

In her lecture, Judith Brehmer will explore the history and complex role of pensioners' clubs within the socialist welfare system of Czechoslovakia from the late 1950s to the 1980s. Faced with the challenges of retirement in a society prioritizing work and productivity, these clubs emerged to counteract potential loneliness and social or political exclusion among older adults. Drawing on detailed records from the pensioners' club in Rožňava (in the Košice region) and insights from other clubs across the country, Judith Brehmer will discuss the sometimes conflicting goals of these organizations—balancing social care for older people with efforts to engage them in the workforce. She will analyze the establishment and activities of the clubs, exploring the extent of members' self-management as well as their individual perspectives on their involvement in the club and their relevance within the socialist society. The lecture will examine how state authorities and pensioners themselves negotiated different ideas of a “successful” old age within these spaces and argue that while the state aimed to integrate the ideal of the socialist worker into old age, pensioners' clubs primarily functioned as local, subsidiary structures facilitating social engagement.

Judith Brehmer works as a research coordinator at Collegium Carolinum (Research Institute for the History of the Czech Lands and Slovakia) and is a PhD candidate at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. Her project “Un/Doing Old Age in Socialist Czechoslovakia 1948–1989” explores processes of constructing and deconstructing Old Age as a life stage in public discourse, social care institutions and on the individual level under socialist rule. She has studied political science, law and East European studies in Munich. Her research interests also include the gender history of Czechoslovakia in the 20th century, with articles published in journals such as *Bohemia* (2020) and *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (2024).

Zoom link: [IOS Regensburg Combating Isolation, Maintaining Engagement: Pensioners' Clubs and Social Participation in Socialist Czechoslovakia](#)