

Ecumenicism and The Cold War

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Abstract:

This thesis looks at the relationship between the ecumenical movement and the Cold War. The ecumenical movement helped develop diplomatic negotiations and create an open dialogue between the East and West, but was also used to undermine or strengthen the position of a church, or nation, in an international environment. The main focus of my thesis will be the ecumenical movement in the 1950's and 1960's, and specifically on the event of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). The Second Vatican Council represented a radical departure for the Roman Catholic Church. This ecumenical council initiated a renewal in both the culture and structure of the church, which impacted the relationship of the church towards the USSR.

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Introduction:

After the Iranian revolution of 1978-79, the role of Pope John Paul II in the fall of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, and the events of September 11th the idea that our political realm has been successfully secularized has been disproven. As a result, recent scholars have tried to shed light on how religion impacts the political arena. Scott Thomas comments on our need to reevaluate the relationship between religion and politics in his book, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*. He writes, “the secularism of our political analysis has distorted our understanding . . . during the early years of the Cold War, Christian ecumenism, multilateralism, and internationalism should be seen as a set of interlinked political and cultural narratives, that led to the founding of the United Nations, The Bretton Woods system, and the World Council of the Churches at the same time.”¹ Thomas argues that we need to look closer at the political and the cultural-religious ties. Thus, a reexamination of events, such as the Cold War, is needed.

This is the main aim of my thesis, to re-examine the political and religious ties during the Cold War through a historical perspective. My main research question was how did the ecumenical movement and the Cold War influence each other? My hypothesis was that the ecumenical movement helped to bridge the ideological and political divide between the East and the West. What I discovered was that the ecumenical movement was used for two reasons; it served as a tool that helped diplomatic negotiations and helped create a dialogue between the East and West, but it was also used to undermine or strengthen the position of a church, or nation, in the international arena.

¹ Scott Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 161

The main focus of my thesis will be the ecumenical movement in the 1950's and 1960's, and specifically on the event of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965). I focus on the Second Vatican Council because it is an anomaly for the Catholic Church and clearly represents the importance of the ecumenical movement within the cultural and political arena of the Cold War. The announcement of the Second Vatican Council, by Pope John XXIII (1958-1963), came as a shock. Pope John XXIII was elected mainly as an interim pope, and it was believed that he would not make any major changes during his pontificate. Yet, the Second Vatican Council represented a radical departure for the church. This ecumenical council initiated a renewal in both the culture and structure of the church. It also helped initiate new negotiations with the USSR, thus changing the church's foreign policy.

In addition to looking at the ecumenical movement within the Roman Catholic Church, I will also look at the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Russian Orthodox Church. I discuss the WCC and the Russian Orthodox Church because they were a crucial component of the ecumenical movement, and to not include them would create an incomplete picture. The WCC was extremely influential to the ecumenicism of the Roman Catholic Church. The new progressive camp within the Catholic Church looked to, and worked with, the WCC. The Russian Orthodox Church is a key player in the ecumenical movement for many reasons. One reason being, it was closely linked to the Soviet state. The Russian Orthodox Church became a way in which the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church negotiated with the USSR and allowed them to understand the religious situation on the other side of the iron curtain.

All three of these institutions, the WCC, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, were extremely important in the ecumenical movement of the 1950's and the 1960's, but their connection with each other has not been properly discussed in the existent

literature. Relying heavily on my archival research at the WCC archives in Geneva, Switzerland, I was able to understand how all three actors interacted with each other and situated themselves in the ecumenical movement.

It is important to make the distinction that the WCC is not a church, but rather is an interfaith- based organization composed of various churches. However, while the WCC is not a church, it does have a Protestant mindset concerning the ecumenical movement. While the Russian Orthodox Church is currently a member of the WCC, The Catholic Church was not and is not currently a member. However, the Catholic Church does currently have a working relationship with the WCC. It is also important to note this thesis does not assume that the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church involvement in the political realm was anything new, but rather it tries to deconstruct how the ecumenical movement was used in the political and how the political in turn influenced the ecumenical. My thesis is divided into three chapters with a brief epilogue, which describes the content of the Second Vatican Council.

The first chapter, the theoretical chapter, examines how the Roman Catholic Church strengthened its position as a transnational actor through the Second Vatican Council. It proposes that the Catholic Church tried to emulate the structure of the WCC through its calling of the Second Vatican Council. At the same time, however, it reformed the church's identity. I look at how the church's transformation into a stronger transnational actor, via the Second Vatican Council, led to a structural and cultural shift within the church.

Chapter Two, titled, “The Changing Tides: Ecumenicism and Reform within the Roman Catholic Church,” examines the origins of this cultural shift. It discusses the changing atmosphere within the Roman Catholic Church. The chapter has four subsections. The first subsection titled, “The Ecumenical Atmosphere,” looks at the emergence of Roman Catholic

ecumenism in the 1940's and 1950's. It states that Roman Catholic ecumenism emerged from a new wave of progressive Catholics mainly from France, Germany, and Belgium. During World War II these Catholic liberals interacted more closely with their non-Catholic colleagues. The second subsection titled, "The Roman Catholic Ecumenical Characters," gives a brief biography of Pope John XXIII and emphasizes the importance of three key players within the Roman Catholic Church: Pope John XXIII, Cardinal Bea, and Cardinal Willebrands. The third subsection titled, "The Influence of the WCC," looks at the relationship of the WCC to the ecumenism of the Roman Catholic Church. It states that the progressives within the Roman Catholic Church were influenced by the WCC. The last subsection titled, "Everything Will Change," states that the new progressive culture within the Catholic Church promoted reforms. It looks at Pope John XXIII's policy of *aggiornamento* as a reform of the internal and external life of the church. This last subsection outlines how John XXIII's policy allowed for a renewal of the church, while at the same time led to changes in the Vatican's foreign policy.

Chapter Three, titled, "The Politics of Unity," discusses this change in the Vatican's foreign policy in more depth. While Chapter Two looks at the cultural shift within the Roman Catholic Church, and the Catholic Connection to the WCC, Chapter Three discusses how the ecumenical movement was directly influenced by and responded to the Cold War. This chapter is divided into four subsections. The first subsection, titled, "John XXIII's Diplomacy and Ecumenical Motive," examines how the Roman Catholic Church used the ecumenical movement to foster diplomacy. The calling of the Council allowed messages of peace to reach leaders in Moscow and, thus, coincided with new negotiations with the USSR. But there were other motives as well. The ecumenical movement proved to be a political tool that the Roman Catholic Church used to undermine Communism through the strengthening of other churches

(non-Russian Orthodox) within the USSR. Russia, however, similarly used the ecumenical movement to undermine the Roman Catholic Church.

I outline this mirror effect in the second subsection “The Russian Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement: peaceful co-existence and ecumenical fears.” In this subsection I state that the Russian Orthodox Church entered into the ecumenical movement because of direct orders from the party leaders in Moscow. The Russian Orthodox Church was originally used by the state to transmit Russia's desire for co-existence with the West. When the Second Vatican Council was announced, however, Moscow wanted the Russian Orthodox Church to strengthen their relationship with the WCC as a way to undermine any possible Roman Catholic agenda. Similar to the Vatican, Moscow used the ecumenical movement, and the relationships that the ecumenical movement created, to strengthen their international influence.

In the subsequent subsections, “The WCC Fear and Competition with the Roman Catholic Church,” and “Observers' and Journalists' Role of Observation,” I discuss how the WCC entered into competition with the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement. This competition and the WCC's fears that the Catholic Church could usurp the ecumenical movement shows that one's involvement in the ecumenical movement secured a position in the international arena. I also look at how the presence of observers and journalists facilitated and opened a dialogue between the Vatican and Moscow but at the same time allowed acts of surveillance to occur. Newspapers had the power to escalate or deescalate tensions, to politicize or depoliticize an event, when reporting on the ecumenical movement. As I have already noted, the epilogue will discuss the content of the Second Vatican Council. It is meant to give the reader a greater understanding of how the ecumenical movement changed the Catholic Church.

Chapter One: Multilateralism, Ecumenism, and the Roman Catholic Identity

The word ecumenism comes from the Greek word *oikoumene*, which in the New Testament is synonymous with the Roman Empire and means the world in its entirety.² In modern times however rather than refer to an empire, or the world, the word ecumenical refers to the church in its entirety.³ The modern ecumenical movement began in the late 19th century; organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Student Christian Movement developed as non-denominational Christian bodies. These organizations were mostly concerned with missionary activities.⁴ World War I and World War II would shift the emphasis not on missionary work, but instead focused on human rights and the stabilization of Europe through an international network. In the post war society, multilateral organizations such as the United Nations developed in the hopes that it could solve conflict in non-violent ways. Similarly, one of the main purposes of these interfaith organizations like the World Council of the Churches (WCC) was to create a stabilizing force within the international body, much like the multilateral organizations that developed around the same time.⁵ This is how the modern day ecumenical movement within the WCC formed, with the emphasis on multi-national and inter-faith assemblies. The Roman Catholic Church, influenced by the WCC, would orient themselves within this world view along with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The ecumenical movement within the Catholic Church during the 1950's and 1960's

2 Michael Kinnamon and Brian Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1997) 1.

3 Michael Kinnamon and Brian Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement*, 1.

4 Katherine Marshall, *Global Institutions of Religion: ancient movers, modern shakers* (New York: Routledge, 2013) 74

5 Canon John Nurser "The Ecumenical Movement Churches, "Global Order," and Human Rights: 1938-1948" *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (November 2003): 852.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20069697> (accessed March 2013)

emulated the WCC and other multi faith-based organizations. The Second Vatican Council tried to emulate the structure of the WCC by inviting church and lay men from different faiths and nationalities to assemble through a central organization, i.e., the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time, however, through the policy of *aggiornamento* the Catholic Church tried to solidify its identity within the modern world and strengthen the church's transnational character.

Jeffrey Hayes discusses the Roman Catholic Church's transnational character in his book, *Religion, Politics and International Relations*. He writes that the Second Vatican Council directly influenced the transnational character of the Catholic Church:

Looking at Catholicism globally throughout the twentieth century and particularly since the 1960's, three interrelated processes in dynamic tension with one another are apparent. First, over time, as consequences of its transnational growth, there was a global strengthening of papal supremacy, Vatican administrative centralization and the Romanization of Catholicism. One of the most important indications of this process was Vatican II (1962-5) and its result: an ensuring, general *aggiornamento* (liberalization) producing not only a pronounced trend towards administrative and doctrinal centralization but also a homogenization and globalization of Catholic culture at the elite level throughout the Catholic World.⁶

While I agree with Haynes that the Second Vatican Council allowed the Catholic Church to grow as a transnational actor, I do not agree that the Council represented the centralization and Romanization of Catholic culture throughout the world, but rather opened up the church to different cultures. Within Pope John XXII's *aggiornamento* was the decentralization of papal authority, putting more power in the hands of the Synod of Bishops. This allowed for the national churches to strengthen; thus, instead of strengthening the Roman character of the church, the Second Vatican Council simultaneously strengthened its national and international character.

While it can be said that the Roman Catholic Church was already a transnational actor, it

6 Jeffrey Haynes, *Religion, Politics and International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2011) 180

tried to solidify this position by shedding pieces of its Roman identity. Joseph Ratzinger wrote in his book, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, that “the East was able again and again to open up the narrow Latin horizon and to force the Council to think not in a Latin but in a Catholic manner, and to avoid the fateful equating of Catholicity with Latinity.”⁷ What the Council essentially did was allow the Catholic Church to change how it viewed itself.⁸ In order to understand this change, it is important to understand how the Pope Pius XII pontificate (1939-1958) is situated within the ecumenical.

Establishing a European order for Pope Pius XII meant creating a united Europe through a return to Christendom.⁹ Blandine Chelini-pont discusses Pius XII's united Europe in his article “Papal thought on Europe.” Chelini-pont discusses the transition from Pope Pius XII's idea of a united Europe to Pope John XXIII's idea of a new Europe. According to Chelini-pont, Pope Pius XII's return to Christendom was born out of the Catholic thought of the 1930's, which was influenced by Friedrich Novalis, Adam Müller, and Friedrich Schlegel.¹⁰ The return to Christendom was a nostalgia for a medieval Europe, a Europe that was united through a common spirituality. Pius XII's version of Christendom sought to bring stability to Europe but at the same time undermined Communism. However, his Christendom, according to Chelini-pont, was linked to a Western identity.¹¹ Pope John XXIII continued in Pius's line of thought, but instead called for a new Europe whereby East and West could be united.¹² Pope John XXIII, with his policy of *aggiornamento*, opened up the church not only to the modern world

7 Pope Benedict XVI. *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009) Kindle Edition. (Kindle location 312-313)

8 Francis X. Murphy. “Vatican Politics: Structure and Function,” *World Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (July 1974): 546. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010100>. (accessed May 2013)

9 Blandine Chelini-pont, “Papal Thought on Europe” in *Religion, Politics and Law in the European Union* edited by Mucian Leustean and John T.S Madeley (New York: Routledge, 2010) 129

10 Ibid., 129-130

11 Ibid., 129

12 Ibid., 130

but also opened the church to Eastern influences. One of the outcomes of *aggiornamento* would be that it tried to shake off the specific Western character of the church. When Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council, an ecumenical council, he emphasized the Catholic connection to the East and to the Orthodox churches. Much like the WCC, the Roman Catholic Church believed that a network of churches could bring peace in times of chaos.

Thus, the Roman Catholic Church tried to establish a peace through its emulation of the WCC multi-faith and multi-national organization, while at the same time sought to undermine Communism through Pope Pius XII's 'Christendom.' The difference would be that John XXIII's version of Christendom would be a new Europe, whereby spiritually the East and West would be united. The ecumenical movement within the Catholic Church, in an almost schizophrenic way, tried to both emulate the WCC by shaking off its Roman identity and, thus, solidify its capability to become a transnational actor, while at the same time seeking to strengthen its identity.

Unlike Haynes, I believe the Second Vatican Council did not homogenize Catholic culture but allowed Catholicism to strengthen at the national level, which thus allowed it to have a greater impact on international affairs. It is this strengthening of the Catholic identity between the international and the national level by which the Catholic Church was able to become so effective in the fight against Communism under Pope John Paul II. Thus, within my thesis I situate the Roman Catholic ecumenical movement of the 1950's and the 1960's within this structural and cultural shift. I examine how the Roman Catholic Church emulated the WCC by forming a multi-faith assembly, through the calling of the Second Vatican Council in order to promote peace and avoid another war in Europe. However, at the same time the Roman Catholic Church incited a policy of *aggiornamento*, which allowed for a renewal of Roman

Catholic identity.

This is why looking at the atmospheric change within the Roman Catholic ecumenical movement proved to be an important component of my thesis. By understanding how and why the tides were changing, I was able to understand to a greater degree how the Cold War and the ecumenical movement was closely tied together. For primary sources, I relied heavily on my archival research within the WCC archives located in Geneva, Switzerland. I also relied on the journal of Cardinal Willebrands dating from 1958 to 1961; which has been translated by Theo Salemink. This journal was Willebrands' work journal and gives mostly brief accounts of his ecumenical encounters. Personal feelings are often left out of the descriptions; but, nevertheless, do exist. I also looked at the Catholic Church's decrees, schemas, pronouncements, encyclicals, etc. Willebrands' journal gave me a good understanding of the working relationship between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, while also providing some insight into the liberalization within the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's decrees, schemas, pronouncements, encyclicals, etc. provided me with an understanding not only of the philosophy of Pope John XXIII, but also an understanding of how the church publicly represented themselves in the ecumenical movement. When reading these primary sources, I was looking for the political message and did not touch on the theological aspect.

My archival research at the WCC proved to be the most crucial component of my thesis. Within these archives exists observer reports on the Second Vatican Council, newspaper reports on the ecumenical situation; reports on the USSR; meeting notes between Visser'tHooft (the Secretary General of the WCC) and Cardinal Willebrands and Cardinal Bea. In addition, there are translated drafts of the Council's schemas along with comments and notes of the WCC observers.

The WCC archives provided me with an understanding of the ecumenical atmosphere, specifically within the Cold War mentality. In the archives exists the more banal documents, memos and invitations, letters filled with tedious administrative information, but there also exists informational reports on the USSR and the Roman Catholic Church. In these reports were gathered information on the religious situation in the Soviet Union and gathered information on how the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church situated themselves in the ecumenical movement. They read similar to a surveillance report, with the words “confidential” or “strictly confidential” often written across the top of the page. In one paper there were instructions to keep the document in the recipient's personal files, in order that no one else had access to or could possibly see the document. While reading these reports, the work of Moritz Föllmer became an important part of my methodological approach.

While analyzing an extract from a survey conducted in 1938 in Nazi Germany by the SD (security service of the SS), historian Moritz Föllmer states in his article, “Surveillance Reports,” that, “Rather than telling us something about popular opinion, the source extract testifies to the ideological mindset and the institutional agenda of the SD.”¹³ In essence Föllmer writes that surveillance reports can tell us more about who is doing the surveilling than who is being surveiled. By closely analyzing surveillance reports, we can receive some insight into the “institutional agenda.” While sifting through the documents in the WCC archives, I looked at how the reports spoke to the “institutional agenda” and what this agenda said about the ecumenical movement and the general atmosphere surrounding the ecumenical movement. While the reports at the WCC archives were not surveillance reports, they did show the WCC's fears and ambitions within the ecumenical movement. By deciphering these reports, I was able

13 Moritz Föllmer, “Surveillance Reports” in Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.) *Reading Primary Sources* (London: Routledge, 2008) 85.

to examine how the ecumenical movement played an important political role. Furthermore, by looking for information on the Roman Catholic Church in the WCC archives, I was able to find information that might have been hidden otherwise because it was recorded through the eyes of the WCC and not the Catholic Church.

To understand the Russian perspective of the ecumenical movement, I relied heavily on three articles: Adriano Roccucci's, "Russian Observers at Vatican II : The 'Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs' and the Moscow Patriarchate between anti religious policy and international strategies In Vatican II"; Anatolij Krassiko's, "The Second Vatican Council in The Context of Relations Between The USSR and The Holy See"; and Jurij E Karlov's, "The Secret Diplomacy of Moscow and the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council." All three articles can be found in the book, *Vatican II in Moscow (1959-1965), Acts of the Colloquium on the History of Vatican II Moscow, March 30-April 2, 1995*, edited by A. Melloni. These three articles pull from the authors' research in the Russian archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Council of Religious Affairs, located in Moscow. Thus, these articles give a good and detailed account of how the Russian Orthodox Church was used by Moscow in international affairs. All three authors describe the relationship of Moscow similarly, but Karlov, who was the first ambassador of the USSR, and Krassiko, who was a Soviet journalist during the Council, have a more personal interest invested in their historical research. Krassiko, in addition to describing the relationship between Moscow and Russian Orthodox Church, gives a historical as well as personal account of how the Italian and Russian press operated during the Council sessions.

For the secondary sources, the most important works I used were by Lucian Leustean, Dennis Dunn, Frank Coppa, and Guiseppe Alberigo. Coppa and Dunn researched Vatican politics during the Cold War, but did not focus specifically on the ecumenical movement. Dunn

researched Vatican politics in relation to the Soviet Union and the Russian Orthodox in his book, *The Catholic Church and Russia Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars*, but does not mention the relationship of the WCC with the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church. Coppa briefly mentions the WCC in his book, *Politics and the Papacy in the Modern World*, but unlike Dunn does not mention the Catholic-Orthodox relationship. Alberigo is essential to any study of the Second Vatican Council. He gives a thorough and detailed account in his edition of *History of the Vatican II*, issued in three volumes, with the contribution of various other scholars. Alberigo's work is detailed and thorough but is geared more towards the inner workings of the Roman Catholic Church rather than its relationship to the political during the Cold War.

In terms of sources that discuss the relationship between the WCC, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church in the ecumenical movement, I have not found any comprehensive study. Leustean does discuss the ecumenical situation among the Eastern churches and specifically mentions their connection to the WCC. However, Leustean does not discuss the role of the Roman Catholic Church with the same great detail. In addition, Leustean focuses mainly on the Eastern churches' relationship towards the Russian Orthodox Church. None of the sources I looked at researched the dialogue between the WCC, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church. My thesis attempts to shed some light into this un-researched field, while at the same time providing a more in depth look at the relationship of the ecumenical movement to the Cold War.

Chapter Two: The Changing Tides: Emergence of Ecumenicism and Reform within The Roman Catholic Church

In this Chapter, I will set the background for the calling of the Second Vatican Council. I will first outline the emergence of the Roman Catholic ecumenicists. These ecumenicists, mainly from Germany, France, and Belgium, emerged from the backdrop of World War II, whereby they came into more frequent contact with their non-Catholic colleagues. These Catholic ecumenists would be heavily influenced by the World Council of Churches' (WCC) ecumenism, and would form a liberal bloc within the Catholic Church. This liberal bloc, which included Cardinal Willebrands and Cardinal Bea, would initiate change. Thus, along with the policy of Pope John XXIII's *aggiornamento*, the life of the Church was subsequently reformed. This internal reform allowed for the external policies of the Vatican to also change.

The Ecumenical Atmosphere:

While Pope John XXIII would be the catalyst for the calling of the Second Vatican Council, ecumenicism had been growing among the liberal Catholic circles since the 1940's. In 1939, the Belgian monastery de Chevetogne was formed and served as a ecumenical hub, specifically for uniting the Western and Eastern churches. Another ecumenical center, The Istina Center, under the leadership of Yves-Marie Congar and Christophe-Jean Dumount. Was formed in Paris in 1945. And on December 20, 1949, Cardinal A. Ottavani wrote "Instructions

of the Ecumenical Movement.” The instructions indicated that ecumenical activity was occurring from the bottom up. Ecumenical activity emerged from the bishops and theologians, and the instructions showed that the Vatican was taking notice. In the instructions, Ottaviani states that, “bishops will not allow recourse to a perilous mode of speaking which engenders false notions and raises deceitful hopes that can never be fulfilled. This suggests that the bishops were taking a certain initiative in the ecumenical movement, without any direct guidance from Rome.

The Roman Catholic ecumenicism would continue advancing in the 1950's. In 1952, the Catholic Conference for ecumenical questions was established, which met twice a year and included Karl Rahner, Cardinal Christophe Dumont, Cardinal Augustin Bea, Pierre Duprey, Charles Moeller, Josef Hofer, and Cardinal Lorenz Jaeger. Other main Catholic ecumenical players would include Cardinal Charles Boyer, Père Henri de Lubac, Cardinal Johannes Willibrands, Hans Küng, and Yves Congar. These theologians, priests, bishops, and cardinals would be labeled as the liberal, or progressive, camp within the Catholic Church. Primarily from Germany, Belgium, and France this liberal group with their ecumenical ideals and with the help of the Pope would change the Catholic Church dramatically.

These Catholic liberals and their ecumenical ideals emerged from the wartime setting. World War II had produced prisoner of war camps, resistance movements, and refugee camps by which the Roman Catholics and other Christian dominations were forced to interact with each other on a daily basis. Yves Congar, one of the leading liberal theologians within the Catholic Church, is an example of how World War II affected his ecumenical theology. Congar, similar to De Lubac, would spend part of the war in a Nazi prisoner of war camp. Historian Paul Philbert describes this time in Congar's life, saying in the camp, “he experienced intimate

contact as a priest with laity, as a Catholic with protestants, and as a believer with non-believers. He also learned German as well, a skill that became invaluable for his future historical research, his access to modern theology, and his ecumenical study and contacts.”¹⁴ War fostered inter-confessional relationships. War fostered inter-confessional relationships. These bonds continued even after the war and would form the plethora of ecumenical activity in the 1950's and 1960's.

This liberal group, while in the minority within the Catholic Church, formed a strong well- organized bloc and would pit themselves against the conservative majority, which included the powerful Italian Curia. The liberals and the conservatives formed a clear division within the Vatican, as Cardinal Willebrands noted in two of his journal entries. In regards to the conservative group, Willebrands wrote the following with a clear frustration: “There is a group in the Curia, i.e. [Cardinal] Ottavani...and [Cardinal] Tardini, who still believe in the unity of Church and State in a medieval way. They don't see what's happening and live outside of a certain circle.”¹⁵ Furthermore, during the preparation of the Council, on May 19th 1960, Willebrands reflects on the different desires of the conservative group versus the liberal group in the outcome of the Council: “the impressions and expectations are so different. There is so much hope in our country, in Germany and elsewhere! Will this become a big disappointment? The fact is that the Italians, even a man like Giovanni Rossi, hardly understand our questions and needs.”¹⁶ There was a clear division within the Catholic Church, and the liberal group was leading the church into reform.

14 Paul Philbert, “Yves Congar: Theologian, Ecumenist, and Visionary”, *U.S. Catholic Historian*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Spring, 1999):118 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25154673>. (accessed May 2013)

15 J.G.M Willebrands, “*You will be Called the Repairer of the Breach*” : *The Diary of J.M Willebrands*, edited by Theo Salemink (Leuven: UitgeverijPeeters, 2009)154.

16 Ibid.,152

This new group of liberal Catholics were described by Hans Küng as the avant-garde.

During the Vatican Council, in a conversation with Professor G. Lindbeck, Küng said,

'You protestants have been saying that men like Rahner, or Congar or myself are a little group of outsiders in the church who do not represent the Catholic position. Now you will have to admit that we, even though still, of course, a minority, are the avant-garde, who are leading the way to Roman Catholic theology as a whole.' On the basis of the first session, Hans Küng is right.¹⁷

The liberal group gained momentum within the Catholic Church, despite being the minority.

One reason for this was because of the Pope's support, but they were also well-organized.

Moreover, the liberal culture fostered an environment of cooperation, consensus, and collegiality, all of which allowed their reforms to more easily be pushed through in the Council sessions.¹⁸

The cultural atmosphere of the liberals radically changed the Catholic Church. But how do we situate this new liberal bloc within the traditional conservatism of the Catholic Church, particularly in the background of the Cold War? These progressives emerged from a post-World War II society with the vestiges of war still imprinted on their minds, and the Cold War represented another contentious environment by which ecumenicism could overcome. The result was an atmospheric change within the Vatican in how they dealt with and saw Communism. This atmospheric change was well-recorded in the WCC's observer reports of the Second Vatican Council. One such observer, Professor K.E Skydsgaard, commented that,

The Roman Catholic Church has officially condemned Communism. It did so in an official pronouncement in 1945, and it is fighting it secretly in the confessionals, and is thus very strongly implicated in the fight against Communism. But at the same time there is a growing movement to the left, a feeling of social responsibility and a recognition of the faults of Christians in this sphere (they do not say 'of the Church' but

17 Hans Küng was quoted by G. Lindbeck in WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 2. "Report of Lutheran Observers" by G. Lindbeck, December 14, 1962.

18 Sociologist Melissa Wilde gives an extensive account how the progressive built and organized themselves in Melissa Wilde's, *Vatican II: a Sociological Analysis of Religious Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 57-59.

'of Christians')...There is a conservative, narrow, self-complacent tendency in the Roman Church, but also an evangelical, broadminded and radical tendency- perhaps even much more radical than our so called evangelical churches. He had seen great bitterness against the Vatican, and also great patience and led sacrifice on the part of these people...The reformation has begun in the midst of this enormous church. The question is whether the church, in the last instance, will allow this reformation.¹⁹

According to Skydsgaard, the liberal bloc of the Roman Catholic Church was turning the church into an evangelical body less concerned with the “Church” as an institution and more focused on Christians as a people, thus severing Christianity from any affiliation with a political ideology.

The Roman Catholic Ecumenical Characters:

The three most important ecumenical characters in regard to Roman Catholic relations with the USSR were Cardinal Bea, Cardinal Willebrands, and of course Pope John XXIII. Angelo Guiseppe Roncalli, or Pope John XXIII, was born in, 1881, in Sotto il Monte, Italy. Born into a farming family, Roncalli came from humble upbringings, which would be a commonality that would bond Khrushchev and the Pope.²⁰

While Roncalli was Italian, his travels would both develop his diplomatic skills and familiarize himself with the East. He first received his diplomatic training during his years as apostolic visitor to Bulgaria in 1925-35 and apostolic delegate to Greece and Turkey in 1935-44. He was not happy to be assigned to Bulgaria, mainly due to administrative issues, but as he notes in his journal in September of 1933,

my prolonged mission as papal representative in this country often causes me acute and intimate suffering. But I try not to show this. I bear and will bear everything willingly, even joyfully, for the love of Jesus, in order to resemble him as closely as I can and to do his holy will in everything, and for the triumph of his grace amid these people, so simple and good but, alas, so very unfortunate!²¹

19 WCC Archives. Box 4201.1.1, folder 5. “Notes on a talk given by Professor K.E,” June. 1955.

20 Eric Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 10.

21 Pope John XXIII, *Journal of the Soul*, translated by Dorothy White (New York: Doubleday, 1999) 221

His work in Turkey was decidedly better for the Pope, who found an interest in the people and language. “I want to study Turkish with more care and perseverance. I am fond of the Turks, to whom the Lord has sent me: it is my duty to do what I can for them....I must continue this with faith, prudence, and sincere zeal.”²² In 1944 he was sent to Paris as apostolic nuncio, during this same time Congar was forced to leave Paris due to his involvement in the Priest Workers' movement. But Congar did make an impression on the Pope, who had read Congar's ecumenical piece, *True and False Reform*.²³

While Roncalli had liberal tendencies, he would be elected pope in 1958 because he was a candidate on which both liberals and conservatives could come to an agreement. Pope John XXIII's pontificate did not last long. He was 77 years old at the time of his election and would die five years later from cancer on June 3, 1963. While his pontificate only lasted a short while, Pope John XXIII's calling of the Second Vatican Council and his renewed relations with the USSR would radically change both the spirit and the structure of the Catholic Church.

Cardinal Bea and Cardinal Willebrands were also important in the Vatican's relationship with the USSR and in the ecumenism of the church. Cardinal Bea was a German Jesuit born in 1881; he spent his religious education in the Netherlands. Willebrands, who was Dutch, was born in 1909. Cardinals Bea and Willebrands came to the forefront in Vatican diplomacy through their positions as president of the Secretary of Christian Unity and secretary of the Secretary of Christian Unity respectively. The Secretary of Christian Unity was a newly formed position, which came out of the preparatory phase of the Second Vatican Council. The Council's instructional documents state that the purpose of the Secretariat of Unity was to help the non-Catholic Christians in trying to discern between what they had in common and what were the

²² Ibid., 228.

²³ Philibert, “Yves Congar: Theologian, Ecumenist, and Visionary”, 16.

differences with the Roman Catholic Church, and generally “what are the desires of these different groups touching on the Unity problem, and what ways can the Catholic Church help them in true unity.”²⁴

The Influence of the WCC:

In Professor George Lindbeck's Council report dating December 14, 1962, he stated that the progressive group within the Catholic Church “will admit quite frankly that they can talk far more easily about the Christian faith and about such problems as persecution with many protestants than they can with a certain type of conservative Catholic.” Indeed, the ecumenism of the liberal Catholics and the Protestants were similar in many respects, and both groups worked closely together. While the Catholic Church never officially became a member of the WCC, Catholics participated in the Faith and Order meeting of the World Council of Churches, in Lund, Sweden, for the first time in 1952. They would also participate in the 1961 assembly in New Delhi, India, sending official observers. Furthermore, there existed various interfaith communities and workshops where Protestant and Catholic ecumenists could meet. There was the Taize community in France, and in Germany there was the evangelisch-katholischeökumenischearbeitkreis, which was a meeting in Germany held yearly between Protestant and Catholic theologians.

In a way, the Protestant ecumenists within the WCC led the path for the Catholic liberals, as many of them looked towards this organization with an intense admiration and curiosity. Furthermore, it would be the personal relationships with WCC members that helped

24 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 1. “Report on the Preparation of the Second Vatican Council” by the Secretariat for promoting Christian Unity, January 25, 1959.

the Roman Catholic Church in their ecumenical struggle. Cardinal Willebrands made frequent trips to the WCC ecumenical institute in Bossey and would often seek the advice from his friend and fellow Dutchman, Visser'tHooft, the Secretary General of the WCC. Edmund Schlink, of the WCC, also would form a friendship with Cardinal Bea and Archbishop Jaeger

Pope John XXIII relied on these personal connections to maintain a good relationship with the WCC.²⁵²⁸ Willebrands was especially useful in fostering the WCC relationship, as he held the closest relationship with the WCC and Visser'tHooft out of any other Roman Catholic.²⁶ This relationship fostered cooperation between the WCC and the Catholic Church, although at times, admittedly, there was competition between the two institutions. But both institutions would share and discuss their ecumenical ideals through the personal relationships that formed and through the various ecumenical conferences and meetings where Catholics were allowed to attend. Information was exchanged between the WCC and the Catholic Church in regards to the ecumenical situation and, specifically, in regards to the situation in the USSR. For example, on March 19th, 1959, Cardinal Willebrands wrote in his work journal regarding Professor Edmund Schlink, who had recently made a trip to the USSR: “We would really like to talk to him about the ecumenical situation in Germany. We speak to him about his trip to the Soviet Union.”²⁷

Information about the USSR, about what the ecumenical situation should be, what it could be, and how the Orthodox churches fit within the ecumenical picture, was shared. In

25 According to Visser'tHooft Willebrands said 'The Pope is concerned about good relations with the WCC. He had recently asked W. : 'Do you have good relations with the WCC?'. W. Said 'yes'. The Pope had then asked: “are you in contact with Visser'tHooft?” W. had again said : 'Yes'.” in WCC Archives. Box 4201.2.4. “Notes on a Conversation with Bishop Willebrands in Geneva on September 5-7” by Visser'tHooft, September 7th, 1964.

26 Jerome-Micheal Vereb, *“Because he was a German!”: Cardinal Bea and the Origins of Roman Catholic Engagement in the Ecumenical Movement*, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006) 31.

27 Willebrands, *“You will be called Repairer of the Breach”*, 87

Willebrands' diary are countless entries describing lunch, dinners, and coffees with the ecumenists in the WCC and in the Netherlands. The Catholic Church also utilized the WCC Orthodox theologian, Dr. Nikos Nissiotis, in order to better understand the ecumenical relationship between Catholicism and Orthodoxy.²⁸ In addition, the WCC observers at the Second Vatican Council also sought to help the liberal Catholic bloc within the Vatican. As one observer noted, “needless to say the observer who can supply the best ammunition for the progressives are theologians, competent in both Protestant and Roman Catholic thought, who have prestige in both Protestant and Roman Catholic circles.”²⁹

“everything will be changed”:

One observer wrote that the implication of the ecumenical movement within the Roman Catholic Church was that “everything will be changed”.³⁰ This change in the Church was dubbed by some as a Catholic reformation, but it had the official name of *aggiornamento*. Pope John XXIII's policy of *aggiornamento* sought to open up the Church to the modern world. It promoted a greater involvement of the laity, the decentralization of the church, and an improvement of relations with non-Christians and non-Catholics. In the Pope's first encyclical letter, “ad Petri Cathedram,” on June 29, 1959, the pope stated that the primary purpose of calling the Council was for “the development of the Catholic faith, the revival of Christian standards of morality among the Christian people, and the bringing of the Church's discipline

28 Ibid., 259.

29 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 2. “Report Of Lutheran Observers” prepared by G. Lindbeck. December 14, 1962.

30 Hans Kung was quoted by G. Lindbeck in, WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 2. “Report Of Lutheran Observers”

into closer accord with the needs and conditions of our time.”³¹ The original purpose of the council was going to be an ecumenical matter, but the theme shifted towards more of the internal life of the church.³² There was a recognition that the Catholic Church needed to reform itself in order to stay relevant in the modern world. *Aggiornamento* not only opened up the Catholic Church to the modern world, but also allowed the Catholic Church, via the Second Vatican Council, to make rapid social changes in order for this reform to happen.³³

Furthermore, the purpose of the Second Vatican Council was not only to incite reforms within the Catholic Church, but also to open up the Catholic Church to non-Catholic Christians. *Aggiornamento* allowed for the simultaneous reform from the inside, while at the same time reforming the relations with the non-Catholic Christians, or the “separated brethren,” along with a new attitude towards the non-Christians as well. The Pope further states in his encyclical letter “ad Petri Cathedram” that,

the council, nevertheless, has definite importance for the separate brethren: it will surely be a wonderful manifestation of truth, unity and charity; a manifestation, indeed, which we hope will be received by those who behold it but are separated from this apostolic see, as a gentle invitation to seek and to find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so ardently from his heavenly father.³⁴

Willebrands commented on this connection between the internal and the external function of the church in a conversation he had with Visser'tHooft. According to Willebrands, the function of The Secretariat of Christian Unity “is not only limited to the relations to the separated brethren. Its advice is asked even for internal questions. Or in other words: the distinction between internal and ecumenical questions begin to disappear.”³⁵

31 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 1. “Report on the Preparation of the Second Vatican Council” by The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. January, 25, 1959.

32 Willebrands, “*You will be called Repairer of the Breach*”, 141

33 Thomas P. Faase, “Bulwark-Catholics and Conciliar-Humanists in the Society of Jesus”, *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Autumn, 1980): 515 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4106136> (accessed May 2013)

34 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 1. “Report on the Preparation of the Second Vatican Council”

35 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 1. Report No. 8 “Concerning the 2nd Vatican Council” by Gen Sec.

Pope John XXIII's renewal of the church would also led to a renewal in the Vatican's foreign policy, thus creating an internal and external reform. John XXII's predecessors, Pope Pius XI (1857-1939) and Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), were vehemently opposed to Communism. In Pope Pius XI's encyclical, *DiviniRedemptoris*, he denounced Communism, and warned about its evil and danger. *DiviniRedemptoris* states that,

This all too imminent danger, Venerable Brethren, as you have already surmised, is bolshevistic and atheistic Communism, which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization. In the face of such a threat, the Catholic Church could not and does not remain silent. This Apostolic See, above all, has not refrained from raising its voice, for it knows that its proper and social mission is to defend truth, justice and all those eternal values which Communism ignores or attacks.³⁶

Communism, according to Pius XI, positioned itself as the enemy of Christianity. It seduced the souls of the faithful, taking advantage of their good will and their desire to see the working class treated fairly. Pope Pius XI's encyclical, *DiviniRedemptoris*, would be the standard text by which the Vatican referred to Communism during much of the Cold War.

³⁷Unlike Pope John XXIII, Pius the XII openly and loudly opposed the communist regimes. Pius XII refused to enter into talks with the USSR.³⁸In addition, his decree on Communism in 1949 stated that any person who was a communist or engaged in or with communist activities could face the possibility of excommunication. The decree was harsh, especially considering that no decree similar was made against Nazism despite Nazism, similarly, standing against the Catholic Church.³⁹In addition to Pope Pius XII's decree, he supported the West openly and

December 4, 1962

36 Pope Pius XI, *Divini Redemptoris*, 1937. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19031937_divini-redemptoris_en.html (accessed May 2013)

37 Ibid.

38 Dennis Dunn, "Global Reach", *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Autumn, 1982): 120 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40256356> (accessed May 2013)

39 Frank J. Coppa, "Pope Pius XII and the Cold War: The Post-War Confrontation between Catholicism and Communism" in Dianne Kirby's, *Religion and the Cold War*, (London: Lagrave Macmillan, 2003) 51

specifically aligned himself with the U.S. in foreign policy. This shifted with Pope John XXIII who did not align the church to any one nation openly.⁴⁰

Pope John XXIII used the church as a way to promote peace and justice within the world and refrained from aligning the Catholic Church with a political stance or a specific state or states.⁴¹ He mediated the Cuban missile crisis with the help of American journalist Norman Cousins. John XXIII, via Cousins, became a channel by which Kennedy and Khrushchev could communicate and de-escalate tensions. Khrushchev was reassured that America had no interest in trying to invade Cuba again, and both Khrushchev and Kennedy agreed that the missile shipment and military blockade would be removed.⁴² In addition to his involvement in the Cuban missile crisis, Pope John XXIII began to open up negotiations with the Soviet Union before detente became a common policy.⁴³ In 1963, Pope John XXIII sent Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, who was the head of the Vatican Bureau of Public Affairs, to Prague and Budapest in order to foster open talks with the communist governments. Pope John XXIII also received at the Vatican Khrushchev's daughter and son-in-law, Alexei Adzubei, who carried with them a birthday greeting note from Khrushchev. Part of Pope John XXIII's diplomatic ability can be seen in his ability to play to the middle, to his policy of non-alignment. For example, during the Second Vatican Council, when the Council was outlining the necessary conditions for a dialogue between Rome and the separated Christian communities, the Pope said that there should be "no concealment traps . . . We do not wish to make our faith on occasion for polemics."⁴⁴ Pope John XXIII's policy of non-alignment helped promote peace

40 J. Bryan Hehir, "Papal Foreign Policy". *Foreign Policy*, No. 78 (Spring, 1990): 27
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1148627> (accessed May 2013)

41 Murphy, "Vatican Politics: Structure and Function," 552

42 Norman Cousins, *The Improbable Triumvirate: John F. Kennedy, Pope John, Nikita Khrushchev*. (New York: Norton & Company, 1972) 12-13.

43 Dunn, "Global Reach", 121

44 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.5. No I/1 "Report of an Observer at the 2nd Vatican Council" by Pasteur Hebert

and improve the Vatican's relations with the USSR. This would be one of the many changes that the Vatican would undergo during his Pontificate.

The Roman Catholic Church underwent a cultural transformation not only with John XXIII's *aggiornamento*, but also with the emergence of a new Catholic liberal bloc. These liberals, who emerged from a war-time setting, would strengthen Roman Catholic ecumenical activity in the 1950's and 1960's. Through their personal connections and work with the WCC, these liberals would push the Catholic Church into the already well-established ecumenical movement. A change was already occurring within the Catholic Church and would accumulate with the calling of the Second Vatican Council.

Chapter Three: The Politics of Unity

In chapter two I discussed the emergence of the ecumenical movement within the Roman Catholic Church. I presented the Roman Catholic ecumenical movement as a cultural shift. In this chapter, “Politics of Unity,” I will discuss how and why the ecumenical movement was utilized in the political arena during the Cold War. The ecumenical movement was used to promote peace but also allowed the Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church to have a greater influence on the political situation. The Catholic Church used ecumenism to undermine Communism and at the same time opened negotiations with the Soviet Union. Moscow, via the Russian Orthodox Church, similarly used the ecumenical movement to open negotiations with Rome but also to undermine any potential Roman Catholic agenda. The WCC also feared a Catholic agenda and entered into competition with the Roman Catholic Church over who could bring the Orthodox churches into their respective ecumenical movements. In the last section of this chapter, I will show how journalists and observers also played an important role in the ecumenical movement. The press framed the ecumenical assemblies in the political context of the Cold War and, thus, allowed the ecumenical movement to become a political tool. Observers allowed for a dialogue to open between the West and the USSR, but at the same time invited acts of surveillance. The presence of both the press and the observers further allowed the ecumenical movement to be used as a political tool.

Pope John's Diplomacy and Ecumenical Motives:

As mentioned in Chapter One, Pope John XXIII's policy towards the USSR had shifted

from his predecessors. Pope John XXIII took a different approach. Known for his “peasant diplomacy,” he became the first pope to fully implement a policy of detente. His peasant diplomacy did not focus on denouncing Communism, or aligning publicly with any particular country or ideology. According to one observer of the Second Vatican Council, he tried to make a *modus vivendi* with Communism.⁴⁵ But how was this *modus vivendi* specifically achieved within the ecumenical movement and the calling of the Second Vatican Council?

It is no coincidence that at the same time preparations were beginning for the Council, there were also negotiations between the Vatican and the USSR to improve diplomatic relations. The calling of the Council emphasized the need for peace, justice, and social equality, which grabbed the attention of Khrushchev and the other leaders in Moscow.⁴⁶ In addition, in a radio address Pope John XXIII gave on September 11, 1962, he emphasized that all of man belonged to God and Christ, which was received by the CC CPSU (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) also with a heightened attention. A closed meeting was arranged between the Vatican and Moscow that allowed for an open dialogue between the two camps to begin.⁴⁷ On January 14, 1963, the CC CPSU sent a letter to the Italian ambassador to then be relayed to Italian Prime Minister A. Fanfani. The letter said the USSR was ready to begin talks with the Vatican. The document stated, “The Soviet government hopes that the Pope will appreciate this readiness on the part of the USSR as an act of good will aimed at the development of international cooperation representing the implementation of principles of peaceful co-existence.”⁴⁸ This led to a meeting on February 6, 1963, between Cardinal Bea

45 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.5, “Observer Report” by Professor George A. Linbeck, October 11, 1963.

46 Jonathan Luxmoore and Jolanta Babiuch, *The Vatican and The Red Flag: The Struggle for the Soul of Eastern Europe* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999) 113

47 Jurij E Karlov, “The Secret Diplomacy of Moscow and the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council” in A. Melloni, *Vatican II in Moscow*. 295

48 Quoted in Karlov, “The Secret Diplomacy”, 295

and Andrey Kozyrev, as the Soviet representative. The meeting was a failure due to Bea's insistence on securing religious freedoms for believers within the USSR. Despite its failure however, the dialogue between Rome and Moscow had been opened and would lead to further meetings in the future.

The Pope's policy of opening up towards the East can be especially seen in the invitation from the Vatican to the Russian Orthodox Church to send observers to the Council. Having the Russian Orthodox Church and Moscow accept the invitation was no small accomplishment and showed the Pope's deliberate will and placed him against the conservative cardinals. The WCC assembly meeting in New Delhi was the first occasion where the Catholic Church would discuss the possibility of the Russian Orthodox Church sending observers. There, Metropolitan Nicodemus told the Catholic observers at the conference that the reason why the Orthodox Church would not be sending any representatives is because the Russian Orthodox Church was loyal to their country, and the Vatican showed repeated hostility towards the USSR.

⁴⁹The political atmosphere surrounding the ecumenical council, in the eyes of the Russian Orthodox Church, prohibited them from participating. ⁵⁰In August of 1961, Cardinal Willebrands and Nikodim (who was the Patriarchate in Moscow and also responsible for the Russian Orthodox Church's involvement in foreign affairs) again discussed the possibility of the Russian Orthodox Church sending observers to the Vatican. ⁵¹The meeting then resulted in Willebrands traveling to Moscow in September and the sending of an official invitation on October 4th. ⁵²The invitation was accepted, but only after some coaxing from the Vatican. It was the reassurance from Cardinal Tisserant that the Council would not be political, and in

49 Giuseppe Alberigo, *History of Vatican II: Vol. I announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a new Era in Catholicism*. (Maryknoll: Orbis books, 1995) 404

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 325

52 Ibid.

addition Cardinal Willebrands' reassurance that the Council “will not speak out against one country” that prompted the Russian Orthodox Church and Moscow to accept.⁵³

But why would the Pope make these concessions? The threat of nuclear war was of course a motivation to improve relationships with the USSR, but the fact remained that there were some 12 million Catholic believers located in the USSR.⁵⁴ And the Pope's method of diplomacy was geared toward ensuring the well being of his flock. During his pontificate, Pope John XXIII managed to negotiate the release of Josyf Slipyj, the Archbishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, who had been incarcerated since 1945 by the Soviets. Under Pope John XXIII's Pontificate, and with the help of American journalist Norman Cousins, Slipyj was released on February 10, 1963.⁵⁵ The Pope had also sent his undersecretary of State Monsignor Agostino Casaroli on a diplomatic mission to Budapest to ensure the release of four bishops. In addition, the Pope John XXIII reached out to Msgr. Francesco Lardone, knowing that he had contacts with the Soviet ambassador in Ankara, who thus allowed for bishops to be sent to the council. Lardone continued this diplomatic mission further, and as a result some 35 Roman Catholic bishops from the other side of the iron curtain were allowed to attend.⁵⁶

By opening up the Vatican to Moscow diplomats, and by inviting Russian Orthodox Church observers to the Council, the Pope could negotiate his position better. By having greater contact with the USSR, the Vatican was able to explain its position to Moscow. Even if the dialogue between Moscow and Rome was not always pleasant, it nevertheless opened up the chance for negotiations. In a meeting between Metropolitan Nikodim and Cardinal Willebrands, Visser't Hooft commented that “my guess is, knowing how Mgr Willebrands feels about contact

53 Stjepan Schmidt, *Augustin Bea the Cardinal of Unity* (New York: New York Press, 1992) 361-362

54 Dennis Dunn, *The Catholic Church and Russia Popes, Patriarchs, Tsars and Commissars* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004) 133

55 Alexis Floridi, *Moscow and the Vatican*, (Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1986) 174.

56 Alberigo, *History of Vatican II*, 402-403.

with Moscow, that it has not been an easy meeting. For it is more than likely that the Pope has asked for better treatment of the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S.S.R.”⁵⁷

While the ecumenical council opened negotiations and a dialogue between Rome and Moscow, which in turn helped Pope John XXIII and the Vatican on their diplomatic missions, were there possibly other motives? In the WCC archives there exist three documents which suggest that the Vatican used the ecumenical movement to undermine Communism in the Soviet Union. The most telling document is a copy of a letter sent to Pope John XXII from Archbishop Iakovos, of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South America, dated November 6, 1959. In this letter Iakovos remarked on the Pope's recent visit to New York:

I shall never forget Your kindness, humanity, and the pious sincerity with which You voiced Your hopes for a world-wide Christian unity that would make a reality of the Kingdom of God on our strife-torn earth With the conviction that it is God's will for you to take a leading role in exhorting the Christians of the world to follow the road of unity and irinic harmony, and with my heartfelt hopes that your aspiration and endeavors for a world-wide concordance may materialize, not only for your venerable Church, but for universal Christianity, may I respectfully request you that, towards this end, you communicate, through the proper channels, with his Holiness Athenagoras I, the ecumenical Patriarch of Orthodoxy, whose constant thoughts and prayers, like your own, are for the fulfillment of universal Christian unity, by which the oppressors of freedom may best be overcome, and Christ's peace and charity may reign on earth.⁵⁸

A copy of the letter was sent to the WCC, with a note from Iakovos saying 'please keep in confidence and any note on your behalf would be appreciated.'⁵⁹ The letter is mostly filled with praise and platitudes towards the Pope, but the very end is the most telling line. It is clear that Iakovos worried about the Roman Catholic Church's ties with the Russian Orthodox Church when he requests that all correspondence should go through Constantinople. What is most pertinent, however, is when Iakovos writes that Patriarchate of Constantinople shares the views of the Pope, in that ecumenism is the best way in which “oppressors of freedom” can be

57 WCC Archives. Box 4201.2.6, folder 7. “Vatican-Orthodox Relationship” by Visser'tHooft. September 17, 1963.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

overcome. The oppressors of freedom is clearly a reference to the communist governments, and Iakovos' familiarity with the Pope's "thoughts and prayers" implies that Iakovos understood the Pope's position on the matter, especially since John XXIII had just made a visit to Iakovos in America.

In another document, a confidential letter Visser'tHooft sent to the WCC on January 6, 1963, we can see other political agendas of the Second Vatican Council. In this letter Visser'tHooft discussed a conversation with Cardinal Bea, in which Bea commented that "he felt that the presence of observers from the Moscow Patriarchate could have the effect of strengthening the position of the churches in Russia. 'We do not want to weaken, but to strengthen other churches' he said."⁶⁰ Cardinal Bea was referring to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, who had declined to participate in the Council, and the Moscow Patriarchate, who had accepted the Vatican's invitation. The presence of observers from Moscow and not from Constantinople gave legitimacy to the Russian Orthodox Church, which both the WCC and the Catholic Church were trying to avoid, since the Russian Orthodox Church had ties to the Soviet state. The strengthening of other Orthodox churches could undermine the effectiveness of the Russian Orthodox Church on an international level and thus diminish Moscow's appropriation of the church for state needs. It was a confusing game to play. They wanted the Russian Orthodox Church to enter into the ecumenical movement, in order to open up dialogue with them and the Soviet Union, but at the same time they wanted to undermine any legitimization the Russian Orthodox Church might bring to the Soviet Union.

60 WCC Archives Box 4201.3.5. "Confidential letter" from Visser'tHooft visit to Rome, January 6, 1963.

The Russian Orthodox Church in The Ecumenical Movement: Peaceful Co-existence and Ecumenical Fears:

It was Moscow's fear that the real reason that the Vatican called the Council was to provide a united front against Communism. Nikodim would state that by not sending Orthodox observers to the council this would inevitably play into the Vatican's secret agenda. He wrote in his essay, "Reflections on the Catholic Church," that the Russian Orthodox absence "will help our enemies to strengthen, to unite and to organize themselves, behind our back, into a united front against us." ⁶¹Visser'tHooft also had this impression, specifically on the Council's schema on *Unitas*. The schema was originally written in such a way that all Christians could unite together, but subsequent drafts of the schema's character transformed. The schema defined Catholics as members of the Church, while non-Catholics were simply "friends" of the church. This indicated that while there was a brotherhood among Catholics and non-Catholics, there could not be a true union. In regards to this change, Visser'tHooft noted: "it is almost as if the Vatican had been scared by its own courage. The intention was very clearly to organize a movement which would take a strong stand against Communism but to do this on a very wide front. The Vatican or at least the Roman Catholic Church would appear as the rallying point of all those who were afraid of the growing influence of Communism." ⁶²

It is clear that the Russian Orthodox Church was under the directives from the CC CPSU to enter into the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical movement served the purposes of the state's foreign policy agenda. The Russian Orthodox Church had been utilized by Moscow since the 1940's, but gained momentum in the mid 1950's. In 1943 the Council of

61 Quoted in Adriano Roccucci, "Russian Observers at Vatican II : The 'Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs' and the Moscow Patriarchate between Anti Religious Policy and International Strategies" in A. Melloni, *Vatican II in Moscow (1959-1965) Acts of the Colloquium on the History of Vatican II Moscow, March 30-April 2, 1995* (Leuven : Bibliotheek van de Faculteit Godgeleerdheid, 1997) 59.

62 WCC Archives. Box 4201.1, folder 5. "Notes on the relations with the Roman Catholic Church and in particular with 'Unitas' " by Visser'tHooft. March 22nd, 1946.

Russian Orthodox Church Affairs (CROCA) was established, and in 1944 the Council for Religious Cult Affairs (CRCA). The CC CPSU meddled in church affairs and controlled the Orthodox Church's involvement in foreign policy through these various departments and councils.

From 1945-1948, the Soviets used the Orthodox Church to control the newly acquired territories in Central and Eastern Europe; extending the influence of the church in these territories was another way of extending the influence of Moscow.⁶³ The Uniate Church in Ukraine was forced into the Russian Orthodox Church between the years, 1945-1948. In addition, under Soviet rule the Orthodox churches in Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, and Georgia were placed under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. Moscow had also tried to bring the diaspora into the fold, sending Metropolitan Nikolai of Krutic to London, Paris, and America in 1945; Metropolitan Alexis was also dispatched to the Middle East in hopes of situating the Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria under their influence.⁶⁴ Also, the Soviets attempted to erase certain radical churches, such as the Stundists, from the historical and public memory, as a way of controlling any appearance of dissidence within the religious life of the state.⁶⁵

Churches in the satellite countries also entered into the ecumenical movement in order to distance themselves from Russia.⁶⁶ For example, the Romanian Orthodox Church formed a friendship with Arthur Michael Ramsey of the Church of England. Ramsey was also a member of the Central Committee at the WCC. Consolidating the power of the Russian Orthodox

63 Pedro Ramet, *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988) 75.

64 Lucian Leustean, *Orthodoxy and the Cold War: Religion and Political Power in Romania, 1947-63* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2009) 14

65 See Sergei Zhuk, *Russia's lost Reformation: Peasants, Millennialism, and Radical Sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine 1830-1917* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004)

66 Lucian Leustean, *Orthodoxy and the Cold War*, 169

Church and forcing other Orthodox churches under its influence allowed Moscow to consolidate its power over the satellite countries. Similarly, when the Romanian Orthodox Church distanced themselves from the Russian Orthodox Church, it was a way to gain greater political independence.⁶⁷

The Russian Orthodox Church was also used in external affairs. Stalin started to re-think how the Orthodox Church should fit within foreign policy after World War II.⁶⁸ With the acquisition of nuclear weapons, the USSR decided that it needed to co-exist with the West and could no longer be strictly antagonistic.⁶⁹ The desire for peaceful co-existence was continued by Khrushchev as a foreign policy tactic.⁷⁰

The Orthodox Church played a crucial role in the dissemination of this co-existence theory. This can be seen in a speech that Archbishop Nikodim made in 1961. In this speech he said,

Christ our Savior, through the high prestige of our churches, should urge peoples and the Governments to seek the only effective means of averting the danger of world catastrophe – the most immediate solution of world conflicts through peaceful negotiations amongst the countries concerned. For this reason the Russian Orthodox church warmly recommends the present Conference to urge local orthodox churches to intensify as much as possible their peaceful efforts for the all-out struggle for international detente and a steady and just peace on earth. We must seek the peaceful removal of vestiges of the Second World War which continue to pollute the international atmosphere We must seek a situation in which international disputes should be exclusively solved through negotiation between organs of states and should not lead to the notorious Cold War.⁷¹

The Orthodox Church promoted peaceful efforts much like the Catholic Church; however, the only difference is the Russian Orthodox Church's messages of peace were under the directive of the state. It was not unknown to those outside of the Soviet Union that this directive was

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Roccucci, "Russian Observers at Vatican II, 50.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Karlov, "The Secret Diplomacy", 296.

⁷¹ WCC Archives. Box 4201.4.1, folder 5. "Statements by the head of the delegation of the Patriarchate of Moscow (Archbishop Nikodim) made at the plenary sessions", 1961.

being pushed upon the church. In a WCC delegation summary report dated in 1962, the report stated that “there is evidence both in discussion with the representatives of the State and with the representatives of the State Department for Orthodox Affairs with whom the group met, that pressure is being put upon the church in this matter of peace.”⁷²

The Russian Orthodox Church's involvement in the ecumenical councils was also encouraged by the CC CPSU to counteract the calling of the Vatican Council by Rome. It was feared that the real reason Vatican Council was called was to form a unilateral group against Communism. In a note addressed to the Assistant of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the President of CROCA wrote in regards to the calling of the Vatican Council:

The Anglo American reaction and the intelligence service widely make use of religious organizations for their own political aim. Now they are counting on the Vatican, on the World Council of Churches, to diminish denominational difference in order to form a single religious front against the USSR and the countries of the socialist area, against the movement of national liberation to excite religious psychosis to maintain its own power.⁷³

In addition to this belief, that the Council's main purpose was to fight Communism, Moscow also believed that the Ecumenical Patriarchate Athenagoras and the Catholic Church were the puppet of the USA.⁷⁴ And that the Vatican was trying to unite with Constantinople and the WCC in order to form a united front against Communism.⁷⁵

In order to respond to this threat, the Russian Orthodox Church was directed to enter into the ecumenical movement even further. The Deputy President of the CROCA, in August 1960, sent a report to CC of CPSU titled, “on the work of the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs of the Council of Ministers of USSR. Regarding the Concern of the Moscow Patriarchate and of Its Exponents on the Participation in the Peace Campaign and in Unmasking

72 WCC Archives. Box 42.3.125, Folder 2. Report, “Impressions of the visit of the delegation to Russia Orthodox Church” signed LEC, June, 1962.

73 Roccucci, “Russian Observers at Vatican II”, 51.

74 Ibid., 53

75 Ibid., 52

the Anti-soviet Propaganda, Carried out in Capitalistic Countries.” The report suggested sending a representative to the pan-Orthodox meeting in Rhodes. At the Rhodes meeting they hoped to organize the various Orthodox churches against the Catholic Church and squash any ambitions of the Vatican and the USA. In addition, the report suggested that the Russian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Church, and the Lutheran churches of Estonia and Latvia should join the WCC.⁷⁶ Russia's increased attention to the ecumenical movement did not go unnoticed. In Willebrands' journal entry dated August 21, 1960, Willebrands wrote: “the Russians strengthen and expand their contacts. This year there were 16 different persons at different ecumenical conferences.”⁷⁷

CROCA's directive for the Orthodox Church to enter into the WCC can clearly be seen in the WCC meeting notes dated November 4, 1960. In this meeting, Nikodim, Mr. Alexis Buevsky (Secretary of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate), and Reverend Francis House (Associate General Secretary of WCC), and Visser'tHooft were present. In this meeting Nikodim demands that the Orthodox Church “should become full members as soon as possible. It is true that for well known reasons the Russian Church had little contact with the ecumenical movement for the first fifty years, but the relationship has developed so well that there is no need to wait until 1963.”⁷⁸ Both Visser'tHooft and Francis House were somewhat reluctant and taken aback at this request; they told Nikodim that a greater observation time was needed. Nikodim then refuted the idea of a greater observation time, stating that they already participated as observers and that ultimately observation was useless.

Nikodim was emphatic that the time for the Orthodox Church to join the WCC would be

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

⁷⁷ Willebrands, *You Will Be Called Repairer of the Breach*, 210

⁷⁸ WCC Archives. Box 42.4.069, folder 1. “Notes of Conversation at the World Council Headquarters” interpreter Alexander de Weymarn. on November, 4, 1960.

at that moment; according to the notes, Nikodim commented: “I believe personally and as Head of the Department of Foreign Church Relations that the time has come now.”⁷⁹ Within the meeting notes one can see the push and pull between the Orthodox Church and the WCC. Nikodim's demands were stern, and his urgency comes across the pages with a sense of desperation. It was clear that Nikodim had direct orders from Moscow, and that he was trying to follow those orders. Furthermore, the WCC seemed to be cognizant that the Orthodox Church might be joining the WCC in response to the Second Vatican Council. When this question was brought to Nikodim, he responded by saying they were not interested in building up a front against the Vatican, and that the 'Roman church had to find its own way.’⁸⁰

In regard to sending observers to the Second Vatican Council, Nikodim himself advocated for sending representatives. Nikodim suggested this in his essay, “Reflection on the Catholic Church.” In this essay, he wrote that if representatives were not sent to the Council, it would strengthen the position of the Constantinople Patriarchate and damage the position of the Russian Orthodox Church, and that “the Orthodox lose nothing by sending their observers to the Council, just as they also lose nothing by participating in various inter-confessional church conferences.”⁸¹

In the ecumenical movement Moscow and Rome created a certain type of mirror effect with each other. Both camps were committed to peaceful negotiations, while at the same time they tried to consolidate their power by uniting with other churches. A Quaker observer at the Council commented on this parallel between Rome and Moscow in his report:

The Oriental Churches are the main target of unity, and while they are here especially the Russians, they have precedence in everything, even in being photographed, exactly

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2, folder 3. Report, by Archbishop Vitaly Bosovon. February 13th, 1963.

in the same way in which four weeks ago our African brother was treated in Moscow by the Orthodox church, by the way of anti-colonist propaganda. I cannot tell you how many parallels I find between Moscow and Rome!⁸²

Similarly, historian Andrea Riccardi describes Moscow and Rome as developing into two polarized symbols, representing two different spheres of the East and West.⁸³ The image of bridging the gap between East and West, between Rome and Moscow, and the commitment to peace and social justice created an important public image for both camps. It was the ecumenical movement that allowed for this image to disseminate into the international sphere, and be perpetuated into the political arena.

The WCC Fears and Competition with the Roman Catholic Church:

Rome and Moscow's similar use of the ecumenical movement for political reasons shows that the ecumenical movement and the political situation of the Cold War were intertwined. Similarly, if we looked at the fears and paranoia of the WCC in regard to the growing influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement, we can also see how the political situation and the ecumenical were closely linked. As previously noted in Chapter one, the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church had a working relationship, but in their cooperation there was also competition.

The competition between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church can be seen in the “Rhodes incident” of August, 1959. During the pan-Orthodox conference in Rhodes, a side

82 WCC Archives. Box 4201.3.2 Letter 1 and 2, “Delegated Observer of the Friends World Committee for Consultation to the 2nd Vatican Council” by Richard Ullman, Oct 1962.

83 An account of A. Riccardi's book *I Vaticano e Mosca*, is given in Roccucci's article, “Russian Observers at Vatican II”, 45

meeting formed between the Catholic and Orthodox attendees. The meeting included various members of the Orthodox community, including patriarchates, bishops, and theologians. The Catholic participants included Pere Dumount, Johannes Willebrands, Pere Wenger, Dom Strotmann, and Pere Villain. It is unclear if the Russian Orthodox members also attended this meeting, as their names are not mentioned, but a total of about 50 people were altogether present.⁸⁴ According to Willebrands' journal entry, what was discussed during the meeting was the desire for greater contact between the Orthodox and the Catholics, which included the exchange between students and theologians. Journalists were present during the meeting and reported the following day that the Orthodox Churches desired to break their relationship with the WCC and reunite with the Roman Catholic Church.⁸⁵ The American, British, and Greek press had, according to both WCC reports and Willebrand's journal entry, over-emphasized the political implications of the meeting.⁸⁶

The meeting, and the reporters' attendance, infuriated Visser'tHooft and endangered the Catholic-WCC relationship. It is unclear if the Roman Catholic Church had any real intentions to undermine the relationship between the WCC and the Orthodox churches, or if the WCC and the Press over-reacted to the meeting. Willebrands would defend the event in his journal and to Visser'tHooft by saying that this was just a dinner and not a formal meeting, "can't I accept an invitation to dinner? . . . The meeting after the meal surprised us all: we hadn't counted on so many participants."⁸⁷

What the Rhodes incident demonstrates is that the WCC feared the Roman Catholic

84 Willebrands, *"You Will Be Called Repairer of the Breach"*, 126

85 WCC Archives. Box 4201.2.6, folder 4. Letter from Visser'tHooft to Willebrands. September 21, 1959.

86 In the notes of a report for the Pan-Orthodox meeting in Rhodes, it states—"The reports in American, British, and Greek press appear to have greatly over-emphasized the political aspects of the meeting." in WCC Archives. Box 41.41.2, folder, 1. "Notes of Pan orthodox Conference in Rhodes", Report for Visser'tHooft. Willebrands also mentioned the over-emphasized political nature of the meeting with in the greek press in his journal entry dated August 22, 1959. In Willebrands, *"You Will Be Called Repairer of the Breach"*, 127.

87 Willebrands, *"You Will Be Called Repairer of the Breach"* 127

Church would usurp the ecumenical movement. Another example of this fear can be seen in a letter written to Visser'tHooft on October 18, 1963, from Nissiotis of the WCC. Nissiotis wrote, "I think Constantinople wants to take an initiative totally other than this of 'the observers' and Rome aspired to show a spectacular gesture towards the East and very probably to shake the Eastern churches from their close connection with the WCC Churches and their general ecumenical orientation towards the Protestant churches."⁹⁶ The letter was written while Nissiotis was an observer at the Council and was stamped with the word "strictly confidential." Nissiotis feared that the Orthodox Churches under the Patriarchate of Constantinople wished to have greater involvement in Roman Catholic ecumenism, and that rather than simply being "observers," Constantinople wanted to enter into a Roman Catholic ecumenism instead of the ecumenism of the WCC. The apprehension that the Catholic Church sought to bring all other churches back into its domain was common in the WCC observer reports of the Second Vatican Council. In addition, Catholic ecumenism was viewed as not putting other churches "on equal terms" with the Roman Catholic Church.⁸⁸

The fear of the Roman Catholic Church dominating the ecumenical movement in actuality was a fear of losing position in the political arena. The following memorandum found in the WCC archives shows the paranoia at its most extreme:

Many trusted friends of the United States and of western democracy in captive Czechoslovakia and other countries behind the Iron curtain are wondering what kind of a new Europe and what kind of a New World are waiting them if the democratic nations in their struggle to stop Communism are willing to make alliances with such questionable allies as France, Salazar, Tito, etc..... People in captive countries ask themselves with anxiety what the next totalitarian regime to which they will be subjected will be like when and if the soviet system is defeated. They fear that in case of a soviet defeat Central and Eastern Europe will be placed under the control of a clerico-fascist regime in which the Catholic Church and the vatican will be the dominant power. These fears are real, not only among protestants behind the iron curtain, but also among

⁸⁸ WCC Archives, Box 4201.2.6, folder 7. "Some Notes on the Relations of the Orthodox churches with the Roman Catholic Church" by Visser'tHooft. October 18, 1963

the intellectuals, liberals and industrial workers.⁸⁹

While this memorandum was found within the WCC archives, it is doubtful that the WCC really perceived that there was a threat of a new “clerico-facist” regime within Eastern Europe; however, what this document demonstrates is that there was a fear that the Catholic Church could maneuver themselves into the ecumenical movement and would shut out the Protestant churches. Ecumenism guaranteed a certain political position within the international arena. Ecumenism, along with the influence of the diaspora, was seen as either a way to extend a life line to, or to infiltrate into, the religious lives of people on the other side of the iron curtain

Observers' and Journalists' Role of Observation:

The presence of observers was an important component of the Second Vatican Council and the WCC ecumenical assemblies. As already mentioned, these ecumenical councils helped to further diplomatic ties between the Soviet Union and the West. But this open dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church, the WCC, and the Roman Catholic Church also meant that there was an explicit “observation” of the other side. The presence of observers within the Council and assemblies, of course, not only opened up dialogue between Moscow and Rome, but also allowed for acts of surveillance and espionage. Both sides were no strangers to gathering intelligence, the Vatican worked closely with U.S. intelligence in Yugoslavia during the mid to late 1940's, appointing American Catholic bishops to various diplomatic posts in order to foster this relationship.⁹⁰ Similarly the Orthodox Church was also involved in gathering and reporting

89 WCC Archives. Box 4201.1.1, folder 5. “Memorandum on Catholics striving for a Catholic Central Europe” February, 1952.

90 Charles Gallagher, “The United States and the Vatican in Yugoslavia, 1945-50” in *Religion and The Cold War* edited by Dianne Kirby (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

information to the KGB.⁹¹ The presence of an open dialogue went in tandem with the existence of gathering information, or “observing.”

The gathering of information was one reason why the WCC wanted the Orthodox Church to join the organization in the early 1960's. In a retrospective report written on January 7, 1975, Lukas Vischer, a theologian working in the WCC and a WCC representative during the Second Vatican Council, wrote on why the WCC decided to extend membership to the Orthodox Church. He states,

The historical situation has obviously evolved since 1961. At that time the situation in the USSR was still relatively unknown. The main concern was to discern the situation of Christians in the USSR after so many years of almost complete isolation. Today there is increasing information coming from the USSR directly . . . For the WCC a major concern was therefore to overcome the total lack of communication. Open criticism of the religious situation in the USSR would inevitably have served unproductive anti communist attitudes – even if it may have led to a lack of solidarity with those who went through very real sufferings, especially in the years 1961-64. But do these considerations still hold today?⁹²

Being a retrospective, the mentality and rationale for why the WCC wanted the Russian Orthodox Church to join could have of course changed. To a certain extent Visser'tHooft was trying to build the WCC into a large organization, and the entrance of the Orthodox Church into the WCC is explained by historian John Arnold, as a deliberate political maneuvering to achieve such aims.⁹³ But looking through the WCC archives it does seem that after the Russian Orthodox Church entered into the organization there were more detailed reports on the religious situation in the USSR, and there is more specific information on the Russian Orthodox Church. In one such report, a list was made with the names of the church leaders and administrators.

91 John, Koehler states that during the 2nd Vatican Council a Polish Bishop was sending reports back to the KGB in, *Spies In The Vatican*, (New York: Pegasus Books, 2009) 10-11.

92 WCC Archives, Box 994.3.50, folder 2. Summary of Discussion, “WCC Relations to the Churches in Eastern Europe” by Lukas Vischer. January 7th, 1975.

93 John Arnold “Cold War, Dissidence and the Ecumenical Movement” in *Christian World Community and The Cold War International Research Conference in Bratislava on 5-8 September 2011*. edited by Julius Filo (Bratislava: Evangelical Theological Faculty, 2012) 154

Next to the names, detailed notes are given: notes such as, “good man, no languages,” “was good student, reasons for his promotion unknown,” “good, intelligent, to be used, several languages.” For Archpriest Sokolovsky, the notes state, “be very careful,” under Archbishop Nikodim, the note says, “practical, pragmatic man.”⁹⁴ The presence of observers and visitors to the USSR provided more information for the WCC and the Vatican about the USSR, and in return it provided Moscow with more information about the Vatican and the WCC.

While the Russian observers and participants had to adhere to the wishes of the state, they, nevertheless, had their own agenda. They were religious men, and had a religious loyalty, as well as the one imposed upon them by Moscow. Nikodim's specific purpose in the ecumenical movement was twofold; he was both ambitious and tactical, and he understood that if the Russian Orthodox Church could be used in foreign affairs, then it would solidify the Church's power within Russia and possibly prevent further religious oppression.⁹⁵ While observers were being sent to the Council, and while there were open negotiations between Khrushchev and the Vatican, there was also a new wave of religious persecution in Russia.⁹⁶ According to historian John Arnold, the environment of the Orthodox Church leaders in the ecumenical movement can be characterized in the following way: “for many in the West, participation in the ecumenical movement may have been an optional extra. As for the leaders of churches in Latin Europe, so for those in Eastern Europe, it was a lifeline and oxygen supply combined and the only means of engaging in public issues other than simply supporting the peace policies of the communist party of the Soviet Union.”⁹⁷ In order to survive, churches in

94 WCC Archives. Box 994.3.50, folder 2. Untitled Report.

95 Roccucci. “Russian Observers at Vatican II”, 57

96 Ibid., 55.

97 Arnold, “Cold War, Dissidence and the Ecumenical Movement”, 156.

the Soviet Union either cooperated with the state or had to move underground.⁹⁸ It is difficult to say what the exact relationship between the church and the state was, or how Nikodim or other Orthodox leaders balanced the pull between their loyalty to the state and their religion.

There existed divided loyalties in the ecumenical movement; for example, during the second session of the Council, the Orthodox churches, including the Russian Orthodox Church, wanted to abstain from sending observers and instead ask for a “general dialogue.”⁹⁹ Given that the request for a general dialogue came from Archbishop Iakovos, who many within Moscow dubbed the puppet of America, meant that Nikodim and the Russian Orthodox Church were showing their alignment towards *orthodoxy* by being in agreement with Iakovos and the ecumenical Patriarchate. The division between one's religious alliance and one's loyalty to the state is hard to clearly define, especially in Nikodim's case. While there were some members of the Russian Orthodox Church who were simply state men, historian Lucian Leustean notes that we should make a distinction between these men and men who were trying to exist within the system.¹⁰⁰

The presence of informants within the Second Vatican Council and the WCC assemblies was not unknown to either body and can be seen in the recorded silence during a session at the Council. An observer at the council wrote,

In today's session especially a Chinese and an Argentine bishop have strongly pleaded that the Council should condemn Communism. Here the Council will probably face one of its highly sensitive political problems. I assume these bishops have many supporters. On the other hand, we should not forget the presence of bishops from the countries behind the iron curtain. One of them has addressed himself to the problem in a very

⁹⁸ Lucian Leustean, *Eastern Christianity and The Cold War*, (London: Routledge, 2010) 1

⁹⁹ Visser'tHooft notes in a report, labeled as “personal and Confidential” that he received a phone call from Archbishop Iakovos who, “informed me that he had a telegram from the Ecumenical Patriarch urging that the World Council and the confessional bodies (Canterbury was specially mentioned) should decide not to send observers to the second session of the Vatican Council and instead ask for a general dialogue.” in WCC Archives. Box 4201.2.6, folder 7. Visser'tHooft, Report “Vatican-Orthodox relationship”. September 17, 1963.

¹⁰⁰ Leustean, *Eastern Christianity and the Cold War*, 7

cautious way, making the council aware of the importance of any expression of opinion on this matter.¹⁰¹

The recording of caution, amongst the bishop from the other side of the curtain, indicates that what was said at the meeting could have repercussions. Similarly, “nervousness” was recorded.

A WCC report dated in June, 1962, states that,

The church leaders are in a high state of nervousness. This becomes apparent especially when such subjects as religious liberty, Prague, and the exchange of personnel are under discussion. The one occasion when the group who are represented on the Central Committee and on Divisional and Departmental Committees of the WCC approached panic was in the several hours of discussion we had with them on the question of Prague, and at this point Archbishop Nikodim himself evidently became unsure of himself.”¹⁰²

While it seems that the WCC was conscious of Moscow's agenda, and even when they received reports that leading churchmen in the Orthodox Church were accused of being solely under state control, Visser'tHooft believed that these men while cooperating with the state were also trying to foster ecumenicism and promote religiosity within their country despite the influence of the state. This mentality can be seen in Visser'tHooft's reactionary notes to a report from a Lutheran visitor to Russia. In this report the Lutheran visitor gave a detailed account of who in the Orthodox Church was a state collaborator. Visser'tHooft commented that while many of the state's interferences within the church were probably true, he did not believe that the Orthodox churchmen were totally puppets of the state. Visser'tHooft's reasoning was that he had known and interacted with these men in conferences. In Visser'tHooft's notes he writes that “Kruger was as favorably impressed by Borig Odessa's character and achievement as were other

101 WCC Archives. Box 43.10.64. Report No. 5, “Concerning the Second Vatican Council: by Dr. Vajta, October 31st 1962

102 WCC Archives. Box 42.4.070, folder 4. Report, “Impressions of the visit of the delegation to Russia Orthodox Church” by L.E.C. June 14th, 1962

visitors.”¹⁰³ It would seem that Moscow's intentions worked in a certain respect; their agenda was filtered through the Russian Orthodox Church, which in turn made it easier for the Vatican and the WCC to accept without a pessimistic suspicion.

The press also played an important role in how the USSR and the Roman Catholic Church were received and perceived in the West and in the East. Newspaper reports had the power to simplify, to politicize, de-politicize, and to perpetuate certain ideology. Anatolij Krassikov, a Soviet journalist at the time of the Second Vatican Council, recounts his story and the role of the journalist in his article, “The Second Vatican Council in the Context of Relations between the USSR and the Holy See.” In his article he says that the Vatican Council changed drastically how people within the Soviet Union saw the Catholic Church. TASS, which was the Soviet Government agency responsible for the media and was under the jurisdiction of the CC CPSU, was in charge of reporting on the Council events, which were then translated and reprinted in the Italian newspapers.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the Italian reports were also translated into Russian newspapers. For example, the encyclical letter, *Pacem in terris*, was translated in its entirety in the Russian newspaper in Moscow Zarubezhom.¹⁰⁵ Krassikov writes that before the Council the KGB censored and packaged all information that was sent to the CC CPSU, but during the council the information came directly from the newspaper reports themselves.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the peaceful message of *Pacem in terris* could be read within Russia and by the communist party, without any anti-Catholic propaganda being attached. The result of this was that the “hawks” within the KGB and the CC CPSU were neutralized to a certain extent, since

103WCC Archives.Box 42.4.070, folder, 4.Memorandum, “From a recent visitor to the USSR” and Visser’tHooft notes. June 6th 1961.

104Krassikov, “The Second Vatican Council”, 314.

105 Ibid., 327.

106 Ibid., 329.

information was no longer filtered through the KGB's influence.¹⁰⁷

While Krassikov writes about how the press helped promote a good relationship between Moscow and Rome, the press could also escalate tensions. For example, as we can see in the Rhodes incident, the press played an important role in the drama that ensued between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church. It was how the press portrayed the meeting between the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox that angered Visser'tHooft, and the WCC became increasingly concerned with how the press portrayed the image of an Orthodox-Catholic alliance. Reuters reported that the Roman Catholic Church was seeking a reunion with the Orthodox churches and also reported that Dumount said he was authorized to negotiate this “return” of the Orthodox churches.¹⁰⁸ Visser'tHooft even requested a correction by the Vatican. In a response to a letter from Willebrands to Visser'tHooft, Visser'tHooft writes,

Many thanks for your letter of September 17. I note that your answer is a provisional one and that you have yet to discuss the matter with some of your colleagues and also to complete your inquiry. What you write is of the greatest importance, very especially 1) that the Catholic commission for a meeting in Venice has never existed 2) that the broadcast of the Radio Vatican is disavowed by all Roman authorities. The real question is now whether these two points will be made fully clear in the Roman Catholic and secular press. I feel that this is extremely urgent. When will we be able to publish the two points mentioned above? For the story of Radio Vatican together with the story of Father Wenger in *La Croix* have had the widest possible circulation. The KIPA agency has sent them all over the world. And it is the Roman Catholic press.¹⁰⁹

The press became an issue in the Rhodes incident because it politicized an event that for all extensive purposes was relatively trivial. The press in both the West and the East had the power to transcribe, add, defuse, or morph the political rhetoric of the Cold War. Within the WCC archives, most of the observer reports included a section on the press reactions indicating that they had probably received instructions to record what the press reactions were. Also within the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 327.

¹⁰⁸ WCC Archives. Box 4201.2.6, folder 4. Letter from Visser't Hooft to Willebrands. September, 21th, 1959

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

WCC archives are a collection of newspaper and press clippings, indicating that the reaction to a said event via the press impacted how the WCC wanted the ecumenical movement to move, or not to move, in a certain way. The press played an important role in the ecumenical movement, in not only fostering the good will between the USSR and the Roman Catholic Church, but also in its ability to infuse a political language into the religious one. Thus, the moral language of a Church was allowed to speak in a political manner, via the press, without the churches explicitly stating a political message.

Through the press and through the attendance of the observers, an open dialogue flourished, but at the same time the press had the capability to politicize or depoliticize an event. Anatolij Krassikov, a Soviet journalist, stated that during the Second Vatican Council the press helped quell the “hawks” within the CC CPSU. The press involvement in the Rhodes incident, however, showed how the press politicized an event and caused tension. The Rhodes incident also demonstrated there existed competition between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, implying that one's involvement in the ecumenical movement guaranteed a certain position in international affairs. Involvement in the ecumenical movement meant that observers were sent to and from countries behind the iron curtain. This allowed for more dialogue between the East and West, but at the same time allowed for surveillance to occur. Ultimately, what the ecumenical movement was during the Cold War was two-fold. It was a movement that promoted peace and an open dialogue, but Rome and Moscow also used it to undermine the other side.

Epilogue:

As stated in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the ecumenical movement facilitated change within the Roman Catholic Church. It initiated negotiations between the Vatican and Moscow, but also created a cultural shift within the Catholic Church. It was the Second Vatican Council that facilitated this change in Catholic culture. In the epilogue I will look at the content of the Council, the encyclicals and decrees that radically changed the outlook of the Catholic Church. These encyclicals and decrees promoted peace, human rights, social justice, and religious freedoms. It also decentralized the church, opened the church to the “separated brethren,” and promoted acceptance of non-Christians.

Nostra Aetate, The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions, promulgated on October 28, 1965, reevaluated the relationship of Catholicism to other non-Christians.¹¹⁰ The decree emphasized the commonality between all people and highlighted the common origins between Judaism and Catholicism. It denounced anti-Semitism and stated that the Jews were not responsible for the crucifixion of Christ.

Pacem in terris promulgated on April 11, 1963, is one of the few encyclicals of the Council published while Pope John XXIII was still alive. The encyclical addressed itself to “men of good will,” thus engaging with both a Catholic and a non-Catholic audience.¹¹¹ The encyclical stated that while there is unity and order in the universe, there is a disunity among men. The main focus of *Pacem in terris* was peace. Written after the Cuban missile crisis, one of the encyclical's main contributors, Monsignor Pietro Pavan, stated he was influenced by Pope John XXIII's mediation of the crisis.¹¹² The encyclical addressed the arms race specifically as an obstacle to peace. It stated that stockpiling weapons had people living in

¹¹⁰ Alberigo, *A brief History*, 86.

¹¹¹ Elisa A. Carrillo, “The Italian Catholic Church and Communism, 1943-1963” *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Oct., 1991): 656. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2502363> (accessed May 2013)

¹¹² Eric Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 13

constant fear, and while “it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance.”¹¹³ Because of this threat of destruction, the encyclical called for the banning of nuclear weapons and for disarmament.

In addition to promoting peace, *Pacem in terris* also asserted the right of free consciousness, freedom of religion (the ability to worship in public and private), and insisted that each man is endowed with human dignity.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, human dignity is a given right: “Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services.”¹¹⁵ By stating that human dignity was a right, *Pacem in terris* promoted social justice. Private property was also seen as a right, but at the same time the encyclical also stated that “it is opportune to point out that the right to own private property entails a social obligation as well.” Since *Pacem in terris* addressed a social and economic obligation to the poor, the press viewed the document as an acceptance of Communism.¹¹⁶ The fourth section of *Pacem in terris* promoted the safeguarding of human rights, and the creation of a global order, through the United Nations.¹¹⁷ The encyclical states, “may the day be not long delayed when every human being can find in this organization [the United Nations] an effective safeguard of his personal rights, those rights, that is, which derive directly from his

113 Pope John XIII, *Pacem in Terris*, “Encyclical of Pope John XXIII On Establishing Universal Peace in truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty” (April 11, 1963)”
http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jxxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html(
 accessed November 2012)

114 Coppa, *Politics and the Modern Papacy*, 219

115 Pope John XIII, *Pacem in Terris*,

116 Elisa A. Carrillo, “The Italian Catholic Church and Communism, 656

117 Hanson, *The Catholic Church*, 351

dignity as a human person, and which are therefore universal, inviolable and inalienable.”¹¹⁸

On November 21, 1964, the Decree on Ecumenism, *UnitatisRedintegratio*, was promulgated. In this decree while the Catholic Church maintained that unity could only be achieved through *the* church, i.e., the Catholic Church, it stressed the important contributions of non-Catholics in this quest for unity. Within this decree, the Catholic Church no longer looked upon different Christian denominations as heretics, but instead recognized that there exists different truths and different beliefs.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, it recognized the validity of these truths and beliefs.¹²⁰ *UnitatisRedintegratio* also stated that in order to understand these various truths and beliefs, ecumenical assemblies were necessary:

At these meetings, which are organized in a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his Communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features. In such dialogue, everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both Communions . . . When such actions are undertaken prudently and patiently by the Catholic faithful, with the attentive guidance of their bishops, they promote justice and truth, concord and collaboration, as well as the spirit of brotherly love and unity.¹²¹

These ecumenical meetings created an understanding of the separated brethren. Similarly, the decree called for a greater study of the separated brethren in order that unity could one day be achieved. There was a need to acquire a “more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background.”¹²²

UnitatisRedintegratio also emphasized that the renewal of the church and the movement towards the ecumenical were interrelated. Chapter II of the Decree states that “every

118 Pope John XIII, *Pacem in Terris*.

119 Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006)86

¹²⁰ Murphy, “Vatican Politics,” 558

121 *UnitatisRedintegratio*, “Decree on Ecumenism”.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (accessed May 2012)

122 Ibid.

renewal of the Church is essentially grounded in an increase of fidelity to her own calling. Undoubtedly this is the basis of the movement toward unity . . . Church renewal has therefore notable ecumenical importance. Already in various spheres of the Church's life, this renewal is taking place.”¹²³ This renewal of the church is also described within the decree as a change of heart, an understanding of past mistakes.

Lumen Gentium, meaning the “light of nations”, was published on November 21 of 1964.¹²⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, according to sociologist Jose Casanova, was one of the main decrees of the Second Vatican Council and changed the church's identity drastically.¹²⁵ Casanova writes that “*Lumen Gentium* and *Christus Dominus* is the very redefinition of just who constitutes the relevant collective actors with the authority to define the collective self identity of the church.”¹²⁶ The decree states, “The individual bishops, however, are the visible principle and foundation of unity in their particular churches (Rom. 11:13-26), fashioned after the model of the universal Church, in and from which church comes into being the one and only Catholic Church (Mt. 21:33-43; cf. Is. 5:1 ff).”¹²⁷ Defining the church as “the people of god”.¹²⁸ *Lumen Gentium* emphasized collegiality and the power of the local bishops in promoting both the local and universal church. *Lumen Gentium* also recognized that the church had erred in the past, and thus the authority of the church could not be placed within the hands of the priesthood alone.

¹²⁹ This document also stressed that the church did not belong to one culture or one

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II*, 33

¹²⁵ Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994)72

¹²⁶ Ibid., 73

¹²⁷Pope Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium*, “Dogmatic Constitution on The Church”, November 21, 1964

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed December 2012)

¹²⁸Casanova, 73.

¹²⁹Luxmoore, *The Vatican and the Red Flag*, 121

political body.¹³⁰

Promulgated on December 7, 1965, *DignatatisHumanae* was the declaration on religious freedom. *DignatatisHumanae* again emphasized that man is born with dignity, but also that all men have a freedom of consciousness. The declaration states, “On his part, man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and purpose of life.”¹³¹ Not only was there a freedom on consciousness for each man, but this document also stated there was a freedom of consciousness on the communal level as well.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Pope Paul VI, *DignatatisHumanae*, “Declaration on Religious Freedom, On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious.” December 7, 1965.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html (accessed December 2012)

¹³² Alberigo, *A Brief History*, 110

Conclusion:

In my thesis I have examined how the ecumenical movement and the political situation of the Cold War were interrelated. I situated my thesis within two layers: how the ecumenical culture fostered a renewal within the Roman Catholic Church (which led to opening up negotiations with the USSR), and, at the same time, how the ecumenical movement was used to either undermine or secure a position in the international arena.

The presence of observers at the ecumenical councils created a dialogue between churchmen from the USSR and the West, but at the same time invited acts of espionage. The presence of the press similarly could either facilitate better relations between Rome and Moscow, or the press could politicize an event and escalate tensions as shown by the Rhodes incident. The presence of the press and observers allowed for the political to infiltrate into these religious meetings.

The party leaders in Moscow used the ecumenical movement to disseminate their foreign agenda. The Russian Orthodox Church had directives from the CC CPSU (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) to enter into the ecumenical movement. This was not unknown to the WCC nor the Roman Catholic Church. They were aware of the state's involvement in the Russian Orthodox Church, but they, nevertheless, chose to incorporate the Russian Orthodox Church into their respective ecumenical councils. Opening up contact with the Russian Orthodox Church allowed the Roman Catholic Church to enter into new negotiations with the USSR, the result of which were clear diplomatic gains by the Catholic Church, including securing the release of Archbishop JosyfSlipyj. Both Moscow and Rome used the ecumenical movement to open up negotiations with the other side, to send a

message of a peaceful existence and at the same time to undermine the position of the other side. The Roman Catholic Church sought to strengthen the presence of other churches in the USSR in order to undermine the communist regime. Similarly, the Russian Orthodox Church strengthened its ecumenical ties with the WCC and the other Orthodox churches to counteract the Vatican's "united front" against the USSR.

What my thesis ultimately showed is that the USSR and the Roman Catholic Church used the ecumenical movement as a political tool. However, the ecumenical movement also fostered a cultural change within the Roman Catholic Church. I traced this cultural shift to the Catholic progressives and their relationship with the WCC. But it was the Second Vatican Council and Pope John XXIII's policy of *aggiornamento* that facilitated the church's change in identity. The church opened itself up to the modern world and to other faiths and thus shook off pieces of its specific Catholic character. This would be the defining element of Roman Catholic ecumenism--the simultaneous change in the Roman Catholic identity and its change towards the external world. This Roman Catholic ecumenicism led to the strengthening of the Catholic Church as a transnational actor, which, under Pope John Paul II, made the church more successful in fighting communism.

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