This book was a decade in the making, and I am grateful for the deep support it has received from numerous institutions and individuals along the way. It began at the University of Pennsylvania, where Peter Holquist and Benjamin Nathans nurtured the project from its earliest days and provided challenging feedback throughout the process to push it in new directions. I was also fortunate to benefit from Bruce Grant’s anthropological eye and, more recently, his guidance on the book publication process. I am grateful for the close and supportive community of history graduate students at Penn, especially Sam Casper, Alex Hazanov, Yakov Feygin, Sam Hirst, and Iuliia Skubytska.

Research for this project was supported by generous grants for extended periods in Tbilisi between 2011 and 2015 from the American Councils / Department of State Title VIII Program for Research and Training on Eastern Europe and the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus, the Pew Foundation, and the University of Pennsylvania. In Tbilisi, the staff of the Archive Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs made my research periods productive, efficient, and enjoyable. I especially thank Ivane Jakhua, Dodo Baghaturia, and director Omari Tushurashvili. My Georgian language teachers Ramaz Kurdadze, Tea Ebralidze, and most of all Nino Sharashenidze equipped me with the tools necessary to carry out the project I envisioned. Frequent conversations about Georgian archives, architecture, history, and memory with Tim Blauvelt, Oliver Reisner, Jeremy Johnson, Angela Wheeler, Giorgi Kldiashvili, Davit Jishkariani, and Levan Asabashvili made for a stimulating intellectual environment in Tbilisi and beyond.

The project also benefited greatly from participation in the following workshops and conferences: Georgian Nationalism and Soviet Power, organized by Jeremy Smith, and the Hoover Institution Workshop on Totalitarian Regimes, organized by Paul Gregory and Mark Harrison.
I presented early versions of chapters at the Lithuanian Institute of History (thanks to Vilius Ivanauskas); the Penn Russian Kruzhok and Annenberg Seminar; Harvard Davis Center’s Symposium on Belonging, Politics, and Knowledge in Central Asia and the Caucasus (thanks to Krista Goff and Meltem Sancak); the conference Conflicting Narratives: History and Politics in the Caucasus at the University of Zurich (thanks to Jeronim Perovic); the American Research Institute of the South Caucasus Connections conference at Indiana University and at its Hamilton Lugar School; the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Institute of World History; the Caucasus Research Resource Center Works-in-Progress series in Tbilisi; and at various Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) and Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN) meetings. Feedback from presentations at these and other conferences from Ron Suny, Stephen Kotkin, Jörg Baberowski, Maike Lehmann, Jeremy Smith, James Heinzen, Zbigniew Wojnowski, Krista Goff, Oliver Reisner, Ben Nathans, Kevin Platt, and many others helped improve individual chapters. I am especially grateful for the detailed and thoughtful comments on the entire book manuscript at a critical stage from Peter Holquist, Tim Blauvelt, Erik Scott, and Krista Goff. Further excellent suggestions from anonymous reviewers and the editorial team of Cornell University Press helped tighten and clarify the book’s arguments, as well as broaden its reach. Any remaining errors are, of course, my own.

At Cornell University Press, Roger Haydon saw this project’s potential on the eve of his retirement, and I am grateful to Emily Andrew for expertly steering the manuscript process through the review stages and to Bethany Wasik for seeing the book through to publication. I thank Evangeline McGlynn for developing the original maps and Nancy Raynor for her copyediting acumen. A version of chapter 3 appeared as “‘What Are They Doing? After All, We’re Not Germans’: Expulsion, Belonging, and Postwar Experience in the Caucasus,” in Empire and Belonging in the Eurasian Borderlands, ed. Krista A. Goff and Lewis H. Siegelbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 80–94, and an early version of chapter 4 was published as “‘A Kind of Silent Protest’? Deciphering Georgia’s 1956,” in Georgia after Stalin: Nationalism and Soviet Power, ed. Jeremy Smith and Timothy Blauvelt (New York: Routledge, 2015): 92–115. I thank Cornell and Routledge for permission to republish these chapters.

Georgetown University’s Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies (CERES) has given me an academic home since leaving
Penn, thanks to the support of Angela Stent, Jennifer Long, Ben Loring, and Michael David-Fox. I have been fortunate, since 2016, to teach a course on the history of the Caucasus, and my students have, in ways likely unknown to them, substantially improved the book that resulted from our hours together covering the *longue durée* of the greater Caucasus region. It is a privilege to be back at CERES and Georgetown, where I was an undergraduate and master’s student—and where I first studied Russian and Soviet history thanks to the singular intellect and charisma of the late Richard Stites. My colleagues at McLarty Associates have also supported and improved this book since I rejoined the firm in 2016, in particular by helping me consider the current policy relevance of the history and stories I tell. Nelson Cunningham, Rick Burt, Kellie Meiman, and Lee Feinstein have been invaluable colleagues and mentors, and George Tsereteli has been a great collaborator on all things Georgian at McLarty.

My parents, Paul and Shelley Pogue, nurtured my historical tendencies (and the creative ones of my siblings, Caroline and Parker) from an early age and have provided unwavering support through every stage of this project, including joining me at academic conferences in Indiana and visiting me while I was living in Tbilisi. My husband, Mike, has been a constant source of support and inspiration for this book—and in our life together. I’m grateful that this project was born when our professional worlds serendipitously took us both to Tbilisi in 2011, where we celebrated our first wedding anniversary. I dedicate this book to our sons, Bo and Niko, who encouraged me, in their own ways, to finish this book amid the uncertainties of a pandemic.