



Romania: The Entangled Revolution (The Washington Papers)

Nestor Ratesh

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This volume offers a full account of the December 1989 revolution that toppled the Communist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania. Based on the author's personal investigation and interviews, extensive screening of the Romanian and international press, and critical examination of sources and interpretations, it offers a full and objective analysis of a complex, often puzzling series of events. Nestor Ratesh explores the economic, social, and human disaster that led to the uprising, and then chronicles the seven days of the revolution from its inception in the western city of Timisoara to its climax in Bucharest on December 22, 1989, when Ceausescu fled the city. The bloody and confused aftermath is examined from different angles, with surprising details and telling portraits of the main players, some of whom the author knows personally.

Ratesh skeptically scrutinizes the revelations, hints, and rumors of conspiracies that reportedly either caused the revolution--or hijacked it. Evidence available so far points toward a genuinely spontaneous popular uprising during which large segments of the army and secret police slowly realized that the fall of the regime was imminent. They first blinked, then searched for ways to save themselves--forcing Ceausescu to flee and bringing into power both new and old politicians who represented change to the masses but maintained relative stability in the power structure. The paradox that an essentially anti-Communist revolution would produce a regime controlled by former Communists has dominated most of the developments since then. The book concludes by examining the ensuing months of dislocation and commotion. Clearly the December revolution remains unfulfilled, entangled in a myriad of contradictions, obstacles, intrigues, lies, rivalries, ineptitude, and plain wrongdoing.

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