From the 1950s, the process of nation-building began for newly independent African countries. While some were drawn to opportunities for popular mobilisation or capitalism, others attempted to implement what is broadly regarded as 'African socialism'. This political ideology involved the rejection of western finance, as well as western ideas about social, economic, and political development. The superpowers, both the US and the USSR, were keen to offer their own 'models' of achieving rapid economic development in Africa. In this seminar, we will first examine Soviet and American approaches to development before examining what 'African socialism' meant to its advocates, as well as to its opponents. Latham and Iandolo give an introduction to American and Soviet models of development respectively. Read Speich's piece on Kenya, alongside short piece from Tom Mboya and Kwame Nkrumah for African perspectives.

Class/Essay questions

1. How different were Soviet and Western approaches to economic development in Africa?
2. What was 'African socialism' and why did many oppose it?
3. How successful were Soviet and American development initiatives in Africa during the 1960s? Answer with reference to THREE examples
4. 'The Cold War in Africa was a contest over different visions of economic modernisation.' Discuss

Class readings

Michael Latham, Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present (Ithaka: Cornell University Press, 2010), pp. 65-68, 75-90

Primary Documents:
Tom Mboya, 'African Socialism', Transition, 8 (1963), 17-19

TASK: Look at the photographs of Ghana’s architecture in the Calvert journal, available from http://www.calvertjournal.com/features/show/5407/red-africa-ghana-architecture-communist-europe

What does this architecture represent?

Further reading

Akira Iriya, Global Community: The Role of International Organisations in the Making of the Contemporary World (Berkley, CA, 2002)

On Modernisation Theorv and US Policy in Africa
The largest nuclear weapon the world had ever seen. Called the Tsar of Bombs (King of the Bombs), it released the equivalent of over 50 megatons of TNT, which was...
more than all the explosives used during WWII combined.[4] The Soviet Union detonated its first atomic bomb on August 29, 1949, at the Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan. The event ended America's monopoly on atomic weaponry and launched the Cold War.[4] CIA agents during the Cold War used a method of communication based on how their shoelaces were tied. Lecture and Seminar Programme. Term 1 Week 8. Africa and the Cold War - Term 1 Week 8. Capitalism, Socialism or African Socialism? Struggles over Economic Growth. The superpowers, both the US and the USSR, were keen to offer their own ‘models’ of achieving rapid economic development in Africa. In this seminar, we will first examine Soviet and American approaches to development before examining what “African socialism” meant to its advocates, as well as to its opponents. Latham and Iandolo give an introduction to American and Soviet models of development respectively. Read Speich’s piece on Kenya, alongside short piece from Tom Mboya and Kwame Nkrumah for African perspectives. Class/Essay questions.