

Date & Time: 13:00-14:45, Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026.

Venue: Room 319, Faculty of Letters Building 1 (3rd Floor),
Hongo Campus, The University of Tokyo

Contact: genbun@l.u-tokyo.ac.jp

国際人文学プロジェクト海外ゲスト授業
International Humanities Project



Swinging sixties - Czechoslovak style

Speaker: Associate Professor Peter Bugge, PhD, Aarhus University

Title: "Swinging sixties - Czechoslovak style" Language: English

Moderator: Prof. Kenichi ABE (UT)

Abstract: After the full Communist seizure of power in 1948, Czechoslovakia became a fiercely Stalinist country. Socialist realism became mandatory in literature and the arts, while cultural contacts with the capitalist West were minimized. Unlike Poland and Hungary, Czechoslovakia experienced no strong anti-Stalinist rebellion in 1956, and the regime had no problems containing a few disgruntled voices among writers and intellectuals. On this background, the rapid liberalization of cultural practices and policies in Czechoslovakia from the early 1960s onwards seems all the more surprising. In film, the Czechoslovak 'new wave' quickly gained international renown, Czech writers took up taboo issues and experimented with form, jazz was 'rehabilitated' and with only a short delay from most of continental Western Europe, even rock music found its way into the 'official' cultural system. Using rock as my main case, but with examples also from film and literature, my talk will outline how this cultural thaw unfolded and seek to explain how and why such a radical transformation was possible within a Communist regime proud of its ability to follow the Soviet example.

