



The Romanian Revolution of December 1989

Peter Siani-Davies

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The Romanian Revolution of 1989 was the most spectacularly violent and remains today the most controversial of all the East European upheavals of that year. Despite (or perhaps because of) the media attention the revolution received, it remains shrouded in mystery. How did the seemingly impregnable Ceausescu regime come to be toppled so swiftly and how did Ion Iliescu and the National Salvation Front come to power? Was it by coup d'état? Who were the mysterious "terrorists" who wreaked such havoc on the streets of Bucharest and the other major cities of Romania? Were they members of the notorious securitate? What was the role of the Soviet Union? Blending narrative with analysis, Peter Siani-Davies seeks to answer these and other questions while placing the events and their immediate aftermath within a wider context. Based on fieldwork conducted in Romania and drawing heavily on Romanian sources, including television and radio transcripts, official documents, newspaper reports, and interviews, this book is the most thorough study of the Romanian Revolution that has appeared in English or any other major European language. Recognizing that a definitive history of these events may be impossible, Siani-Davies focuses on the ways in which participants interpreted the events according to particular scripts and myths of revolution rooted in the Romanian historical experience. In the process the author sheds light on the ways in which history and the conflicting retellings of the 1989 events are put to political use in the transitional societies of Eastern Europe.

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