



The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania (Contraversions, Critical Studies in Jewish Literature Culture and Society , No 11)

By Gail Kligman

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The political hypocrisy and personal horrors of one of the most repressive anti-abortion regimes in history came to the world's attention soon after the fall of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Photographs of orphans with vacant eyes, sad faces, and wasted bodies circled the globe, as did alarming maternal mortality statistics and heart-breaking details of a devastating infant AIDS epidemic. Gail Kligman's chilling ethnography—of the state and of the politics of reproduction—is the first in-depth examination of this extreme case of political intervention into the most intimate aspects of everyday life.

Ceausescu's reproductive policies, among which the banning of abortion was central, affected the physical and emotional well-being not only of individual men, women, children, and families but also of society as a whole. Sexuality, intimacy, and fertility control were fraught with fear, which permeated daily life and took a heavy moral toll as lying and dissimulation transformed both individuals and the state. This powerful study is based on moving interviews with women and physicians as well as on documentary and archival material. In addition to discussing the social implications and human costs of restrictive reproductive legislation, Kligman explores the means by which reproductive issues become embedded in national and international agendas. She concludes with a review of the lessons the rest of the world can learn from Romania's tragic experience.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

"Essentially an ethnography about politics, public policy, and lived experience, this timely analysis of the Orwellian tragedy of Ceausescu's Romania is superbly researched—a cross-disciplinary contribution of immense value and wide interest that in places almost reads like a novel."—Henry P. David, author of *Born Unwanted*

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Gail Kligman is Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics, and Popular Culture in Transylvania* (California, 1988).

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