Preface

We are pleased to be able to present this new edition of *Politics and Government in Israel.* This new edition is different from past editions in many respects, primary among which is that it is co-authored. One of us (Mahler, an American) has authored the previous editions of the book and has been interested in the study of Israel for his entire professional life. Indeed, his doctoral field research was done in Israel's parliament in Jerusalem shortly after the 1973 war, and he has been active in scholarship in this field since that time. The other of us (Hazan, an Israeli) has also been focused on Israeli politics for his professional career, but from an inside perspective. Underpinning his academic work is the attempt to place the developing Israeli case into either a comparative or a theoretical framework, where it can both benefit from and be of benefit to political scientists. It is very satisfying to be able to share with students the many lessons from our two perspectives that can be learned from the politics and history of this state.

Having the opportunity to write an introductory textbook is both rewarding and challenging. The reward comes from being able to share discussion of issues that are of importance, and from being able to feel that we may be contributing in even a small way to student interest in and conversation about the topics presented in the book. The challenge, of course, comes from trying to decide what goes into the book. This is true not only in terms of major topics, but also is true in relation to the level of included detail. For example, the chapter "History and the Creation of Israel" in this volume is but a very small fraction of the size of volumes devoted exclusively to Israeli history, and we are certain that some will be unhappy that something has been omitted from the discussion here, or unhappy that we appear to be stressing one line of interpretation rather than another. That is, indeed, unfortunate, but as we had to decide what to include and what to omit, what to stress, and what to touch upon lightly, those determinations had to be made. At the end of the day, this book is a general introduction to the study of Israeli politics, not a specialized volume, and we simply had to operate within the limits of this specific project.

Any volume dealing with many very controversial subjects, as this book does, also faces a dilemma, and there simply does not appear to be any way around the problem. If we are to discuss controversial material—and, indeed, a fundamental commitment to this type of discussion and inquiry is central to our academic mission—then we are likely to displease some readers. We can only say here that we have endeavored to present a balanced picture, but at the same time we have not shied away from presenting facts that some readers might not be happy having included in the discussion.

It has been a pleasure to work with the State University of New York Press on the fourth edition of this book. Michael Rinella worked with us in the early stages of the project. We also want to thank Diane Ganeles, our production editor at SUNY, for seeing the project through from manuscript to book. None of these people, of course, is responsible for the shortcomings that may be found in these pages, and we alone are accountable for any errors of content or omission in this manuscript, as well as its conclusions.

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