



My Father's Country: Story of a German Family

By Wibke Bruhns

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On August 15, 1944, Major Hans Georg Klamroth was tried for treason for his part in the July plot against Hitler. Eleven days later, he was executed.

Wibke Bruhns, his youngest daughter, was six years old. Decades later, watching a documentary about the events of July 20, she saw images of her father in court suddenly appeared on-screen. “I stare at this man with the empty face. I don’t know him. But I can see myself in him—his eyes are my eyes; I know I resemble him. I know I wouldn’t be here without him. And what do I know about him? Nothing at all.”

How could her patriotic family succumb to Nazi sympathies? And what made her father finally renounce Hitler? With a wealth of letters and diaries documenting the story of her family, from the time of Kaiser Wilhelm to the end of the Second World War, and with her own coruscating intelligence, she unravels her family's unique and unforgettable history.

My Father's Country tells an astounding story—gripping, startlingly intimate, emotionally riveting—of three generations. A huge best seller in the author's native country, it offers unparalleled insight into the experience of being German in the last century. A real-life *Buddenbrooks*.

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Editorial Review

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Bruhns, born in Germany in 1938, has worked as a television journalist and a U.S.-based correspondent for Stern magazine. In 1944, her father, Captain Hans Georg Klamroth, was executed for his part in the conspiracy to assassinate Hitler in July of that year. For decades, Bruhns seems to have tried to maintain an emotional distance from the father she barely remembered. When she caught a glimpse of her haggard father while watching a documentary on the trial of the conspirators, she determined to learn more about him and her family. The result is a searing, painful inquiry that reveals much about her family through the length of the twentieth century; it also confronts readers with the dilemma of trying to survive in a totalitarian society without becoming part of the monstrous evils. Both of her parents were enthusiastic backers of Hitler for years. Bruhns seems particularly disturbed to discover how shamed other family members were by her father's act of betrayal. Her efforts to discover the causes of his conversion are both riveting and heartbreaking. --Jay Freeman

Review

"A literary feat of extraordinary courage. . . . An intimate glimpse into the heart of darkness. . . . Illuminating."

—*The Washington Times*

"A clear-eyed portrait of a flawed man living in complex-and nightmarish-times."

—*Newsday*

"In a time of bogus memoirs that, when exposed to air, crumble before Oprah's baleful glare, **My Father's Country** is the genuine article."

—*Chicago Sun-Times*

"Fascinating. . . . For anyone interested in the German psyche between the wars . . . [this] should be compelling reading."

—*Providence Journal*

"A searing, painful inquiry.... Riveting and heartbreaking."

—*Booklist*

From the Trade Paperback edition.

About the Author

Wibke Bruhns was born in 1938 in Halberstadt, Germany. She has worked as a journalist in both TV and print and as a TV host and news broadcaster. She was a correspondent for *Stern* magazine in the United States and Israel and headed the culture section at one of Germany's largest radio stations, ORB. She has two grown daughters and now lives and works as a freelance writer in Berlin.

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