

Research project:

Architectural Monuments and the Politics of History in Communist Poland – the Case of Kraków, 1945-78

The aim of this research project is to analyze the Polish communist regime's policy towards architectural monuments in the context of the communist vision of national history. I am going to focus on the specific case of Kraków. The researched period starts immediately after the Second World War, and ends in the year of the Old Town of Kraków's listing as a World Heritage Site and the establishment of the Social Committee for the Renewal of the Monuments of Kraków.

In the course of this project, I am going to answer four general questions about: 1) the communist regime's undertakings concerning Kraków's monuments, 2) the connection between the regime's policy and the period's historical discourse, 3) this policy's relation with the widely-understood politics of history, 4) similarities and differences with analogous cases in other countries of the Eastern Block. The research plan is divided into six phases: 1) archival query regarding the policy on the local level (in Kraków), 2) library query on the discourse of historiography (in Kraków), 3) archival query regarding the central-level policy (in Warsaw, Paris), 4) library query regarding the wider context of history politics, 5) library query regarding the international context (in Berlin, Prague, Budapest), 6) comprehensive revision of the collected material and additional research in order to fill the gaps (in Kraków and Warsaw).

I chose the subject because of the lack of studies on the politics of history regarding architectural monuments in Poland, which survived the Second World War. So far, the historical discourse concerning the ideological dimension of architectural heritage protection has been dominated by the subject of its rebuilding (especially the rebuilding of historic Warsaw). The project will contribute to deepening our knowledge about the role of architectural heritage in the communist regime's cultural politics.

The project's outcome will be three articles on the most important aspects of the research problem.