

Have you wondered what dancing was like under Władysław Gomułka? Or in the days of Edward Gierek? Was it appropriate to dance at all after the war? Was only folk dancing danced? Was it possible to run your own dance school in communist Poland? Did dancers often flee abroad? And was there "Dancing with the stars" back then? What does it mean to do choreography for television?

You will find answers to these and many other questions in our research project, in which we lean into the very diverse social, political, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of the functioning of ballet and stage dance in Poland in the post-war period (1945-1989).

We have chosen such a period, i.e. from the end of the Second World War to the fall of the regime of People's Republic of Poland, because it constitutes a vast "white spot" in the history of dance, and we wish to amend it in the most complete and reliable way possible. This is necessary not only because of the need to create a complete picture of the past of the art of dance and choreography in Poland, but also for a better understanding of its contemporary framework.

We explore and describe ballet, the swallows of modernity that broke through the Iron Curtain, but also dance on television and how the dance was taught at the time. Thanks to this project, you will learn about the activities of many great artists, such as Janina Jarzynówna-Sobczak, Bożena Mamontowicz-Łojek, Teresa Kujawa, Janina Niesobska, Barbara Bittnerówna and Janina Strzembosz. You will get to know more about the first experimenters like Jacek Tomasik or the role of foreign professor Alain Bernard. You will also learn what fate awaited artists after the war, especially when they performed in so-called "official theaters" during the war. We will also demonstrate that sports and folklore can be a source of very modern choreography, and that before 1989 there was quite a bit of experimentation on Polish ballet stages.

Our goal is to show how complex the picture of post-war dance is and how complicated were the fates of the artists who created it. Of course, of primary importance here is the cultural policy of the socialist realist period, which determined the institutional conditions and opportunities for greater or lesser creative freedom, which we will also analyze.

The project will result in several academic articles, a database on dance on television before 1989 and a monograph intended for a wide audience.