1991:5, in *CDSP* 1991, v 43, no 21:21).

Mengistu's strategies for agricultural progress.

During Gorbachev's time in power, Mengistu's official reform rhetoric embraced recommendations made by the World Bank as well as those advocated under perestroika. Whatever Soviet influences might have been, however, Ethiopia's ruling elite had the ultimate say in determining agricultural policy. In this case, Mengistu demonstrated a marked reluctance to abandon former intentions to centralise and to collectivise Ethiopia's agricultural sector in line with the tactics that had been advocated by earlier Soviet leaders. First, I discuss Mengistu's collectivisation efforts in the resettlement and villagisation programmes. Then World Bank recommendations for agricultural reform in Ethiopia are reviewed, and certain similarities to some of Gorbachev's strategies for agrarian reform in the Soviet Union are noted. Finally, the 1990 agricultural reforms are examined to see whether there is any justification for Holcomb's and Ibssa's claim (see Chapter two) that Ethiopian leaders used 'showcasing' tactics to gain external funding for development which had little bearing upon their own intentions and policies for internal development.

Resettlement and villagisation

Used in combination, resettlement and villagisation programmes offered Mengistu's administration unique opportunities for collectivising agriculture and controlling the rural population.¹⁸² Resettlement offered opportunities to introduce Soviet-styled modes of socialist production with their emphasis on mechanised, large-scale farming in new settlement areas. Villagisation provided a means for sustaining socialist transformation, because the rural population could be concentrated into clearly defined areas.

After a five-year lapse, resettlement was re-introduced in November 1984, in conjunction with Mengistu's Drought Action Plan. In addition to saving starving peasants, resettlement was viewed as a long-term strategy for the socialist

¹⁸² In theory, resettlement presupposed a movement of the population that would require detailed planning and control, while villagisation technically referred to population regrouping within a particular area (Pankhurst 1992:10).

transformation of agriculture that could address the root causes of famine and end Ethiopia's dependency on external donors. The strategy also had some other uses: in particular, reshuffling the population, so that people who had already accepted the revolution could be placed along sensitive parts of the border; integrating various tribes and nationalities; developing new farming areas for producing food surpluses; removing unemployed and other economically unwanted persons from urban centres; containing the influence of political undesirables within a given geographical location, and depopulating rebel areas so that insurgents would lose their support lines (Dawit Wolde 1989:289).

Although in theory resettlement offered some prospects for agricultural development, Mengistu's undue reliance upon some of the strategies previously deployed in the Soviet Union alienated powerful external donors and greatly reduced prospects for the programme's eventual success. Criticisms in three areas particularly evoked memories of similar complaints that had been levelled against Soviet leaders in the past: the scale and pace of implementation, party control over the operation and the excessive costs engendered by resettlement ventures.

The scale and pace of Mengistu's resettlement operations in the mid-1980s were unprecedented in modern Ethiopian history. Initially, Ethiopian officials set targets to resettle 1.5 million people (300,000 families) from Tigray and Wollo to Southwestern Ethiopia within a nine-month period.¹⁸³ In the first stage, 50,000 family heads (representing an estimated 250,000 people) were supposed to be moved from Welo and Tigray and resettled in the regions in the south and south-west, where they would be assimilated into existing peasant associations. In the second stage, 250,000 family heads (representing an estimated 1.25 million people) were to be transported to undeveloped areas (Pankhurst, 1992:55).

The speed of implementation was every bit as ambitious as the scope of the undertaking. From the programme's inception in October 1984 to January 1986 (when the government temporarily suspended resettlement programmes for consolidation purposes), an estimated 600,000 Ethiopians were moved from their homelands in the North and resettled in other parts of Ethiopia (Pankhurst 1992:56). Resettlement was briefly re-activated in November 1987 in response to poor harvests and impending

¹⁸³ In comparison, between 1974 and 1984 only about 46,000 households (150,000 people) were resettled on 88 settlement sites in 11 regions (Pankhurst, 1990:121; Dawit Wolde 1989:289).

famine, but at the end of May 1988, only 10,000 more people had been resettled. The programme was abandoned a month later, and no further mass movements of settlers from the north to new settlement areas in the West and Southwest were undertaken by Mengistu's administration (Pankhurst 1992:76).

The WPE was assigned primary responsibility for organising the resettlement scheme and implementing the transformation to a socialist agricultural system. Party officials viewed the management of resettlement as a very important party task because it offered opportunities for putting Marxist/Leninist doctrines into practice and testing WPE cadre loyalties. To that end, the party sent out no less than 2,259 cadres to work on settlement sites during the first year of the programme (Pankhurst 1992:55).

On the resettlement sites, cadres introduced patterns of societal organisation and interaction in ways that resembled the methods previously used by CPSU officials in the Soviet Union. Recruited from all parts of Ethiopia, cadres were sent on campaigns to resettlement sites during the first phase of the programme, where they actively assisted in the process of social restructuring. Those selected were expected to serve as vanguard campaigners who would lead the people. Their most important duty was 'to foster collective spirit and to instil values of cooperative work'. Organised into units called Zerfs, cadres also functioned as the most important intermediaries between the state and the settlers. They also had authority over other administrative officials and workers, including the selection and disposal of leaders of local peasant associations and members of the local militia (Pankhurst 1992:149-155).

Finally, WPE officials and resettlement administrators working together were supposed to facilitate the transformation of independent farmers into waged agricultural labourers. All lands situated on resettlement sites were farmed collectively except for small, private garden plots of one/tenth hectare allocated to each household. WPE officials and Ministry of Education workers supervised work arrangements in conventional resettlement sites. Settlers were organised into teams called Budin, and four Budin comprised a brigade. Settlers worked for resettlement administrators. Pay was determined on a points or Netib system, and remuneration was contingent upon official assessments of the work points that agricultural workers had accumulated.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ In the conventional settlement site of Queto, for example, each man received one point for every hour worked (Pankhurst 1992:163).

Insufficient internal resources eventually undermined the viability of Mengistu's resettlement venture. Despite Soviet rhetorical and logistical support for resettlement endeavours, the Ethiopian leader's preference for rapid implementation, his refusal to scale down targets and his decision to collectivise new settlement areas at all costs overburdened the country's already declining economy and alienated powerful capitalist donors.¹⁸⁵ Preliminary survey reports were made too quickly, and valuable resources were often squandered upon sites that had to be abandoned because they were uninhabitable. Moreover, the ventures envisaged were overly ambitious and prohibitively costly. New areas were planned as a number of closely linked villages located within a radius of 100 km designed to accommodate between 10,000 and 20,000 households (family heads). Each village in the complex was planned to house about 500 households (Pankhurst 1990:125). New complexes, in turn, were supposed to serve as excellent locations for introducing villagisation, as a consequence of organised grid-like layouts within each settlement area. However, settlers were frequently moved into resettlement areas before the land had been cleared for planting and dwellings had been completed. Consequently, the need to construct shelter frequently obstructed vital cultivation activities. Finally, attempts at successful production were thwarted by government's failure to provide adequate supplies of vital inputs like fertiliser and good seed (Pankhurst 1992:127-130).

The overly ambitious targets set for mechanised farming on new resettlement sites also undermined the utility of resettlement as a strategy for modernising agricultural production. Although tractors and other farm machinery, mostly provided by the Soviet Union, were delivered to the newly opened farming areas, their utility was limited, because they frequently broke down in the rough terrain and no one had the expertise or the parts to fix them (Pankhurst 1992:128,159-160).

The costs of the resettlement programme far exceeded the original estimates. Initially, only a quarter of Ethiopia's Drought Action Plan's 531.92 million birr budget was supposed to be spent on it. Before the programme was finally scuttled, government expenditures were estimated to be in the region of 600 million Birr, a figure

¹⁸⁵ Initially, only The Soviet Union, East Germany, Italy and Canada, plus a few independent aid agencies and religious groups agreed to help. The United States, West Germany and Britain remained resolutely opposed to the project (Pankhurst 1992:75,79).

considerably in excess of Mengistu's entire action plan budget (Pankhurst 1992:74-75). After resettlement was suspended, internal resources earmarked for existing sites dwindled at an alarming rate. Donors and principal aid agencies in the West, however, continued to withhold financial assistance on grounds that it was an inappropriate strategy for Ethiopia's agricultural development. Although this view was not officially voiced by Gorbachev's administration, Soviet interests in providing continued logistical and rhetorical support for Mengistu's large-scale, controversial collectivist ventures declined markedly.

Mengistu's large-scale experiment in villagisation in the mid-1980s also offered opportunities for controlling the rural population and restructuring the traditional basis of agrarian society.¹⁸⁶ In this case, while Soviet village consolidation policies in the Khrushchev era probably influenced Mengistu's ideas about villagisation to some extent, other prototypes also existed in relatively close proximity to Ethiopia: in particular, ujaama, Tanzania's massive experiment in villagisation.¹⁸⁷ Whatever the influences upon villagisation, it is important to discuss its implications for collectivisation in Ethiopia.

Villagisation programmes were introduced in Hararghe in December 1984 as part of the government's Drought Action Plan, and about one million rural households were moved into new villages over a six-month period. In July 1985, encouraged by earlier successes in Bale in the 1970s and recent experiences in Hararghe, Ethiopian officials extended the villagisation programme to eight of the 12 remaining administrative regions (Alemayehu Lirensu 1990:136).

Subsequently, the programme was scheduled for implementation in two phases. In the first phase, which lasted from December 1985 to March 1986, about 4.67 million people (12% of the rural population) residing in small farming communities in Shewa, Arsi, and Hararghe were relocated into about 4,500 villages. In Phase two, national controls were introduced, and the pace of villagisation was intensified. In June 1986, the administration established a national Villagisation Coordinating Committee to oversee operations. In January 1987, the Ministry of Agriculture issued

¹⁸⁶ Villagisation programmes were introduced initially in the Bale region during 1977-1978 Somali war as countermeasures to security threats. The scale of these operations, however, was substantially less than Mengistu's mid-1980s venture (Alemayehu Lirensu 1990:136).

¹⁸⁷ See Susan Crouch (1987:68-73) on ujaama.

'Villagisation Guidelines' for implementing bodies. Under the programme 10 million people were supposed to be relocated into 9,438 villages by the end of 1987. In July, Ethiopian officials reported that eight million people had been villagised and that more than 180,000 dwelling units had been constructed. In October 1987, shortly after the military government's formal transformation into a civilian administration, Mengistu announced plans to villagise a further three million people. In mid-1988, it was estimated that 12 million rural inhabitants (or one-third of the rural population) had been relocated under the villagisation programme and were living in newly built villages or on officially designated sites.¹⁸⁸

Mengistu claimed that villagisation would effectively promote rational land-use patterns, conserve resources, provide peasants with essential social services and strengthen security. As set out in the Villagisation Guidelines issued in 1985 by Ethiopia's Ministry of Agriculture, peasants living in small, remote farming communities would be relocated in larger village clusters situated somewhere in the vicinity of their peasant smallholdings. Within village clusters, each village would accommodate about 200 to 300 households (1000-2000) persons, and each household would occupy 1000 square meter compounds (Mulatu Wubneh 1990:207).

There were practical shortcomings in the plan to alter traditional ways of rural life through the introduction of collectivist strategies embodied in villagisation. First, peasants were often forced to move house before new accommodation had been built. In some cases, like earlier efforts in the Soviet Union, existing structures were actually hauled to designated sites. Second, new village complexes tended to be located further away from cultivated areas than the old, remote farming communities. Consequently many peasants had to walk long distances before they could even begin the day's farming activities. Third, smaller compound allocations in the new villages actually decreased prospects for self-sufficiency. Reductions in plot size limited prospects for growing garden crops, raising small animals and performing various activities to increase income and to meet domestic consumption requirements (Alemayehu Lirensen 1990:135-136).

¹⁸⁸ Estimates of the numbers actually villagised between 1984 and 1987, as well as details about the pace of reforms and the contents of official villagisation directives vary. Compare, for example, the estimates made by Alemayehu Lirensen 1990:139,136 with those in Mulatu Wubneh 1990:207 and Brüne 1990:26.

Over time, miscalculations made by Mengistu's administration in respect of particular programmes added substantially to the enormous costs incurred by villagisation. As a consequence of the Guidelines set out in 1987, some of the newly constructed villages, and village clusters failed to meet the required specifications. They had to be abandoned and subsequently rebuilt on more appropriate sites. Others had to be moved back some 400-500 metres because they were situated too close to the road (Alemayehu Lirensa 1990:139).

Although collectivist policies associated with Ethiopian resettlement and villagisation projects in the mid-1980s resembled earlier Soviet strategies, the style and pace of implementation were products of Mengistu's own choosing. Nevertheless, Gorbachev's rhetorical and logistical support for resettlement projects, in particular, encouraged Mengistu's administration to divert scarce resources from other areas where they were badly needed.

Reforms advocated by the World Bank and Soviet officials.

Over time, the prospects envisaged by Ethiopian officials for substantially increasing agricultural output through resettlement and villagisation failed to materialise. The programmes were simply too large in scale to be financed by the Ethiopian government. In the absence of external support, Mengistu had no alternative but to consider policy options for agricultural development recommended by the World Bank. These recommendations also bore a marked similarity to Gorbachev's strategies for agricultural reform in the Soviet Union.

World Bank proposals

World Bank officials issued two reports in 1987 and 1988 relating directly to Mengistu's plans for the socialist transformation of Ethiopian agriculture.¹⁸⁹ Authors

¹⁸⁹ World Bank officials had issued earlier reports on Ethiopia in 1980, 1981 and 1984. Descriptions of the government's socialist administrative structures and policies contained in the 1984 report are particularly informative. Critiques and recommendations set out in that particular two-volume report are interesting as well. The 1987 report was based upon the recommendations of a field mission undertaken in March/April 1985 and discussions with Mengistu's administration conducted in November 1986. The 1988 report was based upon the findings of a public investment review mission sent to Ethiopia in February/March 1987 and consultations with Ethiopia's newly transformed civilian regime undertaken in

of the 1987 report attributed part of Ethiopia's lagging economic performance to the difficulties encountered in putting an effective system of development planning into place. They concluded that even within a socialist framework the Ethiopian government should allocate internal resources more efficiently and should take advantage of market forces in order to stimulate peasant farmers and individual entrepreneurs.

To accomplish these aims, World Bank analysts made several important recommendations. First, the Ethiopian government was urged to establish an export action programme that would improve marketing and credit facilities, readjust exchange rates and reform domestic pricing. Then analysts encouraged Ethiopian officials to restore an open grain market by removing inter-regional barriers, eliminating taxes on the movement of grain by private grain traders and restricting the operations of the Agricultural Marketing Corporation. An increase in farmgate procurement prices for peasant smallholders was also recommended. Finally, World Bank officials advised Mengistu to raise the existing level of external development funding substantially. To achieve this aim, they encouraged Ethiopian officials to amend existing policy frameworks in order to attract potential donors. Improved mechanisms for aid-coordination, planning and the promotion of foreign investment were deemed to be particularly important (World Bank 1987:33,48-50,11,72-73).

In the 1988 report, World Bank officials intensified their efforts to persuade Ethiopian officials to abandon the Soviet-styled strategies that had been used to restructure the agricultural sector after the revolution. They were prompted by their reviews of the Ethiopian government's Public Investment Programme (PIP) and their assessments of the viability of strategies advocated to attain the Three-Year Plan (3YDP 1986-1989) objectives.¹⁹⁰ With regard to agriculture, they paid particular attention to the government's preferential allocation of resources to state farms at the expense of peasant farmers and Mengistu's continued reliance upon collectivist strategies as mechanisms for output expansion.

On the issue of resources, World Bank analysts reminded Ethiopian officials

October 1987 (World Bank 1987:unnumbered; 1988: preface).

¹⁹⁰ As originally envisaged, Mengistu's 10 YDP was to be conducted in three stages: a 2-year plan (1984-1986); a 3-year plan (1986-1989) and a 5-year plan (1989-1994) (World Bank 1988:1-3).

that allocations under the current PIP continued to benefit state farms, despite Mengistu's officially stated objective to improve peasant agriculture. State farms were still receiving 63 percent of the total expenditure in agriculture, even though they accounted for only four percent of the cultivated area. In contrast, peasants, who accounted for 91 percent of the area cultivated, were only receiving an allocation of 37 percent. Consequently, World Bank analysts concluded that the current distribution policies represented a serious misallocation of resources. They recommended that the state farm share of PIP be reduced to 28 percent and that allocations to the peasant sector be increased to 72 percent of the total agricultural PIP (World Bank 1988 v, 2: 23, 46-51).

The authors of the 1988 report also criticised the government's plans to increase agricultural output by promoting schemes like resettlement and collectivisation. In respect of resettlement, World Bank analysts questioned the viability of Mengistu's objectives to increase the total land area under cultivation by 930,000 hectares. At a conservative estimate of BR10,000 (\$4,831) per hectare, they claimed that bringing even half of the proposed 930,000 hectares into cultivation through resettlement would involve an additional expense of BR4.6 billion (\$2.2bn): an outlay large enough to swallow over 55 percent of the resources allocated to Ethiopia's entire three-year PIP. Consequently, they maintained that the target was far too ambitious, given the country's limited resources. In addition, World Bank officials advised Mengistu's administration to give substantial attention to problems associated with soil fertility, food supplies, communication infrastructures and health in resettlement areas (World Bank 1988:46,42).

On the issue of collectivisation, World Bank officials expressed concern over the ETGVT's original 10YDP commitments to increase the share of producer cooperatives to 52 percent of the total land-use by 1994. They were especially concerned about 10YDP targets because 3YDP objectives advocated an increase of only six percent in the number of cooperatives by 1988-1989. Analysts were afraid that if the government implemented drastic measures of the kind needed to fulfil the ambitious 10YDP targets for collectivisation in so short a time, agricultural output would deteriorate dramatically (World Bank 1988:46-47).

World Bank analysts also criticised Mengistu's decision to promote and to strengthen socialist production relations. They claimed that initial efforts in this direction had been implemented too quickly and that restrictions on private enterprise remained too extensive. They argued that unless efforts at socialist transformation were implemented on a voluntary basis, food production would decline even further. They maintained that the Ethiopian government needed to learn from other centrally planned economies like the Soviet Union that had already legalised some aspects of private economic activity (World Bank 1988:85).

Within Ethiopia's existing socialist framework, the authors of the 1988 report urged Mengistu's administration to assign a stronger and more dynamic role to the private sector. They recommended that the government introduce a joint venture code which would guarantee private entrepreneurs access to foreign exchange and domestic credit and relax existing limits upon private investment. Ethiopian officials were also urged to guarantee security of tenure to independent farmers and to provide assurances against the involuntary movement or forced membership of peasants into cooperatives (World Bank 1988:86-87). World Bank officials advised the government to adopt a three-pronged approach to reform that would focus on the producer pricing and marketing incentives, exchange rates devaluation, and the promotion of individual and group entrepreneurship in the private sector.¹⁹¹

Gorbachev's reforms

Gorbachev's concerted efforts to resuscitate Soviet agricultural development by promoting and legalising individual initiatives did not really gain full momentum until 1989. His strategies for domestic revitalisation stressed the importance of individual incentives and wage differentiation, as opposed to egalitarianism and collectivism. They also resembled strategies that had been advocated for Ethiopia by the World Bank.

Gorbachev's new strategies for agricultural progress emphasised the importance

¹⁹¹ During discussions in October 1987, Ethiopian officials objected to the World Bank's packaged approach to development policy recommendations on grounds that it made one policy change hostage to another. Subsequently, Mengistu agreed to act upon the first and third recommendations, but elected to ignore analysts' advice about changing the exchange rates (World Bank 1988:106).

of individual peasants and agricultural workers in Soviet economic development. In April 1989, an agricultural reform program was introduced that aimed to make rural life more attractive by reducing differences between urban and rural living conditions and improving the overall quality of the rural work force.¹⁹² In August, legislation was implemented to provide economic incentives to producers and production units for increased agricultural output. Under the new provisions, farms were offered payments in hard currency for wheat produced above quota, and farms that agreed to lease areas for additional cultivation had their debts cancelled. In November, a leasing law was passed that officially authorised individuals or small groups to lease land from state farms or collectives in exchange for rent.¹⁹³ Under the new arrangement, leases became valid for 50 years and could be inherited. Although wages for individuals on leased property were not guaranteed, leaseholders received profit-related income. In May 1990, two months after Mengistu introduced his new economic policy, Gorbachev's administration finally raised procurement prices for several kinds of grain (Tolz 1992:263).

Nevertheless, agricultural policy in the Soviet Union during Gorbachev's time still remained rooted in the notion that highly mechanised state and collective farms would continue to function as the primary units of agricultural production. To be sure, individual peasants and rural workers became more prominent in development rhetoric, but large-scale, state and collective farms still remained the basic units of production in the Soviet Union, and farm managers remained accountable to centralised authorities for the bulk of production-related activities.

Mengistu's response to World Bank and Soviet recommendations.

We turn now to Mengistu's response to criticism, and the balance sustained between the rhetoric and implementation of reform in Ethiopia's New Economic Policy. Available evidence does support the claim made by Holcomb and Ibssa (1990) in Chapter two that Ethiopian elites adopted 'showcasing' strategies to gain the support

¹⁹² See Judith Pallot (1990:655-674) on Gorbachev's efforts to revitalise rural society through the implementation of Green Ticket schemes.

¹⁹³ Although the leasing law was not formally implemented until on 23 November 1989, Gorbachev attempted to introduce leasing arrangements in mid-1987 (Wegren 1992:14).

of influential donors that masked their true policy intentions. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, Mengistu demonstrated a marked reluctance to abandon the Soviet-styled strategies and structures that he had previously advocated for agricultural progress.

Mengistu's initial efforts in 1987 to incorporate capitalist-inspired strategies into his existing plans for socialist agricultural development were limited in scope. Nevertheless, his decision to advocate liberalisation dramatically increased Ethiopia's future prospect of receiving development aid from Western donors. Following the announcement of reforms in December 1987, Ethiopian officials expected to receive a loan from the International Development Agency (IDA) worth \$150,000,000, which had been frozen since 1986, and about \$200,000,000 from the European Community (EC), which had provisionally been allocated under the Third Lomé Convention. Disbursal of these funds, however, remained contingent upon the ability of Ethiopian officials to secure the formal approval of World Bank and European Community officials for their new reform measures.¹⁹⁴

In 1989, Mengistu's reform rhetoric intensified. In May, a journalist, Julian Ozanne, reported that the Ethiopian government was thinking about implementing the development prescriptions advocated by Gorbachev's administration, as well as World Bank analysts: in particular, leasing land for periods of up to 25 years; encouraging private commercial farming; hiring workers; devoting less resources to state farms; establishing rural small scale and cottage private industries; and introducing more liberal pricing and marketing policies (*Financial Times*, 12 May 1989). In July, capital ceilings were raised for Ethiopians wishing to invest in small-scale industries,¹⁹⁵ and the government introduced a new joint venture code, which sanctioned the formation of joint ventures between the Ethiopian state, state enterprises, financial agencies, cooperatives or private capital on the one hand and foreign states, state enterprises, financial agencies or private capital, jointly or severally on the other.¹⁹⁶ In October, the

¹⁹⁴ EC officials, for example, made the release of \$78 million earmarked for Ethiopia contingent upon the government's introduction of free-market incentives (*The Washington Post*, 7 February 1988; Keesing's, 30 November 1988).

¹⁹⁵ The capital ceilings for individual entrepreneurs and cooperatives/business organisations were raised to two million and four million birr, respectively. The total capital invested was limited to four million birr and eight million birr, respectively (ETGVT 1989a:183).

¹⁹⁶ The new law incorporated incentives such as the right of foreign investors to remit any dividends

Ethiopian government was reported to be in the process of abolishing common farms.¹⁹⁷ Reports obtained from field mission analysts at the time indicated that common farms were being divided up and distributed to the growers who worked on them and that producers were at liberty to dispose of their shares as they wished.¹⁹⁸

Despite the new rhetoric, Mengistu's administration was reluctant to abandon the schemes it had previously advocated for agricultural development. In December 1987, Ethiopian officials announced plans to change pricing and marketing policies in line with the strategies advocated by the World Bank (*The Washington Post*, 7 February 1988). Although the government raised some procurement prices (the first rise since 1980), producers benefited only if they happened to be cultivating one of eleven designated crops. Similarly, new directives to restore a free grain market that allowed private traders to move grain between regions, reduced mandatory purchase quotas and permitted farmers to sell surplus grain on the open market lacked power because the AMC still retained a virtual monopoly over the grain market (Associated Press, 28 January 1988). Although Mengistu announced in November 1988 that restrictions would be lifted on private sector investment in all economic sectors and that domestic entrepreneurs would be allowed to participate in joint ventures involving foreign capitalists, he maintained that the government remained committed to socialist principles (Associated Press, 12 November 1988). In 1989, despite the adverse criticisms of World Bank officials, Adela Soneso, President of the Central Council of the Ethiopian Peasants' Association, announced that another 2.7 million people would be moved from isolated farms and resettled in new villages. He confirmed that that plans for collectivisation were going ahead and that efforts were still being made to increase productivity by using the socialist mode of production (Keesing's, 31 December, 1989).

received from the activities of a joint venture, preferential exemptions from certain customs duties and income tax exemptions for a five year period (ETGVT 1989b).

¹⁹⁷ During a field mission to Ethiopia undertaken in January 1990, ICO official Dr Owuzu Akoto was informed by Government agents that a decision had been taken in October 1989 to abolish common farms. The term 'common farms' remained unclarified and could have referred to state farms, cooperatives, or large, collective farms situated in resettlement areas (Akoto 1990).

¹⁹⁸ In March 1990, President Mengistu (1990:27) confirmed that some cooperatives had been dissolved during 1988 and 1989.

In March 1990, Mengistu's administration officially abandoned Ethiopia's experiment in socialism and replaced it with a mixed economic development package, appropriately named the New Economic Policy (NEP). In his March report to the 11th plenum of the WPE's Central Committee, Mengistu acknowledged that a model of development appropriate for one country could not be replicated in another. He explained that socialist prescriptions for Ethiopia's development had initially seemed attractive because both the Soviet Union and China had managed to overcome economic backwardness in a very short period of time. As a rationale for change, Mengistu explained that trends in the world economic situation over the last 15 years had rendered the old-fashioned Soviet-styled strategies of socialist development unsuitable for the modern era.¹⁹⁹

Mengistu's new development rhetoric also embraced the notion that state, private and cooperative sectors would complement each other and function together harmoniously. The main domestic thrust of the new strategy for agricultural development was to enable producers to attain higher levels of production in accordance with their own choices. To that end the government promised to extend full support and encouragement to the private sector.

In theory, Mengistu's NEP incorporated many of the major policy changes previously recommended by the World Bank that also happened to resemble the strategies advocated by Gorbachev under perestroika. In respect of land-use, peasants were accorded security of tenure and acquired ownership rights over crops, plants and trees on tenured holdings. Independent farmers also became legally entitled to hire labour and to transfer tillage rights to their legal heirs. As regards marketing controls, agricultural trade was liberalised, and the Agricultural Marketing Corporation was stripped of its special privileges.²⁰⁰ As regards state-owned enterprises - and, by inference, all state farms because they were administered as enterprises- management

¹⁹⁹ Mengistu's justification for the NEP markedly resembled Gorbachev's earlier rationale for undertaking Perestroika and New Thinking. The similarities may have been coincidental, but the care taken by Ethiopian officials to discuss the new plan with Soviet officials in Moscow less than a week after the announcement clearly indicated Ethiopian intentions not to damage relations with the Soviet Union. (Mengistu Hailemariam 1990:47,20,23-24; BBC, *SWB*, 13 March 1990).

²⁰⁰ Under the NEP, the AMC was supposed to operate on a free-market basis. In keeping with the new arrangement, grain quotas and movement control posts were to be abolished (Mengistu Hailemariam 1990:33; WPE 1990:52-53).

controls were liberalised, and overall performance indicators shifted towards assessment based upon profitability.²⁰¹ With respect to collectivisation, the voluntary aspects of producer cooperative formation and maintenance were stressed. If members found their own cooperatives to be unproductive, they could dissolve them by agreement and then elect to pursue their trade individually (ETGVT 1990a; Mengistu Hailemariam 1990:34-36; WPE 1990:53).

In July 1990, four months after Mengistu's official announcement of the NEP, Ethiopian officials linked the March 1990 reform package to Gorbachev's Perestroika. During an interview in the U.S., Ethiopian Cabinet Minister Tesfaye Dinka claimed that Mengistu's statements about Ethiopia's socialist transformation had described the intentions and the directions Ethiopian elites were going, rather than the actual situation. He confirmed that Ethiopian officials were planning a future of private enterprise, political competition and reconciliation based upon perestroika. The Minister also claimed that Gorbachev's policy of perestroika had helped to influence the switch in Ethiopia and that Ethiopian relations with Moscow still remained on good terms (Associated Press, July 26-27 1990).

At deeper levels, however, vestiges of the previous agricultural policies were carried over into the NEP. This was particularly evident in the retention of extensive state control over agricultural matters and the administration's continued interest in backing cooperatives as the preferred mechanism for raising agricultural output. Official prerogatives to intervene actively in the agrarian sector were not fundamentally challenged by Mengistu's reform rhetoric. To begin with, the state still retained sole ownership of Ethiopian land, even though independent farmers acquired new tenure rights. Second, the state was still expected to play a constructive role in production and services, even though greater participation of the private sector was encouraged. Third, Ethiopian officials reaffirmed their commitment to encourage the establishment of large-scale commercial farms by providing government concessions to such ventures, even though the NEP emphasised efforts to improve the lot of smallholders.

²⁰¹ Under the NEP, profitability was supposed to become the key ingredient for enterprise survival. Unprofitable state-owned enterprises could be leased or sold to private companies, entrepreneurs or eventually closed down. The new strategy posed some practical difficulties for unprofitable state farms, however, because substantial quantities of the maize grown there were actually used to feed the urban population and the Ethiopian army.

Finally, Mengistu's administration retained the right to provide support and incentives wherever deemed appropriate to the private sector and to cooperatives (ETGVT 1990a; Mengistu Hailemariam 1990:33; WPE 1990:52).

Mengistu was also reluctant to abandon the notion that producer cooperatives constituted a superior framework for increasing Ethiopia's agrarian output. In justification of this position, he argued that producer cooperatives were part of Ethiopian tradition and that they had not been copied from socialist models.²⁰² Mengistu claimed that if cooperatives were properly organised and efficiently managed, they would provide effective solutions for the positive transformation of Ethiopian agriculture. Under the NEP, cooperatives were expected to become more democratic and grow stronger, but government powers to assist in resolving cooperative-related problems were retained (Mengistu Hailemariam 1990:27,34-36; WPE 1990:53).

In concluding this discussion on Mengistu's preoccupation with collectivisation, it is interesting to note that his March 1990 reform package made no provision for the fate of the villagisation programme. Consequently, in October 1990, the fate of the large numbers of villages already built and the inhabitants living in them, and the cultivated areas situated nearby still remained in question. In theory NEP reforms advocated the right of villagised peasants to abandon the new villages and return to their old farming communities immediately. In practice, the government's promise to give peasants secured land-tenure, private ownership of crops and trees and free-market access only applied to land-holdings as they existed at the time of the March 1990 proclamation. No provisions were made for peasants to reclaim tillage rights over land farmed in the past or to rebuild the old farming villages pulled down in Mengistu's villagisation effort. This dilemma caused many peasants to remain in the villages after the NEP was introduced. In October 1990, for example, it was reported that most people relocated to the new villages were still living in them. In general, residents were adopting a wait and see attitude and trying to strengthen their relative positions in anticipation of the eventual dissolution of the villagisation programme (Alemayehu

²⁰² The sharp decline in number of producer cooperatives after the March 1990 reform proclamation, cast considerable doubt upon Mengistu's (1990:34-35) claim that producer cooperatives were indigenous. Mulugetta Bezzabah (1992:149) estimated that about 250,000 households belonged to about 3,500 producer cooperatives at the time of the March proclamation, but only 170 producer cooperatives survived thereafter.

Lirenso 1990:142-143).

CONCLUSION

In respect of the strategies and structures implemented for agricultural development, it is vital to remember that Ethiopia's ruling elite were borrowers, rather than the victims of Soviet officials. Mengistu actually wielded considerable control over the way Soviet-styled strategies were implemented and over the structures actually selected for emulation.

After the Ethiopian revolution, tactics and policies for agrarian development previously utilised by Soviet leaders offered Ethiopia's military government methods for restructuring Haile Selassie's agricultural sector and changing the social stratification of rural society. Centralised structures for administration and planning, strategies for product control, clear-cut models of organisation and strategies for engineering fast-paced social change were particularly appealing, given the depth of agricultural crisis. For these reasons, in particular, Soviet approaches to agricultural development influenced the formation of Ethiopian agrarian policy considerably in the first decade after the revolution.

To be sure, Ethiopian officials adopted a more conciliatory rhetoric in respect of Western development recommendations as agricultural output declined and prospects for famine intensified in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, ideas about progressive development through centralisation and socialist transformation remained deep-seated. Consequently, on the eve of Gorbachev's rise to power, Mengistu still demonstrated a firm resolve to continue the process of socialist transformation in line with the Soviet-styled socialist objectives outlined in Ethiopia's Ten Year Development Plan.

Between 1985 and 1990, Mengistu's administration may have utilised strategies and programmes that resembled old and new schemes advocated by Soviet officials, but the selection and implementation of such tactics served the purpose of Ethiopia's ruling elite, rather more than the interests of Gorbachev's administration. Nevertheless, prolonged Soviet rhetorical and logistical support for some of Mengistu's grandiose agricultural schemes prompted Ethiopian officials to divert even more resources to dubious farming ventures than they had while Brezhnev was in power.

Over time, conflicts of interest developed between Soviet and Ethiopian officials, as a consequence of Mengistu's reluctance to jettison all of the strategies for socialist development that Gorbachev considered to be outmoded. These difficulties, however, were superficially smoothed over when Mengistu officially jettisoned Ethiopia's experiment in socialism in 1990 in favour of liberalisation. In this case, however, Ethiopia's New Economic Policy contained reforms proposed by the World Bank that also bore a decided resemblance to the strategies advocated by Gorbachev for agricultural reform in the Soviet Union under perestroika.

We have finally to determine the validity of Galtung's and Ake's accusation that Centre states reduce prospects for self reliance in weak states because of their power to persuade bridgeheads to emulate costly and inappropriate foreign development models. Did the Soviet Union really reduce Ethiopia's prospects for agrarian development by championing its own development models and persuading Mengistu to implement the socialist transformation of the agricultural sector? If 'intention' is crucial to Galtung's and Ake's indictment, then available evidence fails to support their accusation. Block's, Holcomb's and Ibssa's views that Mengistu's administration was opportunistic and used Soviet models of development to attain its own aims are much more realistic. Given the scale of domestic crisis after the revolution, for example, Ethiopian officials really did benefit from importing foreign development models that could help them to centralise control over the agrarian sector, to modernise and to expand agricultural production and to restructure social relations in rural areas. At a deeper level, however, Galtung's and Ake's accusation still has merit. By supporting Mengistu's efforts to implement costly large-scale, Soviet-styled agricultural ventures, Soviet leaders provided the incentive for Ethiopian officials to concentrate scarce resources upon large, ambitious agricultural projects, to ignore the productive potential of peasant farmers and to disrupt the traditional patterns of social relations in rural areas. The adverse impact of this collaboration upon Ethiopia's agricultural development began during Brezhnev's term of office, persisted for most of the Gorbachev era and lingered on after relations between the two sovereign states had been divested of any special ties.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF ASYMMETRIC EXCHANGE

INTRODUCTION

During the Brezhnev and Gorbachev periods, Soviet officials continued to defend the earlier claim that the Soviet Union's relationship with Third World sovereign states was not imperialistic. Given the powerful status of this huge sovereign state in comparison to developing countries at the time, can this claim be valid? One can argue, of course, that asymmetric exchange between powerful and weak states constitutes the norm in modern times, but is there a point where the unequal balance adversely impacts upon the weak state's long-term prospects for development?

This chapter begins with a brief review of the important arguments presented in the preceding chapters about the dynamics of asymmetric exchange demonstrated in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship during the Brezhnev period and then looks at what happened after Gorbachev assumed power. I shall then see whether any conclusions drawn from the Soviet-Ethiopian case can also be used to explain the Soviet Union's relationships with other non-capitalist states. Finally, I will consider whether or not these conclusions can be generalised and used to analyse negative patterns of asymmetric exchange in other relationships between strong and weak states.

PART ONE: THE SOVIET-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP

In the preceding chapters, some important political, military, economic and development concerns about the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship were discussed in order to explain the changes that transpired over the fifteen year period. I also wanted to determine if the patterns of asymmetric exchange in this particular relationship were ultimately more disadvantageous for Ethiopia than they were for the Soviet Union. In respect of change, evidence supported my claim that the prevailing interests of ruling elites drove the relationship and that major shifts in leadership aims and objectives were tolerated only so long as the special relationship remained useful to both parties. In this particular case, however, the priorities of Ethiopia's ruling elite played a considerable part in shaping the adverse patterns of asymmetry that developed.

While Brezhnev was in power, the interests of Ethiopia's ruling elite were particularly well served. In an era of intense Soviet-American ideological competition, the interests of Soviet and Ethiopian officials remained roughly compatible, and elites in both states were able to smooth over quite large differences. The revolutionary government was able to take advantage of superpower rivalry to strengthen its control over Ethiopian domestic affairs. Politically, the importation of Soviet-styled administrative structures and guidelines for Marxist-Leninist vanguard party formation facilitated Mengistu's administrative control over the population more than it provided Soviet officials with opportunities to expand political influence in the region. Militarily, despite some benefits that accrued to the Soviet Union through the acquisition of docking facilities in Eritrean waters, Soviet military advice and arms provision helped Ethiopia's ruling elite to consolidate power over domestic opposition and to establish a strong position in the region more than it fulfilled Soviet security objectives in the area. Economically, preferential access to key imports and aid for large-scale projects deemed essential to Ethiopia's modernisation initially helped Mengistu to benefit from the economic relationship at the expense of the Soviet Union. Brezhnev's provisions of oil and machinery and assistance for building power generation stations were vital to the Ethiopians after relations with the United States became hostile. In respect of development, centralised structures and strategies for managing agricultural production imported from the Soviet Union initially pleased Ethiopian officials because of their perceived potential for expanding agricultural production and restructuring the production and social bases of rural society.

During Gorbachev's term in office, ideological competition declined, and relations warmed between the Soviet Union and the United States. As a direct consequence, the precarious balance of compatibility that had been previously sustained in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship shifted. Mengistu's power to bargain declined, and his administration lost its competitive advantage with the Soviet Union. Eventually, Soviet and Ethiopian priorities shifted, and national interests came into sharp conflict. In this case, a final rupture was avoided, because new ruling elites emerged in Ethiopia, and Soviet officials were able to establish relations with the new administration on a non-partial basis.

In respect of asymmetric exchange, negative patterns were set in motion during Brezhnev's tenure in power that adversely affected prospects for Ethiopia's long-term development. These persisted in the Gorbachev era, despite serious efforts made by

Soviet officials under New Thinking to restructure relations with Mengistu's administration on a de-ideologised basis.

In respect of political relations (Chapter Three), the question of Soviet influence over Ethiopian affairs is complex and not nearly so straight-forward as Galtung's analysis of Center-Periphery relations would have us believe. After the revolution, Ethiopian elites were particularly anxious to form close political ties with the Soviet Union, because relations with the United States were deteriorating rapidly. Soviet interests in Ethiopia, on the other hand, only intensified after Ethiopian officials agreed to adopt scientific socialism as the way forward. During the Brezhnev era, political relations improved significantly between the two countries. This was due in considerable part to Mengistu's decision to restructure the Ethiopian government by introducing Soviet-styled, centralised administrative structures aimed at strengthening state control over the population. His choice to establish a national party in Ethiopia that structurally conformed to the CPSU's guideline for Marxist-Leninist vanguard parties also increased the level of official Soviet support for his military regime. In the Soviet-Ethiopian case, however, Mengistu's reliance upon Soviet-styled organisational structures did not facilitate prospects for cultural penetration by the Soviet Union. Instead, the political interests of Ethiopian officials (the bridgehead in this instance) were secured by strengthening the government's control over the population.

At the beginning of Gorbachev's administration, Soviet-Ethiopian political relations strengthened, chiefly as a consequence of Mengistu's decision to transform the military government into a civilian administration and to turn Ethiopia into an official socialist-oriented state. In the two years preceding the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's (PDRE) official inauguration, the argument for Soviet intervention gained considerable ground. The Soviet constitution of 1977 served as the model for Ethiopia's 1987 constitution, similarities increased between Soviet and Ethiopian government and party structures, and CPSU officials gave considerable importance to the strengthening of party ties with the WPE.

The level of political compatibility between Soviet and Ethiopian officials declined markedly, however, after Mengistu's official inauguration as president of the PDRE in September 1987. Soviet and Ethiopian interests diverged, as New Thinking deepened and Soviet-American relations improved. Nevertheless, two particularly important asymmetries associated with the Soviet Union that had been set in place in the Brezhnev era still persisted. First, Gorbachev's endorsement of Mengistu's efforts

to incorporate Soviet-styled political and party structures in the PDRE in 1987 subsequently reduced Ethiopian prospects for establishing a more liberal civilian administration capable of accommodating the interests of ethnically and religiously diverse citizens. Second, Gorbachev's decision to continue official political backing for Mengistu's administration until the Ethiopian president's resignation, despite certain knowledge of his repressive domestic policies, helped to prolong the political power of one group of Ethiopian elites at the expense of others. In June 1991, however, Gorbachev remedied this particular defect, by agreeing to encourage constructive dialogue with all politically active and influential forces in Ethiopia.

Although more apparent in some respects, asymmetry in the Soviet-Ethiopian military relationship (Chapter Four) demonstrates considerable complexity as well. Without the assistance of Soviet advisors, arms and equipment and Cuban troops, Ethiopian officials could not have prevented Somali incursions over the border into the Ogaden in 1977. The Soviet Union, however, continued to provide substantial military assistance to Mengistu's administration for many years thereafter, even though the cross-border problem had been resolved. Does this mean that arms provision benefited officials in the Soviet Union more than the ruling elite in Ethiopia? In 1987, Ethiopian Unity claimed that Ethiopia had become a dumping ground for second rate Soviet weapons, but this was not always the case. The reality was more in line with Wendt's and Barrett's prediction (Chapter Two) that ruling elites in Third World States would want to acquire more modern, technologically advanced weaponry for their arsenal and that heads of state would willingly divert scarce resources from where they were needed in order to modernise the military establishment. In this case, the Soviet Union, as the main arms provider, was willing to comply with Mengistu's request for a time. Eventually, however, the costs of supply became too high for Gorbachev's administration.

Another factor to consider when assessing asymmetry in the military relationship is whether there is any merit to the Ethiopian Unity's claim that Soviet officials were able to direct the course of Mengistu's military policy because of their power to supply arms and equipment. Evidence fails to support this charge. Mengistu continued to use Soviet arms to defeat Eritrean and Tigrean opposition forces, for example, despite Gorbachev's severe disapproval of the Ethiopian's government's military operations. In the Soviet-Ethiopian case, reality is much closer to Marina Ottaway's prediction (Chapter Two) that leaders of powerful states would exert a

limited influence over security affairs in the Horn region unless their goals happened to be compatible with the aims of local ruling elites.

Two patterns of asymmetric exchange demonstrated in the military relationship are important to consider, however, because they negatively affected prospects for Ethiopia's future development. Evidence collected does support the claim that the Soviet Union, regardless of intention, intervened unduly in Ethiopian affairs by providing military support that artificially prolonged the political life of one group of Ethiopian ruling elites and facilitated prospects for internal fragmentation and wanton destruction within Ethiopia. Moreover, the capture of weapons and military equipment provided by the Soviet Union allowed militant Eritrean and Ethiopian opposition forces, as well as Ethiopia's ruling elite, to develop an undue reliance upon military solutions to resolve regional and local problems.

The adverse impact of asymmetric exchange demonstrated in the Soviet-Ethiopian economic relationship (Chapter Five) has generally been underrated, and it has turned out to be a great deal more complex than writers like Galtung and Ake predicted. To begin with, negative patterns in trade relations were partially obscured by the fact that the bulk of Ethiopia's export trade always remained oriented towards the West. Most of the goods deemed to be essential for Ethiopia's industrial modernisation and military independence, however, were imported from the Soviet Union. Evidence indicates that Mengistu became reliant upon Soviet imports of oil, industrial products, machinery and transport goods while Brezhnev was still in power, because preferential arrangements existed at that time in respect of pricing and supply. The Ethiopian leader's dependence upon Soviet imports persisted throughout most of the New Thinking era, however, even after Gorbachev eliminated preferential trade benefits in an effort to cut economic losses in foreign trade sustained by the Soviet Union.

Complexities also prevail, when one tries to assess the extent that the Soviet Union's rather low provision of humanitarian and development assistance to Mengistu's administration adversely affected the Ethiopian population. Although the evidence does vindicate Ethiopian Unity's claim that the Soviet Union provided very little food relief in the 1984/1985 famine, Soviet officials actually provided a substantial amount of logistical support for food aid distribution, even though this method of assistance was greatly underrated by Western donors at the time. Its value was only recognised three years later, when Gorbachev's large food gift arrived in

Ethiopia without any logistical provisions. Accusations were also made that Soviet officials funded large-scale projects in Ethiopia that were inappropriate and hindered the country's prospects for economic development in Gorbachev's time, as well as in Brezhnev's day. Evidence provided by World Bank officials, however, suggested that Ethiopian officials exercised substantial control over the selection of project funded by the Soviet Union.

The adverse impact of asymmetric exchange becomes clearer when the effect of Mengistu's indebtedness to the Soviet Union is considered. In this case, however, the decisions made by Ethiopia's ruling elite played a vital part in creating the negative conditions of asymmetry that developed, particularly in respect of excessive military spending. During most of Brezhnev's time in power, Ethiopia's debt to the Soviet Union remained relatively modest, as compared to the money owed to the most important western multilateral and bilateral creditors. In the years immediately preceding Gorbachev's rise to power, Ethiopia's indebtedness to Soviet officials increased markedly, largely as a consequence of Mengistu's substantial military campaigns against Eritrean and Tigrayan resistance groups. This trend persisted throughout the New Thinking era. In 1990, for example, Soviet officials claimed that Mengistu's administration owed almost three billion roubles, or eight percent of the outstanding debt owed to the Soviet Union by developing countries. Two years later, Russian officials estimated that Ethiopia's new government owed nine million dollars to the Russian Federation. Of that amount, Mengistu's debts for military spending accounted for about 90% of the total.

As a consequence of Mengistu's excessive indebtedness, the Soviet Union limited Ethiopian expenditures in certain key areas. This adversely impacted upon Ethiopia's domestic environment in three ways. First, as Mengistu's debts increased, Soviet officials reduced assistance for large-scale development projects aimed at modernising Ethiopia's industrial and agricultural sectors, and Ethiopians lost the benefit of Soviet technological expertise, spare parts and other goods needed for project completion and repair. Second, the cumulative debts accrued in purchasing Soviet military goods and services eventually overwhelmed Mengistu's government and increased prospects for domestic instability. As military provisions dried up, his administration was no longer able to prevent various militant opposition forces from taking over the country. Finally, Mengistu's debt to the Soviet Union survived the fall of both governments in 1991 to become an issue of future concern for the Ethiopian

population, because Russian officials confirmed that they still expected Ethiopians to repay the Mengistu's debts to the Soviet Union.

In Chapter Six, the issue of Soviet influence over Ethiopian strategies for agricultural development was examined. The main aim here was to determine whether Galtung's and Ake's claims that powerful states adversely affected prospects for progress in weak states by virtue of their power to shape the course of development had any merit in the Soviet-Ethiopian case. I argued in Chapter Two that positive evidence of Soviet influence over Ethiopian strategies for agricultural development would be obscured by replication, showcasing and interpretation. Evidence subsequently collected confirmed that this was so. In the case of replication, which embraced Galtung's idea of isomorphism, agricultural systems in the Soviet Union and Ethiopia may have demonstrated some similarities, but they really were different in respect of time, geography and social order. This makes it difficult to assess the degree to which Soviet officials actually influenced Ethiopian policies. Showcasing, which embraced Holcomb's and Ibssa's idea that Ethiopian leaders had traditionally produced carefully designed programmes on paper aimed at securing the good will and support of powerful allies that were only facades used to mask their own policy intentions, also complicated the issue, given Mengistu's decision in 1990 to opt for reform and the close resemblance between World Bank prescriptions for agricultural progress and Gorbachev's plans for agrarian reform in the Soviet Union. Interpretation complicated assessments even further. On the one hand, analysts like Henze and Dessalegn Rahmato acknowledged that links existed between Soviet and Ethiopian agricultural policies, even though they remained unwilling to accuse the Soviet Union of direct intervention in policy formation. On the other hand, Holcomb and Ibssa ignored Soviet connections altogether. They maintained that Mengistu's strategies for resettlement represented a continuation of tactics that had been used by Ethiopian leaders in the past to control land and labour.

Assessments of the actual degree of influence exercised by Soviet officials over Mengistu's agricultural policy may be difficult to render, but the evidence does support the claim that Ethiopia's ruling elite were borrowers, rather than the victims of Soviet officials. Mengistu wielded considerable control over the selection and adaptation of the models that he emulated. In Brezhnev's time, Ethiopian officials introduced centralised structures for administration and planning, strategies for product control, models of farming organisation and collectivisation that resembled some of the tactics

and strategies used by Soviet leaders in the past, because they wanted to strengthen the government's control over the agrarian sector and to sweep away the old hierarchical, rural social order. They also envisaged that the new socialist reforms would modernise the agrarian sector and expand agricultural production.

Ethiopian efforts to incorporate some Soviet-styled strategies and structures into their own plans for agricultural reorganisation were marginally successful in managing crisis, but fell short in long-term development planning. Tactics for sweeping away powerful landholders that had been used by Soviet leaders after the Russian revolution helped to reduce the same problem in Ethiopia. Strategies aimed at strengthening the government's control over the production, distribution and export of essential commodities like grain and coffee also facilitated the development of centralised agricultural policies. Despite successes in these two areas, however, Soviet-styled strategies for agriculture reform failed to expand agricultural production in Ethiopia in the first decade after the revolution.

Mengistu continued to pursue agricultural policies along socialist lines after Gorbachev assumed power, and, apart from the occasional disapproval of some of his tactics, Soviet officials continued to support his efforts in this direction. In the late 1980s, however, Ethiopia's ruling elite finally succumbed to financial pressures and introduced reforms advocated by the World Bank that also resembled the strategies advocated by Gorbachev under perestroika. Although Mengistu officially relinquished ambitions to create a socialist agricultural sector in 1990, he demonstrated considerable reluctance to jettison entirely the Soviet-styled strategies and structures for agricultural development that he had used to reorganise Ethiopia's agricultural sector after the revolution.

Discussions about Soviet influence over Ethiopian strategies for agricultural development thus far have focused upon problems inherent in assessment and upon the important part Ethiopian elites played in model selection and adaptation. Can there still be merit in the accusation that Soviet influence upon Ethiopia's agricultural reform efforts adversely affected Ethiopia's long-term prospects for development? The evidence indicates that the answer is yes. In this particular case, Moscow's support for large-scale agricultural projects in Ethiopia provided Mengistu's administration with a justification for overspending and diverting scarce resources away from where they were most needed.

The analyses of interests and assessments of asymmetric exchange presented thus far have worked tolerably well in respect of explaining Soviet-Ethiopian relations. In the following section, I shall argue that they can also be used to explain asymmetric exchange in the Soviet Union's relationship with other friendly, non-capitalist Third World countries.

PART TWO: SOVIET RELATIONS WITH OTHER NON-CAPITALIST STATES

In the next few pages, political, military, economic and development issues arising in respect of the Soviet Union's relationship with Angola, Mozambique and Cuba are examined. Angola and Mozambique provide a basis for comparing Soviet relationships with other socialist-oriented states in Africa, and, although the backgrounds of these two countries differ appreciably from Ethiopia in respect of their long historical pasts as Portuguese colonies, their relationship with the Soviet Union demonstrates some similarities. Cuba must also be considered because it was rated highly as a socialist developing country, granted CMEA full status and represented the best of what socialist-oriented states could hope to gain from their relationships with the Soviet Union. Cuba is particularly interesting because Fidel Castro experienced first hand the benefits and costs associated with maintaining very close ties with Soviet party and government officials.

Political Relations.

Did the Soviet Union unduly influence political developments in non-capitalist states other than Ethiopia by virtue of its power to provide full political support and artificially prolong the life of one particular coalition in power? Evidence suggests that although situations varied, Soviet officials often seemed to exercise some power in this respect, primarily because of their willingness to provide certain local elites with military support. This was so particularly before Gorbachev assumed power. During the New Thinking era, however, local elites who had maintained power in this way became extremely vulnerable to threats posed by rival contenders for power, especially after Gorbachev decided to downgrade military support.

Angola was engaged in a civil war, even before its independence from Portugal in 1975. The Marxist-oriented People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola

(MPLA) had received Soviet aid since 1961 and aimed to secure control of the country by defeating the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). In 1976, the MPLA, led by Agostinho Neto, became the legal government of Angola, but only after the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and Western European states had accorded recognition. In October 1976, Soviet and Angolan leaders signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, and a cooperative agreement between the MPLA and the CPSU was concluded. Subsequently the MPLA became the MPLA Party of Labour (MPLA-PL), and called itself a vanguard party. After Gorbachev assumed power, the Soviet Union continued to support the MPLA-PL politically and to condemn the activities of UNITA (supported by the United States) and South African forces, despite the complex positions of local rivals and the violent scale of the conflict. In 1987, Soviet officials still maintained that the MPLA should not attempt to compromise politically with UNITA.

In the late 1980s, however, Gorbachev's position on the resolution of internal conflict in Angola changed, as it did in Ethiopia. In December 1988, with the help of Soviet and American officials, Angolan, Cuban and South African leaders agreed to withdraw Cuban troops from Angola and to grant Namibia independence. In June 1989, largely as a consequence of Soviet efforts, MPLA and the UNITA officials also signed a cease-fire agreement. In December 1990, Shevardnadze met with UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi for the first time to discuss further prospects for reconciliation (Tolz 1992:778). In that same month, eight months after Mengistu had launched his political reform, the MPLA CC embraced the concept of a multi-party system and adopted a programme aimed at political liberalisation. In the summer of 1991, in response to a complex combination of mounting internal and external pressures, MPLA officials finally abandoned adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles (Webber 1992:133).

In Angola, as in Ethiopia, it is difficult to assess the political power or influence that Soviet officials really had over keeping one particular set of local ruling elites in power. As in Ethiopia, however, the power of Soviet officials to prolong artificially the political life of one group of ruling elites over others in Angola seems to have been linked directly to the rise and decline of Moscow's willingness to supply military assistance to one particular group in power.

Formed in 1962, the National Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) fought for independence from Portugal. Party efforts were supported both by

Chinese and Soviet officials for a time, but Chinese support dropped out, as Sino-Soviet relations declined. Under the leadership of Samora Machel, Frelimo assumed legal political control after Mozambique became a sovereign state in 1975. In March 1977, party officials concluded a 20 year Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union, and declared Frelimo a vanguard party. By 1980, Mozambique seemed to be moving into the Soviet orbit (Hall and Young 1997:140).

Although Frelimo continued to advocate Marxist-Leninist strategies from independence to the late 1980s, Mozambique's ruling elite, like Angolan and Ethiopian officials, had their own priorities and agendas. In particular, modernisation along socialist lines ranked high on the domestic front, and helping insurgent groups in the fight to end white supremacy in Rhodesia was an especially important regional objective. In Mozambique, as in Ethiopia and Angola, however, government efforts to realise key priorities were impeded by the growth in the power of internal resistance. In particular, The Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo) gained substantial political ground in the 1980s.

Unlike the situation in Ethiopia, however, a change of political leadership in Mozambique during the early early Gorbachev years also facilitated a shift in Frelimo's position on the viability of long-term military conflict with Renamo. Although Joaquim Chissano's more conciliatory approach may have been more in keeping with Gorbachev's recommendations for the peaceful resolution of differences, evidence does not support the claim that the Soviet Union was largely responsible for Chissano's decision to conclude a peace settlement with Renamo. In July 1989, about the same time talks were taking place between Eritrean and Ethiopian officials, President Chissano announced plans to open negotiations with Renamo. Although conflicts between the two parties continued until October 1992, the two leaders finally signed a peace agreement, largely due to the mediation efforts of the Catholic Church and the governments of Italy, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Ties between the Soviet Union and Cuba go back much further. Nevertheless, the reasons behind the start of their close political relationship were in some ways similar to Ethiopia. Before the 1959 revolution, relations between Cuba and the United States were cordial, and the Cuban economy thrived. Castro's nationalisation of foreign industries evoked considerable American hostility, and his subsequent decision to embrace Marxist-Leninist ideology effectively severed economic relations between the two countries. Because Cuba had become too economically dependent upon the

United States, Castro could only preserve his new order if he established close ties with a powerful Cold War competitor like the Soviet Union. By improving relations with Cuba, Soviet officials gained new opportunities for expanding socialism in an area heavily dominated by American military and economic interests. Although Soviet and Cuban officials shared some mutual interests, their differences sometimes led to friction. Castro, for example, who maintained an aggressive stance in the non-aligned movement for many years, professed more interest in reducing North-South differences than in redressing negative socialist balances in the East-West correlation of forces. Unlike Soviet officials, he also believed in exporting revolution.

Cuba remained politically important to the Soviet Union and was considered to be the model Third World socialist state for a number of years. This was probably due in large part to Castro's ability to retain sufficient political support in his own country in the face of considerable American opposition. During Gorbachev's tenure in power, however, compatibility levels in the political relationship declined. Castro retained his conservative socialist perspectives and refused to endorse the new reform efforts taking place in the Soviet Union. In 1989, however, Gorbachev and Castro signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that made no provision for mutual security and stipulated that regional conflicts should be resolved through political means, without military force (Shearman 1993:181). Differences may have increased between Soviet and Cuban officials, but diplomatic ties remained intact until the Soviet Union's formal dissolution.

In this case, more evidence is needed to support the accusation that the Soviet Union artificially prolonged the political life of one group of ruling elites through the provision of military support. Although one could argue that the Soviet Union probably helped to secure Castro's position and to prevent an American invasion of Cuban territory in the Cold War era, his very long tenure in office indicates that he also retained some credibility at home.

Military Relations.

Did the provision of Soviet military assistance to friendly, non-capitalist states other than Ethiopia actually increase prospects for conflict and fragmentation by allowing government and opposition officials to develop an undue reliance upon military solutions? Evidence about Soviet military relations with Angola, Mozambique

and Cuba in the Brezhnev and Gorbachev periods indicate that this accusation is true and completely warranted, regardless of what Soviet officials may have intended.

In 1975, Soviet-Angolan military relations were strengthened when South African troops invaded Angola in support of an FNLA-UNITA offensive. As a direct consequence of Brezhnev's arms provision and over 11,000 Cuban troops, the MPLA was able to defeat the FNLA and UNITA and to drive South African troops back to the Namibian border in March 1976, just six months before party officials signed the Soviet-Angolan Friendship Treaty. Thereafter, the Soviet Union became Angola's chief arms supplier, providing weapons similar in character to the arms provided to Ethiopia after November 1977, including MiG-23 Floggers and Mi-25 Hind Gunship Helicopters and the whole range of Soviet surface-to-air missiles (from SA-2 to SA-13) with integrated early-warning radar systems (Alexiev 1988: 151). Training provisions for the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola were provided as well. The value of Soviet arms provided to the MPLA before Gorbachev assumed power remains a matter for debate, but one estimate made of shipments in 1984-1985 was about two billion dollars (Alexiev 1988:151).

In 1985, shortly after Gorbachev's assumed power, the MPLA forces were assisted by Soviet officials in an unsuccessful bid to defeat UNITA. This, in turn, in 1986, caused American officials to extend \$15 million in covert military support to UNITA officials (Alexiev 1988:152). As a direct consequence of foreign military support, MPLA and UNITA leaders resorted increasingly to military means. The level of Soviet military assistance declined under New Thinking, but Soviet arms provision to the Angolan government continued, despite Gorbachev's increasing emphasis on the political resolution of MPLA-PL and UNITA differences. Over the period 1975-1990, for example, the Soviet Union provided 90 percent of Angolan arms imports, with an estimated value of one billion dollars per year. In addition, between 1980-1987, 20,000 to 30,000 Cuban troops assisted MPLA forces in their unsuccessful efforts to destroy UNITA (Webber 1992:137-138). Over time, however, both MPLA and UNITA forces developed an undue reliance upon military solutions, as a consequence of foreign arms provision, and the devastating struggle between local elites for national power carried on.

Soviet officials also provided Mozambique's Frelimo government with a substantial level of costly military assistance to help them fight against Renamo's attempt to take over the country. In the mid-1980s, Soviet arms shipment costs, which

included expensive arms like assault helicopters and jet fighters, were estimated at about one billion dollars (Henriksen 1988:172). Before the decade was over, military assistance provided by the Soviet Union and South Africa to facilitate the competing security interests of Frelimo and Renamo officials had facilitated the deaths of 600,000-700,000 Mozambicans (Duncan 1990:181). In 1989, however, Gorbachev announced plans to withdraw all Soviet military advisors from Mozambique by the end of 1990, and Cuban military advisors (estimated at 400-600 in 1987) left the country (Duncan 1990:181). Thereafter, the level of Soviet arms provision declined. In the case of Mozambique, Soviet arms provision facilitated Frelimo's undue reliance upon military solutions for the resolution of internal differences, which, in turn, fostered Renamo's dependence upon South African military provision, thereby increasing prospects for destruction and fragmentation within Mozambique that spread throughout the region.

In terms of Soviet-Cuban military relations, collaborative ventures undertaken in Angola and Ethiopia between 1975 and 1990, as well as Soviet arms provision to Castro's administration have a direct bearing on the accusation currently under examination. In the 1970s, Castro still believed that national liberation movements seeking independence should receive military support. To achieve these ends, he sent many Cuban troops and military advisors to serve in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia in the 1970s and early 1980s. To assist him in these endeavours, Soviet officials guaranteed Castro's access to abundant quantities of free military supplies. His interventions into other countries were particularly successful in Brezhnev's time, because he gained the support of local elites and Soviet officials. During Gorbachev's tenure in office, local elites in Africa that had been previously supported by Castro's military establishment became increasingly vulnerable to armed attack launched by insurgent groups. This had serious implications for military relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba, because insurgents could also claim to be waging wars of national liberation. As Soviet-American relations warmed, Soviet-Cuban military collaboration declined. Although some MiG-29s were shipped to Cuba in 1988-1989, Gorbachev reduced military provisions substantially during the final years of his administration (Shearman 1993:186).

For a long period of time, Castro was able to upgrade his existing military arsenal as a consequence of access to the latest Soviet military weaponry. He became unduly reliant upon one supplier, however, and security concerns about the prospects of American intervention once again resurfaced when these provisions dried up. In some

respects, the accusation that Soviet military assistance increased prospects for internal conflict and fragmentation did not seem to be particularly applicable to Cuba. Castro survived the demise of the Soviet Union, and information about Cuban opposition groups in the ten years that have elapsed since then has remained elusive. In the Cuban case, however, the accusation must be expanded to take into account the damages that were sustained internally by countries such as Angola, Ethiopia and Mozambique, as a consequence of Castro's direct military intervention. He could not have implemented his strategy, however, without access to the modern weaponry provided by the Soviet Union. Consequently, there is no doubt that whatever the intention, Soviet and Cuban military support facilitated prospects for internal conflict and fragmentation within Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique.

Economic Relations.

Did Soviet economic relations with other friendly, non-capitalist states disadvantage their long-term prospects for economic progress and prosperity? Evidence about Soviet economic relations with Angola, Mozambique and Cuba in the Brezhnev and Gorbachev periods indicate that this accusation has some validity, particularly in respect of trade and debt, regardless of what Soviet officials may have intended. On the other hand, claims that the Soviet Union adversely affected economic development in Third World states because ruling elites were forced to adopt Soviet-styled strategies and structures aimed at economic centralisation are not so convincing. Local ruling elites in these three sovereign states also exercised considerable control over the selection, adaptation, implementation and rejection of the models that they emulated.

Soviet economic relations with Angola, like Ethiopia, were relatively insignificant, compared to the trade relations established with the West. However, the patterns of trade that ultimately formed substantially increased prospects for the MPLA's substantial indebtedness to the Soviet Union. During the special relationship, wide gaps developed between the value of Soviet goods imported into Angola (which undoubtedly included military provisions) and Angolan goods exported to the Soviet Union, just as they had in Ethiopia. Over time, this differential resulted in a serious debt problem for Angola. In 1977, for example, Soviet imports to Angola accounted for 69.2 million roubles or about 86 percent of the trade turnover figure. By 1983, the total trade turnover figure recorded between the two countries had risen sharply to

173.1 million roubles. Of this amount, Angolan imports of Soviet goods increased to 98 percent of the total trade figure (Light 1993:197, table 8.2). Although trade between the two countries declined during Gorbachev's tenure in power, the unbalanced pattern of trade distribution remained. In 1986 and 1987, for example Soviet goods accounted for 98% of the 158.2 and 115.9 million roubles recorded for each period. In 1990, Soviet imports still accounted for 96% of the 59.6 million roubles trade turnover (Light 1993:205, table 8.5).

In contrast to Ethiopia, Mozambique and Cuba, Angola did not have to rely upon Soviet petroleum provisions because of its considerable oil reserves. However, a substantial percentage of the profits accrued in petroleum sales to Western buyers was evidently used to repay debts owed to the Soviet Union. For example, in 1987, Angolan officials were informed that their debt to the Soviet Union had reached 4.5 billion roubles and that the amount owed was increasing by about 23 percent each year. (Belikov 1993:74) By January 1990, however, Gorbachev's administration listed Angola's official outstanding debt at only 2.029 billion roubles (Belikov 1993:74), considerably less than the 2.8 billion roubles debt reported for Ethiopia in November 1989.

In respect of economic planning, Angolan officials also introduced nationalisation and other socialist measures during the Brezhnev era, and their efforts to increase government control over economic planning, production and distribution persisted well into the Gorbachev period. In 1976, the MPLA introduced policies aimed at full-scale nationalisation. By 1980 the Angolan government controlled 71 percent of all companies and 83 percent of the workforce (Alexiev 1988:149). During the 1980s, domestic economic conditions declined dramatically, as a consequence of continuous civil war and the poor economic performance associated with the centralised structures. In 1988, the MPLA introduced an economic recovery programme known as *Saneamento Economico e Financiero* (SEF), which aimed to regenerate the private sector. In September 1990, a more radical reform programme known as the Plan of Action was enacted that advocated the privatisation of all non-strategic state industries (Webber 1992:135-136). Although Angolan officials, like Ethiopian ruling elites, subsequently acknowledged that a resemblance existed between their new reform programmes and Gorbachev's perestroika, their rationale for selection in the 1990s was driven more by the necessity to redress domestic economic adversities and to reduce

foreign indebtedness than by Soviet pressures to restructure Angola's economic policies in accordance with the strategies advocated under perestroika.

Economic relations with the Soviet Union also adversely affected Mozambique's prospects for prosperity. Mozambique, like Ethiopia, incurred a heavy debt as a consequence of military overspending and remained totally dependent upon the Soviet Union for all of its liquid fuel requirements. In 1984, Frelimo and South African officials signed the Nkomati Accords, under which both sets of ruling elite agreed not to sponsor further cross border insurgency (Henriksen 1988:174). Although Western countries welcomed this action and prospects for trade looked promising, Frelimo actually strengthened economic ties with the Soviet Union during the first months of Gorbachev's administration. In May 1985, for example, Soviet officials agreed to provide \$11.7 million in consumer goods in exchange for Mozambican agricultural products to assist in developing the Moatise coal deposit mining infrastructure, to develop rail lines to the port of Beira, to supply fishing equipment and to repair machinery for merchant ships (Henriksen 1988:175). In addition, Frelimo officials concluded a cooperation agreement with the CMEA. Despite this positive beginning, the costs incurred in Soviet military, trading and development provisions continued to mount during the New Thinking era. In November 1989, Mozambique's total debt to the Soviet Union was estimated at 808.6 million roubles (Izvestiya, 1 March 1990).

In respect of economic planning, the Mozambican government also introduced Soviet-styled socialist measures aimed at centralising economic strategies and structures during the Brezhnev era. Frelimo aimed to make heavy industry a high priority, and the manufacture of tractors was deemed to be particularly important. As in Angola and Ethiopia, however, the targets envisaged by Mozambique's ruling elite were overly ambitious. To begin with, Frelimo's firm commitment to end white supremacy in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and to harbour insurgent groups exerted an additional strain upon the fragile economy that could not really be blamed upon Soviet officials. Between 1976 and 1980, for example, Frelimo lost \$600 million in hard currency from applying United Nations sanctions on Rhodesia, plus an additional \$20 million in remittances from Mozambicans working there (Henriksen 1988:173). In addition, by allowing Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) to establish sanctuary camps for attacking Rhodesia, Mozambique's economic infrastructure became a primary target for Rhodesian retaliation. Finally,

Mozambicans, like Ethiopians, had to cope with major famines in 1982-84 and 1986-87.

Chissano introduced the Programme of Economic Rehabilitation (PER) in 1987. That programme contained proposals for the decentralisation of economic management which resembled the reforms introduced by Mengistu in November of the same year. The PER subsequently formed the basis for Frelimo negotiations with the IMF and the World Bank, and, in March 1987, the IMF released a structural adjustment facility worth \$51 million and the World Bank extended a package worth \$106 mn (Hall and Young 1997:197). Given Mozambique's massive need for external assistance, Frelimo really had no alternative in 1989 but to renounce formally Marxist-Leninist philosophy and to restructure political and economic policies along the lines recommended by powerful capitalist donors.

Although a different pattern emerged in respect of Soviet-Cuban economic relations, a negative impact on Cuba's economic prosperity over time was still sustained, as a consequence of Castro's economic dependence upon the Soviet Union. Cuba's trade depended heavily upon trade with the United States in the decades before the 1959 revolution (69% of the total), and in the mid-1970s, a similar dependency on trade developed in respect of the Soviet Union (also 69% of the total) (Shearman 1993:173). During Brezhnev's term in office, Cuba benefited substantially from its economic relationship with the Soviet Union. In 1972, Cuba became the first state outside of the Soviet Union's direct orbit to be admitted to the CMEA, and, as an initial sign of good will, Soviet and Cuban officials concluded some very important new economic bilateral agreements. First, Soviet officials refinanced Cuba's debt and deferred repayments until 1986, with interest-free credit for twenty-five years. Second, Soviet officials raised the purchase prices of Cuban sugar and nickel. Finally, Castro received a further 300 million roubles in credit to develop Cuban industry. Of this amount, 81 million roubles were earmarked for the textile industry, 52 million for electricity and 35 million for railway transportation (Shearman 1993:172-173). In addition to all of these benefits, the Soviet Union provided Castro with 98 percent of its oil imports at preferential prices. After Brezhnev's death, Cuban dependence upon trade with socialist countries continued to rise, accounting for about 86.8% of the total trade in 1982. This same proportion persisted through the early years of Gorbachev's administration, reaching a high of 88.3 percent of the total in 1987 (Duncan 1990:203).

In the New Thinking period, the Cuban economy was adversely affected by Gorbachev's new emphasis on cost effectiveness. In 1986, Soviet officials lowered Cuba's sugar subsidy from 45 cents per pound (1985) to 38 cents. In 1987, Soviet oil deliveries to Cuba declined from seven million tons (1986) to 6.7 million tons, and oil rationing had to be introduced. To make matters worse, Cuban officials also had to pay higher prices for the oil they obtained because the agreements had been concluded before the world market price dropped (Duncan 1990:203). In 1989, Gorbachev became increasingly dissatisfied with Castro's economic policies and his use of Soviet development funds, and, in 1990, estimates that Cuba still owed over 15 billion roubles (Izvestia 1 March 1990) or 80% of the total Third World debt still owed to the Soviet Union alienated Gorbachev's administration even further. In the same year, Cuban trading activities in the CMEA came to an end, and Soviet officials cut oil supplies by 20 percent (Tolz 1992:704). In 1991, Cuba suffered even more after Soviet-Cuban trade switched to a hard currency basis. In the new equation Soviet oil and Cuban sugar were to be valued and traded at world market prices. Over time, Cuba's economic dependence upon the Soviet Union adversely affected the population's prospects for prosperity and self-reliance.

Under the CMEA Charter, Castro was obligated to co-ordinate his domestic economic plans with the centralised systems in place in other CMEA member states in the 1970s. This he did, and more or less the same economic structures remained in place throughout the Gorbachev era. Castro remained hostile to Gorbachev's strategies for domestic economic reform, preferring to remain closely tied to the traditional Soviet prescriptions for socialist economic progress. Although trade with European companies and investors has been encouraged, Castro remains committed to centralised economic structures that he initially implemented, despite evidence of growing economic and social privation in Cuba.

Soviet influence over agricultural development.

Ruling elites in developing socialist and socialist-oriented states did replicate strategies and models for agrarian reform that had been advocated by leaders in the Soviet Union earlier in the century, but it is impossible to verify the claim that Soviet leaders forced them to implement particular socialist development policies. As in Ethiopia, evidence indicates that leaders in Angola, Mozambique and Cuba had their

own priorities and agendas and exercised considerable control over the selection, adaptation and implementation of the models which they emulated. A more substantive accusation is that Soviet leaders adversely affected prospects for agricultural development because they supported the efforts of Third World ruling elites to engineer the processes of modernisation by undertaking costly, large-scale projects, which they could ill afford. On this account, regardless of intent, Moscow's endorsement of Soviet models as the preferred patterns for agricultural transformation and agrarian modernisation encouraged officials in weak states to divert scarce resources disproportionately towards large, state-controlled ventures. In addition, Soviet support for costly experiments in modernising production relations and social engineering like collectivisation, resettlement and villagisation had a devastating impact upon agricultural production, because they confused, destabilised and alienated the rural population. By the time Gorbachev finally urged ruling elites in Third World states to discard collectivist strategies and centralised structures and to emulate capitalist prescriptions for agrarian improvement, the damage had already been done.

In the mid-1970s, the MPLA introduced a system of state and cooperative farms in Angola that were patterned upon Soviet *sovkhoz* and *kolkhoz* enterprises (Alexiev 1988:149). They also set state prices for goods and established specific regulations for procurements and deliveries. For a time, Angolan officials accorded top priority to the new system and channelled most of the scarce funds earmarked for agricultural development to the state sector. This strategy seriously impeded farming efforts by smallholders and had severe ramifications for Angola's predominantly peasant population. By the time Gorbachev assumed power, the MPLA's strategies aimed at socialist transformation had already adversely affected Angolan agricultural production, and the loss had been further exacerbated by civil war. Angola, like Ethiopia, faced severe famine threats in 1984 and 1987, and the government had to appeal to Western donors for emergency food provisions. In 1988, the MPLA finally introduced some policy changes aimed at increasing incentives in the private sector. By that time, however, Angola's ruling elite were importing 90 percent of Angola's food supply, as compared to 1974, when Angola had been classed as a net food exporter (Alexiev 1988:149).

Ruling elites in Mozambique also replicated Soviet-styled strategies and structures for agricultural development with Moscow's approval that ultimately damaged prospects for agrarian improvement. After independence in 1975, Frelimo

militants used Party cadres in the liberated zones of isolated farming areas to prepare society for the construction of socialism. Scarce resources were used to set up and to maintain Soviet-style systems of state farms and cooperative agricultural villages aimed at increasing food and cash crop production, controlling the rural population and reducing the exodus of poor peasant farmers to urban areas. In 1980, Frelimo's third party congress approved the Plano Prospectivo Indicativo (PPI), which advocated a two track agricultural strategy, wherein the government planned to create large state-owned farms and to villagise and to collectivise peasant farmers. In the National Plan for 1980-1990, for example, communal villages for five million people were supposed to be built by 1990 (Hall and Young 1997:90-101).

Frelimo used coercive means to implement socialist transformation, however, and their attempts to enforce collectivisation alienated large segments of the rural population (Henriksen 1988:165-168). Moreover, the government's socialist agrarian policies confused peasant farmers, who, in 1983, accounted for about 90 percent of the total work force (Levey 1983:569), and caused many of them to join insurgent groups actively fighting for Frelimo's removal. Despite calls for reform in 1983 advocated in Frelimo's fourth party congress, the situation worsened markedly during the 1980s. As a consequence of low production levels, cash crop revenues declined and famine threats intensified after severe droughts hit the country in 1982-1984 and 1986-1987. In 1989, Frelimo formally renounced Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the Soviet-styled strategies that had earlier been advocated for agricultural progress. Shortly thereafter, Mozambican officials agreed to emulate the liberalisation models advocated by the World Bank that also resembled the strategies advocated by Gorbachev's administration under perestroika. As in Ethiopia and Angola, however, the adverse impact caused by Frelimo's decision to divert scarce resources into state controlled Soviet-styled, large-scaled agrarian ventures for over a decade lingered on.

In respect of Cuba, the case to be made for the Soviet Union's negative impact upon agricultural development is slightly different. The charge here is that Soviet support for Castro's decision to retain a sugar monoculture after the revolution adversely affected Cuba's long-term prospects for agricultural progress. In 1964, Moscow and Havana concluded a sugar agreement, and, thereafter, Soviet officials agreed to pay subsidised prices for imports of Cuban sugar (Brun and Hersh 1990:174-175). This arrangement worked to Cuba's advantage for many years, but in Gorbachev's time, preferential prices dropped out of trading arrangements. When

world market prices began to dominate Soviet-Cuban sugar transactions, the purchase power of Castro's sugar-dominated economy declined sharply.

Prolonged Soviet support for Castro's costly socialist agricultural policies also increased prospects for Cuba's future agricultural decline. After the revolution, Khrushchev and Brezhnev endorsed his efforts to nationalise American businesses, sugar cane plantations and coffee farms and to implement Soviet-styled strategies aimed at the socialist transformation of the agricultural sector. The Soviet Union and other CMEA member countries continued to support Castro's endeavours in this direction for many years, even after New Thinking became popular. In 1989, however, Gorbachev urged Castro to adopt a more liberal approach to economic and agricultural management, but the Cuban leader declined, preferring to continue along the lines established in the early years after the revolution. Dependency on sugar export revenue obtained from the Soviet Union, plus Castro's unwillingness to reform the ailing, socialist agricultural sector greatly increased Cuba's socio-economic vulnerability.

The preceding analysis of Soviet relations with Angola, Mozambique and Cuba indicates that certain negative patterns of asymmetric exchange identified in the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship were also present in the Soviet Union's relationships with other Third World states embarking on the socialist path of development. In theory, given the anti-imperialist ideology of Soviet officials, the adverse impacts of asymmetric exchange in Cuba should have been less than in Ethiopia, Angola or Mozambique because of that sovereign state's close, preferential ties with Moscow, its privileged position as a member of the socialist camp and its active participation in the CMEA. In practice, however, Cuba was even more adversely affected by the negative patterns of asymmetric exchange that developed during its long relationship with the Soviet Union.

PART THREE: ASYMMETRY IN OTHER RELATIONSHIPS

Research findings in this thesis about the Soviet Union's relationship with Third World friends like Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique and Cuba raise two interesting questions. First, to what extent are the findings about the negative aspects of asymmetric exchange unique to the Soviet Union and its relations with friendly Third World states? Second, if it can be demonstrated that the findings have a wider application, can the research offer any useful insights on the adverse impacts of uneven exchange outside of the Cold War period? To answer these questions, I shall begin

with an examination of American-Cuban relations before the Cold War and follow developments until Fidel Castro took power. After that I shall take a very brief look at some negative patterns of asymmetric exchange similar to those formerly associated with inter-state relations that are becoming increasingly visible inside of prominent international organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

American-Cuban Relations.

American-Cuban relations provide a useful illustration of asymmetric exchange prior to the Cold War period. From the beginning of the 20th century to the late 1950s, American officials and businessmen were extremely interested in Cuba, and Cuban living conditions were among the highest in Latin America. Within a brief space of only ~~two~~ ^{two} years, Cuba lost access to the benefits of American trade, and Fidel Castro cast his lot with the Soviet Union. To the present day, American-Cuban relations remain hostile.

Colonised by the Spanish in 1511, Cuba, along with the Philippine Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico, was ceded to the United States for \$20 million dollars in 1898, following the Spanish American war. In January 1901, with the recommendation of the American President McKinley, 31 delegates from six Cuban provinces framed a new constitution based upon the U.S. model. In May, however, in accordance with Article 3 of the Platt Amendment (U.S.), American officials gained the right to intervene in Cuban affairs for the preservation of good government, and this right was also incorporated into the Cuban constitution. For the next thirty years, with the approval of American officials, various authoritarian leaders such as Gerardo Machado (1925-1933) ruled over Cuba. In 1933, however, Franklin Roosevelt repealed the Platt Amendment, and Machado's government was overturned by a group of non-commissioned officers and students that included Sergeant Fulgencio Batista. Batista served as President from 1940-1944 and established a dictatorship in Cuba in 1952. With Washington's support, he remained in power for six more years, until Castro's takeover on 1st January 1959. (Calvocoressi 2001:782-783; Aguilar 1993:39).

From 1901 until 1959, political relations between the United States and Cuba were mostly compatible. Dictators like Batista were supported, while political revolutionaries like Castro, who had considerable support from segments of the

population, were regarded with great suspicion. Regardless of intention, the United States adversely affected prospects for the development of a liberal political environment in Cuba by continuing to underwrite a succession of dictatorial regimes, despite clear evidence of repressive policies and the knowledge of the lack of Cuban popular support for such administrations. In so doing, American officials artificially prolonged the political lives of certain ruling elites at the expense of others and helped to create the conditions for Castro's revolution and his controversial attempts to restore order thereafter. American hostilities to Castro's administration led to Cuba's increased isolation and vulnerability in the Western hemisphere. This strategy adversely affected prospects for Cuban citizens to form a government capable of accommodating political differences and helped to create the conditions for similar negative patterns of asymmetric exchange to develop in Cuba's political relationship with the Soviet Union.

The United States also adversely affected prospects for security in Cuba, even before the Cold War period. Unlike the Soviet-Ethiopian case, however, American officials directly intervened in Cuba's domestic political development, and established a military presence there to assist local ruling elites in power. Sanctioned by the Platt Amendment, for example, U.S. troops intervened in 1906-1909, 1912-1913, 1917 and 1933 to provide military assistance for corrupt and ailing Cuban administrations. In 1941, however, American and Cuban officials concluded a lend-lease agreement, under which Cuban officials gained arms shipments in exchange for Washington's use of Cuban military facilities (Perez 1993:78-79), and shortly thereafter, U.S. officials constructed a naval base at Guantanamo (Palmer 1992:108).

American military assistance to bolster the position of unpopular government officials in Cuba directly increased prospects for conflict and dissent among the population. Moreover, as a consequence of the precedent established in keeping particular sets of ruling elites in power in Cuba, U.S. troops subsequently intervened directly in the domestic policies of several other Caribbean and Central American countries, including the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Haiti. By so doing, they greatly increased long-term prospects for fragmentation and conflict in the region of the Caribbean and in Central America.

Although economic relations with the United States benefited Cuba's short-term prospects for economic prosperity, the United States adversely affected prospects for Cuba's long-term economic growth by encouraging leaders to rely too heavily upon sugar exports revenue and to allow U.S. foreign investors too much control over the

domestic economy. The bulk of the damage was inflicted before the 1930s depression, but the adverse impact was augmented by increased American-Soviet hostility and competitiveness in the early Cold War period.

In 1903, under provisions of an American-Cuban economic treaty, Cuban officials agreed to reduce duties on American imports and to encourage further American investment in the country, in exchange for gaining preferential access to U.S. sugar markets (Aguilar 1993:40). Guaranteed market access may have generated prospects for economic growth, but it also stimulated a vast increase in Cuban sugar production and an over reliance upon sugar exports for economic prosperity. By 1920, despite ups and downs over the years in the sugar market, Cuba's sugar-based economy was thriving, and U.S. investments in the country were growing. Between 1911 and 1924, for example, U.S. investments in Cuba rose from \$205 million to \$1.2 billion, and Cuba's dependence on U.S. imports increased in a similar vein, rising, for example, from 51 percent in 1914 to 83 percent in 1915 (Aguilar 1993:47-48).

In 1929, however, the U.S. stock market collapsed, Cuba's economic prosperity dropped, and Cuban dependence on U.S. trade relations declined in a manner that adversely affected American interests. In 1933, for example, U.S. imports accounted for only about 53.5 percent of Cuba's total imports, as compared to 74.3 percent during World War I, and U.S. exports of manufactured goods and raw materials (excluding foodstuffs) to Cuba amounted to only \$18 million, as compared to \$133 million in 1924 (Perez 1993:63). This adverse situation was remedied in 1934, when American and Cuban officials concluded a new treaty that guaranteed Cuba's access to American markets for agricultural exports and reduced tariffs on a wide variety of goods. However, the Americans, in particular, benefited from the new arrangement. In exchange for reducing the tariffs on 35 Cuban goods, Washington acquired tariff reductions on 400 American articles destined for Cuban importation (Perez 1993:75-76).

Although Cuba's economy experienced some independent growth in the years of World War II when the European sugar beet economy was adversely affected, American investments in the country continued to rise sharply. By 1955, U.S. investors controlled 90 percent of Cuba's telephone and electricity services, 50 percent of the railroads and 40 percent of sugar production. In addition, twenty-five percent of all Cuban bank deposits were held in Cuban branches of U.S. banks. In 1958, American investments in Cuba amounted to one billion dollars, including \$386 million in

services, \$270 million in petroleum and mining, \$265 million in agriculture and \$80 million in manufacturing (Perez 1993:87-88).

In 1959, revolutionaries gained power, re-established Cuban control over economic transactions and nationalised American assets in the country. As a consequence of Cold War ideological rivalry, Castro's socialist rhetoric and policies alienated American officials even more than they might have done at another time and resulted in a trade blockade that worked to Cuba's great disadvantage. More importantly, in the absence of any western partners willing to go against American wishes, Castro really had no option other than to form economic ties with the Soviet Union and to establish patterns of asymmetric exchange similar to the ones that had characterised Cuba's economic relationship with the United States before the revolution.

In the case of Cuba, as in Ethiopia, complexities are inherent in the accusation that the United States adversely affected prospects for agricultural development by imposing its own strategies and structures for agricultural control upon Cuban officials. Spanish colonists, for example, created much of Cuba's agricultural infrastructure, and, after liberation in 1898, American officials largely accepted the systems already in place. Nevertheless, U.S. political and financial support for re-developing a monocrop culture in sugar encouraged Cuban officials to divert scarce resources towards large, expensive agricultural projects and away from small farmers who made up the bulk of the population. As a consequence, Cuba's prospects for crop diversification and long-term agricultural success were diminished, and the rural inhabitants in the poorer strata became further detached from the general population.

Before 1750, Cuba's sugar plantations were relatively small in size and number. One hundred small plantations, each averaging about 300 acres and cultivated by about 12 slaves, produced a total of 5,000 tons of sugar and exported about a tenth of that amount annually (Thomas 1993:2,7). By 1800, largely as a consequence of growing demand in Spanish and American markets, more Spanish and Cuban entrepreneurial landlords, and more slaves imported into Cuba, sugar had become the mainstay of the Cuban economy. In the 1790s, for example, sugar exports produced on 500 plantations, each averaging about 700 acres and each cultivated by 100 slaves, rose to 30,000 tons per annum. By 1860, Cuba's sugar output at 450,000 tons, accounted for a quarter of the world's sugar production (Thomas 1993:7, 15).

When the American Military Government assumed power in Cuba (1899-1902), Cuba's agricultural sector was in chaos as a consequence of political, military and social unrest that had culminated in the Spanish-American War. Sugar production had been particularly affected, and four-fifths of the sugar estates were estimated to be in ruins (Aguilar 1993: 36-37). This would have been an opportune time for American officials to restructure the agrarian sector, to diversify crop production and to help Cubans end their dependence upon sugar export revenue. Instead, American officials concluded a treaty with Cuban officials in 1903 that secured Cuba's preferential access to the U.S. sugar market. In response, Cuban sugar production rose sharply from 283,651 tons in 1900 to 1,183,347 tons in 1905 (Aguilar 1993:40). Cubans generally continued to profit from sugar for the first two decades of the twentieth century, despite fluctuations in international sugar prices. In 1920, however, Cuba experienced an economic crisis, and many Cubans were forced to sell their sugar mills to American investors. From that time until Castro assumed power, American businessmen and venture capitalists, as well as Cuban landowners, actively participated in the production and export of cane sugar, with the approval of the U.S. government.

By the late 1950s, American interests effectively dominated Cuba's agricultural sector. American and Cuban landowners had incorporated vast tracts of the country into the *Latifundia*. For example, twenty-two sugar companies controlled one-fifth of Cuba's agricultural land. As a consequence, the living standards of peasant farmers declined, in comparison to the urban population. For example, about 15 percent of Cuban peasants had running water, as compared to 80 percent of urban dwellers. About nine percent of peasants had electricity, as compared to 83 percent for those in urban areas (Perez 1993:88-89). As peasants became marginalised from the rest of Cuban society, hostilities increased towards wealthy sugar plantation owners, as well as towards Batista's administration. In March 1958, for example, members of the *The 26 of July Movement* led by Fidel Castro burned cane sugar fields all over the island, destroying about 2 million tons of sugar (Perez 1993:90).

In 1959, Castro assumed power and promised to end Cuba's dependency upon cane sugar. As a result of his new priorities to gain assistance for security and development in the Cold War era and the persistence of old patterns of economic dependence upon sugar exports, Castro's aspirations to diversify became subject to the market demands of the Soviet Union, Cuba's new dominant partner. Consequently, Castro's administration really had no viable option but to continue channelling scarce

resources towards increasing sugar production at the expense of progressing agricultural development through diversification.

The example of American-Cuban relations before 1959 clearly shows that the negative aspects associated with asymmetric exchange between strong and weak states are not unique to relations between socialist and developing states, nor can the damage sustained be blamed solely upon one particular configuration of power at a given time in history like the Cold War era. Galtung's ideas about the structure of economic imperialism, in particular, have explanatory merit in this case. Cuba became economically dependent upon the United States, as a consequence of the structures identified in commodity concentration. In this case, as a consequence of over-reliance upon sugar, American foreign investors were able to penetrate the main sectors of the Cuban economy and to shape Cuba's strategies for economic development and agricultural progress substantially for half a century. In respect of political and military ties, however, the American-Cuban example also reminds us that certain asymmetries associated with 19th century imperialism persisted well into the 20th century. For example, politically, Cuba's constitution was tied to Washington policy documents for thirty years, and, militarily, American troops retained the right to intervene directly in Cuban affairs whenever internal stability was threatened. Regardless of how the negative patterns of Cuba's asymmetric exchange with the United States were set in motion, the effect of Cuba's long-term dependence upon one major partner increased that country's vulnerability to domestic and external crisis and exerted an adverse impact upon its long-term prospects for progressive development.

Relations between International Organisations and weak states

Thus far, the ideas about the asymmetric exchange and the negative patterns likely to adversely affect prospects for development in Third World countries have been used to explain past relationships between powerful and weak states. Do these ideas have any utility in explaining or forecasting the adverse implications of asymmetric exchange in the twenty-first century? In close bilateral relationships between powerful and weak states today, it remains likely that patterns of exchange similar to those formed before and during the Cold War will persist as a direct consequence of the vast disparities in the power and capability of the two states involved.

At the beginning of the 21st Century, however, the importance of special bilateral configurations like Soviet Union's relationship with Ethiopia that were initially formed on the basis of security concerns appears to be declining. This raises an interesting question. In a world that purports to becoming more globalised, particularly in respect of the structures recommended for economic and political organisation, can some of the insights about the negative patterns of exchange in bilateral relationships offered in this thesis also be used to explain asymmetric relationships between powerful and weak sovereign states within inter-governmental organisations (IGOs)? Although such an analysis lies beyond the remit of the thesis, I shall conclude this study by suggesting that the impact of IGO policies upon weaker member states should be the focus of further research.

There is one major difference between the degree of independence that leaders of poor countries enjoyed during the Cold War and their position now. In the case of Soviet Union's relationship with Ethiopia, I argued that ruling elites in poorer states actually exercised considerable control over the selection, adaptation and implementation of the models for political, economic and agricultural development in powerful states that they emulated. Since the end of the Cold War, however, it seems that the power of governments in poorer states within IGOs to control the pace and process of model replication has declined. Consequently, their vulnerability to external crisis has intensified.

Negative aspects associated with the IMF's influence over the importation of western-oriented strategies and structures for economic progress into Indonesia and South Korea in the Asian economic crisis of 1997 demonstrate this. Under the terms of the IMF's structural adjustment loans (SALs), approved by the Group of 5 (the highest contributors, including the United States, Germany, Japan, France and Britain) in 1986, ruling elites of countries in economic crisis gained access to SALs if they agreed to implement prescribed domestic reforms. Removing barriers to foreign trade and investment, devaluation, and privatisation were deemed to be particularly important.

Over time, however, the strategies that had initially been created by the IMF to cope with crisis in one particular period came to be regarded as the best patterns for governments in developing countries to replicate in order to recover from economic crisis. When the Asian financial crisis erupted in 1997, for example, the IMF assembled a rescue package worth more than \$100 billion for Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea (Kreiger 2001: 414). In order to gain the funds, however, ruling elites were

expected to introduce patterned prescriptions for domestic restructuring that had previously been uniformly applied by IMF officials: in particular, devaluation, raising interest rates and decreasing public spending. These prescriptions, however, worsened the economic situation and substantially increased prospects for political and social instability at the regional level and increased prospects for a global economic crisis. In Indonesia, for example, the IMF's insistence on the closure of sixteen banks triggered a bank panic and accelerated the fall of the rupiah. As the crisis worsened, agricultural monopolies were dissolved, businesses went bankrupt, and unemployment soared. Economic dislocation, in turn, intensified political and social unrest, culminating in the fall of Suharto's administration. In South Korea, before receiving their \$58 billion share of the IMF's rescue package, officials agreed to accelerate the opening of financial equity markets to foreign investment, to reform and restructure financial and corporate structures and to increase transparency and accountability (Krieger 2001:473). In this case, policy implementation was facilitated by the election of the more liberal human rights activist Kim Dae Jung as President in 1997. IMF reform prescriptions not only loosened ties between the government and Chaebols (indigenous corporations, usually family based, which had controlled business operations in the country for a long time), they also created new opportunities for the major capitalist powers to penetrate South Korea's domestic economy. Overall, however, IMF policies did very little to help the average Korean recover from the devastating effects of economic crisis.

In respect of economic and agricultural development, coalitions of dominant states advocating free trade within IGOs like the WTO seem to be exerting more power over the destinies of poorer states to compete within a global market. The most powerful states are gaining increased market access to sell their exports on a global basis at the expense of local producers and manufacturers in many developing countries. In the banana war of the late 1990s that pitted a coalition of Latin American states led by the United States against the European Union (EU) and a small group of Lomé member countries producing bananas, fragile monocrop economies like the Windward islands were pushed into economic crisis as a consequence of the WTO's ruling that the EU must create a level playing field for banana imports. Moreover, largely as a consequence of WTO pressures on the EU to end preferential exchanges, Lomé member countries lost many of their former preferential trading advantages in the Cotonou Agreement for 2000-2020 concluded in the year 2000. Will the free trade

conditions being championed by the dominant economic coalitions in the World Trade Organisations really create fairer trading conditions for all member countries, or will such policies only strengthen the position of the most powerful?

Research findings in the third part of this chapter clearly indicate that the adverse impacts of asymmetric exchange are not unique to the Soviet Union, nor should they be confined to a particular historical period. As I have shown, similar patterns of dominance and dependency were demonstrated in the United States of America's relationship with Cuba before the Cold War started and some negative patterns of asymmetric exchange similar to those formerly associated with inter-state relations have become increasingly visible inside of important international organisations like the IMF and the WTO since the Cold War ended.

CONCLUSION

As demonstrated in this thesis, ruling elites in developing countries stand to gain a great deal from transactions with stronger states. If relations become too exclusive, however, and the coupling is retained for some time, adverse consequences for the weaker state are likely to occur. The Soviet-Ethiopian relationship, for example, involved far more than the changing interests of ruling elites whose interests and priorities were sometimes compatible and sometimes conflicting. A special relationship developed between ruling elites in these two states of vastly unequal power in the Brezhnev era, largely as a consequence of Cold War competition and ideological bonding.

Although evidence indicates that Mengistu's administration had a lot to do with the relationship's progression, the negative patterns of asymmetric exchange that subsequently developed adversely affected Ethiopia more than they did the Soviet Union. This negative impact continued long after Gorbachev assumed power and some of them persisted even after both sovereign states had fragmented. Politically, Gorbachev's endorsement of Mengistu's military government and approval for that regime's control over the process of Ethiopia's transformation into a civilian socialist state reduced prospects for establishing a civilian government more tolerant of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. Militarily, Soviet weapons and equipment artificially prolonged the political life of one group of Ethiopians at the expense of others and

facilitated the process of Ethiopia's internal fragmentation. In addition, Gorbachev's arms provisions also provided opportunities for militant opposition forces, as well as Ethiopian officials, to develop too much reliance upon military solutions to domestic problems. Economically, relations with the Soviet Union became prohibitively costly, as preferential arrangements declined in importance and the costs of Soviet imports increased markedly. In addition, Ethiopia's substantial indebtedness to the Soviet Union survived the fall of both administrations to become a potential source of conflict between officials of the Russian Federation and the Ethiopian population. In respect of agricultural development, the extent of Soviet influence over Ethiopian development policy may be debated, but Gorbachev's approval and support for Mengistu's resettlement and villagisation schemes did encourage Ethiopia's ruling elite to divert scarce resources towards a select number of large ventures at the expense of the population.

Analyses of the Soviet Union's relationships with other friendly non-capitalist states demonstrated some marked similarities to the Soviet-Ethiopian case. In respect of interests, evidence indicated that ruling elites in Angola, Mozambique and Cuba had exercised considerable control over the selection, adaptation, implementation and rejection of the models that they emulated, just as they had in Ethiopia. At a structural level, research findings indicated that the negative patterns of asymmetric exchange identified in the examples of Angola, Mozambique and Cuba were similar to those that had characterised the Soviet Union's relationship with Ethiopia.

Adverse impacts in four areas became visible in the Brezhnev period, persisted well into the Gorbachev era and continued to pose problems for ruling elites in those Third World countries after the demise of the Soviet Union. First, the Soviet Union adversely influenced political developments in these weak states by exercising its power to support certain local elites at the expense of other political rivals and to provide them with the military means to prolong their tenure in power. Second, Soviet arms provision escalated prospects for domestic and regional conflict in these countries and allowed Third World leaders like Castro to engage in military interventions around the globe. Third, the Soviet Union reduced prospects for economic independence and growth by fostering trade dependency through the provision of key imports deemed requisite to industrialisation and militarisation and encouraging leaders of poor states to accumulate exorbitant military debts. Finally, the Soviet Union adversely affected prospects for agricultural development by endorsing their own strategies and structures

for socialist transformation, agricultural modernisation and the restructuring of peasant society, despite dubious success rates at home, and, by so doing, encouraged governments in poor states to divert scarce resources towards large, expensive agricultural projects at the expense of the population. These drawbacks seemed to characterise the long-term impact of asymmetric exchange generally in the Soviet Union's relationships with non-capitalist Third World states.

However, relations between the United States and Cuba prior to 1959 make it clear that patterns of asymmetry similar to the ones identified in the Soviet Union's relationships with Third World states deemed to be friendly are apt to develop in close relationships between powerful and weak states over time, regardless of ideological persuasion. Although the interests of ruling elites in both states drive the relationship along, the poorer state remains more vulnerable as a consequence of the vast disparities that exist in respect of capability and power. The weak state may gain substantial benefits initially, but these are likely to be outweighed by the adverse impact of negative patterns of asymmetric exchange in the longer term. These effects are most likely to become visible when a major event such as a radical change in leadership adversely affects the positive dynamics originally set in place between two compatible sets of ruling elites. Cold War conditions may have aggravated the process of asymmetric exchange, but similar patterns have been demonstrated in relationships between powerful and weak states in the past, and they continue to appear in the present.

In a world becoming more global in respect of the capitalist ideologies and the structures currently recommended for effective political and economic organisation, some negative patterns of asymmetric exchange that have been specifically associated with inter-state relations in the past also seem to be appearing in relationships within inter-governmental organisations like the IMF and the WTO. This manifestation of asymmetric exchange should become the focus of future research.

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