

December 23, 1976

Message from Yugoslav Embassy in Beijing, 'From Our People in Addis Ababa - For Your Information'

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Summary:

A Yugoslav diplomat offers a detailed view of the increasing level of formal contact between the Soviet Bloc and Ethiopia in mid-1976, also witnessing the local competition between the Chinese and the Soviet Bloc and comparing their modes of conduct.

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Federal Secretariat for Foreign Affairs SFRY

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SFRY Embassy - Beijing

From our people in Addis Ababa – for your information:

The activity of the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European countries in Ethiopia has been felt greatly as of late. A number of economic, trade, technical, social and sports delegations, including the exchange of football and other sports teams, have taken place. The signing of contracts on technical and cultural cooperation and exchange of goods are continuing on a permanent basis. At present, there is an Ethiopian military delegation in the USSR. These days, the East German foreign minister and trade delegations from Romania, East Germany and Czechoslovakia visited Ethiopia. The very energetic competition between China and the Soviet Union in the exchange of delegations and sports teams to Ethiopia is most interesting. Both countries sent delegations almost at the same time, striving to maintain a mutual balance. The presence of numerous delegations from the Eastern countries seriously disturb the Western states, although they do not attempt to respond in kind. The number of delegations from Western countries visited Ethiopia is almost negligible.

In an effort to expand and consolidate its presence, the Chinese appear modest and unobtrusive. Russians are rougher and intrusive, with careful placement conditions. Ethiopian press, especially in the Amharic language, very often call on the Chinese experience and quotes Mao Zedong. However, the Ethiopian intelligentsia seriously shies away from the application of the Chinese experience and resists such efforts.

According to of our embassy, the continuous exchange of delegations, for now, has more of a formal character. Ethiopia expects more material assistance from the socialist countries which was absent. For its part, Eastern European countries have shown no particular enthusiasm in providing assistance. They are more in favour of extending technical and expert assistance to further Ethiopia's development.

The adaptation of these aspirations will certainly have a serious impact on the subsequent development of relations and the expansion of cooperation. This is even more so especially if one takes into account the Western willingness to provide assistance and loans in order to preserve the acquired positions and extend its own influence.

[signature]

Gaspari