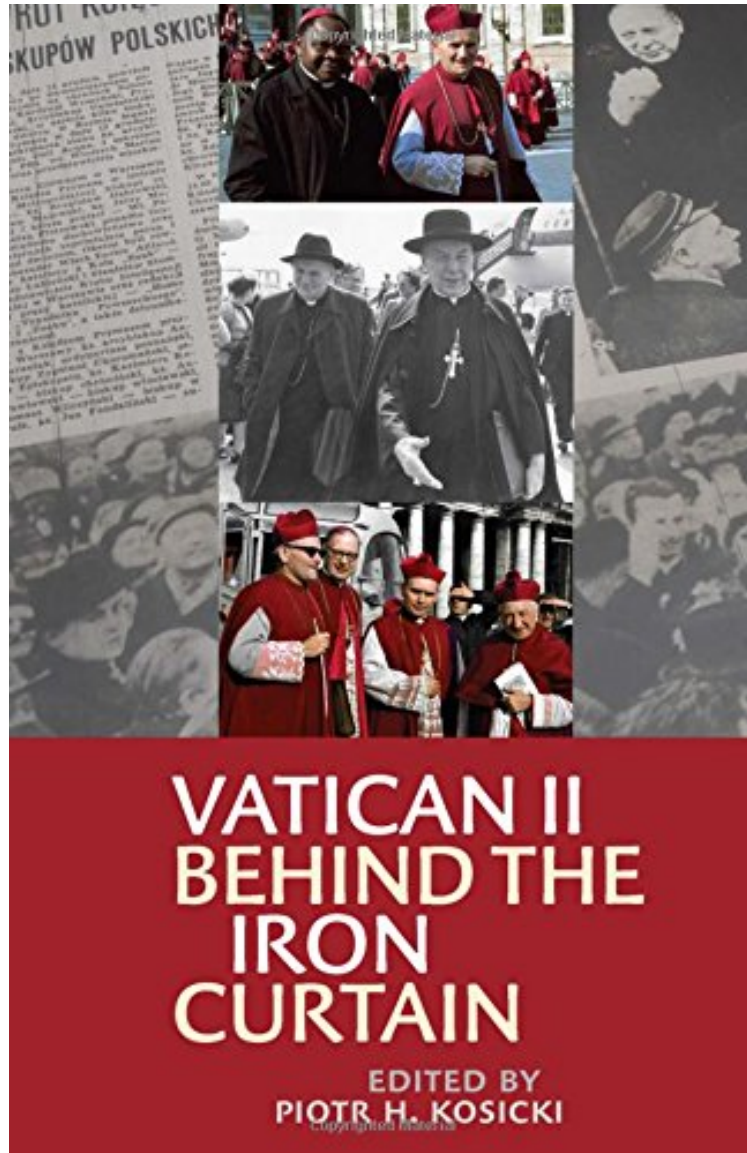


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## Vatican II Behind the Iron Curtain

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**From Ingramcontent : Vatican II Behind the Iron Curtain** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vatican II Behind the Iron Curtain:

A substantial historiography has emerged across national and linguistic boundaries documenting the Second Vatican Council. And yet virtually no attention has been devoted to the links between the Council and the Catholic faithful

who had found themselves living behind an iron curtain by the end of the 1940s. Historians of the Catholic Church have, in fact, mostly rejected the possibility that Communist countries played a role in the Council's story, or that the Council in turn shaped the subsequent paths of those countries. The goal of this volume is to begin writing Central and Eastern Europe back into the story of the Second Vatican Council, its origins, and its consequences. This volume assembles for the first time in any language a broad overview of the place of four different Communist-run countries—Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia—in the story of the Council. Framing these is an account of how the Cold War impacted the Council and its reception. The book engages with both English-language scholarship and the national historiographies of the countries that it examines, offering a global lens on the present state of research (covering all relevant languages) and seeking to propel that research forward. All of the chapters draw on both non-English secondary literature and original primary sources—some published, some archival. In all four countries, religious aggiornamento went hand in hand with waves and spurts of political liberalization. Though short-lived in their initial form, civic aggiornamenti magnified the impact of religious aggiornamento. Every country behind the Iron Curtain was different, yet even across such diverse situations, one finds evidence that societies engaged with Vatican II and, moreover, that the Council furnished a set of norms and aspirations that would play a significant role in the final years of the Cold War. The election of St. John Paul II in 1978, a pope from behind the Iron Curtain, lit a match, but the tinder had been set much earlier for modernization, reform, and an embrace of pluralism—even among Catholics living behind the Iron Curtain.

"The 1960s were the decade when liberation touched virtually everything. This path-breaking volume asks what happened when demands for greater freedom reached two cumbersome institutions: the Catholic Church and international communism. Leading authorities explore how East Europeans worked to reform both church and state. When did the two efforts reinforce each other? What institution was better equipped to deal with freedom's challenges? Fascinating figures make appearances from the shadows of the Cold War—Croatian students and Czech atheists but also the young bishop Karol Wojtyła—who in various ways proved instrumental in ushering in a new age: the one in which we now live. This original study makes absorbing reading and belongs on the shelf of all interested in Christianity, Communism, and human liberation." John Connelly, University of California, Berkeley

"Typically imagined as Cold War captives with few contributions to make, Eastern European Catholics in the age of Vatican II did not merely make up a "church of silence" awaiting Pope John Paul II for their chance to speak. Instead, Piotr Kosicki and his fellow contributors demonstrate in this terrific sequence of essays, that Eastern Europe matters to the evolution of Roman Catholicism after World War II, and not simply as a late-come beneficiary. Beyond the fascinating particularities of each national story, this wonderful volume indicates the need to connect Roman Catholicism's aggiornamento to larger Cold War transitions from militarized standoff to Ostpolitik to human rights." Samuel Moyn, Harvard University

"In this important and much-needed book, Piotr Kosicki and his colleagues walk us through the ramifications of Vatican II for the communist countries and Catholic hierarchies and peoples of Eastern Europe. The distinguished authors of the volume write this little-known and complex history with nuance, attention to detail, original research, and an understanding of the dynamic and frequently unpredictable interaction of religion and politics in the region during the late Cold War." - Norman M. Naimark, Stanford University

About the Author: Piotr H. Kosicki is assistant professor of history at the University of Maryland