This underestimation flows from an ideological characterization of nationalism as a class-based rather than a class-transcending ideology, an epiphenomenon destined to disappear as the bourgeoisie loses its power to more “progressive” classes. Hence, for example, the USSR clearly underestimated the depth of animosity dividing the Ethiopians and Somalis in their proposal to establish a federation linking the two.

Despite these reservations, Porter’s work remains the best-researched and most solid account of Soviet policy towards Third World conflicts currently available.

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In the past decade, Soviet military activity in the Third World has clearly taken precedence over its previous attempts to win influence there through economic assistance and trade. Almost forgotten now, following Soviet military activity in Angola, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan, was the stir created by Nikita Khrushchev’s challenge to the West to compete economically in the Third World, or the largesse (by Soviet standards) which he lavishly distributed for purely political purposes to such countries as Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana, and India. The change in Soviet policy may be explained in several ways. First, military assistance up to and including the provision of Soviet combat troops has proven to be a more efficacious instrument of Soviet influence than economic aid, particularly since recipient nations in the Third World often proved willing to take economic aid from both East and West, without giving political obedience to either. Second, as Soviet economic growth slowed in the post-Khrushchev period, Moscow was less able to provide economic assistance and increasingly sought to tie its aid to projects which directly benefitted the Soviet economy. Finally, the Third World itself became far more complex. Some states, like India, developed an industrial base that no longer required imports of relatively unsophisticated Soviet machinery. Others, like Iraq, whose industrial development prospects were greatly enhanced by the rise in oil prices, lessened their dependence on the Soviet bloc since they now had the hard currency to buy higher quality equipment from Western suppliers. A third group of states like Egypt and Sudan switched patrons from Moscow to Washington. Finally, other countries such as Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia were becoming relatively poorer, both compared to other Third World countries and to the United States and the Soviet Union.

As the economic status of Third World nations became more complex and as the limits on Soviet ability to influence economic developments in the Third World became more obvious, changes took place in the way Soviet academics and, to a lesser degree, Soviet political leaders viewed the Third World. These changes are analyzed with clarity and thoroughness by Elizabeth Valkenier. The book is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, she analyzes the evolution of Soviet trade and aid policy from the Khrushchev era where the political impact of Soviet economic assistance was the primary consideration, through the 1965-74 period when Soviet priorities shifted to Soviet economic gain, to the post-1974 period which she describes as a “slump.” During this period there was a relative drop in Soviet and Soviet bloc trade with less developed countries (LDC’s), as exemplified by the share of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance in Iraqi imports which fell from 28 percent in 1972 to 7.9 percent in 1975 (p. 23) as the oil rich Arab state increased its imports from the West.

Valkenier’s second and third chapters which deal with Soviet views of the world economy and of development theory are more controversial. Relying almost exclusively on statements by Soviet academicians, she contends that the Soviet Union has rejected the
theory of two antagonistic world markets held by both Stalin and Khrushchev in favor of a new concept of a single world economy. While Valkenier asserts (p. 38) “what is going on at present is an intense debate over the degree to which the all-inclusive, global aspects of a single world economy should be accommodated in general theory and incorporated into Soviet policies,” she leaves little doubt that the globalists are winning the debate. One can, of course, question her approach of citing Soviet academicians to indicate changes in Soviet policy, and Valkenier’s defense of her methodology may not satisfy those analysts who wait for statements by high-ranking Soviet leaders in Pravda or Izvestia before agreeing that the USSR has made a basic policy change.

Nonetheless, if one grants Valkenier her two basic assumptions: 1) “while scholars and researchers do not make foreign policy either in Moscow or Washington, their analyses, nevertheless, do reflect and contribute to the mental climate in which foreign policy decisions are made” (p. x, Introduction) and (2) “...the increasingly articulate expression of independent opinion by specialists does provide an insight into the problems, dilemmas, and alternatives faced by the Soviet leadership in trying to improve the functioning both of the Soviet domestic economy and of foreign trade in a situation where global interdependence is as important a factor as systemic competition.” (p. 39; my emphasis) then she has very persuasively argued that a major rethinking of Soviet policy toward the Third World is, in fact, underway. Not only is the concept of globalism replacing the earlier concept of two antagonistic world markets, but even the hitherto sacrosanct emphasis on rapidly building up the state sector in Third World countries is being questioned. Thus, overemphasis on the state sector is being criticized by Soviet specialists as “ultra-revolutionary haste” in development (p. 78); the balance of private and public ownership during the USSR’s own New Economy Program (NEP) period of the 1920’s are being cited positively (pp. 80; 88); and even Western investment in LDC’s is no longer universally condemned (pp. 81-84). Indeed, Valkenier goes so far as to assert in her chapter on development theory that “the need of developing countries to intertwine with the world market (which, after all is dominated by the capitalist economies) is by now accepted by all (Soviet) scholars (p. 84), and (Soviet) scholars are also taking a more balanced approach to Western development theory and even to the Third World activities of Western multinational corporations (p. 94). In sum, Valkenier contends, with the blessings of Party officials who themselves are puzzled by developments in the Third World, Soviet scholars are now taking a far more sophisticated view of the multistructural nature (mnogoukladnost’) of society and economy as a framework for analyzing the diversity inherent there.

In her final chapter, Valkenier analyzes the changing response of the USSR to the Third World’s demand for a new international economic order (NIEO). While initially hoping to exploit the drive the NIEO in its influence competition with the West in the Third World, Valkenier notes that Moscow, whose economy was increasingly integrated into an acknowledged single world market (p. 110), soon “lost zest for a radical restructuring of international economic relations for the benefit of the developing countries.” Perhaps even more important, Moscow openly rejected the idea of advocates of the NIEO that the socialist and capitalist countries were equally responsible for the plight of the LDC’s. Valkenier then examines Soviet ideas for an international division of labor where capitalist, communist, and Third World states would all play their roles, with the Third World states primarily as raw material producers (p. 124). While Valkenier’s discussion of the Soviet view of the International Division of Labor is part of her larger analysis of Moscow’s response to the NIEO, her analysis might have been more complete had it examined the debate within the Soviet bloc from 1958 to 1962 over the “Socialist International Division of Labor,” where Albania resisted the idea of being the “orchard” of socialism and Romania successfully opposed pressure by Moscow to specialize in raw material production, since many of the Third World countries’ objections to Soviet de-