



5. - 6. NOVEMBER 2025

**EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
OF INDIVIDUALS WITH
SENSORY DISABILITIES IN THE
FIRST AND SECOND YUGOSLAV
STATES (1919-1991)**

PROGRAMME AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SENSORY DISABILITIES IN THE FIRST AND SECOND YUGOSLAV STATES (1919-1991)

SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
5.-6. NOVEMBER 2025

ORGANISATION:

Institute of Contemporary
History, Ljubljana

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INSTITUTE
OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Wednesday, 5. 11. 2025

8:45 AM – 9:15 AM: Morning Coffee

Location: The Lobby of the Institute of Contemporary History

9:15 AM – 9:30 AM: Welcome Speech

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM: Introductory lecture

Speaker: Jana Javornik

Title: Resources for Whom? Conceptualising Childcare Policy Architecture for Children with Complex Care Needs

10:30 AM – 12:10 PM: Disability, Education and Care in the Early 20th Century (1900–1941)

10:30 AM – 10:50 AM: Martin Kuhar & Stella Fatović Ferenčić - *Rehabilitation of Disabled Soldiers during the First World War in Croatia*

10:50 AM – 11:10 AM: John Paul Newman - *The King Aleksandar School for the Blind in Interwar Yugoslavia: Disability Care inside and beyond the Institutional Frame*

11:10 AM – 11:30 AM: Dunja Dobaja - *Education of Deaf Children in Schools for the Deaf in Ljubljana and Zagreb*

11:30 AM – 11:50 AM: Marko Buljevac - *Education and Employment Opportunities for Persons with Sensory Disabilities in Zagreb Between the Two World Wars*

11:50 AM – 12:10 PM: Sólveig Ólafsdóttir - *Specialized Training and Life Stories – The Impact of Iceland’s Special Schools for the Blind and Deaf in the Early 20th Century*

12:10 PM – 12:30 PM: Discussion

12:30 PM – 13:00 PM: Coffee break

Location: The Lobby of the Institute of Contemporary History



PROGRAMME DAY 1

Wednesday, 5. 11. 2025

**13:00 PM – 14:00 PM: Sensory Disability and Education in Socialist Yugoslavia:
Personal Narratives and Social Contexts**

**13:00 PM – 13:20 PM: Darja Zaviršek - *Engendering Disability through Oral
Histories of the Specific Era: Sensory Disability and Socialism***

**13:20 PM – 13:40 PM: Janja Sedlaček - *Similar Yet Unique: The Educational
Experiences of People with Sensory Impairments in Socialist Slovenia***

**13:40 PM – 14:00 PM: Dragana Gundogan & Nataša Miličević - *Being Visually
Impaired Women in Socialist Serbia – Experiences with Educational Sphere and
Employment***

14:00 PM – 14:20 PM: Discussion

14:20 PM – 15:20 PM: Lunch

Location: The Lobby of the Institute of Contemporary History

PROGRAMME

DAY 2

Thursday, 6. 11. 2025

8:45 AM – 9:15 AM: Morning Coffee

Location: The Lobby of the Institute of Contemporary History

9:15 AM – 10:15 AM: Introductory lecture

Speaker: Ina Dimitrova

Title: Beyond Labour: Socialist Disability Policy in the Realm of Mental Health

10:15 AM – 11:15 PM: Vocational Education and Employment of People with Sensory Disabilities in Socialist Yugoslavia

10:15 AM – 10:35 AM: Marta Rendla - *Vocational Education of Individuals with Visual and Hearing Impairments in Socialism from a Comparative Perspective*

10:35 AM – 10:55 AM: Jelena Seferović - *How Have Education and Employment Opportunities for the Deaf Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina Changed from Socialism to Today?*

10:55 AM – 11:15 PM: Nataša Milićević & Dragana Gundogan - *Education and Employment of Visually Impaired Physiotherapists in Socialist Serbia*

11:15 AM– 11:35 AM: Discussion

11:35 PM – 12:05 PM: Coffee break

Location: The Lobby of the Institute of Contemporary History



PROGRAMME
DAY 2
Thursday, 6. 11. 2025

12:05 PM – 13:05 PM: Perspectives on Disability History in the Former Yugoslavia

12:05 PM – 12:25 PM: Miloš Paunović - *Serbia's Failed Transition from Segregation to Integration: Education of Children with Disabilities in SR Serbia 1970s-1990s*

12:25 PM – 12:45 PM: Atila Lukić & Gordan Maslov - *Is a History of Disability in Yugoslavia Possible?*

12:45 PM – 13:05 PM: Magda Karavanić - *The Typhological Museum as One of the Pioneers of Dealing with the Issues of People with Visual Impairments in Yugoslavia*

13:05 PM – 13:25 PM: Discussion

13:25 PM – 14:25 PM: Lunch

Location: The Lobby of the Institute of Contemporary History



INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY
PRIVUZ 11, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

The background of the entire page is a light blue color with a black line pattern that resembles a topographic map or contour lines. The lines are irregular and wavy, creating a sense of depth and movement. A solid blue horizontal band is positioned in the middle of the page, serving as a background for the main title.

ABSTRACTS

DR. JANA JAVORNIK

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, LJUBLJANA

Resources for whom? Conceptualising childcare policy architecture for children with complex care needs

Affordable, good quality childcare creates opportunities for many parents to better reconcile work and care or reduces family care to enable other valuable contributions to society. However, scholarship on childcare tends to overlook parents of children with complex care needs. These spend a greater amount of time and cash on care. Thus, their opportunities beyond care can be limited. Resources, like public childcare services, are key in supporting other valued activities in life. In our analyses, we draw on Sen's capability approach to conceptualise and assess childcare policy design across key service aspects in a country-comparative perspective. The conceptualisation of the multifaceted nature of childcare provides compelling insights into the complexity of comparing childcare across countries. The comprehensive overview often challenges the idea of policy clusters, that can mask key distinctions between public and market service provision. The more nuanced conceptualisation and operationalisation of childcare policy design through the capability approach reveals parents' real opportunities for arranging childcare and the varying effects of policy design across gender and class. In addition, it goes beyond implicit commodification assumptions and opens up space for parents' potential desire for multiple care arrangement possibilities.

Jana Javornik, PhD is a non-localised interdisciplinary welfare state and Artificial Intelligence scholar, a public intellectual, and a portfolio-career originator with eclectic backgrounds. She has served as an international policy analyst/adviser/maker, science communicator, a columnist, and a policy impact and AI ethics adviser. A British scholar is currently also a visiting professor at the Institute of Contemporary History. In the past, she worked at Stockholm and Umeå universities in Sweden, Southampton, UEL, and most recently Leeds in the UK, and Utrecht and Edmonton unis. She also served as Director-General of Higher Education and senior policy analyst and adviser. She's led multiple large projects and teams across disciplines and sectors, bringing the collective and collaborative solutions to the increasingly urgent question of how to make our research more societally relevant and accessible, most recently in a series 'The Business of Policymaking'.

DR. MARTIN KUHAR

DR. STELLA FATOVIĆ-FERENČIĆ

DIVISION FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE, CROATIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS ZAGREB

Rehabilitation of Disabled Soldiers during the First World War in Croatia

During the First World War, orthopedists actively sought to expand their discipline by providing comprehensive care for wounded soldiers and civilians. A pivotal figure in this endeavor in Croatia was Božidar Špišić, who in 1915 championed the establishment of a comprehensive rehabilitation center in Zagreb. Špišić argued that such a facility was crucial to prevent a large segment of the population from becoming unproductive due to war-related disabilities. His efforts led to the creation of the first specialized orthopedic department at the Red Cross hospital in 1915, followed by the groundbreaking Croatian orthopedic hospital in 1916. This facility was equipped with operating rooms, X-ray capabilities, physiotherapy, electro- and thermotherapy, and on-site prosthesis manufacturing. A core innovation was the establishment of schools for disabled soldiers, offering occupational therapy and professional retraining in thirty vocations. Špišić's holistic approach, rooted in social medicine, aimed to reintegrate disabled individuals into society. This included training programs, like a course for masseurs, allowing disabled soldiers to become employees within the institute. Patients were then assessed by an Invalid Commission to determine residual disability. Over five years, Špišić's hospital treated 8,797 soldiers, primarily for contractures, amputations, and bone deformities, underscoring the success of this forward-thinking rehabilitation model.

Martin Kuhar, MD, PhD is a senior research associate at the Division for the History of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. His professional interests include the history of medicine, history of eugenics and medical ethics. He also teaches philosophy of medicine at the School of Medicine, Catholic University of Croatia

Stella Fatović-Ferenčić, MD, PhD is a scientific adviser at the Division for the History of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Her professional interests include the history of medicine and history of pharmacy. She is the founder of the Croatian Museum of Medicine and Pharmacy and one of the authors of its permanent exhibition.

DR. JOHN PAUL NEWMAN

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND AT MAYNOOTH

The King Aleksandar School for the Blind in Interwar Yugoslavia: Disability Care inside and beyond the Institutional Frame

My paper will look at the 'King Aleksander School for the Blind in Zemun' in the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia. I have found this to be one of the leading institutes for disability care not only in the interwar kingdom, but also in the Southeastern and Central European region. Through a careful study of the directorship and institutional history of this school, I want to show how international and transnational ideas about disability care, rehabilitation, and training were received and elaborated in Yugoslavia and beyond. My intention is to show the extent and the limits of the 'institutionalization' of blind and disability care in the interwar kingdom. I want to ask how far pioneering institutes such as the school influenced and shaped disability care, given that the largest number of disabled people in Yugoslavia had no direct contact with the school itself. Did the undoubtedly pioneering work of the school influence broader discourse and practice about disability care throughout society, or did its influence remain marginal? And what would these conclusions tell us more broadly about the nature of disability care and the experience of disability in the interwar kingdom? My additional interest is to explore the international and transnational connections of the school, asking how far it represented a common approach to disability in Europe and especially the successor states of Central and Eastern Europe, or indeed the extent to which it is possible to speak of a common approach to disability care and disability more generally in interwar Central and Eastern Europe.

John Paul Newman, PhD is Associate Professor in Twentieth-century European History. He is interested in the modern history of the Southeastern and East-Central Europe, with a particular focus on Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Macedonia. His first book, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State-Building, 1903-1945*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2015. He is currently working on a study of the birth, life, and afterlife of the Illyrian movement in the South Slav lands, provisionally titled 'Illyria Unbound: Reflections on Nation and Identity in Modern Central Europe' (under contract with Oxford University Press).

DR. DUNJA DOBAJA

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, LJUBLJANA

Education of deaf children in schools for the deaf in Ljubljana and Zagreb

In the interwar period, teaching was carried out according to the classical oral method, which included various teaching principles. Teachers learnt about them on professional trips abroad and in specialist literature. The article presents the teaching method according to the above-mentioned method, which schools practised from the first grade onwards, although the pupils did not yet know how to pronounce sounds and voice combinations. The aim was to raise their awareness of speech movements, lip-reading and understanding of short everyday sentences and phrases. On this basis, sign language was replaced in the upper grades in schools for the deaf. The aim was to achieve clear articulation based on the most important phonetic rules of the time, namely the law of muteness of voiced consonants and consonants at the end of words, the analogy of assimilation sounds and the so-called Winteler's law. The aim of all these articulation principles was to ensure that, on completion of their education, pupils were able to speak in such a way that they could be understood and integrated by their hearing environment. Articulation was one of the most important subjects taught. Headteachers encouraged teachers to practise speaking with their pupils at every opportunity, not only in the classroom but also on excursions, during crafts and everyday tasks. The most important prerequisite for clear articulation was correct breathing, which the teachers also paid attention to and taught the children how to breathe correctly through various exercises. Breathing exercises were also an integral part of the teaching methodology. The third important element of the teaching methodology was observation (oral reading). All these elements characterised the education of the deaf children, who were also trained in manual trades as part of their education. The most gifted had the opportunity to receive a higher education.

The academic performance of the Ljubljana School for the Deaf is used as an example to analyse the effectiveness of the teaching method in terms of the number of students who progressed to higher classes and successfully completed their education. Since no archival sources are available for the school in Zagreb, the above analysis is only carried out for the institution in Ljubljana.

Dunja Dobaja, PhD: Her field of research is the social history of the interwar period and the Second World War in Slovenia, with a focus on the social and health protection of mothers and children, the care and education system for deaf children in Slovenia and the problem of stolen children during the Second World War. She has published several scientific and professional articles on these topics. She is the author of the monograph *For the Good of Mothers and Children. The Protection of Mothers and Children between 1919 and 1941*, which was published in 2018 in the collection of *Recognitions*, Institute of Contemporary History and monograph *The Deaf and the World. Between Exclusion and Inclusion*, which was also published in the collection of *Recognitions* in 2024.

DR. MARKO BULJEVAC

UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, FACULTY OF LAW, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Education and employment opportunities for persons with sensory disabilities in Zagreb between the two world wars

The aim of this presentation is to present some aspects of education and employment of persons with visual or hearing disabilities in Zagreb between the two world wars. The presentation is going to be based on research of archival sources. The topics that are going to be presented will include and highlight some aspects of social, legal and organizational context of providing education, vocational training, and employment for people with visual or hearing disabilities between 1919 and 1939 in the area of Zagreb. Education, vocational training, specific care, and sometimes employment for persons with visual and hearing disabilities were organized within two major institutions in Zagreb. These institutions were special and segregated schools for persons with those types of disabilities. The results also provide insight into some specific aspects of quality of life of users and residents in those special schools that were founded for providing specific care, education, vocational training and employment for youth and adults with visual and hearing disabilities. The formal support system was based on medical model of disability. The conclusion is that some persons with visual or hearing disabilities had opportunities to be educated and to be employed, but the majority of them lived their lives isolated, segregated, and sometimes excluded from the society.

Marko Buljevac, PhD was born in Zagreb in 1984. He is associate professor at University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law, Department of Social Work where he holds five classes and one at Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences at University of Zagreb. He has been involved in 14 scientific projects and presented 46 papers in international and Croatian scientific conferences. He is a member of Committee of Government of Republic of Croatia for persons with disabilities. He has published 26 scientific papers, 3 research monographies, 1 university book and 3 professional papers. His primary research interest is in social work with persons with disabilities.

DR. SOLVÉIG ÓLAFSDÓTTIR

INSTITUTE OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Specialized Training and Life stories - The Impact of Iceland's Special Schools for the Blind and Deaf in the Early 20th Century

This lecture explores the historical development of Iceland's special education system for blind and deaf individuals in the early 20th century. Iceland underwent rapid modernization, adopting Scandinavian educational models, particularly from Denmark. However, a stark disparity emerged between the treatment of deaf and blind individuals. While deaf students were integrated into vocational training and a distinct cultural-linguistic community, blind individuals had no comparable educational infrastructure, often remaining dependent on charity or familial support. This study examines how these educational policies shaped the lives of disabled individuals and their integration into Icelandic society. The findings offer broader insights into disability history, modernization, and educational policies that resonate with scholars studying historical social structures in wider context.

Solvéig Ólafsdóttir, PhD is a postdoctoral historian specialising in microhistory, disability studies, and the social history of marginalised individuals in Iceland from the 18th to the 20th century. Her research integrates close readings of public records, material culture, and emotional narratives to reconstruct the lived experiences of people on the fringes of society, especially those with disabilities. She is the principal investigator of the project *Sheltering from the Storm*, funded by the Icelandic Research Fund, and has co-authored *Disability Studies Meets Microhistory* (Routledge, 2024). Her interdisciplinary work bridges history, critical theory, and public engagement, with a strong commitment to inclusive and ethical research practices.

DR. DARJA ZAVIRŠEK

FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

Engendering disability through oral histories of the specific era: sensory disability and socialism

There are few oral histories of people with sensory disabilities related to education and employment under socialism. Drawing on critical disability and gender studies, as well as crip theory and decoloniality, the presentation focuses on the oral histories of women and men with sensory impairments and their experiences with state institutions of education and employment. The socialist authorities in Yugoslavia (1945-1991) developed social protection on the ruins of the inherited, half-built system of residential institutions and boarding schools from the pre-war period. The imperative of universal education and work affected the lives of people with disabilities during socialism, so that most people with sensory impairments received primary education and vocational training, and some were enrolled in paid employment. There was a big difference between people who needed little support and those in need of intensive support. The concept of autonomy of persons with impairments was based on the classical rationalist understanding of autonomy, where the person's ability to reason, make rational choices and work was what counted. Despite educational and employment opportunities, most people with disabilities lived dehumanized lives and their need for support was pathologized. Just as among non-disabled people, who could not turn to each other without the state acting as a universal "mediator" and patriarch, the relational approach of autonomy did not exist in the public care institutions of people with disabilities. The relational approach understands the support and advocacy practiced by staff as core elements of the very autonomy of people with disabilities. Instead of it most people with sensory impairments experienced social invisibility, lack of opportunities, institutional routines, and pedagogized and rationalized violence. Their memories collected, written down, analyzed and reflected upon, showed the everyday life of a specific era.

Prof. Darja Zaviršek, PhD holds the Chair for the Department of Social Justice and Inclusion and is the Chair of the Eastern European Network of Schools of Social Work (EEsrASSW). She is a member of the board of directors of the International Association of the Schools of Social Work (IASSW), where she chairs the Women's Issues Committee. She has been a member of the Academic Network of Disability Studies since 2009, serving as the Rapporteur for Slovenia. She is the founder and director of the Centre for Research on the History of Social Work at the Faculty of Social Work. She received the Eileen Younghusband Award in 2022.

DR. JANJA SEDLAČEK

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, LJUBLJANA

Similar Yet Unique: The Educational Experiences of People with Sensory Impairments in Socialist Slovenia

The presentation will explore how individuals with sensory impairments experienced education and social inclusion under socialism in Slovenia. It focuses on how they perceived their place in society, how they believed society viewed them, and how they saw themselves—placing particular emphasis on their educational trajectories. Most students with sensory impairments in socialist Slovenia attended special boarding schools for the deaf and hard-of-hearing or blind and visually impaired. A smaller number were integrated into mainstream schools, typically those who acquired their impairment later in life and whose families strongly opposed institutionalization, providing support for their inclusion in regular schools. Despite the system's standardized structure, the educational experiences of individuals with sensory impairments varied widely. For many, formal education ended after secondary school, as the system did not foresee or encourage access to university. Nevertheless, some individuals—especially those with strong family support—managed to pursue and complete higher education. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with now-adult individuals with sensory impairments, the presentation will highlight both commonalities and differences in their educational paths. It will examine how factors such as the timing of impairment, the emotional and material support from family, and socio-economic background influenced their schooling and broader life trajectories.

Janja Sedlaček is a research assistant with PhD at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her research focuses primarily on (Slovenian) agricultural history and the history of cooperatives during socialism, the history of rural women in the socialist period, and Slovenian environmental history under socialism. More recently, she has also been exploring the education of visually impaired individuals during socialism.

She is a member of the research group Economic, Social and Environmental History of Slovenia and is involved in the research project Systems of Care and Education of Children with Sensory Disabilities in the First and Second Yugoslav State.



DR. DRAGANA GUNDOGAN

DR. NATAŠA MILIĆEVIĆ

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, BELGRADE /
INSTITUTE FOR RECENT HISTORY OF SERBIA, BELGRADE

Being Visually Impaired Women In Socialist Serbia - experiences with educational sphere and employment

It has already been noticed and widely described the tremendous development of the educational system in the socialist Yugoslavia. In this period, it is especially increased the access to education for various underprivileged social groups including women and people with visual impairments among others. Furthermore, it is mentioned that the different educational and socializing models for visually impaired men and women coexisted, burdened with prejudices and stereotypes. For this reason, in this paper we tackle the social position of visually impaired women during the period of socialism. Concretely, the aim of the paper is to explore the chances and experiences of visually impaired women in terms of their education and employment. The research questions were threefold. Firstly, we examined the educational practice and experiences of women during socialism. Secondly, we presented narratives and testimonies on the process of employment and experiences on the labor sphere. Thirdly, we will examine some of the memories concerning the private sphere, work life balance and independence for visually impaired women. In that way, we will present their attitudes, key experiences and obstacles they faced. Referring to the method used in this paper, firstly we used unpublished archive sources in order to gain information, statistical data and trends on the social position of women with visual impairments, as well as the ideological considerations and discourses. Secondly, we analyzed narratives from semi-structured interviews with the visually impaired women who finished segregated educational institutions and entered the labor sphere during the socialist period. In the analysis we used qualitative approach and oral history in order to present the social position of visually impaired women from their own perspective.

Dragana Gundogan received PhD in sociology at University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy and MA degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology at Central European University Budapest. She is currently working as a research associate at the Institute for Educational Research in Belgrade. As a PhD student she was engaged in teaching at Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Sociology. She is an expert in methodology with the experience in quantitative and qualitative approach in the various topics such as: educational inequalities, sociology of education and social inclusion.

DR. INA DIMITROVA

UNIVERSITY OF PLOVDIV

Beyond labour: socialist disability policy in the realm of mental health

The aim of the presentation is to explore state socialist disability policy in Bulgaria, focusing specifically on psychiatric disability. I argue that it departed – at least to a certain extent – from the established approach to disability under state socialism (1944–89), which was largely based on conceptualising disability as inability to work. The specificities of psychiatric disability and of its relationship with the social environment eventually drove home the fact that this solely work-based approach was inadequate and that certain features of the social environment had to be taken into account. They were recognised as disabling and oppressive, and more importantly, they were identified as factors that had to be transformed. Firstly, I will briefly sketch the socialist approach to disability. Then I focus on the reality of (re)insertion of people with psychiatric diagnoses into employment and show that despite the great expectations, the socialist system turned out to be incapable of organising their effective rehabilitation through work. Against this background, I try to demonstrate how the awareness of the harmful impact of the environment on patients gradually undermined the official approach to disability and called into question the focus solely on productive labour.

Ina Dimitrova received her PhD in social and political philosophy from Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. Currently she is associate professor in social philosophy and bioethics at the Department of Philosophy and History, University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Her current research is focused on disability activism, disability history and history of psychiatry in socialist Bulgaria. She has participated in projects researching generational patterns of caring for people with disabilities in Bulgaria as well as in participatory initiatives exploring the barriers to independent living and CRPD implementation in the postsocialist region.

DR. MARTA RENDLA

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, LJUBLJANA

Vocational Education of Individuals with Visual and Hearing Impairments in Socialism from a Comparative Perspective

The focus of this paper is the vocational education of individuals with visual and hearing impairments from a comparative perspective during the socialist period. During socialism, the opportunities for acquiring vocational skills among the sensory-impaired population expanded from a very limited selection to a broader range of possibilities. For instance, immediately after World War II, blind and visually impaired individuals could only train and be educated in traditional crafts for the blind (such as brush-making and basket weaving). However, socialism provided access to a wider variety of professions. They could receive education and training for careers as telephone operators and administrators, workers in various manufacturing industries (metalworking, woodworking, food processing, and electrical work), service sector jobs (hospitality, retail, massage therapy), and other humanities-related professions (such as librarians, journalists, musicians, sociologists, linguists, and IT specialists). By examining the expansion of vocational opportunities for sensory-impaired individuals, this paper also highlights the broader societal shift towards a more inclusive society, promoting independent and self-sufficient living for people with sensory impairments.

Marta Rendla, PhD is a doctor of historical sciences and is employed at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana, where, as a research fellow, she focuses on the economic and social manifestations of the standard of living in Slovenia during the socialist period. Her research also explores the characteristics of infrastructural goods and the accessibility of goods and services related to leisure, culture, and recreation. She pays particular attention to the issue of housing supply and housing policy. These topics are examined in her scholarly monograph "Kam ploveš standard?" (Where Are You Heading, Living Standard?): The Standard of Living and Socialism (2018). Her research interests also extend to the development of socialist banking and cooperatives. She is the co-author of the scholarly monograph A History of Cooperatives in Slovenia: (1856–1992) (2023) and the professional monograph 73,000 Banking Days: History, Experiences, and Memories (2020), and the author of numerous contributions in the fields of socio-economic and environmental history, as well as cultural history and victimology.

DR. JELENA SEFEROVIĆ

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, LJUBLJANA
INSTITUTE FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH, ZAGREB

How Have Education and Employment Opportunities for the Deaf Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina Changed from Socialism to Today?

This presentation explores education and employment opportunities for the Deaf community during the socialist period in Yugoslavia, with a specific focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It compares experiences from Bosnia with those from Herzegovina and situates these within the broader contexts of Croatia and Serbia. Previous research on the interwar period revealed that children and youth from Bosnia and Herzegovina often migrated to Croatia and Serbia to attend specialized schools and reside in social institutions adapted to their needs. The analysis examines the socialist era and compares it with the contemporary period to illustrate how educational and employment opportunities for this marginalized group have evolved over time. The historical context is reconstructed using archival materials, including newspapers and official institutional records, while the current situation is analyzed through content from websites, professional publications, news articles, and interviews with members of Deaf associations. The goal is to compare past conditions with present realities, identify key changes, and highlight persistent challenges and opportunities in education and employment for the Deaf community in Bosnia and Herzegovina within a wider regional framework.

Jelena Seferović, PhD: Since 2021, she has been employed as a Research Associate at the Institute for Anthropological Research in Zagreb, and since 2022, she has been working as an Assistant at the Institute of Contemporary History in Ljubljana. From 2018 to 2020, she participated in the ERC Advanced Grant project, “Post-war Transitions in a Gendered Perspective: The Case of the North-Eastern Adriatic Region” (EIRENE). She obtained her PhD in 2017 from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, within the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. Her research interests include the history of psychiatry and disability, women’s history, and the anthropology of dying and death.



DR. NATAŠA MILIĆEVIĆ

DR. DRAGANA GUNDOGAN

INSTITUTE FOR RECENT HISTORY OF SERBIA, BELGRADE/
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, BELGRADE /

Education and employment of visually impaired physiotherapists in socialist Serbia

The professional training and employment of persons with visual impairments in socialist Serbia underwent significant changes after World War II. Efforts were made to develop educational models that would expand the range of traditional occupations (such as brush making, basket weaving, spinning, and weaving), that had historically dominated employment opportunities for visually impaired individuals. These efforts aimed to better prepare them for participation in the labor market shaped by socialist industrial modernization. Drawing on international experiences, it became evident that visually impaired individuals could be successfully trained and employed in therapeutic professions such as massage therapy and physiotherapy. Beginning in the early 1950s, visually impaired individuals were given the opportunity to study at educational institutions on the secondary and tertiary level such as High Medical School and Medical College in Belgrade. For this group of students, this represented a development that continues to have lasting effects today. This paper aims to analyze the processes of education and employment for visually impaired physiotherapists in socialist Serbia. The key research questions include: What were the experiences and organizational structures of professional training in the field of physiotherapy? How did the employment process and professional engagement undergo? What were the major challenges, obstacles, and struggles faced, and how were they addressed by individuals and institutions? The research is based on an analysis of archival documents, written memoirs, and secondary literature.

Nataša Milićević, PhD is a research associate at the Institute for Recent History of Serbia. Her main field of interest is the social history of Serbia and Yugoslavia in the twentieth century, with a special focus on the history of the Serbian middle class, the intelligentsia, relations between the authorities and social groups, and everyday life, as well as the history of historiography. She has recently focused particularly on the history of Serbian society in occupied Serbia during the Second World War. Milićević has coedited two books (Свакодневни живот под окупацијом 1941-1944. Искуство једног Београђанина (ИНИС, 2011) and Коста Ст. Павловић, Дневник 1930-1932 (ИНИС- Историјски архив Београда, 2020)) and she is the author of the monograph Југословенска власт и српско грађанство 1944-1950, (ИНИС, 2009), for which she received an award from the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for a special contribution in the field of the Social Sciences and Humanities for the year 2009.

DR. MILOŠ PAUNOVIĆ

NGO CENTER FOR APPLIED EUROPEAN STUDIES, BELGRADE

Serbia's failed transition from segregation to integration: Education of children with disabilities in SR Serbia 1970s-1990s

Education of children with disabilities in Serbia, as well as in the whole of Yugoslavia, was based on international conventions, such as ICERD (1965/1969). It became an integral part of the Yugoslav (thus Serbian) legal framework. This kicked the debate, and later regulative action in direction of substituting the application of the principle of segregation in education of this children population by the principle of integration. In SR Serbia, during 1970s, 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, education for children with disabilities was regulated by federal and local (Serbia's) laws and regulations.

Serbia had a relatively long history of legal frameworks for education of children with disabilities, starting from 1882. However, the fact that education for children with disabilities was based on a law going as far back as 1929 up until 1960 was not helpful when new desirable standards were to be introduced. The fact that it was only in 1960 that the registers for all such children were introduced in Yugoslavia presented was a challenge. The paradigm changes from segregation to integration in expert and government circles in 1970s and 1980s was actually going hand in hand with ever more numerous special schools for children with disabilities. It was only in 1980 that the process of application of the principle of integration started in Yugoslavia, and, hence, in Serbia as well. But the process stalled and, in case of Serbia, practically the application never materialised. The task of this paper is to follow this abortive attempt, and to try to uncover the main reasons for its ultimate failure.

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Is a history of disability in Yugoslavia possible?

When a civil activist Cvjetana Plavša-Matić declared in 2009 how the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Croatia is a historic moment, so much so that it is a start of an “exit out of the historical silence” (2009: 3), she unwittingly made a contribution to an epistemology of disability: something fundamental has changed as a new subject came on to the historical scene. What was, from that point onwards remained strictly in the past. While we should not take this statement as the way to the truth of the history of disability in Croatia and Yugoslavia, we should take it seriously. It seems that, at least in Croatia, disability came about fairly recently. What was this before? Was there a subject of disability, a historical figure whose transformations culminated in the recognition of its human rights or was the politics of disability subsumed in other political struggles or perhaps even neglected.

We propose, following the work of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, to analyze the history of the present of disability. While historical periodization as such is necessarily arbitrary, the historical period this conference focuses on is defined by the way labour came to define a way of thinking about human beings. This paper will focus not on specific policies of the historical period, but on the specific arrangement of labour in its historical context and its newly found anthropological and political role: how and by what processes has one's potentiality of labour become what one is.

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MAGDA KARAVANIĆ

TYPHLOLOGICAL MUSEUM

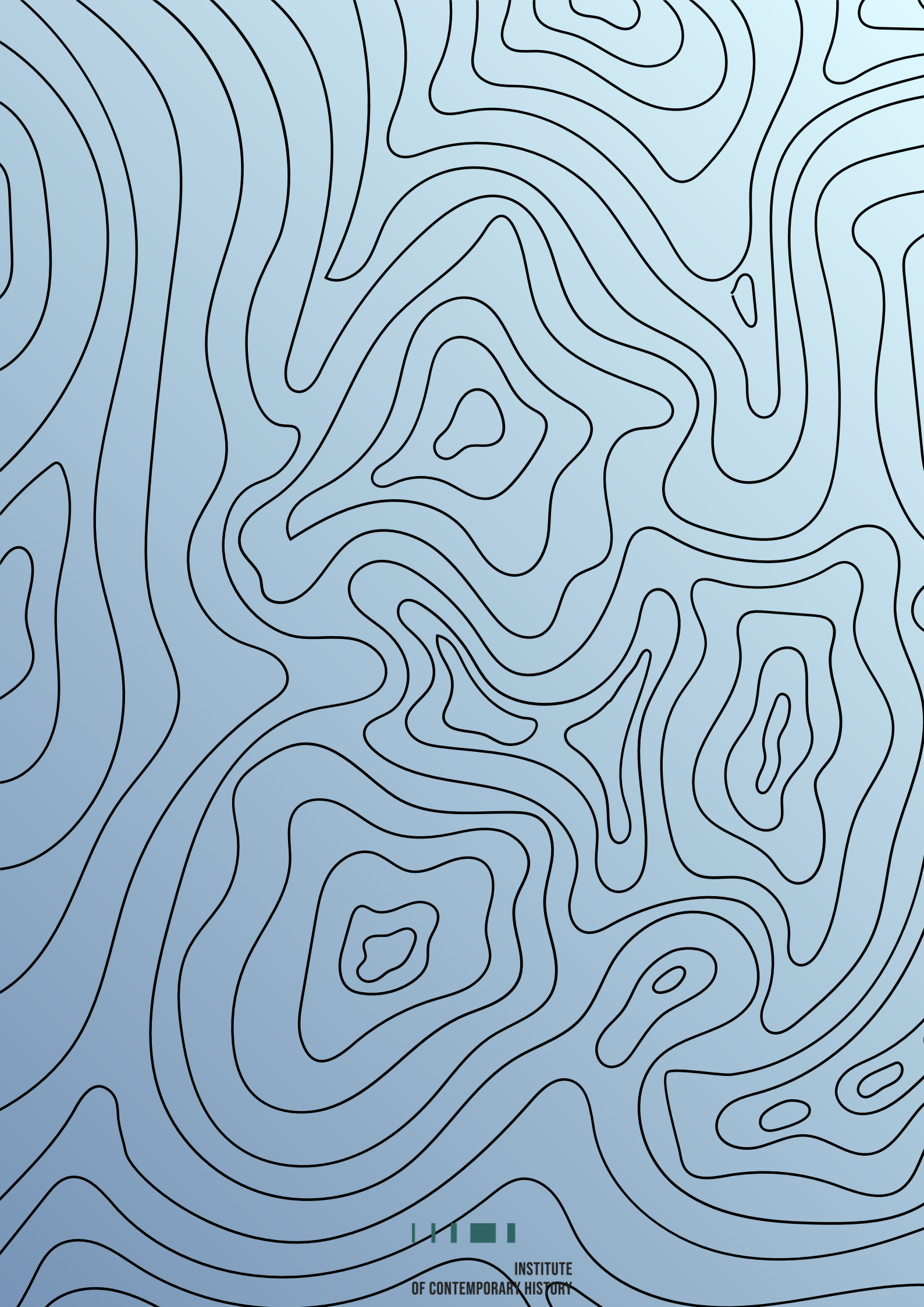
The Typhlological Museum as one of the pioneers of dealing with the issues of people with visual impairments in Yugoslavia

People with disabilities have historically been neglected and disadvantaged in society. During the period of the first and second Yugoslav states, the attitude towards people with disabilities evolved from the dominant medical model that views people with disabilities as people with limited abilities who require medical assistance, towards an increasingly present social model that focuses on equal access to rights for all people, regardless of physical and other differences.

In this context, the Typhlological Museum in Zagreb represents an exceptional example of an institution that, since the mid-20th century, has systematically pointed out the importance of understanding and accepting people with disabilities, especially people with visual impairments. As the only specialized museum institution of such a profile in this part of Europe, the Typhlological Museum has been one of the pioneers in bringing the world of people with visual impairments closer to the wider public since its inception in 1953. The Museum's educational programs have played a key role in sensitizing children and young people to diversity and the importance of including people with disabilities in all spheres of society.

Through its exhibitions, it has always sought to bring cultural heritage closer to all visitors, including people with disabilities. A special place in the museum's display is occupied by the Tactile Gallery – a space that has allowed visitors to experience art and heritage through touch since the 1960s, further promoting the idea of equal access to culture and education for all.

Magda Karavanić (Zagreb, 1994) graduated in history and museology and heritage management from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. While still a student, she worked as an assistant museum pedagogue at the Croatian History Museum, and later as a curator at the Dražen Petrović Museum and Memorial Center. Since the beginning of 2024, she has been employed as a curator at the Typhlological Museum. Her area of interest includes topics from history, educational rehabilitation, pedagogy and museology. She has presented at the Conference of Educational Rehabilitators in Lovran and the Conference on Assistive Technology and Assisted Communication for Children with Developmental Disabilities and Persons with Disabilities in Zagreb.



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