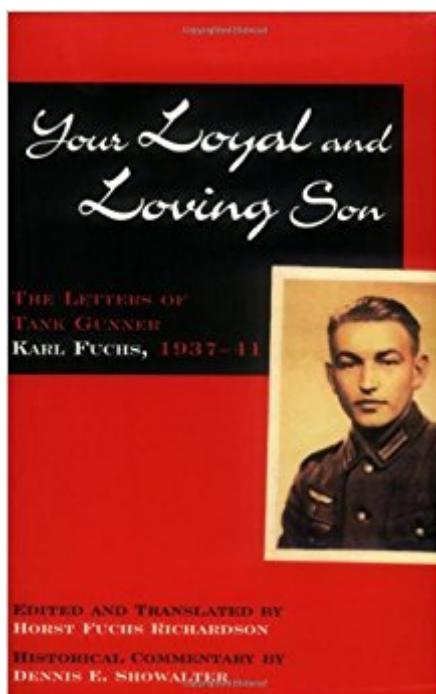


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Your Loyal And Loving Son: The Letters Of Tank Gunner Karl Fuchs, 1937-1941



Synopsis

These are the compelling letters of Karl Fuchs, an ordinary German soldier who was completely convinced of the righteousness of his cause and who wrote them free of the recriminations and hindsight arising from the bitterness of defeat. Combining enthusiastic expressions of loyalty to the fÃhrer and the Fatherland with messages of love for his family and requests for necessities from home, they provide a personal look at a youth typical of his time, one whose fervent and naive nationalism was of the very sort that later fanned the flames of the Holocaust. Throughout Your Loyal and Loving Son, young Fuchs remains an idealist, confident in his concept of duty. Yet his letters clearly support the general assertion that many Germans who backed the Third Reich did so neither out of opportunistic self-interest nor nihilistic delight in destruction, but instead in the hope for a better future. Killed on the Eastern Front, Fuchs did not live to see his son, the infant to whom he wrote and who as an adult compiled these letters for publication. With an introduction and annotations by eminent historian Dennis Showalter, this collection will help make those early war years more comprehensible to contemporary readers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a typically grim World War II story, assembled from the letters of a fine young man who was killed in action near Moscow before he ever saw his son. If there is any atypical grimness, it lies in Wehrmacht tanker Fuchs' having been the son of a devout Nazi and a subscriber to every bit of ideological scheiss that made him and his comrades a scourge to civilization. In between effusions

of hatred, however, one finds in his letters complaints about lousy food and trying to live on a student's stipend in the face of a housing shortage. Fuchs loved his wife and the son he never saw (who is the editor-translator of the letters), wondered if he was ever going to get into the war and if his superiors were really on his side, and quarreled with his father, who seems to have been an old-style Teutonic paterfamilias. After reading the letters and Showalter's invaluable commentary, one is glad Fuchs' side lost but regrets that he did not survive. Roland GreenCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

"Provide[s] some highly valuable insights into the mind of a young German at the apex of the Third Reich's power. . . . The outstanding commentary by Professor Dennis Showalter brings special historical meaning to many of the details and nuances of the author's private and premilitary existence, as well as his military experiences. . . . Especially valuable for . . . the student of Third Reich culture and more ardent scholars of World War II German military history." "For those examining why average Germans followed Hitler, Fuchs' diary provides one impression of Hitler's regime at its zenith--and not a post-defeat expiation." "Fuchs's interesting letters . . . help reveal combat conditions on the Eastern Front and the Nazi zeal of the soldiers who unflinchingly served in Hitler's war machine." "It provides an excellent depiction of life in Germany in the Wehrmacht just before World War II. . . . Mr. Showalter's notes are excellent. . . ."

I was drawn to this book having heard quotes from it during one of the many documentaries I have seen about WWII, Hitler, and the fanaticism that accompanied all of it. I was not expecting a compelling diary of war; I was, instead, interested in a soldier's letters home. I enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1967 and was posted for nearly three years in then-West Germany. My letters home--beginning in basic training and throughout my enlistment--are now a source of amusement, remembrance and pride (my late parents saved several of them). I met many former German veterans of WWII--soldiers, airmen and sailors. Most of them had been as loyal and misguided as Karl Fuchs had been. I remember one of them telling me he had to be "de-nazified" after the war. The common thread among all of the enlisted men that I met was their involvement in the Hitler Youth at a very young age, and understanding nothing other than loyalty to Adolf Hitler. One said he and his friends thought of him as a god. Mine is not a sympathetic look at Karl Fuchs; as an American and a Jew I despise everything they fought for. But I understand the soldier's letter home.

Not really a book about the war, this collection of letters from a rabid young Nazi who was killed on

the Moscow front in 1941 has some value as a window into the twisted thinking of many Germans raised under Hitler's regime. Part of the blame for Karl Fuchs' degeneracy can be laid at the feet of his father, Hans, who comes across in the introductory "Historical Comments" chapter as a frustrated grade-school teacher who tried to compensate for feelings of inadequacy by eagerly throwing himself and his family into the cesspool of National Socialist party membership. A representative and telling example of Fuchs' fanaticism is his Christmas 1939 letter to his father which he concludes with the following passage: "What is uppermost in our minds this Christmas is adherence to duty to our beloved Führer and to our Fatherland to our last dying breath. May this sense of duty and a quiet handshake between us be our mutual Christmas greeting. Heil Hitler! Your loyal son, Karl." This on Christmas! In Fuchs and his family we have a clear picture of the kind of people who made the Auschwitzes and Babi Yars possible. For this, the book has some minor usefulness. But as other reviewers have noted, overall it's really pretty boring.

This book was a compilation of letters of a soldier writing home and it was a wonderful experience of having a front row seat in the German invasion of Russia. This young man was a proud German patriot and he realized that they were fighting for Germany's survival. If you love history from those that were actually making it this book is a must read. Karl Fuchs made me very proud of my German ancestors.

Decent personal war account, but not great. He seemed to be a bit on the spoiled side however. The book seemed at times to be almost simply a list of his personal demands to his parents--Mom, send this, send that, send money, more money, and more money--good God, what is he buying? I didn't realize there was so many stores in Russia. At times, I just wanted to slap the brat factor out of him. All that aside, I remember it being a fairly good combat memoir. Buy it realizing it's not the best, but like a hamburger, fills you up.

NOT a combat memoir, which I'd hoped it was. Letters to Mom, Dad and Wife, about as boring as you could imagine. Some interest as an account of what appears to be a fairly typical young Nazi during this period. Only two or three discussions of combat, descriptions of Russian landscape, peasants and weather. A waste of my time.

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