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978-0-521-89891-1 - Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR

Josie McLellan

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Love in the Time of Communism

In the aftermath of the reunification of Germany one former dissident recalled nostalgically that under the East German regime ‘we had more sex and we had more to laugh about’. *Love in the Time of Communism* is a fascinating history of the GDR’s forgotten sexual revolution and its limits. Josie McLellan shows that under communism divorce rates soared, abortion became commonplace, and the rate of births outside marriage was amongst the highest in Europe. Nudism went from ban to state-sponsored boom, and erotica became common currency in both the official economy and the black market. Public discussion of sexuality was, however, tightly controlled, and there were few opportunities to challenge traditional gender roles or sexual norms. Josie McLellan’s pioneering account questions some of our basic assumptions about the relationship between sexuality, politics, and society and is a major contribution to our understanding of the everyday emotional lives of postwar Europeans.

JOSIE MCLELLAN is Senior Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Bristol. Her previous publications include *Antifascism and Memory in East Germany: Remembering the International Brigades 1945–1989* (2004).

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