

The Politics of Disability in Interwar and Socialist Czechoslovakia: Segregating in the Name of the Nation
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Abstract

By focusing on the politics of disability as a pillar of Czechoslovak identity, this volume reflects upon the vicissitudes of nation building over the twentieth century that led to extreme forms of institutional violence against minorities, mainly the Roma, such as forced sterilization. Answering the question concerning what driving forces had led public health to operate as agent and structure of segregation is one of the core prerequisites for sustainable desegregation and historical justice. This book reexamines the politics of disability in interwar and socialist Czechoslovakia as embedded into nation building, recruited to legitimize diverse forms of structural violence against people with disabilities and ethnic minorities. The book traces the intersectionality of ethnicity and disability, which proliferated across diverse realms of public life, positioning the continuities and ruptures of interrogating propaganda and racial science during the interwar and post-war periods as establishing and reinforcing the border between a healthy Czech majority and a disabled Roma minority. Writing from their experience, the authors critically revise this border that remains observable but unapproachable until it operates as a part of constructing the authenticity of a nation.

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