Piotr Kosicki, ed.

Vatican II Behind the Iron Curtain. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016. Pp. 225. Hb, \$65.

Piotr H. Kosicki, professor of history at the University of Maryland, has edited and contributed to an interesting and valuable volume on the impact of Vatican Council II on the Catholic Church and Catholics in the Communist countries of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland. He gathered a handful of top historians to investigate this heretofore lightly covered subject as well as the broader topic of the Vatican's Cold War policy during and after the period of the council. Some of the papers were presented at the University of Virginia in 2012.

Kosicki opened the book with an overview of the different authors' contributions and an excellent introduction of the consequences of Vatican II on the church and Catholics behind the Iron Curtain. Then Gerald P. Fogarty, S.J., of the University of Virginia described the Vatican's Cold War policy and added some flesh to the barebones story of the backchannel communications between Pope John XXIII and Nikita Khrushchev in terms of resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis. He also revealed that Domenico Cardinal Tardini, the Vatican's conservative secretary of state, discouraged Greek Orthodox–Catholic reconciliation at Vatican II, which put him at odds with a major goal of not only Pope John XXIII, but also of the Catholic Church for close to a millennium. Fogarty praised the Vatican's policy of *Ostpolitik* and hailed Agostino Casaroli as a superb diplomat and advocate of improving relations with the Communist orbit in Eastern Europe. He noted that a benefit of the Vatican's role in helping to bring the Cuban Missile Crisis to a peaceful end was Moscow's release from prison and expulsion from the USSR of Josyf Cardinal Slipyj, the putative head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (some five million strong) that Stalin had suppressed in 1946 after Soviet forces occupied and annexed Galicia and Carpatho-Ukraine into the Soviet Union. A drawback of *Ostpolitik* also touched on Cardinal Slipyj. The Kremlin expected the Vatican to remain silent about the condition of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. The Vatican's subsequent reticence about the plight of Ukrainian Catholics and other Catholics in the Soviet Bloc depressed and alienated Ukrainian Catholics, including Cardinal Slipyj.

Árpád von Klimó, professor of history at the Catholic University of America, took up the issue of the Hungarian Catholic Church. He made clear that the two Hungarian bishops who were permitted to go to Vatican II were under government control and contributed little to the proceedings. However, he claimed that Vatican II had a positive impact on Hungarian Catholicism

and led to changes in liturgy, administration, and the emergence of small lay and clerical independent groups, like *Bokor*, that pushed for religious reform in Hungary. Ivo Banat, emeritus professor of history at Yale University, then showed that Vatican II was the catalyst for the revival of the Catholic Church in Croatia. He described how the church in the Catholic parts of Yugoslavia became the only tolerated opposition to the government in the two decades before Yugoslavia's implosion. James Ramon Felak, professor of history at the University of Washington, focused on the Czech Catholic Church and demonstrated that Vatican II played a pivotal role in the intellectual and political currents that produced the Velvet Revolution in 1989.

Kosicki concluded the volume with a long essay on the influence of the Vatican II on the Catholic Church in Poland. He argued convincingly that the most dramatic impact of Vatican II was the eventual election of Karol Wojtyła, the Polish archbishop of Cracow, as Pope John Paul II in 1978. At the council, Wojtyła impressed bishops from around the world with his spirituality and forceful personality. In many ways, Vatican II gave Wojtyła a global stage where his intellect, eloquence, charm, faith, commitment to unity, and ability to bridge the gap between progressives and conservatives elevated his stature and moved many cardinals to see him as a future pope.

Collectively, the authors maintained either explicitly or implicitly that there was continuity in the Eastern policy of the Vatican under popes John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. The continuity argument calls for nuance for two reasons. There was a clear difference in tone and action between the *Ostpolitik* of Pope Paul VI and the nonviolent confrontation with the Soviet Bloc of John Paul II. Second, Paul VI, while he attempted to dialogue with the declining Iron Curtain countries, paid scant attention to the much more important advance of Western values, largely anchored on Latin Christianity, across Europe and around the world. It was precisely in this period that Western Europe and the United States outlined the policies and institutions that produced the European Union, strengthened NATO and the United Nations, and made Western values attractive around the globe, including in Eastern Europe. In contrast, Pope John Paul II treated the Communist regimes as irrelevant to the main thrust of history and Christianity's unfolding truth and not only fully embraced the growth of Western values, but also worked closely with American and European leaders to undermine the Communist regimes.

There are two other points to note. The role of the Jesuits, including such brilliant theologians as Karl Rahner and Henri de Lubac, was critical to the success of Vatican Council II and to the reforms that the council enacted. A chapter on Jesuit contributions would add value to the book. Secondly, Vatican II held out great hope for change and revitalization of the Catholic Church.

The church seemed to be moving toward major change and, to be sure, there were some reforms on liturgy, ecclesiastical administration, and on dialogue with the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and in Soviet Russia, which, as this book shows, had a positive impact upon Catholicism in Eastern Europe. However, the promise of genuine renewal was unfulfilled maybe because of the need to deal with the Communist menace as a first priority. The Iron Curtain has fallen, and perhaps it is time to get back to reform, an agenda that Pope Francis appears to support.

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