

absolution [absolutism?]" (p. 22), and that Peter's newspaper was "badly [baldly?] factual" (p. 40). But these are small matters that can easily be attended to in the next edition of this highly readable introduction.

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FIVE SISTERS: WOMEN AGAINST THE TSAR. Edited and translated by *Barbara Alpern Engel* and *Clifford N. Rosenthal*. Foreword by *Alix Kates Shulman*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975. xxxvi, 261 pp. Illus. \$8.95.

Five Sisters is a collection of translations of memoirs of five women who were members of Russian revolutionary populist organizations in the 1870s and 1880s. The translators are to be congratulated for making available in English a fascinating set of documents which provide information and insights into several important issues: the experiences of these radical activists as *women*, the broad social and intellectual milieu in which they functioned, their daily experiences, the relationships and the ambience of the revolutionary circles of the 1870s and 1880s, as well as glimpses of peasant and factory life in which these women sporadically took part as propagandists. The five women range from visible revolutionaries—such as Figner and Zasluch, who were not only well known for their deeds but who held decision-making positions among the populists—to rank-and-file participants such as Praskovia Ivanovskaia, whose contribution to the movement was mundane daily drudgery. Taken together, these memoirs are of great interest to students of women's history, of Russian social history, and of the history of revolutionary movements (both Russian and European). The book is, perhaps, potentially most valuable for the non-Russian specialist who wishes to compare women or revolutionary groups in Russia with those of other countries. Unfortunately, neither the beginning student of Russian history nor the non-specialist is given a sufficiently detailed and concrete context in which to place these memoirs. Indeed, many of the events which the memoirs narrate are unintelligible because of the lack of either a fuller introductory section or a more detailed critical annotation of the texts themselves. On the other hand, if the translators intended the book primarily for the Russian specialist who has no need of such background information, the introduction could have provided a more detailed narrative and more interesting analysis of the history of women in nineteenth-century Russia. The translators should have decided more precisely for whom the book was intended and, accordingly, written a longer and more appropriate introductory essay.

Despite this shortcoming, this collection is a fine contribution not only to the literature on women's history, but to Russian history as well. One hopes that it will inspire successors.

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