What happens when new democracies must reckon with multiple recent pasts marked by gross human rights violations? In December 1989, Romania was for the first time in decades in a position to redress three distinct pasts: the anti-Ceausescu revolution of 1989, the communist regime of 1945-1989, as well as the pre-communist dictatorships of 1937-1945. These three pasts were characterized by distinctly different human rights violations perpetrated against distinct groups of victims. Post-communist governments selectively addressed and redressed these pasts in order to maximize the political gains of their leaders. While overlooked in the literature, the problem of the competing pasts is relevant for other countries as well.

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