

AMERICANIZING AFRICANIZATION:
THE CONGO CRISIS, 1960-1967

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides a concise account of U.S. intervention in the Congo between 1960 and 1967, explaining the decisions made by U.S. policymakers and their Congolese counterparts. It argues that the intervention occurred not only because of a commitment to contain the communist threat, but also because of a commitment to a liberal ideology, one devoted to remaking the world in the image of the United States. By confining the meanings of liberty, equality, and development to an American framework, however, the United States found itself in competition with local leaders' visions for their own country. As a consequence, the intervention not only failed to deliver freedom to the Congolese people, but tragically abetted Mobutu Sese Seko's rise to power, a dictator whose kleptocratic rule removed any hope for meaningful development over a thirty-year period.