

# **Milchidika with Marty**

## ***I Will Bear Witness, Part 2***

The following excerpts are from the second volume of diaries written by Victor Klemperer, a German Jew married to a non-Jewish wife and covering the years 1942 to 1945.

I previously wrote a column which covered the years 1933 to 1941 which chronicled the slow rise of Nazism in Germany and the implementation of more and more anti-Jewish laws.

Where we previously left off was when he was required to leave his modest home in the city of Dolzschen; as Jews were no longer permitted to own their own residence, and he must now move into an apartment in a Jewish community house in the city of Dresden, and share the apartment with another Jewish family.

The only news that all the citizens receive during those years is from the controlled newspapers and they are told only what the government wants them to know. They are not aware of how the war is going on the Russian front, but can guess about it from reading the number of obituaries of sons and husbands which are printed in the local newspaper with comments of how "They died for the Fatherland". They do not know that cities like Berlin and Cologne are being bombed.

Nor are they aware of the concentration camps and later the extermination camps. Some of the Jews have heard of places like Theresienstadt and Auschwitz; but are not sure of what happens to the people who are sent there. They never return.

Lastly, the keeping of such a diary is considered "a crime against the state" and is punishable by death. Victor manages every few days to have his wife deliver his completed pages to an Aryan girlfriend who is willing to take the risk of her death and to safeguard them.

Below are excerpts from his diaries:

### **1942**

- January 17     All Jews are to be evacuated from Dresden except anyone who is over the age of sixty-five and holds the Iron Cross Medal First Class or is in a mixed marriage. There is a rumor that they are shot when they reach their destination.
- Transport.
- 18     Jews working in the Zeiss Ikon factory are exempted from this.
- February 8     Gestapo conducting random house searches of all Jews; which involves beatings, abuse and theft.
- 15     Cake can no longer be sold to Jews.
- March        6     Jews are no longer allowed on the train "out of consideration of the repeated Undisciplined behavior of the Jews on the train." Journeys to and from work are allowed.
- 16     A ban on Jews buying flowers.
- 20     Reduction in food rations. Jews are not allowed to buy fish.
- 27     Jews are not allowed to store foodstuffs, but only buy as they need for immediate consumption.

April	2	Jews prohibited from engaging Aryan tradesmen.
	11	Jews are allowed to use the train to go to work only if the distance from home to work is more than three miles.
	26	Jews are not allowed to stand in queues. Hair clippers, Hair scissors, and combs are to be turned in.
May	15	Jews are forbidden to keep pets (dogs, cats, birds). It is also forbidden to give animals away to be looked after.
	29	Jews are not allowed to purchase milk, nor allowed to use a barber shop, must surrender all bicycles unless it is used to go to work.
June	15	Jews must hand over all electrical appliances, vacuum cleaners, gramophones and gramophone records.
	22	Jews must turn in all clothing and fabric to an Aryan collecting station. May keep what is needed for "modest use."
	29	Jewish schools are to be shut, nor are children permitted to have private tutors.
	30	Jews from the old people's home are sent to Theresienstadt. New decree: Jews are to turn over table tennis games. Jews are no longer permitted to buy eggs.
July	27	Those who are fifty percent Jewish are banned from institutions of higher learning. Those who are twenty five percent may attend.

Shortly after these decrees were issued, the city of Dresden was bombed by the Allied Air Force, with much damage inflicted. Victor and his wife were unharmed although much of the city was destroyed. They fled as did thousands of others to the countryside; ripping off his Jewish star and throwing away his identification papers. He was at this point just another German refugee fleeing from the destruction of his home and seeking refuge in some of the small villages on the outskirts of the city. Germany was losing the war, the Russians were advancing on Berlin, and the Allies had invaded France. He and his wife survived. In later years his diaries were published. These diaries are one of the many documents that recorded the daily life of a Jew living in those times.