

Diary and letters of a
nonconformist

I Will Endure Everything, Including Myself

LEOPOLD FLAM

Leopold Flam (1912-1995) lived for the greater part of his childhood in a cellar in Antwerp. His Jewish parents, who had emigrated from Lublin to Belgium, could neither read nor write, and they eked out a living as peddlers and beggars. At the age of thirteen, Flam started keeping a diary that was as candid as it was grim. The fact that he managed to lift himself out of the extreme poverty of his early years rates as a minor miracle. The son of beggars eventually became a professor of philosophy.

Leopold Flam published an impressive number of books and articles, but his diaries – which he kept all his life, literally until he was on his deathbed – are among his strongest work. Out of more than two million (!) words, Kristien Hemmerechts and Guido Van Wambeke have compiled a fascinating book.

Their selection not only paints a unique picture of Flam as a person, it also depicts a turbulent period. Flam takes the reader to Antwerp in the 1930s, to the Dossin Barracks ‘transit camp’ in Mechelen and from there on to Buchenwald, as well as through his years at school and university. We share his hope and despair, his boundless ambition and profound disenchantment, his longings and desires.

‘I Will Endure Everything, Including Myself’ presents a selection of autobiographical documents from the period between 1925 and 1957, the years in which, overcoming adversity time and again, Leopold Flam sought and found his way. Some passages from his final months have been included as well.



AUTHOR



Leopold Flam was born in Antwerp in 1912 and died in Jette in 1995. The child of Jewish parents who had emigrated from Lublin to Belgium, and who could neither read nor write, he succeeded in becoming a professor, philosopher and essayist. As an existentialist he was a strongly independent thinker and one of the most prominent of Belgian philosophers from the late fifties to the mid-eighties. He also had a certain amount of influence in the Netherlands and France.

ORIGINAL TITLE Ik zal alles verdragen, ook mezelf. Dagboeken en brieven. Samengesteld door Kristien Hemmerechts en Guido Van Wambeke. 2023, De Geus, 464 pp.

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