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Sian Rees

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LUCIE AUBRAC

**The French Resistance Heroine
Who Defied the Gestapo**

By Sian Rees

In this first English biography, acclaimed historian Sian Rees asks what did Lucie Aubrac really do in 1943? And was she a heroine, or a woman who could not resist casting herself as one?

In 1943, Lucie Aubrac rescued her lover Raymond from Klaus Barbie, the feared Gestapo chief later known as the 'Butcher of Lyon'. When Raymond was arrested again, Lucie mounted a second astonishing rescue. Pregnant, and claiming to be Raymond's fiancée, she demanded a marriage *in extremis*. This charade provided the chance to ambush the prison van transporting Raymond. Spirited out of France with her husband by the RAF when she was nine months pregnant, she arrived in London a heroine.

After the war, the Aubracs became celebrities: writing and lecturing, they incarnated for a younger generation the spirit of la vraie France which had resisted the Nazis.

In 1983, Klaus Barbie was put on trial for crimes against humanity. He made the bombshell claim that the Aubracs had been 'turned' in 1943, had become Gestapo informers and betrayed their comrades. The French press and the couple themselves furiously denounced this 'slander', but as worrying inconsistencies emerged in the tale, doubts emerged.

Praise for Sian Rees:

'[On *The Floating Brothels*] History at its most engaging' — *Daily Telegraph*

'[On *Sweet Water and Bitter*] A fluent and lively account' — *Guardian*

'[On *Moll*] Rees is a lucid, intelligent guide' — *Sunday Herald*

'[On *The Ship Thieves*] In Rees's hands Porter's story reads like a fictional thriller but imparts the knowledge of a serious historical work' — *Times Literary Supplement*

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- *Author articles on resistance heroines and investigating resistance myths.*

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