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Outwitting The Gestapo



Synopsis

Lucie Aubrac (1912-2007), of Catholic and peasant background, was teaching history in a Lyon girls' school and newly married to Raymond, a Jewish engineer, when World War II broke out and divided France. The couple, living in the Vichy zone, soon joined the Resistance movement in opposition to the Nazis and their collaborators. Outwitting the Gestapo is Lucie's harrowing account of her participation in the Resistance: of the months when, though pregnant, she planned and took part in raids to free comradesâ"including her husband, under Nazi death sentenceâ"from the prisons of Klaus Barbie, the infamous Butcher of Lyon. Her book is also the basis for the 1997 French movie, *Lucie Aubrac*, which was released in the United States in 1999.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

..Set in Lyon after the Germans had invaded the southern 'zone libre' this book purports to be a diary, written during a nine month period of 1943 by one of the most France's most famous resistance 'personalities'. Claude Berri's acclaimed 1995 film 'Lucie Aubrac' was based on the events described. As a number of reviewers have already remarked , many scenes in this account appear to have been directly conjured up from the author's imagination and the Aubracs themselves, subject to media scrutiny as France's resistance history is increasingly put under the microscope have admitted that this book is indeed part novelisation. Translated from the French 'Ils partiront dans l'ivresse' the author revels in her self portrayal as mother, heroine, & machine gun

toting guerilla fighter and resistance cell leader. No where does she state that she and her husband were leading lights in a communist resistance grouping and no light is shed at all on what their role might have been in the capture by the Gestapo of De Gaulle's envoy and resistance unifier Jean Moulin in Caluire, a suburb of Lyon during June 1943. One of the main episodes of the book is Aubrac's attempt to liberate her husband, captured at the same time as Moulin and held by Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie. The facility with which she is able to come and go from Gestapo headquarters in Lyon has led more than one writer to question whether or not the Aubracs were indeed on Barbie's payroll; either that or many elements of Raymond Aubrac's subsequent escape are pure invention. Of course Klaus Barbie muddied the waters somewhat at his trial in the late 80's but the brutal portrayal of him here simply begs the question...how could he possibly have been taken in as Aubrac suggests.

Outwitting the Gestapo by Lucie Aubrac is a personal account written as a diary about the author's role in the resistance. The author grew up in a family with substantial wealth because they were wine growers. She was also a history teacher and a communist. In the 1930s, she met foreign students and sympathized with them over the political oppression they dealt with from fascism. Many of these students were socialists and communists (3). This experience along with marrying a Jewish engineer persuaded her to join the French Resistance after Germany defeated France. The purpose of Aubrac writing this book is to leave a memoir about her role in the resistance. This book also provides insight on what it was also like to live in occupied France. The story takes place in Lyon where Lucie is a history schoolteacher and a member of the resistance while she is pregnant with her second child. Her personal account is mostly about her role in the resistance and surviving under German occupation. She also notes some of her tactics to "outwit" the Gestapo. For example, Aubrac had a doctor establish a spurious record claiming she was a former tuberculosis patient; she could not teach if she still suffered from it by school policies. She used her fabricated medical certificate to get two weeks of absence in order to do missions for the resistance (33). Aubrac also portrays the French resistance to be a unique group of people. According to the author, the resistance is made up of "engineers, draftsmen, teachers, middle-class or workers, every one of us entered the world of cheating and lies with utmost serenity" (47-48). One of the roles of the resistance was to print false identification cards for Jews, in order to help prevent them from not being deported (46).

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