

Empire of Liberation:  
Investigating Soviet Activity in Africa from Khrushchev to Gorbachev

By

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**Abstract**

Africa is often treated as an inconsequential sideshow in the Cold War, with Soviet activity in Africa during this period being discussed only in a regional or sub-regional context. This reduces scholastic understanding of Soviet activity in Africa and Africa's role as a theatre in a truly global Cold War. This thesis is not just a survey of Soviet interactions with African partners, but an investigation of trends in Soviet policy towards Africa that become evident only with a wider lens. This approach places Soviet activity in a continental and global perspective. This project concerns the entire history of Soviet activity in Africa, but focuses specifically on the post-Stalin era between 1953 and 1991. While Soviet leaders hesitantly collaborated to defeat the United States and its allies in what the Soviets considered to be a zero-sum game, this project concludes there was no grand plan towards Africa. This conclusion allows for a better understanding of the trajectory of present Russian relations with African states.

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In memory of John "Jack" Kearney.

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**Guide to Acronyms**

ANC: African National Congress

CFA Franc: French colonies of Africa franc

CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union

DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo

OUA: Organization of African Unity

MPLA: The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola

PAIGC: African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde

RAN: Russian Academy of Sciences

RSFSR: Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic

SADF: South African Defense Force, armed forces of Apartheid South Africa.

SAR: South African Union

SDECE: External Documentation and Counter-Espionage

SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

SKSSAA: Soviet-Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee

SWAPO: South West Africa People's Organization

UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

UPC: Cameroon People's Union

ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People's Union

## Chapter 1: Introduction and Methodology

“The Soviet Union is carrying out a great task for the sake of liberating nations and consolidating peace all over the world,” announced Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev as he became the first Soviet leader to step foot in Africa.<sup>1</sup> His objective was overt and couched in old Bolshevik phraseology. The Soviet Union, he had announced, was in Africa to stay in order to complete its sacred task of global liberation and obliteration of whatever it deemed as imperialism. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt (1956-1970), determined Khrushchev to be a “courageous warrior” and extolled his ideological faith and principled nature. A major Third World country, Egypt, seemed to be drifting ever deeper into the Soviet Union’s warm embrace, the Cold War was making its mark on Africa.

While Khrushchev and high-minded party elites had a theoretical concept of Africa based in Leninist teachings, for Soviet citizens Africa was an amorphous other. It held a similar place in Soviet minds as it did in Europeans. For both peoples Africa was far-off, a strange place with strange people and customs. Soviet cinema, television, literature, and news-media presented it as such. Some Black students who came to the Soviet Union were marginalized and experienced Soviet indifference to their struggles.<sup>2</sup> The friendship universities meant to impart international solidarity and equality fell into segregating class based on racial stereotyping.<sup>3</sup> However, the Soviets had one defining difference in their society. They possessed a politically instilled requirement to support their African neighbors in their effort for self-determination and anti-

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<sup>1</sup> Walz Jay, “Khrushchev opens First Africa Visit,” *New York Times*, (U.S.A. May 10, 1964), para 2.

<sup>2</sup> Katsakioris, Constantin, “Burden or Allies?: Third World Students and Internationalist Duty through Soviet Eyes,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 3 (2017), 539-567, 548. <https://doi.org/10.1353/kri.2017.0035>.

<sup>3</sup> Katsakioris, “Burden or Allies?: Third World Students and Internationalist Duty through Soviet Eyes,” 546.

imperialist struggle. In the experience of Alexander Statiev, an expatriate Soviet, and professor of Soviet history at the University of Waterloo, the regime broadcast this desire plainly, and “it talked a lot about anti-colonial struggle of Africa, especially about Congo, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique.”<sup>4</sup> By singling out specific countries, the Soviet regime defined “Africa” for its citizens. Specifically, the USSR highlighted those regimes which mattered to its foreign policy interests. Statiev’s relationship with Africa itself was only fleeting, as the KGB denied his travel visa as they feared he could defect through Mozambique, a stopover on a planned trip to Antarctica in 1989:<sup>5</sup> Statiev’s intercontinental non-adventure underscores the global nature of the Cold War. Clearly Soviet policy towards African countries was affecting even individual citizen travelers like him, even up to the final days of the USSR.

The question of Soviet involvement in Africa will be analyzed from two primary directions. Firstly, through the Soviet academic interpretation, and secondly, from the actual political and policy impact that Soviet policy had on Africa, with specific reference to certain case studies and countries. The structure of this project is chronological, and the internal chronology of chapters is determined by the length of a given leader’s rule, with two exceptions. Chapter Two covers the entire Soviet/African relationship before Khrushchev, and so its content predates Stalin’s reign. Chapter Three investigates Khrushchev’s impact on Africa and the theoretical background for the new engagement. Chapter Four deals with Brezhnev’s long rule, but also includes the period of Andropov and Chernenko, because they held the topmost post of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) for only three years combined. Chapter Five

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix A1.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A1.

discusses Gorbachev's attempt to modernize the Soviet approach to Africa, and his eventual disengagement from the continent. The final chapter includes the project's findings and discusses effects of past Soviet engagement in Africa.

In order to maintain narrative cohesion a few critical terms must be defined. The definition of empire used is a broad one, for the purposes of this project it is defined as the execution of formal control by one country over another.<sup>6</sup> This definition is preferable to more specific ones because it better represents both the covert and overt attempts at influence made by the competing powers of the Cold War on their African counterparts.

Soviet internationalism is the general ideological imperative to render assistance to foreign communist parties, especially those aligned with the USSR. However Soviet internationalism became a very flexible concept depending on who led the Soviet Union. For Khrushchev it meant providing wide-ranging aid packages that covered almost every sector of government, whereas under Brezhnev it assumed a less comprehensive format. The conception and execution of internationalist policy depended on the leader. There was no uniform format applied to Africa.

The Cold War is defined according to Odd Arne Westad as “the period in which the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated international affairs, roughly between 1945 and 1991.” This definition states the global nature of the Cold War and therefore fits the purpose of this thesis.<sup>7</sup> Critical to understanding the Soviet approach to Africa is

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<sup>6</sup> Sobers, Candace, “Independence, Intervention, and Internationalism: Angola and the International System, 1974–1975,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 21, no. 1 (April 1, 2019), 99.

<sup>7</sup> Westad, Odd Arne, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

the concept of the “Socialist World,” a shifting concept which no longer included the auspice of the People’s Republic of China after the Sino-Soviet split of 1956 brought about by Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization. Ivan Potekhin, the first head of the Africa Institute, defined the “Socialist World” as diametrically opposed to that of the capitalist world and targeted in direct relation to Africa. He states,

A radical reconstruction of the peasantry's entire way of life is needed. There are two possible ways of development, capitalist and socialist. The African peasants have to choose one of them and make their governments act accordingly. They have to make this choice-- with whom to side, with who’s support to enlist: of the capitalist elements of their countries who are connected with the imperialist powers, or of the working class, their own revolutionary intellectuals and the world socialist system.<sup>8</sup>

In the eyes of this eminent early Soviet Africanist the choice was in African hands, but it was abundantly clear which was the moral approach from the Soviet perspective. Through this analysis of Soviet activity and the individuals who orchestrated and legitimized action in Africa, I will expand the definition of what it meant to be a Soviet Africanist. These individuals require further historical investigation, and this project only touches on the distinct imprints they left on Soviet policy.

A final critical definition is that of African-Socialism, a shifting target which carried different connotations depending on the locale and the context of the conversation. For the purposes of this project African-Socialism is defined as a form of socialism not congruent with Soviet style state-socialism.<sup>9</sup> Generally it was predicated on the assumed tribal and collective aspect of pre-colonial African society, which was itself a mythologized past which erased the

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<sup>8</sup> Potekhin, I. I. (Ivan Izosimovich), *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, Moscow, Moscow: "Nauka" Publishing House, 1968, 93.

<sup>9</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 35, 36

former empires and kingdoms of Africa.<sup>10</sup> This definition is grafted from Potekhin's conception of African socialism, which set the tone for following Soviet-Africanists and viewed African-Socialism as a rhetorical device used by African leaders to indicate their adherence to neutrality.<sup>11</sup> However, it clearly had more functions than just a means to remain neutral, it featured a distinctly local, African approach to socialism, which therefore fell outside the bounds of the universalist Soviet approach. Considering the flexibility of the term and its many different forms of implementation, from Nkrumah's Ghana to Sékou Touré's Guinea, utilizing the Soviet understanding of African-Socialism serves to immerse the reader in the Soviet lens on Africa. Certainly, for early African leaders it was a useful concept domestically, which supported the foundation of a new distinctly African post-colonial society and a unique, self actualizing national spirit and locally sourced political origin.<sup>12</sup> As such, African-Socialism came in many forms dictated by local context and the predilections of local leadership. The Soviets effectively viewed them all as a single threat to their form of Marxism-Leninism. Therefore the Soviet lens is the most relevant to this discussion.

The trajectory of Soviet theory towards Africa is integrated into each chapter through references to the heads of the Institute of African Studies, henceforth referred to as the Africa Institute, corresponding to the Soviet leader of the day. The Africa Institute itself was formed in 1959, a year after the United States established its Bureau of African affairs.<sup>13</sup> The differences of

<sup>10</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Nkrumah advocated for total control of freedom from imperialist control, and this could be construed as including the Soviet Union. The concept was Afrocentric and in some cases leaned into autarky, though this was never totally successful.

<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that Nkrumah had great respect for Potekhin, and sent a condolence telegram to Moscow upon Potekhin's death in 1964. He said in part, "The death of Professor Potekhin deprived the world of a great scientist and devoted Africanist. Numerous friends all over the world will remember him with deep sorrow "

<sup>13</sup> "About Institute, The Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences," Institute for African

the Soviet system informed the Soviet Africanists in a contrasting manner than their American counterparts which resulted in a decision-making process that American analysis often found impenetrable. The Africa Institute was a sub-organization of an academic institution while the Bureau of African Affairs belonged directly to the State Department, yet both organizations filled a similar role.<sup>14</sup> Both informed policymakers on the matters of African affairs, though the efficacy of the Soviet counterparts is murkier in terms of policy execution. Only by referring to translated documentation, and more recent publication, can this alternate process be better understood. I draw the academic gaze to this inherent organizational and doctrinal difference in order to contextualize the dichotomy in the understanding of Africa between the US and USSR's two chief analytical organizations dedicated to that subject.

When discussing a Soviet academic or analyst, it is necessary to remember that these actors had considerable experience outside of policymaking and scholarship. These were the personalities of the Soviet Africanists, revolutionaries, diplomats, and researchers. They were the foremost architects of the Soviet understanding of Africa, even if they did not always shape the policy which the Soviet Union applied to its partners on the continent. Soviet Africanists were more than simple scholars, and this critical distinction must be made in order to understand not only their impact, but also the provenance of their expertise. Mikhail Pavlovich (1871-1927) was a former Tsarist official, Menshivik, and Marxist author, who only turned to Bolshevism in 1918.<sup>15</sup> Ivan Potekhin (1903-1964) had been a seasoned Bolshevik, fighting during the Russian

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Studies, Russian Academy of Science, <https://www.inafran.ru/en/node/873>

<sup>14</sup> "About Institute, The Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences," Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Science, <https://www.inafran.ru/en/node/873>

<sup>15</sup> Michael Kemper, "Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia," in *Die Welt des Islams*, Volume 50, Issue 3/4, A Muslim Interwar Soviet Union. 2010, 435.

Civil War.<sup>16</sup> Grogoriyevich Vassili Solodovnikov (1918-2018) was an active diplomat to Zambia and labelled a KGB agent by the CIA, who bugged his office. The CIA certainly considered him influential.<sup>17</sup> The contextual historical differences are vast between the Western and Soviet Africa specialists. I seek to understand and bridge that contextual gap, exploring and reviewing the Soviet lens on Africa.

Although the primary concern is the Soviet experience, some perspectives will be through the eyes of American analysts' and American reporting, as the author is limited to English and could only translate a limited number of additional untranslated texts. However, there is considerable information and translated documentation from Soviet, African, Chinese, and Cuban sources to support the completion of this project. As this text was compiled the usefulness of further research across the breadth of its case studies became starkly apparent. Africa felt the reverberations of all the Cold War's many flashpoints, and each in a different way. The timing of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 influenced Khrushchev's support of Lumumba. The 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal impacted Brezhnev's decision making.<sup>18</sup> The global flashpoints of the Cold War consistently resulted in trickle-down effects to policy towards Soviet allies in Africa.

I want to demonstrate the shifting priorities of the Soviet regime throughout the Cold War in relation to Africa. This series of shifts can be interpreted as a seesaw effect as Soviet top-level

<sup>16</sup> Skorov, George, "Ivan Potekhin-Man, Scientist, and Friend of Africa" *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 2, no.3 (November 1964): 446-447.

<sup>17</sup> Vasiley Solodovnikov interview, Original Document Marina Latysheva / Rev 14.01.2004 / "Russkie idut? Smozhet li Rossiia snova zavoevat' Afriku"  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20131014180820/http://www.agentura.ru/experts/solodovnikov/>  
 Translated from the Russian by Murad N. Alizad. Appendix, A2.

<sup>18</sup> Sobers, "Independence, Intervention, and Internationalism: Angola and the International System, 1974-1975," 110.

leadership, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev replaced each other's foreign policy towards Africa in drastic ways. Lesser discussed relationships are the core of this study, like Benin, Somalia, Burkina-Faso, and Guinea (Conakry). This is backed up by supporting evidence and precedent from more major, and academically discussed relationships, specifically Egypt, South Africa, and Angola. This approach sheds new light on critical, but under-discussed elements of Soviet interaction in Africa. Furthermore, this thesis looks beyond the physical presence of Soviet advisers, engineers, scientists, and labour in its exploration of Soviet relations and discusses those Soviet Africanists whose theories helped shape Soviet policy.

I predicate this thesis's theoretical and methodological underpinnings on both contemporary and past literature. A synthesis of Cold War conceptions and Post-Cold War re-contextualization is useful in order to both provide a unique and fresh discussion of Soviet activity in Africa, but also reduce the historical and temporal distance from the source events. Methodology of case study choices and of structure is simple and serves the thesis. The Soviet-African relations discussed in each chapter are those which best emphasize the dynamics of Soviet policy of the period covered in the chapter. The chronological narrative structure is necessary in order highlight the seesaw effect of Soviet leadership, which swung up when desire for international power projection was high, and down when internationalism was out of vogue among the Politburo (the chief most legislative council of the Soviet Union).

The foremost American Cold War era theoretical influence is from Robert F. Gorman's 1984 article "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist development in Africa." Gorman observed that Soviet policy towards Africa changed drastically as Soviet leadership changed.

Gorman stated in his article that,

Rather, this study has a more modest and specific aim, that is, to recount the evolution of Soviet historical perspectives on the development of socialism in Africa and to summarize the current thrust of Soviet thinking on various economic and political problems in Africa.<sup>19</sup>

He was also developing, and critiquing Edward Thomas Wilson's *Russia and Black Africa Before World War II* from 1974. Gorman is especially important as he engaged directly with Soviet Africanists in his writing, most importantly, Ivan Potekhin, Vasily Solodovnikov, and Anatoly Gromyko, who were the successive heads of the Soviet Union's Africa Institute.

Soviet theory on Africa morphed as Soviet policy itself shifted alongside changing Soviet leadership. Each of those heads of the Africa Institute correspond with a Soviet leader, Potekhin for Khrushchev (1959-1964), Solodovnikov for Brezhnev (1964-1976), and Gromyko for the later Brezhnev period through to Gorbachev and the collapse of the Soviet Union (1976-1991). As a result, this thesis serves as an expansion of Gorman's concepts by building on further analysis of Soviet interactions in Africa. Critically, Gorman identified the severe swings in policy orientation based on leadership in the Soviet Union, he said,

It is clear that Soviet attitudes toward the potential for social, political, and economic development in Africa have swung from one of virtual ridicule under Stalin, to over-optimism under Khrushchev, to circumspection under Brezhnev and apparently Andropov and Chernenko as well.<sup>20</sup>

On Soviet Africanists, he opined that their understanding of Africa had increased over the decades, but that "there is no challenge to official policy, and the primary task of the Soviet

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<sup>19</sup> Gorman, Robert F., "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," *African Affairs* Vol. 83, No. 331, (Apr. 1984), 167.

<sup>20</sup> Gorman, "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," 176.

Africanist is to justify and elaborate on existing policy.”<sup>21</sup> I apply Gorman’s concepts to a wider set of examples over a longer time frame, up to 1991 and the collapse of the USSR. Furthermore, I have access to contemporary documentation which disputes Gorman’s statement that there was no challenge to policy and that Soviet Africanists were primarily meant to provide justification of policy. Rather, through the project significant examples of agency on the part of the Soviet Africanists will be demonstrated, especially during the Gorbachev era, which occurred after Gorman’s article appeared. Therefore, I am both expanding on and refuting elements of Gorman’s analysis.

Piero Gleijeses’ concepts also come into play concerning agency on the part of Soviet recipients of aid, and of Soviet friendly regimes. While Gleijeses’ dealt primarily with Cuba, his drive to ascertain the extent of agency is expanded through this paper. His analysis points out the differing motives for intervention between the Cuban regime and the Soviet government.<sup>22</sup>

In refuting American classifications of the Soviet Union as a monolithic and wholly ideologically motivated regime, a more holistic interpretation of Soviet foreign policy in general can be achieved. The interpretation of the U.S.S.R as monolithic came about thanks in part due to Cold War opacity which can now be overcome. Even Gorman could not have known the inner workings of Soviet academia and administration in 1984. For popular American Sovietologists such as Joseph Churba and this allowed further leeway to imagine a Soviet enemy and therefore assign their own narrative to Soviet history. Churba, for example imagined the Soviets as almost mythically evil, and described the Cold War thusly,

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<sup>21</sup> Gorman, 176.

<sup>22</sup> Gleijeses, Piero, “Moscow’s Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975–1988,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 4 (2006): 98–146, 140.

The Free World and the Soviet imperium are locked in continuing protracted conflict. This is not of the Free World's choice; none of its members seeks conflict or conquest. [. . .] The Soviets' ultimate objective is global hegemony. The sheer scope of Soviet ambitions sometimes make it difficult for us to fathom the true dimensions of the Soviet threat. [. . .] The Soviet Union defines its enemies on so-called class distinctions.<sup>23</sup>

Churba goes on to state that Soviet influence is more deadly than nuclear weaponry, asserting that nuclear annihilation would be a better alternative than the survival of the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup> If Churba had a more complete understanding of the Soviet situation in 1988 his rhetoric may have changed to reflect the economic weakness of the USSR at the time. Churba is applicable here due to his discussion of Soviet involvement in Angola, where Churba claims that the Soviet regime simply ordered the Cubans into the country, demonstrating that he essentialized the Cuban involvement into that of a puppet force.<sup>25</sup> That misunderstanding is most patently obvious in the United States' inability to perceive the Soviet “War Scare,” of 1983, when a third World War was nearly triggered by misunderstanding. The Soviets had misunderstood NATO maneuvers (Able Archer 1983) and mistakenly assumed that the Soviet Union was about to be preemptively attacked. United States intelligence authors admit that they did not understand the basic mechanics of upper level Soviet decision making.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary authors like Gleijeses, Yordanov, and Westad all critique the idea of an omniscient, evil, and all-powerful Soviet Union.

This project, through its support of Gorman aims to further refute that line of thought

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<sup>23</sup> Churba, Joseph, *Soviet Breakout: Strategies to Meet It*, (Ontario: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Inc. 1988), 31.

<sup>24</sup> Churba, *Soviet Breakout: Strategies to Meet It*, 87.

<sup>25</sup> Churba, *Soviet Breakout: Strategies to Meet It*, 42.

<sup>26</sup> “The Soviet “War Scare,” *President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board*, (February 15, 1990), <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb533-The-Able-Archer-War-Scare-Declassified-PFIAB-Report-Released/2012-0238-MR.pdf> xii. (Accessed June 18<sup>th</sup> 2019).

with the thesis that Soviet partners were often just that, partners, not directly subservient. Every subsequent chapter will demonstrate the extent of African agency, and it will reveal how much more complex Soviet relations in Africa were than Churba imagined, dispelling Cold War falsehoods. I expand Gorman's concept of dynamic shifts regarding Soviet policy towards Africa as leadership changes occurred. I continue to engage with the works of contemporary Russian historians to enhance the corpus of Eastern voices in the text.

A critical task of this project rests in locating itself within the preexisting literature concerning the analysis and historiography of Soviet involvement in Africa. There exists considerable debate and scholarly discussion concerning Soviet/African involvement stemming from the former competing powers of the Cold War. Not only that, but competing narratives also stem from nation-states which insisted on their neutrality or which intentionally utilized the resources of both sides for their own ends. African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Abdel Nasser had a much more pragmatic outlook on third party involvement in their national development.

It is inescapable, and in fact intentional, that this project is so general, the rationale behind the scope is to present Africa as the Soviets saw it. Massive, multi-part, but also a single potentially revolutionary whole. As Soviet theory and policy advanced, so too did its sub-categorization of the continent. Critically, Soviet theory supported a more general perspective than the United States did up until the U.S.S.R disintegrated. Therefore, I chose to take the same general approach, and demonstrate by way of example the utility and failures of this practice, as it was tested and modified by the hands of the Soviet Africanists, and ultimately, Soviet

leadership.

Contemporary emphasis on third party agency, specifically that of the Soviet Allies and their partner regimes in Africa has increased considerably since the Cold War ended. Post-Cold War historians, like Sergey Mazov, Natalia Telepneva, and Piero Gleijeses have added weight to the agency debate and demonstrated the operational spaces which third parties successfully maneuvered around their superpower supporters. In this text, the superpower in the spotlight is the Soviet Union, and while the discussion is based most intensely from Soviet depictions, the influence of Gleijeses and his cadre will come through by way of third-party sources and examples. While Gleijeses focuses on Cuba, Telepneva, Yordanov, and Mazov examine the intricacies of Soviet policy making, and Telepneva's research supports my assertion of further internal agency among Soviet actors such as intelligence officials and partner officers in Warsaw Pact regimes.

I take a general approach to the topic and synthesize the preceding author's works to the aid of Gorman's concepts. There is still measurable value on general history surveys, as James Morris Blaut made abundantly clear with *A Colonizer's Model of the World*. Blaut, a critic of eurocentrism and geographer, utilizes colonial voices in his discussion and directly references Amilcar Cabral and W.E.B. Du Bois for the purposes of discussing their counterarguments to eurocentrism.<sup>27</sup> I align with Blaut's critique of eurocentrism and therefore justify my reliance on translated Soviet texts, and the usage of Cuban and African texts wherever possible.

More specific to Russian and Soviet history is *Africa In Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters*, a compilation of works edited by Maxim Matusевич in 2007, and

<sup>27</sup> Blaut, James A., *The Colonizer's Model of The World*. (New York Guilford Press, 1993), 55.

stretches from colonial interactions to contemporary issues. Maxim Matusevich, an eminent scholar on Soviet and Russian activities in Africa has a considerable corpus on the topic. This project is more specific than Matusevich's compilation, *Africa In Russia, Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters*, and is a monograph to keep a single line of thinking throughout. Even titans of the field like Roger Kanet stopped short of a total survey, either by circumstance or design. Kanet's general writing on Soviet interaction in Africa went as far as Brezhnev, with *The Evolution of Soviet Policy Toward the Developing World From Stalin to Brezhnev*, in 1989.<sup>28</sup> Since then he has primarily focused on the Russian Federation's situation, and contemporary security discussions. Therefore, a retrospective discussion of the totality of Soviet interaction in Africa is required. However, while I attempt to fill that gap, there is one major area outside of this project's scope. The Soviet conception of race changed over time and also had geographic elements, as the treatment of Arabs was not necessarily the same as those the Soviets considered "Black." According to the Soviets their conception of race did not result in racism, but in racialism, which they argued did not presume superiority. In practice, the result can only be described as racist, though distinct from the American or western European conceptions of racism. The origins of this conception of race will be further discussed in the second chapter. To properly explore the Soviet approach towards race in Africa would require a parallel, case by case study. Instead, race is only grappled with when clear evidence of an author's approach manifests and when it had overt policy implications relating to the cases described.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Kanet, Roger.E., *The Evolution of Soviet Policy Toward the Developing World From Stalin to Brezhnev*, In: Kolodziej E.A., Kanet R.E. (eds.) *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World*, (Palgrave Macmillan, London," by Springer Link), 1989.

<sup>29</sup> An example of an overt policy implication might be when the American diplomat to Somalia, in 1965 states that "the Somalis aren't bad folks [but] they have come down from the trees pretty early" (Yordanov, Radoslav A. *The*

History has generally dealt with Soviet activity in Africa in a piecemeal fashion, selecting individual relationships and narrow time frames to focus on rather than expand the scope to a general survey of Soviet interaction. A recent principal example of the regional approach is Radoslav A. Yordanov's *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa During the Cold War*, published in 2016. Yordanov specifically covers the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea (then occupied by Ethiopia), and Djibouti. His regional approach has considerable merit, and the granularity of his work is considerable, however Yordanov admits the limitation of his study while at the same time widening the historian's looking glass as he outlines successive examples of wider Warsaw Pact engagement in Africa.<sup>30</sup> Yordanov specifically writes that his own project is an attempt to globalize the understanding of the Cold War, much like Westad.<sup>31</sup> While case-study research has many merits, there is value to a general survey that encompasses the entire breadth of Soviet activities in Africa. The last such attempts were initiated during the Cold War, such as Wilson's and the author therefore was unable to complete the story past the point of his own presence. While this project is effectively a severely abridged version of such an endeavor, it still shows the important trends of Soviet leadership, theory, and practice in specific relation to Africa. Through this approach, the global element of Soviet activity in Africa will be made more apparent, as in every case state-actors from at least three continents were involved.

The widely accepted Western perspective that before Khrushchev activity was limited and

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*Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: between Ideology and Pragmatism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017), page 47). The Soviets did not make such overtly racist pronouncements and therefore could capitalize on their opponent's insensitivity.

<sup>30</sup> Yordanov, Radoslav A. *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: between Ideology and Pragmatism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017), 69.

<sup>31</sup> Yordanov, Radoslav A. *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: between Ideology and Pragmatism*, xxi.

generally ad-hoc, rather than the regime-initiated and regime-based operations of later years.<sup>32</sup> Robert Gorman, who both draws from Wilson, but also from Soviet sources, represents a Western authorship more based in empirical analysis, rather than assertions based primarily in ideology or biases, like those espoused by Churba. Exploring and expanding Gorman's argument that Soviet involvement in Africa fluctuated significantly depending on the leader in power is a cornerstone objective of "Empire of Liberation: Investigating Soviet Activity in Africa from Khrushchev to Gorbachev."<sup>33</sup> While I generally accept Gorman's approach I am in a position to expand on it as I also draw influence from rounded contemporary scholarship which interprets the Cold War on a global and multi-polar scale, rather than a bipolar relationship, therefore this project scholastically aligns itself with the works of Odd Westad and post-colonialist scholarship on a more general scale. There is a link to Soviet authorship from a scholastic perspective, as Soviet primary sources describing theoretical approaches to Africa are relied upon as an explanatory tool. I present the Soviet experience in Africa from a fusion of Western and Soviet perspectives which builds upon both narrative histories, specifically that of Gorman's uniquely prescient article, and that of Solodovnikov. This approach highlights the enduring effect of Soviet activity in Africa, and interprets the disengagement of the 1980s as another dip in the seesaw of Soviet-African relations, to be picked up by the Russian Federation in the 2000s.

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<sup>32</sup> Mazov, Sergey V., *A Distant Front in the Cold War: the USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010), 34.

<sup>33</sup> Gorman, "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," 173.

## Chapter 2: Antecedents and the Stalin Era

This chapter discusses Tsarist and later Soviet activities in Africa prior to Nikita Khrushchev's consolidation of power between 1953 and 1960. Outwardly, the period before Khrushchev was one of theory rather than practice insofar as activities on the continent of Africa were concerned. There was instead considerable debate and discussion in both Soviet and Western academia surrounding developmental theories towards Africa and the potential structure and purpose of relationships between the Soviet Union and both newly-minted free African nation-states and remaining colonial holdings. This chapter's primary objective is to identify the foundational theoretical elements of Soviet thought towards Africa which influenced Soviet theory and practice into the post-Stalin era.

Robert Gorman made the critical claim, building from Wilson, that the preceding period did produce an ideological bridge between Lenin's words and African liberation theory.<sup>34</sup> While it would take another thirty years for that ideological bridge to result in concrete action by the Soviet regime in Africa, that foundation is identified as a useful tool for investigating the later Soviet perspective on Africa. Into the 1950s, Soviet thought remained heavily based on theory developed during the tail end of the Tsarist era, and early universalist Bolshevik thought. Those theories clashed and were melded into the 1930s, but were obsolete by the 1950s. Still, that mix of Tsarist racism and Bolshevik idealism continued to inform later Soviet thinking concerning Africa.

I assert that Soviet thought leaned on more than just strict Leninism, and that Soviet-Africanism arose out of a veritable melting pot of Menshevik, Bolshevik, and Tsarist theory,

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<sup>34</sup> Gorman, 167.

resulting from the Russian Civil War. Early influential Soviet authors were former Mensheviks and Tzarists who managed to retain their positions through a combination of flexible ideology and usefulness to the later Soviet Union, often in areas outside of African studies.<sup>35</sup> In Westad's *The Global Cold War*, the Tzarist turned Marxist intellectual Sergei Bulgakov described the nature of Russian intelligentsia, "other-worldliness, his eschatological dream about . . . A coming empire of justice." The ideal of an empire of justice was a clear objective for early Soviet intellectuals. For them the eventual goal was international justice through the vessel of socialism. They were hamstrung by the Russian Civil War and its effects through the early part of the Soviet Union's life. Therefore the focus remained on the core of the empire for its first thirty years.<sup>36</sup>

Mikhail Pavlovich, one of the chief theoretical architects of the Soviet analysis of Africa was, before the Civil War, a Menshevik. Pavlovich was able to become a Bolshevik thanks to his credentials as a specialist in logistics and industry, rather than any ties to Africa.<sup>37</sup> Later Soviet theorists such as Solodovnikov would also rely on extolling the assumed virtue of the Tzarist empire, as they viewed it as largely benign in its relationship to Africa.<sup>38</sup> Solodovnikov stated, referring to slavery and external colonies,

We of course, have no such "traditions." We did not grow rich on the African slave trade We are not interested in the uranium ores of Africa. The peoples of the U.S.S.R. never before considered and do not now consider relations with Africa from the viewpoint of business, of obtaining profits or raw-material sources. [. . . ] Nineteenth century Russian

<sup>35</sup> Wilson, Edward Thomas., *Russia and Black Africa before World War II* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers Ltd, 1976), 100.

<sup>36</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, 44.

<sup>37</sup> Kemper, Michael. "Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia," in *Die Welt des Islams*, Volume 50, Issue 3/ 4, A Muslim Interwar Soviet Union. (2010), 443.

<sup>38</sup> Solodovnikov Vasilij Grigor'evič., *Africa Fights for Independence* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1970), 31.

travellers made a significant contribution to the study of the geography of Africa and the culture of its peoples. Thanks to their selfless efforts, new pages were added to the history of investigation of the far-flung African continent.<sup>39</sup>

These claims extended not just to the Tsarist regime, but also to the private and state-supported adventurers who established the first Russian links to Africa. These historical links, bound in a shared acceptance of the Orthodox religion, should have been anathema to Soviet memory due to their reliance on modes of fraternity which ran against Bolshevik atheism. These links, under a general umbrella of autocracy were embraced in order to place a spotlight on Russian benevolence in Africa.<sup>40</sup> Tsarist connections, while clearly at odds with the October Revolution and the principles of class warfare and atheism, were an important tool for later Soviet scholars to establish a foundation for further activity in Africa. Though dissonant, these links allowed Soviet scholars to justify the Soviet Union's continued presence in Africa, and to draw a narrative relationship between the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union by effectively mystifying Tsarist and early Soviet interactions in Africa. As a result of those previous expeditions this project does not see the period prior to Khrushchev as any sort of blank space, though it does recognize that this was a gestational, rather than active phase of Soviet activity regarding Africa.

Finally, this chapter deals with the Stalin era (1929-1953) as it relates to Soviet-African relations. While later Soviet authors such as Solodovnikov generally ignored Stalin in relation to Africa, due to a combination of inaction in Africa by Stalin and the de-Stalinization by Khrushchev, they consistently referenced the Soviet Union's refusal to recognize Italy's

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<sup>39</sup> Solodovnikov, V.G., "Opening Address at the Conference on the Historical Relations of the people of the Soviet Union and Africa," in, *Russian and Africa*, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences Africa Institute, (Nauka publishing, 1966, May 19, 1965), 9, <https://dds-crl-proxy.library.carleton.ca/item/116584> (Accessed on June 24, 2019)

<sup>40</sup> Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, 15.

annexation of Ethiopia in 1935 as the Soviet Union's first coherent political steps onto the continent. This tacitly implied that Stalin in some way remained at least the progenitor of later interaction.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Solodovnikov was crediting Stalin with the preservation of Tsarist political ties to Africa, while otherwise ignoring his reign. While Soviet scholars were forced to grasp at such diplomatic pronouncements as evidence of Soviet involvement, I argue that the major impact of Stalin's rule is found in the insipid stagnation of Soviet theory towards Africa. In principle, Stalin's "socialism in one country" theory limited the regime's interest in forming African partnerships. Therefore, Stalin's government placed the Soviet Union decades behind its competitors, such as the United States, which could rely on the experience of its colonial allies. As far as understanding the African continent and how the USSR could establish itself there, Stalin left his successors to bridge up the gap.

The first Russian steps into Africa came during the century preceding the Soviet Union's conception, and by all accounts these steps were limited and generally not driven by the regime. Instead, they were often ad-hoc or private relations which sometimes morphed into state-to-state connections. N.I. Ashinov's private expedition to Africa, and the later government sanctioned mission to Ethiopia in 1889 were representative of that transformation from a private to government operated presence.<sup>42</sup> Such a reliance on private adventurers exhibited a parasitic relationship between the preceding Tsarist regime and its subjects to enhance its involvement in Africa. The Tsarist regime only gave support for such expeditions when a potential for utility was demonstrable to the regime. This contradicts the eventual Soviet tendency under Khrushchev to

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<sup>41</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights for Independence*, 44.

<sup>42</sup> Henze, Paul B., *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (Palgrave, New York, USA, 2000 ),158.

pile spending into African infrastructure projects without a prior demonstration of that spending's potential future utility.<sup>43</sup>

The limit of Tsarist regime interaction on the continent became plainly apparent during the Russo-Japanese War, in which Russia dispatched its Baltic Squadron on around the world journey to relieve its beleaguered Pacific fleet. The Baltic Squadron, then renamed the Second Pacific Squadron, was a disparate fleet made up of coal fired pre-dreadnought battleships, supporting cruisers, and auxiliaries, which all lacked up to date charts on the African coast. Also, since the Russians had no colonial bases in Africa, the fleet had to rely on purchasing coal from French colonial holdings.<sup>44</sup> At that time there was not an established Russian intelligence network on the African continent, and no diplomatic missions to securely and efficiently relay Russian communications from the government to the Squadron. This deficiency was so pronounced that the Russian government had to entrust foreign nationals to relay sensitive messages while the fleet was transiting the Cape of Good Hope, because the “[Tsarist regime had] absolutely no agents in East or South Africa.”<sup>45</sup> The confusion relating to communication to the fleet was also compounded by the class tensions aboard the warships themselves, which were functionally microcosms of contemporary Russian society. They were led by a few elite aristocratic officers and operated by thousands of poorly treated former serfs.<sup>46</sup> Force could not be effectively projected by a disunited and out of communication fleet with no base of operations in Africa. Additionally, while the Russian fleet did not benefit from Russian held colonies in

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<sup>43</sup> Gorman, “Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa,” 174.

<sup>44</sup> Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, 78.

<sup>45</sup> Pleshakov, Constantin, *The Tsar's Last Armada: the Epic Journey to the Battle of Tsushima* (New York: BasicBooks, 2003), 176.

<sup>46</sup> Pleshakov, *The Tsar's Last Armada: the Epic Journey to the Battle of Tsushima*, 119.

Africa, it still relied on French colonial holdings to resupply and provide safe harbor thereby benefiting from French practices of exploitation by proxy.

While ashore some of the crews acted in an exploitative manner towards native peoples, both sexually and culturally, using local peoples as souvenirs through staged photos with the locals and for sexual favours during the stopover in Madagascar.<sup>47</sup> These actions prove that Russians were not in fact special among Europeans, as Solodovnikov would later insist. They too had similar colonial attitudes and acted along a similar pattern as other European powers. The Russian crews fetishized the people of Africa and implied their own superiority through their interactions with Africans. The experience of the naval misadventures of the Tsarist fleet conflicted with Soviet era scholarship, which implored the reader to imagine Russians as an especially unable to commit exploitative colonial activities.

The exploits of the Pacific Squadron were intentionally ignored by later Soviet scholarship, as indicated by the inclusion of Russian/African interactions that were construed as positive even during the Soviet period. Those “nineteenth century Russian travellers [which] made a significant contribution to the study of the geography of Africa and the culture of its peoples,” were highlighted instead.<sup>48</sup> By including the expeditions to Ethiopia in the nineteenth century and elsewhere in the Soviet literature as an example of Russian exceptionalism, Soviet scholars showed that they were willing to provide room for events during the Tsarist period, if they could be sculpted into examples of inherent Russian anti-colonialism. Since the Baltic Squadron's experience indicated that Russians were just as capable to act in an exploitative

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<sup>47</sup> Pleshakov, 137.

<sup>48</sup> Solodovnikov, V.G., “Opening Address at the Conference on the Historical Relations of the people of the Soviet Union and Africa,” 9.

manner as any other Europeans, that part of the history was strategically ignored. For the Soviets, this was doubly a propaganda victory, as the difficulty the squadron had in Africa was also ably ignored by Soviet Africanists. The Soviet gaze chose to ignore Tsarist missteps and racism.

The squadron eventually reached the Pacific and was promptly destroyed at the battle of Tsushima. Defeated by the Japanese, this loss signaled the final nail in the coffin for Tsarist interest on the African continent. The shame of the Russo-Japanese War had negligible impact on Soviet publications concerning Africa, even though it presented several critical lessons.<sup>49</sup> The journey of the Second Pacific Squadron, on its colonialist mission to restore Russia a warm-water port, was anathema to the Soviet scholars who would later claim that the Russian empire never acted in an exploitative manner towards Africa, even if the accounts of the Squadron's stay in both Gabon and Madagascar seem to emphasize that they did. Furthermore, Zinovy Rozhstvensky, the admiral in overall command of the Russian forces present at Tsushima, blamed the loss partly on the poor infrastructure, and long duration of the squadron's stay in Madagascar.<sup>50</sup>

This Tsarist misadventure was representative of what would become an important realization on the part of Stalin. The Soviets learned that in order to be active elsewhere, the home country had to possess the capability to support its operations abroad.<sup>51</sup> When the Soviet Union would next step onto the continent, it would do so from the top-down, and first establish the infrastructure to support activity, rather than the other way around.

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<sup>49</sup> Pleshakov, *The Tsar's Last Armada: the Epic Journey to the Battle of Tsushima*, 137, 178.

<sup>50</sup> Pleshakov, 327, 328.

<sup>51</sup> McNeal, Robert H., *The Bolshevik Tradition*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall Inc. 1963), 134.

The destruction of the Russian fleets which transited around Africa also served as a useful framing device for the ad-hoc relations of later years, which the Soviets would lean heavily on as a foundation for traditional state-to-state links. Use of a cobbled together network of Russian nationals to support the strategic movement of the squadron highlighted the lack of official connections. Core to the disaster of the Russian fleet was a failure to understand the geographic relevance of Africa.

The experts in Africa the Tsarist regime possessed were Orientalists, not regional specialists. Foremost among them was Mikhail Pavlovich. The resilience of Tsarist scholars such as Pavlovich through the revolution, and his ability to keep his position under the new regime undermines the commonly held assumption that the revolution brought about a total renewal of foreign policy thought. Wilson makes this claim in specific reference to Professor B.A. Turaev, one of the very few African regional specialists, as opposed to general Orientalists, such as Pavlovich, who existed before the Civil War and persisted into the Soviet era.<sup>52</sup> The resilience of these authors allowed in part for the perseverance of racist terminology into Soviet literature. The Tsarist interpretation of Africa was inherently racist, generalized. This was one of the Soviet critiques of tsarism that remains accurate, and though the Soviets would go to great rhetorical lengths to avoid repeating the mistake, they were not always successful. The fact that general Orientalists such as Pavlovich carried over their work into the Bolshevik regime suggests a hybrid approach to early Soviet thought, the generalist of Pavlovich and the trappings of ideological policy making that took decades to reshape into something uniquely Soviet.

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<sup>52</sup> Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, 100.

Leon Trotsky, a chief Bolshevik, remarked in the aftermath of the First World War that, “the colonial peoples were drawn into the European war on an unprecedented scale: Indians, Negroes, Arabs, and Madagascans fought on the continent--for what?”<sup>53</sup> That statement reveals a degree of early commiseration with the colonized people of Africa. However, Trotsky did not provide a practical solution to the use of colonized peoples in European conflicts beyond revolution.<sup>54</sup> Such rhetoric is indicative of ideological solidarity, as the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) itself was under threat by those same colonial powers active in Africa, through their interventions into the Russian Civil War in 1919. Lenin later said during the 1920 Second Communist International that “the backward countries can emerge from their present stage of development when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand to these masses and is in a position to give them support.”<sup>55</sup> Such a statement exhibits both a paternalistic and developmental approach to the colonized world, and one which would take on a distinctly top-down tone towards Africa.<sup>56</sup> It insinuated that the Soviet method of state-socialism is the only system able to bring liberation to African colonies. Lenin's quote, found repeated in later Soviet literature on Africa, also established the Soviet Union as the exclusive, and senior partner in any future relationships with liberated African colonies. Such top-down and general solutions suggest that early Soviet thought was itself not too different from Tsarist conceptions of Africa as a place that was both amorphous and controllable.

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<sup>53</sup> Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, 115.

<sup>54</sup> Wilson, 115.

<sup>55</sup> Lenin, V.I. *Collected Works*, Moscow, Vol. 31, 243-244 [no punctuation provided in quote]

<sup>56</sup> “Backwards” in this case being colonized and non-colonized indigenous regimes could also be regarded as racist

Moving the clock forward from Lenin's era for a moment, Wilson repeats the refrain of his contemporaries that Soviet engagement in Africa only began in earnest after the Second World War.<sup>57</sup> While Soviet authors discussed Lenin's words in relation to Africa, the importance and influence of Trotsky was only discussed by western authors. Those Bolsheviks that survived Stalin's purges would rediscover and echo Trotsky's sentiment. Chief among them was Pavlovich. Lenin remained the publicly extolled revolutionary hero, and therefore his influence is considerably less difficult to trace, especially as Soviet authors cite him almost religiously when discussing their own theory.<sup>58</sup>

Soviet scholars did not initially divide Africa in the same geographic manner as American scholars, but both divided it racially, as they assumed that "Arab" class relations were not the same as "black" class relations.<sup>59</sup> These generalizations contradicted the precolonial societies of those perceived groups, which were not necessarily distinctly "black" or "Arab". In this context the determination was according to the Soviets, racialist, rather than racist, as racial superiority was not assumed.<sup>60</sup> Today this can be called racism, especially as skin-color as a distinct class and biological category was imprinted in a foundational Soviet institution called the "All Russian Association of Eastern Studies," which was a project of Lenin's that was dedicated to "the study

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<sup>57</sup> Degtyar, Dimitri "Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation," as found in, *The USSR And Africa*, (Moscow, USSR: Social Sciences Today, USSR Academy of Sciences, 1983), 92-107. 92.

<sup>58</sup> This is true of both Potekhin and Solovnikov, who both use Lenin to prop up almost whatever argument they make, even if the comparison is a stretch.

<sup>59</sup> Possibly a carry over from Tsarist Orientalism. Afterall, this is the same Pavlovich who was a Tsarist until it seemed like the Bolsheviks might win.

<sup>60</sup> This does not mean there were not racists in Soviet academia or that even the Soviet Africanists were free from racism. This only means that they attempted to avoid racism in their theoretical and policy because it would not fit with the state ideology.

of national revolutionary movements in the black and yellow continents.”<sup>61</sup> This supported the later Soviet instinct, which continued to emphasize a combination of racial and class characteristics as propagated in part by leading Soviet Africanist Ivan Potekhin, in the 1950s and 1960s. His theories informed first Khrushchev, and then Brezhnev, that Africa was more complex than class, racial, and geographic distinctions could easily parse. Potekhin’s argument hinged on the class-based distinction present in Pavlovich. Pavlovich and his colleagues packed their work with directly racist language, as emphasized above. Therefore, while this early “All Russian Association of Eastern Studies” in part helped prepare the groundwork for future Soviet-Africanists, it also shackled them to a racist discourse based in Tsarist conceptions of Africa which they would never fully eliminate.

When Lenin died in 1924 the push for Soviet internationalism slowed. Stalin’s new government focused on domestic issues, rather than heading a world revolution. Stalin perceived his Soviet Union as surrounded and under direct threat from both Poland and Japan.<sup>62</sup> With potential enemies on his border, Stalin pulled away from the internationalist tendencies of his predecessor, Lenin. The outbreak of the Second World War confirmed his fears, and Soviet international activity was largely limited to the near-abroad. Africa was not a priority. Stalin personally viewed the Third World, and Africa by extension, as a comparative side show, only useful in the extent at which it could directly support Soviet interests.<sup>63</sup> Where there could be political utility to acting in Africa without any potential for creating problems for the Soviet

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<sup>61</sup> Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, 101.

<sup>62</sup> Kuromiya, Hiroaki “Debate: The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Reconsidered,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 60:4 (2008) 671, (Accessed September, 2019).

<sup>63</sup> Taubman, William, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 532.

Union, Stalin took the opportunity for political grandstanding. That at least allowed him to present his regime as upholding the rhetorical ideological thrust of Lenin regarding internationalism, and Stalin saw his chance to do so in the wake of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936, when his regime was one of the few which refused to accept the validity of the fascist incursion.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, Stalin's pragmatism did have a degree of ideological trappings, but these were always secondary to domestic priorities.

After denouncing the fascist invasion of Ethiopia Stalin established formal diplomatic ties with Ethiopia in 1943.<sup>65</sup> Stalin's government did not provide physical support such as advisers to Ethiopian resistance. Besides that token policy there remained an otherwise general dismissal of Africa due to domestic strategic concerns.<sup>66</sup> As a result, it would only be in July of 1959 that Ethiopia would again have a formal trade relationship with the Soviet Union.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, without any real foothold on the continent in 1953-1954, Khrushchev would be starting from square one, without historical experience to draw from and without a guiding policy in place to measure his own policy against. This demonstrates a clear and concentrated effect of Stalin's non-interaction on later Soviet leadership. The lack of continued concern allowed Soviet analysis to remain rooted in Tsarist and early Soviet thought and therefore retain racial trappings, which underpins why racist language pervaded into the 50s and 60s within the Soviet scholarship.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights for Independence*, 31.

<sup>65</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 4.

<sup>66</sup> McNeal, *The Bolshevik Tradition*, 134.

<sup>67</sup> Baard Richard, Stokke, *Soviet and Eastern European Trade and Aid in Africa*, (New York, WA, London: F.A. Praeger, 1967), 214.

<sup>68</sup> Really, beyond the Cold War even, as the introductory paragraph to a 2004 interview with V.G. Solodovnikov refers to Africa as "the Dark Continent," in a truly bizarre continuation of imperialist vernacular usage by the otherwise modern Russian author.

It was only at the very tail end of Stalin's reign that Soviet theory towards Africa began to re-develop, starting with Ivan Potekhin's 1950 paper, "Stalinist Theory of Colonial Revolution and the National Liberation Movement in Tropical and Southern Africa." This paper finally chose to differentiate between Africa and Asia as distinct and diverse places on their own merits.<sup>69</sup> Such a distinction was a concrete move away from Pavlovich's "All Russian Association of Eastern Studies," though the racial linkage remained clear in the vernacular. Additionally, since a re-positioning of the theoretical discussion in opposition to a racist (so called racialist) school of thought occurred, the existence of the older racist school of thought is verified, and indirectly condemned. Later Soviet authors also point out that not only did Stalin neglect Soviet interest in Africa, he undermined much older Russian/African relationships by failing to maintain those few that did exist.<sup>70</sup>

Not having a policy is still a policy, and therefore Stalin's leadership must be discussed in relation to Soviet-African activity. Whereas later Soviet leaders had personal objectives with continental partners, Stalin's hands-off nature had its own effect as demonstrated by its lingering negative impact on Soviet-African analysis.<sup>71</sup> Through his "socialism in one country" doctrine, Stalin made scholastic writing on Africa difficult for Soviet thinkers and made concrete relationships with early African liberation movements impossible.

While the common trend among western authors through the Cold War was to imagine that before Khrushchev there was no Soviet interaction on the continent, this argument was

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<sup>69</sup> Dallin, Alexander, "Soviet Political Activity" in *Africa and The Communist World*, Zbigniew Kazimierz Brzeziński (ed.), 7-83, (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1963), 10, 11.

<sup>70</sup> Davidson, Olderogge, eds., *Russia and Africa U.S.S.R., U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences, Africa Institute* ("Nauka" Publishing House, 1966), 167.

<sup>71</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, 68.

challenged by both Soviet and Western analysis. I find that both arguments held a degree of merit, insofar as there was limited state-to-state interaction, but a core of scholars and academics did perceive value in future interactions with African peoples, movements, and regimes.<sup>72</sup> The effect of that core of scholars, and the ad-hoc interactions of individual adventurers, would later be used by Soviet theorists to form a foundation regarding their interactions with African partnerships, and therefore did have a concrete, non-negligible effect on future Soviet policy. Finally, due to limited early investment, and the stagnation of analysis during the Stalin era, racialization and a paternalistic approach could flourish and persevere into later Soviet analysis.

The fact that Soviet Africanists had to dig so deep into Russian history to find meaningful links to the continent verifies the lack of activity in the intervening era. That Tsarist expeditions were lauded by Soviet scholars in the 1950s represents the level of ideological confusion which Soviet scholars had to unpack and make digestible. Further ideological dissonance manifested as later Soviet analysts attempted to reconcile Lenin's theories with the requirements of their contemporary regime. On the one hand Potekhin extols the flexibility of Lenin's vision for socialist development. Simultaneously Potekhin denounced the African Socialism that liberation leadership such as Sékou Touré were claiming to develop.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the Soviet reliance on a limited pool of revered individual theorists, specifically Marx and Lenin, hampered later theory, as it always had to hearken back to those thinkers deified by the Soviet regime. The lens through which early Soviet Africanists who crafted the theoretical approach for Soviet engagement in Africa drew from an aggregate of mixed Tsarist and Bolshevik theory dating from the Revolution

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<sup>72</sup> This is out of the domineering and macro purview of Stalin, and instead concerns the middle tier of academics and thinkers who had to navigate his regime.

<sup>73</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 41.

and even before.<sup>74</sup> That fluidity resulted in a veritable blender of academic ideas into the 1920s as former Mensheviks, Tsarists, and victorious Bolsheviks all lent their theoretical roots to what would eventually become Soviet-Africanism.<sup>75</sup> This created a naturally difficult environment for later Soviet-Africanists and acted as an intellectual weight which they would never totally discard. Potekhin himself said, “I am a scientist. My job is to do research and teach. But should it be necessary, I will exchange arms--I will drop my pen and take up a rifle instead--to fight for justice as I did more than 40 years ago during the October Revolution.” Potekhin demonstrated a tight link to the mythologized Civil War era and an inescapable blending of political-science and moralistic crusading.<sup>76</sup>

For Soviet thinkers, there was considerable utility in forgetting the exploits of the Russian fleet in 1904 and ignoring Stalin's apathetic approach. Neither episode was compatible with the post-Stalin Soviet self-image, as Solodovnikov, Potekhin's direct successor pronounced in 1964, “We Soviet Africanists see our task in preserving and developing the traditions of humanism and proletarian internationalism with respect to the peoples of Africa, traditions which have always been inherent in Russian revolutionary democracy and Marxism Leninism.”<sup>77</sup> Internationalism was again at the forefront of Soviet justification for intervention, and a moral parallel was drawn between Russian revolutionary theory and African liberation. The idea that those traditions had been inherent during Stalin's leadership and before it highlight the mythologization of that period.

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<sup>74</sup> Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, 100.

<sup>75</sup> Kemper, “Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia,” 443.

<sup>76</sup> Skorov George, “Ivan Potekhin-Man, Scientist, and Friend of Africa,” 446-447.

<sup>77</sup> V.G. Solodovnikov, “Opening Address at the Conference on the Historical Relations of the people of the Soviet Union and Africa,” 15.

I consider the Khrushchev era as the birth of Soviet-African relations, and not a renaissance, because while there were links prior to 1953, they represent a long and complicated gestation of theory and practice rather than the large scale application of theory through policy which defined the Khrushchev era in relation to Africa. The Soviet regime had finally reached a critical mass of force projection capability and economic security which allowed the leeway to take on foreign adventures and major aid projects.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, an impetus for that expansion finally existed to prove the ideological and moral superiority of Soviet style Marxism-Leninism against the colonialist powers. In either an odd twist of fate, or in an example of Lenin's prescience, it was only when the "victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics," emerged from the Second World War, the USSR was able to extend its "helping hand" to Africa. Therefore, the primary contribution of this chapter is to confirm that the preceding era facilitated a scattershot and contradictory theoretical and political approach to Africa, which continued through the Soviet Union's lifespan. Even though the Stalin era and its antecedents were not as active as the following periods in Africa, they established the theoretical framework for engagement in Africa.

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<sup>78</sup> Force projection as defined by the U.S. Department of Defense "The capacity of a state to deploy and sustain forces outside its territory."

### Chapter 3 Khrushchev's Engagement

Stalin's death in 1953 allowed seismic changes in Soviet policy. Nikita Khrushchev's ascension to the position of First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union signaled his arrival at the apex of Soviet power by 1956. Khrushchev brought a different approach to foreign policy, moving away from Stalin's Socialism in One Country doctrine. This new direction finally gave Soviet theory towards Africa the opportunity to prove itself. Khrushchev, with a rationale for intervention and capability to do so, did not wait long to develop to a policy platform for Africa, critically shifting the dynamic towards interaction and away from isolation.

During the Khrushchev era (1953-1964) decolonization was occurring in Africa, as the imperial powers were forced off the continent. This gave the Soviets a unique opportunity to build support for their brand of state-socialism. The Soviets were still shackled initially with dogmatism held over from Stalin's reign. They viewed national improvement through the Marxist lens which favoured a formula of "stages of development."<sup>79</sup> This dogma was put to the test in Africa. African leaders, and especially Kwame Nkrumah, the prime minister of Ghana, were suspicious of both the United States and Soviet Union. For them a "Third Way," was preferable and the Accra conference held in 1958 made that clear.<sup>80</sup> What the Bandung conference was for Asia, the Accra conference was for Africa. The program was pan-African and centered on liberation and independence, though it did presume liberation should come gradually and along a defined timetable.<sup>81</sup> All independent countries on the continent were invited, from

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<sup>79</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, 68.

<sup>80</sup> Westad, 98, 99.

<sup>81</sup> "The Accra Conference of African States," The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The World Today*, 14, no. 6 (June 1, 1958), 265.

Algeria to South Africa, making it a truly continental endeavour.<sup>82</sup> Africa's most prominent independent leader, Dr. Nkrumah, was walking a tightrope between East and West from the beginning, and there was a clear spectrum of approaches displayed at the conference, ranging from the uninvited but still attending militant revolutionaries of the Algerian Revolutionary Front to the relatively conservative and pro-Israeli Ethiopian delegation.<sup>83</sup> The Soviet Union was faced with the dilemma of dealing with the multitude of routes to liberation, and the thorny problem of neutrality which some independent African states preferred, such as Ethiopia.

With Nikita Khrushchev came a new-found dynamism in foreign policy which had not yet appeared in the Soviet leadership. Described by contemporary western biographer William Taubman as "naive, impulsive," but also possessing a "Machiavellian" side, this combination of traits resulted in serious shifts in Soviet outlook.<sup>84</sup> The Soviet Union was suddenly prodded to remember its internationalist roots once more, and Khrushchev was ready to emphasize that revolutionary history to every advantage against the "imperialist" powers he faced. Khrushchev became a salesman for Soviet style socialism, and the academic and social jury is still out on whether the moral balance of his actions regarding Africa were primarily idealistic or practical in nature. I do not seek to pass that judgment, only to emphasize the massive change in Soviet policy, and to explore that shift.

Not only did Khrushchev introduce a new impetus for fresh partnerships on the African

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<sup>82</sup> The platforms of the two conferences (Bandung and Accra) were different however, and the Accra conference was more exclusionary in some respects, limited to independent African states. though even apartheid South Africa was invited as they were technically independent. They of course declined the invitation.

<sup>83</sup> "The Accra Conference of African States," The Royal Institute of International Affairs, *The World Today*, 14, no. 6 (June 1, 1958), 261.

<sup>84</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 650.

continent, he also began to foster domestic research into new policy formulation at home.<sup>85</sup> The changes began swiftly, and the Soviet regime moved to conclude agreements as soon as possible with newly independent African states. The first of these agreements under Khrushchev came in 1954, coinciding with Egypt's independence.<sup>86</sup> By 1960, Khrushchev's regime had completed another five trade agreements with African states. In 1965, a year after Khrushchev's retirement in 1964, the Soviet Union had completed twenty-two total agreements with African states in the area of trade alone.<sup>87</sup> This massive jump in activity in a relatively short time frame proves Khrushchev's commitment to developing new ties in Africa. This section will detail and explore the theoretical foundation, purpose, and extent of those new ties.

With the change in leadership came a change in theory. Stalin had maintained and relied on an isolationist stance of “Socialism in One Country,” and a dogged emphasis on the Soviet Union's influence in Europe to the general exclusion of all else.<sup>88</sup> Khrushchev would upturn that policy program and replace it with one meant to further socialist (preferably scientific-socialist) expansion beyond just Europe. For Africa this meant re-branding Marxism-Leninism to fit the context of liberation and post-colonial questions. The Africa Institute, which Khrushchev established in 1959, was directed to answer those questions and give a justification for Soviet intervention in African affairs.

Potekhin, the new leading Soviet African studies theorist of the Khrushchev period,

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<sup>85</sup> Maxim Matusevich, et al. *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, Edited by Maxim Matusevich (ed.) (Trenton N.J./ Asmara Eritrea: Africa World Press Inc. 2007), 339, 340

<sup>86</sup> Rubinstein, Grigori, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” as found in *The USSR and Africa*, 76-91, (Moscow, 1983), 80.

<sup>87</sup> Rubinstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 77.

<sup>88</sup> McNeal, *The Bolshevik Tradition*, 134.

provided insight into Marxist development theory and applied that to African states. However, his approach was in large part a departure from the Pavlovich direction. Instead, Potekhin developed a new, flexible foundational approach to build trade and aid with Africa on. Potekhin no longer relied on exclusively western sources, instead utilizing African statements on the subject in support of his argument.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, Soviet theory had entered a new hybrid stage, where it was willing and able to draw on regional thought and then synthesize it with its own interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. While this theory was a departure from Pavlovich's, it still retained many of the preconceptions of previous Marxist-Leninist theory in terms of colonialism. Furthermore, racialization of the African peoples continued, though in a more indirect manner than present during preceding decades. Where before the journal title was *Contemporary East*, in 1961 it was now subdivided into two new journals, *Asia and Africa* and *Peoples of Asia and Africa*.<sup>90</sup> Still clearly evidencing ethnic and national homogenization on a level which instead acted as if Asia and Africa were still a single amorphous Other.

While still often using racist terminology himself, Potekhin sought to undermine racist interpretations of the post-colonial situation. He did this in part by warning against one of the political trends concurrent to Pan-Africanism, “negritude,” as espoused by some African leaders. The theory was pioneered by Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, who was also Senegal’s first President and a respected leader among the emerging core of African liberation leaders. Senghor developed the concept in concert with his ideology of African Socialism, which allowed for the maintenance of ties with the former colonial overlord. Of the African relationship with

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<sup>89</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 11.

<sup>90</sup> Dallin, “Soviet Political Activity,” 21.

established socialist order, Senghor said, “The So-called solidarity of the European proletariat and the colonial peoples does not stand up to criticism,” a clear critique of Soviet style Marxism.<sup>91</sup> Potekhin saw negritude as a means of utilizing race as a determining factor in nationality and of identity, and he agreed with its detractors, stating, “The opponents of negritude who sum it up as anti-racial racialism are quite right.”<sup>92</sup>

Therefore, Senghor’s popular conception of negritude was in direct contradiction to Marxist internationalism and universalism. Potekhin saw the expansion of such regimes as a threat to pan-African progress. Therefore, it can be extrapolated that he believed them to be a threat to the Soviet Union. Negritude seemed especially dangerous to the Soviet Union as it allowed for a relationship to remain with the former colonial overlord, which totally went against Soviet conceptions of liberation.<sup>93</sup> By inference, this would also presuppose that the Soviet Union would be unable to become those country's dominant trading partners, and therefore would undermine the Soviet objective to undercut the west in Africa. While he does not directly admit it, here Potekhin falls into the same line of thinking as Pavlovich, and the theorists of the revolutionary and Stalinist period. He viewed foreign events as a platform for enriching and improving the Soviet regime's international position, without giving Senghor the benefit of the doubt that he may have understood Senegal’s position better than Soviet Africanists. This relation to Pavlovich becomes more apparent since some of the regimes Potekhin holds up as pan-African allies of “scientific-socialism” utilized similarly racially charged rhetoric as those

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<sup>91</sup> Senghor, Léopold Sédar, *Nation et Voie Africaine du Socialisme*, trans. Ezra Beudot (University of California, 1961), 95.

<sup>92</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 114, 115.

<sup>93</sup> The idea that a former colony would aim for ties with its former overlords seemed totally counter-intuitive to Soviet theory, and the Soviet response was to treat it as a threat. This yielded mixed results.

Potekhin decried as falling into the ideology of “negritude,” which he saw as exclusionary on a race basis, anti-scientific, and a dangerous mistake.<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, though Potekhin does critically investigate and identify the diversity of African liberation movements, he fails to see the hypocrisy of the Soviet Union's own choice in friends which was not always based along ideological similarity. Instead allies could be more messily determined by a confluence of military, and political aims such as the alignment with Egypt’s president Nasser. That alignment with Nasser was made clear by Khrushchev's personal visit to Egypt in 1964.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, while he preached an idealistic expansion of the living standards and rights of all Africans, he consistently platformed those ideals on the potential partner's relationship to the “socialist world,” and to Potekhin that meant the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies.

Potekhin's new foundational approach to Marxism-Leninism regarding Africa was critical to the development of Soviet policy, as his viewpoint mattered at least to some degree based upon his position as head of the Africa Institute, itself a direct creation of Khrushchev’s.<sup>96</sup> While it is clear Potekhin's theory expanded and to an extent modernized Soviet thinking towards Africa, whether Potekhin was reacting to new policy implementation, or if his theses were predating those policies and informing their creation remains unclear. Certainly though, Potekhin himself was at least partly responsible for the results of the new direction, as he also taught African and domestic students, establishing a direct academic link between the USSR and

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<sup>94</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 114.

<sup>95</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 609.

<sup>96</sup> Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War, The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 22.

Africa.<sup>97</sup> Potekhin also was able to directly engage with, combat, and critique African Socialism and the concept of negritude through his writing without the potential fallout official declarations at higher levels of governance may have brought.<sup>98</sup>

Additionally, the Africa Institute did not only publish for a domestic market, but published its works and disseminated them to African partners, a synthesis of academia and propaganda distribution.<sup>99</sup> Potekhin and his colleagues at the Institute were then themselves Cold Warriors, in the service of propagating the Soviet historiographical and political narrative to potentially friendly states. This represented a departure from the previously discussed era, as Pavlovich and his colleagues and their work remained primarily within the Soviet Union. On the other hand, Potekhin and many of his colleagues personally traveled to Africa.<sup>100</sup> Such trips further emphasized the newfound physicality and interaction between the Soviet Union and the continent.

Critical to Khrushchev's expansion of interest in Africa was the existence of a bi-polar geopolitical situation. Khrushchev viewed himself personally, and his country in general, as in direct competition with America and the rest of the perceived West as a whole. Therefore, understanding the superpower counterpart's lens is important to evidencing Khrushchev's changes to Soviet policy. In fact, much of the praise Khrushchev received stems not from his own countrymen, but from American analysis bodies such as the U.S. Policy Planning Council,

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<sup>97</sup> Ilyn, Yuri, "Soviet-African Scientific Cooperation," in *The USSR and Africa* (Moscow: "Social Sciences Today" Editorial Board, USSR Academy of Sciences, 1983), 108-130, 110.

<sup>98</sup> Potekhin, and the other Soviet Africanists were therefore a "safe," way for the Soviet Union to critique its partners in Africa without risking the relationship wholesale.

<sup>99</sup> Ilyn, "Soviet-African Scientific Cooperation," 111.

<sup>100</sup> Ilyn, 117.

which viewed the flexibility of Soviet policy in Africa as outpacing American efforts.

Specifically cited are diplomatic flexibility and the capacity of the Soviet Union to accept barter deals rather than hard currency.<sup>101</sup>

However, the Americans were demonstrably more aware of Soviet policy failure than the Soviets were ever willing to admit. Those critical reports allow for a more holistic interpretation of the Khrushchev era changes to Soviet policy. Essentially, by 1961, American analysis had identified Soviet spending as often wasteful, and prone to spending vast sums of money on “prestige” projects which did fit the context of the area where they were constructed. Further waste was identified on a more systemic level, permeating aid and trade missions to Africa. Soviet funded factories were built away from necessary material. The Soviets funded expensive and incomplete geophysical surveys. Trade goods often arrived in poor condition or late.<sup>102</sup> This contrasts with the rosy picture Potekhin and his colleagues painted of the Soviet impact on Africa and became a long running trend. However, the wasteful nature of Soviet support itself hints that Soviet aid may not have been purely security-oriented.

To American analysts such as Gorman it was clear that Soviet interest and activity in Africa had expanded under Khrushchev. Gorman questioned the efficiency and usefulness of that activity and pointed out that whole regimes supported by Khrushchev collapsed, despite receiving considerable Soviet aid.<sup>103</sup> Gorman’s approach was in direct contradiction to Soviet sources, which almost universally praised the general expansion of activity in Africa but failed to critically analyze the minutiae and objective of those trade and aid missions. A specific example

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<sup>101</sup> Mazov, “Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964,” 299.

<sup>102</sup> Mazov, 300.

<sup>103</sup> Gorman, “Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa,” 173.

of this dichotomy is in relation to the Soviet supply of several civilian airliners, experienced pilots, and associated infrastructure (radar) to Guinea (Conakry-Guinea) in 1961.<sup>104</sup> A later Soviet article extolling the virtue of that era's expansion in trade and aid passingly mentions the planes provided for the Guinean national airline, but does not go into further detail, only counting them as one of many net positive results of Guinea's relationship with the Soviet Union.<sup>105</sup> That surface level reference may have something to do with the fact that according to the American ambassador to Guinea at the time, William Attwood, the planes were generally grounded, their crews could not speak French, and the radar, while functional, seemed to fill no purpose.<sup>106</sup> So, while planes, technical assistance, crews, and even the infrastructure was provided, the entire endeavour did not seem to be particularly beneficial for the Guineans. A cynical observer may view the expansion of air infrastructure to reinforce potential future military deployments, and therefore useful only to Soviets looking for forward bases. Publicly, the Soviet relationship was benign, as Soviet treaties throughout the 1960s concerned themselves with industrial and agricultural issues rather than defense.<sup>107</sup>

This little example points to two issues. Firstly, the Soviet habit of quantitative, rather than qualitative analysis and secondly, a continuing failure to fully conceptualize aid as it related to the context of the specific given partner. Effectively, it proves that while Soviet interest in Africa had increased, many of the theoretical and analysis practices of the previous era continued to hamper the Soviet approach. While universalist, pan-African aid seems ideal, if the constituent

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<sup>104</sup> Mazov, "Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964," 300.

<sup>105</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 85.

<sup>106</sup> Mazov, "Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964," 300.

<sup>107</sup> Slusser Robert M. and Ginsburgs, George, *A Calendar of Soviet Treaties 1958-1973*, (Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands: Sijthoff and Noordhoff, 1981), 87.

partnerships remain not particularly well understood, all the planes and radar in the world will not make a functional airline. Unfortunately for the Soviets, it was the Americans who recognized this error, and not themselves, though at least the Guineans got some free hangars out of the arrangement.<sup>108</sup>

While the theory developed by Potekhin and his colleagues was formulated in the early 1950s, it was concurrently being physically tested on the continent through the form of Soviet trade and aid. In this area, a concrete impact was finally being delivered by the Soviet Union onto the African continent. Potekhin's understanding of development was predicated on the industrialization of the underdeveloped country.<sup>109</sup> In his view the staple based, agrarian economies of Africa required quick industrialization in order to further their economic and political independence.

Potekhin's theory was put in practice with the provision of industrial materials and items to African partners. Critically, rather than exclusively providing industrial materials, tools for resource extraction and refinement were also supplied.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, while Potekhin extolled the virtue of economic diversification, Khrushchev continued to partly reinforce pre-existing staple economies. The result of Somalian Prime-Minister Abdirashid Ali Shermarke's visit to Moscow in 1961 was a cohesive loan plan and technical aid for industrial development such as the deepening of Berbera's port.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, while the dredging of ports in Somalia served to

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<sup>108</sup> Slusser, *A Calendar of Soviet Treaties 1958-1973*, 169.

<sup>109</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 12.

<sup>110</sup> Rubinstein, Grigori, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," as found in *The USSR and Africa*, 76-91, (Moscow, 1983), 86.

<sup>111</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 37.

expand the country's trade potential, it also did not discriminate in terms of exported goods.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, Somalia could remain a staple based economy, but now be more dependent on the Soviet Union, rather than Western trade partners. In Potekhin's estimation, this still revealed a step towards economic and therefore political liberation on the part of the Somalis. However, Potekhin's assertion that the “socialist world” would provide the means of economic liberation for the developing world remains a weak argument as he then attempts to back up that assertion with the example of “how freely Eastern Europe developed” after the end of the Second World War.<sup>113</sup>

However, even in its early stage between 1953 and 1960, this new engagement did not discriminate regionally, and agreements were formed with African partners across the continent, from Guinea to Egypt.<sup>114</sup> This meshed well with the internationalist and universalist vision found at the core of Marxist theory, but it also served a more utilitarian purpose to Khrushchev. The utilitarian element of Soviet engagement was the support and expansion of a socialist pan-African movement, dependent on Soviet aid and trade. Potekhin explored the utility of such a relationship in terms of its capacity to rob the West of markets in Africa, and therefore benefit the “Socialist world” and be mutually beneficial.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, to the Soviet Union Africa offered considerable potential, as the markets of Africa's constituent states represented a major utility to their colonial power's economies. To deprive the colonial and former colonial powers of their surviving monopolies would by extension be of great use to the Soviet Union. This dichotomy

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<sup>112</sup> Milne, Charles, *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*, (Maryland: University Press of America Inc. 1980), 220, 221.

<sup>113</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 41.

<sup>114</sup> Rubinstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 77.

<sup>115</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 18.

effectively established the Soviet purpose in Africa, to deprive European powers of their former colonial economies.

One of the first African states to receive a Soviet delegation was Liberia, a country correctly believed to be firmly in America's influence.<sup>116</sup> The choice to dispatch a delegation to Monrovia displayed Khrushchev's desire to exhibit the flexibility of Marxism-Leninism, in line with Potekhin's prostrations concerning the many routes to "scientific-socialism".<sup>117</sup> Really, it also emphasized Khrushchev's own willingness and capacity to bend the rules when it came to Africa, and his desire to look for partners on the continent almost everywhere, even if only on a cultural, diplomatic, and trade basis.<sup>118</sup> Effectively, Khrushchev accepted that the Soviet Union could not dictate the terms of development everywhere, and this distinction insofar as Africa was concerned had a major impact on the countries and regimes which the USSR accepted as friends.

An area where Potekhin and Khrushchev differed was that "selfless aid," which Potekhin asserted that only socialist countries could provide. Khrushchev sought to provide that aid to a wider range of ideologically diverse counterpart regimes than Potekhin opined for. Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egyptian Arab socialist regime, which was killing off domestic communists in the 1950s, should not have made a good bedfellow for the Soviet Union, and yet it was one of the first African regimes to conclude a trade agreement with the Soviet Union.<sup>119</sup> Not only was Nasser receiving civilian aid, but also a slew of military agreements, including visits from the

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<sup>116</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War, The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 33.

<sup>117</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 27.

<sup>118</sup> With the clear and continuing exception of South Africa, which was quickly accurately labelled a racist state and the Soviets sought to isolate it as best they could.

<sup>119</sup> Stokke, *Soviet and Eastern European Trade and Aid in Africa*, 128.

Soviet Navy and technical aid.<sup>120</sup> Direct military aid in the form of heavy equipment and naval partnerships was a step level higher than even partners who were closer in ideology to the USSR received. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (P.A.I.G.C.), for example, received only small arms and possibly training during this period, even while it was engaged in open combat against the colonial Portuguese. Furthermore, Nasser's regime was in part built on a racial notation around a perceived Arab race. Similarly, trade agreements with Sékou Touré's Guinean regime were completed in February of 1959, less than a year after Nasser's.<sup>121</sup> Again, Khrushchev quickly moved to conclude an agreement with a newly minted nation-state, which in part presented its regime as socialist, but relied upon nationalistic definitions. In the Guinean case, even Potekhin believed Touré was genuine in his communism, as he quotes Sékou Touré as a proponent of pan-Africanism and anti-racialization in his 1964 article, "Pan-Africanism and the Struggle of Two Ideologies."<sup>122</sup>

This difference contrasts with Potekhin's warnings concerning racialization being applied to policy making. Potekhin saw that route of liberation as a red herring and argued such policy would torpedo the end objective of a more unified Africa and scratch away at the pan-African dream.<sup>123</sup> This difference in opinion between experts and top policymakers foreshadowed the scattershot results of Khrushchev's policy in Africa. Additionally, the examples of Egypt and Guinea are indicative of another critical factor, perception. Even esteemed Soviet-Africanists such as Potekhin failed to see the contradictions present in both partner regimes. Whether this

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<sup>120</sup> Slusser, *A Calendar of Soviet Treaties 1958-1973*, 797.

<sup>121</sup> Stokke, *Soviet and Eastern European Trade and Aid in Africa*, 177.

<sup>122</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 116.

<sup>123</sup> Potekhin, 113.

was intentional blindness in support of policy, or a genuine oversight due to lack of information, or misplaced idealism, it is difficult to say. However, the result was clear: with or without this ideologically-founded justification, increasing aid served to win Khrushchev political capital on the continent, and established the USSR as a major supplier of aid.

Another element of the expansion of Soviet interest in Africa was in the area of education into which the Soviet Union poured considerable capital. The main objective was twofold, inculcation of foreign nationals to the “scientific socialist,” ideology, and to increase Soviet national's own knowledge about the African continent and its constituent parts.<sup>124</sup> Incidentally, this awareness came about in part thanks to the input of an American pan-Africanist, W.E.B. Du Bois, who suggested the formation of a dedicated institution for African studies in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev took that advice and created the Africa Institute, which was headed by Potekhin upon its foundation in 1959.<sup>125</sup> This Institute would form the nucleus of Soviet policy thought, research, and theoretical development in the Soviet Union, and notably it survives to the present as an outgrowth of the Russian Academy of the Sciences.

Directly under the Africa Institute was the Soviet-Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (SKSSAA) which served as a diplomatic backdoor and low level Soviet diplomatic apparatus.<sup>126</sup> The SKSSAA, which relied on the Soviet-Africanists of the Africa Institute to support its propaganda and diplomatic endeavours, highlights the relationship the Soviet Africanists had with foreign policy, in that they were active participants and developers of it. At the highest level

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<sup>124</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War, The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 232.

<sup>125</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 339, 340.

<sup>126</sup> Casula, Philipp, “The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and Soviet Perceptions of the Middle East During Late Socialism,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe* 59, no. 4 (October 1, 2018): 499–520. 515.

of leadership, the Presidium of the Communist Party, a meeting in July 1961 highlighted the need to involve the Soviet Africanists in the creation and distribution of propaganda.<sup>127</sup> The SKSSAA, since it was an unofficial diplomatic apparatus, had an easier time making links with sub-state actors, such as the African National Congress, (ANC) which was seeking to end the apartheid regime in South Africa.<sup>128</sup> They had come from the periphery of Soviet policy construction, and become a primary element of it towards their specialist area.

The second critical domestic institution which Khrushchev founded was the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University, in 1960, also known as the Friendship University.<sup>129</sup> This institution would serve to inculcate foreign students in the Soviet interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, and therefore the hope was to allow for the creation of domestic cadres in the home country. In that regard it is difficult to judge, but at the very least it did serve well as an educational institute, and thousands of students attained degrees. This school is useful framing device for the dual role of Soviet actions in Africa. On the one hand providing genuine trade and aid to African partners, and on the other facilitating the military means to achieve the creation of new African partners, along "scientific socialist," lines of course.

One area of critical infrastructure support that Khrushchev took great interest in was that of the development of hydroelectric power stations in Africa. This focus touched off for the Soviet Union with the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956, when the West pulled funding for Nasser's mega project: the Aswan High Dam.<sup>130</sup> This dam would be the world's largest embankment dam

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<sup>127</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War, The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 20.

<sup>128</sup> Casula, "The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and Soviet Perceptions of the Middle East During Late Socialism," 515.

<sup>129</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War, The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 232.

<sup>130</sup> Milne, *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*, 126.

and intended to supply electricity to support industrialization and control the flooding of the Nile. The crisis pitted France, Britain, and Israel in military confrontation against Nasser's Egypt.

Khrushchev took the initiative immediately and offered funding to Nasser in the form of credit and technical support in the form of Soviet engineers.<sup>131</sup> By funding the Aswan High Dam Khrushchev positioned himself as a champion of the Third World and managed to one-up the West at the same time. It was the perfect way to exhibit the perceived superiority of Soviet science and technology, while also emphasizing the Soviet Union's newly rediscovered internationalist attitude. By extension the completion of the dam, and at a wider level the support for Egypt during the Canal Crisis, seems to prove Potekhin's point about economic dependence. By aligning the Egyptians closer to Moscow, it seemed as if the Suez itself would be more open to Soviet, rather than British trade, as the sovereignty of the canal was proven to be Egyptian in the wake of battle. The canal could for the first time be hypothetically closed to those who had ordered its construction. Russia, now the Soviet Union, would never again be forced around the Horn of Africa, if Egypt remained friendly to Soviet ships.<sup>132</sup>

In other parts of Africa, the West's refusal to fund expensive hydroelectric projects without the promise of profit allowed the Soviet Union to capitalize on filling that investment void.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, Socialist style regimes preferred to deal with the Soviets because they found them more often to act as equal partners.<sup>134</sup> By comparison the West seemed more stingy,

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<sup>131</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 80.

<sup>132</sup> While it is difficult to determine how much the memory of 1904-1905 played on Khrushchev's mind in relation to the crisis, it was without a doubt a strategic boon for the Soviet Navy, which was granted easier access to the Pacific.

<sup>133</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 100.

<sup>134</sup> Erlich, Alexander and R. Sonne, Christian, "The Soviet Union: Economic Activity," in *Africa and The*

and agreements came with more strings attached. Therefore, while Soviet regime would not directly benefit directly from hydroelectric power generated by dams it invested in, considerable political capital was accrued. Up for continued debate is the effective use of that political capital by Khrushchev and his successors.

With the foundation of the Africa Institute, the Patrice Lumumba Friendship University, the Soviet-Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, and the existence of many various agreements covering trade and aid by 1960, the following period is the later stage of Khrushchev policy dynamism. His policy now had matured to a degree that was becoming self-reinforcing. By that I mean that rather than having to justify Soviet presence in Africa on ancient fraternal ties, or long-ago visits by private individuals, the Soviet regime could now point to its actions of the past decade to highlight the value of its presence. Furthermore, the depth and extent of aid already rendered provided further incentive to potentially friendly regimes to begin dealing with the Soviet Union. This is supported by the continuing expansion of trade agreements, which by 1965 would reach twenty-two.<sup>135</sup>

An aspect of the Khrushchev era's involvement in Africa that seems to avoid general attention by historians is that of the establishment of a nuclear test reactor in Egypt, and the planning of a similar reactor in Ghana.<sup>136</sup> The Egyptian reactor, which reached critical mass in 1961, was a major signal of continuing Soviet support for Nasser's regime.<sup>137</sup> Nuclear reactors were the epitome of Soviet science, and by getting the first one operational on the African

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*Communist World*, Edited by Zbigniew Brzeziński 84-49, (Stanford California: Stanford University Press. 1963), 67.

<sup>135</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 77.

<sup>136</sup> Stokke, *Soviet and Eastern European Trade and Aid in Africa*, 172-174.

<sup>137</sup> Stokke, 174.

continent, the Soviet Union was both flexing its sovereign, and scientific muscle, while utilizing both those capacities to place certain allied regimes on a pedestal.<sup>138</sup> All of this was of course in direct contradiction to Khrushchev's stated desire to make Africa a nuclear free zone.<sup>139</sup> For that reason, this Cold War vignette is instrumental in evidencing the continued contradictory nature of Soviet policy towards Africa, and is an inherent problem with Khrushchev's philosophy and practice. However, that same Egyptian reactor would again be mentioned favorably as proof of enduring Soviet scientific aid to Africa some twenty years later in a collection of Soviet academic works published in 1983.<sup>140</sup> References to Khrushchev in that article are not to be found, but the principle fact that his policy resulted in the reactor could not be ignored, even after his fall from political grace. Therefore, that reference further supports the degree and longevity of the Khrushchev era policy's impact.

A continuing aspect of Soviet involvement in Africa was the enduring presence and expansion of scientific and academic missions to Africa. This expansion at least hints at the possibility that the Soviet regime needed to further inform its understanding of African contexts. Also, these expeditions were not limited to low ranking researchers or private individuals, but instead the whole spectrum of Soviet academia made pilgrimages to African countries during the Khrushchev era.

Professor Dimitri Olderogge, who would helm the Africa Institute, made a two-year trip to Mali, in conjunction with the Malian National Institute of the Humanities between 1961 and

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<sup>138</sup> *Research Reactors in Africa*, (Vienna Austria: International Atomic Energy Agency, 2011), 10.

<sup>139</sup> Dallin, "Soviet Political Activity," 44.

<sup>140</sup> Degtyar, "Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation," 97.

1962.<sup>141</sup> Such academic journeys emphasized the new relationship developed by Khrushchev which sought to further incorporate African opinion and research with Soviet academia. While these efforts were certainly more equitable than the orientalist expeditions of Pavlovich era, they focused often on archaeology, linguistics, astronomy, geology, and of course, to evangelizing the theory of scientific socialism.<sup>142</sup> While this was all of scientific and academic value, the Soviets were again dogmatic in its approach of a third political option for those visited regimes.

One of the academics dispatched to Ghana in 1964, Torocheshnikov, revealed that the student's understanding of Marxism-Leninism was severely lacking. This was in an academic system in which the curriculum had been nominally determined by the USSR. However, Torocheshnikov found that the influence of the former colonial power's academic program remained difficult to dislodge.<sup>143</sup> This spoke to two problems. Firstly, that educational norms which contradicted the Soviet curriculum were difficult to uproot, and secondly, that the host country's regime may not have wanted to see those norms removed to begin with. Again, the African regime had benefited from Soviet funding and aid, but successfully utilized it for its own devices, refusing the “scientific-socialist” path. Torocheshnikov’s findings hint that Kwame Nkrumah was willing to bend Soviet diplomacy to his will, rather than be cowed by Soviet claims of scientific, industrial, and economic supremacy. By 1964, in all three cases explored, Sékou Touré’s, Nasser’s and Nkrumah’s, liberation leaders were not simply buying the Soviet line wholesale. Instead they displayed considerable agency.

While the rhetoric of Soviet theoreticians revolved around the industrialization of Africa,

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<sup>141</sup> Ilyn, “Soviet-African Scientific Cooperation,” 120.

<sup>142</sup> Ilyn, 120.

<sup>143</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War; The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 241, 243.

that did not preclude the Soviet Union's capacity for taking advantage of the agrarian and extraction-based economies present. The primary import from Egypt was unsurprisingly cotton, from Ghana, cocoa beans, from Morocco, phosphates, and from Nigeria, "first and foremost agricultural products."<sup>144</sup> Not only did the USSR continue to support those staple exports, but it also provided the tools to reinforce that dependence. In the case of Ghana, for example, the Soviet Union concluded a deal to construct a tomato cannery in Mamou, but then failed to consider the lack of water or tomatoes in the area.<sup>145</sup> The Soviet Union in that example was too inept to successfully exploit the Ghanaian staple economy because of failures across the gamut of the Soviet approach. In some situations, the Soviet Union was still completely flummoxed by Africa, with or without having to navigate local leadership.

It would be remiss of me to ignore or forget the massive uptick in arms deliveries to Africa during this period. Incidentally, this element is often played down by Soviet academia, possibly to keep in line with the Khrushchev focus on "peaceful coexistence." Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that with the expansion of interest in Africa, arms exports to African partners increased. These arms originated in the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, this inter-continental arms trade reinforces the global aspect of Africa as a theatre of the Cold War. in One of the key state elements Potekhin saw in need of further expansion was the security apparati of African regimes to protect their economic and political security.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, Soviet academia saw a utility in the dispatch of advisers to allies, because in its estimation only a truly Marxist-Leninist regime could prevent coups by the military, as only a true Marxist-

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<sup>144</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 82, 86.

<sup>145</sup> Mazov, "Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964," 300.

<sup>146</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 21.

Leninist can mint a non-elite officer corps (elitism within a regime's military was seen a major security threat for recently liberated African regimes).<sup>147</sup> The assumed conclusion there is that only with the support of already non-elitist officers to support a developing partner could that regime's internal security be assured. Therefore, with the ideological justification out of the way, a moralization for military aid had been established. The result under Khrushchev was the start of major military equipment and technical aid to partner states.

During the Khrushchev period this military aid took two primary forms: supply of military product and supply of military/technical advisers. In a similar vein as more peaceful aid, military aid was delivered quickly, though often failing to consider the local context, or not providing the correct equipment for the specific task. While much of the aid was justified for national defense, these arms served to deter American or European military action and just as critically, cornered the market for the Soviets and therefore prevented American, European, or Chinese intrusion.<sup>148</sup> This dichotomy would change and expand under Khrushchev's successor, Leonid Brezhnev as the moralistic justification would ebb in the face of practical need for capital accumulation.

The recipient of the lion's share of Soviet military products during the Khrushchev era was Egypt. The variety of equipment delivered was staggering and covered almost every area of military requirement. The USSR sold or gave tanks, ships, warplanes, logistical support equipment, and even a submarine during the 1953-65 epoch.<sup>149</sup> However, like with the peaceful

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<sup>147</sup> Mirskii G, "Political Role of the Army in Asia and Africa, (Politicheskai rol' armii v stranakh Azii I Afriki)," *Narody Azii I Afriki*, 1968, n.6.,. As found in *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*. By Charles Milne, (Maryland: University Press of America Inc. 1980), 198, 204.

<sup>148</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 41.

<sup>149</sup> "Transfers of major weapons: Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1953 to 1965," See Appendix A3.

industrial aid, there was severe qualitative issues with some of the supplied war material. For example, of the 2,710 armored vehicles provided (tanks, armored personnel carriers, armored reconnaissance vehicles, and armored assault guns), 1,580 were of Second World War vintage.<sup>150</sup> Therefore, 58.3% of armored vehicles supplied were obsolete, and most were second-hand to begin with. The inferior nature of these weapons became tragically evident for their Egyptian crews during the Six-Day War with Israel of 1967.<sup>151</sup> Therefore, even though its quantitative superiority was not in doubt, its capacity to provide security for the territorial integrity of Egypt was lacking. Doubtless though, the Soviets were the ones providing the arms, and therefore pontificating their internationalist credentials through military aid.

Beyond the military products provided, the Soviet Union identified the importance of ideological inculcation of the military in order to further support regime security.<sup>152</sup> However, yet again the execution was found to be lacking, as one of the major importers of Soviet aid, Kwame Nkrumah's government in Ghana was overthrown by a military coup in 1966.<sup>153</sup> Ghana had been accepting British military training assistance, as its officers were trained in Dartmouth.<sup>154</sup> Therefore, even though Soviet academia and the Soviet military recognized a clear risk to a partner's regime stability, no proactive action was taken to develop a “non-elitist,” officer corps there. Of course, in this example the Soviet Union's hands were at least partly tied by Ghana's sovereignty, and Nkrumah's regime refused to lean heavily into either superpower camp.<sup>155</sup> The

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<sup>150</sup> “Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1953 to 1965,” See Appendix A4.

<sup>151</sup> Dustin, Simon, *The Six Day War 1967: Sinai*, (Osprey, publishing, 2009), 88.

<sup>152</sup> Mirskii G, “Political Role of the Army in Asia and Africa, (Politicheskai rol' armii v stranakh Azii I Afriki),” 204.

<sup>153</sup> Rubinstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 84.

<sup>154</sup> Baynham, Simon, *The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 74.

<sup>155</sup> Mazov, “Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964,” 308.

result was also an outcome of the Soviet Union's early tendency to not attach strings to military aid. In order to preserve the appearance of neutrality and complete sovereignty Nkrumah did not accept a wide ranging military agreement which limited him to donated, obsolete and second-hand equipment, without the attendant advisers to provide the most efficient use of the weapon system. Nkrumah was caught in an inter-continental dilemma wherein any further movement away from Britain risked retribution, but to remain close to the colonizer allowed easier interference by the colonizer.

Upon debarking from the *Armenia* in May of 1964, in Alexandria, Egypt, Khrushchev made a short speech to mark the occasion of a Soviet leader stepping foot onto the African continent for the first time. He said, "The Soviet Union is carrying out a great task for the sake of liberating nations and consolidating peace all over the world," in the same sentence both contradicting himself, but also restating his dual commitments to liberation and expansion of activity in Africa.<sup>156</sup> By his presence in Egypt Khrushchev was personally conflating his intervention there with the global Cold War. Khrushchev understood that liberation often entailed violence, especially for socialist or communist aligned liberation parties, directly conflicting with the consolidation of peace. As demonstrated previously, this contradiction was totally acceptable to Khrushchev, and represented an intense advancement in Soviet political theory and practice regarding Africa. The Soviet Union was attempting to have it both ways presenting itself as internationalist in line with the respected writings of Potekhin, while allowing for violence in the pursuit of peace.

Khrushchev's journey to Africa represented the culmination of his government's efforts to

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<sup>156</sup> Walz, "Khrushchev opens First Africa Visit," para 2.

expand its capacity for involvement on the continent, but it also came at the twilight of Khrushchev's time in power. Before the year's end Khrushchev found himself in forced retirement, and his successors would again introduce seismic changes to Soviet-African policy. Within the halls of Soviet leadership, there were those who disagreed with Khrushchev's approach in both the domestic and foreign policy realms. Leonid Brezhnev, during a meeting of the Presidium on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1964, would call Khrushchev's behavior "incomprehensible," in reference to the contradictory nature of his predecessor's policy. It was as a result of these meetings that Khrushchev would be retired, and that Brezhnev would now be able to alter and modify Soviet policy towards Africa again.<sup>157</sup>

Beyond every other blunder and mistake, the largest made by Khrushchev and his theorists was to misunderstand the position of the Soviet Union's African partners, and to allow themselves into being baited into believing that African objectives aligned with Soviet long-term goals. Part of the failure lays with Khrushchev's penchant for personal interaction with individual revolutionaries and leaders, Kwame Nkrumah, Mobido Keita, Sékou Touré, and Gamal Nasser in particular.<sup>158</sup> Since Khrushchev had established a correspondence with most of the leaders of partner states in Africa, if they could sway him individually, they could effectively sway Soviet policy. That represents one of the major failures of Khrushchev's personalistic tendency. There was not enough quick input on the part of his policy thinkers. It is no real shock that the four above African leaders were known for their charisma and intelligence, and they used it very effectively against Khrushchev's idealistic tendencies.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 11.

<sup>158</sup> Dallin, "Soviet Political Activity," 22.

<sup>159</sup> Mazov, "Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964," 309.

This speaks not only to African agency in the matter, but also the capacity of African statesmen to control the narrative, and more generally to maintain the political initiative. African leaders had pragmatic considerations which were not always recognized by Soviet leadership. For example, as previously noted, Sékou Touré's Guinean (formerly French Guinea) regime was rapidly adopted as a Soviet partner. Post-Cold War interpretation of that shift argues that was because of Touré's communication with Khrushchev.<sup>160</sup> There was also a shared ideological element as, Sékou Touré's approach was inherently anti-imperial, against both the French, who he won Guinea's independence from, and the Portuguese who controlled what is now called Guinea-Bissau. Touré was engaged in a violent struggle to free Portuguese-Guinea from the Portuguese, while also cementing his power domestically.<sup>161</sup> The rapid nature of Touré's adoption as a friend of the Soviet Union had more to do with how far Khrushchev was willing to go to find allies in Africa, rather than practical concerns. For the Soviet leadership, the move seemed practical and pragmatic, coming to the aid of a fellow anti-imperialist regime, but it would only yield another imbalanced partnership where the Soviet Union was pumping capital into a regime which had different objectives than the Kremlin.

Another critical failure of the Khrushchev era policy towards Africa was its consistent capacity to let down rather than support certain revolutionaries, especially in Cameroon and the Congo. This came as a result of severe policy dissonance due to Khrushchev's dual push for political liberation of African states, and for peaceful coexistence with the West.<sup>162</sup> This resulted

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<sup>160</sup> Mazov, *Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964*, 306.

<sup>161</sup> "Portuguese Guinea: the PAIGC After Amilcar Cabral," (United States State Department, February 1, 1973), 2, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/documents/organization/67534.pdf> (Accessed December 26, 2018).

<sup>162</sup> Dallin, "Soviet Political Activity," 38.

in examples of Khrushchev deriding African revolutionary leaders for their violent nature of their revolution. For example, when Cameroonian revolutionary, Félix-Roland Moumié, visited Moscow to seek Soviet aid for his revolution, Khrushchev told him to “come to power legally through elections.” This was after the Soviet Union had poured hundreds of tanks to support Egypt's regime under Nasser.<sup>163</sup> Moumié responded by soliciting Mao for aid instead, and therefore emphasized the internal schism within the “socialist world” Potekhin imagined. Khrushchev not only failed to gain an ally to placate his Western enemies, he managed to put a spotlight on his own hypocrisy at the same time, further undermining Soviet ideological credibility.

Another result of Khrushchev's conflicting policy was the tragic fate of Patrice Lumumba at the hands of the Belgian government and their Katanga allies.<sup>164</sup> Khrushchev, who had the means to potentially save Lumumba, a clear ally of the Soviet cause, simply failed to act in his defense.<sup>165</sup> This was an unmitigated success for the CIA, who had previously attempted to assassinate Lumumba, and they were pleased to see their Belgian allies do it for them. The Belgians were able to facilitate the murder a prominent, successful pan-African socialist leader without Soviet interference.<sup>166</sup> That level of inaction was counter-productive to Soviet goals in Africa and proved that Africa ranked lower on the Soviet hierarchy or priorities than its relationship with Belgium (in the Lumumba case). The Friendship University was renamed to

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<sup>163</sup> Dallin, “Soviet Political Activity,” 39.

<sup>164</sup> During the Congo Crisis Katanga, a region of what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo broke away and was backed by the Belgians. It was Katangan gendarmes who likely executed Lumumba, though a Belgian officer was present, according to Sergey Mazov in *A Distant Front in the Cold War*.

<sup>165</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War*, 165.

<sup>166</sup> Milne, *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*, 98.

“The Patrice Lumumba Friendship University,” as a result of Lumumba's assassination.<sup>167</sup> This rhetorical move did not offer any concrete support to the remaining pro-Lumumba forces, whose request for Soviet aircraft was later denied.<sup>168</sup> Soviet revolutionary credibility was deeply damaged by the incident.

Khrushchev had stated, “the policy of the Communist Parties and socialist countries, a policy aimed at strengthening the close alliance with the peoples fighting for independence and peoples that have already won it.” This rhetoric rang hollow in his interactions with Moumié, and Lumumba. Khrushchev displayed the level of dispassionate callousness the Soviet Union was able to sink to on the international stage by evidencing how disposable revolutionaries were to Moscow.<sup>169</sup> When taking the previous discussion of Khrushchev era policy in Africa, the enduring question of why these contacts were embarked upon must be raised. This is especially true when the result was such a mixed bag of contradiction, ambition, idealism, and inconsistency.

So, then what was Khrushchev's policy based around? Perceived practicality, idealism, or one-upmanship all seem to be possible contenders, and this thesis argues that it was primarily a combination of idealism and competition against the West. That answer explains why the local context could so easily be ignored, and why such massive spending was provided to major projects. Both motives also fit the Soviet ideological rhetoric of the period, as discussed relating to Potekhin. Incredibly, even though the USSR under Khrushchev expanded its relationships in Africa to cover aid in such a wide variety of fields, the Soviet Union continued to underspend the

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<sup>167</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*, 164.

<sup>168</sup> Mazov, 167.

<sup>169</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, 166.

West.<sup>170</sup> Even worse, the trade imbalance generated by the Khrushchev regime reduced the amount of capital available for domestic projects. This situation is a blow to Potekhin's zero-sum game analysis which opined that by denying the former colonial power's the economies of their colonies that Moscow would catch that economy instead.<sup>171</sup> Instead, it turned out that the economic capture could not be complete, and that the newly liberated countries could just as easily find a trade partner in Mao, as in Khrushchev.<sup>172</sup>

The Chinese directed the development of the 1865km long TAZARA (Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority), which served to insulate Tanzania and Zambia from relying on apartheid South African infrastructure.<sup>173</sup> The railway's construction, between 1968 and 1975 involved between thirty and forty thousand Chinese workers and about double that in domestic African labor.<sup>174</sup> The TAZARA railway is still featured in P.R.C. Propaganda as a representation of China's long relationship with Africa.<sup>175</sup> The trade imbalance and external competition severely undermines any argument that the Khrushchev policy was practical, at least domestically.

Unfortunately, the Soviet Union's inability to identify friendly regimes which shared similar long-term objectives, and then support those regimes, negatively impacted Khrushchev's impact on both Africa and on Soviet policy towards Africa. Aid supplied was not ensured to be efficiently used, and the Soviet regime repeatedly lost the political initiative to skilled, pragmatic opportunists such as Touré and Nasser took advantage of Khrushchev's generosity.

<sup>170</sup> Erlich and Sonne, "The Soviet Union: Economic Activity", 82, 83.

<sup>171</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 12.

<sup>172</sup> *Peking Review* Peking, [Beijing] People's Republic of China, Vol. 15. No. 20, May 19, 1972, 4.

<sup>173</sup> Monson, Jamie, "Remembering Work on the Tazara Railway in Africa and China, 1965–2011: When 'New Men' Grow Old," *African Studies Review* 56, no. 1 (April 2013): 45–64. 47, 50

<sup>174</sup> Monson, "Remembering Work on the Tazara Railway in Africa and China, 1965–2011: When 'New Men' Grow Old," 50.

<sup>175</sup> Monson, 61.

Objectives, blunders, and back-stabbing aside, Khrushchev produced a lasting effect on the continent, and the support provided by the Soviet Union in the form of trade and aid remains at least in part in use to the present. Furthermore, the wide breadth of aid that the Soviet Union could offer a new regime was substantial, if the regime could justify their “scientific-socialist,” credentials. Almost any requirement a new regime had could be met with Soviet aid: education, energy, healthcare, industrial, logistical, and militarily. Even in the field of building sports fields Khrushchev could boast Soviet provision, as those constructed in Mali continue to attest.<sup>176</sup> With the ejection of Khrushchev from the Soviet leadership in 1964, a shift from dynamism to political ossification under Brezhnev occurred, and will be explored in the following section. Khrushchev had finally flung the Soviet Union fully into the African theatre of the Cold War, and all his followers would have to face that reality.

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<sup>176</sup> Stokke, *Soviet and Eastern European Trade and Aid in Africa*, 191.

### Chapter 4: Brezhnev's African Dilemma

When Leonid Brezhnev took the mantle of Soviet leadership from Nikita Khrushchev in October of 1964, he naturally inherited the partnerships that Khrushchev had cultivated over the preceding decade. However, Brezhnev did not share Khrushchev's foreign policy attitude, and took a more conservative approach towards the dissemination of aid to African partner regimes. Brezhnev was still willing to couch his rhetoric in internationalist language, but he was seemingly far less willing to actually act on those pronouncements. In May of 1981 Brezhnev said, "Africa is the sphere of the vital interests of the Africans themselves, and nobody else."<sup>177</sup> Brezhnev's own theoreticians, such as Anatoly Gromyko, took this to mean that Africa should become free of neo-colonialism, but the statement fit Brezhnev's more conservative policy nicely, in reality this meant less oversight from the Soviet Union as well.<sup>178</sup> This section will discuss how that pronouncement came to be, how Soviet idealism turned to Soviet pessimism, and how the Brezhnev era impacted the Soviet Union's relations with Africa as a whole. I argue that the period saw a substantial change in the Soviet outlook towards Africa, moving away from the heady objective of supporting the formation of a host of pro-Soviet regimes, towards a less ideologically based means to accrue much needed hard capital. Again, the pendulum swung back to Moscow, and the Soviet Union saw its domestic concerns more heavily outweigh the foreign ones. While Khrushchev experienced the same dilemma, Brezhnev's strategy for weighing Soviet interaction with Africa was radically different. Where Khrushchev saw opportunities for long

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<sup>177</sup> Festus Eribo, *In Search of Greatness Russia's Communications with Africa and the World* (Westport, Conn: Ablex Pub, 2001), 95.

<sup>178</sup> Gromyko, Anatoly. A., Galenovich, Yu. M., Goncharov L.V., et. Al eds., *For Peace and Social Progress: Materials of the Soviet-African Scientific-Political Conference, Moscow, 13-16 October 1981*, (Moscow, U.S.S.R.: Nauka Publishers, 1983), 14.

term and radical social change, Brezhnev saw his partnerships on the continent only as a means of further directly funding Soviet domestic spending. Accordingly, this chapter will also investigate the effects of the Brezhnev era on trade and aid to African regimes. Brezhnev's relationship with his chief scholars on Africa will also be discussed. Finally, there is the question of whether Brezhnev's leadership saw a deterioration of relationships on the continent or an improvement, as Soviet policy swung from a more ideologically motivated position to a more pragmatic one.

In Africa the political landscape had also shifted. The year of Africa, 1960, in which seventeen countries gained independence, was long gone.<sup>179</sup> The "jet-propelled" development that Kwame Nkrumah had strove for had not come to fruition. Instead, the level of inequality between Europe and Africa had become an ever-widening gulf.<sup>180</sup> Nkrumah himself was ousted by British trained Ghanaian officers in 1966.<sup>181</sup> The wars of liberation continued across the continent against the embers of Portuguese empire, in Angola, in Mozambique, and in Guinea-Bissau. Domestic and interstate conflicts also struck crippling blows to the pan-African unity outlined at Accra in 1958, as Ethiopia fought an insurgency in Eritrea, while also fighting Somalia over the Ogaden.<sup>182</sup> As the hopes for pan-African union died in the sands of Ogaden the Soviet Union found itself having to pick sides and re-evaluate its policies in Africa.

Speaking in 1964, the first year of his tenure as the head of the Soviet Union, Brezhnev said the following concerning Soviet activity in the developing world,

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<sup>179</sup> "the year of Africa," A term coined by O. H. Morris, who was part of the British Ministry of Colonies.

<sup>180</sup> Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, 91.

<sup>181</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 84.

<sup>182</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 187.

“We are in full agreement with the Asian, African, and Latin American countries that the last colonial regimes must be swept from the face of the earth [ . . . ] wherever a struggle is going on against foreign imperialist interference-Cyprus, the Congo, Southeast Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, or the Latin American states-the people see and tangibly feel our support for their just struggle for national and social liberation.”<sup>183</sup>

Brezhnev's rhetoric is clearly internationalist and follows the Khrushchev style closely. However, on further inspection his rhetoric did not match the policy employed by the Soviet Union.

Brezhnev's regime was initially particularly conservative concerning its outlook on Soviet policy towards Africa, as it saw the Khrushchev era as one of wasteful spending.<sup>184</sup> Between 1961 and 1965, “339 million rubles” was spent on “equipment and materials for the construction of complete enterprises,” and it took up to a decade and a half for the credit invested in the Aswan High Dam to be repaid.<sup>185</sup> To Brezhnev this was too much. Also, the shelf life of the supported regimes was always in doubt, and it did not seem that the USSR was capable of accurately determining their level of stability. This issue can be clearly seen twice early during Brezhnev's tenure: first with a coup in Ghana which unseated the pro-Soviet regime in 1966, and then again later with the fall of Nasser and the rise of the Sadat regime in Egypt, which led to that country dropping out of a previously agreed Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1976.<sup>186</sup> The first example supported the establishment of a more short-term approach, and the second reinforced that justification.

The more conservative approach initially allowed relationships with African allies

<sup>183</sup> Gromyko, Anatoly and Ponomarev, B. N. *Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II*, USSR Academy of Sciences, (1981), 264.

<sup>184</sup> Gorman., “Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa,” 173.

<sup>185</sup> Degtyar, “Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation,” 103.

<sup>186</sup> Rubenstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 84.

deteriorate to the point of regression in strict terms of trade, but as the practical utility of African partnerships was demonstrated as a means of acquiring hard currency, Brezhnev shifted to a more pragmatic stance.<sup>187</sup> That pragmatic stance manifested in the use of arms sales to acquire hard cash in the short term for the Soviet Union. Brezhnev also had to juggle certain major policy doctrines inherited from Khrushchev, foremost among them was the doctrine of peaceful coexistence, which continued during Brezhnev's tenure, and caused the same sorts of issues it had from Khrushchev concerning Africa. In 1969 Brezhnev had this to say about peaceful coexistence, "the relations of the Soviet Union with countries of the capitalist world are based on the spirit of peaceful coexistence of states irrespective of their social system, a principle substantiated by Lenin." Not only did he reiterate the Soviet Union's continued emphasis on peaceful coexistence, but he also attributed its origin to Lenin, a useful way to politically sidestep his predecessor.<sup>188</sup> Critically though, Brezhnev accepted the same principle that his predecessor did, supporting armed liberation against European colonial empires, while at the same time preaching peaceful coexistence with those same powers.

By 1976 Brezhnev's long-term, internationalist rhetoric was on the wane as he stated that the Soviet Union had "special interest," directly to the president of Angola, Agostinho Neto, in response to the then ongoing conflict between Angola and Apartheid South Africa. Instead, he denounced American mediation of the conflict "to support the power of the Republic of South Africa, this tottering bastion of racism."<sup>189</sup> Finally, this shift can be seen in relation again to

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<sup>187</sup> Mazov, Sergey, "Soviet Policy in West Africa: An Episode of the Cold War, 1956-1964," 310.

<sup>188</sup> Gromyko and Ponomarev, *Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II*, 411.

<sup>189</sup> "U.S. Mediation in Africa Denounced by Brezhnev As 'Fictitious Liberation'," *New York Times*, (USA: 1976), para, 2, <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/10/08/archives/us-mediation-in-africa-denounced-by-brezhnev-as-fictitious.html> (Accessed September 17 2018).

Egypt, as Soviet trade continued with the Sadat regime even though it had taken a pro-American approach.<sup>190</sup> Egypt was fully divested from Soviet influence by 1972, when president Sadat ordered all Soviet advisors out of the country.<sup>191</sup> Where Khrushchev based Soviet moral authority on its own capacity to intervene, as he did in supporting Nasser through the completion of the Aswan High Dam, and through pronouncements at U.N. meetings, Brezhnev was content with complaining about America's attempts at intervention while continuing to reap the benefits of trade with newly minted ideologically opposed regimes.

Not only did Soviet leadership question the utility of expanding aid in Africa, as indicated by the new rhetorical distance Brezhnev was willing to put between Soviet interest and Africa, but so did some of the African regimes accepting that aid. While the Soviet Union's politicians and theoreticians kept up the public rhetoric of internationalism, there was a demonstrable shift in the percent of economic aid and trade to Africa when compared to military aid and trade. Soviet sources lean towards emphasizing ever increasing numbers of trade goods moved, and therefore tend to either obscure or simply avoid mentioning this major shift. However, American analysts caught on to the difference quickly. The U.S. State Department recorded that starting in 1969, Soviet military aid had begun to outstrip economic aid in gross terms, and by 1977 that difference was stark. Over four billion U.S. dollars was dedicated to defense aid, while under one billion U.S.D. was dedicated to economic aid.<sup>192</sup> I believe an emphasis on multi-use equipment, such as trucks, cars, and easily convertible cargo planes aided the Soviet attempt to cover their

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<sup>190</sup> Rubenstein, 81.

<sup>191</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 87.

<sup>192</sup> Weinstein, Warren and Henriksen, Thomas H. (eds.) *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations*, (New York, New York, USA: Praeger Publishing, 1980), 80,81.

military assistance as otherwise peaceful aid or trade. Soviet scholarship detailing the establishment of enterprises in Africa often places importance on such industries.<sup>193</sup>

An example of African apprehensiveness is the Nigerian regime under Yakubo Gowon which had invited a Soviet geological study in to determine the feasibility of establishing a steel mill with Soviet support. However, the Nigerians found that the Soviet experts were not as efficient as their Western competition, and did not seem to understand their audience, as the report they finally compiled for the Nigerians was entirely in Russian.<sup>194</sup> Incidentally, later Soviet scholars proudly recall this debacle in a completely different manner. It was described instead as, “An agreement on the construction in Nigeria of Tropical Africa's largest metallurgical works with Soviet assistance is being realized.”<sup>195</sup> The Soviet source fails to mention that the plant was never built, as exhaustively discussed by Vladimir Shubin in his article, “Beyond the Fairy Tales” in *Africa in Russia, Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*. In 2007, Shubin points out that the project remained under review by the Russian government while he compiled his work. This example serves to represent a more systemic problem which African partners had begun to discover, that the quality and timeliness of aid did not necessarily match that of its First World equivalent.

Finally, while Soviet theoreticians professed that Soviet aid had no strings attached, it still was not necessarily free, and by the Brezhnev period Soviet scholarship had begun to discuss the return of Soviet credit in Africa. While Soviet scholars saw their investments paid off in certain cases, such as the Aswan High dam, there remained the assumption that through barter, trade, or

<sup>193</sup> Gromyko and Ponomarev, *Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II*, 264.

<sup>194</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 369.

<sup>195</sup> Rubenstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 86.

further agreements that aid would be paid off eventually.<sup>196</sup> This would be true of all aid disbursements, even in the “least developed” examples. Soviet scholars blamed the former colonial powers for imparting those economic hindrances on former colonies, but that did not stop the Soviets from taking advantage of that reality. Instead, the Soviets presented their aid as magnanimous, as they were still willing to invest in countries and to “free Africa from transforming the colonial structure of its economy,” even if that meant creating a new dependence on the Soviet Union.<sup>197</sup> While that dependence was clearly good for the Soviet Union, that point had even been identified by Potekhin. He saw the opportunity to fight a zero-sum game against the former colonial powers by substituting the Soviet Union as the new economic metropole for ex-colonies.<sup>198</sup>

The U.S. State Department recorded that starting in 1969, Soviet military aid had begun to outstrip economic aid in gross terms, and by 1977, that difference was stark. Over four billion U.S.D. dedicated to defense aid, while under one billion U.S.D. was dedicated to economic aid.<sup>199</sup> This was a complete shift away from the mixed approach Khrushchev had taken, which placed a major emphasis on economic aid in order to facilitate trade, local industry, and infrastructure. Soviet scholars contradict the trend identified by the U.S. by emphasizing the peaceful nature of Soviet aid by focusing on the aggregate amount of technical and economic assistance provided to African partners.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Degtyar, “Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation,” 101.

<sup>197</sup> Degtyar, 94.

<sup>198</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 12.

<sup>199</sup> Weinstein, Warren and Henriksen, Thomas H. (eds.) *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations*, (New York New York, USA: Praeger Publishing, 1980), 80,81.

<sup>200</sup> Degtyar, “Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation,” 95.

The expansion of Soviet military aid and trade can be discussed as either a positive element of socialist fraternity or a cold play for hard capital, depending on the author's perception of Soviet aims and Empire. I argue that Soviet scholars also may not have had the same access to shipping manifests that U.S. State Department analysts had, and therefore the emphasis on peaceful aid may stem from a genuine belief that the majority of Soviet technical assistance was peaceful in nature. The difference in the Soviet historical narrative may also explain the belief in peaceful aid. The extent of this narrative is visible in the official history of the Soviet Union's foreign policy as provided in *Soviet Foreign Policy* (1980), which presents the USSR as a peaceful historical force, as shown by its insistence that the Soviet Union was a driving force for complete denuclearization.<sup>201</sup> However, it is difficult to believe that they were not at least aware of considerable military material aid to supported regimes, as they remain willing to argue that the Soviet Union did play a role in each supported regime's battlefield success. For example, in *The USSR and Africa*, a 1983 collection of Soviet writing on Africa, Grigori Rubinstein references Soviet aid to Guinea (People's Democratic Republic of Guinea) as part of the reason for the country's continued independence against the "imperialist powers." Yet Rubenstein does not specify exactly what that support entailed.<sup>202</sup> It had to be partly military aid, and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports referencing the period provide evidence to back that claim, as Guinea received enough arms to outfit their small military, ranging from reconnaissance vehicles, to armored personnel carriers, to tanks, but the supplier for much of the arms remains uncertain.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Gromyko and Ponomarev, *Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II*, 228.

<sup>202</sup> Rubenstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 84.

<sup>203</sup> "Transfers of major weapons: Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1950 to 2017," See Appendix A5.

As Brezhnev era policy moved away from the idealism endemic during the Khrushchev period, a gap developed between the policy put into action and the rhetoric developed by politicians and theoreticians. Identifying the ideological/policy gap is critical to understanding the extent of change between the two periods. Competing with the Brezhnev approach was the new head of the Africa Institute, V.G. Solodovnikov, who had taken the position following Potekhin's passing. This ideological gap can be seen in Solodovnikov's 1970 work, *Africa Fights for Independence*, a short piece by the then head of the Africa Institute. It echoes Potekhin in rhetorical thrust, presenting the Soviet Union as the senior partner to African liberation movements and socialist style regimes.<sup>204</sup> Solodovnikov forms this relationship by equating Soviet martial success in the Second World War to imparting a certain debt on the Africans which Solodovnikov assumes were saved from Nazism thanks to the Red Army's entry to Berlin. While this justification deeply echoes Potekhin, Solodovnikov attaches further naturalistic elements to the equation, in that he states "In these favourable conditions [ . . . (the Soviet victory according to Solodovnikov). . . ] the national liberation movement in colonial and independent countries expanded on an unprecedented scale," therefore predicating the post-war decolonization partly on the Soviet victory.<sup>205</sup> This attaches a debt which was not emphasized to the same degree in Potekhin's works, or by Khrushchev. This establishment of a blood tie to the Soviet Union connects nicely with the USSR's newfound propensity to focus on hard currency repayment of aid.

Solodovnikov also adds further granularity to the Soviet interpretation of African

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<sup>204</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights For Independence*, 52.

<sup>205</sup> Solodovnikov, 53.

regimes, in that he breaks down African regimes through an exploration of their political colonial foundations. This choice in principle is an admission of difference among former colonial states. By grouping countries by their former colonial overlords, Solodovnikov is distancing his work from the Potekhin thrust for universality among African movements. This is a distinct break from Khrushchev era thought, which preferred to imagine a unified African liberation movement free from specific imposed colonial distinctions.<sup>206</sup> This impacted Brezhnev era thinking in that certain African states were isolated based on the effects of colonial heritage to whatever extent the Soviet Union could manage.

Specifically, Apartheid South Africa, was identified by Solodovnikov as an entrenched racist state, unlikely to collapse in the near term.<sup>207</sup> The other state to be isolated, Rhodesia (later Zimbabwe), was expected to fall in the relative near term. The difference in timeline manifested due to the existence of a state of civil war in Rhodesia already, with the liberation forces Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZAPU) both tying themselves to socialism.<sup>208</sup> In these cases, Solodovnikov was correct, as Rhodesia collapsed nine years later, and it took two more decades for South Africa. The effect of his pronouncements on the sustainability of those regimes impacted the Soviet practice of what this project argues was a method of isolation through treaty, by making positive agreements with all of the Apartheid state's neighbors and signaling public and political support for the liberation

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<sup>206</sup> Though Potekhin did reference different levels colonial overlordship, and different contextual impositions, the basis of his argument was more classist than regionally deterministic.

<sup>207</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights for Independence*, 102.

<sup>208</sup> Though Mugabe did not mention the Soviet Union once in either his 1980 independence speech or his following 1983 speech commemorating the same event, he had received considerable amounts of Soviet made equipment, including surface to air missiles.

movements against the Rhodesian and South African regimes.

Solodovnikov also benefited from hindsight unavailable to Potekhin and was able to make a more mature argument about neocolonialism in Africa, which he saw as a severe threat to the future of independent African regimes. Incidentally, Potekhin had identified the risk of economic dependence on former colonial powers and had even identified African leadership which shared the same fear.<sup>209</sup> However, it was Solodovnikov who saw those fears of neocolonialism manifest in the South African relationship with its neighbors, and British actions to support Rhodesia and South Africa. Without citing Potekhin, and possibly for political reasons, Solodovnikov almost completely lifted Potekhin's assertions concerning neocolonialism and economic interdependence made in 1964 and applied them to the Africa of 1970.<sup>210</sup>

Again, Solodovnikov's determinations seemed to influence Soviet policy, as Brezhnev's regime sought to isolate those countries and did provide material support to the Angolans and “moral support” for their cause. The Soviet Union concluded a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation agreement with Angola in 1976 and in 1977 one was signed with Mozambique.<sup>211</sup> These treaties signaled public Soviet support for two of Apartheid South Africa's neighbors, both of which were engaged in supporting further liberation movements across the border into South Africa or against Rhodesia.

That initial conservative shift by Brezhnev was identified by American scholars as a response to Khrushchev era optimism which did not provide enough material benefits to the

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<sup>209</sup> Potekhin, *African Problems: Analysis of Eminent Soviet Scientist*, 6, 11.

<sup>210</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights for Independence*, 115.

<sup>211</sup> Rubenstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 83.

U.S.S.R compared to the expense of the projects.<sup>212</sup> Specifically, the shortsighted nature of Khrushchev's infrastructure projects in terms of Soviet dividends was a noted Soviet Africanist critique. This criticism found its defense in the short shelf-life of many of the African regimes Khrushchev initially partnered with.<sup>213</sup>

A primary example of the deterioration of flexibility and dynamism of the Brezhnev regime in relation to African/Soviet relations is displayed during Abdul Nasser's visit to the Soviet Union in 1970. Nasser observed Brezhnev, Aleksei Kosygin, and Nikolai Podgornyi circulating and signing a telegram to warn the president of Somalia, General Mohamed Siad Barre that an assassination was being plotted against him.<sup>214</sup> Where Khrushchev monopolized power and acted, Brezhnev cautiously devolved power in favor of political theater and etiquette. Nasser's horrified conclusion from observing the ultimately needless delay was that Egypt could no longer rely on the Soviet Union for timely assistance.<sup>215</sup> Nasser expected a strong ally to respond swiftly, instead of dawdling over signatures. Brezhnev had just accidentally alienated one of the Soviet Union's premier partners in Africa and demonstrated that his regime would no longer value expedience over protocol. Furthermore, he did this even at the potential expense of the Barre regime, one of the few foreign allies who even went so far as to claim that they, too, were of the "scientific-socialist" vein.<sup>216</sup> The need to demonstrate "collective leadership," and therefore the focus on domestic political theater, was clearly negatively impacting the Soviet

<sup>212</sup> Gorman, "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," 174.

<sup>213</sup> Gorman, 173.

<sup>214</sup> Schattenberg, Susanne, "Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16, no. 4. (2015), 835.

<sup>215</sup> Schattenberg, "Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo," 835.

<sup>216</sup> Metz, Helen (ed.), *Somalia: A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, USA. (1993), 40, [https://www.lanmangroup.com/uploads/1/0/8/5/108520449/somaliacountryst00metz\\_0.pdf](https://www.lanmangroup.com/uploads/1/0/8/5/108520449/somaliacountryst00metz_0.pdf) (Accessed October 14, 2017).

foreign policy towards Africa.

Not only did Brezhnev oversee a decline in actual economic aid to Africa, certain relationships were intentionally terminated, even with regimes which had presented themselves as Soviet style. This is apparent in the decimation of the Soviet Union's relationship with Somalia in 1977, as the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was terminated in response to the Ogaden War which Somalia was fighting against another Soviet ally, Ethiopia.<sup>217</sup> In July of 1977, Barre's regime sought to capture the Ethiopian province of Ogaden as it held a Somali minority. The Soviets had been supplying both the Ethiopians and Somalians with arms, and this contributed to the intensification of the conflict.<sup>218</sup>

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, Barre's instance that Somalia was now “scientific-socialist” was contemplated at least by later American scholarship to secure further aid funding, but the contemporary Soviet interpretation trusted Barre as genuine in his Marxist credentials.<sup>219</sup> Solodovnikov proudly listed Somalia as one of the African states engaged with the Soviet Union on cultural and educational exchanges, since the “development and consolidation of cooperation between the U.S.S.R and African states is bound to worry imperialist states.”<sup>220</sup> Additionally, Brezhnev had warned Barre of an impending assassination attempt previously (albeit slowly, and with triple signatures) which demonstrates that Brezhnev wanted the Barre regime to survive, at least in 1970.<sup>221</sup> Now the Soviets realized that Somalia, in its revanchism was itself imperialist.

This situation reinforced that the Soviet Union was unable to act as the peaceful arbitrator

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<sup>217</sup> Metz, *Somalia: A Country Study*, xix.

<sup>218</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 182.

<sup>219</sup> Metz, *Somalia: A Country Study*, xxiv.

<sup>220</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights for Independence* 140.

<sup>221</sup> Schattenberg, “Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo,” 835.

of African problems as Potekhin and Solodovnikov had indicated it would. Therefore, African trust in Soviet support continued to deteriorate, as the USSR showed its own tendency for impotency in adjudicating African matters. Brezhnev, rather than solving the problem, picked a side and lost a friend on the continent. However, it is worth discussing Barre's own penchant for duplicity, as in 1976 he was in communication with the office of the president of the United States:

The Revolutionary tide, which two Centuries ago, swept over the United States has, since then, stirred in many other countries of the world. It is no wonder that this revolutionary spirit has touched the souls of the Somali people at this particular time. As we stated repeatedly, the objective of our Socialist Revolution is to wage war against the very enemies of mankind, namely poverty, ignorance, and disease.<sup>222</sup>

The text conflates the American Revolution with a Socialist one and can only be interpreted as a method of currying support with the First World. General Barre goes on to discuss the situation in Angola, and while he reiterates his support for the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), he also reinforces Somalia's adherence to a policy of non-alignment and then argues for complete French disengagement in what was to become Djibouti.<sup>223</sup> Solodovnikov exhibited no expectation of such duplicity by supposed Soviet style allies, and the Soviet Union therefore continued to be blindsided by African statecraft which was able to effectively take advantage of both the First and Second World, just as it had been under Khrushchev. Solodovnikov was so deep in his dismissal of even the possibility of a successful Third Way, that being a neutral path beyond the influence of the Soviet Union and United States, that in 1970 he could not identify a single regime in Africa actually embarking upon a middle

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<sup>222</sup> Barre, Siad Mohamed, "Correspondence to Gerald R. Ford," Mogadishu, Somalia, January 9, 1976, 2, <https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/document/0351/1555853.pdf> (Accessed January 13, 2018).

<sup>223</sup> Barre, "Correspondence to Gerald R. Ford," 5.

path.<sup>224</sup> Such analysis, completely divorced from reality, served only to hinder the potential flexibility of Soviet policy, which about Africa refused to admit a Third Way existed.

Still, the SKSSAA was on the ground in Somalia, arriving in 1972 and supporting Soviet diplomatic efforts. The SKSSAA contingent support construction of schools and “orientation centers,” meant to preach Marxist-leninist ideology to the Somali people.<sup>225</sup> The SKSSAA, like the Africa Institute, was proving its worth to Soviet leadership as a diplomatic side channel and instrument of soft power. It persisted until the breakup of the Soviet Union as a useful arm for convincing not just foreigners of the revolution's persistence, but also served to make a domestic Soviet audience aware of Third World struggles.<sup>226</sup>

Whether or not the Soviet relationship with Somalia was already in decline, Brezhnev failed to salvage it. By choosing Ethiopia over Somalia, Brezhnev established a hierarchy of partners in Africa. This fundamentally undermined the Soviet assertion of equality and unity between the Soviet Union and its African partners. It also allowed the United States and People's Republic of China to capitalize on the Soviet withdrawal of support. Potekhin's old concept of a unified, self-reinforcing “Socialist World,” had given way to a disjointed one, in which Soviet foreign policy determined the general direction of Warsaw Pact member's African policy but had no sway over non-Soviet aligned regimes. As recent scholarship by Yordanov shows, outside Warsaw Pact powers the disciplined and unified “Socialist World” Potekhin envisioned did not exist, as Albania publicly uncovered a joint Soviet-Bulgarian plot to smuggle arms to Eritrea in

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<sup>224</sup> Solodovnikov, *Africa Fights for Independence*, 107.

<sup>225</sup> Casula, “The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and Soviet Perceptions of the Middle East During Late Socialism,” 511.

<sup>226</sup> Casula, 518. 519.

1969.<sup>227</sup>

Brezhnev's self-awareness of the Soviet image as a non-colonial and non-imperialist power is highlighted by the intentional avoidance of pushing for military bases on foreign soil.<sup>228</sup> This consciousness did pay dividends in a practical sense, as it is cited as one of the contributing factors which drove General Yakubu Gowon's regime in Nigeria to rely so heavily on Soviet arms during the Biafran War, as discussed by David E. Albright in *Soviet Policy toward Africa Revisited*. To Nigeria's government in the 1970's, the Soviets did not seem to carry the same colonial legacy as potential western partners.<sup>229</sup> The Nigerian regime was open in its dismissal of Soviet rhetoric and openly admitted its practical aims which did not include the adoption of Soviet style, "scientific-socialism." Yet the Soviet Union's scholars and leaders treated it as an ally with the same aims and objectives as the USSR.<sup>230</sup> The conflict itself consisted of the regime attempting to avoid the succession of one of its constituent territories, the Biafran republic. The regime defeated the secessionists after a brutal blockade and the effective forced starvation of the Biafran area.

Soviet scholars emphasized barter and trade with Nigeria, cultural and educational exchanges, and material improvements, all staples of a Soviet relationship with a continental partner by the Brezhnev era.<sup>231</sup> The effects of the Biafran War were left completely off the table. However, Soviet scholar Grigori Rubinstein blames the conflict completely on the rebels and

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<sup>227</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 72.

<sup>228</sup> Albright, David E. *Soviet Policy toward Africa Revisited*, (Washington D.C.: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1987), 5.

<sup>229</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 355.

<sup>230</sup> Matusevich, 371.

<sup>231</sup> Rubinstein, "Soviet-African Trade Relations," 83.

unspecified imperialists. The Nigerian government highly appraised Soviet support rendered it during the civil war, which it argued had been unleashed by the separatist elements which were encouraged and helped by imperialist circles.<sup>232</sup> I argue the purpose of those omissions was practical, the Soviets and the Nigerian government could not admit that the civil conflict was in part the Nigerian regime's own fault. As previously mentioned, in the field of geologic and metallurgical developments, Nigeria was also referenced as a place of scientific and technical engagement by the Soviet Union and therefore certain regime failures were ignored in favour of maintaining the relationship.<sup>233</sup>

Leonid Brezhnev was willing to denounce his own country's theoreticians as far as Soviet interests in Africa, as he stated in 1976 that the Soviet Union had no “special interest,” in Africa.<sup>234</sup> This ran counter to Solodovnikov's pronouncements concerning the need for Soviet engagement in Africa. Where the Khrushchev regime had great difficulty determining its African partner's long term aims, the Brezhnev regime no longer recognized that question as worthwhile for two reasons. Firstly, the Soviet political theorists continued to argue African aims could be assumed to be in line with securing their domestic freedom from colonial hands. This played into the regime's new strategy of hard currency accumulation, as sales could now be justified to support the integrity of partner regime's internal rule. That was clearly the case in the Biafran example, as the arms sales were purely to support the Nigerian regime's internal security, and

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<sup>232</sup> Rubenstein, 85, 86.

<sup>233</sup> Ilyn, “Soviet-African Scientific Cooperation,” 118.

<sup>234</sup> “U.S. Mediation in Africa Denounced by Brezhnev As ‘Fictitious Liberation’,” *New York Times*, USA: 1976 Para 2, <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/10/08/archives/us-mediation-in-africa-denounced-by-brezhnev-as-fictitious.html> (Accessed September 17, 2018).

therefore, stability and inviolability.<sup>235</sup>

The second reason long term African aims could be dismissed lay in the sudden failure of several of the former partner regimes. Ghana had experienced a coup and short-lived regime change in 1966, moving it away from Soviet interaction.<sup>236</sup> Additionally, a more general realization that African regimes would not simply adopt “scientific socialism” on their own led to the realization that continental partners were not necessarily as stable as anticipated.<sup>237</sup> Finally, Brezhnev was no longer willing to risk throwing Soviet money at a country which could prove to be a liability later.<sup>238</sup> This only meant that Soviet sales were now only couched in revolutionary rhetoric. The rhetoric was no longer the primary reason for the supply of arms. Automatic moral determination on the part of the USSR concerning its consumers were now a thing of the past.<sup>239</sup> Therefore, the Soviet Union was able to function more flexibly about potential business partners, at the expense of its proclaimed moralistic credentials. For example, by continuing to trade with the Sadat regime, the moral attachments of the past relationship with Nasser were discarded in favor of pragmatism.

Brezhnev's dislike for more heavy-handed direct interaction in Africa allowed space for other state-socialist regimes outside of the Soviet sphere of influence to fill the gaps. In the case of the People's Republic of China, this was clearly to the detriment of the Soviet Union and was recognized as such by Soviet authors.<sup>240</sup> However, Chinese action on the African continent was

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<sup>235</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 355.

<sup>236</sup> Rubinstein, “Soviet-African Trade Relations,” 84.

<sup>237</sup> Rubinstein, 84.

<sup>238</sup> Gorman, “Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa,” 173.

<sup>239</sup> While out of the scope of this thesis, the moral imperative was still critical to some close Soviet allies, such as the Cubans, who repeatedly engaged in foreign revolutions as part of Castro's program of "international activism."

<sup>240</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 357.

also at times a useful tool for the Soviet politicians, who blamed the People's Republic of China for causing unrest in Angola following Angolan independence in 1976.<sup>241</sup> In fact, the Soviet authors of *Soviet Foreign Policy Volume 2*, went so far as to lump the P.R.C. in with the “imperialists,” wholesale stating that Angola,

fell victim to intervention by South African racists supported by pro-imperialist and pro-Maoist forces [. . .] As a result of the timely and selfless aid given by the USSR, Cuba, and other socialist countries, and also by progressive countries in Africa, South African troops and imperialist and Maoist mercenaries were driven from the territory of the young republic in March 1976<sup>242</sup>

Here the Soviets present Maoism as a source of international instability and present the Soviet Union and its “scientific-socialist” allies as the true source of liberation. The same source then takes the Angolan president's words as further confirmation of Soviet superiority in terms of development, “insofar as the Soviet Union, rightly in the vanguard of the historical development of the peoples of the world, is building communism and has passed along a truly amazing revolutionary road leading from an exploiter society to socialism and the birth of proletarian internationalism.” Such pronouncements by Soviet allies in the face of peer competitor socialist regimes was useful political capital for the Soviet Union.<sup>243</sup>

Maoist China recognized a value in Third World interaction, and especially interaction in Africa. To say that Africa was a sideshow of the Sino-Soviet split is a mistake, as the frankly absurd extent of competing propaganda that the Soviets and People's Republic China attest. *On The Docks* was a play put on by the PRC,

“With the loading of foreign-aid cargo as the theme, it describes the sharp struggle

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<sup>241</sup> Gromyko and Ponomarev, *Soviet Foreign Policy Vol. II*, 602.

<sup>242</sup> Gromyko and Ponomarev, 602.

<sup>243</sup> Gromyko and Ponomarev, 602, 603.

between the dockers and a class enemy and the struggle between proletarian ideas and bourgeoisie [. . .] When the curtain rises, the dockers are busy moving seed rice for shipment to Africa. Because of an approaching typhoon, the freighter will leave port ahead of time. There are still 8,000 sacks to be loaded. In addition, 2,000 sacks of export wheat that had been left out in the open have to be moved into the warehouse [. . .] Politically vigilant, Fang Hai-chen leads the dockers to gradually reveal the hidden enemy. As he is being exposed and trying to get away" by -sneaking aboard a foreign freighter, Chien is caught by the workers. The missing sack of wheat is located and the freighter loaded with the seed rice sails for Africa on time."<sup>244</sup>

The play, first performed in 1964, and subsequently put on until at least until 1972, is representative of how the Chinese regime wished to impart the importance of aid to Africa on its population. The production also emphasizes self-critique and the danger of unseen counterrevolutionaries. *On the Docks* stands as an odd anecdote of the Cold War rivalry for African partners between the U.S.S.R and the PRC, as the play was specifically discussed in the same issue of the *Peking Review* as Siad Barre's visit to China.<sup>245</sup>

The Chinese were also willing to take advantage of African overtures for support, and they invited Siad Barre to visit China on May 14, 1972. The visit was publicized in the *Peking Review*, May 19, 1972 which stated, "Extending his welcome to the Somali guests, Premier Chou En-lai praised the Somali Government and people for their successes on the road of independent development under the leadership of President Mohamed Siad Barre." Critically, Chou En-Lai focused on the "independent development" of Somalia, and the article makes no mention of the Soviet Union whatsoever.<sup>246</sup> Instead, by positioning Somalia as independent of both Soviet and western influence, the P.R.C. discredited and ignored Soviet support, while maintaining that the

<sup>244</sup> *Peking Review*, Peking [Beijing] People's Republic of China, Vol. 15. No. 20, May 19, 1972, 22.

<sup>245</sup> While it is not stated that the play was specifically preformed for Barre during his visit, it is telling that it is featured in the *Peking Review* alongside Barre's visit, as if the to remind him that China had a history of providing aid to Africa.

<sup>246</sup> *Peking Review*, 14.

P.R.C. could be relied upon by the Barre regime for “anti-imperialist” support. Barre was also establishing his own agency, and that of his regime through the visit, emphasizing that Somalia was willing to keep its options open for determining potential supporters. Barre recognized the principle danger of relying too heavily on one source of aid and trade, that same potential dependency discussed by Potekhin. Instead, he worked with the P.R.C. to diversify Somali aid and insulate his regime against any potential shocks. Those shocks would come with the Soviet Union's withdrawal of support for Somalia during the Ogaden War. The Maoist regime was willing to take advantage of Soviet policy shortcomings and provided risk-averse governments the opportunity to diversify their base of foreign support without the same level of ideological rhetoric which the Soviet Union was perceived to push.<sup>247</sup>

Soviet friendly regimes such as Cuba, which stepped up their involvement in specific regard to the conflict in Angola and the Namibian War of Independence, allowed the USSR to present itself as a paragon of socialist fraternity, while the Cubans bore the brunt of the bleeding.<sup>248</sup> In another example of Brezhnev’s slow reaction time and conservative mentality, it would be the Cubans who responded first to MPLA cries for help. In fact, according to Dr. Sobers, “The Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev initially refused to offer any assistance to the MPLA, having already endured three “visible international setbacks”: the collapse of the

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<sup>247</sup> The PRC didn’t only offer an alternative, it also actively infiltrated pro-Soviet countries. When the Derg regime conclusively aligned with the Soviets the PRC dispatched cadres to the countryside to spread Maoism among the farmers. More recent literature, such as Yordanov’s excellent *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa* brings this subterfuge in greater detail

<sup>248</sup> I deliberately chose to term the conflict “Namibian War of Independence,” as opposed to describing it as the “Angolan Bush War,” a name foisted upon the conflict by Apartheid South Africa to obfuscate the depth and purpose of the conflict. The author wishes he had thirty more pages to discuss the involvement of the Soviet Union here in far more detail, but it has been “done to death,” and shedding light on some slightly less mainstream relationships took priority.

socialist government in Chile in 1973, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's turn toward the West, and the failure of a Communist government to take root in Portugal."<sup>249</sup> Therefore Brezhnev's conception regarding his reaction to the situation in Angola was driven by both other events in Africa with Sadat's shift in allegiance, but also European and South American affairs. Brezhnev's policy decisions regarding Angola were globally driven and simultaneously not driven by the internationalism as seen under Khrushchev.

Incidentally, the U.S. still perceived the Cubans to be somehow under Brezhnev's control, but documents from the period seem to refute that assumption, and instead present the Cuban and their SWAPO allies as almost completely independent in their interactions. When listing those regimes and movements which supported SWAPO, the unnamed SWAPO author did not even mention the Soviet Union whatsoever.<sup>250</sup> However, there is one reference to "well-intentioned friends," which could be a veiled reference to Soviet declarations of support at the U.N.<sup>251</sup> Still, the support from the unnamed party only constituted moral support, which the Soviet Union was openly giving. Additionally, the Nigerian regime, then under Murtala Mohammed, denounced Soviet presence on the continent altogether, and in Angola specifically.<sup>252</sup> Such a declaration from a trade partner to the Soviet Union emphasized the capacity which Soviet partner regimes now had to criticize the Soviet Union, while retaining commercial links. That capacity was not evident during Khrushchev's regime. Finally, this new

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<sup>249</sup> Sobers, "Independence, Intervention, and Internationalism: Angola and the International System, 1974–1975," 110.

<sup>250</sup> "Correspondence to Cuba," 12, [http://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC48\\_scans/48.SWAPO.correspondencetoCuba.pdf](http://freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/DOC48_scans/48.SWAPO.correspondencetoCuba.pdf) (Accessed April 27<sup>th</sup> 2018).

<sup>251</sup> "Correspondence to Cuba," 9.

<sup>252</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 357.

trend enforces the concept that Brezhnev was either unwilling or unable to deepen foreign dependency on the Soviet Union. Where before the Soviet Union was the only real alternative to Western aid, now the USSR was competing with the PRC.

Western publications tend to consider the Cubans as Soviet puppets to Soviet machinations, but as revealed by the correspondence between unnamed SWAPO officials and the Cuban regime, this does not necessarily seem to be the case. While Cuban soldiers acted on the continent and not just in Angola, but also in Ethiopia, and often with Soviet moral support, this was more of an outgrowth of matching aims, rather than interventions executed on Moscow's order. However, Cuban actions did directly support Soviet rhetorical aims and presented at least a partly united socialist front against "imperialism."

Brezhnev's regime policy changed in the 1970s and onwards to reflect lessons learned from Soviet interactions with Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, and Sékou Touré. Brezhnev sought to move away from Khrushchev's personalistic method of diplomacy, and instead aimed to convey the importance of the enduring 'revolution' rather than the given leader who executed the liberation itself.<sup>253</sup> This shift reveals that while Brezhnev was a conservative leader, he was able to accept some of the lessons of Khrushchev's regime. Brezhnev was willing to shift Soviet policy to place more of an emphasis on Soviet material gains through African connections. This transformation also emphasized a more defined effort to entrench Soviet-African relations in the long term, rather than relying on grand, but short-term projects. However, as mentioned before, this tended to alienate Brezhnev from the revolutionary activity on the continent in general,

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<sup>253</sup> Kanet, Roger E., Miner, Deborah, and Resler, Tamara. eds., *Soviet Foreign Policy in Transition*, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, (1992), 51.

losing even the personal connection which Khrushchev had formed.

Today there is increasing debate about not only the extent of Cuban agency, but also whether Brezhnev was shrewder than previously credited. As new archives are opened, the record shifts, and in 2015, further Russian declassification presented insights on the upper echelon decision making of the Brezhnev era.<sup>254</sup> Natalia Telepneva finds that, in fact Brezhnev was divesting authority for African support to some of his Warsaw Pact allies, specifically Czechoslovakia in the case of Ghana. Principally, he allowed Czechoslovak intelligence operatives to support a putsch to bring Nkrumah back into power in conjunction with KGB and Ghanaian supporters.<sup>255</sup> This is a stunning revelation and bucks the conception of Brezhnev as a conservative in relation to Africa quite well. However, the planned countercoup failed as local Ghanaian operatives failed to make a workable plan, and ultimately Brezhnev's conservative has defined his relationship with Africa.

More than just a simple period of stagnation, the Brezhnev era represented a more insidious decline in both the political strength of Soviet foreign policy and its physical capability to accomplish given objectives. In Africa, this manifested in its inability to capitalize on successful revolutions on the continent, such as in Angola, and the Soviet hesitancy to support potential allies and therefore rob the First World of trade partnerships. Initially, Brezhnev even declined to support the Cuban intervention in Angola.<sup>256</sup> It was only when Castro was successful

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<sup>254</sup> Telepneva, Natalia, "Saving Ghana's Revolution: The Demise of Kwame Nkrumah and the Evolution of Soviet Policy in Africa, 1966–1972," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 20, no. 4 (2018): <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/718198> 7.

<sup>255</sup> Telepneva, "Saving Ghana's Revolution: The Demise of Kwame Nkrumah and the Evolution of Soviet Policy in Africa, 1966–1972," 5.

<sup>256</sup> Gleijeses, Piero "Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975–1988," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 8, no. 4 (2006): 98–146. 103.

in stabilizing the situation and effectively winning the war that Brezhnev conceded the action was effective, and then he capitalized off of the Cuban risk by establishing trade with Angola.<sup>257</sup> Even with the new scholarship in mind, the Soviet Union was still attempting to offload some of its former activities onto allies, rather than take responsibility for activities it previously carried out. While Brezhnev did make some efforts to act assertively in Africa, as he did in Ghana, the evidence to reinforce his image as a conservative leader outweighs the image of him as an assertive one. It was often only after an assertive leader, like Castro, intervened in Africa that Brezhnev then capitalized off of that assertiveness.

Brezhnev's "equal" trade relationships generated further wealth for the Soviet Union, but overall hurt the long-term Soviet platform on the continent, as the Soviets would no longer quickly and decisively back revolutionaries in the way Khrushchev had supported Nasser in the 50's. Brezhnev's Soviet Union had demonstrated itself as inflexible and slow to respond, qualities which the People's Republic of China quickly capitalized on, by taking up the relationships which Brezhnev's Soviet Union saw as too risky or too expensive.<sup>258</sup> The PRC was quick to invite Siad Barre to China and therefore snub the Soviets, who had up to then been the primary supporter of the Barre regime.<sup>259</sup>

Brezhnev hampered Soviet foreign policy with his tendency for structural conservatism and stability. His primary critique of Khrushchev was the pace of restructuring and the idea that change itself was inherently positive.<sup>260</sup> Brezhnev found Khrushchev's leadership choices

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<sup>257</sup> Gleijeses, "Moscow's Proxy? Cuba and Africa 1975–1988," 111.

<sup>258</sup> Schattenberg, "Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo," 836.

<sup>259</sup> *Peking Review* Peking [Beijing], People's Republic of China, Vol. 15. No. 20, May 19, 1972, 14.

<sup>260</sup> Schattenberg, "Trust, Care, and Familiarity in the Politburo," 836.

“incomprehensible,” and in that inability to comprehend Khrushchev, Brezhnev revealed his political conservatism, and his unwillingness to further the Khrushchev platform of massive expansion in Africa.<sup>261</sup> Unfortunately for the Soviet Union, Brezhnev's alternative to the Khrushchev platform was embedded in traditional trade and expensive, but safer aid bets, such as Angola, where stabilization was more likely thanks to the swift Cuban intervention and military victory.<sup>262</sup> Even with the engagement there, Soviet policy was to effectively cede the initiative to other supporting state socialist regimes, such as Cuba. Such a personal ideology on Brezhnev's part was at odds with the revolutionary agenda. Brezhnev would leave his successors not only with major domestic instability, but also with a confused foreign policy which did not match Soviet rhetoric.

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<sup>261</sup> Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 11.

<sup>262</sup> Gleijeses, Piero, *Conflicting Missions Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) 4.

## Chapter 5: Gorbachev

While Leonid Brezhnev had a proclivity to pride himself on his own imagined frugality and deployed that intent with new “non-ideological” policy in Africa, his policies also led the Soviet Union into a ruinously expensive war in Afghanistan.<sup>263</sup> Brezhnev died on November 10, 1982, leaving the reckoning of his errors to his successors. He was replaced by two dying men in succession, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko. They both continued down the same general path that Brezhnev had intended, selling weapons to African clients without attaching ideological strings as had been done previously by Khrushchev.<sup>264</sup> With Chernenko's death on March 10, 1985, the Soviet Union would finally get a leader with new ideas, Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>265</sup> However, Gorbachev was seriously constrained by domestic problems at home, as the fiscal mistakes of his predecessors compounded and manifested into internal political disagreement within both the Soviet Union and its Eastern European Warsaw Pact partners.

Responding to this situation Gorbachev introduced a series of major reforms, as part of his “new thinking,” which saw a reduction in military expenditure and priority shift away from expensive military programs and exercises. Importantly for Africa, this meant less interest in fewer abroad installations, fewer bilateral military exercises, and fewer military equipment traded or granted.<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, in pursuing detente<sup>267</sup> with the United States, Gorbachev viewed regional conflicts as potential flashpoints which could lead to a deterioration with the

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<sup>263</sup> Gorman, “Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa,” 174.

<sup>264</sup> Gorman, 173.

<sup>265</sup> Critically, Gorbachev introduced two major programs of reform domestically, perestroika and glasnost which aimed to provide government transparency and encourage a more free press. These programs were a seismic change in policy from the opacity which had been expected of the Soviet regime.

<sup>266</sup> Goodman, Melvin A. *Gorbachev's retreat: The Third World*, New York, USA.: Praeger Publishers, (1991), 21.

<sup>267</sup> Detente here meaning pursuing less hostile relations with the US, distinct from “peaceful coexistence”

U.S.<sup>268</sup>

Up until the arrival of Gorbachev, Soviet leadership continued to parrot the rhetoric of socialist internationalism. The contents of the 1981 Soviet-African Scientific- Political Conference, which was finally translated to English in 1983, maintained that same rhetoric. The conference, opened by Soviet Africanist Anatoly Gromyko (not to be confused with Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs), who headed the Africa Institute from 1976 to 1991, included delegations from across Africa, including Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Nigeria. A variety of regimes represented with varying degrees of connectivity to the Soviet economy, and varying importance to Soviet strategic planning, were present. All that coordination and cooperation would be rendered increasingly redundant over the next decade, as the Soviet Union entered terminal decline and collapse, and its former partners drifted away from the strong rhetoric which once formed the cornerstone of Soviet involvement in Africa, internationalism and liberation. At the time, though, Soviet activity in Africa was interpreted as a useful political activity by Soviet Africanists such as Anatoly Gromyko and Solodnikov who continued to embark on field work.<sup>269</sup>

This discussion of the Gorbachev era as far as Soviet policy in Africa seeks to avoid the trap of teleological bias, and instead investigates Soviet policy of the era through the struggles of Soviet politicians, and area specialists, to actually redefine and renew Soviet policy towards Africa. The Soviet Union, which was clearly losing the competition for influence in Africa even

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<sup>268</sup> Goodman, *Gorbachev's retreat: The Third World*, 18.

<sup>269</sup> Gromyko, Anatoly "Africa, The Soviet Union, and the United States," Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs, Baltimore, USA, October 31, 1990. 11:56., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGfY3GR7uoQ> (Accessed April 16<sup>th</sup> 2019).

to secondary powers such as the French, will be discussed in this chapter, especially concerning Benin and West Africa. We will utilize expanded American primary sources stemming from the CIA archives, which provide a biased, but detailed investigation of Soviet relations in Africa. This proved a necessary compliment to the translated Soviet sources in order to present a more holistic view of the period, and to make up for the Soviet focus on domestic problems that developed in the last years of the Soviet Union. That in itself is an indicator of a loss of policy importance among Soviet leadership, as international desire to justify or moralize Soviet interest on the continent declined proportionally to domestic crises, even though Soviet efforts to remain active in Africa persisted into the final days of the USSR.

Gorbachev, capitalizing on the move away from ideology based policy introduced by Brezhnev, was hesitant to withdraw from Africa. Instead Gorbachev attempted to revitalize and reshape the relationships he inherited, as indicated by newfound cooperation with the U.S. around the peace process in Namibia, where the two superpowers collaborated to support Namibian independence.<sup>270</sup> However, as the domestic situation declined, Gorbachev was forced to recognize the declining capacity of the Soviet Union to spend its limited political credit and capital on maintaining or supporting regimes which failed to contribute directly to the Soviet economy. The maintenance of those relationships did have a domestic political effect, as the Soviet press emphasized visits from African leaders such as Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam, and such leaders were even granted special fiscal treatment, with their debt repayments restructured or delayed, further reinforcing their regime's importance to the Soviet Union.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Gromyko, Anatoly, "Africa, The Soviet Union, and the United States," lecture, 18:50.

<sup>271</sup> "Information About the Highlights of a Brief Working Visit to the USSR (25-27 July This Year [1988]) of the General Secretary of the WPE CC, the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Mengistu Haile

These shifting relationships will be discussed through the lens of several individual Soviet-African partnerships to reveal Gorbachev's gradual failure to revitalize the Soviet Union's capacity to compete in Africa. Firstly, Benin's unique path to, and away from socialism will be investigated, followed by a discussion of the Soviet withdrawal from Ethiopia, finally, the impact and efforts of Soviet Africanists in the last days of the Soviet Union will be discussed in relation to South Africa and the African National Congress (ANC).

Benin emerged as an avowed Afro-socialist country in 1972, after a successful coup independent of major Soviet interference. The *Parti de la Revolution populaire du Benin* (PRPB) effectively made the country a single-party Marxist state, but developed a totally different form of election, one based on class concerns, again independent of Soviet involvement. The new regime was also distinct from previous waves of Afro-socialist regimes, avoiding the pre-colonial mythologizing common among the first wave of Afro-socialist regimes, such as that found in Sékou Touré's Guinea.<sup>272</sup> Additionally, unlike Léopold Senghor did in Senegal in 1960, Benin based itself totally around the PRPB, rather than make concessions to religion.<sup>273</sup> This feature revealed two prongs of the PRPB's approach to governance.<sup>274</sup> Firstly, there was a fully forward-looking nature which aimed to totally change the social and economic situation of Benin. Instead, all of Benin's success would only stem from the PRPB, not from any past connections or from pre-colonial assumptions. Secondly, by maintaining an almost utopian

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Mariam'," July, 1988, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár [Budapest], XIX-J-1-j, Etiópia, 1988, 38d, levéltári szám: 41 – 13. Obtained and translated by Radoslav Yordanov. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134785> para 3.

<sup>272</sup> Le Vine, Victor T. *Politics in Francophone Africa*. Boulder Colorado, (U.S.A.: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 2004), 142.

<sup>273</sup> Le Vine, 186.

<sup>274</sup> Senghor's Prime Minister, Mamadou Dia, was feverently anti-secular, and this was part of the reason for their disagreement, and the government's internal instability.

outlook, the PRPB justified its relationship with former colonial powers, such as France. This approach was both practical and ideological.

Two years after the coup, in 1974 the regime decided to suddenly and fully align itself with Marxism-Leninism, though the coup itself had not been Marxist in direction.<sup>275</sup> The Beninese regime under Mathieu Kérékou experimented with Marxist-Leninist doctrine for fifteen years. However, just as suddenly as the new ideological alignment was announced it was peacefully abandoned in 1989. Kérékou, the country's president since 1972, unilaterally declared that the regime would abandon Marxism-Leninism.<sup>276</sup> Benin, while a small country with limited ability to project power internationally, is a useful case study for this project because it is an excellent representative of the general shift away from Soviet influence. Instead, it was representative of the policy directions that African regimes embarked upon on their own, reforming old partnerships with former colonial powers and new relationships with regional players. Effectively, the Benin case shows that while the Soviet Union reduced its internationalist capacity during the Gorbachev era, certain African regimes were ready and able to forge their own course, without requiring Soviet support.

After Benin's adoption of Marxism-Leninism until the early 1980s, Benin did receive Soviet military aid and economic assistance. However, the last major Soviet military aid to Benin came in 1982, at the very tail end of the Brezhnev era.<sup>277</sup> According to SIPRI reports through the period of 1982 to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Benin received no further major Soviet

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<sup>275</sup> Le Vine, *Politics in Francophone Africa*, 145.

<sup>276</sup> The Vancouver Sun “Western Africa's Benin Drops Marxism-Leninism” (Vancouver, Canada: Infomart, 3\* addition, December 8 1989), para, 1, (Accessed February 20 2019).

<sup>277</sup> “Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1960 to 1992,” See Appendix A3.

military assistance. Therefore, the regime was servicing its security with older equipment and had to seek new suppliers. Benin received arms shipments from its former colonial power, France, between 1982 and 1989, including armored vehicles and aircraft.<sup>278</sup> This shift is corroborated by a CIA report written with data up to 1982, which posited that Benin would be pushed to seek further assistance from the West as the Soviet Union and former partners could no longer be relied upon to provide aid.<sup>279</sup> Reforming a partnership with the French was a strategic choice, as it provided needed security, and also the means to tie itself back into the West African Francophone community of nations as world socialism teetered on the brink of irrelevance. Benin demonstrated that, even before disengagement, certain regimes were already divesting themselves of Soviet aid and diversifying their relationships to secure domestic security, as shown in their newly reformed links with France and Libya.

Benin became even further removed from Soviet influence. Instead, mutually supportive inter-African networks of support were developed specifically between Qaddafi's Libya and Benin, but also with the other local francophone countries. According to the CIA Benin became more closely tied to other African regimes, such as Qaddafi's Libya, which maintained considerable influence in Benin during and after 1988.<sup>280</sup> According to a 1981 CIA report, "Benin: A Growing Base for Libyan Subversion," the Libyans were taking on an increasingly active role in supporting the Kérékou regime:

Since the late 1970' Tripoli has provided military training in Libya and Benin, armored

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<sup>278</sup> "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1960 to 1992," See Appendix A3.

<sup>279</sup> "Benin: Turn Toward Moderation," CIA, 12.

<sup>280</sup> Allen, Charles E, "Highlights of Monthly Warning Reports for May 1988," Central Intelligence Agency, U.S.A. 1988, 4, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP91B00776R000400030018-6.pdf> (Accessed February 18, 2019).

cars, uniforms, and rations, and cash for military expenses.[. . .]Libya has given \$10 million to build roads, a hospital, and housing projects, and has financed cattle-raising, fishing, and mining projects.<sup>281</sup>

Regional players, such as Libya, were able to inherit the senior partner role which the Soviets had formally taken in African affairs, covering the gamut of both economic and military requirements while Benin shopped for a more powerful foreign ally. Calling back to the Khrushchev era, where Soviet aid and trade involved a diverse range of infrastructure, security, and economic concerns to provide for almost all of a partner regime's needs, it was now African regimes that wielded their own economic strength to support the persistence of fellow regimes.

The CIA report notes that the Beninese regime made deliberate steps to disentangle itself from Soviet support on its own volition thanks to pressure from within the PRPB.<sup>282</sup> Also, the CIA report hints that the Soviets might “maneuver behind the scenes and use offers of aid to improve the fortunes of their Beninese clients,” based on SIPRI data and the general trend of Soviet disengagement under Gorbachev, this backroom meddling feared by the CIA never materialized.<sup>283</sup> In a ghostly echo of Potekhin, the CIA also observed the new intervention of Libya as potentially creating a dependence and therefore making Benin a satellite of Libya. Nevertheless French interactions with the Beninese regime which covered security and economic support were not characterized with the same negative connotations.<sup>284</sup> Instead, if anyone was maneuvering to change the fortunes of Benin, it was the Kérékou regime, which moved to

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<sup>281</sup> “Benin: A Growing Base for Libyan Subversion,” Central Intelligence Agency, (U.S.A, November 4, 1981), 10. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP84B00049R000200400097-5.pdf> (Accessed January 26, 2019).

<sup>282</sup> “Benin: Turn Toward Moderation,” CIA, iii.

<sup>283</sup> “Benin: Turn Toward Moderation,” CIA, iv.

<sup>284</sup> “Benin: A Growing Base for Libyan Subversion,” CIA, 4.

further away from its anti-capitalist ideology by reconnecting with the French and changing the ideological and political basis of the country.

“Benin leaders, meeting since Wednesday, announced in a communique that they had decided to renounce the ideology that has been the basis of the country's politics and economics for 15 years,” commented The Vancouver Sun on the ideological shift in Benin, December 8, 1989.<sup>285</sup> There was no violent revolution or bloody coup. Instead, Kérékou and his colleagues simply dropped their ideology and publicly announced the change as the practicality of socialist alignment waned. Kérékou found more utility in aligning towards France, as the French government was forgiving chunks of West African debt in 1989 and was on a path to continue that trend.<sup>286</sup> Finally, French re-engagement in francophone Africa as shown by new commitments of arms and aid, had to cast a certain pall over the Kérékou regime with the assassination of Thomas Sankara in 1987. Which was swiftly followed by the subsequent collapse of Sankara's Marxist-Leninist regime in Burkina Faso.<sup>287</sup> Marxist-Leninist regimes were demonstrably on unstable ground in the late 1980s, and rather than direct the country into violent revolution or brutal suppression of political discontent, Kérékou embarked on a conference to determine the new political and ideological direction of the country. This “les forces vives de la nation” was immediately compared to the French revolutionary Estates-General, further playing to the French mythologized historical narrative, and intentionally drawing parallels to French revolutionary spirit as a masterful method of currying favor with the new foreign supplier.<sup>288</sup> The

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<sup>285</sup> The Vancouver Sun “Western Africa's Benin Drops Marxism-Leninism” para, 1.

<sup>286</sup> “National Intelligence Daily,” U.S.A., Central Intelligence Agency, June 19, 1990, 15, [https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC\\_0005301373.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0005301373.pdf) (Accessed January 26, 2019).

<sup>287</sup> Le Vine, *Politics in Francophone Africa*, 142.

<sup>288</sup> Le Vine, 253.

conference announcing the change was carried by francophone media and received coverage in continental French, all without bloodshed.<sup>289</sup> These moves maintained a revolutionary twist to the proceeding course of Benin and also circumvented inflaming political instability.

Benin's peaceful transformation away from Marxism-Leninism was later cited by Congo-Brazzaville's (presently the Republic of the Congo) opposition as a method of African democratization.<sup>290</sup> By its peaceful transition, little Benin sent shockwaves across Africa with its novel approach to ideological shifts. Benin did not allow itself to become reliant on the Soviet Union, or the French. Instead its leaders carefully chose which foreign partner would suit them from moment to moment based on a careful reading of popular support and international trends.

For its part, the Soviet Union did not attempt to compete with the French in Benin, and disengagement after 1982 was clearly accomplished as illustrated by the lack of military aid supplied.<sup>291</sup> This policy route fits with Gorbachev's primary objective of deepening detente with the West, achieved in part through demilitarization of foreign policy.<sup>292</sup> For Gorbachev, risking possible escalation with France over Benin and some military equipment deliveries was not worth any potential pay-off. Therefore, the small country was left to its own devices. Still, Benin's peaceful switch away from Marxism-Lenin and its capacity to play both sides to its benefit remain a useful touchstone when discussing the level of autonomy African regimes actually possessed. They were not simply the playthings of super-powers, and rather exhibited a considerable amount of agency through their choice of foreign and regional partners. Such a

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<sup>289</sup> Le Vine, 251.

<sup>290</sup> Le Vine, 251.

<sup>291</sup> "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1960 to 1992," See Appendix A3.

<sup>292</sup> Goodman, *Gorbachev's retreat: The Third World*, New York, USA.: Praeger Publishers, (1991), 19, 21.

form of change was not seen in another Afro-socialist regime, that of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia endured violent civil war, rather than the peaceful democratization seen in Benin, and the long-suffering delivered by that conflict eventually toppled the Marxist-Leninist regime in 1991.<sup>293</sup> It is fitting that Ethiopia, which hosted the first major Russian permanent fixtures on Africa, as discussed in the chapter on antecedents, remained a close partner of the Soviet Union since the Khrushchev period, and would remain a Soviet priority almost until the very end.<sup>294</sup> In Ethiopia, the Soviet Union had partly put its ideological concerns aside and supported Emperor Haile Selassie's regime during the Stalin and Khrushchev eras.<sup>295</sup> A revolution in 1974 saw a Marxist-Leninist oriented regime rise to power, under Mengistu Haile Mariam, and Soviet support duly increased.<sup>296</sup> However, in the wake of the Ogaden War (1977-1978), famine, domestic security problems arising from secessionist movements in Eritrea, and general complaints about the ethnocentric nature of the Derg regime, Gorbachev had good reasons to cool the relationship with the Soviet Union's old partner.

As the 1980s wore on, and Gorbachev's withdrawal continued, the Soviet Union asked the Ethiopian regime to seek Western aid, therefore tacitly implying that Soviet foreign aid was out of the question. Furthermore, the Soviet leadership went so far as to “discourage rural collectivization,” a former cornerstone of planned economies in the Soviet style and “encouraged freer markets”.<sup>297</sup> While this move mirrored Gorbachev's own domestic reforms and “new

<sup>293</sup> Le Vine, *Politics in Francophone Africa*, 142.

<sup>294</sup> Olderogge, eds., *Russia and Africa*, 167.

<sup>295</sup> Stokke, *Soviet and Eastern European Trade and Aid in Africa*, 214.

<sup>296</sup> Ofcansky, Thomas P. and LaVerle Berry, eds, *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, Department of the Army, (USA 1993), xiii.

<sup>297</sup> Heinz, Edward J. “Prospects for Economic Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa,” USA: CIA, 1989, 15, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP91M01043R002200120013-2.pdf> (Accessed February 6<sup>th</sup> 2019)

thinking” in general, it had the added benefit of divesting the Soviet Union further away from the Derg regime's problems. In the eyes of the CIA, this divestment from Ethiopian affairs also could be construed as a concession to Western influence, though the American analyst compiling the report still saw the Soviet Union retaining some influence as a result of the newly renewed flexibility of Soviet policy.<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, the CIA source viewed the general economic shift as a global trend, rather than one limited to socialist style regimes in Africa or the Soviet Union itself.<sup>299</sup> Still, Soviet involvement in at the very least an advisory role in Ethiopia remained up until the very end of the Ethiopian regime itself, which was only outlasted by the USSR by a few months.<sup>300</sup>

A common cry among western analysis of Soviet activity in Africa relates to the preponderance of military advisers found in Soviet partner regimes as a critical indicator of reliance on Soviet support. However, in the Ethiopian case, Russian military advisers to Ethiopia predate both the Derg regime, and the Soviet Union itself, with advisers being dispatched to Ethiopia in 1919.<sup>301,302</sup> For Gorbachev to curtail what had become an established tradition of military cooperation with Ethiopia in the 1980s had to have taken either a crisis at home, or considerable political clout, as Ethiopia was Russia's oldest continental partner. Soviet military aid to Ethiopia declined significantly under Gorbachev,

The value of arms deliveries from the Soviet Union and its East European allies declined to US\$774 million in 1985 and to US\$292 million in 1986. The number of Soviet military advisers in Ethiopia also declined, to about 1,400 in 1988, although it returned to normal

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<sup>298</sup> Heinz, “Prospects for Economic Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 16.

<sup>299</sup> Heinz, 1.

<sup>300</sup> *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, Department of the Army, (USA 1993), xx.

<sup>301</sup> *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, Department of the Army, (USA 1993), 282.

<sup>302</sup> The source does not clarify whether or not these are Soviet advisers or White emigres.

levels of approximately 1,700 in 1989. [. . .] Throughout 1990 Moscow continued to reduce its military commitment to Addis Ababa. In March 1990, for example, the Soviet Union announced the withdrawal of its military advisers from all combat zones.<sup>303</sup>

Gorbachev related the shift in Soviet policy to Mengistu in 1988 during the latter's visit to Moscow, and the Ethiopian regime needed to find a peaceful settlement to its domestic problems.<sup>304</sup> While the Soviet Union under Gorbachev did honor its preexisting agreements to Ethiopia, the fact that Gorbachev refused to provide further support to Mengistu's regime during a clear existential crisis of the ongoing civil war there mirrors in some ways the Soviet retreat from Eastern Europe. Mengistu failed to find a peaceful solution after 1988, and Gorbachev did not have the will or clout to prop up the Ethiopian regime further. Of course, that 1,700 advisers did remain in Ethiopia into 1989 does reveal how critical the Soviet Union perceived its relationship with Ethiopia. By comparison, the Soviet withdrawal from elsewhere in Africa had already been largely completed as shown in the Benin study.

It is worth noting that some of the forces fighting against Mengistu's regime had American backing and received funds for propaganda usage. By the 1980s, the Somalian regime was receiving American weapons, such as a shipment of one hundred American Patton tanks in 1985.<sup>305</sup> For Gorbachev, these developments represented further risk of escalation. Furthermore, the U.S. was providing considerable humanitarian aid to combat the famine in Ethiopia concurrent with the conflict with Somalia and the ongoing war in Eritrea.<sup>306</sup> That aid declined,

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<sup>303</sup> *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, Department of the Army, (USA 1993), 296.

<sup>304</sup> *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, Department of the Army, (USA 1993), 296.

<sup>305</sup> "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1953 to 1991," See Appendix A6.

<sup>306</sup> It may be worth noting that yet again the Soviets fell in support of a regime brutally attempting to suppress a secessionist movement, as Mengistu attempted to crush the Eritreans. Gorbachev was not altogether different from Khrushchev (Hungary) and Brezhnev (Biafran War) when it came to disdain for anti-regime sentiment, even if that instability was only affecting a partner.

but did not end after the famine's end, undermining Ethiopian reliance on Soviet aid.<sup>307</sup> For its part, the Soviet regime downplayed American aid to Ethiopia as much as possible, to at least insinuate that Ethiopia was still receiving as much support as before the middle of the 1980s.<sup>308</sup> The will of the Soviet press to at least deny the Soviet Union's waning influence on the survival of African regimes points to how important the USSR still at least perceived its relationships with governments, even if it could no longer provide the level of support previously. This approach reveals the creation of a deliberately constructed facade to enforce and sustain at least the optics of Soviet internationalism.

The later Soviet approach to Ethiopia was dominated by pragmatism and flexibility, which was construed as withdrawal by Western analysts. Instead, while the amount of aid did decline, Gorbachev was not willing to truly concede defeat in Ethiopia until the last days of the Soviet Union. The Western interpretation does not emphasize the clear distaste for withdrawal in the Ethiopian case. Mengistu's 1988 visit to Moscow, the surge in advisers in 1989, and the distinct unwillingness of the Soviet press to admit waning relevance in Ethiopia highlight the enduring special link between Ethiopia and Russia.<sup>309</sup> Again, Gorbachev was unwilling to risk confrontation with the European or North American regimes exercising their own influence in Africa. This was shown by Gorbachev's push for peaceful solutions, and the severe decline in military hardware provided, but at the same time he went further to protect the Ethiopian regime

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<sup>307</sup> Omang, Joanne, "Ex-Official Says Ethiopia Mired in 'No-Win' War," (Washington Post, 1987), para 5, 6.

<sup>308</sup> Schmemmann, Serge, "Ethiopian Meets with Chernenko in Moscow," (New York Times, December 18, 1984), para, 8.

<sup>309</sup> East German Ministry of State Security, "The Current Situation in PDRE [People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia] and the Region," The Wilson Center, (USA. June 6, 1988), paras. 1,2, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/134784> (Accessed March 23, 2019)

than he did the Beninese.<sup>310</sup> Ultimately, while the Soviet Union did clearly retreat from Ethiopia, they only did so after all other options and their own political and economic capital were exhausted. In fact, the Soviet withdraw from Ethiopia was concurrent with Soviet withdrawal in Eastern Europe, with the Ethiopian-Soviet partnership only disintegrating in 1990.<sup>311</sup> Soviet internationalism in certain ideologically important cases was not allowed an easy death, as even in the final years the USSR attempted to uphold at least the legacy of its liberation rhetoric in Africa. In that year the head of the Africa Institute visited Baltimore, and gave a speech on Soviet interactions in Africa. In it he critiqued the Soviet government openly, but was hopeful for continuing change in Africa and partnership with America to resolve the conflict in Namibia.<sup>312</sup> This example showcases the relevance of those themes of internationalism during the Gorbachev period, and provide insight on the Soviet media's newfound capacity to pick up the rhetorical slack of Soviet leadership.

This next section's inclusion is required because it reveals a massive shift in the Soviet approach to South Africa, and the region of southern Africa in general. Prior to Gorbachev's tenure Soviet the policy towards apartheid South Africa was one of isolation.<sup>313</sup> To enforce and support that policy, the Soviet Union supplied and provided political aid to South Africa's socialist opponents, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and especially Angola.<sup>314</sup> Therefore, this policy created a socialist cordon around the Apartheid state with the aim of laying a passive siege to

<sup>310</sup> "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1960 to 1992," See Appendix A3.

<sup>311</sup> Ofcansky, Thomas P. and LaVerle, Berry, editors, *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, "The Derg, The Soviet Union, and the communist World," (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, U.S.A. 1991), para 4, <http://countrystudies.us/ethiopia/137.htm> (Accessed March 8 2019).

<sup>312</sup> Gromyko, Anatoly, "Africa, Soviet Union and the United States" October 31, 1990, Lecture, remarks made during a visit to the United States, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGfY3GR7uoQ>

<sup>313</sup> Russians are Coming? Can Russia Conquer Africa Again," para, 4. Appendix A2.

<sup>314</sup> Russians are Coming? Can Russia Conquer Africa Again," para, 4. Appendix A2.

South Africa.

However, under Gorbachev's auspice the Soviet Union made major moves to further its interest in South Africa itself by expanding its public relationship with the African National Congress (ANC) and therefore aiming to put South Africa on a path of friendship with the Soviet Union.<sup>315</sup> This action highlights that two primary tenets of Gorbachev's policies could be construed as complementary, rather than contradictory. Firstly, that refocusing away from ideology rooted in internationalist state-socialism, connecting with sub-state actors such as the ANC allowed for more potential for fostering future relationships Secondly, personal action, such as the Soviet foreign minister's visit to Namibia, or even more critically, Gorbachev's meeting with the ANC president Oliver Tambo in Moscow, in 1986, emphasized the utility of personal political relations and “showing the flag,” through personalistic diplomacy.<sup>316</sup> The strength of Cuban, Angolan, and MPLA forces on the ground in Namibia also revealed that the SADF was no longer capable of defending the entire border. It was clear the Soviet Union that South Africa was weaker than it had been in decades prior.

This also ties to Gorbachev's revival of personalistic diplomacy as last seen by Khrushchev. Gorbachev made it a point to invite critical partners to Moscow, as previously referenced in the Ethiopian case. Rather than limiting future prospects, withdrawal of ideological factors expanded them in a further construction of Brezhnev era conceptions of inter-party relations, which necessitated a more flexible approach to foreign relations.

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<sup>315</sup> The Soviet Union had a long history with sub-state actors South Africa, specifically the CPSA (Communist Party of South Africa) which was a member of the Comintern in the 1920s, and eventually became aligned with, but separate from the ANC.

<sup>316</sup> Ren, Christopher S. “In Namibia, South Africa Is Center of Attention” *New York Times*, (U.S.A. March 23, 1990), para. 4, para. 17.

However, the cornerstone of this personalistic approach in relation to South Africa came with an attempt to establish a meeting between Nelson Mandela and Gorbachev. The man selected to plan and execute this operation was none other than Vasiley Solodovnikov, whose leadership of a delegation to South Africa to meet Nelson Mandela in Lusaka presents the dual role of Soviet Africanists as active political agents.<sup>317</sup> Since the Brezhnev era, the Africa Institute had slowly shifted from a purely academic institution to a more politically active role, and Solodovnikov's preparations for the Mandela meeting highlight the extent of that political capacity.<sup>318</sup> Therefore, while the link between the academics and policymakers is often murky at best, in this instance there is at least proof that the academic could act as a policy executor on behalf of the policymakers. In a 2004 interview, Solodovnikov outlined the Soviet purpose in Africa, and his own objectives:

however, as an Africanist and an ambassador in Zambia, I had had a personal goal of sorts, to isolate South Africa. On Atlantic we had friendly Angola; friendly Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania. All that was left was Rhodesia and Zimbabwe to completely isolate SAR from the rest of the continent. The division of Africa to three parts was our foreign policy: Northern Arabic, the Central Tropic and the Southern Africa.<sup>319</sup>

Solodovnikov clearly laid out the Soviet approach to Africa and how such experts as himself were afforded an increasingly free hand in devising policy directions.

The meeting itself was not to be, as the Soviet Union collapsed before it was scheduled to occur, but that itself reveals how up to the very last second Soviet African-experts were fighting

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<sup>317</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 54.

<sup>318</sup> Tolmacheva, Marina "The Year of Africa Remembered: Horizons of Change in African Studies 50 years after the Year of Africa," Washington State University, 2013, 20

<sup>319</sup> "Russians are Coming? Can Russia Conquer Africa Again" para 4. See Appendix A2.

to maintain Soviet relevance in Africa. This battle was also being waged by Solodovnikov's colleague, and successor head of the Africa Institute, Anatoly Gromyko, as he explained to an American audience in October of 1990 the platform of what he regarded as the future Soviet relationship with African regimes.<sup>320</sup> Gromyko denounced the failures of the Gorbachev regime, and even went so far as to question the underlying Marxist foundations of Soviet policymaking.<sup>321</sup> Instead, he saw budding cooperation between America and the Soviet Union as far as the negotiations surrounding the independence of Namibia.<sup>322</sup>

While Solodovnikov's effort was in vain, his contribution to the South African liberation movement was recognized by the South African government after the collapse of the Apartheid regime, and he has a biographical page on the South African presidency's official website. He was awarded “The Order of the Baobab in Gold” for “His outstanding contribution to the cause of the decolonialization of Africa and combating apartheid and lifetime achievement in the study of Africa.”<sup>323</sup> This is a fitting reminder that, while the Soviet Union had political motivations and at times an exploitative approach to its relationships in Africa, at least some of its agents still attempted to uphold the ideological slogans of Potekhin and the old vanguard international approach.<sup>324</sup> According to the South African presidency's website, “Solodovnikov has over many decades expressed his solidarity with the peoples of Africa. He is a great friend of the continent

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<sup>320</sup> Gromyko, Anatoly, “Africa, The Soviet Union, and the United States,” (lecture).

<sup>321</sup> Gromyko, (lecture).

<sup>322</sup> Gromyko, (lecture).

<sup>323</sup> “Grogoriyevich Vassili Solodovnikov (1918 - ),” The Presidency of South Africa, para, 1, <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/national-orders/recipient/grogoriyevich-vassili-solodovnikov-1918> (Accessed February 28 2019)

<sup>324</sup> As of February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the website has not been updated to reflect Solodovnikov's passing.

and of South Africa.”<sup>325</sup>

Even though the attempt to establish a meeting between Mandela and Gorbachev never manifested, the struggle of Soviet thinkers' agents to facilitate such an event and the enduring legacy of Soviet authorship which supported the South African anti-Apartheid struggle left an unexpected positive mark. However, any political utility was lost with the Soviet collapse, and as will be later discussed, the Russian Federation has taken a considerably different tone towards Africa.

An argument can be made as to whether or not the move away from foreign policy based in old, purely Soviet concepts of internationalism to one again based in domestic concerns foreign policy was wise, certainly, it was major. The shift in policy was so significant that Gorbachev's style of leadership regarding foreign policy is often described as “non-ideological,” while it is truer to say that it was just a different sort of ideology, I agree that the term fits considering the difference between Gorbachev's “New Thinking,” and the older worn out tropes of Bolshevik internationalism. Finally, while Gorbachev moved away from old concepts of internationalism, the same was not true for all the apparati beneath him, and critical to this project, the SKSSAA continued to project confidence in the idea of foreign Marxist-Leninist revolutions, even as the experiment died in the Soviet Union.<sup>326</sup>

The move away from an assertive socialist-international presented the opportunity for further generating equality in Soviet-African partnerships, and therefore was a step away from

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<sup>325</sup> “Grogoriyevich Vassili Solodovnikov (1918 - ),” The Presidency of South Africa, Para 7.

<sup>326</sup> Casula, “The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee and Soviet Perceptions of the Middle East During Late Socialism,” 519.

the expansion of Soviet empire.<sup>327</sup> Additionally, this approach had already been viewed as a successful method for generating economically viable partnerships by the People's Republic of China, which had detached ideological domination from foreign policy in specific reference to Africa far earlier, around 1971.<sup>328</sup> The PRC continued to maintain relations with African socialist allies, but its pool of relationships expanded, and possessing a regime which shared qualities with the Chinese one was no longer a prerequisite for aid.<sup>329</sup> As seen in the Ethiopian and Beninese cases, while the Soviet Union did attempt to cut ties with economically unreliable allies, the ideological and economic policy shifts came too late to contribute meaningfully to the Soviet economy, or to increase Soviet capability in competition with the PRC or United States.

The western response consisted of an argument concerning the core rationale for the change in Soviet policy, specifically the debate concerning whether the disengagement was intentional. For African states the disengagement forced them to forge partnerships with other powers, emphasizing the decline of Soviet influence on the continent. American aid now overtook Soviet support in even the most long-lived Soviet-African alliances, and American analysts noted the new Soviet propensity to direct partners to seek non-Soviet support as clear indicators of declining Soviet competitiveness.<sup>330</sup> European and North American powers engaged in Africa were able to consistently capitalize on Soviet disengagement. This was shown in the Benin case as France moved in to reassert a degree of influence, and again shown in the Ethiopian case, where American humanitarian aid undermined Soviet influence in a direct

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<sup>327</sup> The author concedes there is no apolitical or non-ideological policy, but the shift between level of ideological motivation and that of Gorbachev is so significant that the term applies under these specific circumstances.

<sup>328</sup> Pippa, Morgan, "Ideology and Relationality: Chinese Aid in Africa Revisited," (2018) 212.

<sup>329</sup> Pippa, 209.

<sup>330</sup> Heinz, "Prospects for Economic Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa," 15.

manner.

The historiographical argument regarding Gorbachev's relationship with Africa is intense. Western authors such as Sylvia Woodby argues Gorbachev's policy was forced by economic factors, rather than ideological ones.<sup>331</sup> Incredibly, some of those authors made that economic argument a half decade before the Soviet collapse, as Gorman did. While that debate is important, this project views it as a critical tool for identifying the difficulty of locating Gorbachev's intentions relating to his policy towards his African partners. That debate, which centers around the question of intent as outlined by Zubok, only goes so far as to prove there remains debate. Gorbachev continued the shift away from ideology and brought it even to the rhetorical sphere through the dismissal of Ethiopian attempts to violently suppress internal political turmoil. Instead, the Gorbachev government pushed for a negotiated solution, therefore accepting the possibility of political plurality in African Marxist-Leninist regimes.

However, even with the impetus of a newfound synthesis, the Soviet Union's capacity to interact and support friendly regimes deteriorated consistently through Gorbachev's tenure due to domestic fiscal and political constraints. Tantalizing CIA discussions hint at Soviet intentions to push trade partners to seek aid from the West, rather than from the Soviet Union itself.<sup>332</sup> Such pronouncements by the CIA point to an admission that, for all of the assumed meddling before, even staunch anti-Soviets were beginning to recognize a clear deterioration of Soviet threat in Africa. The CIA did also admit that African socialism remained the “dominant post-colonial economic philosophy,” though they saw it as a threat to reform, rather than an instrument of

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<sup>331</sup> Woodby, Sylvia, *Gorbachev and the Decline of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy*, (Boulder Colorado, U.S.A.: Westview Press, Inc. 1989), 25.

<sup>332</sup> Heinz, “Prospects for Economic Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa,” Iv.

empowerment as the Soviets did.<sup>333</sup>

Another result of Gorbachev's new thinking was the changing presentation of Africa by the less repressed Soviet media. This allowed for the return of a "Dark Continent" mentality and language when discussing African affairs, which unfortunately persists to the present as highlighted by the "Russians are Coming? Can Russia Conquer Africa Again," an interview of Solodovnikov published in 2004.<sup>334</sup> This change was representative of the Soviet Union's struggle to assign new societal and cultural understandings in a rapidly changing world in which the old ideals of liberation theory and internationalism were rapidly losing relevance, even as some Soviet media strove to emphasize those older ideals. The unfortunate implication of removal of liberation ideology in foreign policy, coupled with further expansion of a free press, effectively enabled racist speech not seen since the 1950's. That terminology can be directly seen in a 2004 interview with Solodovnikov, the former head of the Africa Institute, and diplomat. The journalist interviewing Solodovnikov, in setting up her subject, described the importance of the Africa institute and Russia's Relationship with Africa as such:

the scientists of the Africa Institute gained influential supporters in the Russian Ministry of External Affairs. It is possible, that after the presidential elections, the government will decide to reattempt at "reconquering" Africa. [. . .] Nowadays Solodovnikov is the adviser at RAN's Africa Institute and one of the leading Africanists in the nation. [. . .] what the USSR was doing in Africa and what chances Russia has regarding reconquering positions in the Black continent:<sup>335</sup>

This linguistic change is worth noting as it shows the progression of the Soviet and Russian conception of Africa, and the eventual conceit that it was easier to blame the Africans for Soviet

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<sup>333</sup> Heinz, 7.

<sup>334</sup> See Appendix A2.

<sup>335</sup> See Appendix A2.

failures than recognize the problems inherent to Soviet activities on the continent. The goal was again to “conquer,” and any Khrushchev-style rhetoric of brotherhood, or Potekhin's dreams of a world united in socialism, were crushed in the pessimism of the collapse of the USSR. For his part Gorbachev's efforts to reform the Union and redirect Soviet allies on a new path, as he attempted with Mengistu, represents the last breaths of that idealistic Soviet approach, mixed with the pragmatism delivered by Brezhnev's imagined thrift. In hindsight it was too little, too late, but Gorbachev left a turbulent legacy which still generates disagreement among historians.

General Sovietology that does not directly assess Soviet policy towards Africa remains useful to offer insight into the process of Soviet leadership in relation to the Soviet far abroad. This aspect of the research is exemplified by contemporary scholars such as Vladislav Zubok, who determined that Gorbachev was simply too busy to deal with foreign affairs because of the Soviet domestic crisis by 1989.<sup>336</sup> Furthermore, Zubok argues that to an extent Soviet foreign policy became '*faits accomplis*' as Soviet power diminished.<sup>337</sup> These arguments can be applied to and explored in the context of Soviet-African relations, as Soviet support of friendly regimes on the continent diminished into the late 1980s, regardless of the partner's political outlook. To contrast that interpretation, a source such as Robert F. Miller's 1991 monograph, *Soviet Foreign Policy Today*, argues this retreat from foreign affairs was partly intentional, as Gorbachev outlined a plan of disengagement in the Third World and the removal of ideological concerns from foreign policy decision-making in 1988.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Zubok, Vladislav, “With his back against the Wall: Gorbachev, Soviet demise, and German reunification,” *Cold War History*, vol 14. No. 4, (2014), 626.

<sup>337</sup> Woodby, *Gorbachev and the Decline of Ideology in Soviet Foreign Policy*, 25.

<sup>338</sup> Miller F. Robert, *Soviet Foreign Policy Today*, New York, New York, (U.S.A.: Unwin Hyman Ltd. 1991), 162.

This chapter has argued that disengagement during the 1980s was a direct policy choice, but by 1989 Gorbachev's hand was being forced by contemporary domestic politics. However, this approach does not take into account the amount of effort that went into protecting Soviet relationships in Africa, especially those which were considered ideologically important, such as the Soviet relationship with the Derg regime in Ethiopia, and those which represented potential for future growth and political capital, as seen in the attempt to facilitate a meeting between Mandela and Gorbachev, revealing Soviet hopes that South Africa might have become a useful partner to the USSR. While the Soviet Union was in part forced out of Africa by its own mismanagement, the Soviet political machine dragged its heels and dug-in wherever it could. It only shed those partnerships which were not seen as useful in any way. An example of that was the relationship with Benin, which was both risky and unlikely to yield economic or political gain for the Soviet Union and therefore disengaged. On the macro level, Gorbachev was taking this hands-off approach more because it was the less risky option available, and the Soviet Union's domestic situation necessitated an overabundance of caution. As it turned out he still overplayed his hand, and was unable to convince the Mengistu regime to shift its domestic policy to mimic Gorbachev's new thinking, and he was equally unwilling and unable to prop the Ethiopian regime up in its moment of crisis in 1989 and 1990.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion and Findings

The collapse of Soviet aligned African regimes corresponds chronologically with the fall of the Soviet Union. Marxist-Leninist regimes in Africa had been wiped off the map by 1992. Benin March 1, 1990, Cape Verde September 28, 1990, Mozambique December 1 1990. MPLA abandoned Marxism-Leninism in 1990, People's Republic of the Congo 1991, Somali Democratic Republic 1991, People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia May 28 1991, Democratic Republic of Madagascar's government agreed to a democratic transition on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1991, Djibouti had its first multi-party elections in December 1992. 1994 heralded the first multi-party elections in Guinea Bissau.<sup>339</sup> This seismic shift remains under-represented in the academic discourse of the Cold War, as so much focus remains on the European decline of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR. All of the regimes discussed in this thesis had been replaced by 1992.

Ten Marxist Leninist, or state-socialist African regimes collapsed or otherwise transformed in a span of about two years. The number of regimes which collapsed is comparable to the fall of the Warsaw Pact and yet there is no wide study of them. Countries like Benin made a more peaceful transition than Poland, while others fell into a state of civil war, like Ethiopia. The spectrum of results and the scale of regime change both indicate an important area of untapped study.<sup>340</sup>

Between Stalin's death and the fall of the Soviet Union, a metamorphosis occurred in the

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<sup>339</sup> The Democratic Republic of Madagascar had already begun moving away from scientific socialism in the 1970s to secure loans from the IMF.

<sup>340</sup> There was a general failure of one-party states in Africa around the same time, including but not limited to, Zambia (1990), Togo (August 1991 and rightest), Zaire. Cameroon, 1990 the more conservative regimes fell as their biggest benefactor, the US, no longer had any need of them.

relationship between Africa and the USSR. Factors such as decolonization and more outward looking Soviet leaders, such as Nikita Khrushchev, drove this new direction. However, Khrushchev and Soviet academia grappled with outdated theory and competing priorities. This divergence resulted in scattershot policy implementation. Certain regimes, favoured for international political points, such as Nasser's Egypt, benefitted massively from Soviet support while liberation movements such as Félix-Roland Moumié's UPC were blackballed and allowed to fail. While Khrushchev expressed support for African liberation, these exhortations clearly came with ideological strings attached. Ultimately Khrushchev was generous to those African states that and movements that he had a personal attachment to and those that appeared to be on the path to state-socialism. The fruits of that capital and labour still dot the African continent, as the Aswan High Dam and stadiums in Mali and Guinea can attest.<sup>341</sup> Certainly Khrushchev's interest in Africa resulted in a major expansion in activity there, and left a long legacy. Khrushchev had moved the Soviet perspective from seeking an empire of justice, to one that sought the liberation of Africa.

Khrushchev's overspending was part of his undoing, and his successor Brezhnev was much less willing to spend capital where concrete returns were unassured.<sup>342</sup> As a result, Khrushchev's dynamism was initially replaced with political ossification under Brezhnev as far as Africa was concerned. However, Brezhnev's reign was a long one, and when it became clear that there was money to be made in Africa, Brezhnev moved away from association and instead

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<sup>341</sup> Goodman, Marshall, "A Balance Sheet of Soviet Foreign Aid," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Jan., 1965), 349-360, 354, [https://www-jstororg.proxy.library.carleton.ca/stable/20039101?seq=6#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www-jstororg.proxy.library.carleton.ca/stable/20039101?seq=6#metadata_info_tab_contents) (Accessed August 10<sup>th</sup> 2019).

<sup>342</sup> Gorman, "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," 173.

began to choose partners based on potential capital return.<sup>343</sup> Soviet scholars began to discuss the terms of eventual payoffs under Brezhnev, rather than the more incorporeal ideological payoff that Potekhin yearned for.<sup>344</sup> The Nigerian regime under Yakubu Gowon, for example, intentionally avoided formal pronouncements of Marxism-Leninism while at the same time benefiting from Soviet arms shipments.<sup>345</sup> The turn away from ideology towards a policy largely dictated by capital resulted in increased activity on the continent, and some breakthroughs. Certain partnerships which would have been unthinkable under Khrushchev became possible, such as that with Gowon's non-Marxist regime.

In other partnerships Brezhnev's new policy resulted in considerable political blowback, such as the disastrous mishandling of the relationship with Said Barre, and the Derg regime in Ethiopia. By flipping sides during the Ogaden War and supporting the Ethiopian regime, Brezhnev damaged the idea of a Soviet supported peace between Afro-socialist regimes and permanently soured the Soviet relationship with Somalia.<sup>346</sup> By the end of the 1970s, Soviet Africanist rhetoric had shifted away from the very idealistic publications of the 1960s to instead focus on the material relationships with African regimes. Certain ideological commitments to Marxism-Leninism on the part of African governments still carried political capital with the Soviet Union, but it was no longer such a critical component to building a functional relationship.

Gorbachev inherited a Soviet Union in clear decline, and had to contend with serious

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<sup>343</sup> Gorman, 174.

<sup>344</sup> Degtyar, "Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation," 101.

<sup>345</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 355.

<sup>346</sup> Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War*, 245.

domestic and foreign pressures. For that reason, his agency is particularly difficult to determine regarding his policy on African partnerships. What is clear is that the Gorbachev period saw both an intense last ditch struggle to save the Soviet Union's position in Africa. However, simultaneously the policy of refocusing away from ideology revealed a tacit recognition that the Soviet Union could no longer provide considerable material support due to the declining domestic situation. Solodovnikov, one of the U.S.S.R's premier African experts, attempted to facilitate a meeting between Gorbachev and Nelson Mandela, but the Soviet Union itself collapsed before the meeting was due to take place.<sup>347</sup> Without an ideological purpose, and without the capital resources to remain relevant on the continent, the Soviet Union's successor states largely disengaged from involvement in Africa.<sup>348</sup>

From a theoretical standpoint, this thesis is an expansion of Robert Gorman's "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," which finally sought to investigate the Soviet experience in Africa in a less ideologically motivated, measured way. Where Gorman was limited by his time, and the still present iron curtain, contemporary scholarship can finally affirm and expand his primary assertions. In order to clarify and expand on Gorman, Westad's concept of a global Cold War was applied through a more general approach than Gorman's. This allowed greater granularity in case-study selection to achieve a more holistic and wide perspective than targeted area studies do.

Soviet scholars, such as Pavlovich, Potekhin, Solodovnikov, Gromyko, and Olderogge

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<sup>347</sup> Matusevich, *Africa in Russia Russia In Africa, Three Centuries of Encounters*, 54.

<sup>348</sup> With certain notable exceptions, such as Ukraine, which maintained a partnership with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and sold military hardware there.

were discussed and their theory dissected and compared to actual Soviet practice in Africa. Through that lens, the effects of leadership changes were proven as the theory shifted alongside the changing Party heads. The trajectory of Soviet understanding of Africa can be viewed parallel with the Soviet policy approach. The formation of the Africa Institute signaled a new understanding of Africa and corresponded with Khrushchev's own rediscovery of the continent. The establishment of the Soviet-Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (SKSSAA) under the Institute allowed for the direction and dispersal of propaganda developed off of Africa Institute works. The SKSSA also served as a reciprocal of future Soviet talent, like Vladimir Shubin, who was a desk officer from 1969 to 1979, and went on to become a respected contemporary historian.<sup>349</sup> Under Gorbachev members of the Africa Institute made some of the most desperate attempts to remain relevant in Africa. Importantly, the last great Soviet Africanists, Solodovnikov and Olderogge, went on to influence the Russian Federation's Africa Institute (the direct successor to its Soviet counterpart) and both continued to advocate for a Russian presence in Africa up until their passing.<sup>350</sup>

I have built off of those assertions through this thesis, such as Gorman's cornerstone determination that Soviet involvement in Africa fluctuated significantly depending on the leader in power.<sup>351</sup> While outside of this project's scope, it would be useful to extrapolate Gorman's basic model to the post-Soviet Russian experience in Africa, especially as Russian activity in

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<sup>349</sup> Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, "Vladimir G. Shubin" <https://www.inafran.ru/en/node/350> (Accessed July 21st 2020).

<sup>350</sup> See Appendix A2.

<sup>351</sup> Gorman, "Soviet Perspectives on the Prospects for Socialist Development in Africa," 173.

Africa is currently on the rise.<sup>352</sup> Therefore I argue that the seesaw effect Gorman identified has remained apt, as Russian activity in Africa swings back into the fore today.

South Africa has become a much closer partner under the Putin government, to the point that the Russian Federation deployed strategic nuclear bombers to the country for a visit. The South African Defense National Defense Force praised the visit, saying “The 'Military to Military' relations between the two countries is not solely built on struggle politics, but rather on fostering mutually beneficial partnerships based on common interests.” They also mention that Russia and South Africa have “strong historical links,” pointing to a recognition of the credentials built up by the Soviet Union while simultaneously emphasizing the difference in their Post-Cold War relationship with the Russian Federation.<sup>353</sup> Ultimately the Soviet engagement with the ANC paid dividends. As Russia re-examines its potential options for engagement in Africa, those countries which the Soviets garnered a positive image provide a useful pool of potential friends.

Such a visit by Soviet nuclear strategic forces to any African country would have been challenging and destabilizing during the Cold War. The flight of the Tupolevs into the heart of the former bastion of Apartheid proves how categorically different the new paradigm is. This relationship also emphasizes the value of Cold War era connections and in particular of the great effort of Solodovnikov to bring South Africa towards the Soviet sphere.

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<sup>352</sup> Stratfor, “Russia's Plans for Making Friends in Africa,” (June 15, 2019), para 1, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russia-putin-diplomacy-africa-great-power> (Accessed August 7<sup>th</sup> 2019)

<sup>353</sup> Trevithick, Joseph. “Russian Tu-160 Bombers Touch Down In South Africa in First – Ever Visit (Updated)”, *The Warzone*. October 23, 2019, para, 1, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/30576/russian-tu-160-bombers-touch-down-in-south-africa-in-historic-first-ever-african-visit> (Accessed January, 17 2020).

I demonstrate the need for further retrospective investigation of the Soviet involvement in Africa. Current scholarship is insufficient and often compartmentalizes the Soviet experience in Africa, detracting from the whole sum of Soviet involvement. Without a wider lens, the resolution of those more detailed recent case studies can be obscured. Furthermore, certain micro-effects on Soviet citizens remain largely ignored. For example that the KGB believed that defection was possible through African partner states, and therefore was willing to cancel a Soviet citizen's trip over the possibility that he might defect by way of Mozambique.<sup>354</sup> Only today with continuing interdisciplinary focuses can a nexus between the social history and political history be properly exploited to the maximum benefit.

Soviet policy was ad-hoc, inconsistent and largely contextual down to the individual relationships, as the comparison between the treatment of Nasser and Lumumba shows. The only cohesive thread through the Soviet Union's existence was its ideological bias towards support of African liberation movements. That bias itself waxed and waned depending on the specific leader of the day. While the Soviet Union's ideology projected internationalism and solidarity, the Soviet track record of support was mixed. Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, Thomas Sankara: successive leaders of the U.S.S.R consistently failed to support some of their best potential allies.

Ultimately, Soviet rhetoric and Soviet policy were never fully aligned as leaders and contexts shifted throughout the Cold War. There was never a coherent written policy towards Africa in general, and specific countries were dealt with often in a confused manner as well. Ambassadors were allowed to choose their own objectives when it involved their individual

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<sup>354</sup> See Appendix A1.

station, as demonstrated in Solodovnikov's incredible latitude in handling South Africa. Agency was not centralized or monolithic, it was dispersed and ever changing as Soviet willingness to engage expanded and contracted through the decades. These features of the Soviet approach toward Africa should inform the reading of its successor's activity on the continent, as the connections developed by the Soviet Union were never erased, and as the USSR called back to its Czarist past to define its presence in Africa, so does the Russian Federation reference its Soviet credentials when interacting in Africa today.

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## List of Appendices:

## A1. Interview with Alexander Statiev, by Author, e-mail, March 28, 2019

When I introduce you to my readers, how would you like to be introduced, and could you summarize a short personal timeline relevant to the questions posed, including place of birth, and year?

I don't really care whether you introduce me or not. You can mention my name but I don't know how anything else you ask here can be related to your topic. I was born in China and spent my first 4 years there and afterwards I lived with my parents in Iraq for 3 years and Romania for another two; I lived permanently in Russia from 1973 to 1991, after which, I escaped on the eve of the communist putsch, first to Austria, then to Australia and Germany and finally found my way to Canada in 1993. Before the early 1990s, the western countries did not accept emigrants from Russia who did not claim to be refugees, which I did not. That is why I tried to emigrate, unsuccessfully, three times to South Africa, twice to Canada and Australia, and once to the U.S., U.K and Ireland. I was among the first Russians to come to Canada, when it allowed in 1991 former Soviets, who were not refugees, to come after thorough screening that lasted over 1 year.

Were issues concerning the African continent [or specific country/region thereof] ever a point of discussion during your childhood? If yes, please elaborate on the context and with who?

In your personal experience, how were Africans presented on television, radio, or print media in the U.S.S.R.?

If you mean the state, yes, it talked a lot about anti-colonial struggle of Africa, especially about Congo, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique - more about Angola than Mozambique because the latter was under the influence of Chinese communists, whereas Angola was under the Soviet influence. Angola was presented as almost a communist country, unlike, say Libya or Egypt. People were not interested in Africa much, although they generally approved the policy of the state believing that nearly all the blacks were happy to get Soviet support for anti-colonial struggle. A general public attitude to blacks was positive because of ideology portraying them as victims of imperialism but few Russians met them with the exception of political festival of 1957, when many Africans arrived and some Muscovite women decided to try them in sex, after which a number of mulatto children emerged, the so-called "children of the festival". Until the fall of communism, Moscow had only two universities: the Moscow State University (MGU) and the Lumumba University named after the leftist Congolese leader. This university taught Russian and Marxism to all revolutionaries of the Third world; they undertook a special training with the KGB while they were studying or afterwards.

In your personal experience, through speech or broadcast, was it ever presented that Soviet leadership seem concerned about issues in Africa, and if so, when and what were they concerned

with?

See above

During your time in the Soviet military, did you ever operate in conjunction with forces from an African country? If so, where were they from, when, and why?

I have not served in the armed forces; I only spent two months of training as a cadet with the Military Engineer Academy Camp after graduation from an institute, after which I received a rank of Lieutenant-Engineer of reserve. Everyone who graduated had to undertake it. After the Korean War and until Afghanistan, no Russian regulars operated in conjunction with foreign forces outside the Warsaw Treaty countries and Cuba (and only during the Missile Crisis). Only military advisors participated. They lost only 8 officers killed in Mozambique, 11 in Angola, 33 in Ethiopia in war against Somali and 22 in Libya during the War against Chad [Krivosheev, *Rossia I SSSR v voynakh XX veka* (Moscow: OLMA, 2001), 542, 543].

Since your exit from the U.S.S.R., have you seen a shift in the Russian conception of Africa? If so, how?

During Gorbachev's time Russia stopped supporting African revolutionaries because of poor economic situation in Russia and because they became frustrated with meagre results that this support brought - quite different outcome from South-East Asia or Latin America. Neither Russian government, nor Russian people had interest in Africa until the last couple of years, when Putin decided to follow the Chinese lead and fill the void left by the West. His policy in Africa pursues commercial interests and is ideology free; that is why he is ready to make a deal with the most notorious regimes if Russia can gain some economical benefits. It was revealed last year that mercenaries from the Wagner Russian private military contractor company operate in the Central African Republic, certainly sent their by Putin. Russian public is totally indifferent to Africa.

In your personal opinion, which Soviet leader had the greatest impact on Africa?

Khrushchev did because he conducted this anti-colonial policy in good faith, unlike subsequent cynical leaders who sought to instigate unrest merely to distract the West to remote regions. Of course, the defeat of South African invasion by Angola would be impossible without Soviet and Cuban assistance, so in later periods this support was also important but at that time Soviets kept Neto on short leash.

Would you be available to answer follow up questions if those arise? Your participation in this has already been very beneficial and personal answers will provide a humanizing element to what is so far a very general discussion. No detail is too small, and yes/no answers are perfectly fine as well. I am curious as to your experience in this area and I am certain others will be as well.

It would be easier to talk via Skype than to write long messages.

One curious thing: In 1989, the Geophysical Institute I worked for offered me to go to Antarctica with their expedition. I agreed and undertook a month-long training in the Russian North. However, the airplane that was to fly to the Antarctic was to land in Mozambique for refueling. When KGB, that had to approve every potential expedition member, learned that my wife was Bulgarian, that is a foreigner, they decided that this marriage certainly meant that I would run away in Mozambique and prohibited my participation in the expedition.

I hope this helps a bit.

A2. Vasiley Solodovnikov interview, by Marina Latysheva.

Original Document

Marina Latysheva / Rev 14.01.2004 / “Russkie idut? Smozhet li Rossiia snova zavoevat’ Afriku”  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20131014180820/http://www.agentura.ru/experts/solodovnikov/>

Translated from the Russian by Murad N. Alizad

*“For his entire first term, Putin was reviving the symbols of Soviet Union back to life in an orderly fashion. One of the attributes of the former USSR was the influence on the internal matters of developing countries. Seemingly, the empire is gone, and so are the plans that came along with it. For example, plans concerning Africa were something that our country could bid farewell. However, the Africa Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAN) still develops recommendations for our business expansions on the Black continent. The institute attempted to discuss these recommendations with the government. Unofficially, these discussions were being held, for example with Herman Gref. And here, according to the information given by “Versiya”, the scientists of the Africa Institute gained influential supporters in the Russian Ministry of External Affairs. It is possible, that after the presidential elections, the government will decide to reattempt at “reconquering” Africa.*

*Once upon the time, the advocate for an ideology of tight friendship with Africa was the Russian ambassador in Zambia, Vasily Solodovnikov. Back in the day in places like the United States and Western Europe, he was considered behind-the-curtain inspirer of all African rebellions and a KGB agent himself— not too long ago “Versiya” also published an article on that. Nowadays Solodovnikov is the adviser at RAN’s Africa Institute and one of the leading Africanists in the nation. He told “Versiya” about the reasons for being called a spy, what the USSR was doing in Africa and what chances Russia has regarding reconquering positions in the Black continent:*

M.L: English writer Michael Nicholson, who made You a protagonist for his book “The Red Joker”, talks about Soviet operation “Red Saddle” – the division of the continent into three parts, one of which would’ve been absolutely pro-Soviet. Is that the reality, or the imagination of the writer?

V.S.: There was no operation code named “Red Saddle”. However, as an Africanist and an ambassador in Zambia, I had had a personal goal of sorts, to isolate South Africa. On Atlantic we had friendly Angola; friendly Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania. All that was left was Rhodesia and Zimbabwe to completely isolate SAR from the rest of the continent. The division of Africa to three parts was our foreign policy: Northern Arabic, the Central Tropic and the Southern Africa. Both in ethnic and geographic aspects that is a wide decision that encapsulates African division. Considering that the decolonization of Africa started from North and then spread to the central, tropical Africa, our relationship and partnership started with northern and tropical Africa.

M.L.: You were considered the ideologist of all African revolutions, also because all of the headquarters for national-liberation movements situated in Lusaka, capital of Zambia...

V.S.: Training camps for these movements were situated in Mozambique, but their representatives were in Lusaka: African National Congress of South Africa (led by Oliver Tambo); SWAPO – South West Africa People’s Organization (led by Sam Nujomo, who later became president of Namibia); ZAPU – Zimbabwean African People’s Union (led by Joshua Nkomo). The latter had training camps on Zambian territory. There were two Soviet military advisors working with ZAPU.

USSR maintained relationship with these movements, delivered them weapons, trained their commanding personnel. Therefore, they connect me to the revolutionary processes in Africa. But we never planned any uprisings. For example, when Cuban representatives were visiting my residence in Lusaka, they offered to create an exiled Zimbabwean government in Maputo (capital of Mozambique). However, things did not develop past these consultations. Even the Rhodesian leaders themselves didn’t want that. Joshua Nkomo used to say: “We don’t need your help, you just give us weapons, and we’ll manage ourselves”. And we did give weapons. That was all of our contribution.

Besides this, I was personally blamed for creating Katanga problem in Zaïre. In the mid 70’s, there was a large uprising of Katangese gendarmes against Mobutu. Partially, the rebel gendarmes came from Angola. We did not arm the gendarmes and we did not provoke them into this uprising. A legend was born then, that Zambia, Angola, Cuba and USSR were fighting on the side of these Katangese gendarmes. I was even described as an organizer of this insurrection, despite only finding out about it from the newspapers.

Overall, Americans tried to deliberately discredit me. For example, during the early 70’s, when we published the book called “Political parties of Africa”, dozens of book reviews sprung up in the West, maintaining that this was a manual for covert operations. They even attempted to prevent my appointment as an ambassador: when I first received my agrément (the consent of Zambian government for my appointment as an ambassador), it wasn’t officially declared right away. Despite this, one Zambian newspaper, guided by the CIA, reported information regarding my appointment and called it USSR’s attempt to influence Zambia and the political situation in South Africa in general. According to the international law, information is not published before a diplomat is designated as an ambassador, until the former ambassador leaves the country. This was all done, so that the secret services of western allies could conjure up a “black” dossier about me and forward it to the Zambian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result, Zambians stalled my visa approval for a long time. All this time, they were carefully studying my dossier, where I was presented as a KGB agent.

It became rumored since then, that I was in the service of the committee. This was absolutely impossible. In our diplomacy, ambassador always represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only. Of course, we had KGB and GRU servicemen in the embassy personnel. However,

I did not control professional enterprises of intelligence service agents, and they even had their own coders, since we both channeled information on separate parallel channels.

M.L.: They used to write that Soviet embassy in Zambia was a giant building, with 45 employees, where 12 of them were working for KGB. They were even reporting that you had in your office a giant portrait of Lenin, which would turn into a political map of continent with a single push of a button...

V.S.: We had an ordinary embassy. Very little, only two people from intelligence services, one from KGB and one from GRU. Our personnel overall totalled 15 people. It was a gorgeous, brand new building. Constructed under the supervision of the previous ambassador, the embassy had a large territory, with a nice park. We even noticed that my personal residence was “bugged”. Actually, specialists from Moscow only discovered this “bug” only a year after I bought my personal residence from an Irishman.

M.L.: In which African countries were we economically interested?

V.S.: Zambia, to which we delivered weapons and received cobalt in return. Republic of Guinea, where we purchased bauxites – in Russian territory we didn’t mine it. Bauxites are a raw component for aluminium, which is crucial for aircraft industry. It was also then, when our scientists of the African Institute were advising the Government Committee of External Economic Relations, offering to purchase oil from Algeria. The prime cost, and even the purchase cost of oil was significantly lower than the cost of oil mined in Northern Regions of Russia. According to our calculations, it was much more profitable for USSR to purchase oil in Africa. But they didn’t agree with us.

Finally, there were weapon shipments. Zambia was purchasing MiG’s from us – I even personally attended a show trial of a MiG-21, where we watched it together with the president of their country, in Lusaka airport. We sold them “Katyusha’s”, artillery. The shipments weren’t large scale, since the country was small and couldn’t afford paying it all at once. It was a commercial deal, and they partially paid us in cobalt.

It is curious however, that Zambia attempted to purchase weapons from the Western countries at first. England offered weapons left from World War II. They of course didn’t want that, since Rhodesia, which they had occasional border conflicts with, was equipped with extremely modern aircraft, shipped by Americans. Then Zambians asked Americans, and they refused. Only afterwards, Kaunda remembered us. We were very pleased with this deal. Zambia had currency value, since they exported lots of copper.

Besides, we were arming the rebels with weaponry. Everything regarding that was a charity. ZAPU, for example, was getting shipments of small arms, mainly Kalashnikov guns. They didn’t pay us, didn’t even promise us anything in return.

M.L.: What is happening in Africa today?

V.S.: Today, our influence in Africa is dwindling. France maintains positions in former colonies. England also feels very secure about itself in Zimbabwe and South Africa. As a rule of thumb, Americans are trying to secure absolute lordship over Africa. They already control almost everything in Central Africa. However, it is all becoming very complicated for Americans these days, since Islam is spreading even in Tropical Africa. Let's just say that the occupation of Iraq had very negative repercussions for the relations between African countries and America.

M.L: Do we still have chances to consolidate ourselves in Africa?

V.S.: Older Africans still maintain a very good opinion about USSR. Many important politicians and economists of Africa studied in our country, including from Somalia, Mozambique, and Angola. President of Angola dos Santos graduated from an institute in Baku, and his wife was Russian. Samora Machel – the first president of Mozambique, and the president of Namibia Sam Nujomo were friends of USSR. Even Jomo Kenyatta (that is the first president of Kenya), who later took pro-Western stance, studied in Moscow before the Second World War, at the Institute of East, where several future leaders of the national-liberation movements had their internships. Among the representatives of the newer generation, there are many graduates of our universities as well. They received good education and held positive attitudes towards the Soviet Union.

When USSR collapsed, we de facto left Africa. However, I assure you, that they still remember us.

Biography of V. G. Solodovnikov. Excerpts from the CIA dossier.

“Diplomatic mission of SAR, PO Box 121, tel. 70-7901, Salisbury, 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1976. Top Secret.

For Minister of Interior. Pretoria.

Solodovnikov was born on 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1918 in Ukraine. His occupation is economist, doctor of economic sciences.

On September of 1964, he was appointed as the director of the USSR Academy of Sciences' Africa Institute. He is also the representative of Soviet-African society of friendship and has the rank of correspondent-member of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Previously, he was the secretary director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations. He is one of the leading Soviet Africanists.

When he was appointed as the director of Africa Institute, western observers concluded, that he would pay more attention to the practical, not ideological questions. Previous Soviet Africanist researchers carried the seal of Marxist-Leninist dogmatism, ignoring the customs and lifestyle in Africa...

In the early 70's, professor Ulyanovsky, the secretary chief of international division of Central Committee of Soviet Socialist Communist Party, inquired Solodovnikov to commence a

research on evaluating the utilization of African women's movement in the "liberation movements". Despite this research never surfacing, there were changes to the role of African women, including their active participation in the "liberation movements", which was the accomplishment of Solodovnikov.

He is the author of several books. In May 1971, he published a book titled "Political parties of Africa", which prognosed the "victory" of religious beliefs in Africa. This book was described as the "framework for Soviet plans regarding Africa". Swiss newspaper Der Bund called this book an "alphabet of Covert operations". The book was written for internal circulation.

This man is likely one of the most important figures that were appointed a position of ambassador in Africa. Strategic positioning of Zambia is ideal for Solodovnikov, since his duties include coordination of "liberation movement" efforts, directed from Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique and naturally, Zambia.

There are unconfirmed reports regarding to his connection with KGB, and even if he isn't an agent, he is without a doubt closely associated with this organization. He had too good connections for many years, not to use them."

## A3. "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1960 to 1992"

A3-A6 were generated through the Included titles are the automatic titles generated by the report system at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. It can be found here, [http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade\\_register.php](http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade_register.php) The transfer database also produces the automatic titles provided.

Information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), <https://www.sipri.org/>

## Transfers of major weapons: Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1960 to 1992

**Note:** The "No. delivered" and the "Year(s) of deliveries" columns refer to all deliveries since the beginning of the contract. The "Comments" column includes publicly reported information on the value of the deal. Information on the sources and methods used in the collection of the data, and explanations of the conventions, abbreviations and acronyms, can be found at URL <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/armstrad/sources-and-methods>>.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

Information generated: 29 September 2020

Supplier/ recipient (R)	ordered	No. designation	Weapon description	Year(s) Weapon of order	Year delivery	of delivered	No. Comments
<b>France</b>							
R: Benin	(2)	DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	Transport aircraft	(1960)	1961	(2)	Second-hand; aid
	3	MH-1521 Broussard	Light aircraft	(1960)	1964	(3)	Second-hand; aid
	1	SA-313B Alouette-2	Light helicopter	(1960)	1962	1	Aid
	(15)	M-8 Greyhound	Armoured car	(1963)	1964	(15)	Second-hand
	(4)	M-101A1 105mm	Towed gun	(1965)	1966	(4)	Probably Second-hand
	1	DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	Transport aircraft	(1971)	1971	1	Second-hand
	3	DC-3/C-47 Skytrain	Transport aircraft	1982	1982	3	Second-hand; aid
	1	AS-350/AS-550 Fennec	Light helicopter	1983	1983	1	Aid
	1	AS-350/AS-550 Fennec	Light helicopter	1984	1984	1	Aid
	1	AS-355/AS-555 Fennec	Light helicopter	1985	1985	1	Aid; armed AS-355M version
	1	Buffalo	APC	(1986)	1987	1	CP version
	(10)	VBL	APV	(1986)	1987-1989	(10)	
<b>Soviet Union</b>							
R: Benin	2	An-26	Transport aircraft	(1978)	1978	2	
	2	Project-123	FAC	1978	1979	2	Second-hand; probably aid; Project-123K version
	(20)	PT-76	Light tank	(1981)	1982	(20)	Supplier uncertain; second-hand
	(14)	BRDM-2	Reconnaissance AV	(1982)	1983	(14)	

## A4. "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1953 to 1965"

Information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), <https://www.sipri.org/>

Weapons delivered to Egypt by the Soviet Union throughout the Khrushchev era.

### Transfers of major weapons: Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1953 to 1965

Note: The "No. delivered" and the "Year(s) of deliveries" columns refer to all deliveries since the beginning of the contract. The "Comments" column includes publicly reported information on the value of the deal. Information on the sources and methods used in the collection of the data, and explanations of the conventions, abbreviations and acronyms, can be found at URL <http://www.sipri.org/contents/amstrad/sources-and-methods>.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

Information generated: 30 December 2018

Supplier/ recipient (R)	ordered	No. designation	Weapon description	Year(s) Weapon of order	Year delivery	of delivered	No. Comments
<b>Soviet Union</b>							
R: Egypt	(200)	BTR-152	APC	1954	1955-1956	(200)	
	50	IS-3	Tank	(1954)	1955-1956	(50)	Probably Second-hand
	(100)	SU-100	Self-propelled gun	1954	1955-1956	(100)	Probably from Czechoslovakian production line
	(200)	T-34-85	Tank	1954	1955-1956	(200)	From Czechoslovakian production line
	(350)	BTR-40	APC	1955	1955-1959	(350)	
	20	Il-14	Transport aircraft	1955	1955-1956	(20)	
	39	Il-28	Bomber aircraft	1955	1955-1956	(39)	B-228 version from Czechoslovakian production line
	(2)	MiG-15	Fighter aircraft	(1955)	1956	2	Second-hand
	86	MiG-15bis	Fighter aircraft	1955	1955-1956	(86)	From Czechoslovakian production line
	100	MiG-17	Fighter aircraft	1955	1956-1957	(100)	From Polish production line
	(2)	P-10/Knife Rest	Air search radar	1955	1956	(2)	
	(2)	P-20/Tokan	Air search radar	1955	1956	(2)	
	18	Project-183/P-6	FAC	(1955)	1956-1960	18	
	4	Project-254/T-43	Minesweeper	(1955)	1956-1959	(4)	
	2	Skorv	Destroyer	(1955)	1956	2	Second-hand
	(30)	P-15/88-N-2A	Anti-ship missile	(1961)	1962-1967	(30)	For Project-183 (Komar) FAC
	8	Project-183/Komar	FAC	(1961)	1962-1967	(8)	Second-hand
	2	Project-255/T-301	Minesweeper	(1961)	1962	2	Second-hand
	2	Skory	Destroyer	(1961)	1962	2	Second-hand
	8	SO-1	Patrol craft	(1961)	1962-1967	(8)	Second-hand
	(500)	3M6 Shmel/AT-1	Anti-tank missile	(1962)	1963-1965	(500)	
	(15)	An-12	Transport aircraft	(1962)	1963-1965	(15)	
	(30)	BM-14 140mm	Self-propelled MRL	(1962)	1963-1964	(30)	Second-hand
	(60)	IS-3	Tank	(1962)	1962-1967	(60)	Second-hand, IS-3M version
	(115)	MiG-21F-13	Fighter aircraft	(1962)	1963-1967	(115)	
	1	Project-613/Whiskey	Submarine	(1962)	1962	1	Second-hand
	18	S-75 Dvina/SA-2	SAM system	1962	1963-1967	(18)	
	(48)	SM-4-1B 130mm	Towed gun	(1962)	1963-1964	(48)	Possibly Second-hand
	(450)	V-750/SA-2	SAM	1962	1963-1965	(450)	
	(30)	BM-24 240mm	Self-propelled MRL	(1963)	1964-1965	(30)	Probably Second-hand
	(300)	D-20 152mm	Towed gun	(1963)	1964-1970	(300)	
	(200)	D-30 122mm	Towed gun	(1963)	1965-1969	(200)	
	(75)	KS-1/AS-1	Anti-ship missile	(1963)	1963-1964	(75)	S-2 (SS-C-2b Samlet) coast defence version
	4	SS-C-2 CD\$	Coast defence system	(1963)	1963-1964	(4)	
	(150)	T-55	Tank	(1963)	1964-1966	(150)	
	(600)	BTR-50	APC	(1964)	1965-1968	(600)	Possibly second-hand
	8	Mi-6T	Transport helicopter	(1964)	1965	8	
	4	Project-106/MP-10	Landing craft	(1964)	1965	4	
	(30)	T-34-85	Tank	(1964)	1965	30	Second-hand
	25	ASU-57	Self-propelled gun	(1965)	1965	(25)	Probably second-hand

## A5. "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1950 to 2017"

Information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), <https://www.sipri.org/>

Weapons delivered to Guinea.

### Transfers of major weapons: Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1950 to 2017

Note: The "No. delivered" and the "Year(s) of deliveries" columns refer to all deliveries since the beginning of the contract. The "Comments" column includes publicly reported information on the value of the deal. Information on the sources and methods used in the collection of the data, and explanations of the conventions, abbreviations and acronyms, can be found at URL <http://www.sipri.org/contents/armstrad/sources-and-methods>.

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

Information generated: 29 December 2018

Supplier/ recipient (R)	ordered	No. designation	Weapon description	Year(s) Weapon of order	Year delivery	of delivered	No. Comments
<b>Czechoslovakia</b> R: Guinea	(45)	T-34-85	Tank	(1958)	1959	(45)	Supplier uncertain; second-hand
<b>France</b> R: Guinea	(2)	AML-90 Lynx	Armoured car	(1989)	1990	(2)	For Presidential Guard
<b>Russia</b> R: Guinea	4	Tigr	APV	(2011)	2011	4	
<b>South Africa</b> R: Guinea	(10) (32)	Mamba Puma M-26	APC APC	(2003) (2013)	2003 2014	10 (32)	
<b>Soviet Union</b> R: Guinea	(6) (10) (15) (16) (8) (20) (10) (8)	BTR-152 BRDM-1 BRDM-2 BTR-40 T-54 PT-76 BTR-50 BTR-60PB	APC Reconnaissance AV Reconnaissance AV APC Tank Light tank APC APC	(1958) (1968) (1970) (1970) (1974) (1977) (1981) (1983)	1959 1969 1971 1970 1974 1977 1982 1983	(6) (10) (15) (16) (8) (20) (10) (8)	Possibly second-hand; supplier uncertain Supplier uncertain; probably second-hand Supplier uncertain Second-hand; supplier uncertain Supplier uncertain; probably second-hand Second-hand; supplier uncertain Second-hand; supplier uncertain Supplier uncertain; second-hand
<b>Ukraine</b> R: Guinea	(4)	BRDM-2	Reconnaissance AV	(1998)	1998	4	Second-hand
<b>Unknown supplier(s)</b> R: Guinea	(2)	BMP-1	IFV	(2005)	2005	(2)	Second-hand

## A6. "Transfers of Major Weapons: Deals with Deliveries or Orders made for 1953 to 1991"

Information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), <https://www.sipri.org/>

Arms transfers to Somalia from the U.S.

### Transfers of major weapons: Deals with deliveries or orders made for 1953 to 1991

**Note:** The "No. delivered" and the "Year(s) of deliveries" columns refer to all deliveries since the beginning of the contract. The "Comments" column includes publicly reported information on the value of the deal. Information on the sources and methods used in the collection of the data, and explanations of the conventions, abbreviations and acronyms, can be found at URL <<http://www.sipri.org/contents/armstrad/sources-and-methods>>.

**Source:** SIPRI Arms Transfers Database

**Information generated:** 29 September 2020

United States							
R: Somalia	448	BGM-71 TOW	Anti-tank missile	(1981)	1982	448	For use on M-113A1 APC
	(15)	Commando V-150	APC	(1981)	1981	(15)	Second-hand
	(24)	M-113	APC	(1981)	1982	(24)	Second-hand; no. could be 50
	(3)	TPS-43	Air search radar	1981	1982-1984	(3)	\$26 m deal
	(300)	FIM-43C Redeye	Portable SAM	1982	1982	(300)	Second-hand; US emergency aid during Ogaden War (between Ethiopia and Somalia)
	100	M-47 Patton	Tank	(1983)	1985	(100)	Second-hand tanks returned to USA and transferred to Somalia; aid
	18	M-198 155mm	Towed gun	(1985)	1986	(18)	