

## **Abstract**

The problems of Romanian transition to democracy after the year 1989 were in large 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 opposition centers possessing the potential to take part in the overthrow of the regime existed.

In the swift and still unclear events of December 1989, National Salvation Front rose to hold the power, being directed by Ion Iliescu at the same time. As a formerly top positioned communist apparatchik, who had been swept out from his status after several conflicts with Ceausescu, he transferred almost complete communist structure under 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 overwhelming majority of the state power around NSF and in contradiction with his original proclamations postponed transition to democracy.

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 carry out a takeover peacefully in 1996 elections, under the terms of a standard constitutional democracy process.