

Women's Reflections on Motherhood and Reproduction under Socialism

F. born, 1956, linguist/translator, divorced, one child, interviewed in Braşov, Romania, summer, 2003.

It was like everything else, a mixed blessing. On the one hand I was happy because I had him, he was a very cute baby, and it was a joy for me, but from a material standpoint it was terrible. It was during the winter, there wasn't any heat, there wasn't any electricity, everything was rationed, there was no clothing for children... everything I needed was brought in somehow from contacts from abroad, the same with food, through acquaintances of my father-in-law or through acquaintances of my father. I remember they cut off the electricity and I had to carry the child and buggy up seven flights of stairs to our apartment. In order to give him a bath I had to heat the water on the stove in a pot. I had a ten liter pot and the flame was so small that it took two hours for the pot of ten liters to heat up. After that I put him in a plastic basin on the table in the kitchen, I would light a candle, because there was no electricity, and I would give the baby a bath.

R. born, 1956, teacher, married, two children, interviewed in Braşov, Romania, summer, 2003.

There were kindergartens with normal schedules which allowed you to drop off the children in the morning and to pick them up at five when you finished work...there was much more order. I think from this perspective, things were better. Better because...they had warm meals, they had a clean cot, there was a [healthy] fear of the woman who worked with the children and there was discipline, and care for children.

F. born, 1956, linguist/translator, divorced, one child, interviewed in Braşov, Romania, summer, 2003.

It [Decree 770 and attendant policies] was purely and simply a crime! A crime... it was one of the worst things that happened.... It was political rape... we were raped, obligated, at all times to do what the party wanted. We didn't have... they didn't give us the possibility to choose. We had to go where we were relocated, we had to work where they said, we had to have children, everything was obligatory. It was horrible because many women died.

Source: Anonymous Interviewees, interview by Jill Massino, oral histories, Brasov, Romania (Summer, 2003), tape, Indiana University Institute for the Study of History and Memory.