

Chapter 15
Das Neue Afrika:
Ernst May's 1947 Kampala Plan as
Cultural Programme

Kai K. Gutschow

In December 1933, after being repeatedly thwarted in ambitious planning work in Silesia (1919–25), Frankfurt (1925–30) and the Soviet Union (1930–33), the German modernist planner Ernst May surprised even his closest friends when he announced that he would “withdraw to the African bush in order to think about it [all] in peace”.¹ Using monies he had earned from lucrative contracts to build vast cities in the Soviet Union, he purchased a 160-hectare coffee plantation near Arusha, in the British colony of Tanganyika (present-day Tanzania). He took his family from Moscow, through Zurich, to Genoa, by boat to Mombasa, and up to a pastoral farm in the shadows of Kilimanjaro. For the next three years he concentrated all his efforts on growing coffee and fruit in the temperate highlands of British East Africa.²

1 Anon. (1955), “Der Plan-Athlet”, *Der Spiegel* 9(19) (May 4), 36. Portions of this chapter were presented in a panel on “Architecture and Emigration” at the 1997 Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) conference in Baltimore and on a panel at the 2003 Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) conference in Louisville titled “Recalibrating Centers and Margins”. I would like to thank Mary McLeod, Susan Henderson, Eric Mumford, Mary-Lou Lobsinger, anonymous readers from the ACSA, and especially Diane Shaw for reading earlier drafts of this paper and offering instructive insights. All translations from the German are my own.

2 The most comprehensive source on May (1886–1970) is now the German Architecture Museum (DAM) catalogue: C. Quiring et al., (eds) (2011) *Ernst May 1886–1970* (Munich, New York: Wasmuth), and includes an essay by the author “Das ‘Neue Afrika’”. See also Justus Bueckschmitt’s rather uncritical and descriptive official biography: Bueckschmidt, E. (1963), *Ernst May: Bauten und Planungen* (Stuttgart: Alexander Koch). A comprehensive exhibit on newly discovered and newly acquired drawings, photographs and personal letters related to May’s African period was held at the Deutsches Architektur Museum (DAM) in 2001 and was accompanied by the documentary catalogue Herrel, E. (2001), *Architekt und Stadtplaner in Afrika 1934–1953* (Tübingen, Frankfurt: Wasmuth Verlag). Herrel’s narrowly focused work, published after the primary research for this study was completed, avoids issues of context, colonialism or culture, and did not make use of

The transition from his grand European and Soviet projects to a colonial hierarchical mind-set came quickly. He regarded the African landscape as a *tabula rasa*, where “there was no trace of visible human civilization”.³ He worked with great passion and energy to develop a productive and self-sufficient farm-landscape “from nothing”, complete with a small village and infrastructure for his many “primitive” farmhands. He wrote condescendingly that both the Indian and the African workers, “which are here at our service ... often need to be taught even the most elemental tasks”.⁴ For “spiritual” (*geistig*) and “cultural” sustenance, May wrote of how he enjoyed reading Dostoevsky, playing Furtwängler on the Victrola, or playing a trio with a “like-minded person, who would have to come seventy miles by car”. May was unwilling or unable to see and appreciate local people and culture. He saw little irony in the fact that after being forced to abandon his work in the Soviet Union because critics had attacked his planning methods as overly bourgeois and “Western”, he was unable to return to his native Germany because Nazis had condemned his architecture in Frankfurt as “primitive”, “un-German” and “bolshevik”, and because Nazi racial purity laws already had attacked his Jewish family background.⁵

May’s valuable correspondence with Lewis Mumford, relying instead on May’s letters to his wife, which often present a different tone.

3 For a good overview on May’s life as “Architect-Farmer” in Africa, see the letter from May to Martin Wagner, 20 October 1935; copy in the Gropius Nachlaß, Bauhausarchiv, Berlin (hereafter GN).

4 Letter from May to Wagner, 20 October 1935, GN, for this and the following.

5 Nazi critics denigrated *Das neue Frankfurt* as “Mr May’s small Soviet industry” and called him the “Lenin of German Architecture”, see for example, Anon. (1933), “Ein Schädling soll gutmachen”, *Deutsche Bauhütte* 37(14) (5 July), 176. General Goebbels had personally issued public warnings about May and his housing on the radio, accusing the architect of being a “Bolshevik” traitor and threatening to “burn down those lousy doghouses”, Anon., “Plan Athlet”, 35; and Bueckschmidt, *Ernst May*, 79. The attacks were not just on his architecture, but personal and racial. May himself wrote that “I could not return to Prussia for political reasons (my mother being of Jewish origin)”; letter to Lewis Mumford, 20 September 1940, in Lewis Mumford Papers, University of Pennsylvania, Folder 3194 (hereafter LMPUP). The *International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Emigrés* vol. II: 2 (New York: Sauer, 1980–83), 789, questions whether May’s mother was Jewish. Bueckschmitt and other accounts of May’s career never mention his Jewish origin, citing only the Nazi sympathizers that labelled all modern architecture as Jewish or Bolshevik. Eckhard Herrel offers the most convincing proof, a letter from a housekeeper of Ernst May’s father, written to the mother of May’s wife Ilse May, both in Germany, on 19 February 1939, warning the Mays not to send their son to Germany for architectural studies because May’s grandmother, on his mother’s side, was Jewish at birth; Herrel, *Ernst May* 11, 57. A cartoon in which May was portrayed as a Jewish dandy “Ernst Adamowitsch May” combined personal and architectural critiques. See the sketch by Heinrich Lauter in Rudolf Wolters, *Spezialist in Sibirien* (Berlin: Wendt & Matthes, 1933), 84. The sketch is often wrongly attributed to Wolters, as in Herrel, *Ernst May* 14. Although sympathetic to the socialists early on, Wolters went on to become a Nazi propaganda writer

May later retained fond memories of his first years in Africa as “Architect-Farmer”, writing in terms that suggested the traditional, rooted, *völkisch* inheritance he had tried to instil in all Germans through his garden colonies: “For the first time I was able not only to design a small region on paper, but could organically shape everything down to the smallest detail: an achievement that was physically demanding, but satisfied me immensely”.⁶ The total landscape that May created on his Arusha farm was closely related to the “self-help” settlements and the “inner-colonization” projects that he had built in Silesia and that had been discussed widely as a method of reviving Germany after the devastation of the First World War.⁷ Although not as vast as his European planning projects, he suggested a parallel to his earlier work when he wrote proudly that he had created “my own third Reich”, an alternative to the ominous conditions in Germany.⁸ This desire for control and the ability to shape an entire environment, including its native inhabitants, lies at the centre of both the colonial project and May’s ambitions for modern planning.

After three years of farming, once again restless, and ever in search of the “grand cause”, May sold his estate, moved to Nairobi – the capital of colonial British East Africa – and opened a small architectural practice. Except for a two-year internment as an “enemy alien” in South Africa during the Second World War, May was active as an architect and planner with various British partners all over East Africa for the next 16 years – simultaneously the longest, and least studied, phase of his career.⁹ Before the war, he designed several large commercial buildings and factories in Nairobi and Kampala, an English boys’ school in Arusha, and several large residences for colonists in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. During the war, shortages of materials encouraged him to experiment with several low-tech, self-help technologies such as rammed earth, adobe and hand-formed terra-cotta and concrete panels. Beginning with the cessation of hostilities in Africa at the end of 1944, May was commissioned by both European

with such books as *Neue deutsche Baukunst*, ed. Albert Speer (Berlin: Volk und Reich Verlag, 1940).

6 May, as quoted in Bueckschmitt, *Ernst May*, 81.

7 German “*selbst-hilfe Siedlungen*” were widely discussed in journals like Walter Curt Behrendt’s *Die Volkwohnung* and May’s own *Schlesisches Heim*.

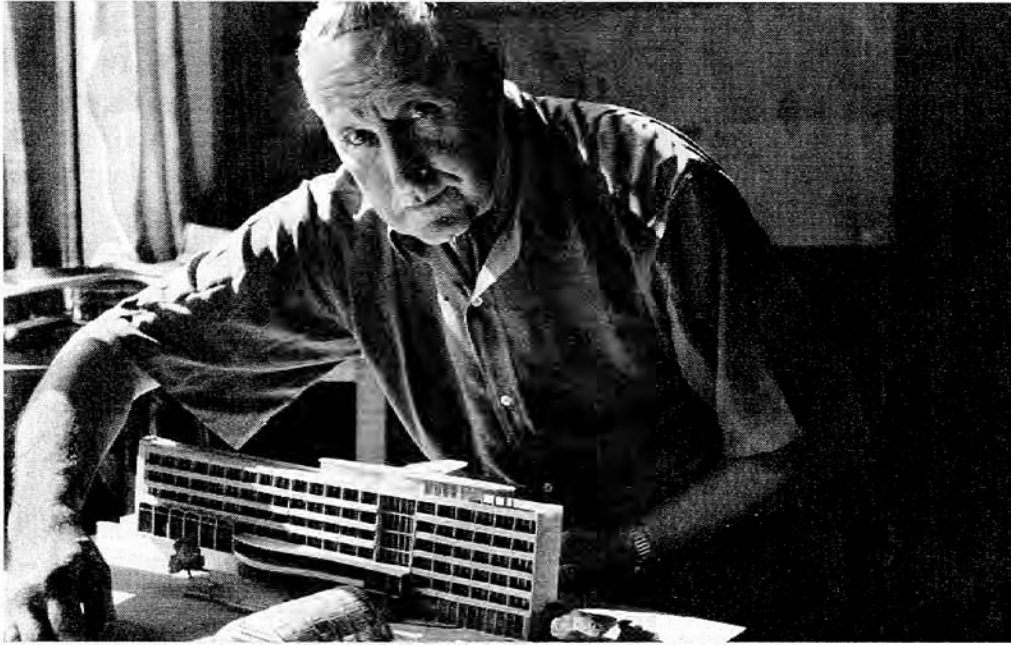
8 May, letter to Wagner, 20 October 1935, GN. May did set off these words in quotes, indicating his awareness of the irony that he was creating a personal, parallel version of the Third Reich. On May’s Silesian work, see Henderson, S.R. (1990), “The Work of Ernst May, 1919–1930” (New York, PhD dissertation, Columbia University), Part I.

9 On May’s African architectural work, see Herrel, *Ernst May*; Bueckschmidt, *Ernst May*, 79–107; Nicolai, B. (2002), “‘The Docile Body’: Überlegungen zu Akkulturation und Kulturtransfer durch exilierte Architekten nach Ostafrika und in die Türkei”, *Kunst und Politik: Jahrbuch der Guernica Gesellschaft* 4, 63–78; Sharp, D. (1983), “The Modern Movement in East Africa”, *Habitat International* 7(5/6), 311–26, esp. 313–16; May (1953), “Bauen in Ostafrika”, *Bauwelt* 44(6) (9 February), 104; and Holder, D. (1952–53), “Neue Bauten von Ernst May in Ostafrika”, *Innendekoration – Architektur und Wohnform* 61(1), 1–17.

and African clients to design and build a vast array of industrial and commercial buildings, hotel, villas and cultural institutions such as hospitals, schools, museums and churches, as well as a series of housing developments, both for colonists and the native labour force. By late 1953 the Mau Mau uprisings in Kenya were slowing down construction progress and making life for Europeans increasingly difficult. At the same time, invitations from Germany to participate in his homeland's enormous rebuilding efforts proved difficult for May to resist. In December 1953 he set sail for Germany and began yet another phase of his career planning large-scale housing projects in Hamburg, Bremen and Mainz.

An in depth analysis of May's architectural work in Africa, which lies beyond the scope of this chapter, shows that May resorted to the International Style aesthetic and functional planning methods he had helped pioneer in Germany, though now adapted to the local climatic, economic and cultural conditions. (Figure 15.1) The hot climate forced him to maximize the use of outdoor spaces, to include shade canopies and screens, and to provide natural ventilation for all rooms through simple design techniques and building orientation. Occasionally his European clients seem to have demanded a traditional cottage style that used local stone, thatched roof, and features such as deep porches that were simultaneously European and part of a larger English colonial style. Most of his work, however, was starkly modern, part of a growing body of "tropical" architecture that appeared all over the world after the war.¹⁰ Many of the formal elements, including the sun-shades, *piloti* and single-loaded outdoor corridors, had their origins in the work of Le Corbusier, especially his work in Brazil, India and North Africa. Whole "schools" of this specialized modern architecture developed in Latin America and West Africa, with subsidiary centres in South Africa, Palestine and Southeast Asia.

10 See Godwin, P. (1943), *Brazil Builds* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943); Fry, M. and Drew, J. (1956), *Tropical Architecture in the Humid Zones* (New York: Reinhold Publishing), much of which was available in the pages of the English journals *Architectural Review* and *Architect's Journal*, to which May had access in the British colonies. See also Kulterman, U. (1969), *New Directions in African Architecture* (New York: Braziller) and most recently Lauber, W. (2005), *Tropical Architecture: Sustainable and Humane Building in Africa, Latin America, and South-East Asia* (Munich, New York: Prestel).



Ein Deutscher der revolutionärste Architekt Afrikas!

Figure 15.1 Portrait of Ernst May with a model of the Oceanic Hotel in Mombassa, c. 1953. The original caption reads: “A German, the most revolutionary architect in Africa”

Source: Clipping from “Der Mann von Morgen gehört nach Deutschland”, *Neue Illustrierte* (n.d.); collection of the author.

Although May himself focused more on technical concerns and individual style than on true cultural or geographic distinctions, “tropical architecture” such as his is often discussed in terms of “New Regionalism”, hybrid or synthetic modernities, or a “tropicalist” approach.¹¹ To others, including May, this modern architecture represented an antidote to the overtly historicist styles of earlier colonial architecture, and even a “neutral”, “abstract” or “international” language appropriate for emerging and newly independent countries. But, as Fassil Demissie, Hannah Le Roux, Walter Peters, Christopher Cripps and others have begun to

11 On the mix of globalism and regionalism in African modern architecture, and the difference between a generic “tropical” architecture and a critical regionalism or “tropicalist” approach, see Tzonis, A., Lefaivre, L. and Stagno, B. (eds) (2001), *Tropical Architecture: Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy), 1–58, for a good introduction. See also Elleh, N. (2001) “Architecture and Nationalism in Africa, 1945–1995”, in Enwezor, O. and Achebe, C. (eds), *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994* (Munich, New York: Prestel), 234–45; Harris, R. and Myers, G. (2007), “Hybrid Housing”: Improvement and Control in Late Colonial Zanzibar”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66(4) (December), 476–93; and Nicolai, “The Docile Body”, 65–9.

reveal, such an interpretation is deceptive. At its core, modern architecture as practised by May and others was a European invention imposed on the subjugated colonies. These scholars have shown how the very idea of a universal, abstract or modern space, which ignored or saw the local building culture as “non-existent” or “primitive”, reinforced and promoted much of the ideology of domination, control and racial superiority inscribed in the colonial and imperial projects.¹² The so-called “purely technical” thinking that produced “cool, white space”, and a double-layer roof construction that sheltered primarily Europeans from the local heat and context were themselves cultural constructs. The “functional” layouts of spaces, programmes and circulation distinguished not only between uses and economic classes, but also discriminated between races. The privileging of the machine, both as a metaphor and for building technology, and the concept of Africa as a “laboratory” for May’s experimental ideas, all implied a Western model of industrialized modernity. Even the unacknowledged use of indigenous vernacular forms such as *piloti*, the *verandah* and the catenary curve of the native hut, or the use of decorative concrete-block sunscreens to filter out sun and local people while creating private interior domains, all failed to acknowledge the difference and significance of indigenous practices and culture within the colonial setting.

A slight twist comes from the fact that May’s dismissive indifference to local culture applied not only to Africans, but also to “local” Europeans, whom he accused of being apathetic to all modern cultural trends. In a letter to Walter Gropius, May boasted that he was able to execute all commissions “without any compromises, not because the people here are enthusiastic supporters or followers of modernism, but because they will be satisfied with whatever the architect wants to do, as long as their spatial functions are satisfied”.¹³ The implication was that even the European colonists were somewhat “primitive” and needed to be educated and acculturated to the benefits of modern architecture and planning.

As revealed even by this brief description, May’s African architectural work provides an interesting case study of the transformation of canonical modernism as it emigrated to the colonial tropics. A richer understanding of his larger ambitions is possible by investigating his profession of choice, which was *planning*, not

12 On the underlying ideological implications of modern architecture when introduced into colonial and apartheid contexts, see the valuable insights in the issue of *Social Identities* 10(4) (2004), Demissie, F. (ed.), including: Le Roux, H., “Building on the Boundary – Modern Architecture in the Tropics”, 439–53; Cripps, C. “Architecture, Race, Identity and Multi-Culturalism: A Radical ‘White’ Perspective”, 469–81; Demissie, F., “Controlling and ‘Civilizing Natives’ through Architecture and Town Planning in South Africa”, 483–507; Peters, W., “Apartheid Politics and Architecture in South Africa”, 537–47. An example of an analysis of tropical architecture, including May’s, that does not take into account this colonial theory, but relies instead on the purely technical details, is Ogura, N. (1986), “Early Modern Architecture in East Africa and its Adaptation to the Climate”, *Journal of Architecture, Planning, and Environmental Engineering*, no. 367 (September): 108–14.

13 Letter May to Gropius, 18 July 1938, GN.

architecture. As he wrote rather modestly, though with fiery ambition, to his friend Lewis Mumford: “[M]y architectural work in East Africa was rather of the individual type and not of any social significance”. Writing from his internment camp, he exclaimed:

[I long to] carry out town planning work on a large scale and of social importance. ... I am of course, loaded like a shell before exploding with creative impulse, just waiting where fate will direct this shell to. ... I am longing for the moment, when, after my quiet period in Africa, I will again have a chance to mount my town-planning horse and ride into battle.¹⁴

As in his earlier European work, May had ambitions to create more than merely functional built environments in a modern style. Through his planning he hoped to generate a new society and culture, a theoretical programme I will call *Das neue Afrika* (The New Africa), to link it to his earlier projects *Das neue Frankfurt* and *Das neue Russland*.¹⁵ May received his chance to do battle and begin to plan *Das neue Afrika* when the British colonial government in Entebbe, Uganda, hired the German architect in January of 1945, even before the end of hostilities in Europe, to design an urban extension scheme for nearby Kampala.

In Search of *Kultur*

Before looking more closely at May’s planning work for Kampala, I would like to return briefly to the question of why one of the most accomplished European modern architects of the pre-war period would “escape” to colonial Africa to muse and then pursue his planning visions. Answers to this question get at his ambitions and his preconceptions about Africa. Why, for example, did he not follow the lead of his International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) colleagues in emigrating to London or the United States of America (US)? We know he asked his friends Mumford, Gropius and Martin Wagner about opportunities in the US,

14 May, letters to Mumford, 28 September 1940, 4 March 1941, and 6 July 1942, in LMPUP.

15 On *Das neue Frankfurt*, see Mohr, C. and Müller, M. (1984), *Funktionalität und Moderne* (Cologne: Rudolf Müller); in English Henderson, “The Work of Ernst May”; and the source material from *Das Neue Frankfurt*, republished in the anthology Hirdina, H. (ed.) (1984), *Neues Bauen, neues Gestalten: Das neue Frankfurt/die neue Stadt. Eine Zeitschrift zwischen 1926–1933* (Berlin: Elefant Press). On the term *Das neue Russland*, see Elias, R. (1985), *Die Gesellschaft der Freunde des neuen Rußland* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein). May wrote several articles about his Russian work for the German-language magazine *Das neue Russland*, published from 1924 to 1932 to promote the cultural programme social experiment of the new Soviet Union.

and that they even made appeals to the Carnegie Foundation to offer May a US professorship and therewith the possibility to immigrate.¹⁶

May supplied a hint about his goals in a letter he wrote to his wife from his South African internment camp. Eager to get on with his career, and making grand plans for their future, he wrote: "I still feel that one should consider very carefully whether one should go to a country in which *culture* still seems to be very far behind European standards".¹⁷ The globe-trotting May, corresponding with colleagues all over the world about career opportunities, could have been referring to any number of countries in which he had friends and connections: Tanzania, Kenya, the Soviet Union, Japan, Israel, Turkey or his homeland, Germany. But the backward culture May was referring to was in the US.

May's disgust with America provides valuable insights about how he defined "culture" in the context of his planning work. Much of the culture of Weimar Germany, and indeed of May's earlier *Das neue Frankfurt* project, would have been unthinkable without influences from America, from cultural imports such as jazz, Walt Whitman and Frank Lloyd Wright to industrial methods such as Taylorization and Fordism that began to shape every aspect of Frankfurt life.¹⁸ May himself had been in close contact with American city planning authorities since the early 1920s, and since 1922 was a regular correspondent and great admirer of Mumford and his work on regional planning. In 1925, he toured American cities in person as part of a large German delegation that attended the International City Building Congress in New York. But like his colleagues Eric Mendelsohn and Walter Curt Behrendt, May was offended by the crass, impersonal commercialism and the pervasive capitalist ethos he experienced.¹⁹ Wagner, working in Istanbul,

16 Correspondence from Gropius and Wagner to May reveals that as early as 1937 May was inquiring about possibilities in the US. In letters on 28 September 1940 and 4 March 1941, May wrote to Mumford explicitly asking about opportunities to build on a grand scale in the "wonderful young America", LMPUP.

17 May, E., from Internment Camp No.2, Ganspan, letter to Ilse May, under house arrest in Kenya, from 18 March 1941; letter no.28, Nachlaß Ernst May, Deutsches Architektur Museum, Frankfurt (hereafter NLEMDAM), 160-902-023, emphasis is mine; also cited in Herrel, *Ernst May*, 162n.182. Four days later he wrote her again: "Even that American professorship does not attract me too much because I very much wonder if we would like America (especially if in a war) this time more than we did when we were staying there last time!"; letter no. 29, from 23 March 1941, NLEMDAM 160-902-023; also cited in Herrel, *Ernst May*, 59, 162n.183. May wrote to his wife in nearly fluent English.

18 See, for example, Cohen, J.L. (ed.) (1995), *Scenes of the World to Come: European Architecture and the American Challenge, 1893-1960* (Paris, Montreal: Flammarion, CCA); Bittner, R., Brüning, H. et al. (eds) (1995), *Zukunft aus Amerika: Fordismus in der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Dessau, Aachen: Stiftung Bauhaus, RWTH); and Lüdtkke, A., Marssolek, I., and Saldern, A.v (eds) (1996), *Amerikanisierung. Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Steiner).

19 See, for example, May, E. (1925), "Amerikanische Reiseindrücke", *Schlesisches Heim* 6(6) (June), 219-28; and with similar views Mendelsohn, E. (1926), *Amerika*.

expressed similar sentiments in a letter to May: "America, as I saw it twice, and probably it continues to be, is a place I hate with my deepest heart! Not the land! Not its opportunities! Not its people! But its ice-cold and obsessive business mentality (*Jobbergeist*), which lacks what we Germans call soul (*Seele*), and which is so satanically unfruitful in every attempt to create form".²⁰ For both May and Wagner, modern America had an antipathy to all sense of a community and culture that was so vital to their approach to planning.

In an account of his own travels to the US, May speculated that the American mentality was actually an evolution from an earlier, more benevolent "colonial" outlook.²¹ America's earliest colonial settlements, he insisted, were closer to nature and retained much of the "harmony", "spirit" (*Geist*) and "communal values" (*Gemeinschaftssinn*) of European culture. The ideological freedoms and the vast profits reaped from the land with "reckless brutality", however, soon guided the businessmen and the "mighty slaveholders" with their cheap labour to seek what May called a "strutting and pompous outer representation, not unlike the Roman villas of Palladio". The American capitalist spirit, the over-emphasis on the individual and the devastating effects of technology, he felt, only developed after this earlier state. May commented on the chaos and human devastation in America's unplanned cities, where "the masses live in wretched housing, and must perform spiritless and soul-deadening mechanical work, such that one has to wonder if not some of the former slaves were better off than many nameless, anonymous Americans living in their gigantic cities today".²² The connections to the situation that May encountered in the African colonies, where English businessmen reaped profits and materials from the bountiful land and native labour force, are not hard to make, though Africa's less-developed state gave May hope he could still effect change.

The root of May's thinking lies in several cultural ideals developed in Germany to confront the problems of social life under industrial capitalism, recently summarized by Alan Colquhoun in reference to regionalism and post-colonial architecture.²³ The first was a distinction between *Zivilization* and *Kultur*,

Bilderbuch eines Architekten (Berlin: Rudolf Mosse); and Behrendt, W.C. (1927), *Städtebau und Wohnungswesen in den Vereinigten Staaten*. 2nd edn (Berlin: Guido Hackebeil). May, Mendelsohn and Behrendt were all close friends, émigrés, and ideologically aligned with Lewis Mumford and his "organic", "regionalist" and "communal" approach to organizing, architecture, cities and society; see Mumford, L. (1938), *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich), for related critiques.

20 Letter to May from Martin Wagner, in Istanbul, from 12 March 1937; in Box IB, folder 43, Nachlaß Ernst May, Germanisches National Museum, Nürnberg (hereafter NLEMGN), copy in Akademie der Künste, Berlin.

21 May, "Amerikanische Reiseindrücke", 219.

22 Ibid., 223.

23 Colquhoun, A. (1997), "The Concept of Regionalism", in Nalbantoglu, G.B., and Thai, W.C. (eds) (1997), *Postcolonial Space(s)* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press), 15–17.

a concept that Norbert Elias has shown was the direct result of the German revolt against French cultural dominance (and military conquest) in the early nineteenth century. *Zivilization* implied an aristocratic materialism and the superficiality of the metropolis, and represented the rational, universal and technological project of modernity. It suppressed the more profound and Germanic *Kultur*, which valued the instinctual, the autochthonous, the particular, and deeply held traditions and values. Closely related is the concept of *Erziehung*, or indoctrination, a term that May used often to make clear the all-encompassing educational and culture-forming effect of good planning. A final important distinction was that between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, first made by the early sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887. Tönnies pitted *Gesellschaft*, a form of human association that was primarily rational, means-driven and independent of historical or geographical contingency (examples are bureaucracies, factories and corporations), against *Gemeinschaft*, more organic associations rooted in time, place and culture (examples are families, clans and religious groups).²⁴ Although Tönnies clearly valued the former, he theorized that the latter was an inevitable by-product of man's development, but that it could be confronted through social and cultural work.

May developed some of the most advanced examples of rationalized, technically advanced pre-fabricated mass-housing developments (*Siedlungen*) of his day, but he clearly valued *Kultur* and *Gemeinschaft* as models for the society he hoped to develop through his planning work. He saw planning as a tool to educate people and to create a communal culture, or *Gemeinschaftskultur*, among urban dwellers. When he wrote about the lack of *Kultur* in the US, or the lack of *Zivilisation* on his Arusha farm, and about how he satisfied his needs for *geistige Kultur* through European books and music, it is precisely in this opposition that his thoughts must be interpreted. For May, America had been overrun by *Zivilization*, while the African native population had neither *Kultur* nor *Zivilisation*. However, through proper planning, Africans could perhaps be helped to attain *Kultur*. As we shall see, May resorted to a balance of modern ideas and older, more traditional paradigms to accommodate the African climate, topography and culture, and to confront the racial and economic disparities he encountered in his work to create *Kultur* through planning.

Opportunities of Africa

May's desire to escape from *Zivilization*, capitalism and America does not yet fully answer why he went specifically to East Africa. Nationalism and the discovery of a community of like-minded expatriates, it seems, also played a role. The destinations May and many German émigrés with similar ideological convictions chose were far from arbitrary. Palestine, where Mendelsohn, Richard

²⁴ Ibid., 16–17.

Kaufmann and many other German architects emigrated, had been a destination for German Jews since before the First World War.²⁵ Japan and Turkey, where Taut, Wagner and Poelzig settled briefly, had been close allies of Germany in the First World War.²⁶ Mexico, Brazil and Latin America, where Hannes Meyer, Max Cetto, Paul Westheim and others found refuge, had been destinations for Germans since Humboldt.²⁷ Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika, where May escaped to, were created out of the former colony of German East Africa (Deutsch Ostafrika) in 1918. Although under English control while May worked there, the majority of Europeans in the territory were still of German descent. It also had been a popular destination for German emigration throughout the Weimar years.²⁸ May's neighbours formed a close community, a colonial outpost with transplanted culture from home, where news from the home front was shared at the local store or at the local European school. It is little wonder that, although May spoke fluent English, and certainly during the war often felt pressure to relinquish his German citizenship, he remained proud of his German heritage, and always hoped to return some day to help rebuild Germany.

Perhaps even more than an escape from *Zivilization* and a connection to Germany, May's radical move to colonial Africa was an embrace of opportunities he felt were unique to Africa. The whole continent, particularly British East Africa, was seen as a place of tremendous potential. Due to the Arab pirates who had controlled the coast from Zanzibar and the feared Maasai warriors who controlled the dry grasslands of the interior, the first Europeans (German missionaries) crossed Kenya only in the 1850s.²⁹ Germany's late entry into the

25 See, for example, Yacobi, H. (ed.) (2002), *Constructing a Sense of Place: Architecture and the Zionist Discourse* (Aldershot: Ashgate); and for German emigration more generally, Barron, S. and Eckmann, S. (eds) (1997), *Exiles + Emigrés: The Flight of European Artists from Hitler* (Los Angeles: LACMA).

26 See, for example, Nicolai, B. (1998), *Moderne und Exil: Deutschsprachige Architekten in der Türkei 1925–1955* (Berlin: Verlag für Bauwesen).

27 See, for example, Lazo, P. (2002), "Dislocating Modernity: 2 Projects by Hannes Meyer in Mexico", *AA Files* 47 (Summer): 57–63; and more generally for Latin America, Brillembourg, C. (ed.) (2004), *Latin American Architecture, 1929–1960* (New York: Monacelli Press).

28 One report claims that in 1939 there were 2,500 Germans, out of a total of 9,000 Europeans, living in Tanzania, and that even in 1947 they were still treated with suspicion for Nazi sympathies. See Buxton, D. (1950), "German Settlers in Tanganyika", *The Contemporary Review* 178 (December): 358–61. On the colourful, pioneer-like existence of life as an émigré farmer in northern Tanganyika, see the memoirs of Veit, F. (1971), *Vom Pariser Platz zum Kilimandscharo* (Pfaffenhofen/Ilm: Afrika). Although he does not mention May, Veit arrived in Kenya by steamer from Hamburg only a few months before May on 24 August 1933 and lived for over 40 years in Arusha, the same small town in which May lived from 1934–37.

29 On the history of East Africa, see, for example, Oliver, R.A. (1963–1976), *A History of East Africa*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press); Ingham, K. (1963), *A History*

colonial struggle and Britain's comparatively *laissez-faire* administrative doctrine in Africa in the early years had left the territory almost wholly undeveloped. It was only after the discovery of the source of the Nile at Lake Victoria and the construction of the railroad from Mombasa to the lake at the turn of the century that Kenya and Tanganyika began to be settled. East Africa, the mid point of the Cape-to-Cairo road and railroad, soon became a popular destination for émigrés and tourists.

Headlines from English language publications proclaimed that colonial Africa was an "emerging colossus", that it was "the strategic prize of the century", that this was "the century of Africa".³⁰ The Nazi author Karl Hänel summarized European and especially German aspirations in East Africa in 1937:

Africa is the last place (*Raum*) which is still open to Europe. Its economic importance can scarcely be overestimated ... It is the last economic levelling place ... that can provide for us the riches for which we have set up our economy and which will not again give up without a fight.³¹

While these descriptions emphasize capitalist aspirations, Edward Said, Nicholas Dirks and others have made clear that colonial ambitions and the lure of the Orient and "other" were as much the product of cultural work such as paintings and literature as any true economic or political program.³² Although May headed to Africa in search of grand opportunities, they were more cultural than economic.

of East Africa 2nd edn (London: Longmans); Ward, W.E.F. and White, L.W. (1972), *East Africa: A Century of Change 1870-1970* (New York: Africana); and the short histories in *The Year Book and Guide to East Africa 1950* Gordon-Brown, A. (ed.) (1950) (London: Sampson, Low, Marsto).

30 See, for example, Hubbard, W.D. (1928), "Africa Emerging from History", *Current History* 28 (June): 442-5; Grabowski, A. et al. (1935), "Continent of Loot", *Living Age* 348 (May): 211-21; Low, H.T. (1949), "This is Africa's Century", *Rotarian* 74 (January): 17-21; Davidson, B. (1951), "Africa: Emerging Colossus", *Nation* 173 (8 September): 187-9; Herald, G.W. (1952), "Africa, Strategic Prize of Century", *U.N. World* 6 (February): 17-20.

31 Quoted from Hänel, K. (1939), *Vom Sudan zum Kap* (Leipzig: Goldman), a piece of Nazi propaganda documenting the history of all the East African colonies and Germany's superior ability to exploit and take advantage of the potential.

32 Said, E. (1978), *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books); Said (1993), *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf); Dirks, N. (1992), *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).



Figure 15.2 Photo of Ernst Udet in front of Kilimanjaro, relaying a sense of adventure and opportunity

Source: Udet, E. (1935), *Mein Fliegerleben* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag), n.p.

In fact, May's decision to emigrate and his attitude upon arrival were sparked by literature. Through a mutual friend, May had been introduced to the memoirs of the German World War I flying ace and folk hero-turned-author, Ernst Udet, who had done aerial shows all over the world. In his book *Fremde Vögel über Afrika* (Strange Birds over Africa), Udet represented Africa as a romantic, simple, wide-open territory remote from the problems of the known world and not yet defiled by Western industrialization – much as May later saw his own farm³³ (Figure 15.2). For a 47-year-old planner still eager to realize his life's ambitions, it seemed to be a place full of potential on every level. In a country where lions attacked flying aces and bushmen approached the steel birds with war paint and spears, life looked like one big safari. May left for Africa soon after reading this book, and even took up flying himself.

33 Ernst Udet, one of the Germany's most decorated WWI fighter pilots, became a stunt and celebrity adventure pilot after the war. Films and his popular book, *Fremde Vögel über Afrika* (Leipzig: Velhagen and Klasing, 1932), portrayed Udet's flights across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It is likely that May also read Ernest Hemingway's adventure tales about Kilimanjaro from 1933 or Karen Blixen's 1937 novel *Out of Africa*, as he bought a large part of Blixen's estate outside of Nairobi and built his modern house in the landscape she describes. On Udet's life see Ishoven, A.V. (1977), *Udet Biographie* (Berlin: Neff). The reference to Udet comes from Buekschmitt, *Ernst May*, 79, and confirmed in Herrel, *Ernst May*, 13.

Unlike India and North Africa, cities in East Africa were for the most part a new colonial phenomenon, foreign to indigenous tribes, who were largely nomadic and built on a modest scale with impermanent materials. As a 1945 British report put it: "The city is a new event in Africa".³⁴ Kampala, different than European and other colonial capitals such as Rio, Algiers, Bombay, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, or even Johannesburg, seemed to present May with a comparatively clean slate. It lacked both a significant assembly of indigenous architecture and much of the nineteenth-century Victorian ornateness that dominated other colonial cities well into this century. It was the largest city in Uganda, yet little more than a frontier trading town when May arrived in 1945³⁵ (Figure 15.3).

The earliest British improvements to the area had been the draining of swamps to rid the area of the tsetse-fly menace. The first and only planning work before May was a 1929 master plan by the English colonial planner A.E. Mirams that focused primarily on the central business district between the old fort and Nakasero Hill.³⁶

34 White, L.W.T. et al. (1948), *Nairobi: Master Plan for a Colonial Capital* (London: H.M. Stationary Office), 4. See also Burton, A. (2002), *The Urban Experience in Eastern Africa, c. 1750–2000* (Nairobi: British Institute). Zanzibar, a "coastal metropolis" off the coast of Tanzania, offers a notable exception; see Harris and Myers, "Hybrid Housing".

35 On the image of the frontier town, see Banyikwa, W.F. (1990), "Signatures of Four Generations of Urban Planning in Nairobi, Kenya", *Journal of East African Research and Development* 20, 186–201. Kampala served primarily as a colonial trading centre for the hinterlands, a transfer and processing station for agricultural products bound for Kenyan ports and on to metropolitan England. On the relation of colonial production to the European "metropolitan" economy see King, A. (1990), *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy* (London: Routledge). Government and administrative functions for Uganda and Kampala were centred in nearby Entebbe, on the shores of Lake Victoria. Kampala had been gazetted as a township in 1906 and only achieved the more independent status of municipality in 1948. Prior to that it was administered and financed by the protectorate government in Entebbe; see Southall, A.W. and Gutkind, P. (1956), *Townsmen in the Making: Kampala and its Suburbs* (Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research), 4.

36 This was rather late when compared to other British colonies and a sign of Uganda's relative backwardness. See Mirams (1930), *Kampala: Report on the Town Planning and Development of ...*, 2 vols (Entebbe: Government Printer), and the summary of Mirams in Kendall, *Town Planning in Uganda*. Mirams had spent several decades working as a colonial planner in India, especially in Bombay (Mumbai). Kendall notes that prior to Mirams' plan, decisions relating to urban development in Kampala had been rather ad hoc, "rather surprising", he claims, since in Jerusalem, Malaya and Turkey town plans had been proposed much earlier, Kendall, *Town Planning in Uganda*, 19. Mirams included infrastructure such as running water, electricity and roads, and proposed building codes and use-based zoning ordinances to prevent disease, to control urban sprawl and to segregate the various populations. King, *Colonial Urban Development*; and Curtin, P.D. (1989), "Medical Knowledge and Urban Planning in Tropical Africa", *American History Review* 90(3) (June), 594–613.



Figure 15.3 View of Kampala, c. 1930

Source: Mirams, A.E. (1930), *Kampala: Report on the Town Planing and Development of ...* vol. 1 (Entebbe: Government Printer).

This “far-sighted plan” proposed zoning ordinances to control sprawl and the random growth of the city. It also laid out European-style infrastructure such as running water and electricity, and recommended the construction of a modern, non-commercial “civic centre” (more like a main street), with rigid building codes for institutional buildings such as a national theatre and museums. Mirams attempted to impose social control, order and segregation, yet he all but ignored Africans, who were relegated to living at the edge of town or in neighbouring Kibuga township.

May’s Kampala Plan as Garden City

Perhaps as a result of the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1940 and 1945, which funded many housing and planning projects through the British colonies, May was hired by the British colonial authorities in January 1945 to institute a plan for the rapidly expanding city in the post-war building and economic boom. He worked for over two years creating a theoretical framework and beginning construction projects on crucial pieces of the urban plan, especially on much-needed native housing. His plan stands out for the progressive element of being among the first in East Africa to include large settlements for low- and

middle-income Africans and Asians, especially those who had been displaced in the expansion process and now lived on the periphery – both socially and physically.

May began his Kampala plan with the observation that the existing city was “a beautiful garden city”. On the cover of his final report, as well as in the first diagram, May conceptualized Kampala as a grouping of nine separate but interrelated settlements, each on its own hill (Figure 15.4). This segmented layout, he argued, was not the product of previous planning efforts, but the natural result of the local topography. May’s schematic plan proposed expanding infrastructure in distinct new developments around the hilltops east of the existing downtown. Kololo was set aside for European and Asian inhabitants, and Naguru was strictly for Africans. A small housing tract for native workers was planned close to the Nakawa industrial zone and rail line. Overall, May’s plan was to allow for a doubling of Kampala’s total population, to about 40,000. The results of his planning work were published in his *Report on the Kampala Extension Scheme, Kololo-Naguru, prepared for the Uganda government by E. May ... Sept. 1947*.³⁷ While working on the plan, May also was commissioned to design a master plan for the nearby industrial city of Jinja, on Lake Victoria (1947), as well as a factory and office complex for the Uganda Company (1947), and later the municipal museum (1950) and a tourist hotel (1951) in Kampala.³⁸

37 Information on the Kampala plan taken from May (1948), *Report on the Kampala Extension Scheme, Kololo-Naguru, prepared for the Uganda government by E. May ... Sept. 1947* (Nairobi). This report was to a large extent summarized in May, “Bauen in Ostafrika”, 104–11; May (1947), “Kampala Town Planning”, *Architects’ Yearbook* 2, 59–63; and May (1950), “Städtebau in Ostafrika”, *Die neue Stadt* 4 (February), 60–64, reprinted in *Plan* (Zurich) 6(5) (September–October 1949), 164–8, though all references herein are to the former. See also May, Klaus (1949), “Städteplanung in Uganda (Ost-Afrika)”, *Das Werk* 36(1) (January), 8–9; and the clipping “Kampala-of-the-9-Hills”, *East African Standard* (Nairobi) n.d., in May Nachlaß, DAM. For illustrations of the plan, see Herrel, *Ernst May*, 70–5, 130; and www.planum.net/archive/may.htm (accessed: 25 March 2006). Curiously, the Kampala master plan that followed May’s, by the British colonial planner Henry Kendall, makes no mention of May and his plan, claiming that “no qualified town planner had been appointed until 1949 to deal with problems in the protectorate”, *Town Planning in Uganda* (Entebbe: Crown Agents, 1955), 23. Daniel Bertrand Monk, who has done work on Kendall’s earlier work in Palestine, has suggested to the author that Kendall hated all things German and modern, and systematically tried to erase all record of May’s planning work in the colonies. Electronic mail to the author, 26 January 1997.

38 May already had built a cigarette factory for the East African Tobacco Company (1937), and an office and commercial building in downtown Kapala (1938). For a full catalogue of May’s African projects, see Herrel, *Ernst May*.

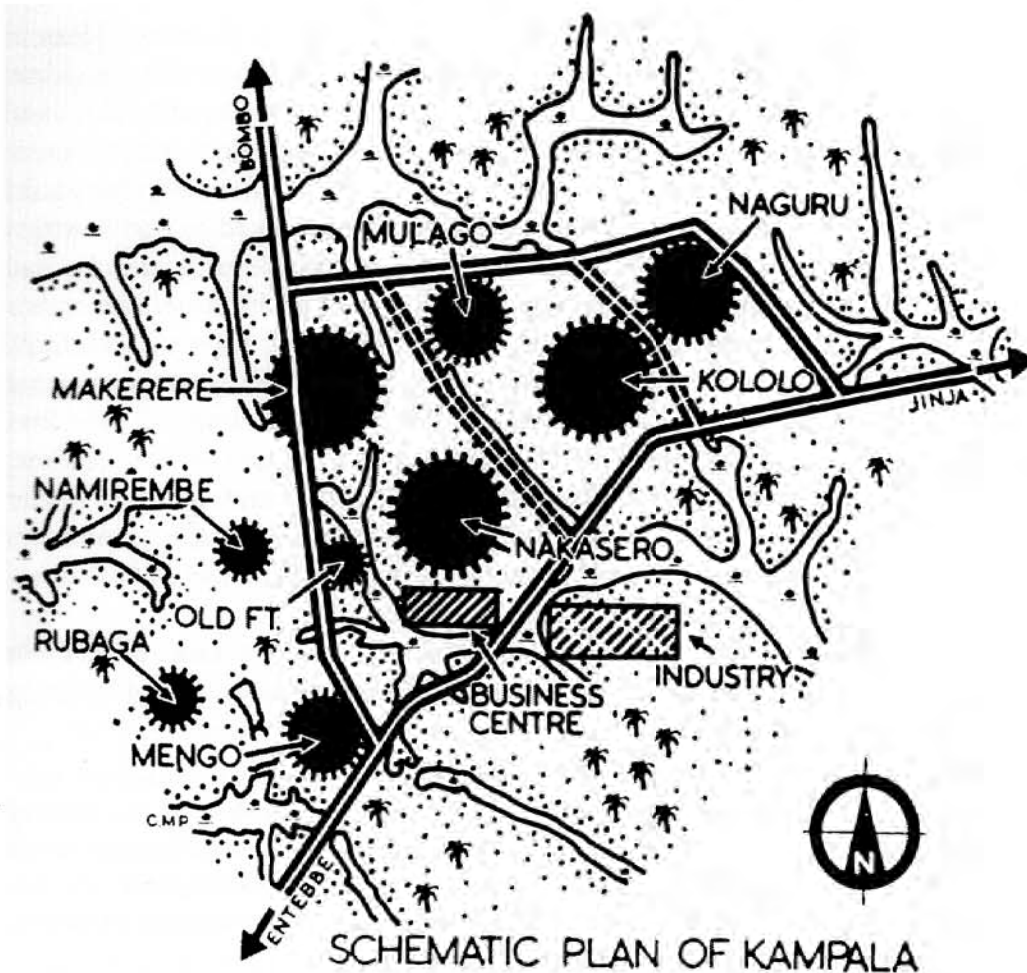


Figure 15.4 May's diagrammatic plan of Kampala as a multi-centred Trabantenstadt (satellite city)

Source: May, E. (1948) Report on the Kampala Extension Scheme, Kololu-Naguru, prepared for the Uganda government by E. May ... Sept. 1947. (Nairobi: Government Printer), 2.

By conceptually organizing the city and its extension into nine separate, mixed-use communities, May revealed his intellectual debt to Ebenezer Howard's Garden City and related regionalist urban planning principles, as well as his opposition to the rigid zoning advocated by CIAM and Le Corbusier. He first had been exposed to the Garden City concept while working as a young apprentice to the architect and Fabian socialist planner Raymond Unwin in Hampstead, England (1910–12), and during his education as a student of Theodor Fischer in Germany (1912–13).³⁹

39 See Henderson, "The Work of Ernst May". May worked for Unwin from 1910–12. He assisted with the plans for Hampstead Garden Suburb and, with the help of Lady Unwin, translated Unwin's famous book *Town Planning in Practice* (1909) into German.

After the war, May found great support for these “biological planning” ideas in the writings of Lewis Mumford, as well as the organic and regional planning ideas of Patrick Geddes.⁴⁰ All three promoted humanistic over technological values and sought the development of a communal, social and cultural life through a more dynamic and biologically oriented model of architecture and planning. May read Mumford’s popular book, *The Culture of Cities*, while interned in South Africa during the war and wrote enthusiastically of the “immense pleasure” he had reading the most “clear and functional” book. He praised the American author for working so courageously against a “narrow, so-called economic outlook, based on old-fashioned capitalist dogma”, and against “the giant towns that are so fundamentally adverse to the biological needs of mankind”.⁴¹ Mumford reciprocated by celebrating May’s Frankfurt work as “one of the earliest applications of modern methods of planning and building communities: so far probably the best”.⁴² Elsewhere, he described May’s planning as the “expression of a new creative spirit, which made Germany between 1925 and 1932 assume a world-leadership in the embodiment of the new culture”.⁴³

May had implemented these garden city and regionalist ideas already in his earliest independent planning work in Silesia, in his canonical housing

While interned in South Africa, he corresponded extensively with Unwin’s daughter Jane, who wrote letters seeking his release. On May’s relation to the Unwins, see the obituary May wrote, “Unwin as Planner for Social Welfare”, *Town and Country Planning* 31(11) (November 1963), 427–8. On the German context of Garden City planning that May was part of, see Lejeune, J.F. (1996), “From Hellaerau to the Bauhaus: Memory and Modernity of the German Garden City”, *New City* 3 (Fall), 50–69.

40 May’s relationship to Mumford has not been explored in depth, though May shared much in common with Behrendt, whose relationship to Mumford is discussed in Samson, M.D. (1996), “Lewis Mumford, Walter Curt Behrendt, and the Modern Movement in Germany”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 55(2) (May), 126–39. On Geddes, see recently Welter, V. (2002), *Biopolis: Patrick Geddes and the City of Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT).

41 Mumford’s *The Culture of Cities* was a popular book in South African architectural circles eager to escape Le Corbusier’s modern planning ideals; see Japha, D. (1998) “The social programme of the South African Modern Movement”, in Judin, H. and Vladislavic, I. (eds), *Blank –: Architecture, Apartheid and After* (Rotterdam: NAI), 428. May wrote to Mumford about how he had ordered *The Culture of Cities* from the University of Witwatersrand Library, and how he had fought for nearly identical principles in Frankfurt and the Soviet Union; May, E., letter to Mumford, 4 March 1941, LMPUP. In other letters from his camp May thanked Mumford for sending him a copy of his earlier *Technics and Civilization* (1934), and discussed reading his essay “Rehousing Urban America”, and his *Sticks and Stones* (1924), a history of American architecture presented from a cultural rather than a stylistic standpoint.

42 Mumford, L. (1938), *The Culture of Cities* (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich), caption for plate 30.

43 May, E., quoting a letter from Lewis Mumford, in a letter to Ilse May, 12 February 1941, no.24 NLEMDAM 160–902–023; also cited in Herrel, *Ernst May*, 161, n. 175.

developments (*Siedlungen*) in Frankfurt, and even in his urban master plans in the Soviet Union. In each case he worked towards dissolution of the crowded metropolitan centre into a looser constellation of “satellite cities” (*Trabantenstädte*) or regional “garden colonies”. As Mumford’s book explained, this concept of simultaneously expanding and decentralizing the city through manageable, orderly parts has deep connections to colonization, and even colonialism. Plans for an “inner colonization” were first proposed by early industrialists such as Robert Owen and James Buckingham, who sought to create small, balanced communities in the open countryside “in order to enable the new industrial workers to rise out of the squalid state in which they lived”. Reformers such as Edward Wakefield advocated a more systematic application of the “art of colonization” in foreign lands such as Australia.⁴⁴ Indeed, garden city principles dominated English colonial planning for the first half of the twentieth century in places like Nairobi, Jerusalem, Manila and Sydney.⁴⁵ Paradoxically, May’s Kampala plan both follows this rich line of planning tradition and seeks to battle the “barbarizing social results” of capitalism, including its colonialist form. The fact that the Nazis, too, employed the Neighborhood Unit, or “Development Cell”, is a sign of the “traditional” and “rooted” values as well as malleable agendas implicit in the idea.⁴⁶

The street plans and housing of May’s Kampala expansion scheme of 1947 reveal an informal and curvilinear plan with social and cultural institutions at strategic intersections, and traditional, pitched-roof houses along winding, tree-lined streets, surrounded by greenbelts. (Figure 15.5) Although May’s plan for the city resembled plans from early in his career, the Kampala street plan stood in stark contrast to the rigid *Zeilenbau* (linear building) planning technique that May had employed with increasing frequency in Frankfurt after 1929, including the Hellerhof, Westhausen and Goldstein housing developments, designed for the German Garden City Association in Frankfurt.⁴⁷ Although conceived primarily out of concern for economy, by 1930 May had conceptualized the *Zeilenbau* method of planning as the evolutionary end-stage of modern city planning.

44 Mumford (1849), *Culture of Cities*, 392, and more generally 392–401, where he references, for example, *A View of the Art of Colonization* (London). The relationship to Geddes’ planning work in the new town and garden city of Tel Aviv after 1925 also warrants further research.

45 See Home, R.K. (1990), “Town Planning and Garden Cities in the British Colonial Empire 1910–1940”, *Planning Perspectives* 5(1), 23–37. May’s Kampala plan was done before the 1948 British Town Planning Act that centralized control over all colonial plans in the empire. On planning legislation in the colonies see Stevens, P.M. (1955), “Planning Legislation in the Colonies”, *Town and Country Planning* (March): 119–23; and King, A. (1980), “Exporting Planning: The Colonial and Neo-Colonial Experience”, in *Shaping an Urban World*, Cherry, G.E. (ed.) (New York: St. Martin’s Press), 203–26.

46 Fehl, G. (1992), “The Nazi Garden City”, in Ward, S. (ed.), *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future* (London: E&FN Spon), 88–103.

47 See Mohr and Müller, *Funktionalität und Moderne*, 227–59.

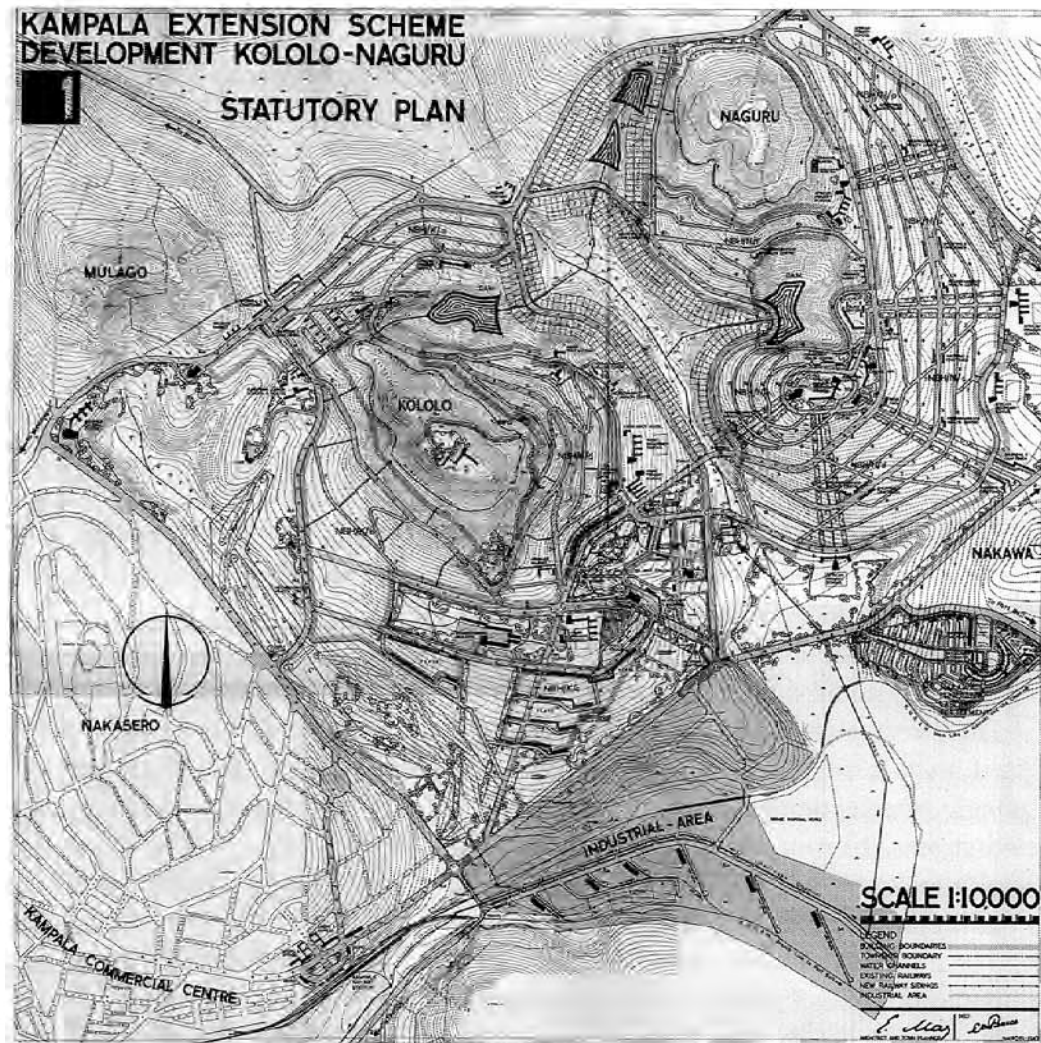


Figure 15.5 Statutory Plan of Kampala Extension

Source: May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, n.p.

The carefully arranged, parallel rows of low-rise housing optimized cost, density, solar orientation and circulation. They seemed to offer an ideal means of providing modern housing for the masses.⁴⁸ May had continued to use the *Zeilenbau* system of planning in the Soviet Union. Even his first larger housing project in Africa, the Delamere Flats apartment complex for middle-income Europeans in Nairobi – designed in 1938 but not built until 1947–51 – was laid out in efficient, parallel

48 On May's ideas about evolution of modern planning culminating in the *Zeilenbau*, see Fehl, G. (1987), "From the Berlin Building-Block to the Frankfurt Terrace and Back: A Belated Effort to Trace Ernst May's Urban Design Historiography", *Planning Perspectives* 2(2) (May), 194–210.

rows.⁴⁹ The nine apartment blocks were built of reinforced concrete, outfitted with a version of the standardized Frankfurt kitchen, and had the first fully enclosed plumbing in East Africa. The resemblance to May's Frankfurt housing, both stylistically and in planning terms, was unmistakable (Figure 15.6).



Figure 15.6 May's Delamere Flats Apartment Buildings, Nairobi, designed 1938–39, built 1947–51

Source: Anon. (1953), "Flats in Nairobi, Kenya (Delamere)", *Architect's Journal* 117(3019) (8 January).

Kampala was seemingly another opportunity for May to realize his lifelong ambitions of ameliorating the world's urban and housing problems through modern architecture and *Zeilenbau* planning. Why, then, did May abandon his modern planning ideas and revert to earlier, more traditional, curvilinear

49 On the Delamere Flats apartments, see Herrel, *Ernst May*, 79–81, 131; Anon. (1953), "Flats in Nairobi, Kenya (Delamere)", *Architects' Journal* 117(3019) (8 January), 38–9; and Holder, "Neue Bauten", 4–9. In keeping with this context-specific, economic and egalitarian method of planning, May changed the orientation of the parallel blocks from the vertical North–South used in Europe to the horizontal East–West orientation shown here. With this he minimized the impact of the equatorial sun, took advantage of the dominant wind patterns, maximized the view from the hill, and provided parking spaces under each unit, since cars were far more plentiful in Nairobi than in Berlin or Frankfurt.

garden-city and low-rise housing ideas in Kampala? The hilly site, his British government clients, the conservative tradition of colonial urbanism, as well as the lack of public financing for most of the housing, certainly may have influenced him to turn towards a more flexible, organic plan. But May, in the grand tradition of master-planners, was notoriously stubborn in sticking to his own proud ideals in the face of criticism and client pressures. I would like to suggest instead that May purposefully reverted to what he considered an older, more traditional method of planning and architecture in order to create a didactic and symbolic landscape that would help level the divisive social conditions he encountered in the British colony and help create a new hybrid African urban culture, a *neues Afrika*.

A “Social and Cultural Plan”

May’s Marxist leanings led him to theorize that modern architecture and planning were the result of a long evolutionary process of planning in Europe. It was thus inappropriate to impose modern plans from advanced capitalism too swiftly on a country and people that had few urban traditions to build on. In the Soviet Union, for example, he had encountered what he saw as a profoundly heterogeneous and “primitive” population that was to inhabit his new industrial cities. His urban plans thus prescribed only a gradual, phased transition from more traditional, petit-bourgeois housing towards an increasingly collective and modern architecture and planning. His planning also included extensive educational programs to teach Russians how to live in a “civilized”, or better, “cultured” manner, to reap the benefits of close, communal living, and to utilize a functional architecture most appropriately.⁵⁰

Contrary to the picturesque, safari-like setting May and most Europeans conjured up about the continent, May found the situation of the indigenous population in Africa to be “primitive” and “depressing”.⁵¹ He felt Africa was plagued by vicious tribal warfare, rampant disease, incredible poverty, neglect and, as he saw it, lethargy. May and other planners in East Africa complained that

50 Bueckschmitt, *Ernst May*, 65. On May’s Russian “adventures”, see Bueckschmitt, 59–77; the September 1930 and July 1931 issues of *Das Neue Frankfurt*; May (1950), “Frankfurt – Magnitogorsk – Nairobi”, *Deutsche Zeitung und Wirtschaftszeitung* (1 July): 2; and Anon. (1986), “Lebenslang für die ‘große Sache’: Ernst May”, special issue of *Bauwelt* 77(28) (25 July). On the gritty situation in Magnitogorsk, see Kotkin, S. (1995), *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Way of Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

51 On the idealized European conception of Africa, see Warmbold, J. (1989), *Germania in Africa: Germany’s Colonial Literature* (New York: P. Lang); and more generally Said’s *Orientalism*.

natives seemed to have little desire to settle permanently.⁵² When they did stay in town, they afforded themselves only crude mud huts with metal roofs. Based on these experiences, May wrote extensively, if naively, on the problems of the colonial situation in Africa he hoped to solve through planning. He hypothesized that Africans, being closer to nature and “childlike”, initially needed a simpler, more natural architecture and planning. Introducing such a “natural” and “primitive” architecture, he hoped, would set in motion a process of acculturation, the familiarization with Western ideas, and eventually the invention of an African form of modern architecture and a Western culture and lifestyle.

May explored the positive forces of Western urban planning in an article written after his return to Germany in 1953:

The indigenous population of East Africa has been in contact with highly developed cultures for many hundreds of years, without inspiring them to raise themselves from their primitive lifestyle ... One could perhaps understand this stagnation of the native, if the conditions in which he lives were even remotely as paradise-like as Europeans imagine it to be. ... Only with the intensive contact between the native population and the colonists of the last generation, is it possible to detect in the settlement centres, and only there, a striving for a higher standard of living. The urbanized African clothes and feeds himself better. He acquires a bicycle, and, when under strict European discipline, works quite intensely ... With reading and writing [the native] was given the means of acquiring a higher cultural level, but hundreds of years of hard work and discipline will be necessary in order to instill in him those values that form the bedrock of European civilization: love of work, honesty, trustworthiness, fidelity, and humanity (*Menschlichkeit*).⁵³

Urban planning, he speculated, could provide a stable social and civic system for the natives “without previous training in citizenship”, thereby “inducing the African labourer to become more stable, and to cease wandering back to his village after a few months, a practice which is most detrimental to any kind of systematic trade or production”.⁵⁴ Settling down would elevate the African to enjoy what he called “a full share in the duties and benefits of modern civilization” and culture.⁵⁵ As blatantly paternalistic and colonial as this attitude was, it had much in common with the nostalgic urge of many modern urban planners to forge a more harmonious society through control from above.⁵⁶ Like so many

52 See White, *Nairobi*, 48–9. Most Africans wandered into town only long enough to work off their poll tax and then returned to their villages.

53 May, “Bauen in Ostafrika”, 104.

54 May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, 3, 10.

55 *Ibid.*, 6.

56 For similarly paternalistic views of the didactic role of European urbanism, see White et al., *Nairobi*, especially the sections “The General Problem of Urban Planning in

who spread International Style architecture and planning across the world, May struggled to sort out the competing ideologies of universalism and regionalism, modernity and tradition, monumentality and standardization. The radical social divisions and economic disparities that May encountered in the colonial context of East Africa, however, help clarify existing conflicts and sublimated ideologies in his work.

May's positions were concretized in the Kampala plan, which worked toward the goal of urbanizing African colonial society by addressing three subjects: social planning, physical planning and architecture. On the first level of social planning, May was convinced that Africans were not yet ready for the anonymity of the large city or *Zeilenbau* developments. As a planner, he would first have to adjust his designs to "offer replacements for the lost tribal associations [in order to] enable [Africans] to advance steadily towards higher standards of life".⁵⁷ His plan would encourage the economic and cultural assimilation of the diverse populations, yet maintain a spatial and social segregation. In a region that saw the clash of so many cultures, religions and "levels" of civilization, May saw it as his charge to create a social structure which would allow individual freedoms, characters and strengths to manifest themselves.⁵⁸ Quoting his teacher Unwin, May wrote: "One of man's most noble achievements has been the formation of communities which depend for their life and progress on the context of the *difference* in endowment and training of individuals who compose them, not on the degree of standardization. That creation of values due to the association or cooperation of individualities which are different is, after all, the essence of all planning and design".⁵⁹

Africa", and "Segregation"; and Connell, P. et al. (1939), *Native Housing* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press), an architecture school thesis based substantially on Le Corbusier's planning methods, and discussed in Japha, "The Social Programme".

57 May, "Bauen in Ostafrika", 111.

58 Besides the native Africans, Kampala and all of East Africa was composed of Europeans from all countries, Islamic Arabs who had earlier dominated coastal trade, and a large number of Indians, including Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains, who had been brought in by the British to help build the railways.

59 Unwin, quoted in May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, 5.

APPENDIX I
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STRUCTURE
Basis for Town Planning Development of Kampala

Social Units	Administration	Education	Culture	Health Services	Physical Training	Recreation and Pleasure	Industry and Commerce, Shops and Workshops, Hotels
(1) Family group of 100 families.	(a) Family Group Assembly. (b) Family Group Council. (c) Meeting in Assemblyroom attached to nursery school.	Nursery school.	Reading room in Nursery school.	Group Health Centre— 1 African nurse. 1 Health Inspector. (In Kololo, European and Asian staff).	Children's playgrounds combined with nurseries. Work in the allotments.	Walks in the green areas.	—
(2) Neighbourhood Units of approximately 550 families.	(a) Neighbourhood Unit Assembly. (b) Neighbourhood Unit Council. (c) Meeting in Assembly hall of primary school.	Primary school (mostly combined for several Neighbourhood Units).	Sunday school. Branch library combined with primary school. Branch club for theatre, music and literature.	Neighbourhood Health Centre— 1 Senior Welfare Worker and 1 Senior Health Inspector. (In Naguru all African staff, in Kololo in accordance with racial composition of the sector.) Clinic staffed with— 1 Medical officer. 3 Male attendants. 1 Female attendant. Public shower bath.	Sports grounds combined with primary schools. Allotments (Allotment Warden).	Walks, sports, beerhall.	Local centre for shopping and craftsmen.
(3) Community of all Neighbourhood Units in one clearly defined area of the town: Kololo, 2,390 families, Naguru, 3,182 families.	(a) Community Assembly. (b) Community Council. (c) Meeting in Community Hall. Police Station.	Secondary school (one for Europeans, 1 in the two communities for Asians, and 1 for Africans).	Churches, mosques, library, community centre, clubs for various cultural purposes.	Community Health Centre— 1 Health Inspector. 2 Clerks. Venereal Diseases Clinic. Swimming pool, combined with bathing facilities.	Community sports grounds—may be combined with sports ground of a centrally situated school. Swimming pool.	Central park for recreation and pleasure, serving the whole of the township. Allotment centre. Communal purchase and distribution of seeds and implements.	Communal market, communal shopping and workshops centre, hotel, co-operative sale of surplus products from allotments and communal beerhall.
(4) Township comprising all the communities of Kampala.	(a) Township Assembly. (b) Township Council.	University, Technical colleges, schools for arts and crafts.	Cultural centre with theatre, lecture hall, museum and central library. Cathedrals and mosques. Exhibitions, featuring various spheres of world development, permanent arts and crafts exhibition.	Township M.O.H. European, Asian and African Health Inspectors, township hospitals.	Sports ground and stadium in the various communities. Kololo park for recreation and pleasure to represent Kampala sports centre.	Green belt, allotments, park for recreation and cinemas, beerhalls, restaurants.	Light industry, central market, offices and shops of local and foreign commercial firms.

Figure 15.7 “Social and Cultural Structure” proposed by May’s Kampala plan

Source: May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, 21.

May used planning as a tool to attempt to create this cooperation. Calling on his own experiments in creating rural settlements in Silesia, his experience shaping a small environment as an architect-farmer in Tanzania, and the latest theories of Neighbourhood Unit planning espoused by Clarence Perry, Lewis Mumford and many English planners, May proposed the creation of smaller, nested social units within the overall city.⁶⁰ Using a “Social and Cultural Structure” chart in his published plan, May broke the city down into a matrix of nested groups and cultural institutions, including family, neighbourhood, community and township, each group requiring different forms of support, educational facilities and communal

60 On the “Neighbourhood Unit” concept then popular in colonial planning, see the nearly contemporaneous plans for Nairobi by White et al., *Nairobi*; and for Palestine by Kendall (1948), *Jerusalem: The City Plan* (London). For a history and brief summary of the idea, see Mumford (1954), “The Neighborhood and the Neighborhood Unit”, *Town Planning Review* 24 (January), 256–70, and Miller, M. (2002), “The Origin of the Garden City Residential Neighborhood”, in Parsons, K., and Schuyler, D. (eds), *From Garden City to Green City* (Baltimore, London: Johns Hopkins University Press).

government⁶¹ (Figure 15.7). Given such defined and didactic social boundaries, May hoped Africans would be inspired to settle down and take more personal interest in their surrounds, much as they had in their villages.

On the second level of urban planning, May zoned each group into their own distinct built development. The universal planning system May had developed in Germany and continued to use in the Soviet Union was inappropriate for the social and racial diversity he sought to accommodate in Africa. Although the Soviet Union had featured a wide ethnic and racial diversity, Soviet politics and ideology had mandated collective and homogenized living environments for all comrades. In the Kampala plan, by contrast, May segregated the housing by race both into districts and in the site layout.

This strategy had some local historical precedent. Kampala was something of an anomaly as an African city, as it was situated next to the independent African town of Kibuga, capital of the Buganda tribe and seat of H.H. the Kabaka. Although Buganda chiefs had been located on various hills of the area since the eighteenth century, Kibuga was established in 1885 as headquarters for this tribe. Over time a dual city evolved, not unlike other French and British colonial cities, with two discrete subsections: Kampala primarily for Europeans and Asians, and Kibuga exclusively for Africans.⁶² Aidan Southall has shown how Kampala differed from the typical racial and hygienic separation occurring in other colonial dual-cities such as Morocco, Cairo or Delhi, arguing that it was more “political” than “colonial”, part of a natural “localization of ethnic interests” common to cities all over the world. He makes the case that in Kampala, the balance of power was “more equal” than in most cities because of the power of the Buganda tribe.⁶³

In order to accommodate this balance in his atomized city plan, May planned large, green sites with impressive freestanding residences, as well as a series of tall apartment blocks arranged in parallel rows and on grids for Europeans on the northern and western sides of Kololo Hill. Both were close to the commercial downtown and overlooked the whites-only golf club. The modern *Zeilenbau*-like method of housing was thus reserved only for the highest levels of the colonial society, the Europeans. May balanced this with middle- and upper-class Asians and Africans on the eastern portion of Kololo and Naguru Hill.

61 May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, 21.

62 Southall, A.W. (1967), “Kampala-Mengo”, in *The City in Modern Africa*, Miner, H. (ed.) (New York: Praeger), 297–332, esp. 302.

63 Gutkind estimates that the Kibuga had a population of around 32,441 in 1911 and therefore was considerably larger than the European Kampala, though almost completely separate; see Southall and Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making*, 6; and Malinowski, D.T. (1989), “A Historical Evolution of Urbanization and Town Planning in Uganda” (Winnepeg: MA thesis, Univ. of Manitoba), 93–4. Of Kampala’s 24,203 inhabitants in 1948, Gutkind maintains, 1,297 were Europeans, 10,824 were Asians/Indians, and 11,905 were Africans. The majority of Africans lived in the Kibuga; see Southall and Gutkind, *Townsmen in the Making*, 7–8.

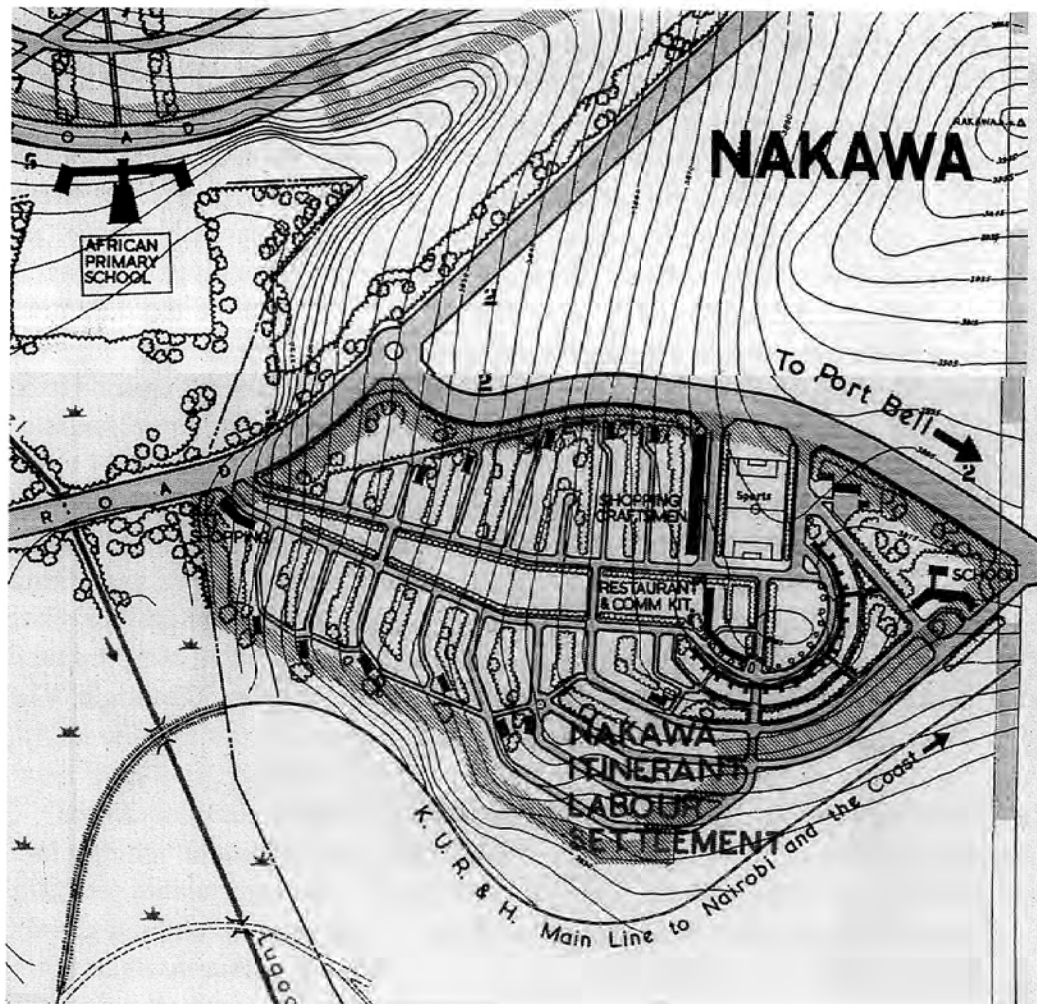


Figure 15.8 Nakawa Itinerant Labour Settlement Camp

Source: Detail from Figure 15.5.

He projected a mix of row, semi-detached and detached houses arranged on both sides of the curving green streets, very much according to traditional garden city ideals.⁶⁴

May displaced the lowest classes of Africans to the “Nakawa Settlement for Itinerant Labour” between Kololo and Naguru, near the industrial area, in what one contemporary review called rather optimistically “an African ‘suburb’ for non-government workers ... similar to the non-Government European!”⁶⁵ (Figure 15.8). For these African labourer’s, May planned rows of small huts around a

⁶⁴ Even within this category, May distinguished between the more spacious Asian (or Indian) sections in Kololo and the denser African settlements on Naguru.

⁶⁵ D.L.M., “A Uganda Letter: Government Sets an Example in Ideal African Housing”, *n.t.* (n.d) (c. 1947); clipping in folder 160-906-003, NLEMDAM.

large open green space containing cultural facilities. Different house types were planned for bachelors and families. Communal kitchens at the end of each row were to provide nourishing meals to single workers and to free up female labour. Workshops were intended to furnish employment for those not working in the industrial area. Allotment gardens were to keep women productively busy while men were at work elsewhere. A new central park provided pleasurable amenities which would “make the life of the African labourer richer, beyond just working to provide the bare necessities of life, [and thereby prevent the] continuous coming and going of African labour”.⁶⁶ European cultural and educational institutions such as museums, theatres, cinemas and exhibition buildings within the park were to serve, in May’s words, “[as a kind of] propaganda ... to contribute very essentially to preparing [the] African masses for their future development”.⁶⁷

According to May, this curious mix of modern amenities and very traditional planning would help Africans undertake their evolution from pre-industrial nomad to productive modern city dweller. He hoped his plan would be didactic, a kind of “teacher”, or *Erzieher*, that would encourage certain cultured behaviours. Fritz Wichert, editor of the magazine *Das neue Frankfurt* that chronicled and promoted May’s earlier cultural program, summarized May’s position in a 1928 article “The New Building as Educator”:

[N]ew building arises when new world views, new lifestyles, and new society are empowered. She creates the space for both the soul and body of the new life, for all the forces that seek to emerge amidst the new opportunities. The new building as shelter, as environment, as milieu, created by man, radiates a didactic spirit, and in turn configures the essence of man ... Put succinctly: the new man demands a new environment, but the new environment also demands new people.⁶⁸

May’s colonial outlook is only thinly veiled by this desire to educate and “improve” the local conditions. An otherwise favourable contemporary review hinted at this, when it noted that May’s very orderly and inwardly focused scheme offered “what the tourist expects, but is now somewhat outmoded. (It is a thought that Government might set aside a sort of reserve where some Africans might be encouraged to live and behave as the tourist expects them to!)”⁶⁹ Although far from May’s intentions, his effort to provide green space and separate cultural services served to isolate one population from the next in a context that demanded

66 May, “Kampala Town Planning”, 62.

67 Ibid., 63.

68 Wichert, F. (1928), “Die neue Baukunst als Erzieher”, *Das neue Frankfurt* 2(11/12) (December), 233. See also Henderson, S. (1997), ““New Buildings Create New People’: The Pavilion Schools of Weimar Frankfurt as a Model of Pedagogical Reform”, *Design Issues* 13(1) (Spring), 27–38.

69 D.L.M., “A Uganda Letter”.

assimilation, not further segregation. The act of creating housing and separate neighbourhoods for natives was clearly an instrument of control and segregation.

Architecture and Planning as Cultural Programme

The segregation of different social groups according to their evolutionary state also took place on the third level, that of architecture. In his Kampala plan, May proposed a matrix of architectural guidelines that suggested several different-sized houses to accommodate the unique living habits and economic situations of each of the three dominant races in Kampala (Figure 15.9). The European houses were by far the largest, containing functionally specific room types on several levels, with elegantly curving driveways, garages and swimming pools. The Asian or Indian houses were smaller but contained a variety of designated bedrooms and living rooms as well as a kitchen and sanitary facilities. The African houses were the smallest of all and contained only generic, undifferentiated "rooms", with cooking and eating facilities on the veranda. While the European houses were flat-roofed and very much in the advanced modern style, the Asian and African houses, which would form the overwhelming majority of housing in the new settlements, were traditional, pitched-roof houses built using self-help techniques.⁷⁰

May firmly believed he was respecting difference among the three races' social and cultural habits by differentiating between the various groups at all levels of planning, rather than resorting to universal standards. In so doing, however, he was clearly reinforcing a colonial hierarchy of race and economic potential, promoting a paternalistic policy of viewing the lowest classes of African society as needing European acculturation. May's project of social engineering thus acquiesced to racial and economic segregation. A 1948 master plan for Nairobi expressed what seemed to be the common opinion among planners in East Africa, including May: "Ethnic 'nucleation' [is] common in all towns with a mixed population. ... [Indeed] it is unlikely that on the whole, social groups will not try to distinguish themselves from one another by spatial separation".⁷¹ Although segregation had ceased to be the official policy in Kenya in 1923, "ethnic nucleation" was seen as inevitable and natural. Its practice even amongst the local African tribes reinforced the planners own tendencies.⁷²

70 Of the three types, only the housing for African workers was executed as planned; see Herrel, *Ernst May*, 73–5.

71 White et al., *Nairobi*, 48–9.

72 Tamarkin has shown that living in towns tended to consolidate the identities of tribal groups and to exacerbate their differences; Tamarkin, M. (1973), "Tribal Associations, Tribal Solidarity, and Tribal Chauvinism in a Kenya Town", *Journal of African History* 14(2), 257–74. The racial differences were only somewhat ameliorated by the common awareness that all were "penned into the Colonial Framework, citizens of a small country,

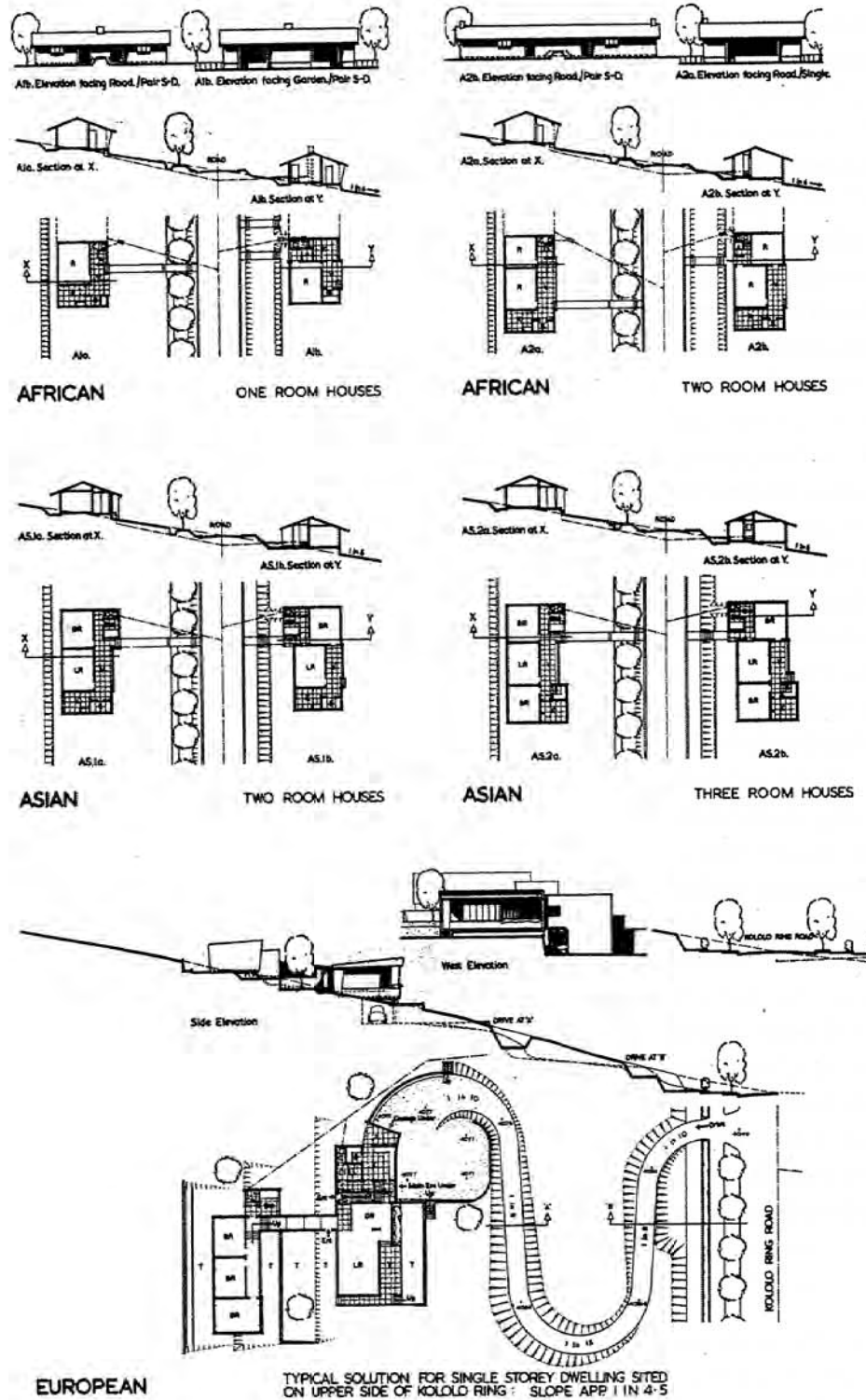


Figure 15.9 Detail from “Typical Solutions for Design of Dwellings on Steeply Sloping Sites”: African, Indian, and European typologies

Source: May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, n.p.

Always intent on improving the plight of the Africans, May insisted that his sketches for African dwellings were only preliminary guidelines. Since the future character of the newly developed area would be largely decided by the quality of its architecture, May called on Africans to begin the evolution towards their own "typical African style of [modern] architecture", and to do so on an "economic basis" in a manner that they could afford. In experimental designs for self-help housing for low-income native Africans that he designed at the same time as his Kampala plan, May worked to reintroduce what he defined as a simple, commonsense functionalism to Africa, similar in spirit to the buildings of the very first European colonists, whose work he admired in both America and Africa, but now with a modern edge. He invented several variations of modern native huts, including a framed wood version with innovative, prefabricated clay shingles and a hut made of prefabricated parabolic concrete arches with a set of standardized panels⁷³ (Figure 15.10). The huts were based on research work May had pursued in Silesia, Frankfurt and even during his internment "on the possibilities of utilizing natural, unprocessed building materials for housing purposes". Convinced of his idea, he constructed prototypes of the huts at his own expense near his office in Nairobi and applied for patents in several countries.

The cultural intent of the huts was to "speak to the psychology of advanced natives" by "improving" and "evolving" native huts with more modern techniques, part of a phased acculturation process that was justified by the lack of money for native housing. Aware of the dangers of forcing advanced European designs on this different cultural context, May wrote: "European or other foreign models should not be copied [in Africa]".⁷⁴ Ironically, his African huts were nearly identical to ones he had designed in Silesia 20 years earlier. The project backfired when a Ugandan community to whom he tried to sell the huts for several years proclaimed: "The same houses should be built for us as the whites".⁷⁵ May's attempt to provide Africans with an inexpensive, easily produced house that he deemed sensitive to their physical and spiritual needs points to the difficulty of architectural design in the colonies.

with the controlling power in the hands of a distant Cabinet, powerful and unknown". White et al., *Nairobi*, 22.

73 On May's self-help housing for Africans, see Herrel, *Ernst May*, 67–9, 129; Anon. (1946), "Hook-on Slab Reinforced Concrete System", *Architect's Journal* (13 June).

74 May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, 4, 18.

75 Anon., "Plan-Athlet", 36.



Figure 15.10 May's "Hook-on-Slab" concrete-panel huts for Africans, 1945

Source: Collection of the author.

A more successful attempt to bring two disparate cultures together is the large Cultural Centre that May designed from 1949–52 in Moshi, the home of over 3,000 native coffee growers and the most important city in central Tanzania.⁷⁶ It is among the most frequently illustrated of May's African works and has the distinction of being the first large architectural project in East Africa financed exclusively by Africans – the Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union (KNCU). For many, this revolutionary project signalled the waning of European domination of Africa. In his comments at the opening, the governor of East Africa praised the building for its imaginative design, for the way it symbolized the material progress of the local Chagga people, and especially for the meaningful role it was playing in bringing together whites and Africans in the town centre of Moshi.⁷⁷ In this case, architecture – a cultural centre – was a tool commissioned by Africans but designed by Europeans to bring the two races together.

⁷⁶ On the Moshi Cultural Center for the KNCU, see Herrel, *Ernst May*, 95–9; clippings of contemporary reviews in the EMNLDAM; Holder, "Neue Bauten", 11–17; Kultermann, *World Architecture*; as well as the student recording and analysis of May's project "Modern Architecture in Tanzania around Independence" at www.archiafrika.org (accessed: 25 March 2006).

⁷⁷ Anon. (1952), "Governor Opens First Section of New K.N.C.U. Building", *Tanganyika Standard* (18 March).

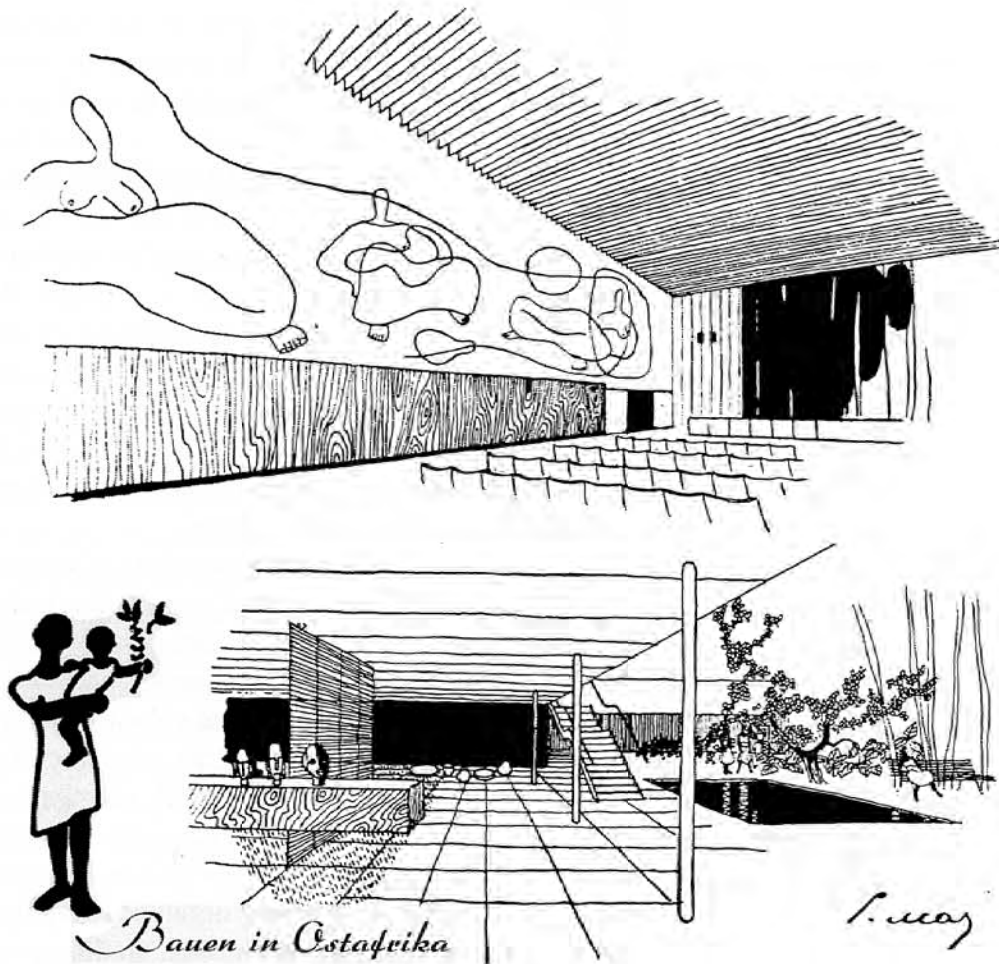


Figure 15.11 Renderings of the auditorium and exhibit space with African masks in May's Moshi Cultural Center for the native coffee growers association KNCU

Source: D. Holder (1952–53), “Neue Bauten von Ernst May in Ostafrika”, *Architektur + Wohnform* 61(1), 17.

May's rendering of the cultural centre's auditorium and museum-like exhibit spaces, whose very functions represent European cultural constructs, present more questions about the interaction of races than they answer (Figure 15.11). Do they show a European display of “primitive” masks or locals exhibiting their own art? Do the murals represent May's rendition of local art or his own attempt at “primitivism”, borrowed from Le Corbusier? Or is it contemporary art in the spirit of Robert Motherwell? Was this an African attempt at self-expression or a colonialist attempt to find an adequate representation of others?

In one form or another, these questions and oppositions come up in the analysis of all of May's African work. In the post-war era, primitivism and modern

architecture were becoming ever more blurred. Modern architecture and planning had begun with the desire to give every person a clean and respectable home and an attempt to find an artistic expression for an increasingly technological and rationalized world. But in a colonial context this vocabulary of forms too easily expressed the supremacy of European civilization and technology in the outposts of the empire and the ensnarement of colonies in a world market. Yet, as Africans began to search for their own means of self-expression, they increasingly embraced this architecture. European, abstracted forms began to express the independence and difference of the cultural and climactic environment of the resident population.⁷⁸ May's designs always swung between the poles of sensitivity to local cultural, political and climactic contexts and a paternalistic imposition of modernity and European ideas. His plans displayed clearly his struggles to acknowledge the positive effects of difference and individualism over monotony and standardization, the conflict of European and African cultures.

Ernst May's Kampala plan is a curious mix of conservative ideas of control and administration, of nostalgic and organic metaphors, of the power of industry and modernity to transform life, and of progressive thinking that acknowledges and highlights the role of difference and individualism. His ultimate goal was to assimilate and make the Africans a productive part of a segregated colonial society, to create a new African culture, *Das neue Afrika*. While his work reinforced the *existing* unwritten codes of racial, economic and architectural segregation, he intended his plans to be a mechanism for the gradual integration and even equalization of the groups. As he stated in the opening pages of his Kampala plan, the underlying purpose of his work was to "develop the organized civic life of the African so that he may graduate to full citizenship [among his European peers]".⁷⁹ His plan was "a contribution to the many endeavours being made in our day to awaken the African gradually from his lethargy, and to make him capable of sharing in the responsibilities of directing his own affairs, so that he may become a member with equal rights in the society of nations".⁸⁰ Urban planning, as it had been throughout May's career and in the project of modern architecture more generally, was seen as a political, social and, above all, cultural tool to benefit all levels of society.

78 See Kulterman, *Neues Bauen*, for an analysis of the transformation of modern architecture in Africa after May left.

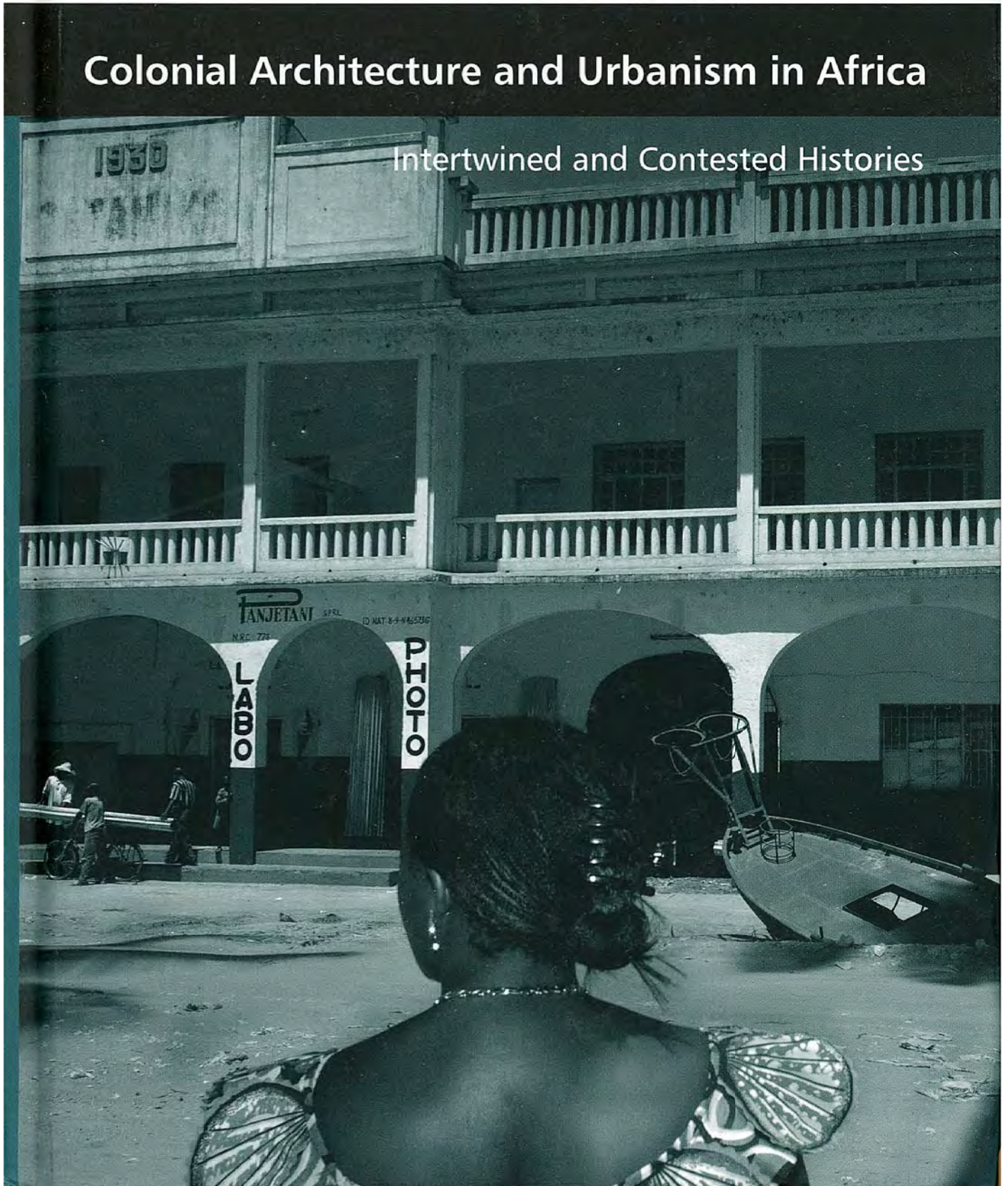
79 May, *Kampala Extension Scheme*, 2.

80 *Ibid.*, 6.

Edited by Fasil Demissie

Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa

Intertwined and Contested Histories



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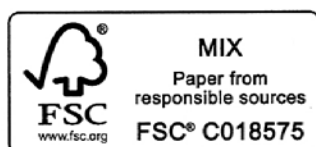
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Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa

Intertwined and Contested Histories

Edited by Fassil Demissie, DePaul University, USA

Colonial architecture and urbanism carved its way through space, ordering and classifying the built environment, while projecting the authority of European powers across Africa in the name of science and progress. The built urban fabric left by colonial powers attests to its lingering impacts in shaping the present and the future trajectory of postcolonial cities in Africa.

Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa explores the intersection between architecture and urbanism as discursive cultural projects in Africa. Like other colonial institutions such as the courts, police, prisons, and schools, that were crucial in establishing and maintaining political domination, colonial architecture and urbanism played a pivotal role in shaping the spatial and social structures of African cities during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, it is the cultural destination of colonial architecture and urbanism and the connection between them and colonialism that this volume seeks to critically address.

The contributions, drawn from different interdisciplinary fields, map the historical processes of colonial architecture and urbanism and bring into sharp focus the dynamic conditions in which colonial states, officials, architects, planners, medical doctors and missionaries mutually constructed a hierarchical and exclusionary built environment that served the wider colonial project in Africa.

This valuable collection of scholarly articles has significantly broadened and deepened our understanding of colonial architecture and urban transformation in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Africa. The contributors to this volume have masterfully unpacked simplistic arguments that have failed to grasp the complex dynamics that shaped the relationship between colonial rule and city building in Africa. This book marks a significant advance in scholarship in the disparate fields of architectural history, urban studies, and city planning.

Martin J. Murray, University of Michigan, USA

From the States, Africa and architecture operate as isolated symbolic territories. Attempts made to understand one often negate the other. Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa demonstrates that this mode of understanding is historically obsolete. This phenomenal collection of essays depicts the self-conscious inscription of the West's architectural/urban identities (e.g. English, French, German) onto Africa. Such practices, usually taken as benign styles or formal technique, are meticulously analyzed for ideological content and political discourses. Within these details Africa, architecture, and urbanism represent the interrelated means to impose, manage, and defy complex aesthetic regimes. Indeed, the collection itself signifies the resistance to pervasive, colonial machineries and their claim on modernity and history.

Darell W. Fields, University of California Berkeley, USA
and author of *Architecture in Black*

Cover image: The Hotel Palace in the city of Kalemie (formerly Albertville) in the Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of Congo taken in 2008. © Carl de Keyzer/Magnum Photo.

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