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| Title: | THE OBJECT OF ZIONISM: ARCHITECTURE OF STATEHOOD IN ISRAEL |
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| Abstract: | Dissertation Abstract The Object of Zionism investigates the fabrication of the State of Israel as a unique project in modern history--unprecedented in its relative scope and rates of growth; ideological and visionary roots; political and ethical circumstances; and concentration of architectural experiments. These experiments entailed the molding of a new artificial landscape and infrastructure, the destruction and expulsion of indigenous Palestinian communities, and the construction of dozens of New Towns and hundreds of new rural settlements for Jewish refugees and immigrants. Indeed, contrary to common belief and to visual impression, the State of Israel was not born of haphazard improvisation, emergency routine, or speculative ventures, and certainly not of gradual autochthonous build-up, but rather of the objective to construct a comprehensive, controlled, and efficient model-State and put into praxis modernist regional, urban, architectural, and sociological theories. The Dissertation is conceived along the intricate dialectics of Land and State. These two foundational notions are positioned not as a diachronic sequence (referring until 1948 to the Land of Israel and thereafter to the State of Israel), but, quite the contrary, as an immanent bipolar condition informing all textual manifestos and spatial manifestations that may be referred to as Zionist. Chapter 1 describes Zionism as an ideologically rural construct, as a strategically expansionist movement, and as an architecturally inventive culture, producing ever more new settlement typologies. Chapter 2 studies the initial master-plan of the State of Israel, published in 1951. This plan, within less than a decade, transformed from a statement of 4 principles into a mega-project transcending its originators and becoming a self-generating planning machine. Chapter 3 depicts the attempt to constitute a continuous political hegemony and a consensual cultural uniformity in Israel of the 1950s and to support such an official "Statist" attitude by a conscious and fairly elaborate architectural discourse. Chapter 4 examines both the efficiency and benevolence of the welfare-state and its coercive policy of social engineering associated with the ambitious project of mass housing. Chapter 5 narrates the all-too-decisive absorption of Brutalist architecture in Israel, and its instantaneous diffusion throughout all private and public sectors, programs, and typologies. |
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