

EUGENICS AND FEMALE EMBODIMENT IN
CZECHOSLOVAK PUBLIC CAMPAIGNS
DURING THE 1960S AND 1970S

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This study deals with policies directed at women in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s and 1970s. The author has studied several public campaigns in the press and on the radio that aimed at changing women's behaviour. Their goal was to encourage women to use the contraceptive pill. This new practice was described as natural, progressive and self-determined. However, unwanted behavioural patterns (such as abortion, postponing motherhood) were condemned as old-fashioned or unhealthy. This was based on a pronatalistic policy aimed at increasing the birth rates of the majority society. While Czech and Slovak women should have two or three children, access to abortion was facilitated for Roma women and women with disabilities, but also for women from socially disadvantaged families. This image of the modern socialist woman, mistress and mother, shows clear continuities with the time of the so-called national rebirth in the 19th century.