

PLS 343

Politics of Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 4, Lecture 2:
Independence

Recap

- Second colonial occupation
- Decolonization

Plan for today

- Formation of Africa's postcolonial states-system
- Formation of Africa's postcolonial states

Formation of Africa's postcolonial states-system

- Pan-African movement
- All-African Peoples' Conference, Accra, 1958
- Organization of African Unity, 1963
- Attempted international federations:
 - Mali Federation
 - East African Federation
 - Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union
 - Senegambia



Kwame Nkrumah

Formation of Africa's postcolonial states

- Momentous decisions to retain:
 - The nation-state as the exclusive unit of organization
 - Colonial-era boundaries (with some exceptions)



Causes of the acceptance of the nation-state and colonial-era boundaries

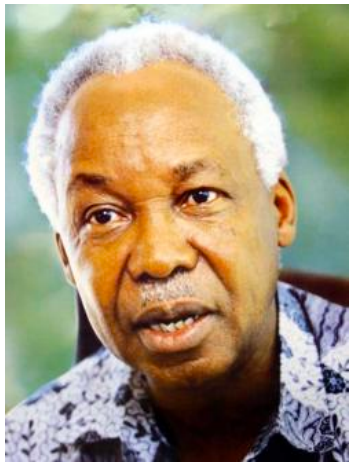
- The nation-state as a powerful template:
 - Association with modernity
 - International legitimacy and organization membership
 - Elite interests:
 - Sylvanus Olympio: “Political unification is only desired by those political leaders who believe they could come out on top in such unions.”
 - Olympio, Sylvanus. 1961. “Reflections on Togolese and African Problems,” in *Africa Speaks*, ed. James Duffy and Robert A. Manners. Princeton: D. Van Nostrand: p. 75.
- Existence of administrative structures
- India’s partition



Sylvanus Olympio

Models of early postcolonial state-making

- African socialism: Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Ahmed Sékou Touré in Guinea, Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso
- 'Conservatism': Jomo Kenyatta, Hastings Banda, Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire



Nyerere



Sékou Touré



Sankara



Kenyatta



Banda



Houphouët-Boigny

Other independence-era decisions and their consequences

- Limited investment in state capacity given state-system protections —>
 - Concentration of state power in strategic and profitable areas
- Maintenance of colonial-era administrative structures —>
 - Decentralized despotism
- Weak formal links between the state and society —>
 - Neopatrimonialism
 - Politics of ethnicity
 - Conflict
- Economic strategies

Takeaways

- Consequential reinforcement of colonial legacies and some attempts at meaningful change