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978-1-107-04214-8 - Freedom, Repression, and Private Property in Russia

Vladimir Shlapentokh and Anna Arutunyan

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Freedom, Repression, and Private Property in Russia

This study demonstrates how the emergence of private property and a market economy after the Soviet Union's collapse enabled a degree of freedom and simultaneously supported authoritarianism. On the basis of case studies, Vladimir Shlapentokh and Anna Arutunyan analyze how private property and free markets spawn feudal elements in society. These elements are so strong in post-Communist Russia that they prevent the formation of a true democratic society, while making it impossible to return to totalitarianism. The authors describe the resulting Russian society as having three types of social organization: authoritarian, feudal, and liberal. The authors examine the adaptation of Soviet-era institutions like security forces, police, and the army to free market conditions and how they generated corruption; the belief that the KGB was relatively free from corruption; how large property holdings merge with power and necessitate repression; and how property relations affect government management and suppression.

Vladimir Shlapentokh was born, raised, and educated in the Soviet Union. Before immigrating to the United States in 1979, he worked as a Senior Fellow in the Sociological Institute in Moscow, where he conducted the first nationwide public opinion surveys in the USSR. He is currently Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University and is the author of eighteen books.

Anna Arutunyan is a Russian-American journalist currently based in Moscow, where she is a senior correspondent for *The Moscow News*. She has reported on Russian politics for ten years and is the author of *The Media in Russia* (2009) and *The Putin Mystique* (2012).

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Preface

In the preparation of this book several people took important roles. First of all we would like to mention those who edited it – Judy Spanogle, Eric Beasley, and Jeff Oliver. We highly appreciate their efforts and their willingness to enhance the quality of the text. Our special gratitude goes to Jeff, who prepared the text for the publisher. We also want to say thanks to Vera Bondartsova, who with her research work helped us a lot in the writing of the book.

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