The Third Migration

La troisième migration

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1 The Third Migration points towards a third paradigm of migration, different from the First Migration that refers to the dispersal of Le Corbusier’s collaborators around the world, and the Second Migration which might be called The Bauhaus Goes to America. The Third Migration describes European architects in the Soviet Union, from the 1920s until 1937, and their post-Soviet movements. The First, Second, and Third Migration paradigms are differentiated by their ideas, the reasons and ways their members traveled, and the pedagogical projects they exported. While the First and Second migrations could also be described as emigrations, since the architects they describe had the tendency of settling in their destinations, the Third Migration is more itinerant, and collects examples of architects that had a tendency to move around. The organization is not chronological: the three models happened more or less in parallel.

Migration of Architects

2 The first half of the twentieth century was characterized by the movement of people. On the one hand there was a proliferation of means of transportation that took people further and faster, and on the other hand a series of conflicts that ignited the relocation of large numbers of individuals. During the first decades of the century, as a result of the pogroms large numbers of Russian Jews moved to countries like Argentina and the United States, and there was a big wave of Japanese emigrating to California in the United States and British Columbia in Canada. As the century advanced, the map of Europe was dramatically reorganized – at least twice. The periods before, during, between and after the two World Wars saw the dislodgments of population from Europe to other continents, within Europe (including the moving of masses of people with the purpose of their termination), and to Europe. By way of the military there were also considerable movements of people between continents, either in the context of wars or colonial projects. In relation to colonial, and later post-colonial operations in India,
Africa, and the Middle East, they also triggered not only the circulation, but also the displacement of population.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, the movement of architects in particular was incremental. Architects, as they usually do, also moved for study purposes, like the Americans, South Americans and Europeans at large to the École des beaux-arts in Paris. Another example is the international student body at the Bauhaus: in 1929, the Bauhaus magazine celebrated the foreign students at the school in a list that established the nationalities of the student body, from which we learn that 30 out of 170 students were foreigners (18% of the student body): “30 are foreigners, namely: 8 Swiss, 4 Poles, 3 Czech, 3 Russians, 2 Americans, 2 Latvians, 2 Hungarians, 1 German-Austrian, 1 Dutch, 1 Turk, 1 Persian, 1 stateless”. Architects also moved around in search of work. This period is the beginning of the international architectural practice, with examples like the offices of Auguste Perret and Peter Behrens, who had foreign employees and designed and built outside of their countries. The most emblematic example though is Le Corbusier’s office, where before the Second World War, apart from twenty-eight French, there had been at least eight American, one Argentinian, two Belgian, six British, two Canadian, one Chilean, seven Czech, two Danish, five Dutch, five German, one Greek, four Hungarian, three Japanese, one Palestinian, one Spanish, one Soviet, three Swedish, thirty-two Swiss, one Uruguayan, and fifteen Yugoslavian collaborators (including employees, interns, photographers and sculptors).

The aftermath of the Russian Revolution brought hundreds of foreign architects, Germans and Americans in particular, to the Soviet Union. The Spanish Civil War, which first attracted foreigners into Spain as part of the international brigades, later saw the exile of several Spanish architects, like Josep Lluís Sert who went to the United States and Felix Candela who went to Mexico. The Nazis in power in Germany sparked the movement of architects within continental Europe, and to Britain, the United States, Latin America, Australia, the Middle East and Africa.

The movement between Holland, Switzerland, Germany and Russia of architects like Hans Schmidt and Mart Stam; the Czech Antonin Raymond in Tokyo; Bruno Taut in Turkey (he had been to Russia and later to Japan for an extended period) with other foreign architects like Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky; the German architect Richard Paulick in Shanghai; French architects, such as Pierre Emery, in North Africa; Catalans like Antoni Bonet i Castellana in Argentina; Ukrainians like Gregori Warchavchik in Brazil, and Wladmiro Acosta (born Konstantinowsky) in Argentina; Italians such as Lina Bo Bardi in Brazil; Austrians like Rudolf Schindler and Richard Neutra going to the West Coast of the United States by way of New York, Chicago and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin East; the former Bauhaus teachers and students in Chicago, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and California; Chinese like Ieoh Ming Pei and his wife Eileen studying in Harvard and then settling in the United States; and so many more individual cases exemplify some of the itineraries during this period. The widespread migration of Jewish architects to Britain, America, South America, and Palestine, which amounted to networks of Jewish architects in several places; networks of communist architects in several places; and several other networks, speak to the collective dimension of some of these circuits. These movements also indicate that internationalism was a foundational idea of modernism. As early as 1930 Sheldon Cheney, in his The New World Architecture, insisted on the free flow of ideas between countries at that moment in time.
Three Migrations of Architects

Discussions about the origins of modern architecture abound, but it is safe to assert that after acquiring momentum from different directions, it took off after the First World War. During the 1920s, there were a series of institutions that brought architects together and provided platforms for debates and discussions: the Deutscher Werkbund with exhibitions like the 1927 Weissenhof Estate, the Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne (CIAM) starting in 1928, and pedagogical institutions like the Bauhaus, among others. These early stages of modern architecture were never the unified impulse that the notion of a “modern movement” may suggest, and divisions became more evident when architects started to leave continental Europe in the 1930s, and spread their ideas abroad. The internationalist spirit was present in the first CIAM, when 28 architects from 12 European countries gathered in the Chateau de la Sarraz in Switzerland. Although CIAM would be active until 1959, with a grand total of 11 congresses, the first meeting in particular showed that what in appearance was a cohesive crusade, was clearly composed by factions, finding architects Hannes Meyer, Hans Schmid, Paul Artaria, Marcel Breuer, and Mart Stam aligned to defend more radical stances, defying Le Corbusier’s otherwise dominant vision. Within the congress, they were seen as the voice of the far left, and with the exception of Breuer and Artaria, these architects ended up through different channels moving East. This early splinter of modern architecture and its protagonists going to the Soviet Union in the 1930s is part of what I describe as the “Third Migration.”

The First Migration

The First Migration relates to Le Corbusier and his collaborators who resettled in their home countries, established practices around the world, or worked for international agencies. There are too many examples to name them all. For instance, the Swiss Albert Frey worked in Le Corbusier’s office for over a year in the late 1920s, and in 1930 immigrated to the United States. Others like Kunio Mayekawa (who worked for Le Corbusier in 1929) and Junzo Sakakura (1930-35) came to the office from Japan and then returned to their country. The foreigners who worked for him usually, but not exclusively, resettled in their home countries afterwards. Others emigrated again, and others stayed in France for good. All of them, to different extents, spread Le Corbusier’s gospel (and at times got international commissions for him).

Le Corbusier was not part of the Third Migration, because although he designed the Centrosoyuz in Moscow and visited the Soviet Union a series of times to oversee aspects of the project, he never moved there permanently. After the competition, two Soviet technicians went to Paris for the design phase and later returned to Moscow to take charge of the construction. The first one was a Party member, Pavel Nakhman, and the second one was the architect Nikolai Kolli who spoke French. Moreover, one of Le Corbusier’s employees moved to Moscow, and his circumstances were close to those of the members of the Third Migration, exemplifying the dynamic situation of architects in the period. The Czech František Sammer had worked at Le Corbusier’s atelier in Paris since 1930. In 1933, he moved to the Soviet Union to work on the Centrozoyus and, in 1935, moved to Tokyo to work for Antonin Raymond who eventually sent him to
Pondicherry, India to work on the Golconde Dormitory. Another good example of the First Migration is Ernst Weissmann, who worked for Le Corbusier between 1928-30 (and was a member of CIAM), and, in 1938, moved to the United States where he worked for the former Le Corbusier collaborator Josep Lluís Sert, proving that there was such a thing as a Le Corbusier network. In 1944, he joined the United Nations and eventually became the director of Housing, Town, and Country Planning (HTCP) from which he supervised UN experts all over the world. This first model of migration not only expanded the influence of modernism within the discipline (through the indoctrination of architects around the world), but also, had repercussions in international institutions like the UN and its multiple branches, and others like the Ford Foundation. These institutional relationships are exemplary of the lack of radical political affiliations of this first model of migration.

The Second Migration

The Second Migration was the migration of, among others, Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer, Ludwig Hilbersheimer, and Bauhaus graduates like Rolf Sklarer to the United States where they taught and practiced architecture. They were the core of the so-called “American Bauhaus”. This migration stepped into a new land, and in a way relates to the first migration model in that there was a gospel to proclaim, but the United States demanded different reactions. Many of the members of this migration first went from Germany to England. In January 1937, Gropius was announced as the new Chairman of the School of Architecture at Harvard University, and, in March 1937, Gropius and his family arrived in the United States. Other former Bauhaus faculty also reached the United States by way of London, such as Breuer and the artist László Moholy-Nagy. The case of Mies van der Rohe is different: he went to the United States directly from Germany after having tried to work under the Nazi regime. He traveled to America in 1937 and shortly after arriving in New York talked with Willard Hotchkiss, president of Chicago’s Armour Institute of Technology (later the Illinois Institute of Technology) where Mies was eventually hired and where he would teach for the next twenty years. It is relevant to note the reception of the work of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe in the United States before they finally migrated. In the case of Gropius, in the United States a group of Harvard students organized an exhibition of his work in Cambridge, Massachusetts as early as 1930. Later, the work of

There is a considerable list of non-architects from the Bauhaus who followed the same path: the teachers Josef Albers, László Moholy-Nagy, Xanti Schawinsky, and Lyonel Feininger (originally American). There was also a critical number of Americans who studied at the Bauhaus and then returned to the United States (although some only attended lectures for a couple of semesters), like the architect Howard Deardyne (who studied architecture during Meyer’s tenure), Bertrand Goldberg, and William Priestley.

As a whole, Second Migration architects and pedagogues were involved in multiple educational institutions, including Black Mountain College, Yale, Harvard, and the Illinois Institute of Technology.

If the First Migration was the least political, this Second Migration is pluralistic (or chameleon-like) because its members not only adapted to but also embraced different ideologies. Some of the architects related to this second model (and Bauhaus-related people in general) worked or tried to work for the National Socialist government in the years following Hitler’s ascent to power. Only once it became clear that the Nazis were ruling modern architecture out of their agenda did these architects look for an exit. Gropius and Mies van der Rohe flirted with the Third Reich, or at the very least, tried to win competitions during Hitler’s regime.

The Third Migration

The Third Migration had a distinctly peripatetic diaspora to “other” countries, determined by politics, although in most cases the participants returned to Europe after the war. The Third Migration describes architects who left their home country (or adopted country in some occasions), in many cases in order to put into practice their Marxist ideals – far from a Fascist bound Germany – finding the first test case for their ideas in the Soviet Union until circa 1937.

While the First and Second migrations have been widely studied – if not as a phenomenon in these terms, then at least in a myriad of other ways – there is scant literature on a third migration that germinated in Germany in the 1920s. When compared to the First and Second migrations, this Third Migration is the most political because its members moved East to serve the Soviet project, and many of the members later continued to be associated with the Communist Party. The Third Migration is also different because of the timing and nature of its displacements. Architects who can be associated with the Third Migration include Hannes Meyer and the Red Bauhaus Brigade, the larger Bauhaus scene in the Soviet Union during the 1930s (which included among others Pál Forgó, Vladimir Nemecek, Max Krajewski, Peer Bücking, Gustav Hassenpflug, Johan Niegeman, Kurt Meyer, Richard Paulick, Gerda Marx, Lotte Beese and Stefan Sebök, many of whom worked for the May Brigade), Bruno Taut’s brief Soviet stint and later sojourns, Werner Schneidratus (who worked in the Moscow office of Albert Kahn), and Ernst May and his Brigade in its two iterations. A distinction should be made when including May as part this group: he belonged to the same migratory culture, was brought to the Soviet Union by the same authorities and for the same reasons, but he himself was not politically identified with communism.
The involvement of foreign architects as city planners in developing designs for a series of cities, including Ernst May’s plans for Magnitogorsk (which were partially built) and Hannes Meyer’s unrealized plans for Nizhny Kurinsk and other cities, are part of the more international phase of Soviet city planning. Architect Kurt Liebknecht estimated in his memoir that between 1933 and 1936 the Soviet Association of Architects had a thousand members who were foreigners, and half of them were Germans. Historian Kurt Junghanns roughly confirms this tally, stating that the number of foreign architects enrolled in the Soviet Association of Architects between 1933 and 1936 amounted to somewhere between eight hundred and one thousand, half of whom were German. Junghanns clarifies that not every foreign architect was enrolled in the association, so the actual number of foreign architects in the Soviet Union was bigger.

This count does not imply that all of these foreigners were politically aligned with communist ideas, or that they were anti-Fascists by default. A case like that of the German architect Rudolf Wolters is an interesting exception. In 1932, Wolters went to Moscow to work for the People’s Commissariat for Transport and from there he was sent to Novosibirsk to work in Trans-Siberian Railway’s urban planning division. In 1933 he returned to Germany and started working for Albert Speer and became one of his closest collaborators. In 1939, Joseph Goebbels appointed Wolters Exhibition Commissioner of the Third Reich. Architect Gustav Hassenpflug was also among the Bauhaus graduates to collaborate with the Third Reich. A member of Ernst May’s Brigade, he returned to Germany in 1933 and quickly acclimated to the new regime. Others, like Walter Kratz and Werner Hebebrand, have similar stories. In brief, not all of these foreigners were politically aligned, but they were working for the Soviet cause and to state the least, did not disapprove of it at the time.

This larger context helps also to situate the specific group of architecture students from the German Bauhaus that followed Hannes Meyer to the Soviet Union after he was expelled from the directorship of the Bauhaus in 1930: the Red Bauhaus Brigade. Their migration is to some extent comparable, but in many respects also different from others of the period, including the most emblematic brigade of foreign architects to the Soviet Union at the time: Ernst May’s brigade. May’s brigade was considerably larger, was offered better conditions, and was by and large more official and as such more publicized (more on this later). The seven Red Bauhaus Brigade members were Tibor Weiner (1906-1965), Konrad Püschel (1907-1997), Philipp Tolziner (1906-1996), René Mensch (1908-1980), Béla Scheffler (1902-1942), Antonin Urban (?,1942), and Klaus Meumann (1907-?). all of whom had studied architecture under Meyer at the Bauhaus. Driven by collectivist ideology, Meyer and his short-lived brigade staged an itinerant extension of the interrupted “second” Bauhaus. Part of the interest lies on Meyer’s pedagogical project because it helps to uncover the education received by the students and understand the evolution of their architectural ideas after they moved to the Soviet Union. Specifically, the careers of Weiner, Püschel, Tolziner, and Mensch, extended well beyond the period they spent together in the Soviet Union and took divergent paths. From this group, Weiner went to the Bauhaus for post-graduate studies. Following his sojourn in the Soviet Union, he had perhaps the most itinerant trajectory: after working in France and Chile, he returned to his native Hungary in 1948 where he subsequently worked as an urban planner and teacher. After the Soviet Union, Püschel returned to Germany, fought in the war, and later dedicated his life to a professorship in Weimar – with the exception of an intense work assignment in North Korea in the 1950s that became the most important role of his career. Tolziner never
left the Soviet Union. He survived the Gulag and became a specialist in the restoration of historic buildings in the Urals, only to return to Moscow after he was rehabilitated to work once again on the design of collective housing types. Mensch worked as an architect in Iran, Chile, and his native Switzerland, but while the rest of this group were engaged in political or survival logics, Mensch was following work opportunities rather than an ideological agenda. Of the remaining Brigade members, Scheffler and Urban died in the Soviet Gulag, and there is no trace of Meumann after the 1930s which probably means he had the same tragic fate (image 1).

From left to right: René Mensch, Hannes Meyer, Ljusja Petrowskaja, Konrad Püschel, Tibor Weiner, and unidentified girl in Moscow, 1931.

"Hannes Meyer Mluví," Tvorba, October 8, 1931.

At first, the Red Bauhaus Brigade worked under Meyer at GIPROVTUS (Construction of Higher and Technical Education Colleges Trust), but soon after Meyer left and started to work for other Trusts, also participating in projects like an entry for the Greater Moscow Plan (1932), and eventually designing cities for Siberia and the Far East of the Soviet Union. What happened to the Red Bauhaus Brigade members after 1933 when they left GIPROVTUS? Interestingly, unlike Meyer, many of the members of the Brigade were able to build in the Soviet Union. Antonin Urban allegedly designed and built a vocational school in Novokuznetsk. In 1932 Scheffler went to work for Pëtr Oranskij in the new city of Uralmash, and they designed and built a series of buildings (among them a school with ten classrooms and a stadium). Most importantly, in 1933, Püschel, Tolziner, and Weiner joined former Ernst May Brigade members Mart Stam and Hans Schmidt in the design of the city of Orsk where they would remain until 1936. As was normally the case for new towns, Orsk was built to accompany an industrial operation on the banks of a river (the Ural River in this case). Eventually, Schmidt had sole charge of the design, modifying the center-less first proposal, and rearranging the buildings...
on the short sides of the rectangular city blocks by turning them ninety degrees in order to create a profile for a main street. Under Schmidt, the three former Bauhaus Brigade members took on design and construction tasks. Individually or in pairs, they took charge of whole sectors (quartals) of the city. Moreover, since qualified laborers were scarce, training workers with no building experience was also part of their job.

Considering that after the Red Bauhaus Brigade was dissolved, three of its members ended up working for two former members of Ernst May’s Brigade, it is relevant to bring their story to the fore. In 1929 May was invited to become the Chief Engineer of the Project Planning Office at CEKOMBANK (Central Bank for Municipal Infrastructure and Housing Construction), the central financial institution for housing construction in the Soviet Union. Based on his previous experience in Frankfurt, he was asked to work on city planning, and on September 1, 1930 (a month before Meyer), May and a team of twenty-one professionals left Germany for the Soviet Union. Among his eventual collaborators were some of Meyer’s old acquaintances like Mart Stam and Hans Schmidt. Sociologist Virág Molnár writes that at the start of the 1930s, the unemployment rate for German architects was extremely high with some estimates reaching 90%. Illustrating the lack of jobs, Mónlar mentions that May initially brought eighteen architects with him to the Soviet Union but that 1400 architects had applied for a job (image 2).

May’s work in the Soviet Union was mainly associated with the design of a master plan for Magnitogorsk, the most emblematic new town of the First Five-Year Plan. Historian Thomas Flierl adds that he also made studies for other new towns in Western Siberia and the Kuznetsk Basin such as Novokuznetsk, Leninsk (population of 90,000 to 100,000), Tyrgan-Prokopyevsk (population of 45,000) and Sverdlovsk. In 1932, just like
Meyer, May also presented a proposal for Greater Moscow. By the beginning of the Second Five-Year Plan (1933-37), as the first generations of Soviet-trained technicians began to take over, the desire for foreign expertise began to dwindle. May left the Soviet Union in December 1933. He could not return to Germany because, we know from Kai. K. Gutschow’s research that Nazi critics had vilified Das neue Frankfurt and called May the “Lenin of German architecture”\(^27\). Moreover, Goebbels had made vociferous attacks on May and his Frankfurt projects in radio broadcasts. May was Jewish on his mother’s side, so fear of persecution for his heritage was added to the political reasons that stopped him from returning to Germany\(^28\). Ernst May eventually did disapprove of the Soviet politics of the period and left in December 1933, he then bought a coffee plantation in Kenya and spent the next twenty years in Africa.

20 Regarding the role of foreign architects in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, the work of art historian Maria Gough is helpful in understanding the different types of foreigners who arrived in the Soviet Union during the interwar period and also sheds light on the larger role that foreign professionals played at the time. A possible point of entry is her analysis of the activities of four foreign artists in the Soviet Union during this same period: John Heartfield, Gustavs Klucis, Lotte Jacobi, and Langston Hughes. In a conference entitled “Radical Tourists in Soviet Photographic Utopia”, Gough used the rubric of “radical tourists” to describe her case studies. (In Gough’s scholarship, a “radical tourist” is someone who visited the Soviet Union to verify what was happening\(^29\)). However, what is more useful is that Gough identifies three other categories of foreigners in the Soviet Union at the time: “professional contractors”, “international communist workers”, and “wealthy tourists”. These rubrics are useful as a framework to conceptualize the roles played by Ernst May, Hannes Meyer and their brigades\(^30\). May for example was a “professional contractor”; he did not identify with communism and the terms and conditions of his contract make it clear he was in the Soviet Union exclusively as a technical consultant\(^31\). However, most members of the May brigade, Meyer, and the members of the Red Bauhaus Brigade, were a hybrid between “professional contractors” and “international communist workers”. The members of the Red Bauhaus Brigade in particular were professional contractors because they had been hired by a technical institute for their expertise and they all received a stipend for being foreigners, but they can also be associated with “international communist workers” since most of them identified themselves with the Soviet project at the time and some joined the Party.

21 As a side note, American architect Albert Kahn is the prime example of a foreign architect working as a “professional contractor” in the Soviet Union at the time. Kahn was well known for his automobile plants in Michigan for Henry Ford, and he signed a contract with the Soviet authorities in April 1929. Albert Kahn’s firm, whose Soviet branch was run by his brother Moritz, was first commissioned to build a tractor factory in Stalingrad. By the time their contract ended in March 1932, they had designed over five hundred industrial plants. They had a team of about thirty American technicians in the Soviet Union who, while designing factory plants, also ran an informal trade school that instructed over a thousand Soviet technicians. Kahn had no interest in communist ideology or the Soviet political project, but his firm was possibly the most prolific foreign architectural operation in the Soviet Union in the 1930s\(^32\). It is significant too that that the second stage of the Palace of the Soviets competition included international entries by, among others, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius, Hans Poelzig and Erich Mendelsohn. This was the most important architectural competition of the 1930s
in the Soviet Union, and one of the finalists that moved on to a third stage was the British born Hector Hamilton who lived in the United States at the time.

**Was the Third Migration Global?**

As opposed to Western Europe or the United States, the members of the Third Migration moved East to the Soviet Union and later to “other” countries like Chile, China, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, North Korea, and Turkey. To different extents, some of these countries came to be considered after the Second World War as part of what came to be known as the Second and Third World, and part of the activities of these migratory architects had to do with aiding modernization projects through architectural designs, urban planning, and education. Not every country was open to receiving refugees, and even those that were usually had quotas or special requirements and sought to check the entry of foreign, political activists. Thus, the framework of the Third Migration, highlights countries that did allow for the immigration of political refugees. The members of the Third Migration moved in and out of countries in different continents that either practiced tolerance, were opportunistic, needed architects and construction experts, were not informed about their political ideas, or openly welcomed these architects for ideological reasons. At times, the countries that welcomed these foreigners overlooked the time they had spent in the Soviet Union. On other occasions, having worked in the Soviet Union was considered an advantage. The welcoming attitude from countries like Mexico, Chile, and the Dominican Republic towards Spanish political refugees after the Spanish Civil War, or the foreign policy of Turkey at that time, are clear examples of this. These countries welcomed intellectuals, scientists, university professors, technicians, et al. as part of an effort to develop education, culture, and science to higher levels. However, this “welcoming attitude” is nuanced. At first foreigners were accepted, but changes of government and political shifts at large in the 1940s complicated the lives for example of Meyer in Mexico and Weiner in Chile, and they returned to Europe.

The “multi-continental” phase of Meyer and some of the former members of the Red Bauhaus Brigade was not exactly “global” in the current sense of the term. When attempting to emigrate, they were limited to certain countries that had the flexibility and openness to receive foreigners with connections to the Soviet Union. However, the tendency of architects like Meyer, Püschel, Mensch, and Weiner to jump from one country to another was often the product of changes in the political waves. In parallel, the fact that they could work in all these places speaks to an inherent flexibility of the architectural profession, the language of architectural drawings.

Yet, what was offered by this militant version of modern architecture? The Third Migration was an itinerant modernism that had to constantly adapt to local variables, but that nonetheless left buildings, urban schemes, cities, and, most importantly, generations of local architects who were educated by its members in countries where architectural culture was transitioning to modern approaches. Implied in the term itinerant is the idea that the expertise acquired by Third Migration architects in the Soviet Union involved fast work, adapting and learning about extreme climates and negotiating in a language they had not fully mastered. Similar things can be said about the work done later of Meyer in Mexico and Weiner in Chile. Above all, the members of the Third Emigration became what can be characterized as “architectural
mercenary”. In this case, the term “mercenary” is not intended in a derogatory way, instead suggesting that these architects could provide their professional services anywhere and that architecture could be deployed as a social weapon that had the capacity to contribute to progress, politics, and culture, particularly in places that were culturally foreign and remote from a European perspective.

25 It is interesting to note, that before the Second World War, the United States was not yet the monolithic nemesis of the Soviet Union. A subset of Bauhaus students, including the industrial designer Hin Bredendieck and the architect Rolf Sklarek, were close to Meyer; and even though they immigrated to the United States in the 1930s, they appeared to be politically closer to the Third Migration34. Even Meyer considered the United States as an option in the late 1930s. Perhaps it was not by chance that on his first trip to Mexico in 1938 Meyer made a stopover in New York. Moreover, in March 1938 he had also advised Weiner to emigrate to the United States, where Moholy and company had paved the road for former Bauhaus students. Moreover, Meyer thought that working in the United States and studying American building techniques at first hand would favor Weiner’s development as an architect35.

26 The fact that Stam, Schmidt, Weiner, Püschel, and others worked for state agencies in countries of the Eastern Bloc in the 1950s was a payoff for diverging from the CIAM-established path. Stam and Schmidt participated in the first and second CIAM congresses, yet the Third Migration came to antagonize the “official” transactions happening in CIAM congresses. Stam left the Soviet Union in 1934, and Schmidt in 1937. After the war, Schmidt worked in Basel until 1956, when he moved to the GDR to take charge of the Institute for Typification (Institut für Typung), and in 1958 became the Director of the Institute of History and Theory of Architecture at the East German Bauakademie. Stam lived in East Germany between 1948 and 1952. Between 1950 and 1952 he was director of the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Dresden, advocated a reconstruction plan of the city and in 1950 became the director of the Advanced Institute of Art in East Berlin. Bodenschatz and Flierl analyze that many members of the next generation of immigrants to the Soviet Union (listing Ule Lammert, Werner Schneidratus, Gerhard Kosel, and Benny Heumann) also moved to the German Democratic Republic after 1945 and held important positions in architecture and planning36. But let us remember that when Meyer, the Red Bauhaus Brigade, and the Ernst May Brigade first arrived in the Soviet Union circa 1930, they were involved in a “radical” line of action, and their interest in science, measurable data, and sociological considerations was accepted at first. When seen in the larger context, with exceptions of cities like Orsk which were planned by foreigners and got built, the hundreds of factories done after plans of Albert Kahn, or the influence of some of these operations training local architects, questioning the repercussion of foreign architects in the period of the First and Second Five Year Plan in Soviet architecture is pertinent. As the 1930s advanced, it is undeniable that arbitrary ideological criteria gave way to official approaches – formal and otherwise. These impositions clearly affected the architecture of some of these foreign architects, leading them to lose formal rigor, analytical acumen, and tenacity. What is clear however, is that for some of the architects that made it out in time and alive, they won architectural agency of a different kind and several of them deployed it in the postwar period in countries of the Eastern block.

27 One aspect of the aftermath of the Meyer Bauhaus presents an intriguing question: are the Bauhaus students that settled in Palestine part of the Third Migration? I consider
the Palestine Bauhaus to be a subset of the Third Migration, with the caveat that the Palestinian version did not represent some of the characteristics of the phenomenon. Compared to the Red Bauhaus Brigade for instance, the architecture students from the Bauhaus who migrated to Palestine provide a distinct contrast. The Bauhaus students in Palestine can be divided into two groups: the first group included the architects Arieh Sharon, Shlomo Bernstein, Chanan Frenkl, Edgar Hecht, Schmuel Mestechkin, and Munio Weinraub. They were all originally from Poland, they had immigrated to Palestine, and after studying at the Bauhaus they returned to Palestine. Artists Wolf (Ze’ev) Joffe had also immigrated to Palestine from Latvia before going to the Bauhaus, and returned to Palestine after his studies in Germany. The second group included the architects Heinz Schwerin and his German wife Ricarda Meltzer (a German non-Jewish Bauhaus photography student), as well as the photographers Naftaly Avnon (born Rubinstein), Ellen Auerbach, Erich Comeriner, the dancer Karla Grosch, and the artists Mordecai Ardon (born Max Bronstein), Erich Glas, and Ruth Kaiser-Kohn, who immigrated to Palestine after studying at the Bauhaus. Many of these Bauhäusler that returned or immigrated to Palestine were students during Mies’s tenure.

Unlike many members of the Third Migration, the former Bauhäusler in Palestine did not return to Europe. This tendency to settle in Palestine can easily be explained by the fact that most, if not all of them, had come to the Bauhaus from Palestine in the first place. Above all, Zionism as an ideology had both left- and right-wing variants. The left-wing variants represented progressive socialist ideas that coincided with many of Meyer’s ideas, such as collective living which found an outlet in the Kibbutzim. The Red Bauhaus Brigade members Scheffler, Tolziner, and Weiner were Jewish, and Tolziner had been a member of the Zionist group “Blau-Weiss” in his youth and had lived in Palestine for a spell before his Bauhaus days. But after he became more radical politically, he left his Zionist ideals for Communist ones, and neither he nor Weiner considered the possibility of settling in Palestine. Their decisions to pursue their ideals elsewhere are telling, since as left-wing Jews the option of going to Palestine would have been an obvious one, but clearly their left-wing commitments were not aligned with a Zionist variant.

Meyer also invited Arieh Sharon (1900-1984) to join him in the Soviet Union. Sharon was born in Poland and came to the Bauhaus in 1926 via Palestine, where he had emigrated in 1920. Since Sharon spoke Polish and some Russian, he had been the guide for a delegation from the Soviet State Schools of Art and Architecture (Vkhutemas) that came to the Bauhaus. As a follow up to this visit, in the spring of 1928, three Bauhaus delegates (Sharon, Peer Bücking, and the master of the weaving department Gunta Stölzl) went to Moscow to see the Vkhutemas. Most importantly, while in Dessau, Sharon worked for Meyer and had been in charge of the project for the ADGB Trade Union School in Bernau. However, despite Meyer’s invitations (and also those of Mart Stam to join him in Magnitogorsk to work with the May Brigade), Sharon chose to stay in Palestine. Sharon had married Stölzl and had a daughter, the reason for which he stayed in Germany until May 1931, when he returned to Palestine with the purpose of getting a new passport. During the months that followed Sharon’s departure, based on Sharon’s own memoir and letters of Stölzl, he thought about going to the Soviet Union. As things turned out, Sharon and Stölzl split paths: he stayed in Palestine and Stölzl settled in Switzerland.
In terms of their architectural production, those architects from the Red Bauhaus Brigade who spent the last stage of their careers in Eastern European communist countries – those who reengaged with national projects – saw some of their progressive ideas take a toll. Although some architects can be said to have remained modern in spirit, some of the designs of the likes of Tibor Weiner in Sztálinváros, like his building for the headquarters of the Communist Party, exemplify the dominant Socialist Realism. In contrast, the architects who emigrated to Palestine were not always forced to leave behind their ideals. Some of the architectural projects developed by Bauhaus students in Palestine, like those by Arieh Sharon, remained to a certain extent more “experimental”.

After the war, Stalin’s government began to target “rootless cosmopolitanism”, a term that was eventually used to describe Jewish intellectuals. In the beginning, however, the term was part of an anti-foreigner discourse and as such Meyer and his brigade would have fallen under this rubric. This leads us to question political ideas and their relation to cosmopolitanism and globalization. Moreover, it was during the interwar period that the postwar phenomena of the “global architect” started to brew. Le Corbusier can be considered perhaps the first truly global architect. Having worked and moved swiftly between Europe, the Soviet Union, Latin America, and India, it is safe to state that Le Corbusier’s movements were dominated by the availability of commissions – his version of cosmopolitanism led him to work at one point in the Soviet Union and later with no apparent contradictions campaign for his Algiers project with the Vichy government; he made allegiances depending on what each opportunity demanded. (In the end though, both the Soviet Union and Vichy rejected his ideas). Now, let us consider Meyer as a counterexample. After exiting the Bauhaus under accusations of being a Marxist, he placed his expertise at the service of the Soviet Union’s First Five Year plan. After having been accused as a Marxist by the Dessau authorities, Meyer embraced the accusation and worked in the Soviet Union until it was no longer feasible. When reading the texts he wrote in his Soviet period, Meyer explicitly retrofitted Marxism onto his Bauhaus work. Afterwards, he returned to his native Switzerland, and later he accepted an invitation to Mexico where he thought that the spirit of the Mexican Revolution still dominated the politics of the country. While in Moscow Meyer’s brand of Marxism had been criticized by some local critics as “soft”, in Mexico in the 1940s he appears to have had the opposite problem. Meyer had been hired when Lázaro Cárdenas del Río was the president, a leader with whom the Communist Party had been at ease. But with the change of presidency, first with Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) and with Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), Socialist politics veered towards an unapologetic capitalism and the country sealed its allegiance with the United States. By the time Meyer returned to Switzerland ten crucial years had passed during which not a single one of his projects had been built, and he died prematurely a few years later without having accomplished his last major task: the publication of a book on his Bauhaus tenure. In brief, Meyer was not at home in the world. He did not move with ease from country to country. In fact, he stayed for long periods in each destination. We can state that Meyer circulated through defined areas of the world due to his political ideas. Moreover, Meyer chose his destinations in accordance with his own views of world politics and he attempted to use his destinations to inform and position himself relative to sympathetic political scenarios. In parallel, the decision by some of Meyer’s collaborators to work after the war in Communist countries was deliberate. The Eastern Bloc speaks to an alternative
globalization, or a fragmented version of cosmopolitanism. Also, there is an affinity
between the itinerant character of the Third Migration and the “homelessness” that
Siegfried Kracauer or Theodor Adorno wrote about, which in turn derived from György
Lukács’ idea of “transcendental homelessness” as described in his *The Theory of the
Novel*. The main difference is that homelessness is different from itinerancy, and it is
this last concept qualifies better the reality of some of the studied architects.

Unlike the Bauhaus under Gropius and Mies, the project of Meyer and the Red Bauhaus
Brigade did not have a permanent home – or to be precise, never found a final home.
Meyer’s project was not a global project – as a matter of fact it debunks the very idea of
being “at home in the world”. Although he was in authority positions a series of times,
he was more of a political intransigent than a political animal (even though this idea
can be challenged if one considers all the lip service he performed for Stalin,
exemplified by the lectures he gave in Western Europe between 1931 and 1936).

The first show trials in the USSR in 1936 prompted the beginning of the exodus of all of
the foreigners who could leave. Even those who remained an extra year left the Soviet
Union by November 1937 at the latest, if they could. Those who stayed usually had no
choice, and ended in the Gulag accused of espionage. Meyer left the Soviet Union in
1936. No matter how much Meyer and the other members of the Red Bauhaus Brigade
had identified with the Soviet project, they could not live in service of that project.
Even though Meyer in some capacity kept on defending Stalinism, he ultimately was
well aware that the Stalinist project excluded him. Meyer and his Brigade’s endeavors
can be tentatively described as internationalist rather than global, engaged at times
with the Communist party, various educational institutions, and a series of state
organizations in countries of dissimilar political contexts.

**The Three Migrations**

Investigating these three migrations is one way of breaking down the impact of
modernism in architecture, and disassembling romantic monolithic notions of modern
architecture. Studying the Third Migration as a different set of architectural
“strategies” is also a statement of resistance against more purist readings of modern
architecture. As things turned out, the Third Migration’s understanding of modern
architecture was interrupted by the war and for the most part found itself on the
Eastern side of the Iron Curtain in the postwar period and, therefore, had to comply
with Party dictates, loosing many of its initial modernist impulses. My larger project is
an attempt to expose some aspects of this Third Migration, to question what was lost by
its interrupted development, and to understand what can be learned from this
unexplored legacy.
NOTES

1. Emigration is the act of leaving a country with the intent to settle elsewhere. Conversely, immigration describes the movement of persons from one country into another that is not their native country. In the two terms, the focus is either on the receiving country or the country of departure. This essay will use as an alternative the term migration, which refers more generally to movement (like that of birds in wintertime), and is also closer to the term itinerant.


3. Peter Behrens’s built works outside of Germany include buildings in the United States, Russia, France, Austria, the former Croatia, and Slovakia. Auguste Perret’s built works outside of France include buildings in Marroco, Luxembourg, and Algiers.


6. The Deutscher Werkbund was founded in 1907; its purpose was to promote dialogue between industrialists and retailers with architects and designers in order to elevate the standards of German mass-produced commodities and industrial design in general.


12. In 1934, Walter Gropius arrived in England and was made the design controller of the Isokon furniture company. In 1936, he formed an architectural partnership with Maxwell Fry, and even participated in MARS (i.e. the Modern Architecture Research Group). Architectural historian Winfried Nerdinger argues that Gropius’s relocation to England in 1934 was for financial reasons, and that he traveled freely between England and Germany a number of times between 1935-36 before moving to the United States. Winfried Nerdinger, “Bauhaus-Architekten im ’Dritten Reich’”

13. In 1935 Marcel Breuer and László Moholy-Nagy arrived in London, they both moved to the United States in 1937. Other modern architects from Germany also used London as an intermediate transit point, as was the case with Erich Mendelsohn who arrived in London in 1933 and formed a partnership with the Russian-born Serge Chermayeff who also later moved to the United States. From London, Mendelsohn moved initially to Palestine, before immigrating in 1941 to the United States. Interestingly, the architectural historians Nikolaus Pevsner, Rudolf Wittkower, and Emil Kaufmann all arrived in London in 1933 but, unlike the architects, they remained in place.


16. Other American educational institutions that had Bauhaus faculty were the Aspen Institute, Georgia Institute of Technology, Washington University in St. Louis, City College in New York, New York University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Sarah Lawrence College, School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Parsons School of Design, Cooper Union, and College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland.

17. A prime example was the 1933 competition for the Reichsbank building where Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe were invited to submit designs.

18. There were non-architecture Bauhaus students like Hinnerk Scheper, Lená Bergner, Leonie Neumann, Ethel Fodor, etc. that also had stints in the Soviet Union. Also, there were Bauhaus-related people, like Margarete Mengel (Meyer’s Bauhaus secretary) who also made it to the Soviet Union.

19. The first configuration of Ernst May’s Brigade, which traveled to Moscow in October 1931, included thirteen employees from his Frankfurt practice, among them Albert Löcher, Albert Winter, Max Murkhardt, Max Frühauf, Werner Hebebrand (and his wife the photographer Grete Leistikow), Fritz Jasper, Hans Leistikow, Ulrich Wolf, Walter Kratz, Walter Schwagenscheidt, Wilhelm Schütte, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, and Mart Stam (who had freelanced for May) along with new hires such as Carl Lehmann, Erich Mauthner, Hans Schmidt, and Wilhem Hauss. There was a second wave of collaborators that traveled later, included among others Alfréd Forbát, Arthur Korn, Johan Niegeman, Erich Mauthner, Hans Burkart, Kurt Liebknecht, and Max Frühauf. It should be noted that Niegeman, Forbát, Stam, and others had had Bauhaus connections.


31. Ernst May’s first contract is dated July 15, 1930, and his second contract March 16, 1932. The author is indebted to Thomas Flierl for sharing these documents.
34. Hin Bredendieck taught at the New Bauhaus in Chicago and later at Georgia Tech. Rolf Sklarek settled in Los Angeles.
35. Hannes Meyer (Geneva) to Tibor Weiner (Paris), March 6, 1938, Hannes Meyer Papers, Deutsches Architekturmuseum-Archiv, Frankfurt am Main.
38. For more information on Sharon and Stötzl, see Arieh Sharon, Bauhaus + Kibbutz, op. cit.; Gunta Stötzl, Bauhaus Master, Ostfildern, Hatje Cantz, 2009.

RÉSUMÉS

This essay describes a migration scenario of architects in the interwar period, one that is different from others of the epoch. The Third Migration addresses a movement of mostly left-wing architects from Europe to the Soviet Union during the interwar period, architects that mostly relocated before the war, and many returned to Europe after the war. The Third Migration points towards a third paradigm of migration and not a chronological sequence, the first example being the Le Corbusier school around the world, and the second example being the Bauhaus that goes to the United States with Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe et alli. This larger frame helps to situate the specific group of architecture students from the German Bauhaus who followed Meyer to the Soviet Union in 1930 after he was expelled from the directorship of the Bauhaus: the so-called Red Bauhaus Brigade. This essay questions whether the movements of this Third Migration can be considered global and suggests a frame for analyzing the dissemination of modern architecture.

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