



Life Journeys Leading to **MAUTHAUSEN**

Franz LUCAS



Oksana Dmytruk Kolarik

Michael Car

Dear student,

In 1938, in a small town in Upper Austria, one of the many Nazi concentration camps was constructed. It was known as the Mauthausen concentration camp. It existed from 1938 to 1945. The camp was run and guarded by the SS. The people who were imprisoned here came from many countries in Europe: Poland, Russia, France, Italy, Germany, Austria and others. They were political opponents, belonged to marginalised groups (e.g. 'criminals', 'asocials') or were persecuted for anti-Semitic and racist reasons (e.g. Jews). Most of the prisoners were men, but there were also women and children. In the Mauthausen quarry, the prisoners carried out hard forced labour. In the more than 40 subcamps (Gusen, Steyr, Linz, Ebensee, Vienna...), they were deployed in the arms industry. People lived in overcrowded accommodation. They were not given enough food and clothing, and they starved and died of diseases. SS men beat many prisoners to death, shot them or murdered them in the gas chamber at Mauthausen. In total, almost 200,000 people were imprisoned at Mauthausen and its subcamps. Half of them lost their lives.

The Mauthausen concentration camp was on a hill and could be seen for miles around. Many people were involved with the camp: they worked there, brought deliveries or knew SS men. Almost everyone knew about the death camp. Often, the SS men committed the crimes in full view of the population. On 5 May 1945, the Mauthausen concentration camp was liberated by US troops. In this booklet, you will read the story of a person who was connected with the Mauthausen concentration camp. Where a word is underlined, you can find a short explanation at the end of the booklet. There are also tasks for you to work on in your small group after you've finished reading. Take the booklet with you on your visit to the Mauthausen Memorial! During your visit, you will encounter the places and stories you read about in the booklet.



It's 14 December 1964, just over a week before Christmas. A group is visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Poland. They are standing on what's known as the 'ramp'. The 'selection' is being explained to them: 'This is where the trains arrived. SS doctors would be waiting. They would direct people to the left or to the right. Right meant forced labour in the concentration camp. Left meant to the gas chamber.'

This is not an ordinary group of visitors. They include judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers from the first Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt am Main. At the back of the group, there is a man with a scar on his cheek. He is the only defendant among them: Dr Franz Lucas.

He is 53 years old, highly respected, and until recently, head gynaecologist at Elmshorn hospital. Now he runs a private practice and treats his patients on days when the trial is not taking place. He has to stand trial as a former SS doctor in Auschwitz and other concentration camps.





Franz Lucas is born in Osna-brück in 1911 as the son of a master butcher. He attends a strict Catholic Jesuit high school in Meppen, and it is at this time that he becomes interested in National Socialism. Lucas studies medicine in Münster and Rostock and becomes a gynaecologist. In 1937, he joins the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) and the SS.

In 1939, the Second World War begins when the German Reich invades Poland. Franz Lucas is transferred to Nuremberg in 1942, where he works in an SS military hospital and as a military doctor. He is transferred again in 1943, when is assigned as a doctor to the SS office responsible for the concentration camps. The SS doctors form a separate group in the concentration camps. In addition to providing medical care to SS personnel and prisoners, they have a specific role in the Nazi extermination program. They select the people to be killed and carry out or supervise the murders.

Franz Lucas first becomes an SS doctor in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where it is primarily Jews who are murdered in the gas chambers. The cattle cars carrying men, women and children from all over Europe arrive at the ramp in Auschwitz. Lucas takes part in the selection of the arrivals and sends thousands of people to the gas chamber.

From August to October 1944, he serves as a camp doctor in the Mauthausen concentration camp. As in all concentration camps, medical care at Mauthausen is divided into two parts: favoured prisoners are treated in the Infirmary, but the vast majority of sick prisoners are sent to the Special Infirmary, where they receive barely any medical care. From 1943, they are taken to the [Infirmary Camp](#).





Some prisoners who have medical training report to the SS doctors. Lucas knows some of the Polish [prisoner doctors](#) from Auschwitz-Birkenau. He takes them out of the hard labour in the quarry so that they can provide medical care for their Polish compatriots. Lucas gets into an argument with the camp commander, [Franz Ziereis](#), because he treats concentration camp prisoners who have been bitten by guard dogs in the quarry. This is not common. Lucas also reportedly smuggles medicines into the camp for the prisoners.

However, according to witness testimonies, Franz Lucas is involved in selecting prisoners for the [Hartheim](#) killing centre in the Mauthausen concentration camp. Between April and December 1944, over 3,000 sick and weak prisoners, including many Hungarian Jews and Soviet prisoners of war, are killed in the gas chamber at Hartheim.

Lucas is transferred from Mauthausen to various concentration camps, the last of which is the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin. From there, in mid-April 1945, he cycles to Elmshorn. This is where he is when the war ends in May. Lukas isn't charged and works as a doctor at the local hospital after the Second World War. From 1954, he heads the gynaecology department. He has a house built, marries in 1950 and becomes the father of two daughters.



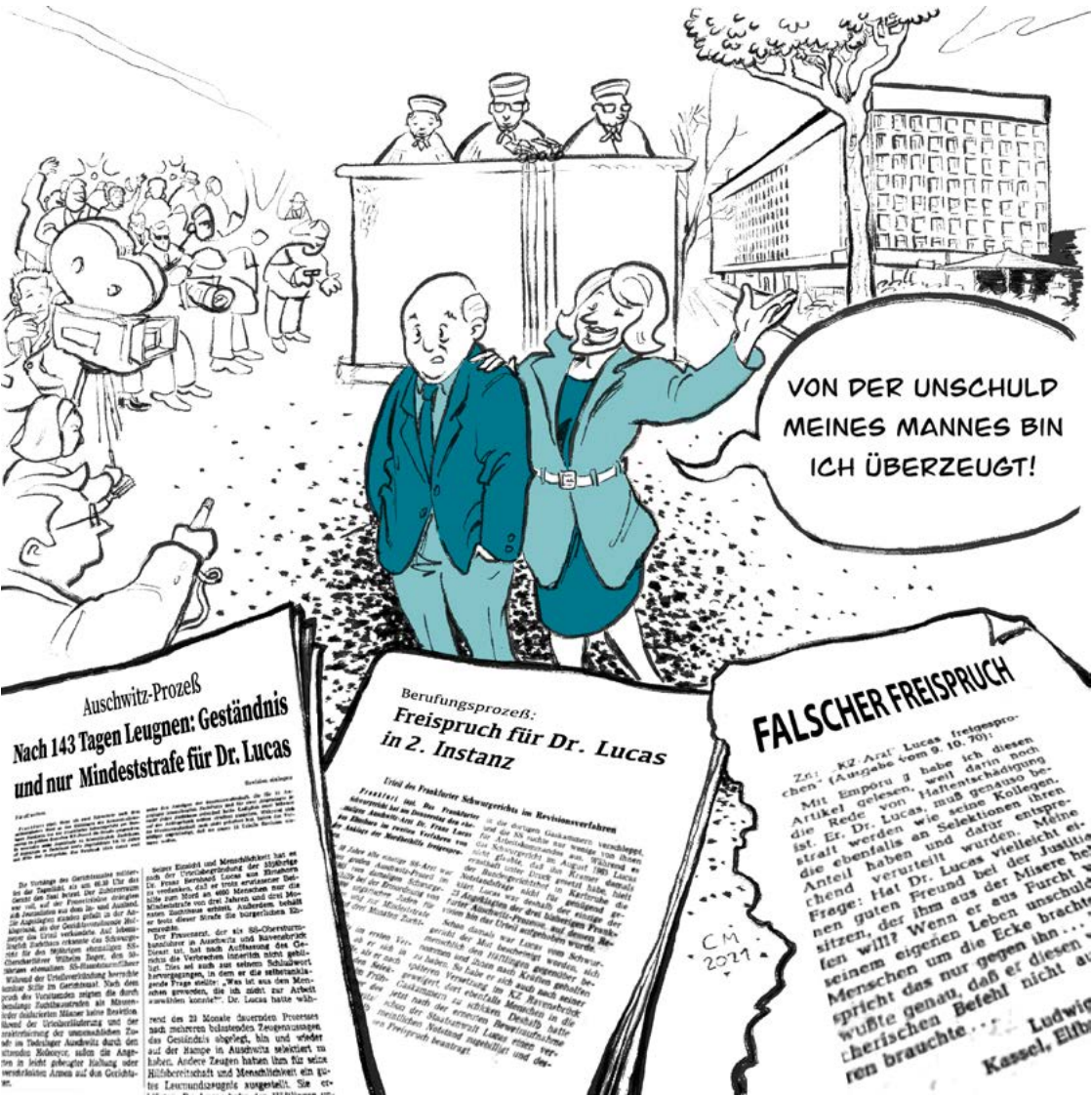


In the 1960s, however, his past catches up with him. Franz Lucas is one of the defendants in the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials from 1963 to 1965. He claims that he was not involved in the crimes at Auschwitz. His wife Susanne believes that her husband has been falsely accused. She says she only learns of his wartime past through the press.

After 143 days of pleading not guilty, in March 1965, Lucas finally admits that he conducted selections on the ramp at Auschwitz, following incriminating witness statements. In August 1965, he is sentenced to three years and three months in prison for aiding and abetting the murder of at least 4,000 people. He serves this sentence.

In 1969, a new trial begins after the German Federal Court of Justice overturns the verdict because of unresolved issues. In 1970, he is acquitted because he helped some prisoners and the court believes his account that he felt forced by superiors to carry out the selections of prisoners.

Franz Lucas runs his private practice as a gynaecologist until 1983. He dies in Elmshorn in 1994.



VON DER UNSCHULD MEINES MANNES BIN ICH ÜBERZEUGT!

AUSCHWITZ-PROZESS
Nach 143 Tagen Leugnen: Geständnis und nur Mindeststrafe für Dr. Lucas

Berufungsprozess: Freispruch für Dr. Lucas in 2. Instanz

FALSCHER FREISPRUCH

Seine Einsicht und Menschlichkeit hat es ihm ermöglicht, die Verantwortung für die Verbrechen der Verbrechen zu übernehmen. Er hat sich nicht weigert, sondern hat sich verpflichtet, die Verantwortung zu übernehmen. Er hat sich nicht weigert, sondern hat sich verpflichtet, die Verantwortung zu übernehmen. Er hat sich nicht weigert, sondern hat sich verpflichtet, die Verantwortung zu übernehmen.

Titel des Frankfurter Schwurgerichts im Revisionsverfahren
Freispruch für Dr. Lucas
in 2. Instanz

Die in der ersten Instanz verurteilte Dr. Lucas wurde in der zweiten Instanz freigesprochen. Die Gründe für die Freisprechung sind im Urteil des Revisionsgerichts dargestellt.

Zu: KZ Arzt Lucas freigesprochen (Ausgabe vom 9. 10. 70): Mit Empörung habe ich diesen Artikel gelesen, weil darin noch die Rede von Haftentschädigung ist. Dr. Lucas, muß genauso bestraft werden wie seine Kollegen, die ebenfalls an Selektionen ihren Anteil haben und dafür entsprechend verurteilt wurden. Meine Anteil verurteilt wurden. Meine Frage: Hat Dr. Lucas vielleicht einen guten Freund bei der Justiz sitzen, der ihm aus der Misere helfen will? Wenn er aus Furcht vor seinem eigenen Leben unschuldig Menschen um die Ecke gebracht hat, wußte genau, daß er diesen christlichen Befehl nicht an den Menschen um die Ecke gebracht hat, wußte genau, daß er diesen christlichen Befehl nicht an den Menschen um die Ecke gebracht hat.

Ludwig Kassel, Elbt.

Some words explained...

Selection – During selections in concentration camps, prisoners were divided into two groups: Stronger people were employed in forced labour, and the sick and weaker people were selected to be murdered.

SS – Stands for ‘Schutzstaffel’ or ‘protection squad’. The SS was one of the most powerful organisations in the Nazi regime: it reported to the police, had business operations and had armed troops (the ‘Waffen-SS’). The SS guarded the concentration camps and was mainly responsible for the persecution and mass murder under Nazism.

Infirmiry camp – Also known as a sick camp. Prisoners who were no longer able to work because they were ill or weak were taken there. Only a few of them survived.

Prisoner doctor – Term used to describe a prisoner who had medical training and worked as a doctor in the concentration camp. The prisoner doctors provided medical care to inmates but had hardly any medicines available to use.

Ziereis, Franz – Camp commandant of the Mauthausen concentration camp from February 1939 to May 1945. As commander, he was in charge of the entire camp.

Hartheim – Under National Socialism, a killing facility in a castle near Alkoven in Upper Austria. Mentally and physically disabled people as well as mentally ill people were murdered in the gas chamber at Hartheim. Later on, sick and weak prisoners in the concentration camps, especially Mauthausen and Gusen, were also murdered here.



Brief history

Franz Lucas is born in Osnabrück - **1911**

1914 - 28 July, start of the First World War

1918 - 11 November, end of the First World War

1933 - 30 January, Adolf Hitler becomes Reich Chancellor in Germany

He joins the _____ - **1937**

1938 - 12 March, 'Anschluss' ('Annexation') of Austria to Nazi Germany
- 8 August, construction starts on the Mauthausen concentration camp

1939 - 1 September, start of the Second World War

1940 - May, Construction begins on the Auschwitz concentration camp

Lucas becomes a military doctor in an SS hospital in Nuremberg - **1942**

SS camp doctor at _____ - **1943**

Camp doctor at _____,
later in other concentration camps - **1944**

Lucas leaves the Sachsenhausen concentration camp
before it is liberated - **1945**

1945 - 5 May, Mauthausen concentration camp is liberated by the US Army
- 8 May, Nazi Germany surrenders; end of the Second World War in Europe





Charges are brought against him
as part of the _____ trials - **1963**

He admits guilt, is convicted and given a prison sentence - **1965**

He is tried again and acquitted - **1969 - 1970**

Franz Lucas dies in Elmshorn - **1994**

Further reflection in groups ...

-  From 1943, Franz Lucas works as an SS doctor in several concentration camps. What are his duties in the camps?
-  In the 1960s, Franz Lucas is taken to court. His wife Susanne wants to put in a good word for him. Think about why she defends him despite the incriminating evidence.
-  As part of his trial, Lucas returns to Auschwitz as a defendant. What memories might he associate with his former workplace?
-  During your visit to the Mauthausen concentration camp memorial, you will also see where the SS men worked and lived. Find out what their everyday life was like there.



Notes

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Educational manager and project manager: Gudrun Blohberger, with support from Christian Angerer, Petra Bachleitner and Bernhard Mühleder

Team coordinators: Walter Fröhlich, Jutta Steinmetz, Evelyn Steinthaler

Academic and expert advice: Christian Dürr, Andreas Kranebitter

Supporting research: Bernhard Mühleder

Some words explained ... Jutta Steinmetz

Brief history: Evelyn Steinthaler

Further reflection in groups ...: Petra Bachleitner, Christian Hanl, Teres Stockinger

Project management and administration: Aleksandra Božic, Angelika Heumader-Rainer, Gudrun Troppmann

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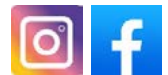
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