

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

*Victor Klemperer*

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

'Klemperer's diary deserves to rank alongside that of Anne Frank'  
*Sunday Times*



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**Victor Klemperer : The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1945-59** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1945-59*:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. All alone or in two's, the ones who really love you By Cabin Dweller  
The lesser evil in the title is not the lesser evil consistently repeated by Viktor Klemperer in his diary at the end of his life. He is referring to East Germany, a lesser evil than the West. Most readers and the publishers as well

would think of comparisons to the Holocaust. Klemperer forgets the past in a hurry and focuses on the political tie to his professional career, including some sparse use of the word comrade. I have finished reading a classic and an epic. Klemperer is as unhappy after World War II and with his first wife or second wife as he was living in the Jews house and losing his career. He is tired, and so there is no surprise on page 177 with I would it were bed-time, Hal, and all well from Henry IV, Act V. The politics are specifically confusing, but the overall impression is clear, that out of the ruins there would be a divergence of economic theories and historical interpretations preying upon a defeated people, some of whom throughout 1946 and 1947 pose a most interesting storyline, which is the character reference needed by Germans from Jews in the eyes of the Russian occupying force. A price to pay to the occupiers: Very great tension between KPD and SPD very many nasty goings-on, which evidently was affected by the same anti-Semitism of the past. But almost none of this book is about Jewish persecution; it is as much about the philo-Semitism Klemperer claims to hate. For their part, the Russians are mostly to become thieves, having for example removed crateloads of treasures and also food from the starving. This came from a particular trip on page 213 to Leipzig, where 30% of infants dying was too few for a Russian military leader. But there was no gassing, says Klemperer. Klemperers academic heroes would be Rousseau and Voltaire. His career returns to him, basically in the same proportion as returned access to transportation. Eva is always a footnote; while alive and sometimes productive even, she is only a mute portrait somewhere on the wall. She is senile on June 8, 1948, and therefore Klemperer is free to repeat how guilty he is. But I dont believe they fought or drifted so much from each other, since when Klemperer says she sacrificed a prolific career for his, she was stuck with him, he is only expressing the pessimism that follows him at every turn. Vanitas becomes a fixture for years in his entries. America is all but omitted, just as much as reflection about persecution as a Jew. At the end of 1950, he states views that will fade before death, I want to be a Communist, I want to go with the SED what they do in the cultural area is often so fundamentally wrong. Only: what is done in the West is 1000 X more odious still. In 500 pages of reading, I cannot understand what he meant. Perhaps one moment of humor is on page 403: The broad Danube impresses me. But it is not blue here either. Always go back to page 454 for the ghost. And about Anne Frank, circa 1956, she is unimpressive and vain and silly in her writing, but Klemperer later says that the staged version shook him very much.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Contemporaneous diary by a Jewish professorBy Nancy PhillipsPrimarily of interest to those people who have read volumes 1 and 2 (1933 to 1945) of Klemperer's diaries, and to those wanting an outsider's account of the post-war occupation and then development of East Germany.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... a third volume of his journal so I was overjoyed to find and get this bookBy Richard A. CleeI wasn't aware that Mr Klemperer had written a third volume of his journal so I was overjoyed to find and get this book. It arrived in excellent shape.

This final volume of Victor Klemperers diaries opens in 1945. After the horrors of the war, Victor and Evas return to their Dresden home seems like a fairytale. Victor tries to resume his distinguished academic career and joins East Germanys Communist Party. In 1951, Eva dies; a year later, aged 70, Victor marries a studentan unlikely but successful love match. But with the growing repression of the Communist Party, and the memory of those who did not survive, Victors 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.

From Publishers WeeklyThis 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. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.