



## The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1945-59

*By Victor Klemperer*

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**The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1945-59** By Victor Klemperer

This final volume of Victor Klemperer's diaries opens in 1945. After the horrors of the war, Victor and Eva's return to their Dresden home seems like a fairytale. Victor tries to resume his distinguished academic career and joins East Germany's Communist Party. In 1951, Eva dies; a year later, aged 70, Victor marries a student—an unlikely but successful love match. But with the growing repression of the Communist Party, and the memory of those who did not survive, Victor's achievements ring hollow. Politics, he comes to believe, is, above all, the choice of "the lesser evil." A masterpiece both of Holocaust literature and memoir.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This third and final volume of the diaries of Klemperer, a German-Jewish professor of philology who survived the Nazis because his wife was Christian, lacks the inherent drama of his life under the Nazis, related in the first two, highly acclaimed volumes, and many readers will be mystified by the political twists and turns of East German communism. Nonetheless, Klemperer was an acute observer of life's complexities, and the diary becomes quite a good read. In 1945, he is amazed that he has survived, but the conditions of life are still wrenching. He is suspicious of all the former acquaintances who shunned him in the Nazi years and now fawn over him. As a privileged academic in Communist East Germany, Klemperer attends endless, mind-numbing meetings, but also receives a number of appointments, a good salary and a cherished automobile. He publishes his most important work, *LTI*, a study of Nazi language. As someone who had suffered so acutely under the Nazis, he believes communism is "the lesser evil," yet he is anguished by the parallels between Nazism and communism. The diary is a poignant document about life under communism and the political choices that so many Europeans faced after WWII.

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Review

"*The Lesser Evil* is a remarkable coda to an extraordinary life." -- *Edmund Fawcett, Los Angeles Times*

"A powerful account of how world-changing forces were reflected in the ordinary life of one flawed individual." -- *Library Journal*

From the Publisher

This final volume of Victor Klemperer's diaries opens in 1945. After the horrors of the war, Victor and Eva's return to their Dresden home seems like a fairytale. Victor tries to resume his distinguished academic career and joins East Germany's Communist Party. In 1951, Eva dies; a year later, aged 70, Victor marries a student—an unlikely but successful love match. But with the growing repression of the Communist Party, and the memory of those who did not survive, Victor's achievements ring hollow. Politics, he comes to believe, is, above all, the choice of "the lesser evil." A masterpiece both of Holocaust literature and the memoir.

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**Dawn Spigner:**

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