

Czech Postcommunist Cinema and the Prague Spring

- Václav Klaus: Prague Spring 1968: a minor power struggle between two CP factions
- Czech right wing media: the same view
- Today's students at Czech universities: the current image of the 1968 „heroes“ dissuades young people from accessing information about 1968 – „irrelevant“

Czech cinema

- *Rebelové* (Rebels, 2001) – retro-musical
- Young people in love
- Three army defectors meet three girls



Rebelové (2001)

- Desertion was not the most salient characteristic of 1968
- Grotesque images of teachers
- „neglected“ Baroque church is actually painstakingly restored



Rebelové (2001)

- Private business – not the most salient characteristic of 1968
- Neoconservative perception: **liberty equals consumerism**
- Natiowide political debate ignored
- Communist ideological jargon on TV – was not the case in 1968.

Rebelové (2001)

- No jamming of Voice of America
- High quality lyrics from the 1960s in a new, inane context
- =>*Rebelové* is a film about the 1970s, with bits from the present time



Pelíšky (Cosy Dens 1999)

- Film about two families in a villa
- Ostensibly takes place from winter 1967 until Warsaw Pact invasion of August 1968



Pelíšky (Cosy Dnes, 1999)



- **Two stereotyped ciphers:**

Anticommunist Kraus

Communist Šebek

No real people

Pelíšky (Cosy Dens, 1999)

- Life in the normalisation era in the „cosy dens“
- Most intense at Christmas



Pelíšky (Cosy Dens, 1999)

- **Childlike activity of adults:**



Debate about the size of
the bear codiac

Setting your alcoholic
breath on fire

Holding breath under
water

Pelíšky (Cosy Dens, 1999)

- Factual errors: *Literární listy* did not appear until 1st March, 1968; in the film teacher Eva takes them to school before Christmas 1967, etc.
- Absolutely no political activity

Pelíšky (Cosy Dens, 1999)

- **Film mocks pro-regime and anti-regime attitudes in equal measure =>**

„Political activity is absurd“

„We desire life in privacy“

Czech postcommunist films about 1968:

- Are in fact films about the normalisation period of the 1970s and 1980s, which is the most traumatic period in recent Czechoslovak history, affecting the Czechs and Slovak deeply still today.

