

ISRAEL AND ITS PALESTINIAN CITIZENS

This volume presents new perspectives on Israeli society, Palestinian society, and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Based on historical foundations, it examines how Israel institutionalizes ethnic privileging among its nationally diverse citizens. Arab, Israeli, and American contributors discuss the paradoxes of democratic claims in ethnic states, as well as the dynamics of social conflict in the absence of equality. This book advances a new understanding of Israel’s approach to its Palestinian citizens, covers the broadest range of areas in which Jews and Arabs are institutionally differentiated along an ethnic basis, and explicates the psychopolitical foundations of ethnic privileges. It will appeal to students and scholars who seek broader views on Israeli society and its relationship with the Arab citizens, and want to learn more about the status of the Palestinian citizens in Israel and their collective experience as both citizens and settler-colonial subjects.

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ISRAEL AND ITS PALESTINIAN CITIZENS

Ethnic Privileges in the Jewish State

Edited by

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PREFACE

The idea of this volume emerged during a discussion some years back with Dr. Sahar Huneidi, a Palestinian scholar in exile, who sought to learn about the status of the Palestinian citizens in Israel and their collective experience as both citizens and settler-colonial subjects. Her intellectual curiosity, academic background, and personal interest led to lengthy discussions about the nature of this population's citizenship and how the settler-colonial structure of the Jewish state (or more accurately the Zionist state) is manifested in their collective experience. How is this citizenship in a settler-colonial state exactly reflected in the state's relationship with them? After all, the Palestinian citizens in Israel, who comprise close to one-fifth of the total population of Israel within its pre-June 1967 borders, live under a Zionist system that is built on the premise that the state established on their homeland is actually the "state of the Jewish people" and the homeland itself is the "homeland of the Jewish people" – not theirs.

We decided that a volume is needed to focus on the ways that Israel has formulated its relationship with its Arab citizens from the very beginning, even in pre-state days, in such a way that ensures extensive, indisputable, ethnic privileges for Jews across a wide swathe of socio-political domains at the expense of Arabs, while simultaneously presenting itself as a democracy. This seemed theoretically important for reasons I present in the first chapter. We also decided that I would edit a volume on this focus, and that Dr. Huneidi would serve as Assistant Editor.

Thus, the book was structured with the focus on exploring the nature and the foundational underpinnings of the ethnic privileges granted to Jewish citizens (and noncitizens) in Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians who are both citizens and natives of the homeland (privileges that apply vis-à-vis other non-Jews in the country). We assembled a group of scholars to examine the roots of these privileges in pre-state Zionist thinking and in the state's political structure; how these privileges are manifested in

various spheres; how they are justified by Zionist thought and resisted by Palestinian citizens; and what their long-term implications are. We did not ask the authors to take any particular theoretical approach, such as considering a settler-colonial framework of analysis, but we did ask them to examine the underpinnings and manifestations of Jewish ethnic privileges as shown in state policies.

Over the last few years, I have been heavily involved in discussions, workshops, conferences, and conversations that have influenced my thinking about the subject matter of this project. Ideas included in my introductory chapter, as well as ideas for other chapters in this volume, were enriched by discussions at Mada al-Carmel – Arab Center for Applied Social Research in Haifa, and by the countless seminars and workshops that were held there and elsewhere over the years on the relationship between Israel and its Palestinian citizens. Under Mada's sponsorship, from 2003 to 2005, about 50 Palestinian academics, intellectuals, and civil society and political leaders came together in an ongoing project to consider the present and future relationship between Israel and its Palestinian citizens. The final outcome of this initiative was the issuance of *The Haifa Declaration* in May 2007. The thoughtful and wide-ranging debates, and the process that we underwent to develop *The Haifa Declaration*, left a deep intellectual impact on my thinking. *The Haifa Declaration* stated that the citizenship of the Palestinian citizens and their relationship with the state of Israel “are defined, to a great extent, by a formative event, the *Nakba*, which befell the Arab Palestinian people in 1948 as a result of the creation of the state of Israel. This was the event through which we – who remained from among the original inhabitants of our homeland – were made citizens without the genuine constituents of citizenship, especially equality ... the bedrock of democratic citizenship” (<http://mada-research.org/en/files/2007/09/haifaenglish.pdf>).

Similarly, the discussions generated at the Fletcher Seminar on International Conflict, which I chair at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in Boston, and the numerous speakers over the last few years also contributed to some of the insights reflected in my chapters, as well as in the book's structure.

I am grateful to the many people who knowingly or unknowingly assisted in shaping my thinking, as reflected in my introductory chapter, and who have helped at various stages of this project, both at Mada al-Carmel and at the Fletcher School. My thanks go to Areej

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My thanks also go to the more than a dozen contributors to this volume. I thank them for their valuable contributions, for their cooperation with me and my team in numerous rounds of editing, and for their patience waiting until the whole project was completed.

My special thanks go to two people who contributed enormously to the intellectual caliber and production of the volume: First, Kate Rouhana, who edited all the chapters in this volume. Her editing went beyond work on language and style to encompass structure, substance, and flow. Mia Lattanzi served as the copy editor and interacted with authors to complete their chapters to a consistent level of perfection. Kate's and Mia's tireless and meticulous editing of various versions of each chapter contributed to bringing this volume to its present standard.

Special thanks also go to Sahar Huneidi, the Assistant Editor, who offered her support and encouragement and who persisted to have this project completed, despite all the difficulties of adhering to the original time frame. Sahar helped in conceptualizing the project, reviewing chapters, and the general editing task.

My editor, John Berger at Cambridge University Press, offered his constant support and remarkable patience as the original time frame envisaged for completion was exceeded. His graceful encouragement is most appreciated.

I hope that this volume provides the reader with a rigorous understanding of the historical, ideological, and psychopolitical foundations of the Jewish privileges in Israel and of their institutional and political manifestations. I hope that this understanding will contribute to bringing an end, sooner rather than later, to the erroneous conception that Israel in its 1967 borders is, or can be, both democratic and Jewish. The Jewish part of this definition – the Zionist part – which is explicated clearly in this volume – is reflected in

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extensive and entrenched ethnic privileges that are fundamentally incompatible with democracy.

I also hope that this book will contribute to future theoretical and political thought that will seek ending ethnic privileges and transforming Israel from a Zionist state to a democratic state.