During Vatican II, Father Yves Congar, acting as official Vatican envoy, met with Jews in France to ask them what they wanted. The Jews answered they wanted to be considered as "brothers, partners equal in dignity". Lazare Landau writes, "the Council granted our wishes". Since then, two new concepts have emerged in the Church's relations with Jews; the notion of "praying to the same Lord", and that of a "common mission" to bring God to the world (that requires no need for Jews to convert to Christ's Church for salvation), which are the principles followed to this day by Pope Benedict XVI.

Vatican II & Rome's Secret Accord with Jewish Leaders

During the early days of the Second Vatican Council, a secret meeting took place between the Holy See and a group of Jews. It was a kind of "Vatican-Moscow" agreement applied to the Synagogue. The Vatican-Moscow agreement was a secret pact between Vatican and the Kremlin made in 1962 wherein in exchange for Russian Orthodox observers to be present at the Council, John XXIII guaranteed that Vatican II would contain no condemnation of Communism. [1]

News of the pact between Moscow and the Vatican is now widely publicized. The Vatican's secret accord with Jewish leaders is not so well known.

The meeting concerning the Jews took place around 1962-63, and was recounted by the Jewish writer Lazare Landau in the French journal *Tribune Juive (*number 903), dated January 17-23, 1986. Pope John XXIII had entrusted these negotiations to Cardinal Bea, who at the time was the Pope's point man for ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

Landau writes of Bea:

> "He sent secret emissaries to the Jewish communities to find out what they wanted. Thus, the Jews of Strasbourg received the Reverend Father Congar, OP, who came, shrouded in mystery, to the synagogue, where he listened for two hours as the community leaders explained their grievances."

This was the origin of the "new perspective" that would be imposed on Catholic doctrine, which was, as Jean Madiran notes, that "we must no longer speak of the infidelity of Israel but of its fidelity."

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Lazare Landau went into much more detail about this meeting in number 1001 of *Tribune Juive*, dated December 25-31, 1987. Landau reveals:

> "On a misty, freezing winter's evening in 1962-1963, I went to the Centre communautaire de le Paix [Peace Community Center] at Strasbourg in response to an extraordinary invitation. The Jewish leaders were holding a secret meeting in the basement with the envoy of the Pope. At the conclusion of the Sabbath, a dozen of us were there to welcome a white-robed Dominican, the Reverend Yves Congar, whom Cardinal Bea, in the name of John XXIII had charged with asking us, on the eve of the Council, what we expected from the Church…

> "The Jews, kept apart from Christian society for nearly twenty centuries, and often treated as underdogs, enemies and deicides, asked to be completely rehabilitated. As descendants in the direct lineage from the monotheistic stock of Abraham, where Christianity arose, they asked to be considered as brothers, partners equal in dignity, of the Christian Church…
> "The white messenger, divested of any symbol or adornment, returned to Rome taking with him innumerable petitions in harmony with our own. After difficult debate … *the Council granted our wishes*.

> "Homilies and catechisms changed in a few short years. In France, the flower of this renewed doctrine was presented by the *Editions du Centurion* under the name: *The Faith of Catholics*. The French episcopate, in the person of L.A. Elchinger, Bishop of Strasbourg, played a decisive part in the presenting of the contemporary 'Jewish Question' at the Council. The clergy readily adopted the conciliar decisions. This attitude found powerful backing in the 'Pastoral Orientations' of the Episcopal committee for relations with Judaism, published by the French Episcopal Conference on April 16, 1973.

> "In the Vatican itself, this current of thought received endorsement from a most eminent quarter. On October 4, 1983, in front of Pope John Paul II and the World Synod of Bishops, Cardinal Etchegaray, the minister of the Holy See, made a ringing declaration that resolved all the Jewish 'problems' in two points:

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1. A total definitive reconciliation with Judaism and the Jews;

2. Repentance and pardon to be sought for the wrongs committed in the past. "Since the secret visit from Father Congar in a concealed part of the synagogue, on a cold winter's night*, the Church's doctrine has indeed undergone a total change*." [2]

Jean Madiran noted that Father Congar would never confirm or deny that this meeting took place. What is most important, however, is that we see the consequences of Landau's report unfolding from the time of the Council to the present.

Notes:
[1] Vatican-Moscow Agreement, Jean Madiran. *The Fatima Crusader*, No. 16. Sept.-Oct., 1984
[2] Quoted directly form "Rome's Secret Accord with Jewish Leaders", Jean Madiran, Originally published in the Autumn 1990 issue of Madiran's French journal *Intineraires*, published in English by Anthony Fraser's *Apropos*, Supplement to *Apropos* No. 9 (not dated), pp. 4-6.. Emphasis added.

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