

Abstract

The problematic of Romanian transition to democracy after the year 1989 was by its major part determined by the form of previous regime. Because of the extreme pressure and control exercised on the opposition and personal dictatorship of the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu, no major dissent groups or centers existed, bearing the potential to take part in the overthrow of the regime.

In the swift and still unclear events of December 1989, National Salvation Front rose to hold the power, being directed by Ion Iliescu. As a formerly top positioned communist apparatchik, who had been swept out from status and power after several conflicts with Ceausescu, he transferred almost complete communist structure to the newly formed regime, including Securitate, the secret service. Deconstruction of the former regime was actually performed by the execution of the former president and his wife and by trials of several Securitate generals. Iliescu concentrated most of the power around NSF and in contradiction with the original proclamation postponed transition to democracy.

The new regime, which was led by Ion Iliescu demonstrated in its ideological presentation and exercise of power apparent similarities with the era of communist rule, nevertheless, it worked under formal democratic framework. Because of this fact, the opposition could take over the power peacefully in 1996, under the terms of a standard constitutional democracy.