
Sport and Physical Education for People with Disabilities in the Bohemian Lands at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries

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Résumé

The presented paper is part of disability studies. It focuses on the Bohemian lands in the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, specifically on institutes where people who were considered abnormal”, deviated”, sick” according to the language of the time, i. e., blind, deaf-mute, mentally and physically impair people were housed. Based on contemporary sports, medical, and daily periodicals, and archival materials from each institute, the paper primarily seeks to show the surprising diversity of physical education and sports activities organised for or by people labeled as disabled” at that time. By analysing the discourse on how disabled” people should be physically educated, and by exploring the perception of the disabled” sport by the healthy” part of society, the paper, secondly, aims to elaborate on the mechanism of the then very common medical model of understanding disability as personal tragedy that can be overcome by the willingness of the disabled” people to become as useful” as the healthy” people. In this context, the third objective of this paper is to point out the highly paradoxical role of physical education and sport which on the one hand offered disabled” people an opportunity for increasing their abilities and self-confidence, on the other hand did not include disabled” people in gymnastics and sports organisations to any great extent. In this way, physical education and sport, as exclusive, segregating systems, reinforced the dichotomy between the abnormal” and normal” people. This binary distinction is also evident in the Sports History, where disabled” sport is usually treated as a separate phenomenon instead of being thought together with the normal” sport. Therefore, finally, the paper would like to highlight how disabled” and normal” sport were entangled during the period analysed in order to propose an inclusive”, non-discriminatory historical narrative.

Mots-Clés: disability, discrimination, Bohemian Lands

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