

# **The Popes and the Cold War: Examining encyclical evidence and the evolution of their Ostpolitik, 1945–1990**

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# The Popes and the Cold War: Examining Encyclical Evidence and the Evolution of their *Ostpolitik*, 1945–1990

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## Abstract

*This discussion identifies the changing nature of the Vatican's ostpolitik—its attempt to assuage tension between the Roman Catholic Church and the governments of the USSR and its satellites in Eastern Europe—by sampling how these approaches were articulated within the discourse of particular encyclicals promulgated during pontificates from the onset of the Cold War through to its conclusion. It is divided into four short sections, one allotted to each pope, starting mid-way through the pontificate of Pope Pius XII (1939–1958) in 1945, and ending in the midst of Pope John Paul II's (1978–2005) in 1990. Encyclical evidence provides an effective and accessible primary-source window into understanding the contemporary Vatican's intellectual history vis-à-vis its position on the Cold War.*

The earliest statement on the Vatican's position on Communism can be traced back to the condemnation made by Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) in *Qui Pluribus* (1846).<sup>1</sup> Only two years later, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published their infamous manifesto, leading to a firmer anathema in the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864).<sup>2</sup> Yet, despite

these efforts, no other text did as much to shape the course of history in the second millennium. Indeed, its influence on the development of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) led Pope Pius XI (1922–1939) to state in *Divini Redemptoris* (1937):

Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever.

He also said:

Those who permit themselves to be deceived into lending their aid towards the triumph of Communism in their own country will be the first to fall victim of their terror.<sup>3</sup>

Given the broad *lacunae* in the literature, there is a wonderful opportunity for an industrious scholar to situate the history of the Vatican's position on Communism in relation (or in opposition) to developments in Marxism from 1848 to 1917, Marxism-Leninism from 1917 to 1928, and Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism from 1928 to 1945.<sup>4</sup> Such an effort

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absolutely contrary to the natural law itself, and if once adopted would utterly destroy the rights, property, and possessions of all men, and even society itself." Quoted in *Divini Redemptoris*, "Attitudes of the Church Towards Communism," article 4.

<sup>3</sup> These excerpts from *Divini Redemptoris* are found in Thomas J. Craughwell (ed), *The Wisdom of the Popes* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 226.

<sup>4</sup> In the first section of his monograph, "The Church and the Challenge of Communism," Peter C. Kent offers a brief, though excellent, treatment of this variety. See Peter C. Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII: The Roman Catholic Church and the Division of Europe, 1943–1950* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2002), 11–18. Moreover, there are exciting opportunities here, I believe, particularly within a historical institutionalism paradigm, which experienced renewed interest in 1990s among political economists and political scientists. For a good overview of historical institutionalism's precepts see Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative politics," in Kathleen Thelen et al. *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–32.

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<sup>1</sup> Used as foundational to its argument, this text is cited in *Divini Redemptoris*, "Attitudes of the Church Towards Communism," article 4.

<sup>2</sup> See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin Classics, 1985 edition). In the *Syllabus of Errors*, which identified contemporary errors in the nineteenth century and was in effect until a pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), was adopted during Vatican II, Pope Pius IX wrote: "that infamous doctrine of so called Communism which is

would offer much to other analyses on how the Vatican's *ostpolitik*—its attempt to assuage tension between the Catholic Church and the governments of the USSR and its satellites in Eastern Europe—was culturally, intellectually, and politically constructed during the Cold War<sup>5</sup>

The task at hand is a far more humble project. In order to provide meaningful background for such an endeavour, this discussion limits itself to identifying the changing nature of *ostpolitik* and sampling how these approaches were articulated within the discourse of particular encyclicals promulgated during pontificates from the onset of the Cold War through to its conclusion. It is divided into four short sections, one allotted to each pope, starting mid-way through the pontificate of Pope Pius XII in 1945, and ending in the midst of Pope John Paul II's term (1978–2005) in 1990.<sup>6</sup> Ostensibly, this approach requires more focus on select primary documents and less reliance on secondary material; however, it does provide an important means of understanding the contemporary Vatican's intellectual history *vis-à-vis* its position on the Cold War. Because these are currents that have run through topics studied to date, it is intended to culminate the author's initial attempt to address the contemporary history of the Vatican, its popes, and their pontificates.

## I. Pope Pius XII: 1945–1958

As Peter C. Kent adroitly points out in *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, the central interpretative issue on Pope Pius XII's role in the Cold War is whether or not he had an active political agenda during its onset.<sup>7</sup> While concurring that Pope Pius did have a political agenda, the author moves the debate beyond a simple active/inactive dichotomy and argues these policies often ran contrary to any single “great” power.

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<sup>5</sup> This definition is taken from an article from Dennis J. Dunn published in the midst of the Cold War. See Dennis J. Dunn, “The Vatican's *Ostpolitik*: Past and Present,” *Journal of International Affairs* volume 36, number 2 (Fall/Winter 1982/83), 247.

<sup>6</sup> Given his short tenure, Pope John Paul I (1978) has been reverentially omitted from this discussion.

<sup>7</sup> Given the economy of time and space, this historiographical question needs to be left aside particularly since it has been dealt with in the introduction of the monograph cited above. See Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, 8.

The Holy Father worked for compromise amidst demands for unconditional surrender.<sup>8</sup> Kent writes:

Although he relished the opportunity to fashion his discourses on spiritual principle, when it came to judging the behaviour of people and nations, Pacelli had a difficult time resolving the many perspectives bearing on particular questions.<sup>9</sup>

This insight bears directly on an attempt to define Pope Pius XII's *ostpolitik* and raises three interrelated questions: first, was there a programmatic break from early papal thought, or was there broad continuity situated in a new global paradigm? Second, did he deal with Communism as an abstraction, or did Pius XII react to its practical implications in Eastern Europe and the USSR? And finally, did political considerations operate independently of doctrinal concerns? Answers to how these questions are “played-out” ought to be interpreted initially, and importantly, in light of the Holy Office decree signed by Pope Pius XII on 30 June 1949 and released two weeks later on 14 July 1949. It not only excommunicated Communists ascribing to materialist doctrines, but also individuals working to install Communist regimes.<sup>10</sup> While Pope Pius XII did perceive a much greater political threat from Communism than had his predecessors, one ought to understand this concern in terms of its doctrinal implications—including its inherent atheism, suppression of religious freedoms, and other forms of religious persecution—rendering the former contingent on the latter.<sup>11</sup>

Towards this end, Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical titled *Humani Generis* (1950) in the Holy Year, which dealt efficiently with doctrinal matters pertaining to evolution, new trends in philosophy, such as developments in existentialist thought, and, in several instances, Communism. Here he wrote:

Communists gladly subscribe to this opinion so that, when the souls of men have been deprived of every idea of a personal God, they may the more efficaciously defend and propagate their dialectical materialism.<sup>12</sup>

Pope Pius XII went on to say:

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII: Shepherd of the Modern World* (London: Collins, 1985), 225–226; Kent, *The Lonely Cold War of Pope Pius XII*, 255–256.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>12</sup> *Humani Generis*, article 5.

No Catholic can doubt how false this is, especially where there is question of those fictitious theories they call... idealism or materialism, whether historic or dialectic, or even existentialism, whether atheistic or simply the type that denies the validity of the reason in the field of metaphysics.<sup>13</sup>

Although Peter Hebblethwaite questions whether or not it was a “theological bombshell,” it was arguably another twentieth-century *Syllabus of Errors* (1864) like Saint Pius X’s *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907).<sup>14</sup> However even later encyclicals like *Laetamur Admodum* (1956), written for Hungary and Poland, and *Ad Apostolorum Principis* (1958) directed at China, which contained austere political messages, were rooted in doctrinal concerns. Clearly this characterization was true for *Humani Generis*, which was based on fears over new developments in theology and its influence on church teachings, perhaps directed at the French Church and its priest-workers, and directly took issue with the political reality of Communism and its affect on the church throughout the world.<sup>15</sup>

## II. Blessed John XXIII: 1958–1963

An important historical issue in determining the nature of his *ostpolitik*, though not widely discussed in the secondary literature, is the moment when Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) broke from papal tradition and curial influence by articulating his own vision for relations with the Communist bloc. Clearly, this approach does not come in the first half of his short pontificate. Even when Pope John announced there would be a Council—in a speech at St. Paul’s Cathedral on 25 January 1959—he spoke in language that disparaged Communism.<sup>16</sup> His first encyclical, *Ad Petri Cathedram* (1959), probably written for Pope Pius XII, reinforced this point.<sup>17</sup> Whereas his

predecessors denounced the system of governance on doctrinal grounds—the Curia continued this practice during “Good” Pope John’s pontificate—it was not until he issued *Mater et Magistra* (1960) that his *ostpolitik* may be understood in a pastoral capacity.<sup>18</sup> Redefining the church’s traditional position on Communism and Socialism, he spoke to all men of good will and re-established diplomatic ties with Moscow.<sup>19</sup> This new approach is emphasized by the language used in the preparatory Council documents: “fear of Soviet power,” “hatred of Communism,” “the iron curtain,” and “the Church of silence” were all terms the Holy Father wished to avoid.<sup>20</sup> While the effectiveness of any given *ostpolitik* is a separate issue, Pope John’s approach began to pay dividends as a number of bishops from Eastern Europe, Karol Wojtyla from Krakow among them, arrived for the opening of the Council in October 1962.<sup>21</sup> Only days later, Pope John, due largely to his pastoral approach to the Cold War, helped avert a nuclear holocaust as the United States and Soviet Union faced off in the Cuban Missile Crisis.<sup>22</sup>

Encapsulating his *ostpolitik*, and perhaps reflective of contemplative introspection on these events, Pope John XXIII issued *Pacem in Terris* (1963) that became one of the most important encyclicals in papal history. Appealing not only to Church brethren, but the whole of humankind, Pope John covered a range of issues in his final encyclical including economic and political rights, disarmament, and the United Nations (UN). Here he transcended anathemas directed at either superpower and instead articulated a pastoral vision for the entire human community. Offering a message applicable to both the occupation of the Eastern bloc as well as the neo-colonialism perpetuated by the West, he cited “characteristics of the present day,” saying

No one wants to feel subject to political powers located outside his own country or ethnic group. Thus in very many human beings the inferiority complex which endured for hundreds and thousands of years is disappearing, while in others there is an

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., article 32.

<sup>14</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII*, 228; Peter Hebblethwaite, *Pope Paul VI: the First Modern Pope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 235.

<sup>15</sup> While this discussion does not deal with this issue extensively, see Pope Pius’ disapproval of priest-workers in Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII*, 228.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 320-321.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, an article entitled *Punti Fermi* in *L’Osservatore Romano* on 18 May 1960. Though unsigned, but it was likely written by Cardinal Ottaviani, Cardinal Siri, and Cardinal Tardini. See Ibid, 358.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 393-394.

<sup>20</sup> Hansjakob Stehle, *Politics of the Vatican 1917–1978* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1981), 444. Cited in Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII*, 414.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 427.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 445–446.

attenuation and gradual fading of the corresponding superiority complex which had its roots in socio-economic privileges, sex or political standing.<sup>23</sup>

Recasting the modern world in a positive light, *Pacem in Terris* was Pope John's "last will and testament."<sup>24</sup> It had two remarkable effects. First, in the international community, the encyclical was enthusiastically received at the UN when Cardinal Suenens presented it.<sup>25</sup> Second, and perhaps even more importantly, within the Church Pope John walked a fine line between creating greater harmony and marginalizing the plight of his faithful living under the restraints of Communism in the "Catholic" countries of Eastern Europe.<sup>26</sup> Complicity with oppressors, inadvertent or not, is not well received. Perhaps, then, the true importance of *Pacem in Terris* was moving beyond this objection by stating ideals pertinent to both sides of the bi-polar world.

### III. Pope Paul VI: 1963–1978

By the beginning of Paul VI's (1963–1978) pontificate, then, being inherently multifaceted was a conceptual hallmark of the Vatican's *ostpolitik*.<sup>27</sup> Pope Paul, largely through his leadership in the Council for Public Affairs, Monsignor Agostino Casaroli, fully added two other descriptors to the mix: dialogue and development. According to this pontiff's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), dialogue was possible—a natural extension of Pope John's *ostpolitik*—and the Church continued to repudiate ideological systems premised on a rejection of God. This was a powerful caveat to his predecessor's work. Moreover, while the Church

had not altered its position, the Communist bloc had made an important concession.<sup>28</sup> This position was the foundation for Pope Paul's speech at the United Nations the following year, when he addressed the supranational institution and focused on creating dialogue, not only between Moscow and Rome as he suggested earlier, but between the Church and the international community.<sup>29</sup> By 1971, Casaroli made the first official visit to Moscow since 1917.<sup>30</sup> Pope Paul's approach, however, quietly undermined the same system with which it sought *détente*. Because Communism saw religion as an alienation of capitalism, Communist countries were prepared only to tolerate religion during a transitional period, and then only if it was run by the state. By continuing to dialogue with Communist countries, Pope Paul maintained the Church in much of Eastern Europe and managed to discredit, in theory, a system he sought appeasement with in practice.<sup>31</sup> Unbeknown to the Holy Father, the effect of his *ostpolitik*, most venomous to Communism in the Eastern bloc, had yet to occur, for "...without the overtures to the East by Paul VI and Casaroli, a Polish Bishop would never have been elected Pope."<sup>32</sup> Thus, this discussion submits, the nature of Pope Paul's *ostpolitik*, whether in intent or outcome, ought to be examined as a subject of historical revisionism.

Since the developing world was the next battleground in the Cold War, *Populorum Progressio* (1967), Pope Paul VI's great encyclical on development in these regions, ought to be considered in this context. Though he rarely used the term "capitalism," opting for "liberalism" instead, the Bishop of Rome made no mention of "Communism." However, reading it "against the grain," one can see latent suggestions become manifest in Pope Paul's thinking. The encyclical is based on axiomatic assumptions—even where it repudiates capitalism. It suggests that a proper world order ought to be based on a market economy within a welfare state, private property, and an equitable distribution of goods and services.<sup>33</sup> Elsewhere, however, Pope Paul writes more

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<sup>23</sup> *Pacem in Terris*, article 43.

<sup>24</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII*, 467, 484–485.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 495; Hebblethwaite, *Pope Paul VI*, 436.

<sup>26</sup> Dennis J. Dunn writes: "In contrast to the other East European states, papal *Ostpolitik* was viewed suspiciously in Poland, not by Communists, but by the Polish Catholic leadership." See Dunn, "The Vatican's *Ostpolitik*: Past and Present," 253.

<sup>27</sup> Commenting on this evolution, Hebblethwaite writes: "It has two aims and works on two levels. It hopes to improve the lot of Catholics living under Communism and to contribute something to peace and *détente* on the wider international scene. It has a pastoral and a world-political objective."<sup>27</sup> See Peter Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church* (London: Collins Publishing, 1975), 165.

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 164–165.

<sup>29</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Pope Paul VI*, 436–440.

<sup>30</sup> Hebblethwaite, *The Runaway Church*, 167.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 171, 177.

<sup>32</sup> Dunn, "The Vatican's *Ostpolitik*: Past and Present," 254.

<sup>33</sup> A stance one might call today "capitalism with a human face." Writing on authentic development, he argues, "The development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone...it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man...What counts for us is

overtly on the merit of democratic pluralism, saying that

[the public authorities] must also see to it that private initiative and intermediary organizations are involved in this work. In this way they will avoid total collectivization and the dangers of a planned economy, which might threaten human liberty and obstruct the exercise of man's basic human rights.<sup>34</sup>

Whereas political considerations became tied to development, pastoral ones were couched in the language of dialogue. His venerable predecessor's phrase, "To all men of good will," is used in the encyclical's opening and closing words. Pope Paul asks, "We call upon all men of good will to join forces with you as a band of brothers. Knowing, as we all do, that development means peace these days, what man would not want to work for it with every ounce of his strength?"<sup>35</sup> Although a close reading shows the pope favours a western model, advocating one was not his primary concern. Rather, he disseminates modern commandments for the modern world. Hebblethwaite summarizes these commandments as

Feed the hungry; care for the health of all people and all peoples; educate humanity; free the enslaved.<sup>36</sup>

Just as *Pacem in Terris* was a vital part of Pope John XXIII's pontificate, *Populorum Progressio*, arguably, became inextricably linked to Pope Paul VI's legacy.

#### IV. Pope John Paul II: 1978–1990

In contrast to his predecessors, and perhaps as a consequence of being a Pole raised under Communist rule, Pope John Paul II was unwilling to placate Communist regimes. With the notable exception of Pope Pius XII, it is curious, then, to

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man—each individual man, each human group, and humanity as a whole." By offering a critique of capitalism, moreover, he was tempering a powerful repudiation of the philosophic/ideological system evident in the Eastern bloc. See *Populorum Progressio*, article 14.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., article 33.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., article 87.

<sup>36</sup> Hebblethwaite, *Pope Paul VI*, 483.

cite continuity with his immediate predecessors' *ostpolitik*. Yet the Holy Father did share some of Pope John XXIII's pastoral concerns, and Pope Paul VI's chief viceroy on foreign affairs, Agostino Casaroli, not only maintained this position, but was elevated to secretary of state and made a cardinal. Thus Pope John Paul's *ostpolitik* was unique—a blend of change and continuity—not only reintroducing an active political agenda, but establishing particular political objectives as well. The historical evidence reveals compelling basis for this claim: after his election. As Hebblethwaite writes,

When he went to Gniezno in 1979 and proclaimed "spiritual unity of Europe," he seemed to be disregarding the brutal material facts—the ideological division of Europe, the Berlin Wall, and so on...it stood Marxism on its head in so far as it asserted that, eventually, the material arrangements would catch up to this pre-existing "spiritual unity," and give it expression.<sup>37</sup>

The assassination attempt by Mehmet Ali Agca on 13 May 1981, commissioned by the Soviet secret police (KGB), offers proof that the Soviet bloc was conscious of this objective.<sup>38</sup> Yet, arguably it was this event that inaugurated the "Holy Alliance" between the church and the United States, argues Carl Bernstein, "to hasten the end of the Communist empire" after Pope John Paul II and President Ronald Regan met in 1982.<sup>39</sup> Clearly Pope John Paul II had a political end game in mind early in his pontificate. The important, grand-scale historiographical question, then, is how he influenced the end of the Cold War and fall of Communism in the Eastern bloc.<sup>40</sup>

Using his encyclicals as a tool to further his *ostpolitik*, *Laborem Exercens* (1981) was at once covertly and overtly political. Written to commemorate the great social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), some of the opening words of *Laborem Exercens* were,

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Hebblethwaite, "The End of the Vatican's *Ostpolitik*," in Peter C. Kent and John F. Pollard, *Papal Diplomacy in the Modern Age* (London: Praeger, 1994), 258.

<sup>38</sup> Dunn makes this point in the final footnote of his piece on the Vatican's *ostpolitik*. See Dunn, "The Vatican's *Ostpolitik*: Past and Present," 255.

<sup>39</sup> Carl Bernstein, "The Holy Alliance," *Time* vol. 139 (24 February 1992): 29.

<sup>40</sup> Among the works addressing this issue are: Ibid: 28–35; Carl Bernstein and Marco Politi, *His Holiness: John Paul II and the Hidden History of Our Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 449–483.

We are celebrating the ninetieth anniversary...on the eve of new developments...economic and political conditions...with influence in the world of work and production no less than the Industrial Revolution of the last century.<sup>41</sup>

Although he criticized both “Marxist collectivism” and “liberal capitalism” at various points throughout the rest of the encyclical, the pontiff made specific choice in diction to articulate his message. For example, he says

The call to solidarity and common action addressed to the workers, especially to those engaged in narrowly specialized monotonous and depersonalized work in the industrial plants, when the routine tends to dominate men...*it was the reaction against the degradation of men as the subject of work* and against the unheard-of accompanying exploitation...this reaction united the world in a community marked by great solidarity.<sup>42</sup>

It continued,

...Education in itself is always valuable and an important enrichment of the human person: but it in spite of that, “proletarian” processes remain possible...There is a need for every new movement of solidarity of the workers and with the workers....<sup>43</sup>

This article is particularly powerful because it consciously used the language of “solidarity,” at once both an abstract concept reflective of Christian ideals and a powerful statement of support for Polish resistance. After the end of the Cold War, even the Holy Father himself reflected on his *ostpolitik*. He says, “perhaps this is also why the Pope was called from ‘a faraway country.’”<sup>44</sup> Given the revealing subtext of *Laborem Exercens*—and, later, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis*

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<sup>41</sup> *Laborem Exercens*, Chapter I, “Introduction,” article 1, “Honouring Work on the Ninetieth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*.”

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, Chapter II, “Work and Man,” article 8, “Worker Solidarity.”

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 131.

(1987)—perhaps it was.

## Conclusions

Choosing to examine certain documents often comes at the exclusion of other relevant ones. Certainly this is the case here. However, examining the primary evidence, even in a limited capacity, offers a valuable opportunity to trace as transitive and transient a concept as the Vatican’s *ostpolitik* during the twentieth century. Beginning with the Pope Pius XII, one sees a firm approach to Communist rule armed with doctrinal objections; with Pope John XXIII, one sees the Vatican adopt a far more conciliatory approach based on pastoral intentions; similarly with Pope Paul VI, the Vatican maintained this approach and began to give greater attention to dialogue and development; and finally with Pope John Paul II, *ostpolitik* became a political tool aimed at bringing about the fall of Communism, the break-up of the Soviet Union, and the democratization of Eastern Europe.<sup>45</sup> Written ten years after *Laborem Exercens*, it is appropriate to conclude with insights from an encyclical, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), which Pope John Paul II issued to commemorate both the one-hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* and, perhaps more importantly, the historic events of the preceding years. He writes:

The events of 1989 are an example of the success of willingness to negotiate and of the Gospel spirit in the face on an adversary determined not to be bound by moral principles. These events are a warning to those who in the name of political realism wish to banish law and morality from the political arena.<sup>46</sup>

And yet, in terms of a postscript, the post-Cold War era is not necessarily shaping up to be the era it might otherwise have been. When Pope John Paul II returned to Poland in the early 1990s, he castigated his fellow

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<sup>45</sup> While these characterizations have been offered discretely for the purposes of this discussion, it ought to be noted that further study would reveal great interplay them. For example, Pope John Paul II’s *ostpolitik* can at once be both doctrinal and political. My intention here, then, is to offer a means of primarily understanding how its conceptual nature changed from pontificate-to-pontificate. It is my sincere hope further comparative work is conducted to show commonalities and differences in the changing nature of the Vatican’s *ostpolitik*.

<sup>46</sup> *Centesimus Annus*, Chapter III, “The Year 1989,” article 25.

Poles for letting the excesses and secularism of modernity take hold in their homeland. He spoke passionately, referring to Poland as both his mother and his father, and reprimanded his brothers and sisters for squandering the opportunity they were blessed with following the collapse of Communism in their country and the rest of Eastern Europe.<sup>47</sup> He widened this message to the world as a whole in his widely translated work—likely the only papal pronouncement ever to make the *New York Times* best-seller list—entitled *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. Here he casts consternation in the light of optimism.<sup>48</sup> Yet, as liberal-democratic capitalism becomes the norm in a world fraught by globalization, the Vatican’s new *ostpolitik* may not be its relationship with Communist states, but with modernity itself in the post-Communist world. If the antecedents to the Vatican’s role in the Cold War do lie with Pope Pius IX, as this discussion suggested at its outset, then maybe, just maybe, the roots of today’s conflict lie there too.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bernstein and Politi, *His Holiness*, 487–498.

<sup>48</sup> This theme is central to the book as a whole. See Pope John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*.

<sup>49</sup> With his *Syllabus of Errors*, Pope Pius IX set the precedent for policies enacted later, such as St. Pius X’s anti-modernist campaign. Writing on the latter’s “Court,” Peter Hebblethwaite argues, “It believed that the modern world was riddled with errors. . . . It may be said to have invented “Modernism” as a system in order to better condemn it.” While the today’s concerns about modernity are founded on a whole different basis—arguably, Pope John Paul II has adeptly identified issues that the force of modernity, in all its ubiquity, has mystified in the post-industrial/modern period—it is interesting that these “new things” are hardly new at all. For the quote above, see Peter Hebblethwaite, *Pope John XXIII*, 57–58; for an early analysis of St. Pius X’s *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, the encyclical inaugurating this campaign, see Rev. Father George Tyrrell, *The Programme of Modernism: A Reply to the Encyclical of Pius X, Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1908).