How do Soviet politicians rise to power? How are national and regional regimes formed? How are conflicting political interests brought together as policies are developed in the Soviet Union? These questions have long absorbed historians and political scientists, yet none have systematically examined the crucial role played by patron-client relations. In *Patronage and politics in the USSR* Professor John Willerton offers major new insights into the patronage networks that have dominated elite mobility, regime formation and governance in the Soviet Union during the past twenty-five years.

Using the biographical and career details of over two thousand national leaders and regional officials in Azerbaizhan and Lithuania, John Willerton traces the patron-client relations underlying recruitment, mobility and policymaking. He explores the strategies of power consolidation and coalition building used by Soviet chief executives since 1964 as well as the institutional links and policy outcomes that have resulted from network politics. The author also assesses the manner and extent to which leaders in politically stable and less stable settings, spanning different national cultural contexts, have relied upon patronage networks to consolidate power and to govern. Finally, Professor Willerton explores how, in a period of dramatic change, patron-client networks may now be giving way to institutionalized interest groups and political parties.
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PATRONAGE AND POLITICS IN THE USSR

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge
New York Port Chester
Melbourne Sydney
To Nancy
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Preface

Students of the Soviet system have long struggled to find and fit together the pieces comprising the Soviet political puzzle. Although less evident in the period of openness and radical reform, scholars have labored simply to determine the broad contours of that puzzle. Core pieces have often remained obscure. This book concentrates on one puzzle within the broader Soviet context: political patronage. Widely acknowledged as central to Soviet political life, patronage relations have received almost no systematic attention. My interest in Soviet patronage networks emerged in the twilight of the Khrushchev period, when Western observers were surprised by the top leader’s sudden ouster. Scholars struggled to trace the emergence of the Brezhnev regime and the development of a new policy program. Initially I was interested in identifying broad norms of patronage politics, especially as they related to regime formation and power consolidation. Later, in the wake of Gorbachevian reforms, I became more interested in exploring the impact of political and institutional changes on deeply rooted elite behavioral norms. Throughout, I wanted to illuminate broad proclivities that transcended one regime and that were evident in both national and subnational Soviet politics. It was my good fortune that an academic year stay in the USSR yielded not only national, but extensive republic-level, data so that I could consider hypotheses in a comparative light.

Many people have provided encouragement and support during the stages of my work on patronage. I have profited immeasurably from intellectual exchanges with friends and colleagues during graduate school at the University of Michigan, research visits to the USSR, and my years as an assistant professor at Michigan State University and the University of Arizona. Bill Zimmerman, who chaired my dissertation, provided the intellectual challenge and support that I needed to move forward with my ideas on patronage.
and Soviet elite politics. Ellen Mickiewicz not only provided me with a formal introduction to Soviet politics, but helped me to define patronage politics as a primary research focus. Zvi Gitelman and Al Meyer enabled me to consider patronage in a broader comparative context, challenging me to rework my assumptions about the modern bureaucracy. George Breslauer helped me to refine my thinking not only about Soviet elite politics, but about patronage and its relevance to the Soviet system. Roman Szporluk helped me to better understand the politics of Soviet republics, sensitizing me to the value of long-term, careful study of particular organizational and regional settings.

Along the way others have reacted to some or all of my chapters, and I have benefited from their suggestions. Bill Reisinger saw the manuscript through all of its revisions, and his thoughts played a critical role as a more finished book took shape. Ron Hill provided helpful comments – and much encouragement – after reading the entire manuscript in its final stage. Donna Bahry, Steve Burant, Charles Fairbanks, Jeffrey Hahn, Eric Hoffmann, and Ron Suny read parts of the book as it evolved through various conference papers, and their suggestions were critical as the revision process went forward. Several anonymous reviewers for Cambridge University Press offered thoughtful and suggestive comments that significantly strengthened the book’s organization and content.

A 1982–83 research stay in the USSR, supported by the International Research and Exchanges Board, was critical to both data collection and initial analyses. My Soviet hosts in the Department of USSR History of the Soviet Period, Moscow State University, extended me every courtesy and enabled me to have a most fruitful year. Nikolai Naumov was especially supportive in orienting me to the norms of Soviet academic research life. I also benefited from the professionalism and assistance of many staff members of the INION (Institute of Scientific Information for the Social Sciences) Library in Moscow. A follow-up research trip to Moscow, Vilnius, and Tallinn, supported by the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities and Michigan State University, provided important interviews that helped me to anticipate Gorbachev period developments.

I should also like to make mention of my editor at Cambridge University Press, Michael Holdsworth, who was most encouraging and helpful as the manuscript moved through the review, revision, and production process. Rachel Quenk gave the entire manuscript a careful reading and provided invaluable help as the final draft
emerged. The staff of James Madison College of Michigan State University and of the Department of Political Science of the University of Arizona provided much needed assistance; I would especially like to thank Becky Moore, Kelli Waldron, and Bonnie Weybourne. Van Maas provided tremendous moral support throughout my long odyssey with political patronage, and I am most grateful. Finally, my wife, Nancy Stiller, inspired and encouraged me as a book slowly emerged from a doctoral dissertation. Nancy constantly motivated me with a laugh and a smile, and her love and support made all the difference. More than anyone Nancy enabled me to see this project to its completion. It is with much love and gratitude that I dedicate this book to her.