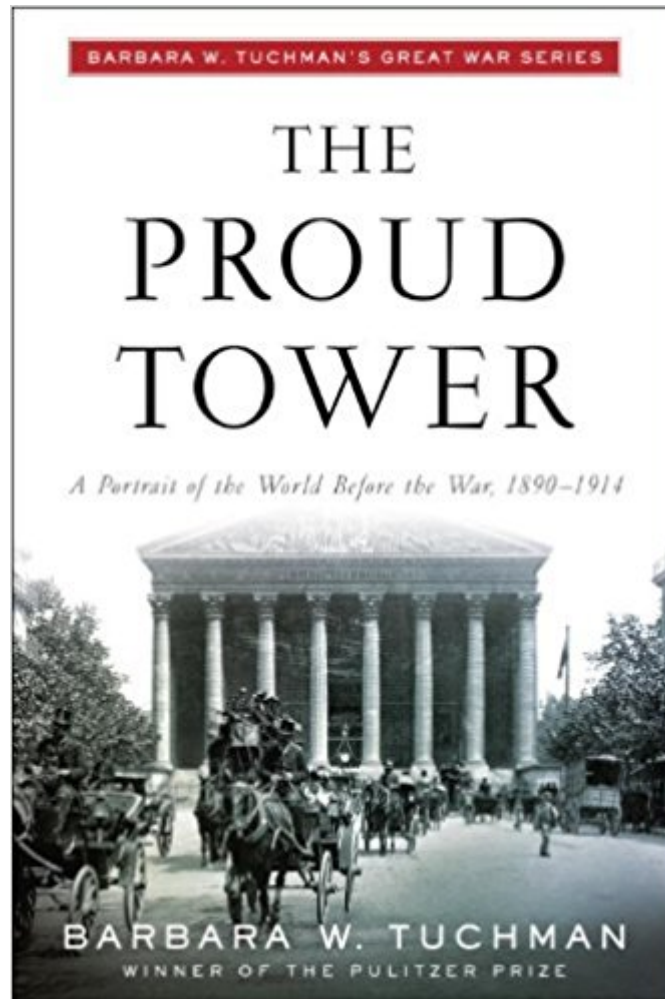


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The Proud Tower: A Portrait Of The World Before The War, 1890-1914



Synopsis

The Proud Tower, the Pulitzer Prize-winning The Guns of August, and The Zimmerman Telegram comprise Barbara W. Tuchman's classic histories of the First World War era. During the fateful quarter century leading up to World War I, the climax of a century of rapid, unprecedented change, a privileged few enjoyed Olympian luxury as the underclass was heaving in its pain, its power, and its hate. • In The Proud Tower, Barbara W. Tuchman brings the era to vivid life: the decline of the Edwardian aristocracy; the Anarchists of Europe and America; Germany and its self-depicted hero, Richard Strauss; Diaghilev's Russian ballet and Stravinsky's music; the Dreyfus Affair; the Peace Conferences in The Hague; and the enthusiasm and tragedy of Socialism, epitomized by the assassination of Jean Jaurès on the night the Great War began and an epoch came to a close. • Praise for The Proud Tower • [Barbara W. Tuchman's] Pulitzer Prize-winning The Guns of August was an expert evocation of the first spasm of the 1914-1918 war. She brings the same narrative gifts and panoramic camera eye to her portrait of the antebellum world. • "Newsweek" A rare combination of impeccable scholarship and literary polish . . . It would be impossible to read The Proud Tower without pleasure and admiration. • "The New York Times" An exquisitely written and thoroughly engrossing work . . . The author's knowledge and skill are so impressive that they whet the appetite for more. • "Chicago Tribune" [Tuchman] tells her story with cool wit and warm understanding. • "Time

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Customer Reviews

A collection of essays and magazine pieces published from 1962-65, Mrs. Tuchman attempts a

snapshot of the major powers as well as two of the major movements: the first organized terrorist movement, Anarchism and the rise of Communism which agitated and propelled that Lost World into the catastrophe that ended European dominance and put the remaining Empires (British, French, Belgian and Dutch) on life-support and led to the twin horrors of the Shoah and Communism. The "chapters" are only loosely linked by the theme announced in the sub-title: "A Portrait of the World Before the War." Mrs. Tuchman doesn't quite achieve that, but her fluid, graceful prose and easy, unostentatious erudition still make even the less significant pieces a pleasure to read. While an attempt was made to mould them into a homogenous whole, it doesn't quite work. They remain separate pieces. The qualities of the essays vary with the ones on German militarism and "L'Affaire Dreyfus" Chapters 4 and 6. Tuchman also badly misunderstands the greatest and most influential of all German 19th century philosophers--Nietzsche--but she's in excellent company there. Few students of philosophy properly understand Nietzsche so it's hardly surprising a general historian would repeat the clichés and misunderstanding of that enemy of German militarism and premature proponent of European cosmopolitanism--a process not dissimilar to that which the US Civil War began and which is still not complete within the United States. As introduction to the period, the two above-noted essays are good enough. But a far better introduction to France before the war and the treason committed by prominent French politicians as well as the Dreyfus Affair, Richard Watt's "Dare Call It Treason" is far superior.

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