



# **Putin's Preventive Counter-Revolution: Post-Soviet Authoritarianism and the Spectre of Velvet Revolution (BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies)**

*Robert Horvath*

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This book examines the 'preventive counter-revolution,' a programme of reforms and repression that transformed the face of Russian politics during Vladimir Putin's second term as president. Kremlin propagandists hailed this programme as a defence of national sovereignty against Western attempts to foment a 'velvet revolution' in Russia. But this book shows that the Putin regime was reacting to a real domestic threat: opposition leaders and youth activists who had begun to employ 'velvet' revolutionary methods in a campaign to harness popular grievances and to challenge Putin in the streets and at the ballot box. It traces the formulation and implementation of the regime's two-track response, which was based on a careful analysis of the lessons of the recent 'velvet' (or 'coloured') revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. The first track was repressive: the imposition of controls on NGOs, restrictions on electoral competition, and a crackdown on opposition demonstrations. The second was the mobilisation of supporters in 'patriotic' youth organisations that employed both gang violence and 'velvet' revolutionary techniques. Drawing on a wide range of Russian-language sources, including opposition activists' blogs, this book charts the end of Russia's experiment with liberal democracy and the emergence of a new type of authoritarian order.

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