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Book Review: Orthodox Christian Renewal Movements in Eastern Europe

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Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović & Radmila Radić, eds. *Orthodox Christian Renewal Movements in Eastern Europe*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017. ISBN 978-3-319-63354-1, 339 pp. Index.

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Following on several other relatively recent publications on East European Orthodoxy, this very informative and interesting volume is also the product of newer scholars' research. It is deliberately inter-disciplinary, including theologians, historians, ethnologists, anthropologists, philologists, and liturgists. Both editors teach in the University of Belgrade, as do the contributors to Part II, the volume's center, plus others from Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia.

It opens with a Prologue and an Introduction as chapters 1 & 2, which leads readers to want to read more, even though those two chapters tell it all, in skillful summaries. Meic Pearse, currently at Houghton College in New York state, has broad experience in Europe and the UK. His title "Looking West but Walking East, states the key theme, not to be confused with Peter the Great's approach to modernization. His opening lines are worth quoting:

The historic strength and the historic weakness of Eastern Orthodoxy are one and the same. The perception that the Church is, and should be, timeless and unchanging; that all its doctrines and practices--including that of icon-painting--are traceable back to Christ and the apostles; that doctrinal development is fully and definitively encompassed by the first seven ecumenical councils; these convictions have protected it from the fast-changing world of the modern era ... But the very intractability of Orthodoxy has sharply limited its ability to make converts outside its historic homelands, and sometimes even to hang on to its historic constituency... Suffering for the faith has left a moral legacy of superiority over the West ... but already dissipating." (1)

Pearse goes on to note that for the renewalists, their line is "in order to keep things the same, things are going to have to change." (9) The following chapters provide a diversity of strategies employed by religious leaders of renewal movements that deeply influenced official Orthodoxy, with some success. Yet, in many cases it is a story of movements from below stimulated by modern changes such as popular reading, and especially communal singing, long resisted by official leaders, until at some point in the mid-twentieth or post-communist eras Orthodox Churches were adopting and adapting to modernity.

Chapter 2 introduces the reader to "Understanding Renewal Movements in Orthodox Christianity" including some definitions for 'renewal.' The editors' key opening statement sets the reader not only checking one's knowledge of post-Ottoman Imperial history, but imagining

what it meant that “autocephaly transformed churches into “national institutions.” (11) At first a gradual process of change, then the sudden post World War I break up of the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Russian Empires, resulting in many “changes to the borders of states... encounters with different religious influences,” specifically Catholicism and Neo-Protestant movements presented its populations with an uncertain new world. The varied responses for religious renewal were three-fold: organized forms of church renewal, the forming of small fraternities, and “informal gatherings of believers.” (11-12) We are alerted to watch for specific varieties, by the authors noting that all were characterized by “intensity of personal religious experience, holiness, discipline, communion, scriptural authority... vernacular languages in liturgical practice, hymn chanting, prayer, revival of pilgrimages and monasticism.” (12)

Of the three parts in this compelling study of Orthodox renewal, the section on Russia/Soviet Union, Ukraine in four chapters, draws attention mainly to lesser known movements, with such labels as Edinoverie, Tolstoyism, Dukhobortsy, Renovatism, Stundism (Maliovanttsy), Pashkovism, and Baptist. Part 2 focused on the Serbian Orthodox Church, five chapters all presenting a variety of perspectives on the God Worshipper movement (Bogomolci), because it “attracted thousands of believers” and left a strong influence on Serbian Orthodox Church life. (14) Less compelling are the comparisons (Part 3) between three national Orthodox Churches responding to renewal movements even as its nationalist understandings were changing, in particular the reality of less of a universal God, but “the God of a particular nation.” (15)

Scattered observations on the findings grouped by Parts 1-3 may offer some general comparisons. James White (Ekaterinburg) relied on the career of Father Ioann Verkhovsky, son and grandson of clergy, who by 1885 had developed a theology bringing together ecclesiological populism, Slavophile nationalism, and religious reformism for the purpose of a critique of the Russian Orthodox Church’s lack of canonical, national, and popular legitimacy, because of its “Babylonian captivity” to a state persistently interfering in church matters. So a branch of Old Belief - *Edinoverie* emerging as early as 1800, had discussed with Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) a common commitment to Orthodox dogma (i.e. *edinoverie* as common belief), so that the Metropolitan of Moscow recognized them while the *Edinoverie* maintained their rites. Even though later in the 19th century Moscow Metropolitan bishops Filaret and Grigorii defended

Edinoverie as “completely Orthodox,” state policies toward all of Old Belief differed. Verkhovsky near the turn of the century was arguing on behalf of Old Belief as a peoples’ movement, where ritual varied contextually, but the piety was held in common.

Yet another chapter by Svetlana A. Inakova (Russian Academy of Sciences) reported on the effort at rapprochement between *Doukhobory* (then living in the Caucasus) and the emerging religion of Tolstoyism, Tolstoy expressing interest initially, and was also seeking to get the new leader Peter Verigin to read his *The Kingdom of God is Within You* book. When the *Doukhobory* were brutalized and their women raped following their mass burning of guns in 1895, local authorities banning them to Siberia, Tolstoyans achieved international publicity for their plight, and organized aid for them to emigrate to Saskatchewan in Canada. The point of the historical survey was to note the linkages between Orthodox, sectarian and Protestant movements, as part of the turn of the century modernized media information flow.

Less persuasive is M.V. Shkarovsky’s short review of the Renovationist movements between 1905-22. A key reality was that 70% of the population were thought to be Orthodox believers, and a Russian Orthodox Church institutional structure of 78,000 churches/chapels, 120,000 priests, 130 bishops, 1253 monasteries and sketes, 95,000 monks and novices, and four theological academies, nevertheless “the authority and influence of this externally mighty institution had been largely undermined.” (67) Shkarovsky’s key point in assessing the competing Renovationist movements, was that although they shared common views on church reforms, their views on social-political issues differed. In any case, the state *Duma* had moved steadily more conservative during the Great War, hence church reforms debated in the Church Sobor of 1917 by electing a Patriarch meant that under emerging Soviet power the Church leaders were limited to protecting what they could. As a renewal movement, the support of a peasant based movement had not materialized. Readers will compare the author’s focus with more recent studies of Renovationism seeking clues for Orthodox modernization and renewal after 1990. In a similar way Sergei Zhuk’s chapter is limited to the *Stundist* [sic] movement that went furthest toward millenarianism under a leader (in the Kiev area). *Maliiovannyi* was a self-taught peasant, whose fifteen year imprisonment in several psychiatric institutions (1890-1905), created for his followers a martyr hailed as the new Messiah. Several other preachers took the apocalypticism further, prompting followers to attempt communal living, vegetarianism, as a

form of social protest, but the ecstatic form of intense worship enabled a psychiatrist to list four features of ecstatic behavior as evidence for mental illness--actually a regular method of accusing religious dissenters of mental illness that developed within the Orthodox Missionary Society at the time, and later adopted by Soviet measures against dissenters well past the 1970s. Zhuk treats not only the *Maliiovanny* as radical fringe, repeatedly claiming direct parallels to 16th century “Radical Reformation” movements, given his limited attention to the broad literature on 16th and 20th century religious movements. Hence this first part of the book offers less positive options for a renewed Russian Orthodoxy.

One might assume that Part 2 - five chapters on the God Worshippers in Serbia, might be explained or dismissed as the contributions of five scholars from a Serbian research group. That is hardly the case; instead chapters 7-12 keep adding insights into both the renewal movements’ energy, and its cumulative impact on an official Serbian Orthodox Church that long resisted and oppressed peoples’ movements as unwelcome influence from Western Catholicism and Protestantism.

The section opens with Bojan Aleksov, having published his dissertation (2006) on the Nazarenes in Hungary and Serbia, here concentrated on the Nazarene neo-Protestant sect among the Serbs, in order to show its deep impact on the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC). There was a pietist renewal movement, whose leader, Samuel H. Froelich of Zurich, fostering spiritual renewal among his Swiss Reformed Christians, but also drawing adherents from the Swiss *Taeufer* (Mennonite). It became known in German as *Neutaeufer*. Two German speaking apprentices, having heard Froehlich preach, returned to Budapest, where their evangelistic activities among the rural and urban peasants “became the fastest spreading and most remarkable movement in the Hungarian half of the Hapsburg Empire ... eventually in the newly independent, ethnically and religiously homogenous Kingdom of Serbia.” (105) Somewhat akin to the Quaker style of structure and shared leadership, also like Mennonites refusing military service, doing Bible study, preaching relevant to daily life, and much communal prayer and singing, these have become known as Nazarenes in Slavic regions. The SOC clergy and episcopate perceived them as a threat, bringing in Western and Protestant ways. SOC hostility lasted between 40 and 60 years, depending on the region; the Nazarene expansion stalled “with the emergence of the grass roots *Bogomolci* movement.” (106) Their grassroots attraction as one priest described them, was

their “charity, modesty, friendliness, naturalness, and decency.” (106)

By the late 1880s, Serbian priests on their own initiative formed periodic assemblies to discuss why members were turning Nazarene. The priests shared self-criticism, not adequately taught in seminary to preach to the people, nor taught in pastoral care, plus too many SOC restrictions preventing priests from engaging in social concerns of the people. The priest authoring the assembly report, however, urged severe measures against Nazarenes, such as forced baptisms. Later assemblies sustained the hostility. The change came during the inter-war years as new priests studying in Bukovina and the seminary in Karlovci, with lengthened training time, more emphasis on preaching, pioneered such social innovations as reading hall for craftsmen, gymnastic society, association of Serbian women, choral society, even a fire fighters association. In the 1930s too, the cooperative movement reached Serbia, with priests often leading the cooperative societies. Catholics in Serbia did not lose members to the Nazarenes because of the church’s participation in a broadly European “devotional revolution,” fostering the Marian cult, plus the social doctrines of *Rerum Novarum* in 1891.

Those influences, as well as the Nazarenes as neighbors, resulted in the emergence of the God Worshippers (bogomolci), “an independent life from the Church, but continued to consider themselves Orthodox.” (121) What observers noted, given the similarity to Nazarenes, was “outward appearance of asceticism, fasted often, avoided drinking, smoking and other vices ... preach sexual chastity among married partners ... women cover their heads in church.” (122) By 1920 a single organization had formed, headquartered in Kragujevac, offering training for leaders and preachers. At their height there were 500+ brotherhoods, some with 100,000 members (in the Hungarian Vojvodina) and similarly in Serbia and northeastern Bosnia. (125) Aleksov noted that the God Worshippers “utilized Protestant tools of church life - mission conferences, programmes for women, revival meetings, emotional singing...” (125) The Protestant tools phrase appears also in the other four chapters. By “channeling a grassroots movement into its own ranks, the Serbian Church also gradually transformed, despite its clear reluctance...” (126)

Chapter 8, by Radić and Milovanović, presents a multi-sourced history of the God Worshippers, initially unorganized with main centers in Belgrade and six other Serbian cities (141) Drawing from reports by its members, the movement was based on “the personal spiritual

experiences of individuals who lived through wars, crises of faith, modernity, materialism, liberalism, socialism, and other ‘modern innovations.’ (141) Between 1920 and 1921 Metropolitan Dimitrije had approved a “Covenant of Orthodox Christians” and “Rules of National Christian Communities (NCC). (145) The activities also spread through active publishing. Two Serbs from the USA financed a new printer in 1928, eventually totaling a circulation of brochures and books of 4 million by 1941. One journalist spoke of the God Worshippers as “consumers of devotional literature,” whereas other villages did not buy such books. (149) Helped by the personal support of Metropolitan Nikolaj, from 1926 forward national Orthodox Councils were held, drawing God Worshippers from all corners. The program consisted of “worship, prayer, confession, communion, spiritual songs, lessons, sermons, and the reading of reports on Brotherhoods.” (152) Diocesan prayer councils were held quarterly. Following a meeting of hierarchs at Mt. Athos in 1930, that condemned cases of dabbling in spiritism, in its second phase of activism, God Worshippers were deemed fully Orthodox. (154) Scholars have differed widely on the size of the movement, so the authors conclude conservatively that the “total number of God Worshippers rarely exceeded 100,000 in periods of major booms.” (157) During the Communist era in Yugoslavia, a remnant went underground, often meeting at night in secret. By the late 1970s, the SOC leaders concluded that the movement was over. (160)

The remaining four chapters in Part II become very interesting in their drawing on specialized disciplines, starting with linguistics and liturgy. Author Ksenija Koncarević of the Philology Faculty in Belgrade jumps ahead in her opening to note that God Worshipper hymnody had a broader significance because its hymns took in Serbian folk story rhythms. The achievement of SOC autocephaly in 1879 triggered a prolonged struggle to get to a liturgy in the vernacular. It involved weaning from the Russian Church Slavonic to a Serbian old Slavonic version, finally to Serbian. A decade earlier Prof. Peićić, head of a municipal educational and ecclesiastical department, having argued that prayers should be understood by those wanting to pray to God, did something about it. Composing prayers for his children, he then published them, adding the argument that the “churches have remained empty and the people untamed, stupid and cruel” because they could not understand Church Slavonic. The writer’s intent is to identify the “influences of the religious renewal movements on the language policies of the SOC.” (175) One

influence was the slowly developing Catholic liturgical movement, that presumes that “the Protestant communities must have had a considerably greater influence on awareness of the need to introduce the national language into religious services.” (176) In the south Slavic countries, Protestantism had been present since the late 16th century, for example the Lutheran bishop Trubar had translated the Bible in Slovenian, then added a catechism, plus 30 other books in Slovenian. Others migrated to Serbia following Emperor Josef II declaration of religious toleration, including the Nazarenes, Baptists and Adventists, with proselytization through the distribution of vernacular versions by the Bible Society. (177) With the Nazarene hymnal *Zions Harfe* translated into Serbian at the turn of the century, Orthodox parishioners began pressing the Serbian hierarchs to have services in the vernacular, there was an attempt in Timisoara in 1905-06, with some bishops accepting the idea, without follow through. Soon a stronger influence was the God Worshippers accepting modern styles of folk music in the vernacular. There followed a gradual introduction of parts of the liturgy in the vernacular. Two translators played a major role. Bishop Dr. Irinej Ćirić (1885-1955) who had a serious resume of studying at the Moscow Theological Academy, then a PhD from Vienna, having taught at the Karlovci seminary, and fluent in eight languages, began in 1907 to publish some service texts, then translated 45 Psalms, Vespers in vernacular and the complete service liturgy for Pentecost Sunday. The other, Dr. Justin Popović, an archimandrite, also translated a variety of service materials. Yet it was only in the 1960s, when seeking to recover from anti-religious pressures, specifically in 1964, that the SOC started using Serbian in the worship services, retaining treasured Church Slavonic expressions. Since some parishes had switched to Serbian a bit earlier, the author notes that “this indicates the liturgical and para-liturgical works which emerged within the God Worshipper movement influenced the decision to accept Serbian as the service language.” (183)

In his opening paragraph in Chapter 10 on the Prayer Chanting of the God Worshipper Movement, Dragan Asković, of the Belgrade Theological Faculty, remarked that since almost no God worshippers exist today, “their only testament is their hymns, whose divine inspiration allows them to live on.” (191) A more popular religious hymnody made unity among Christians more possible. Moreover, “this was appropriate to the Serbian mentality; since the Serbs appreciated and fostered poetry to an exceptional degree.” (192) He meant that in contrast to Greek poetry in translation that “lacked the elementary poetic delight found in rhyming and

symmetrical verses.” (193)

Then followed selected God Worshipper hymns, all published, the most popular was “Help us Supreme God,” which became a virtual anthem for God Worshippers. Their songs conveyed self-awareness, Askovic adding as theologian that “self-awareness has always been the basis for engaging in dialogue, and dialogue is a prerequisite of Christianity.” (198) Given how the speeches/sermons of the God Worshippers were based on personal experiences, inspiration and faith, he added that “emotion is spiritual and therefore does not have a predictable design.” Indeed many of those hymns and tunes were known in both Muslim and Serbian Christian traditions, so the verses differed, “but the melodies are completely identical.” (200) A further indicator of Christian openness, was that God Worshippers adopted the Irish folk tune for “Amazing Grace,” for their Christmas hymn titled “Welcome Bright Day.” (202)

Still another renewal feature of the God Worshipper movement was the recovery of pilgrimages to holy places. That included “mixed pilgrimages,” a Dutch anthropologist had reported Kosovo Catholics and Orthodox going to the same holy places. Those were often well-known monasteries, as stand ins for Mt. Athos and Jerusalem. (221) The author Dragana Radislavljević-Ciparizović, Philosophy Faculty, also reported on recent research on the “religiosity of pilgrims,” covering 1995-2017, tracing the backgrounds of 25 Catholic and 25 Orthodox pilgrims, to inquire after their upbringing, conversion, and self-appraisal of religiosity. There has been a post-communist religious revival, field research revealing that newly opened parishes in cities have formed “a small but strong eucharistic core.” (222) The pilgrim respondents for the research, were almost all members of a parish, not attending the nearest church, but “sought out a suitable community and priest.” (223) The background varied, a religious family background, non-religious background then converted, and God Worshipper origins.

Returning to the influences of the God Worshipper movement, no longer existent, the author concluded that the movement had spread throughout the regions, Nazarenes were an important external factor, and that the movement played a major role in SOC revival between the wars. Then the writer’s last sentence: “instead of only peasants as religiously active, now we have well-educated believers of both sexes ... share with the God Worshippers ... a love of monasteries, frequent pilgrimages, and regular liturgical life.” (225)

Part 3 with its three chapters on Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria, may seem less vital initially, but what they demonstrate is the similarities and contextual uniqueness of mid-19th to late 20th century religious revitalization of religiosity, reflecting modernity's focus on the personal, the experiential, and epiphanies, grass roots in origin, with classical confessional boundaries less vital, even as new national consciousness was emerging. At the same time, in each of the three countries, there are fascinating stories of types of movements.

Corneliu Constantineanu, University of Arad, Romania, offers an up-dated case study of the Lord's Army (LA) that involved identifying three influential priests - Dumitru Cornilescu, as translator of the Bible into the Romanian vernacular, Father Tudor Popescu, preacher/evangelist for what became the LA, and Iosif Trifa as founder of LA in 1923, with members signing a decision. All three after seminary studies realized they did not know the Bible well. Hence Cornilescu's translation appearing in 1921, soon republished by the Bible Society (5 million copies published by 1981). (235) Popescu read the Cornilescu Bible, was transformed and began preaching a personal soteriology to large crowds. Trifa, a seminary graduate in 2010, was soon ordained as priest. Not really knowing the Bible, he began learning the Scriptures in Latin. In a testimonial he stated "it gives me everything I need to shepherd souls." (238) Trifa was invited to become chaplain of the Sibiu Seminary in 1921, where he started "Preaching," a journal to call people to repentance. Following a personal crisis of faith in the futility of his efforts, he developed a new strategy. That was to get people to sign a Decision to "fight against sin, especially drunkenness and cursing." Then followed notable and widespread responses, Trifa in the journal outlining four core principles for the Lord's Army membership: crucified Christ as core principle, living a righteous life comes through understanding of Christ's victory on the cross, moral and ethical renewal comes through encountering Christ on the cross, and that the Lord's Army exist "through lay and voluntary involvement." (24) Indicators of a changed life would be one's daily life, acts of mercy, love and prayer, forgiveness and suffering, distribution of Christian literature. (243) These sound like a Protestant style, rather than Orthodox. All three figures named by the author were deeply committed to the Romanian Orthodox Church, but all were expelled by the hierarchy. Trifa died in 1938, still actively leading the LA, but had brought in a younger man Traian Dorz (1914-1989) to help in editing of the publication. Described as

“peasant poet and leader of the Lord’s Army,” Dorz had published 12 volumes of poems between 1935-47, was imprisoned from 1948-64 in six different prisons, two forced labor camps, then under house arrest thereafter. Still his prolific writing continued, with 100 published volumes, more than 10,000 poems in 36 volumes, a four volume history of the LA, 43 volumes of meditations and reflections, plus books for children. Eventually, the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch stated: “The poems and songs of brother Traian Dorz are inspired by the Holy Gospel and have a spiritual and moral content that is accessible to all believers of all ages; they cultivate the love for Christ and for people through their poetic-popular sensibilities.” (254)

Another chapter also on the Lord’s Army focused on the rise, spread, and decline of the LA in the Serbian Banat, that is, thanks to the border divisions, many Romanians found themselves inside Serbia, the Romanian Orthodox Church less able to function, and surrounded by other ethnicities following the Great War. Author Maran stressed the struggle between existing local parishes whose priests tried to take over the Lord’s Army for the sake of fostering Romanian culture abroad, with a criticism of LA hymnody sounding too Protestant. After the end of communist rule in Serbia, the new post Yugoslav themes were less focused on religiosity, leaving a mere remnant of old generation LA, and new generations less interested. (280)

To compare Greece to the renewal movements in the Slavic world, it matters that modern Greece did share a border with the Slavic countries, Macedonia partially in Greece, partially in Yugoslavia. Yet the Greek Revolution of 1821, separating it from the Ottomans, meant a church leadership still under the ‘oversight’ of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul, and a rebuilding of a Greek national state and of Greek Orthodoxy. Prof. Amaryllis Logotheti, Panteion University in Athens provided an assessment of the Brotherhood of Theologians Zoe, and its influence on 20th Century Greece. In contrast to the above, there was less popular disrespect for the hierarchy, more so against the secular rulers. What emerged, since the power of the Church against the State was weak, was a brotherhood of theologians, plus a sisterhood, that sought by religious means “to express social, political and economic discontent.” (286) The Brotherhood of Theologians Zoe was founded in 1907, Logotheti relying heavily on the weekly journal *Zoe* produced from 1911 to the present. Most members were theologically educated, had to voluntarily follow three Orthodox virtues: celibacy, poverty, and obedience.

Their goal was to foster spiritual growth of members in Orthodox spirituality, and foster

expansion of Orthodoxy “within the framework of urbanisation and secularisation.” (289) Logotheti noted that *Zoe* followed the “Protestant idea of salvation [that] is not to be found in any kind of withdrawal from the world, but in the midst of worldly activities...” (290) *Zoe* developed a corporate structure to run programs that sought to influence Orthodoxy from within. With major changes in the inter-war years, wealth inequality exploded, plus huge demographic changes in the countryside due to a wave of refugees. One device that many male members and female members of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood utilized, was running Sunday Schools in the parishes. In 1959 *Zoe* controlled 2,216 Sunday Schools with 30,650 pupils, related societies that *Zoe* members tended to head were a society to foster harmonious relations between Christianity and science, student choirs, social welfare associations, a Student Christian Union, plus fostering volunteer nursing in post-war after 1945. During the period of the Greek Junta (1967-1974) opposed by an active communist party, *Zoe* drifted more rightward, having raised money to rescue 18,000 children from war zones in northern Greece, settling them in 54 children’s homes in cities and towns.

The final turn to Bulgaria, reveals how the structure of forming monastic fraternities, came to shift an emphasis on sustaining the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, to developing a charity network with many lay activists, especially women, which the author Galiona Goncharova of Sofia University labeled a movement for Practical Christianity. Here too, it is a story of the White Cross in 1922 as a monastic fraternity, replaced by the Union of Christian Orthodox Fraternities in 1934, both using the journal *Christiyanka* for the Christian Family, published from 1923-1948. The overall task was the “inner mission of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (BPC). Its role was that the journal and its agencies formed a public space and a network for debate...” (305)

To understand Bulgaria’s status by 1918, it had been on the side of the Central Powers and was required to pay reparations, losing western Thrace and northern Dobruja to Greece and Romania respectively. In so doing, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church got drawn in by the fraternities toward the renewal of Bulgaria via religion, with the state under three varied governments resisting the church’s efforts (1913-1940). Goncharova stressed that the journal as idea leader “evolved in this context of increased clerical and lay sensitivity to social issues.” (309) Since 1925 the journal had referred to its activists as “social workers,” and as a longer

term impact, *Christiyanka* journal served “as a pioneer in the field of social welfare in terms of gender.” (310) This referred to the major role of women, at its height in 1937, when the brotherhoods had involved 5,000 men and 25,000 women. Also since 1933 high born women volunteered to sew and knit children’s garments. A major writer for the journal and head of the inner mission was credited by the author as inspiring theologians and clerics “to apply the Protestant notion of *diaconia* and the Catholic idea of *Caritas* to the BPC’s social mission and the charitable activities of the fraternities.” (315) In that connection it might be noted that *diaconia* and *caritas* have long been part of Christianity, but to organize for efficient services of relief, reconstruction, and reconciliation as they emerged in the west (and soon after in the east) due to the massive devastation from the “Great War,” it was a label meant to signify massive suffering, not victory.

This serious volume on renewal movements in Orthodox East European visions is a major achievement. It will teach many of us who thought ourselves specialists, what there is yet to learn and ponder. Each essay is supported by footnotes, some predictable, but I found myself glad to see references worth knowing and even checking. Since the book is also equipped with a 16 page index, it should serve many as reference source for further research on related topics.