

Lukasz Stanek, "Architects from Socialist Countries in Ghana (1957–67): Modern Architecture and *Mondialisation*," *JSAH*, Volume 74, no. 4 (December 2015): 416–442

In "Architects from Socialist Countries in Ghana (1957–67): Modern Architecture and *Mondialisation*" Lukasz Stanek documents the attempt by nations aligned with the Soviet Union to create a multi-national building culture that would express the ideals of the socialist bloc in a distinctly modernist architectural vocabulary. Using Ghana as a case study, Stanek demonstrates how the newly independent nation's leadership of the Ghana National Construction Corporation (GNCC) imported eastern European technical expertise and construction technologies, largely from Poland, to work with Ghanaian architects and planners to develop building complexes that were intended to embody the nation's post-colonial identity. Stanek shows that modern architecture was not simply imposed on Ghana by its Soviet benefactors, but rather that the nation's Western-trained design leadership sought continued access to contemporary design ideas and construction methods, and with the alignment of the nation to the socialist world, that access came through a network of designers based in eastern Europe. With the deposition of first President Kwame Nkrumah in 1966, Ghana became a leader of the non-aligned movement, and the international networks of design and construction expertise thus broadened.

Stanek's article deftly reinforces the idea that among those working in newly independent nations such as Ghana, modern architecture was not strictly associated with either the West or the Socialist world; it was simply the best-practice means of producing quality construction that carried little identification with the previous colonial regime. Stanek's narrative is well told and is developed from an impressive variety of archival sources located on three continents. By examining the network of designers and technicians working in post-independence Ghana, Stanek has made an invaluable contribution to our understanding of mid-twentieth century African architectural production.

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