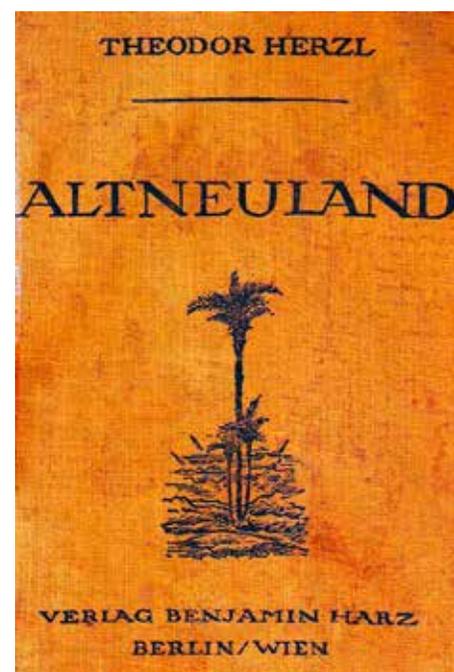


PROXY COLONIALISM THE EXPORT OF ISRAELI ARCHITEC- TURE TO AFRICA

Zvi Efrat

“I work here,” he added a moment later, [...].
“At what, if I may ask?” inquired Friedrich.
The scientist’s eyes grew dreamy as he replied, “At the opening up of Africa.”
The visitors mistrusted their ears. Was the seeker after scientific truth a bit mad?
“Did you say, ‘at the opening up of Africa’?” asked Kingscourt, suspicion gleaming in his eye.
“Yes, Mr. Kingscourt. That is to say, I hope to find the cure for malaria. We have overcome it here in Palestine thanks to the drainage of the swamps, canalization, and the eucalyptus forests. But conditions are different in Africa. The same measures cannot be taken there because the prerequisite—mass immigration—is not present. The white colonist goes under in Africa. That country can be opened up to civilization only after malaria has been subdued. Only then will enormous areas become available for the surplus populations of Europe. And only then will the proletarian masses find a healthy outlet. Understand?”
Kingscourt laughed. “You want to cart off the whites to the black continent, you wonder-worker!”
“Not only the whites!” replied Steineck, gravely. “The blacks as well. There is still one problem of racial misfortune unsolved. The depths of that problem, in all their horror, only a Jew can grasp. I mean the Negro problem. Don’t laugh, Mr. Kingscourt. Think of the hair-raising horrors of the slave trade. Human beings, because their skins are black, are stolen, carried off, and sold. Their descendants grow up in alien surroundings despised and hated because their skin is

differently pigmented. I am not ashamed to say, though I’ll be thought ridiculous, now that I have lived to see the restoration of the Jews, I should like to pave the way for the restoration of the Negroes.”
Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land*¹ [1902] [fig. 1]



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Africa is deeply rooted in the Zionist imagination. In *Old-New Land*, a second-rate utopian novel, which is nonetheless commonly referred to as the clairvoyant founding text of political Zionism, Jews self-identify as both the ultimate exiles of the world (hence compelled to identify with the “negro problem”), and as modernity’s migrant-experts, the nomad agents of reform and progress. The scientist’s lab in this text is an unequivocal metonymy of the Jewish colony. Its allusion could hardly be mistaken: If the Jews are to settle, it is in order to resolve the universal demographic and territorial conundrum. Literary Zion, here, and in other seminal visionary texts of the time, is by and large an institute for colonial training, whereby agronomy, epidemiology, and *Arbeitswissenschaft* are rehearsed, and universal issues of immigration and redistribution of the means of production, are debated.

Such is the genre of utopian fiction; it draws its textual pleasures precisely from the flow of slippages between the insatiable colonialist libido and the prudent reformist agenda. And as for the writer of the utopia, he is destined to eternal perplexity as we may learn from the epilogue of *Old-New Land*, “I have meant to compose an instructive poem. Some will say it contains more poetry than instruction. That it has more instruction than poetry will be the verdict of others.”

A year after the publication of *Old-New Land*, at the 6th Zionist Congress in 1903, Herzl announced his Uganda Plan for a provisional Jewish state in East Africa. The Imaginary spilled over into the Real. After negotiations with the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, an “investigatory commission” was sent to examine the proposed territory and the Jewish Territorialist Organization (JTO) was formed by supporters of the African interim Plan. Between 1903 and 1905 expeditions were sent to locations in Mesopotamia, Cyrenaica (Libya), and Angola. Herzl died in 1904. The “territorialists” (perhaps, ironically, the last non-territorial Zionists) proved to represent only a contested minority within the Jewish assembly. The poetry of “the opening up of Africa” would become instructive only fifty years later with the work of emissary planners, engineers, and architects from the newly formed State of Israel.

The work of Israeli planners and architects in Africa and Asia—an activity remarkable in its relative scope and distribution for a small developing country—was a direct byproduct of Israeli diplomacy in the “Third World” during the 1950s and 1960s. The specter of political and economic isolation, which only increased following Israel’s exclusion from the first All Afro-Asian conference in Bandung (1955), impelled Israel to seek recognition and legitimacy and to establish networks of relationships with the new nations of the world. In the framework of such a diplomatic strategy, which often assumed a quasi-spiritual and missionary character, Israel turned to countries in Asia and Africa, chosen according to several criteria: first, they were in the early phases of independence at the time; second, they were seeking assistance to attain their goals of modernization; and third, they had not as yet taken a stance in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israel offered itself, and indeed was perceived, as an agent of modernity and progress. But more importantly, Israel was seen as a country that had itself recently been de-colonized, attained independence, and garnered expe-



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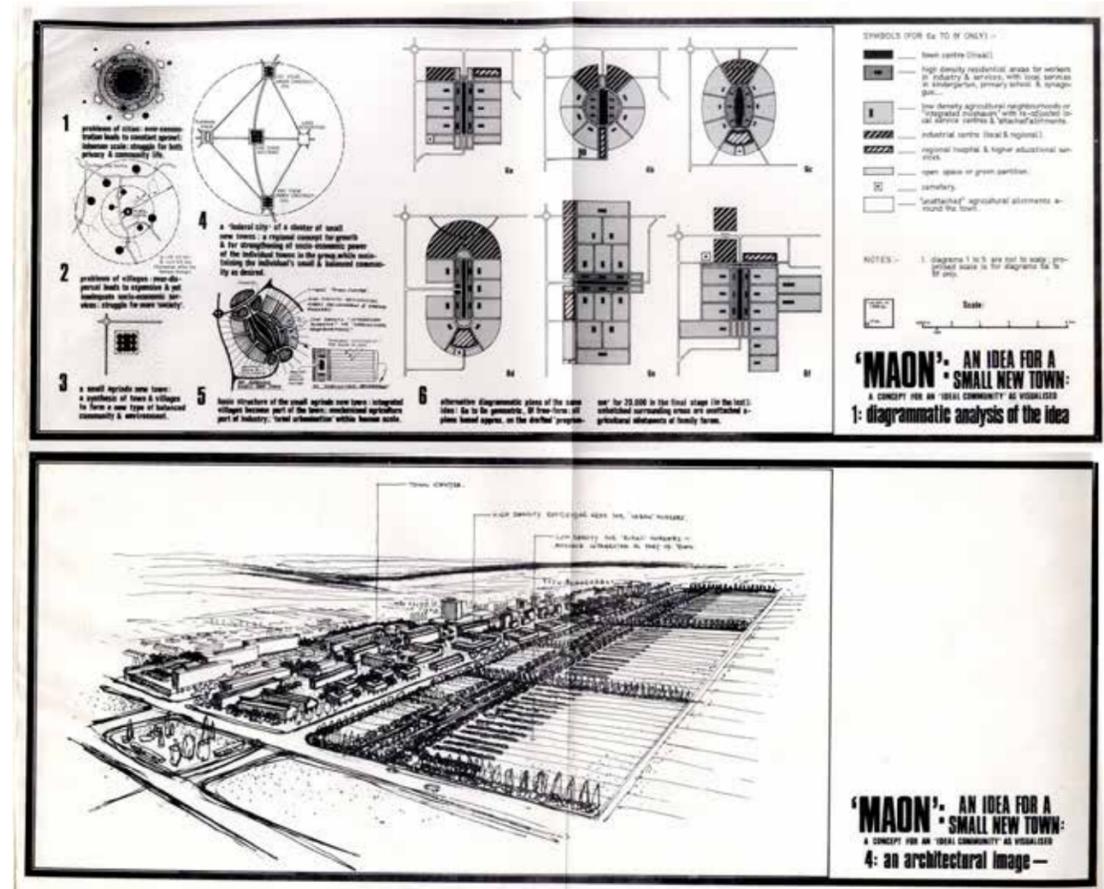
rience in the problems besetting developing countries. Moreover, Israel’s relative political and economic weakness enabled the receiving countries to accept its aid without the risk of entering into the kind of dependency that came with sponsorship by the large powers, which were then at the height of the Cold War.

The export of architecture and planning, even if executed by private companies or individual consultants, was performed in the context of governmental aid and cooperation programs, devised in 1952 by then foreign minister, Golda Meir, in the hopes of gaining political support at the UN assembly in return. These aid programs began in Asia, specifically in Burma, and then spread to Africa. No less than twenty-three official Israeli institutions were involved in these programs, coordinated by the Agency for International Development Cooperation (Mashav) of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²

By 1957, Israel had established diplomatic relations with thirty-three African nations, practically all of the black nations of sub-Saharan Africa, and had rapidly transformed into a major factor in the continent. To get a sense of its efforts, by 1964, the Israeli ratio of such experts to its total population was almost twice that of all the OECD countries combined. However, the so called “honeymoon period” of the Israeli-African relationship soon came to an end. These relations were broken off in 1973 as a result of Arab pressure and the oil crisis.³ In her autobiography, published just two years after the collapse of her African doctrine, Golda Meir wrote:

I am prouder of Israel’s International Cooperation Program and of the technical aid we gave to the people of Africa than I am of any other single project we have ever undertaken. [...] We did what we did in Africa not because it was just a policy of enlightened self-interest—a matter of quid pro quo—but because it was a continuation of our most valued traditions.⁴ [fig. 2]

In Africa, Israel chiefly proffered agricultural know-how and focused specifically on introducing new technologies and crops; establishing agricultural farms and training centers; organizing rural institutions, and planning comprehensive regional and rural development projects.⁵ But Israel was also engaged in other fields, such as medicine and public health, workers unions and youth organizations, social work and community development, and certainly security and military training. In addition, African



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students arrived in Israel to receive training in various courses and seminars at the Afro-Asian Institute for Labor Studies, established by the Israeli Labor Federation.

The Israeli ministries of foreign affairs and of housing, in collaboration with the Jewish Agency,⁶ established a planning institute especially to provide architectural and infrastructural services for developing countries. It was called the IPD (Institute of Planning and Development), and it supplied work for local planners and experts who had just completed work on the many national development missions and extensive public works of the 1950s in Israel. The IPD was headed by senior Israeli planners, and its commissions included regional plans for the nations of Chad (1963) and Sierra Leone (1965). These plans were attempts at the application or re-interpretation of Israel’s master plan of 1950 (a.k.a. “*The Sharon Plan*”) in Africa. By promulgating their local experience in managing the interrelations between urban centers and the agrarian hinterland, these experts functioned as conduits, transmitting modern regional theories, such as Walter Christaller’s “Theory of Central Places,” which were still intellectually fashionable during the 1960s.

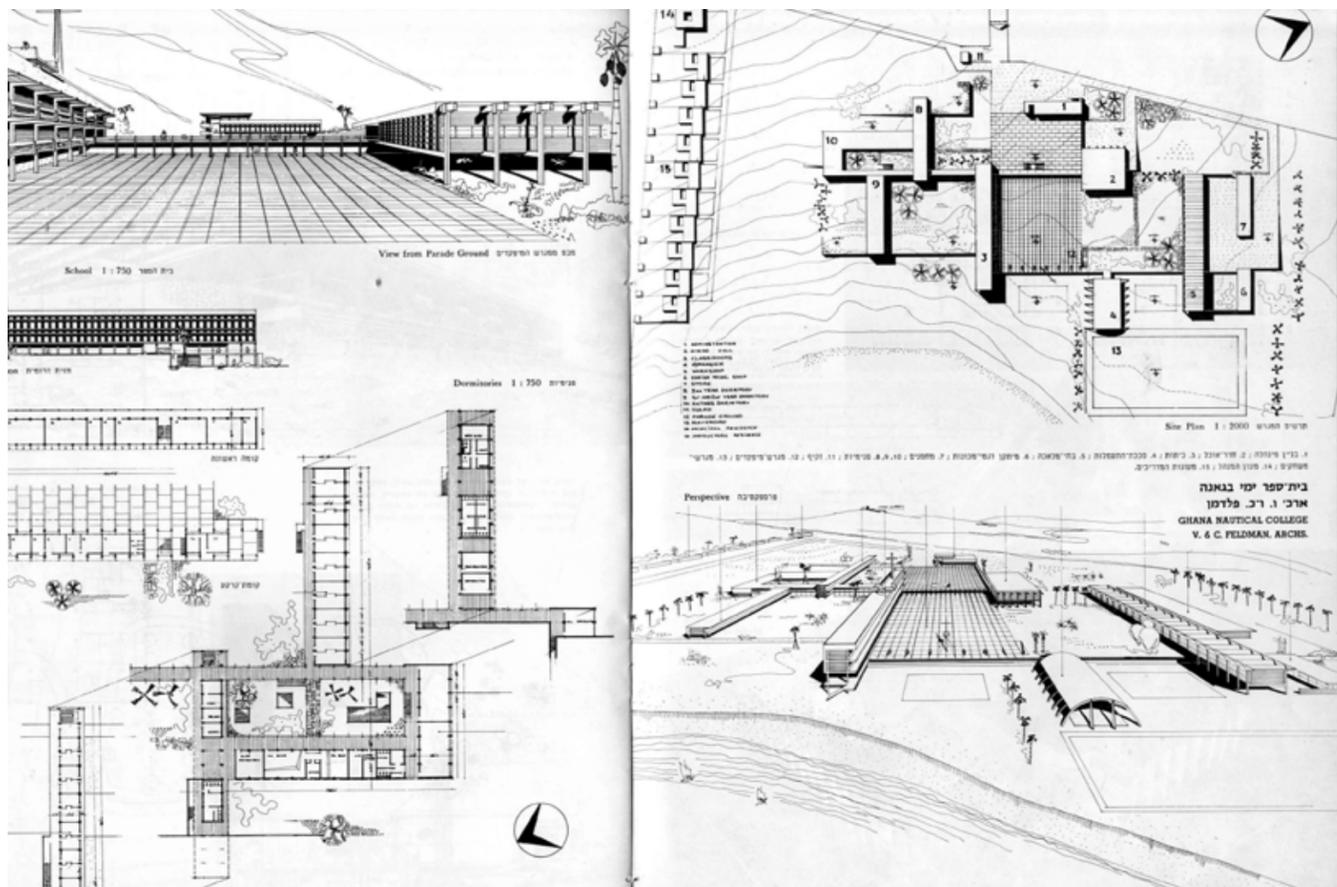
The migration of doctrines, whether original or derivative, found its epitome in the proposed export of the Israeli collective-settlement prototypes, the Kibbutz and the Moshav, to African countries that were seeking models for developing peripheral areas and intensive agriculture. Such settlements (the Moshav model, which emphasized cooperativism over collectivism, was generally the preferred one) were built in Nigeria, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Zambia, Swaziland, and Ethiopia. Zambian prime minister, Kenneth Kaunda, for example, described the Moshav

as the building block in his country’s national effort to come as close as possible to a “grassroots development.” [fig. 3]

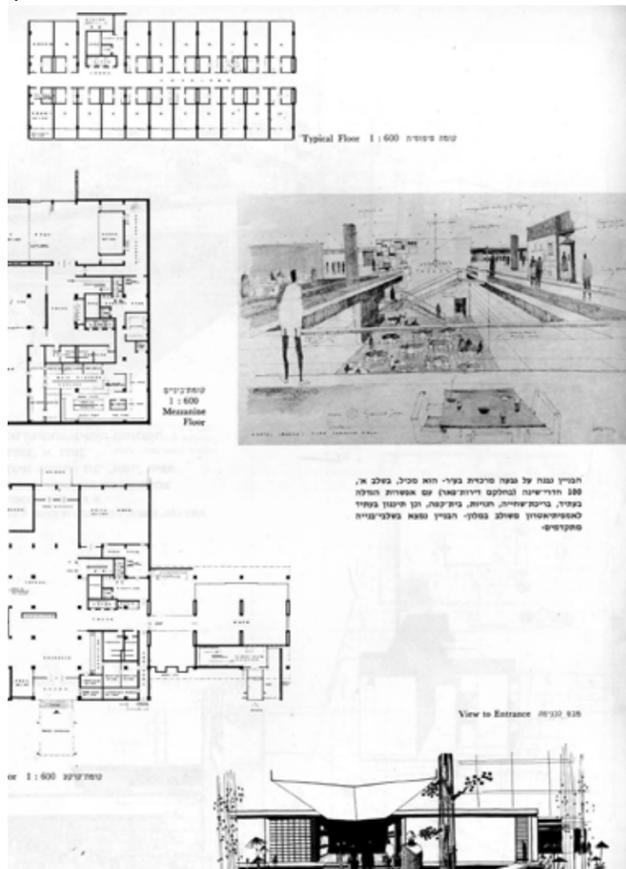
The export of large-scale projects to Africa presented an opportunity to divert knowledge and surplus means and expertise that had accumulated in Israel during its first two formative decades, as the large waves of immigration were slowing down.

Moreover, these projects constituted a kind of laboratory for the development of Israeli entrepreneurial culture, even if they were still in the name and under the auspices of the State. In fact, some of the more spectacular projects done by Israeli companies in developing countries during the 1960s could never have even been considered locally, given the constraints of the Israeli welfare state of the time. It was only about a decade later that the political climate, and with it the construction market, in Israel changed to enable developers and architects to make local use of their entrepreneurial experience abroad. Indeed, some of the African endeavors contained the seeds of the consolidation of large-scale Israeli private-developer culture. Although conducted by and large under the auspices of the State, these projects nonetheless took place under competitive conditions, which soon thereafter would begin to be manifested on the Israeli city itself. [figs. 4/5]

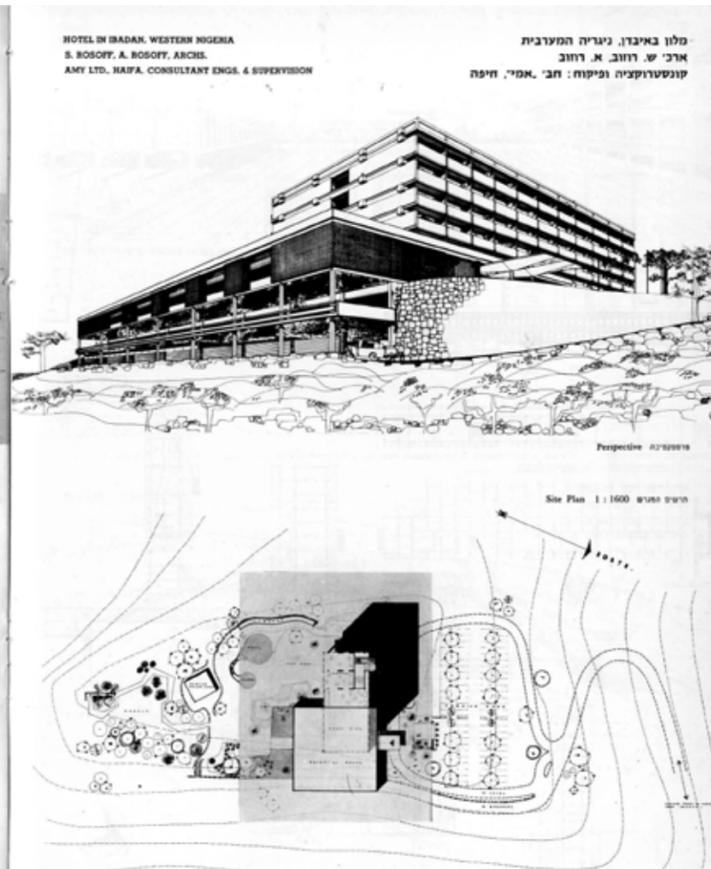
Infrastructure such as roads, airports, and water and drainage systems, were built primarily by the Solel-Boneh company, which established partnerships and opened up agencies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Solel-Boneh was a public company that belonged to the Histadrut, and in effect was controlled by the government and was used to achieve political objectives. Golda Meir aspired to turn



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Solel-Boneh into a for-profit company, but not ostentatiously so: "I used Solel-Boneh as a tool [for Zionist propaganda]; I don't want you to lose money over there, but for God's sake, no big profits."⁷ Solel-Boneh's strategy was to break into new markets through the establishment of joint companies, which, after an initial start-up and mentoring period of five years, would be transferred to the host country. In this way, administrative and technical knowledge was transmitted, enabling the developing countries to carry out large projects that met international standards on their own, thus lessening their dependency on foreign companies. Such partnerships were established in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Ivory Coast. After the nationalization of the daughter companies of Solel-Boneh in Ghana, the corporation changed its "missionary" policy, and in 1964 began to work according to purely commercial considerations.⁸ In many of Solel-Boneh's international projects—in particular public structures, hotels, housing projects, and military facilities—the planning itself was also done by Israeli architects. [fig. 6]

In his autobiography, *Kibbutz + Bauhaus: An Architect's Way in a New Land*, Arieh Sharon dedicates a chapter to the topic of planning in developing countries, from 1960. This chapter contains in fact only several schemes for hospitals and one fairly elaborate built project—the University of Ife in Nigeria—but it appears essential to the book as though a biography of an Israeli architect of the period could not be considered complete without a portfolio of projects in developing countries, some impressions of encounters with exotic cultures, and certain comments about tropical architecture. Before interpreting the contextual and pretextual circumstances of Israeli professional involvement in Africa on the whole, let us read closer in Sharon's autobiographical chapter. The prologue may sound both righteous and presumptuous to a foreign reader:

Israelis have tried to contribute to the progress of new nations. The similarity of the problems makes the Israeli experience very useful to the countries concerned. Our planners and builders have applied their knowledge in the developing world.⁹

What allows Sharon to speak for Israelis in general and to introduce his own private work with such broad statements, is the fact that, after years as head of the Planning Department at the Labor and Construction Ministry and later at the Prime Minister office, he personifies the apparatus of national planning.

After a short description of a hospital scheme designed for developing countries, which is based on a flexible repetitive pavilion system with "a layout that may either be compact and dense for hot and dry countries, or loose and dispersed for hot and humid countries," [fig. 7] Sharon turns to recount his "most important challenge" in foreign territory, the building of Ife University in Western Nigeria, a project for which work lasted almost two decades (1960–1978). What makes this story epic is Sharon's full engagement with the preliminary geographic, demographic, and infrastructural considerations of the Nigerian government. He was first commissioned to advise on the choice of site for the future university, surveyed sixteen medium-sized towns and compiled data on their socio-

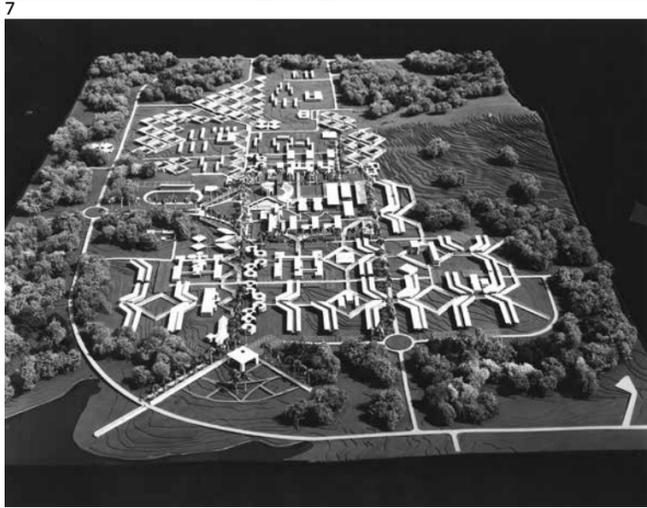
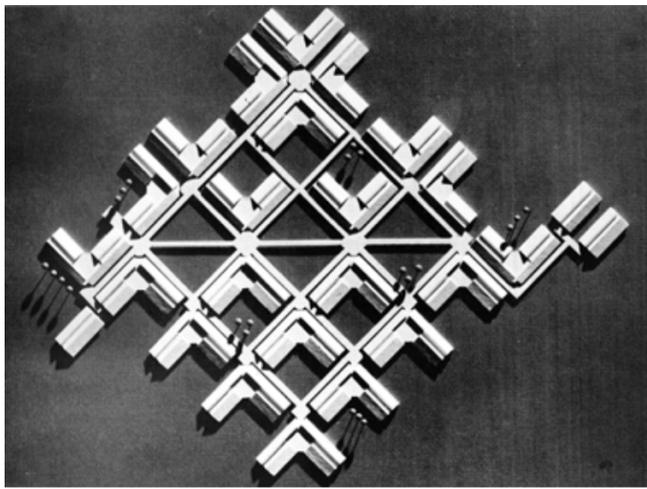


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economic structures and their services, amenities, and communication networks. In his report to the Nigerian government he indicates that:

The town of Ife seemed to be the most appropriate site, considering the basic development factors and the existing services of water supply, electricity and tele-communication. [...] Ife lies within the high-forest belt of the region, 800 meters above sea level. Its climatic conditions of rainfall, temperature and humidity, can be regarded as favorable. [...] The town is centrally located in the western region and favorably connected with other towns. [...] Of special architectural interest is the Ife museum, exhibiting world-famous bronze heads. In Ife originated the fine terracotta sculptures, which had been evident only in the ancient Nok culture, and it is therefore regarded as the cradle of Yoruba culture.¹⁰

Following Sharon's report, the Nigerian government decided to send a delegation, consisting of "the ministers of culture and Labor, the leader of the Opposition, several professors of the future university and the advising architect and town planner," to study the plans of some British, American, and South American universities. The visit in the new university in Mexico City aroused a negative feeling of uncalled for enormity. "Somehow each of us had in mind a smaller university, more human and intimate." But, "the delegation was nevertheless strongly impressed by the great frescoes on the walls, painted by the famous Mexican artists Diego Rivera, Orosco and Siqueiros." This is the moment when Sharon reveals his sources of inspira-



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tion and builds up his atavistic alibi:

Later on, during the Ife construction, I was able to exploit these impressions by proposing sculptural Yoruba elements in the Ife university buildings. But the greatest lesson was given to us by the Aztecs' and the Mayas' old towns, the perfect architectural example of an urban ensemble, where the pyramidal temples, piazzas and sacred courtyards meet in such a convincing synthesis of order and space relations.¹¹

The delegation's next visit was Brasilia, where "contrary to the sterile emptiness between the public buildings" designed by Niemeyer, "we saw the compactness of the residential super-blocks looking into one another." The last visit was to Israel, where the campus of the Hebrew University in Givat Ram, Jerusalem, had just been completed and the delegation's impression of it was positive. "It was obviously the result of the simple character of the buildings, courtyards and gardens and the modest scale of teaching programs and goals." [figs. 8–10]

As Sharon relates, then, the Givat Ram Hebrew University campus, one of the most prolific modernist projects in Israel and a prime initiation site of the post-war generation of local architects, is the Ur-Form of the Ife University campus. Its *Sachlich* rigor, small size, and efficient circulation, interwoven patios and gardens, covered walkways and parallel north-south elevations, will be exported to the Nigerian wooded countryside. Interestingly enough, its very compactness was considered both practically desirable and culturally contextual, "We agreed with the professors that, in view of the local conditions and customs [...] the layout of the campus [...] should be as compact as possible," Sharon recalls.¹² Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, in her thorough study of the architecture of Ife University campus, observes that the compact yet flexible character of Sharon's scheme for the campus was inspired by both Sharon's earlier work, and indigenous urban fabric:

Adopting a variant of the loose grid scheme was, moreover, akin to the succession of courtyards of the traditional *afin*. In addition, the imposing campus entrance gate and sculptural secretariat gate connote, in their monumentality, the importance of the gate in both Yoruba palatial architecture and shrines. Thus, the choice of layout for the campus's main core closely followed modernist schemes, yet addressed local traditions of planning and architecture.¹³

Ben-Asher Gitler seems to be convinced that Sharon had genuine interest in both traditional and modern Nigerian art, which he collected and readily used as a depository of images, motifs, and gestures. "The concrete facades of Oduduwa Hall were painted with white abstract and geometric form [...]. These abstract murals recall Yoruba wall paintings [...]. The circle-and-triangles pattern applied to the stage façade, as well as the abstract shapes of the piazza-facing one, translate abstract Yoruba forms and repetitive patterns into a modern idiom."¹⁴ However, Ben-Asher Gitler points at the mechanisms of appropriation and reification of native art at work here and explicates the shortcomings of decontextualization: "The reduction of Yoruba formal vocabulary and its translation into clear

geometric planes, that seem to 'float' on the wall in the Oduduwa Hall murals, clearly indicates a purely formal adaptation [...]." The appearance of local art "in a novel architectural building type created an entirely new discursive space, where local art no longer directly related to the cultural spaces and realities implicitly attached to it."¹⁵

Apparently, then, the Ife campus holds such a seminal place in Sharon's portfolio not because he regards it a derivative adaptation of Israeli modernism, but indeed since he holds it to be a paradigm shift in his own oeuvre towards a more culturally inquisitive and environmentally sensitive architecture. And if his intellectual and emotional attraction to the native cultures of Africa is fairly subdued in his memoirs, his newfound fascination with functionalist methodology for adapting to the climatic conditions brings him back to the conception of architecture his former teacher Hannes Meyer taught him at Bauhaus Dessau. The text introducing the project in his autobiography not only describes climatic parameters as the major determining factors in the design process, but also explicates his own creative contribution—the inverted pyramids—in relation to the body of work of Western, mainly British,¹⁶ architects in Africa in the 1960s:

One of the main planning considerations was to relate the building design to the climatic factors. Most of the public buildings in Nigeria are oriented from east to west, their main elevations facing north and south, thus being protected from heat and glare. This also ensures cross ventilation by prevailing breezes, coming mainly from the south. Many of these buildings erected by English or local architects use as sun protection either concrete canopies and frames around the windows, or louvers and precast ornamental elements around the terraces. We proposed to make the buildings self-protecting against the monsoon rain and the intensive sun and glare by cantilevering the floors one over another. The humanities building was designed accordingly as a series of reverse pyramids along a climatic and functional utility principle. [...] This solution proved useful and efficient, because all the continuous openings [...] are protected and open to catch the breeze along the whole elevation line. [...] In subsequent buildings, we used a double pyramidal building system, also ventilated vertically by open interior courtyards. Most of the buildings are raised on pillars and interspersed by open terraces, to facilitate cross-ventilation. Thus the shaded, open spaces on the ground floor were connected directly to the surrounding garden areas.¹⁷

Indeed, photographs of the built campus, showing well-shaded and ventilated passages framed by the buildings' skeletons and shells, support Sharon claims for structural, rather than applicative approaches to climate-responsive architecture. [figs. 11–13] His project certainly does not rely on climate protection elements and fixtures, such as "concrete canopies and frames around the windows, or louvers and precast ornamental elements around the terraces." In this sense, his tropical endeavor diverges from the doctrinaire Israeli architecture of the 1950s and 1960s, of which he himself was one of the main articulators. The contextual sensibilities, sculptural plasticity, and climatic



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ingenuity found in Africa will henceforth inform his projects at home and spread over the entire architectural praxis of Israel in the late 1960s and 1970s. Inverted pyramids would now become commonplace, as would the integration of art and folklore in both public and private buildings.

The establishment of higher education institutions was a priority in Africa. Like the Ife University in Nigeria, discussed above, many other higher education institutions in Africa were designed by Israeli architects, among them Nsukka University, also in Nigeria (1963, designed by Al Mansfeld and Daniel Havkin), and many buildings on the campus of Haile Selassie University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1960s, designed by Zalman Enav).

Israeli architects also participated in the design of iconic government buildings in Africa, whose goal was to unite under a new national ethos the many ethnic groups that found themselves within borders arbitrarily demarcated by the colonial powers. “Tropical Modernism” was adopted as a “neutral” yet regional style, an alternative to favoring one ethnic culture over another. Dov Karmi and his team, for example, designed the parliament building of Sierra Leone in Freetown (1956–62), whose similarity to the Israeli Knesset building is not coincidental. Zalman Einav designed the palace of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia (1962) as well as the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry (1965). [fig. 14] Engineer Shmaya Ben-Avraham designed a complex structural folly for the summer palace of the Persian Shah on the Caspian Sea (1970s), whose construction was never completed.

Africa was, again, the first extensive site for private Israeli investment beyond the borders of the country—despite Foreign Minister Golda Meir’s warnings to entrepreneurs Yekutiel Federman and Moshe Meir: “I don’t want any speculation in Africa. You are going there to fulfill a national role.”¹⁸ [figs. 15/16]

[] The largest private project designed by Israeli architects in Africa was the Riviera in Abidjan, capital of the Ivory Coast. At the beginning of the 1960s, entrepreneur Moshe Meir initiated the expansion of the city along the natural coastal lagoon, to adapt it to 120,000 residents while turning it into an attractive tourist site. Israeli Architect Thomas Leitersdorf, whose own experience had been gained building on swampland in England, summoned Israeli foundations experts, who solved the problems of building on the lagoon. The ambitious project, which includes an elevated train, was planned according to advanced models of urban planning and preservation of the local culture.¹⁹ [figs. 18/19] Leitersdorf also regarded climate management as a prerequisite in his African work, as quoted in a newspaper interview: “The [architectural] language is first and foremost derived from the climate. This is a place that has 98 percent humidity and you have to orient your buildings such that they catch the breeze. By contrast, my clientele was European, so I tried to blend the axial structure of the African village with the dimensions of the Western city.”²⁰

Many more hotels and resorts were built and designed by Israelis in Africa,²¹ however Israeli-exported architecture reached its most outlandish manifestation with the Hôtel Ivoire (late 1960s) on the Riviera of the Cote d’Ivoire. [fig. 18] The architecture of the hotel (also by Thomas Leitersdorf) corresponds with elegant western

retreats, but its interior design, By Heinz Fenchel (who designed the Dan Hotels in Tel Aviv), breaks astounding new ground in exotic opulence. [figs. 19–26] An introductory essay in a catalogue of a retrospective exhibition of Fenchel’s life work refers to the Hôtel Ivoire’s eccentricities and hints at Fenchel’s training as a set-designer:

The Hôtel Ivoire and the adjacent commercial center, which were designed to draw investors and to place Abidjan on the international map, were designed in a Hollywoodesque style to include swimming pools, a casino, a conference hall, a movie theater, a supermarket, and an ice-skating rink. Every part of this monumental complex was meticulously planned, and its ceilings and walls were decorated with geometric patterns inspired by African culture. Here too, Fenchel introduced specially commissioned works by Israeli artists and craftsmen. The project was designed to give expression to the Ivory Coast’s national aspirations, and to emphasize the development and progress that characterized Houphouët-Boigny’s presidency.

The design of Hôtel Ivoire enabled Fenchel to enlarge his repertoire of forms and colors. As a European immigrant living in Israel, Fenchel constantly experienced the local dialectic between East and West. It seems that his encounter with African culture instilled in him a new sense of freedom, and a desire to fuse the world of European modernism with an abstract formal world inspired by ethnic art and by a repertoire of fragmented, a-symmetrical forms, sharp angles, and warm colors.²²

Zalman Einav, who, after completing his studies at the Technion in Haifa, studied at the Department of Tropical Architecture at the AA in London, actually moved to Ethiopia, lived there for eight years, married a local woman, established a partnership with the local architect Michael Todros, initiated the establishment of an architecture school, and helped found the journal of the local architects’ union. Aside from the prestigious projects mentioned above, on commission from the local government and aristocracy, he designed a network of post offices, schools for the peripheral areas, military bases, and apartment houses in Ethiopia—all based on labor-intensive production technologies, with light-weight prefabricated building parts, suited to the economy of the underdeveloped areas.

Israel propagated its experience in the design of low-cost mass housing through seminars held in Israel by the Housing Ministry and the Jewish Agency’s Afro-Asian Institute. –Israeli architects designed housing projects in Africa that were quite similar to those being built in Israel in the same years, only that in Africa these constituted luxury housing projects for the ruling elite. [figs. 17–18] In certain cases, Israeli architects were involved in the planning of entire cities and suburbs (in the 1970s, Yashar and Eitan, for example, planned the cities of Bandar-Abbas and Bandar-Bushehr in Iran; Einav planned a suburb of Teheran and, through a third party, a residential neighborhood in Basra, Iraq).

This architectural activity often complemented another Israeli export branch—that of military equipment



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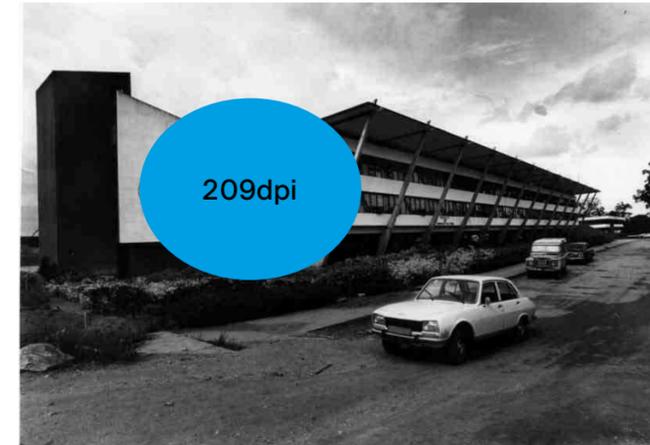
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and expertise in training of local armies. Einav designed military bases in Uganda, Iran, and Ethiopia, and the experience he gained there was implemented years later in Israel, when new bases were built after the evacuation of the Sinai. Yashar and Eitan, who took part in the design of the Israeli nuclear reactor in Dimona, designed military bases in Uganda, while in Iran they designed not only military and naval bases but also a nuclear research city, a project that was shelved in the wake of Khomeini's revolution, marking the end of the Iranian chapter in Israeli involvement in the "Third World."

In conclusion, the search for a language that would accommodate both modern architecture and African visual and material heritage was certainly not unique to the Israeli architects. As Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler maintains, "this approach to Modernism developed from the discourse of Africanism and negritude, which were an important part of cultural production in Africa from the 1950s onwards."²³ In retrospect, it remains to be asked whether post-colonial tropicalism—with its often genuine interest and commitment to explore native conditions, cultures, and identities; its soft rhetoric of "aid" and "assistance"; its participatory or collaborative operations—is indeed essentially different, less primitivist, less exploitive, less disempowering, than the earlier colonial modernism it sought to replace? And, in the particular context of the Ife campus project, was indeed the figure of Arie Sharon as remarkable as Ben-Asher Gitler claims in defining a "heightened discourse between modernism and its assimilation of a [native] culture, especially when compared to the work of other expatriate architects"?²⁴ [fig. 19]

Another look at the photographs documenting the Ife project reveals that the former Bauhaus member has finally found his own blend of geometric delirium and pagan Brutalism and concocted a rather surreal dialect of "tropical architecture." His atavistic fascination—hitherto utterly repressed—released a current of camouflage-like murals, gigantic sculptures, round openings, warped roofscapes, and overstated undulating topography, composing an astonishing setting that was promoted in postcards as "scenes from the most beautiful campus in Africa." [fig. 20]

Even if this curious composition proved to be of no imperative consequence to modern African architecture, and constituted only a marginal footnote of neo-colonial practices (in relation, for instance, to authoritative projects by Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, or Doxiadis in developing countries), it nevertheless had an enchanting effect on Israeli architecture, which always fancied exotic transposition over indigenous intricacy.

- 1 Herzl, Theodor. *Old New Land* [Alteneuland, 1902], trans. Lotta Levensohn, New York: Bloch Publishing, 1960.
- 2 See *The Role of the Israel Labor Movement in Establishing Relations with States in Africa and Asia: Documents* [English], Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1989.
- 3 Although economic links continued and even intensified on more pragmatic terms. (For a fascinating account of the changing attitude of Africans towards Israel, see Barbet Schroeder's film *General Idi Amin Dada: An Autobiography*).
- 4 Golda Meir, *My Life*, UK: G. P. Putnam Sons, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1975, p. 265.
- 5 See: Mordechai Kreinin, *Israel and Africa: A Study in Technical Cooperation*, New York: Praeger, 1964. On the Israeli aid program and its priorities, see: Joel Peters, *Israel and Africa: The Problematic Friendship*, London: The British Academic Press, 1992; Abel Jacob, "Israel's Military Aid to Africa: 1960–1966," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 9:2 (1971).
- 6 The Jewish Agency for Israel was founded following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 to facilitate economic development and especially to support the absorption of immigrants.
- 7 Dan, *On an Unpaved Road*.
- 8 See: Eliyahu Bieltzki, *Solel Boneh, 1924–1972* [Hebrew], Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1974, pp. 407–435.
- 9 Arie Sharon, *Kibbutz + Bauhaus: An Architect's Way in a New Land*, Stuttgart & Tel Aviv: Karl Kramer Verlag & Massada, 1976, p. 125.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 127.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, "Campus Architecture as Nation Building: Israeli Architect Arie Sharon's Obafemi Awolowo University Campus, Ife-Ife, Nigeria," in Duanfang Lu (ed.), *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*, New York: Routledge 2010, p. 123.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 129. Ben-Asher Gitler further mentions the sculptural elements on campus as deriving directly from African art. She quotes Harold Rubin, Sharon's project architect *in situ*: "As a native of South Africa I was aware of the sculptures which are mostly figurative but are executed in very abstract forms."
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 16 Sharon was probably referring to Maxwell Fry's and Jane Drew's project for the University of Ibadan.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- 18 According to Yekutiel Federman's son, Micky, Golda said these things to his father as he departed for Africa; Recorded in an interview with him conducted by this author in 1999.
- 19 After the fact, Leitersdorf imported the urban ideas that he had experimented with in Africa, back to Israel, and implemented them in Ma'aleh Edumim, one of the largest Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which he designed.
- 20 In Noam Dvir, "Into—and out of—Africa," *Haaretz* (September 24, 2010). Accessed at <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-end/into-and-out-of-africa-1.315438>. The final clause in this citation is included only in the original Hebrew article, from *Haaretz* September 17, 2010.
- 21 Arie Rozov, who designed the Dan-Carmel Hotel in Haifa for investor Yekutiel Federman (1959–1963), designed hotels in Ibadan (1962) and Port Harcourt in Nigeria. Zalman Einav designed hotels and thermal baths in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (1963–1965), the office of Yarmitzky, Margalit, and Marco designed the Hilton hotels in Kenya and Madagascar (1967–1971) as well as a chain of safari hotels in Tanzania.
- 22 Arie Berkowitz, "A Complex Puzzle: Heinz Fenchel—Architect and Designer," in Arie Berkowitz and Carmela Rubin (eds.), *C. Heinz Fenchel, A Complex Puzzle, Exhibition Catalog*, The Rubin Museum, Tel Aviv, 2012, p. 286.
- 23 Ben-Asher Gitler, p. 133.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 133.