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# The Interplay between Materialist and Ideological Factors in Soviet Relations with Ethiopia and Mozambique

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## Introduction

The emergence of the Afro-Marxist states in the 1970s was a development which was enthusiastically received by the Soviet Union. For one thing, Soviet policy-makers and scholars viewed it dialectically as presaging long-term structural changes in global productive relations. The development was thus critical to the internationalisation of the class struggle and the eventual success of socialism on a global scale. Anatoly Gromyko (1983: 82-83) expressed this positive response to the emergence of the Afro-Marxist state when he observed that:

*"The socialist orientation in Africa is a continuation of the cause of the October Revolution under the specific conditions of its carrying out the high mission of preparing the way for the victory of scientific socialism..."*

The geopolitical significance of the development was not lost on the Soviet Union as is evident in the critical role which it played in Angola in 1975/76. This is because the emergence of the Afro-Marxist states provided the Soviet Union with an opportunity for renewed challenge to the hegemonic position of the West in Africa and also to shore up its declining influence on the continent. The importance of these states in Soviet global geopolitical calculations was further underscored by the strategic location of some of them in Southern Africa (Mozambique and Angola) and the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia). For example the littoral states in the two regions can provide the Soviet Union with naval facilities for manoeuvres in the Indian Ocean.

The political and ideological orientation of the Afro-Marxist states

provided the framework around which the Soviet Union could build military, economic, political and socio-cultural relations with them.

The expectation was, therefore, that special relations between the Soviet Union and the Afro-Marxist states would develop and grow. The decision of the 24th and 25th congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) emphasised this point. In a similar vein, the famous Breshnev Doctrine, advanced in Leonid Brezhnev's report to the 25th Congress of the CPSU, asserted that the cultivation of special relations with the Afro-Marxist states would be a central element in Soviet African policy. (See Tarabrin, 1980: 12). The Afro-Marxist states were equally enthusiastic about cultivating and developing special relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. For them, as for the Soviet Union, such relations were a structural and historical necessity, reflecting the dialectics of the global conflict between the forces of imperialism and anti-imperialism. Angola and Mozambique, for example, characterised the incipient relations as a natural alliance, arising out of an consolidating relations already established during the wars of national liberation in both countries. Samora Machel underlined this point of view by declaring that the "socialist countries were and are at all times our safe rearguard." (quoted in Ottaway and Ottaway, 1981:30).

The ideology of proletarian internationalism also provided a cornerstone for a relationship which both sides characterised as a symbiotic one, "... a new type of equitable and mutually beneficial international relations..." (Tarabrin, 1980: 12). The ideological formulation of this proletarian internationalism is concretely conceptualised in terms of opposition to neo-colonialism and the pursuit of the Non-Capitalist Path of Development.

The Soviet Union's characterisation of the relationship was part of its reassessment of its African and Third World policies. The reassessment took account of fluctuations and vagaries in African and Third World politics and of the need to be discriminating in developing close relations with countries and regimes in Africa. The Soviet Union, as part of this reassessment, became more realistic about prospects for the socialist transformation of Africa and opted for selectivity in its relations with African countries. It is therefore useful to view its relations with the Afro-Marxist states in the wider context of this reassessment of its African and Third World policies.

This is an important point to emphasise. However, behind the ideological rhetoric of proletarian internationalism lies the awareness of the overwhelming obstacle to the transition to socialism posed by the character of Africa's political economy for the Afro-Marxist state. Soviet characterisation of "the socialist orientation in Africa" is clear on this point. Thus, according to Anatoly Gromyko (1983: 81):

*"In Africa the socialist orientation arose and is developing in countries that*

*have not yet broken away completely from the world capitalist economic system, that still have many economic ties with it. Social and economic transformations being effected in African countries with socialist orientation do not take place so far under the hegemony of the working class... It should be stressed that in Africa, the socialist orientation is advancing in countries with a multistructural economy, where ethnic hostilities are still left, where the level of development of productive forces is low, and where pre-capitalist and often pre-feudal forms of society predominate."*

The establishment, cultivation and consolidation of special relations between the Soviet Union and the Afro-Marxist states would, on this view, be necessarily complex and complicated. Yet the Soviet formulation of the notion of socialist orientation contains the seeds of potential disagreement with the Afro-Marxist states over, for example, how Marxism-Leninism is to be conceptualised and concretely applied to the specific situations of these states. This is not unrelated to the strategic question of the policy options available to them as they seek to structure and shape their domestic and external environments in ways that are fundamentally i.e. ideologically different from those of neighbouring countries.

The interlocking connection between domestic and external environments in structuring the choice options open to the Afro-Marxist states as they pursue efforts to democratise productive and political relations provides an important dimension to the dynamics of their relations with the Soviet Union. There is little doubt that for these states the cultivation of special relations with the Soviet Union was viewed as crucial to developmental strategies they were embarking upon. It is of course, a difficult issue whether the expectations on which they sought to build the special relations were borne out or justified by the forms which those relations have assumed.

In concrete terms the special relations are pursued in the following spheres: the political, the economic, the ideological, the scientific and cultural, and the military. For example, the political sphere involves cooperation to build a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party and the democratisation of political structures. The economic, is concerned with cooperation to strengthen and broaden the state in the economy on an anti-capitalist basis.

In what follows the focus is on the forms and modalities of bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and two Afro-Marxist states - Ethiopia and Mozambique. As indicated earlier on, the theoretic-ideological formulation of the character of these bilateral relations is sometimes couched in terms of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the historical process in its transition from capitalism to socialism. Two closely related interpretations of Soviet objectives in the Afro-Marxist states have generally been deduced from this theoretico-ideological formulation.

First, there is the thesis that the Soviet cultivation of these relations is part of its general global strategy of confrontation with the West in general and the United States in particular. Thus it is argued that "Soviet strategic motives in Africa differ substantially from region to region but are shaped by global rivalry with the United States." (Nation and Kauppi, 1984: 36). In this way, the more substantive nature of the relations - the utilisation of Marxism-Leninism as a strategic development option - is neglected and replaced by cold war explanations of Soviet motives. As Gupta (1974: 20) has observed, "the presence of the Soviet Union anywhere in the Third World was seen as an overt ...threat to the rampants of the West's world-wide interests... Soviet policies were therefore analysed in terms of the cold war.

Secondly, some analysts see in the cultivation and development of these bilateral relations the consolidation of Soviet empire-building. In fact, as far back as 1961 Seton-Watson (1961: 120) has claimed that the Soviet Union was an "imperialist power" in that sense that it was seeking "... by a series of weapons and tactics to impose its doctrines and institutions on the other nations of the world." Recently Bissell (1980: 6) made much the same point, claiming that "the Soviet empire builders are leaving their tracks in Africa, and recent years have provided abundant evidence of their existence." Ethiopia, Mozambique and the other Afro-Marxist states, for example, are thus viewed as "client" or "satellite" states of the Soviet Union. The implication is that the ideology, in this case Marxism-Leninism, is irrelevant or epiphenomenal in explaining relations between these countries and the Soviet Union. In this way, again, the high premium placed on Marxism-Leninism as a development option by the Afro-Marxist states is overlooked. But more seriously contradictions that have emerged out of the dialectics of these bilateral relations are hardly considered; nor can they be explained within the framework of the cold war of patron-client relationships.

What is required is therefore a conceptual framework which avoids cold war or imperialistic explanations of relations between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia, Mozambique and the other Afro-Marxist states. This can be done by situating the relations in the wider context of the objective conditions of the contemporary world system, characterised by asymmetries between centre nations and peripheral ones. These asymmetries fundamentally arise from the global capitalist economy, the class system it has created and which sustains it and the consequent income inequalities and other contradictions between developed and developing countries that it has generated.

A useful conceptual schema in this respect is Claude Ake's (1978: 17-18) distinction between bourgeois and proletarian nations. This is in effect a distinction between developed and developing countries. This categorisation reflects the division of the global capitalist production system "into those countries which relate to it as owners of capital and technology. This dis-

tribution is the class division of the global system." (Ake, 1978: 18) What does this mean in operational or empirical terms?

A country's place within this division is based on its share of the world's capital and technology, "the two fundamental instruments of labour in the global capitalist system..." (Ake, 1978: 17). This global class division, in other words, is based on a distinction between those countries which monopolise these fundamental instruments of labour and those who do not possess them and are, therefore, subjected to exploitation. Another operational indicator of this global class division is the income gap or inequality between the bourgeois (i.e. developed) and the proletarian (i.e. developing) countries.

Given this objective criteria, Ake (1978: 18) argues that "... even internally progressive countries such as the Soviet Union must be regarded as bourgeois countries. To classify a country as bourgeois does not mean that it is unprogressive or that its internal economy is capitalist... but rather we are saying something about its share of the world's capital and technology." This then suggests that bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and the Afro-Marxist states will not be immune from contradictions created by their different objective positions in the global production system. As Ake (1978: 18) has hypothesised:

*"irrespective of the ideology of a country, its place in this classification is a matter of great importance which affects its behaviour and creates contradictions between it and other countries with a similar ideology which are on the other side of the classification..."*

All this does not mean that there are not secondary contradictions between, for example, the Soviet Union and the other bourgeois nations which will tend to bring the Soviet Union closer to the Afro-Marxist states. But if placed in the context of the primary contradiction suggested earlier on between bourgeois and proletarian countries, a number of apparent paradoxes between the Soviet Union and the Afro-Marxist states can be explained in a way that a conceptual framework based on cold war or patron-client presuppositions is ill-equipped to do.

What role does or can ideology play then as an explanatory variable, in view of the conceptual schema suggested here. Much has been said about the limitations of ideology as an explanatory variable in discussing relations between the USSR and the Afro-Marxist states. Young (1982:294), for example, has argued that:

*"While ideology is indisputably a significant vector, it is powerfully cross-cut but other determinants, both for the great powers and the African states... Both the Soviet Union and the United States define African policy in a global perspective; broader strategic considerations may well override regional*

*ideological factors."*

But the problematic nature of the connection between ideology and policy outcomes, implied in Young's argument, may be symptomatic of an inherent problem in the very notion of an "ideology". The problem can be placed in clearer perspective if ideology is viewed as a cognitive map or operational code in relation to objectives which are structurally determined in the sense of reflecting a nation's determination to consolidate or alter its position in the global production system. On this view ideology need not be as deterministic or as incorrigible a guide to policy choices as is sometimes expected of it.

The antithesis that is often drawn between ideology and pragmatism is an overdrawn one if the instrumental or interest view of ideology is accepted. For indeed the notion of pragmatism tends to give the impression of ideological inconsistency when in fact the connection between ideology and policy is dialectical and much more complicated than is usually suggested.

What are the specific forms and modalities of the bilateral relations between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia and Mozambique, two Afro-Marxist countries strategically located in regions which have experienced and are still experiencing intense regional conflicts? Pertinent questions to raise include the following: What are the policy aims or goals of both sides to the bilateral relations? What forms have the relations established assumed? How have both sides characterised the relations? What are some of the internal and external environmental factors which have affected the direction which the relations have assumed?

## **Ethio-Soviet Relations**

The genesis of Ethio-Soviet dates back to 1924 when the Soviet Union initiated discussion on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In 1931 the two countries signed an agreement for "the delivery of consignment of oil products and other Soviet commodities to Ethiopia" (Tarabrin, 1980: 42). The Soviet Union supported Ethiopia during the Italo-Ethiopian war for basically anti-fascist and anti-colonialist reasons, although there were also strategic considerations underlying the support. For example, Brind (1983: 92) contends that the Soviet position in the Italo-Ethiopian war arose out of a desire "to limit the influence of Western European states - particularly Britain" in the region.

The Soviet Union opened its embassy in Addis Ababa in 1956 and in 1959 Emperor Haile Selassie paid the first ever visit by an African Head of State to the Soviet Union. But the relations developed were never close and much

closer relations began to develop only after the overthrow of Haile Selassie in November 1974. A basic reason for this was the strong relationship that Emperor Haile Selassie had cultivated with the West, particularly the United States in military, economic and socio-cultural matters. This was reflected, for example, in the 1953 Treaty between Ethiopia and the United States which gave the United States a twenty-five year lease on a communication centre near Asmara. The United States was thus understandably to experience a reversal of its fortunes in Ethiopia with the accession to power in Ethiopia of a military government which was later to commit itself to the radical project of socialist transformation along Marxist-Leninist lines.

Much has been written about the diplomatic realignment which has occurred in the Horn since the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974. The realignment has revolved around relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and also between them and Ethiopia and Somalia (Brind, 1983; Ottaway, 1984; Renneck, 1981). It has, moreover, underlined the significant effect which regional developments in Africa can have on the strategic calculations of the superpowers and their subsequent policy shifts and choice of allies. The sources of these regional developments lie deep in the contradictions unleashed as part of the dialectics of the processes of conflict and change in Ethiopia and Somalia - the spill-over effects of changes in one country and the other and the specific form which these contradictions have assumed with the outbreak of the Ethio-Somali war.

An important aspect of the realignment was the development of closer ties between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union. The two countries issued in May 1977 a declaration of basic principles to provide the framework of bilateral relations thus established was further strengthened with other agreements in 1977 and 1978, the highpoint of which was the initialing of a treaty of friendship and cooperation in November 1978. Somalia, which had concluded a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union in 1974 viewed this development in the context of its own deteriorating and confrontational relations with Ethiopia, abrogated the treaty and began to seek better and closer relations with the United States.

The realignment was not an easy one for the Soviet Union to decide upon, in so far as the option before it was to choose between Ethiopia and Somalia. It tried to avoid this option and sought instead to steer a middle course which would enable it to retain the goodwill of Somalia and while it also took advantage of the new political situation in Ethiopia to strengthen its position there. This was a calculation behind the Soviet Union's attempt to act as a broker with Cuba to arrange a political solution to the Ogaden problem. This could have involved the creation of a loose federation in which substantial autonomy would be granted to Eritrea and the Ogaden, two critical issues in the Ethio-Somali dispute. This option had however, been effectively



ruled out by Somali military invasion of Ethiopian territory in the spring of 1978. A result of this invasion was that the Soviet Union was compelled to commit itself militarily on the side of Ethiopia.

A number of considerations could have influenced the Soviet Union's decision to commit itself to Ethiopia. Ethiopia provides a base from which the Soviet Union can expand its political and diplomatic influence in Africa. This is because of the political importance of Ethiopia in Africa, its key strategic position in the Horn, its economic and natural resource endowment, its large population - the second largest in Black Africa - and its huge physical land mass. There was also an ideological consideration: the desire to support the 'progressive' forces that were increasingly gaining the upper hand in Ethiopia and particularly within the Derg although there was then (in 1978) much fluidity and incoherence about the evolving Marxist-Leninist ideology in the country. Another consideration is the strategic one about the threat posed to the Soviet Union's naval interests by the plan to convert the Red Sea into an "Arab Lake" under the aegis of Saudi Arabia. The seriousness of the threat to Soviet interests in the area was further underlined by Arab support for Somalia in its conflict with Ethiopia. In the circumstances, Ethiopia assumed even more strategic importance to the Soviet Union because of its geopolitical location in the region.

If Soviet support was crucial to sustaining the Derg in power in preventing the disintegration and incipient decline of the Ethiopian state into anarchy, such support was, however, predicated on Soviet calculations of its own national interests and of advantages it would derive from establishing a foothold in Ethiopia. What, then, have been the forms and modalities of the relations?

The special character of evolving bilateral relations between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union was underscored by the twenty-year treaty of friendship and cooperation the two countries concluded in Moscow in November 20, 1978. The treaty covered such diverse but interrelated fields as political, economic, cultural and military relations. The special character of the relations has also been underscored by the frequency of visits to each other's country by high-powered delegations from the two countries. These visits provide the occasion for negotiating, concluding and reviewing the various areas of bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries. The visits also provide a forum for the ventilation of mutual reservations and critical observations about each other's commitment to the treaty.

Let me illustrate with some examples.<sup>1</sup> In July 1980, Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, the Deputy Defence Minister of the USSR and Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Navy, visited Ethiopia. With his entourage Admiral Gorshkov visited the naval base in Maswa, Asmara, Ethiopia's Northern Command Headquarters, and the Dahlak Islands. It seems, however, that

the primary purpose of the visit was to discuss the establishment of an enclavage in the Dahlak Islands, astride the sea lanes carrying most of Europe's oil, in compensation for the use of Berbera in Somalia which the Soviet Union suffered with the abrogation of its friendship treaty with Somalia. What lends credence to this supposition is the fact that Admiral Gorshkov is allegedly the brain behind the policy of projecting Soviet naval power well beyond its adjacent sea lanes as a deterrence to the subversion of Soviet interests in such friendly countries as Angola, Cuba, Ethiopia, Libya and South Yemen.

The Military strategic factor in Ethiopia-Soviet relations has earlier on in May 1980 been underscored by the visit of an Ethiopian delegation to Moscow under the leadership of Haddis Tedla. The delegation held discussions with Marshall Dimitry Ustinov, the Soviet Defence Minister, and Marshal Nikolay Ogarkov, the Soviet Chief of General Staff. In 1981 two top-ranking Soviet military delegations visited Ethiopia - one, in April, headed by General A.A. Yepishev, Chief of the Soviet Army and Navy's Main Political Directorate, and the other in June, headed by Marshal S.L. Solokov, the Soviet Union's First Deputy Minister of Defence.

Leonid Brezhnev used the occasion of the visit of the Ethiopian Head of State, Mengistu Haile Meriam in October 1980 to urge Ethiopia to negotiate political solutions to its problems in Eritrea and with Somalia. The Soviet Union was reluctant to get militarily entangled in those problems and, for military-strategic reasons, preferred a peaceful solution in Eritrea. This was partly because the naval facilities which it was keen on securing were in Eritrea.

It was understandable, therefore, that the Soviet Union encouraged a political solution of the Eritrean problem. To this end, using the Italian Communist party as proxy it encouraged the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), whose leader had visited Moscow in January 1980, to enter into negotiations with the Ethiopian government. As Remneck (1981: 136) has surmised, "in what appears to have been a counter initiative to the Saudi\Sudanese efforts to forge an Arab bloc of Red Sea states, the Soviets, following close on the heels of Cubans, proposed ... that Ethiopia and Somalia join South Yemen and independent Djibouti in a federation of Marxist states, in which Eritrea and the Ogaden would receive substantial autonomy." As indicated earlier, this option was scuttled by the Somali invasion of Ethiopia territory.

What has been the cost of the military-strategic factor in Ethio-Soviet relations? Much of this is shrouded in secrecy and it is therefore difficult to assess the financial cost. But it has been estimated that the Soviet Union supplied about \$1.5 billion worth of equipment to Ethiopia during the war in the Ogaden and that further substantial financial costs were incurred in air and

sea-lifting material to Ethiopia from the Soviet Union (Remneck, 1981: 141; Brind 1983: 93). Military aid is easily the single largest item in Soviet aid to Ethiopia. But this had meant a heavy debt burden for Ethiopia.

Ethiopia, for example, was in 1981 paying off a \$2,000 million arms debt to the U.S.S.R. The annual repayment interests on the debt were about US\$28 million. This was being repaid in cash or by barter exchanges of such valuable Ethiopian commodities as coffee and hides and skins. Ethiopia also incurred the additional economic burden of maintaining Cuban and Soviet troops in the country. For example, it has been estimated that there were between 1200 and 1500 Soviet Military personnel in Ethiopia in 1981. The economic burden, particularly that of repaying the arms debt was aggravated by the precipitous fall in Ethiopia's foreign exchange earnings as a result of the downturn in the world primary commodity prices for coffee and the fall in demand on the world market for hides and skins.

The Soviet response to Ethiopia's foreign exchange and economic crisis was to enter into agreement with Ethiopia in 1981 to sell her crude at about \$10 a barrel less than the world market prices. Another agreement provided for an increase in Soviet purchases of Ethiopian coffee, sesame oil, harricot beans and other agricultural goods by about 50%. But this was conditional on equivalent increase in the value of Ethiopian purchases of Soviet machinery, vehicles and petroleum products. In spite of this, the Soviet Union was so worried about Ethiopia's unpaid debt of about \$2 billion for Soviet arms that during the visit of Wollie Chiol, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Trade to Moscow in December, 1981, the Soviet Union said that it was willing to provide Ethiopia with preferential prices for fuel imports only on a short-term basis.

By 1981, therefore, Ethio-Soviet relations had begun to show signs of strain and stress. Ethiopian concern with the heavy arms burden it has had to carry was further exacerbated by disenchantment and disappointment with what Ethiopians regarded as the paucity and inappropriateness of Soviet non-military, particularly economic assistance and aid. The strain thus created was further underscored by the precipitous fall in Ethiopian foreign exchange earnings owing to declining world prices for its main export, coffee and a dramatic fall in the demand for hides and skins, its second foreign currency earner. The urgent need to increase its foreign income earnings provides a context within which to consider Ethiopia's overtures to the West in 1981. But what have been the modalities and forms of Ethio-Soviet economic relations? The following is a representative illustration of the economic transactions between the two countries.

In March 1981, as part of its contribution to the drought and famine relief efforts, the Soviet Union donated 12,000 tons of wheat, 50 trucks, 50 water tankers and 10 water pumps of a total value of Ethiopian Birr 12 million to

Ethiopia. In August 1981 S.A. Skachkov, the Chairman of the Soviet Committee on Foreign Economic Relations visited Addis Ababa to sign an economic cooperation agreement which provided for Soviet assistance in consolidating construction organisations in the state sector. The agreement also provided increased trade credits for Ethiopia.

In the same year in October at the Third Session of the joint Ethiopian-Soviet Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation and Trade in Addis Ababa, the Soviet Union agreed to provide technical assistance for the construction in Ethiopia of a hydroelectric power station and the opening up of the land and water resources in the Gambela region. A major Soviet agricultural project was also on the Baabbi River Valley involving the construction of a dam to allow for irrigation and electric power supply.

Perhaps the most important industrial project so far undertaken by the Soviet Union in Ethiopia was the construction of an oil refinery at Assab at a cost of Birr 7 million. This refinery is made up of oil tanks capable of storing 18 million litres of oil. The Soviet Union also helped to build Ethiopia's first tractor station. In April 1984 the Soviet Union agreed to provide the necessary technical assistance for the construction of a hydro-electric power station on the Webbe Shebbele River. In September 1984 the two countries signed a long-term economic cooperation agreement on Soviet participation in Ethiopia's ten-year plan. It also included provisions for the Soviet Union's help in oil and gold exploration in the country.

As has already been pointed out, Ethiopia has been unhappy with the quantum and quality of Soviet development assistance to and trade with the country. As a result Ethiopia had no choice but to turn to the West for economic assistance and aid. Ethio-Soviet relations had not substantially diverted the direction of Ethiopian foreign trade from the West to the Eastern bloc countries. In 1982, for example, over 46% of Ethiopian imports came from western industrial countries. This dropped to 45% in 1980 but in 1982 it had risen to about 63%. (see Tables I and II). The West, particularly the EEC, remains Ethiopia's main trading partner.

The Ethiopian disappointment with Soviet economic assistance and aid was reflected in a number of policy decisions and overtures beginning from 1981. In that year the Ethiopian government took measures to restore its eligibility for loans and assistance from the World Bank. The ten-year programme of Economic Strategy introduced in July 1981 shifted emphasis from collectivisation and nationalisation. It also outlined the role which western bilateral and multilateral economic assistance was expected to play in the implementation of the plan.

The liberalisation reflected in these policy measures was due partly to disappointment with the record of the Soviet Union in the trade and aid area. It

was also dictated by Ethiopia's heavy arms debt burden. It was in effect due to the necessity of finding solutions to the conjuncture of problems which were buffeting the Ethiopian state: the debilitating impact of the drought and the world recession on the country's fragile economy; political insecurity and its attendant instability arising not only from dissensions within the Derg over ideology and public policy, but also from the unsettled ethnic problem posed by irredentist secessionist movements in the Ogaden, Eritrea and Oromo.

As a result of the liberalisation, Western aid began to flow into Ethiopia late in 1981 for the first time since the Derg came to power. As was indicated earlier on, Ethiopia began the negotiations which led to the restoration of its eligibility to receive loans and assistance from the World Bank. The highpoint of the liberalisation measures was the introduction in February 1983 of a new law on joint ventures in all but a few sectors of Ethiopia's economy. The law provided for transfer of shares and repatriation of profits. By mid-1983 Ethiopia had accepted, as part of an agreement with the World Bank, to compensate British, Japanese, French, Italian, Dutch and American companies which had been nationalised in 1978.

A final area of Ethio-Soviet relations to be illustrated here is the political one. The major Soviet concern here is the creation in Ethiopia of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party to replace the Derg. The Soviet Union saw in party organisation an area in which its own experience could serve as a model for Ethiopia. But there was another dimension to the Soviet Union's interest in party organisation. In the Soviet view the creation of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party was essential for the transition of socialism and the consequent progressive democratisation of political structures and institutions in Ethiopia.

The Soviet Union was insistent on the creation of such a party for a number of reasons. The basic reason was that, deriving from its experience elsewhere in Africa (e.g. Egypt, the Sudan, Ghana, Guinea and Mali), the Soviet Union had come to question the ability and even commitment of bourgeois African nationalist leaders, be they civilian or military ones, to effect a socialist transformation of their countries along Marxist-Leninist lines. It was important to create durable Marxist-Leninist party structures that would survive the political fortunes of particular leaders and coup d'états. Thus, in the case of Ethiopia, "once having secured the military regime's position, the Kremlin showed that, profiting from its earlier experiences, it was no longer willing just to rely on a military regime for the maintenance of an alliance into which it had invested considerable resources and prestige." (Legum, 1984: 24).

The Soviet Union, therefore, stepped up pressures on the Derg to set in motion the machinery to create a communist party in Ethiopia. To facilitate

this, various Ethiopian delegations visited Moscow between 1980 and 1984 to study the structure and organisation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). For example, no less than twelve major delegations from the Commission for the Organisation of the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE) visited Moscow in 1983 to study CPSU's structures. In addition two delegations from the Supreme Political Department of the Armed Forces of Ethiopia visited Moscow in 1983 to hold consultations with officials of the Main Political Department of the Soviet Armed Forces. In return, a number of Soviet delegations visited Ethiopia to oversee and help with efforts to build a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party in the country.

An important development in the Ethiopian adoption of Marxism-Leninism was the First Congress of the Commission for the Organisation of the Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE) which was held in June 1980. COPWE had been formed in December 1979 to pave the way for the creation in Ethiopia of a proletarian party on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The Second Congress of COPWE in January 1983 decided to establish a fully-fledged Marxist-Leninist party by September 1984 when the Third Congress was scheduled to be held. COPWE, which since inception had acted like a political party, was replaced in September, 1984 by the Ethiopian Serto-Ader Party (ESP).

Some concluding remarks can now be made about the nature of Ethio-Soviet relations. For example, what does the foregoing discussion suggest about the hypothesis that the primary contradiction between bourgeois (i.e. developed) and proletarian (i.e. developing) nations provides a useful explanatory schema for looking at some aspects of Soviet bilateral relations with the Afro-Marxist states?

The problem created for Ethio-Soviet relations by this contradiction is largely reflected in their economic relations. In this area the Soviet Union has done little that would indicate a determination to alter the global division of labour and the class system that underpins it. Indeed, the Soviet Union had been quite nationalistic in protecting its own economic interests and in taking advantage of its position in the capitalist global production system.

For example, as was illustrated above, the Soviet Union has used the export of machinery to Ethiopia to cover the costs of its imports of primary commodities like coffee and hides and skins from the country and to stockpile them or to guarantee its access to them in the future. An underlying consideration in Soviet economic relations with Ethiopia is, therefore, the exportation of hard currency exports like military hardware, petroleum products, machinery and equipment that would bring benefits to the Soviet economy since such exports are tied to the import of raw materials needed by the Soviet economy. This indeed has tended to be the general trend of Soviet trade policy with developing countries. (On this, see Kanet, 1981: 347-353).

Soviet economic assistance has also not helped to bridge or narrow the income inequality gap between it and the rest of the industrialised world on the one hand and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian complaint about the meagre nature of Soviet aid and technical assistance has already been detailed above. Nor has the Soviet Union offered substantial sources of investment capital in Ethiopia. Here again the Soviet performance in Ethiopia can be generalised for its performance in the developing world in this area. (See Kanet, 1981: 337, Legum, 1984: 25-26).

Ideological considerations in Ethio-Soviet relations have not however been irrelevant. They have played and are still playing an important role in a number of policy areas:- in efforts to create a proletarian-based vanguard party and in the training of party cadres; in the visible role played by Soviet military and technical assistance personnel in the highly sensitive area of the organisation of logistics for the distribution of drought relief by the Ethiopian government; in Ethiopian support of the Soviet Union on critical world issues in the UN and elsewhere; and in Ethiopian rebuff on overtures from the West, especially the US for the normalisation of its relations with them.

## Mozambican-Soviet Relations

The foundations of current Mozambican-Soviet relations lie deep in the Soviet military and political support of national liberation movements in the hitherto Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. That support found theoretical justification in Lenin's position on the Soviet support of oppressed colonial peoples. The Soviet presence in the Southern African region dates back to the 1920's when the Soviet Union established links with the South African Communist Party and through it, with a number of black South African nationalists. As was the case in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, the Soviet role and presence in Mozambique and Southern Africa took on a much more dramatic turn in the mid-1970s. The Angolan Civil War, 1975-1976 was critical in this respect. Soviet military support of the MPLA against its rivals, UNITA and (FNLA), went a long way to contributing to the eventual success of the MPLA and its accession to power in an independent Angola. The direct Soviet military intervention, which was in response to direct South African and United States involvement in support of the UNITA and FNLA, was on a large scale and marked the first such Soviet involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Stevens (1980: 48) has calculated that in the latter half of 1975 the Soviet Union "sent the MPLA military equipment worth over \$200 million and several hundred military advisors, while at the same time it provided the

logistical and economic support indispensable to the Cuban provision of some fifteen thousand troops." One effect of this was that in the West "fears were expressed that the Soviet Union would support revolution elsewhere in the region..." on a similar scale and "the 1977 Soviet intervention in Ethiopia reemphasised these fears." (Stevens, 1980: 45).

Another effect of Soviet intervention in Angola was that it brought the Soviet Union closer to Mozambique. The development eventually led to a diplomatic realignment in which China, the major Communist ally and supporter of Frelimo during the national liberation war in Mozambique, saw its influence in the country wane while that of the Soviet Union waxed stronger. This also reflected a general decline of Chinese influence in Africa in the 1970s - a decline which was due, among other reasons, to "a series of diplomatic blunders that put them on the side of closing causes", including support of the CIA-backed FNLA in Angola, Mobutu in Zaire, and of Somalia after its invasion of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia (Ottaway and Ottaway, 1980: 34).

A little bit more needs to be said about the internal and external contexts within which Mozambican-Soviet relations should be placed and understood. One factor linking the internal and external contexts and which highlights the sometimes tenuous nature of the distinction in the case of Mozambique, is the structural factor arising out of the political economy of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique. The relative backwardness and underdevelopment of Portugal in comparison to the other imperial powers had resulted in the transformation of Mozambique into a labour reserve and plantation to serve and meet the needs particularly of expatriate non-Portuguese capital.

Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique, therefore, played the role of an intermediary for South African capital, making the Mozambican economy a fragile and dependent one. As Harloh (1984: 15) puts it, "the poorest and most underdeveloped of Europe's colonial powers left behind one of the poorest countries in Africa." This colonial inheritance has made the Mozambican economy susceptible to political, military and economic blackmail and sabotage from South Africa.

The heritage has also had a major impact on the Frelimo government in Mozambique as it considers and chooses options to pursue in trying to delink from South Africa. The success of South Africa and international finance capital in undermining those options must be viewed in the context of the historically-determined structural fragility of the Mozambican economy and its peripheral integration into the South African one.

Other factors which provide the internal and external nexus for Mozambican-Soviet relations include the following: the hegemonic role of South Africa as a proxy for international finance capital in Southern Africa; the wars of national liberation in the region; the special dimension given to those



wars by the racist philosophies of white minority regimes in the region; and great power interests and involvement in the region. The interconnectedness of these factors provides the background against which to examine cooperation and tension in Mozambican-Soviet relations. What are the modalities and forms of those relations? On what expectations have they been based?

As in the case of Ethio-Soviet relations, these relations are based on "... a certain community of ideas and a desire to advance along the road of social progress." (Tarabrian, 1980: 122). A central objective is to advance the progress of proletarian internationalism in the Southern Africa region. In concrete terms this has meant that both countries would support liberation movements in South Africa, Namibia and Rhodesia\Zimbabwe, although as the case of Zimbabwe showed, both countries did not support the same liberation movement. The role of Mozambique in providing a rear for the liberation movements in Rhodesia\Zimbabwe and South Africa was a critical dimension in advancing the prospects for proletarian internationalism in the region.

The furtherance of proletarian internationalism has also been defined in terms of reducing dependence on the West and of constructing socialist national economies within the region. The aim, in the words of Leonid Brezhnev, is "... to establish totally new relations of production, change the psychology of the people and set up a new administrative apparatus relying on the support of the masses." (Quoted in Gromyko, 1983: 82). This rationalisation puts the relations in the wider perspective of Soviet global interests and hegemonic competition between capitalism and socialism as ideologies of development.

Mozambique views the Soviet Union as a "natural ally" and a "safe rearguard" in the socialist project which Frelimo has undertaken. The Mozambican expectation was based on its acceptance of Marxism-Leninism as providing a terrain of choice in transforming Mozambican society and overcoming the legacy of Portuguese colonial rule in the country. The choice of Marxism-Leninism and the projected vanguard nature of Frelimo were decisions that grew out of the dialectics of the war of national liberation.

In a way, the Soviet Union had been important in the conceptualisation of Mozambican socialism. The Mozambican expectation had been that Soviet assistance would be substantial and critical in the twin areas of social reconstruction and military security assistance to withstand South African political and military aggression as well as economic sabotage against Mozambique. This is concretely or operationally what the phrases "natural ally" and "safe rearguard" refer to. The "image" which "the Soviet Union brought from Angola ...of an ally prepared to back its friends to the hilt" (Stevens, 1980: 51) reinforced this expectation in the late 1970s.

As will be shown, however, Mozambique has been disappointed at the

quantum and substance of Soviet economic and military aid and assistance. With the country virtually besieged by South Africa, its economy paralysed and its political control of the state shaky, the Mozambican government has had little room to manoeuvre. It had no choice but to reach the detente with South Africa that Nkomati represented. Disappointed with its "natural" ally and with its "safe rearguard" exposed, Mozambique had to reassess its international relations and attitude towards the role of western capital in the country's development.

An observation which should, perhaps, be made about the modalities and forms of Mozambican-Soviet relations when compared with Ethio-Soviet ones is the close working relation in the former case between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (GDR); so much so that there has been talk of a "quasi-alliance" or "quasi-coalition" of the "USSR", Cuba and the GDR in the Southern African region. (Albright, 1982: 4. Much more so than in Ethiopia, the GDR role in Mozambique has been as active as, if not more than that of the USSR. Coker (1981: 619) sees Southern Africa as offering a good illustration of "... how East European interests have forced the Soviet Union to confront the responsibilities as well as limitations of its power." (see also, Lawson, 1982). Indeed it is Coker's (1981: 619) argument that "... fundamental differences between the East Europeans and Moscow have been reflected in disputes over three main issues ..." of which "... the wisdom of admitting Mozambique into the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) ..." is "... perhaps more than any other ..." the one about which "... the divergence of opinion is most clear."

Some illustrations of the modalities of Mozambique-Soviet relations can now be given. As in the case of Ethio-Soviet relations, a most prominent feature of Mozambican-Soviet relations has been Soviet military aid to Mozambique. Their treaty of friendship and cooperation provides for mutual consultations and military aid, "... in the case of a situation tending to threaten or disturb the peace ..." The precarious military and security situation of Mozambique as a target for Rhodesian and South African attacks and sabotage, in view of its providing sanctuary, a "rear base" for liberation movements in Rhodesia\Zimbabwe and South Africa was obvious enough to underscore the importance of the military clauses of the treaty. The clauses are perhaps intended to underscore Soviet transfer and deployment of military arms, equipment and personnel to progressive regimes and liberation movements in Southern Africa.

Soviet military aid has not been substantial enough, however, to provide Mozambique security against South Africa. Nor was it enough to deter Rhodesian incursions into Mozambique and support of the MNR. In the aftermath of the treaty of friendship and cooperation, Soviet arms and military equipment which were transferred to Mozambique included what

was described as "outmoded" 1-34 tanks, MIG 17s and 122-mm rockets. According to this same observer, "the Soviet did not see fit to provide Mozambique with the sophisticated air defence which would be necessary to deter the intermittent and destructive raids by the Rhodesian airforce." Daniel Papp (1981: 81) makes much the same observation: "In the years since the treaty was signed, Rhodesia has launched positive air strikes and ground operations into Mozambique primarily against ZANU guerrilla bases. These attacks have been carried out with impunity.. What then has been the nature of Soviet military aid and assistance to Mozambique? The total value of Soviet arms transfers to Mozambique in 1982 was about \$250 million. Much of this was made up of thirty-five tanks (T-34s, T-54s and T-55s), eight M.G.-21 fighters, a number of SA7-7 SAM missiles and 122 mm howitzers. (Stevens, 1980: 51). But this aid has also been generally symbolic and feeble. In February, 1981, for example, the Soviet Union deployed warships from its Indian Ocean fleet to Maputo and Beira as an expression of solidarity with Mozambique. The aim was to deter South Africa from future attacks such as those carried out when it bombed houses occupied by members of the African National Congress. D.U. Ustinov held discussions in Maputo with his Mozambican counter-part, Alberto Chipande. This was followed by a visit in mid- December 1981 by a Soviet naval squadron. As a result of these naval movements, the South African Minister of Defence accuses the Soviet Union of military design to open up "a second front against South Africa" and of having deployed 250 Soviet tanks, 400 armoured cars, a number of M.G. 21 fighters and anti-aircraft missiles to Mozambique.<sup>3</sup>

Another illustration of Soviet solidarity was provided by the visit of two Soviet warships to Maputo in April 1983. When two Soviet technicians were murdered and twenty-four others kidnapped by MNR bandits in Mozambique's Zambesia Province, in August 1983, the Soviet Union sent four warships, including an aircraft carrier, on an eight-day visit to Maputo. This was intended as a strong signal of the seriousness with which the Soviet Union viewed South African-inspired aggression against Mozambique. But as was indicated above, such demonstration of naval power and solidarity with Mozambique have been ineffective in deterring or curbing South African inspired aggression against Mozambique which has itself been reticent about granting the Soviet Union naval and military bases. Indeed the 1978 constitution of Mozambique contains statutory provisions against foreign military bases in the country. This is partly due to the Mozambican attempt to strike a delicate balance between commitment to proletarian internationalism and nonalignment.

The overall picture which emerges is that Soviet military assistance was ineffective in providing the badly needed guarantee against South African and South Africa inspired military and subversive activities against the Mozambi-

que state. The militarily exposed and insecure position of Mozambique compounded and exacerbated the dependent and fragile economic situation of the country. The Nkomati Accord, entered into by Mozambique and South Africa on March 16, 1984, was part of the Mozambican attempt to come to terms with its fragile military and economic position and the political problems it was creating domestically for the Frelimo government.

The Nkomati Accord highlighted the failure of the Mozambican-Soviet treaty of friendship and cooperation in helping to build and ensure a military and economically strong Mozambique able to stand up to the overpowering regional power of South Africa. It had become increasingly clear to Mozambique that the Soviet Union was not prepared to commit its forces to the defence of their country. President Leonid Brezhnev's comments that "the Soviet-Mozambique treaty was non-military in nature" (Quoted on Papp, 1981: 81) underlined the Soviet reluctance to commit its forces in defence of Mozambique. Colin Legum (1984: A47-A48) has asserted that, "it can be stated as a fact that Samora Machel was counselled on at least three different occasions by Soviet leaders to do everything possible to avoid an open military confrontation with South Africa - the first was by Brezhnev; the second by the President Podgorny, when he paid a state visit to Maputo; and the third was by Andropov when Machel visited Moscow in 1983."

There had been, prior to the Nkomati Accord, a number of signals of Mozambican disenchantment with the nature of Soviet military and economic assistance. In April 1982 Mozambique entered into a treaty of military cooperation with Portugal. Shortly thereafter the idea of Mozambican military cooperation with France and Great Britain was also floated and rumoured. Also in 1982 there was a marked improvement in Mozambican relations with the United States. An earlier signal contained in Samora Machel's description of his meeting with the U.S. President, Jimmy Carter in October 1977 as marking the beginning of a new era in their bilateral relations (Papp, 1981: 81) was now being seriously and vigorously pursued. Thus, sometime in 1982, as Kuhne (1985: 2) claims, "Mozambique signalled to the State Department in Washington that it would welcome U.S. assistance in reaching a fundamental accommodation with South Africa on questions of mutual security."

How was the Nkomati Accord viewed by the Soviet Union? In a sense, it was a setback for the Soviet Union in its pursuit of the mission of proletarian internationalism in Southern Africa. This partly explains its subdued reaction to the accord. On the one hand, given its failure to provide military security to Mozambique and its private nudgings of Mozambique not to provoke South Africa militarily, the Soviet Union did not want to offend Mozambique and the Frontline States by publicly condemning the accord. On the other hand, the Soviet Union was sensitive to the sense of betrayal

felt by the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) as a result of the accord. It therefore privately had to reassure the ANC of its continuing support of the liberation struggle in South Africa. The statement credited to President Ceausescu of Romania that the Nkomati Accord was a positive factor that would help Mozambique consolidate its revolutionary gains<sup>5</sup> was a view also probably shared by the Soviet Union. What the accord also underscores is a credibility problem for the Soviet Union. As Legum (1984: A48) has argued, "developments in 1983 and especially in 1984 showed up the Soviet rule of strategic ally as being so weak as to be almost derisory".

Why has the Soviet Union been unable to meet the security and military needs of Mozambique? One explanation is that, in view of the hard choices it had to make in pursuit of its global interests, particularly because of its limited resources, the Soviet Union has tended to relegate Mozambique, and indeed the entire Southern African region, to a back state in its geopolitical and strategic considerations. (Albright 1982: 16; Legum, 1984:A48). A similar explanation is that the Soviet Union is playing "a low-key regional role" in Southern Africa because it accepts the region as essentially being the sphere of influence of the West. A Soviet challenge to the hegemony of the West in the region might encourage the West to exert "deterrent pressure" and challenge Soviet hegemony elsewhere. (Steven, 1980: 52-53).

While there is some merit in these explanations, the active military presence of the Soviet Union in Angola suggests the need to look for another explanation. One such explanation is that Mozambique, unlike Angola, which earns substantial foreign exchange from the sale of petroleum, lacks the hard currency to pay for modern and sophisticated Soviet weaponry. Another is that the Soviet Union is unprepared to deploy its troops or those of Cuba, for example, in Mozambique because the risks of a direct military confrontation with South African troops were much higher than in the case of Angola. (Kuhne, 1985:4)

Another important area of Mozambican-Soviet relations is their socio-economic relations. An agreement between the two countries was signed in November 1980 to cover agriculture, fishing and mining. There were also discussions on Soviet-assisted projects in Mozambique. These developments were followed in May 1981 when the first session of the Soviet-Mozambique Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation and Trade was held in Moscow.

A result of the session was an agreement on economic and trade cooperation to cover the period 1981-1990. Among other provisions, there was a protocol for Soviet aid and assistance in the Creation of three state cotton-growing farms, a polytechnic school and four vocational and technical schools. The importance attached to these relations by both countries translated into increased trade and commercial transaction flows between the two

countries. For example, Tass in September, 1981 reported that the volume of Mozambican-Soviet trade had increased from \$8 million between 1977 and 1980. The growing trade and economic links were further consolidated in April 1983 when Prakash Ratilal, the Governor of the Bank of Mozambique signed an agreement in Moscow for a loan of 40 million roubles on 'favourable terms' to finance geological and cotton projects.<sup>6</sup>

In March 1983 a Soviet agricultural delegation visited Mozambique to discuss methods of improving cotton production in Manpula province. That same month a delegation from the Soviet Central Consumer's Cooperative Union visited Maputo to discuss modalities for implementing a three-year cooperation agreement which both countries had signed in 1982. In 1983 a three-year bilateral trade agreement was the highlight of a visit to Maputo by G. K. Zhuravlev, the Soviet Union's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, with the expectation that trade turnover between the two countries during the period would be about \$300 million. This was followed by a number of further developments in 1983. A delegation from the Soviet Union, headed by Yuriy Minayer, Deputy Chief of USSR Foreign Ministry's Department of Trade with African Countries, met with Mozambican officials in Mid-November to consider precise items to include in Mozambican-Soviet trade in 1984. It was agreed that the USSR would supply raw materials, chemical products, animal feeds and consumer goods; Mozambique would export sisal, cashew nuts and prawns. The delegation also announced the Soviet donation of clothes, textiles and other articles worth about \$13 Million to Mozambique in aid of victims of drought. This was additional to an earlier donation in October 1983 of 10 000 tons of rice and 700 tons of frozen fish. In December 1983 the Soviet Ambassador to Mozambique, Yuri Sepelez indicated that the Soviet Union was sending shiploads of rice and oil to Mozambique in addition to a recently signed \$300 million trade agreement. (Kuhne, 1985:1). Late in 1984, the Soviet Union again donated 3 000 tonnes of fish and consumer goods of about \$13 000 as contribution to Mozambique's agricultural marketing campaign.

These transactions suggest that great importance is attached to bilateral economic relations in fostering the economic and socio-political development of Mozambique. Bilateral economic relations are intended to strengthen the state productive sector, assure state control of the national economy and diminish economic dependence on South Africa in particular and the world capitalist economy in general. But, as in the case of Ethio-Soviet bilateral economic relations, this hope has generally not been achieved. South Africa and the West remain the major sources of foreign exchange earnings and imports for Mozambique.

In other words, they have remained its major trading partners, although there has been some decline in the volume of trade between Mozambique

and the West relative to that between Mozambique and the centrally planned economies between 1977 and 1982. Table III shows that between 1977 and 1982 the percentage share of Mozambique exports to OECD countries dropped from 76% to 40% while imports dropped from about 59% to 39%. On the other hand, during the same period Mozambican exports to countries with centrally planned economies rose from 0% to 13% while imports grew from 0% to 23%.

In spite of its trade links with the OECD countries Mozambique was reluctant to accede to the Lome Convention. The Berlin Clause in Annex 35 of the Lome Treaty would have created tension in Mozambican-East German relations if Mozambique signed the Treaty since it makes recognition of Berlin as part of the Federal Republic of Germany mandatory. When Edgar Pisani, the EEC Development Commissioner, visited Maputo in February 1982, President Samora Machel informed him that Mozambique was interested in forms of economic cooperation and aid outside the framework of Lome. Refusal to join the Lome Convention deprived Mozambique of considerable development cooperation assistance, the loss of which was not offset or compensated for by assistance coming from the Soviet Union and East Europe. Disappointment on this score, as in the case of Ethiopia, led Mozambique to seek closer trade ties with the West, to whom it turned for more development assistance.

The sacrifice which non-accession to Lome had meant for Mozambique was compounded by the failure of its efforts to join COMECON, to which it was granted an observer status in 1979. The issue of Mozambique's application for full membership in COMECON, especially the need to secure Soviet support, was a major reason for Samora Machel's visit to Moscow in November 1980. The Mozambicans placed a high premium on COMECON membership for ideological "...cooperation between the developed socialist states and the socialist states whose economies are still developing as a decisive factor in strengthening the position of socialism on four continents". (quoted in Lawson, 1982:37). But Soviet support was not forthcoming and has been, at best, lukewarm for reasons discussed below.

The issue of Mozambique's full membership in COMECON raised a number of issues. First, it highlighted contradictions between developed and developing economies within the socialist world, and especially the reluctance of the developed ones to 'level up' with the developing ones. As Coker (1981:630) sums it up, "for many East European economists, 'leveling up' has become an increasingly transparent smoke-screen for unjust or inequitable development in contravention of their ideological posture". Secondly, there is, according to Peter Wiles and Ian Smith, the emerging consensus within the Soviet bloc "since the early 1960s... that the (New Communist Third World) should remain attached to the capitalist world market" although

"under effective state control" (quoted in Lawson, 1982: 35-36).

The reason for this is partly the Soviet bloc's realisation that the kind of capital assistance and transfers needed for development in Africa and Third World countries were much more readily available in the West. Related to this is the refusal of the Soviet Union to subsidise Mozambique to the extent to which it has committed itself in Cuba and Vietnam. It is East Germany and Bulgaria which have provided Mozambique with the most generous credit terms among the Soviet bloc countries. The two countries were also the most active supporters of the application of Mozambique for membership of COMECON.

A third issue concerns the criteria for admission to full membership status in COMECON. This is an important issue in view of the fact that none of the Afro-Marxist states or 'African countries of socialist orientation' has achieved that status. One explanation for this state of affairs is that offered by Lawson (1982: 38):

*Within the communist Third World, what distinguishes the full CMEA member from the 'candidate' members is partly their degree of effective planning, and partly the degree of their attachment to Soviet policy, but mainly, as Singleton has argued, the assurance that their transition to a Marxist-Leninist state is irreversible. Soviet commentators are quite clear on this point. They admit that a change of ruling elite can alter relations with any African country very rapidly, whether or not it is of socialist orientation.*

The critical criterion, therefore, is ideological reliability. In the view of the Soviet Union this can best be assured by the development of a fully-fledged Marxist-Leninist party. This is why so much importance is attached by the Soviet Union to the political, especially party-building dimensions of its bilateral relations with the Afro-Marxist states. It is only the creation of a Marxist-Leninist states. It is only the creation of a Marxist-Leninist party that will create conditions which will not tie the prospects for socialist transformation to the political fortunes or misfortunes of particular leaders or ruling cliques.

As indicated earlier on, and as happened in the case of Ethio-Soviet bilateral economic relations, disappointment with the record of the Soviet Union in the economic and development assistance field led Mozambique to adopt a more open door policy towards the West and Western capitalist financial institutions. It began to consider more seriously liberalisation measures than it had done earlier in 1980 when it returned some concerns in the public sector to private enterprise. Talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began late in 1983. The IMF, in endorsement of the liberalisation which had been initiated in the country approved a U.S.\$45 million loan for Mozambique. The need to gain access to western capital markets also led



Mozambique to make other concessions. Giving up its objections to the Berlin Clause, Mozambique accepted aid from West Germany. This was a signal that it was reconsidering its stand on the Lome Convention. It eventually acceded to the convention in 1984.

There were probably strategic security considerations in Mozambique's seeking improved economic relations with the West. For example, Harlon (1984:236) has speculated that these "improved links... are also to be seen in the light of growing South African aggression. Frelimo hopes that if it increases Western investment and involvement in Mozambique then these countries will stop South Africa from attacking their new property". Here again we see how military, political and economic factors converge and lead to radical policy changes.

What this also underscores is the interrelatedness of domestic and external factors in shaping the government's policy options and in narrowing its terrain of choice. The same economic and security weaknesses of the Mozambican state which the adoption of socialist development options and the pursuit of closer ties with the Soviet bloc had been designed to remove, had now impelled Mozambique to reconsider its options domestically and externally as it attempted to come to grips with those weaknesses. While this might suggest the limited value of ideology as an indicator of economic policy choices and foreign policy behaviour in the Afro-Marxist state, the point should, however, not be overdrawn.

Economic and trade relations with the Soviet bloc are still important and, though limited and inadequate to deter South African aggression, Soviet bloc economic, technical and military assistance has nonetheless been useful in preventing the total collapse of the Mozambican state. As the debate during Frelimo's Fourth Congress in April, 1983 made clear, bad management, leading to serious mistakes in a number of critical sectors, was also partly responsible for the anemic state of the national economy. But ideology is still important and this is underscored by the distinction which is drawn in the Report of the Frelimo Central Committee to the Fourth Congress between the Party "which establishes relations with all countries on a basis of respect for national?" "which relates to progressive forces around the world", and the state sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs... and peaceful resolution of conflicts".

Let us, therefore, now turn to Mozambican-Soviet bilateral relations in the political and scio-cultural spheres in which in addition to economic and military relations, the building of the Party in Mozambique, as in Ethiopia, is centered. President Machel's visit to Moscow in November 1981 had, among other objectives, the development of strong inter-party links between Frelimo and the CPSU. Frelimo, following upon the logic of its revolutionary tradition, had declared itself a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party in 1977 at its

Third Congress. The links that President Machel sought were therefore intended to consolidate Frelimo as a vanguard party by enabling it to learn from the experience of the CPSU.

What form have the links assumed? As in the case of Ethio-Soviet relations in this particular area, officials of Frelimo and the CPSU have exchanged annual visits to each other's country. For example, in March 1981 a parliamentary delegation from the USSR visited Maputo. This was followed in mid-November 1981 by the visit of a CPSU delegation to Maputo. Since February 1981 Frelimo has been sending a delegation at the invitation of the CPSU to the latter's annual congress in Moscow. In addition the two parties have discussed expanding cooperation in education to include the training of Frelimo cadres in the USSR.

The vanguard role of Frelimo was and still is defined as that of moving the party from a popular movement into a vehicle for socialist transformation, under the alliance of workers, peasants and progressive petit-bourgeois elements. It was in pursuit of this task, under the ideology of Marxist-Leninism, that Frelimo looked up to the Soviet bloc for continued organisational and other strategic support in much the same way as it had supported the liberation struggle. But if Frelimo saw in the Soviet bloc a model for its theoretico-practical formulation of Marxism-Leninism, it did not intend to emulate or copy that model slavishly, regardless of Mozambican realities. President Machel has been quoted as affirming that "African must use Marxism, but Marxism cannot be allowed to use Africans." (In Saul, 1985: 138).

The Soviet Union had a considerable impact on the definition and conceptualisation of Mozambican Marxism. But that impact must, however, not be over-emphasised. Many people, including Frelimo's top functionaries, have always insisted that Frelimo's adoption of Marxism-Leninism has its deep roots in the party's revolutionary tradition. As Oscar Monteiro has been quoted as saying, "It is our experience which led us to Marxism-Leninism. We have spontaneously demonstrated its universal character. We have on the basis of our practice, drawn theoretical lessons." (in Saul, 1985: 136).

In spite of this close affinity between Frelimo's revolutionary tradition and Marxism-Leninism, it is the chronic shortage of trained and educated party cadres within its rank and file that led Frelimo to turn to and depend on the Soviet bloc for experts, "cooperantes", as it set out to build durable party structures and train Mozambican cadres. This was an important reason why President Machel and other Frelimo leaders placed such a premium on establishing strong and close inter-party links with the CPSU, for example. That way, links which had been forged during the liberation struggle against Portuguese colonial rule would be further consolidated.

The Soviet influence on the conceptualisation and concretisation of the party's role in Mozambique has, therefore, been substantial. This was evi-

dent in efforts in 1980-81 to strengthen the role of the party by giving it a grass-roots presence throughout the country, a task which two important Ministers, Marcelino dos Santos and Jorge Rebelo, left the cabinet to pursue.

But this effort was itself the result of another development which could be attributed to the influence of Soviet Marxism. This is the trend towards centralisation and bureaucratisation. The tension between centralisation and populist democracy, between leadership and mass action is a constantly recurring one in the Mozambican debate on Marxism-Leninism. It was an issue which dominated public debates in the period leading up to and during Frelimo's Fourth Congress in April 1983.

The emphasis in the debates was on participation and decentralisation if the Party was to be self-reliant and to direct and manage affairs in their local communities. The determination to strengthen links between the Party and the base was underscored by the increase in the composition of the Central Committee from about 65 to 130. This was done to allow for the infusion of new blood from the peasantry.

Recent developments in Mozambique have pointed to serious questioning of orthodox Marxism-Leninism as an ideological formulation for ordering the processes of change and transformation in the country. These developments, which have pitted a number of Frelimo cadres and officials against their Soviet bloc counterparts, have highlighted problems concerning the type of theoretical training party cadres should be given.

At issue was the question whether and, if so, how Marxism-Leninism should be adapted and applied to the concrete and historically specific situation of Mozambique. The issue arose because it was becoming increasingly clear to a number of Frelimo leaders and Mozambican intellectuals that trainees from the Soviet bloc, and particularly from the German Democratic Republic, were not relating their Marxist-Leninist theoretical formulations to Mozambican realities. The result was that their formulations appeared abstract and unreal to the Mozambican students and Frelimo cadres they were training. An outcome of this was the suspension of the teaching of Marxism-Leninism at Eduardo Mondlane University in 1983 and the closure of the Faculty of Marxism-Leninism pending curricula-review to design more relevant courses in Marxism-Leninism.

There are other dimensions to these developments. First, the issue of an appropriate or relevant Marxism-Leninism touched on the issue of indigenisation and self-reliance in the area of ideological training. Secondly, at issue, albeit implicitly, was the viability of Marxist internationalism as a policy guide. In this respect the debate over an appropriate Marxism-Leninism could be viewed as part of a wider debate within Frelimo's hierarchy over Mozambique's future and its role in internationalising its own

struggle in the larger context of furthering a proletarian revolution in Southern Africa.

What seems to have emerged, and is perhaps underlined by the Nkomati Accord, is the socialism in one country idea. A fixed line has not emerged but what is becoming more and more apparent is that the Party and state in Mozambique seem to be moving on a contingency plan which is influenced as much by the superordinate position of South Africa as a proxy for finance capital in the region as by disappointment with the Soviet bloc.

## Conclusion

How much influence then has the Soviet Union exerted over Ethiopia and Mozambique? Neither country is "client" states or satellites of the Soviet Union. This in itself suggests that there are strong limitations on the extent of the Soviet influence over their domestic and external policies. This is, in other words, to state that both Ethiopia and Mozambique have much room for maneuvering, for pursuing independent policy options in their relations with the Soviet Union. No doubt this is also partly due to how much the Soviet Union is prepared and willing to invest to maintain and consolidate its bilateral relations with each country. The overtures of both countries to the West and the limited but important concessions they have made to market forces by encouraging private enterprise in some sectors of their economies are attributed in part to the low level of Soviet development assistance and aid.

The fragile economies of both countries have, therefore, been a powerful factor in shaping and moving the course of their domestic and foreign policies in directions which might appear to belie and undermine their ideological affinities with the Soviet Union. But does this not then point to the irrelevance of ideology? Not necessarily. As I have pointed out earlier on, ideology admits of flexibility. This is why it is sometimes characterised as a cognitive map to guide policy options and choices and to define objectives while it is itself subject to modifications, reinterpretations and re-examinations in the light of historical conjunctures and specificities.

What, therefore, may appear as ideological deviations or heresies, like the adoptions of essentially monetarist policies and the introduction of liberalisation measures by Ethiopia and Mozambique, are better viewed as short-term responses to domestic and external constraint which are structurally determined as they pursue their long-term responses. Indeed, these short-term responses must be viewed alongside the fact that the regimes in both countries are also captives of their ideological preferences.

This is reflected in the continuing debates in both countries, especially in

Mozambique, about the best road to socialism, in the self-critical assessment of progress towards it and in socio-economic structures that are being gradually created. The road is tortuous, precisely because of constraints already mentioned. The character of these constraints is such that their political control of the state has not been translated into their control of their economies. Yet ideology still matters in that it has served the instrumental role of defining and structuring the developmental options chosen by them.

The Soviet influence is therefore to be sought in the adoption of Marxism-Leninism by both countries. In the case of Mozambique the choice of Marxism-Leninism grew out of Frelimo's revolutionary tradition whereas in Ethiopia, the military regime had no socialist project when it took over power, although Marxist-Leninist oriented groups played a prominent role in the overthrow of Haile Selassie. But the Soviet model or version of Marxism-Leninism has not been slavishly or dogmatically followed or imitated. Here again, the conjuncture of domestic and external factors has given rise to nationalism and emphasis on the need to adapt Marxism-Leninism to the specific situation of both countries.

The Soviet Union itself has been conscious of the limitations of ideology as a basis for sustaining its bilateral relations with each country. It has taken advantage of its position in the global division of labour to secure better terms of trade in its economic relations with both countries. As its lukewarm attitude towards COMECON membership for Mozambique demonstrated, it is still sceptical of the depth of the commitment to Marxism-Leninism and its durability or irreversibility of both countries.

To say all this is to indicate the nature of the contradictions which have characterised the relations between the Soviet Union and each of the two countries. It is, however, not to deny positive elements in those relations. It is to look at them dialectically. While Soviet support has not been all that it should have been in the military and economic aspects of the relations especially, it has nevertheless been in many respects a critical sustaining force in both countries. This fact is well-captured in President Machel's statement, quoted earlier on, that "the socialist countries were and are at all times our safe rear-guard."

#### Footnotes:

1. Much of the information that follows is drawn from the annual issue of *Africa Contemporary Record* ACR beginning 1979.
2. ACR Vol. XIV, 1981-1982, pp B168-9
3. ACR Vol. XVI, 1983-1984, p. A299
4. ACR Vol. XII, 1980-81, pp A18-A19
5. ACR Vol. XXVI, 1983-84, p. B673
6. ACR Vol. XIV 1981-82 p.B659

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TABLE I

## Principal Trading Partners of Ethiopia ('000 BIRR)\*

IMPORTS	1979	1980	1982
China, People's Rep.	13,355	20,742	8,210
France	19,486	32,634	52,111
German Dem. Rep.	36,752	34,666	31,848
German Fed. Rep.	118,585	142,387	157,877
India	14,111	13,156	N.A.
Israel	15,925	21,317	N.A.
Italy	117,244	161,477	184,504
Japan	124,399	129,715	145,431
Kenya	15,779	15,596	N.A.
Korea Rep.	22,347	14,557	N.A.
Kuwait	181,515	69,225	N.A.
Netherlands	23,870	33,986	30,424
Saudi Arabia	1,386	1,811	17,957
Sweden	36,741	22,249	N.A.
Switzerland	22,068	52,736	N.A.
Taiwan	13,734	11,494	N.A.
USSR	22,857	287,746	441,821
United Kingdom	77,871	97,930	122,810
USA	137,492	114,885	63,568
TOTAL (incl. others)	1,175,053	1,494,703	1,652,829

\* Figures for 1981 are not available. Source: National Bank of Ethiopia, Quarterly Bulletin.

TABLE II

## Principal Trading Partners of Ethiopia ('000 BIRR)\*

EXPORTS	1979	1980	1982
Belgium	10,946	10,506	N.A.
Djibouti	50,923	100,351	77,519
France	30,342	58,399	44,311
German Dem. Rep.	764	3,925	15,422
German Fed. Rep.	61,969	74,593	133,571
Israel	3,330	3,368	N.A.
Italy	97,820	89,150	43,913
Japan	53,419	56,649	62,172
Netherlands	32,007	17,884	10,564
Saudi Arabia	75,744	66,420	56,015
Spain	12,932	7,680	N.A.
Switzerland	3,325	1,107	N.A.
USSR	58,353	81,193	5,042
United Kingdom	19,503	18,451	16,922
USA	246,134	59,621	216,045
Yemen, People's Dem. Rep.	11,374	11,437	N.A.
Yugoslavia	34,469	34,169	15,154
TOTAL	864,327	878,750	836,295

\* Figures for 1981 not available Source: National Bank of Ethiopia, Quarterly Bulletin.



TABLE III

## Trade Balance by Groups of Countries (million pounds)

	1973	1975	1977	1979	1981	1982
<b>OECD Countries</b>						
Exports to	66	51	59	93	82	55
Imports from	125	104	102	121	197	196
<b>Countries with Centrally Planned Economies:</b>						
Exports to	0	0	0	12	32	18
Imports from	0	1	2	53	63	114
<b>Other Countries:</b>						
Exports to	22	29	19	27	43	18
Imports from	56	65	68	120	190	191
<b>Total:</b>						
Exports to	88	80	78	132	158	136
Imports from	181	171	172	295	449	501

Data published by the National Planning Commission as part of request to reschedule debts.  
Extracted from Hanton, 1984.