

Stites liberally seasons his discussions with statistical data and survey results. None of this should be taken seriously, however, because he applies no critical standards for the use of such material. He tells us that illegal abortions in Moscow rose two and one-half times in 1909–14 and tenfold in St. Petersburg from 1897 to 1912, but provides no hint as to how these data were collected. On the same page we learn the results of a student questionnaire on sexual problems with decimal point precision, but nothing at all about how the sample was obtained, the form of the questions, or the circumstances (even the city) in which they were asked. In other cases, statistics (as those on literacy on page 397) come out so badly garbled or mistranscribed that no sense at all can be made of them. The best the reader can do is to treat all this material as simply another type of impressionistic evidence.

Stites's monograph is also a pleasure to read. The language is straightforward and the judgments are well grounded and stated with conviction. No slave to form, he takes the reader on a number of byways that are informative and often absorbing. This important addition to the history of modern Russia will be much read and much discussed.

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RASPUTIN: THE MAN BEHIND THE MYTH, A PERSONAL MEMOIR.

By *Maria Rasputin* and *Patte Barham*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977. vi, 266 pp. \$10.00.

Here is a portrayal of Grigorii Rasputin that we have not seen before. Perhaps only a daughter looking back fondly many decades after the painful events of her youth could have produced this sympathetic memoir. We meet the loving father, the miracle-worker, the sincere (if not always successful) combatant of his own wild impulses toward debauchery and licentiousness, and, above all, the devoted champion of Russia's salvation from communism. It should come as no surprise that Rasputin possessed a number of redeeming qualities. No one could earn the devotion and influence he obviously enjoyed without a measure of intelligence, charm, and generosity. The reader will nevertheless want to place in perspective many of the claims made here on behalf of that influence.

Despite selective memory and temporal distance, Maria Rasputin succeeds in creating some of the personal texture of her father's life. We learn of the inextinguishable humiliation he suffered at the hands (literally) of the maidservants of a capricious noblewoman toward whom he had made his first clumsy sexual advances, his involvement with orgiastic religious sects, his home life (what little there was of it), and his battles with the church leader, Iliodor, and with his murderer, Felix Iusupov. As expected, Maria takes the last two thoroughly to task, not even forgoing *ad hominem* sallies of a most indelicate kind. Yet amid the personal assaults and often unconvincing apologies lie some valuable insights.

Finally, I must admit to a slight uneasiness at Maria's boast about the size and resilience of her father's sexual equipment, even if the comment provides graphic preparation for the epilogue, in which we learn that this very same instrument survives to this day in Paris as an object of cult worship. That is what it says.

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