

Russia
(Censorship
Literature)

Moscow Pitting Tuchman Book Against Solzhenitsyn's

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MOSCOW, Jan. 7—The Soviet Union has published a translation of "The Guns of August," a book by Barbara W. Tuchman that deals with the origins of World War I, apparently to counter the impact of "August 1914," the novel by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, which has been barred by the Kremlin.

The publication of the American historian's book in the Soviet Union, 10 years after its appearance in the West, seems designed to present a version of the events of August, 1914, that is more acceptable to Soviet ideologists than the Solzhenitsyn novel.

The fact that the authorities felt compelled to engage in this unusual publishing move with an edition of 100,000, combined with the recent appearance of underground reviews of "August 1914," suggests that the forbidden novel has had a substantial readership in the Soviet Union.

Book Sells Quickly

Mrs. Tuchman's book, which appeared in Moscow bookstores before New Year's, was virtually sold out in a matter of days.

Despite official blacklisting and public condemnation, smuggled copies of the Solzhenitsyn novel, which is also a best-seller in the West, appear to be circulating through a grapevine of intellectuals and



Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn



Barbara W. Tuchman

The New York Times

to be stirring wide reaction and discussion.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn's book centers on the Battle of Tannenberg, in which German forces in East Prussia put the Czarist army to rout in the early stages of World War I.

Official Soviet reviewers have accused the author of glorifying German militarism and of heaping scorn on the disarray and blunders among the Russians. Some of the underground assessments have found in the novel "a truthful word" about a vital segment of Russian history.

Mrs. Tuchman's book focuses on errors and miscalculations

among Western statesmen that dragged the world into war in 1914. But it also includes several chapters on the Eastern Front that have now been seized upon by the Soviet authorities as a weapon against Mr. Solzhenitsyn.

The two books were first compared here last April in a review that described the American writer as being "far more objective about Russia" than Mr. Solzhenitsyn. The review was signed by Jerzy Romanowski, ostensibly a Polish writer, but inquirers have not been able to identify anyone by that name, and it is believed to be a pseudonym.

The identity of those concerned with the publication of the Tuchman book has also been veiled. Both the translation and what is pointedly termed a "necessary foreword" are attributed to O. Kasimov.

No translator or historian by that name can be identified in available reference books. The only O. Kasimov listed in the catalogue of Moscow's Lenin Library, an institution comparable to the Library of Congress in Washington, is an engineer specializing in textile technology.

Mr. Kasimov's introduction, which does not mention Mr. Solzhenitsyn's work, appears intended to supplement Mrs. Tuchman's research and to use her findings to cast doubt indirectly on some of the novelist's assessments.

The official Soviet commentator, while acknowledging the Russian defeat at Tannenberg, seizes in particular on Mrs. Tuchman's view that the defeat must be evaluated as part of the over-all strategy of the Allies in World War I.

Referring to reinforcements

summoned by the Germans from the Western Front, where the crucial Battle of the Marne was building up, Mrs. Tuchman wrote: "Whatever it cost the Russians, the sacrifice accomplished what the French wanted: withdrawal of German strength from the Western Front. The two corps that came too late for Tannenberg were to be absent from the Marne."

Mrs. Tuchman Skeptical

Mrs. Tuchman called news of the Soviet action "fascinating" but said, "I can't imagine it would be a very effective counter."

She said that she did not feel that her book was likely to prove anything "one way or another" against Mr. Solzhenitsyn.

She said that she had begun, but not finished, his novel, noting that this was no reflection on his artistry but a manifestation of her unease with books that fictionalize history.

"I really can't comment on what his over-all assessment is because I'm not sure," she said, referring to the events of August, 1914. "I can say I doubt if my assessment on the whole would be very different."

She recalled that in her research she was very impressed "by the fatuousness and ineptness" of the Russian military organization at that time.

Mrs. Tuchman said that "The Guns of August" was published in Europe under the title later used by Mr. Solzhenitsyn for his novel. She said that when it was learned that he was going to use "August 1914," word was sent to him that the title had been used on the same subject. She recalled that her agent was informed that titles could not be copyrighted.

Mrs. Tuchman, noting that she is the treasurer of the Authors League, said of the Soviet publishing venture, "I haven't heard a whisper of royalties."

Toll in Managua Reported to Pass 10,000

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