

May 13, 1977

**CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on Visit of Mengistu
Haile Mariam to Moscow**

Citation:

"CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on Visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow", May 13, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SAPMO, J IV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav M. Zubok
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Summary:

CPSU CC to SED CC, Information on Visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow regarding Soviet-Ethiopian relations, Somali-Ethiopian tensions, and the opinion that the Soviet Union should support Ethiopia

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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Confidential

On the results of the official visit to the Soviet Union of the Ethiopian State Delegation led by the Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) of socialist Ethiopia Mengistu Haile Mariam

In the course of negotiations the Soviet leaders and Mengistu discussed the issues of bilateral relations and relevant international questions.

The main results of the visit were covered in the Declaration signed on the initiative of the Ethiopian side about the foundations of friendly relations and cooperation between the USSR and the Socialist Ethiopia, and in the joint communique, as well as in the published news releases on the course of the visit.

Beside the declaration about the foundations of friendly relations and cooperation between the USSR and Ethiopia, [the two sides] also signed an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation, a consular convention, a protocol on economic and technical cooperation which envisages assistance to Ethiopia in [construction] of a number of industrial and agricultural objects, provision of buying credit and the commission of Soviet experts.

According to the wishes of the Ethiopian side, an agreement was signed on some additional deliveries of armaments and military equipment to Ethiopia.

The visit of the Chairman of the PMAC Mengistu Haile Mariam to the USSR had an obvious goal - to establish direct personal contacts with the Soviet leaders and to ensure the support of the Soviet Union for the cause of the protection and development of the national-democratic revolution in Ethiopia.

On May 6 of this year Mengistu was received by General Secretary of the CC CPSU L.I. Brezhnev. At this talk he informed L.I. Brezhnev on the activities of the new Ethiopian leadership who took a course toward the socialist orientation of the country. On behalf of the Ethiopian people the Chairman of the PMAC expressed profound gratitude for the assistance the Soviet Union renders to Ethiopia in the defense of [its] revolutionary conquests.

L.I. Brezhnev underscored our principled position with regard to progressive transformations in Ethiopia and declared that the Soviet Union, which from the very beginning came out in favor of the Ethiopian revolution, intends to continue this course and to give, as much as it can, political, diplomatic, and other forms of assistance to the new leadership of Ethiopia. L.I. Brezhnev drew Mengistu's attention to the fact it was important, in order to advance the revolutionary process, to create a party of the working class, the intention that the leader of the Ethiopian state had voiced, and to the necessity to activate the international affairs of Ethiopia with the aim of foiling the encroachments of imperialist and other reactionary forces. L.I. Brezhnev expressed concern about the continuing deterioration of relations between the two progressive states that are friendly to us - Ethiopia and Somalia, and pointed to the urgent need to take measures for the improvement of these relations.

Mengistu voiced profound satisfaction with the meeting and the frank, comradely character of the talks.

During negotiations with N.V. Podgorny, A.A. Gromyko, and other Soviet comrades

the head of the Ethiopian delegation informed them about the roots of the Ethiopian revolution and its course at the present stage, about internal and external difficulties the new leadership of the country experiences today. Mengistu said that the Ethiopian leadership stands on the platform of Marxism-Leninism and regards the Ethiopian revolution as part of the world revolutionary process. He stressed his intention to create a working class party in Ethiopia. However, he said, the Ethiopian revolution is going through a complicated, one can even say, critical phase. Rightist, as well as ultra-leftist elements, are rising, de facto, in a united front against the revolution. They unleashed a virtual civil war in some provinces of the country. These actions of domestic counterrevolution are linked to the activities of imperialism and other external reactionary forces directed against the new Ethiopia. Mengistu underlined that a special role in these coordinated activities belong to the anti-Communist regime of Numeiri, and behind its back lurk reactionary Arab countries, first of all Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The head of the Ethiopian delegation said that Ethiopia will not overcome external and internal counterrevolution alone, and for that reason it relies on support on the part of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. He expressed a wish to develop all-faceted cooperation with the USSR.

Mengistu supplied detailed information on the policy of the Ethiopian leadership on the nationalities question, on his intention to resolve it on a democratic basis in the framework of the unified multinational state. The Ethiopian side judges that the separatist movement in Eritrea, which receives massive support from the Arab countries, acquired a reactionary character after the victory of the national-democratic revolution in Ethiopia.

Mengistu spoke with concern about the position that the Somali leadership took towards the Ethiopian revolution. He favored normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Somalia and the united efforts of the two progressive states in the struggle against imperialism and reaction.

The Soviet side expressed understanding of the difficulties the new Ethiopian leadership encounters inside the country and outside its frontiers. The Ethiopian delegation was informed about the measures the Soviet leadership undertakes in support of Ethiopia in the international arena, in particular in connection with the anti-Ethiopian position of the ruling circles of Sudan and to the arms supplies to the Eritrean separatists from a number of Arab states. The Soviet Union was said to continue henceforth to give assistance to the new Ethiopia.

[The Soviet side] explained our position on major international issues, including the relaxation of tensions, the situation in the South Africa, in the Middle East; in response to the Ethiopian side we informed her about Soviet-American and Soviet-Chinese relations. Mengistu spoke about common views between Ethiopia and the Soviet Union on the crucial issues of international affairs. He said that he shared the viewpoint of the Soviet side regarding the essence of differences between the USSR and China and, on his part, pointed out to the difference of positions between Ethiopia and China on a number of issues, including the situation in the African Horn.

Mengistu gave the impression of a serious figure who firmly believes in his cause, although he still lacks sufficient political and state experience. In particular, it seems that he and other Ethiopian leaders do not devote due attention to vigorous measures in the international arena in order to foil the attempts to drive Ethiopia into international isolation, [and] to win over world public opinion, first of all in the progressive states of Africa.

Mengistu and the members of the Ethiopian delegation estimated highly the results

of the negotiations in Moscow and expressed thanks for the understanding with which the Soviet side addressed their needs. They expressed the opinion that the results of their visit will contribute to the further improvement of Soviet-Ethiopian relations.

We in the Soviet Union believe that the visit and talks with the Ethiopian state delegation was fruitful and useful.

The Ethiopian leadership, in our opinion, should be granted the support of the Socialist Commonwealth.

[Source: SAPMO, J IV 2/202/583; obtained and translated from Russian by Vladislav M. Zubok.]