

Memorial circuit

– Town of Bourg-en-Bresse 🏠

Paul Pioda's shop

21 Victor and Hélène Basch Street – Bourg-en-Bresse (01000), France





Figure 1: Photographic portrait of Paul Pioda (1907-1944)

Occasional anti-collaborationist **propaganda** activities were noted as early as spring 1941 at the Jérôme Lalande High School, including the **production** and **distribution** of leaflets.

A group led by the young **Raymond Sordet** even provided information to the **Secret Intelligence Service**¹ until the high school student was arrested.

But it was **Paul Pioda**, a reserve officer² in charge of the **'Liberation'** movement in the Ain department, assisted by his sister **Louise**, who then played an essential role in the development of the **Resistance** at the Lalande High School. It was he who initiated and sustained this movement.

¹ **Secret Intelligence Service (S.I.S.)** or **MI6**: UK's foreign intelligence service, founded in 1909 and headquartered in London.

² **Reserve officer**: Volunteer citizen, holding the rank of officer in the army, providing temporary support to active military personnel.

From autumn 1941 onwards, high school student **Marcel Thenon** regularly visited the shopkeeper because, coming from a modest background, he was looking for second-hand books. These were stored in his **back shop** on Government Street³, a stone's throw from Lalande High School. **Paul Pioda** quickly noticed that the second-year student, accompanied by his friend **Paul Morin**, shared his ideas. After several visits to the back room, the shopkeeper gave them **leaflets**, **resistance newspapers**, and **portraits** of General **Charles de Gaulle** and **Lorraine crosses** to distribute carefully to their friends.



Figure 2: Photographic portrait of Marcel Thenon (1925-1989)

³ **Government Street:** Current Victor and Hélène Basch Street.

Leaflets and newspapers, essential for recruiting new members, were partly produced clandestinely at night in **Joseph Michallat's printing shop**, close to Pioda's shop.



*Figure 3: Mr Michallat in front of his printing press **Républicaine** (Bir Hakeim newspaper)*

It was also **Paul Pioda** who advised the high school students to get organised. The first “**sizaine**” was created in October 1941, followed by the first “**trentaine**” in January 1942. By 1943, **two** “**trentaines**” were up and running. The merger of the ‘**Libération**’, “**Combat**” and ‘**Franc-Tireur**’ movements gave rise to the **M.U.R.** (United Resistance Movements), and subsequently to the **F.U.J.** (United Youth Forces) in the autumn of 1942. In June 1943, the F.U.J. had around **400 members**, including around **100** students from the Jérôme Lalande High School.

Sources

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- ◆ Mazzola, D. et Grassaud, F. (2023, 20 avril). *Des femmes de la Résistance sortent enfin de l'ombre à Bourg-en-Bresse*. Franceinfo. Accessed on 11/07/2025.
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- ◆ Debat, Richard. *La résistance au lycée Lalande de Bourg-en-Bresse (Ain) : 1940-1945*. 1999. 61 p. Accessed on 11/07/2025.
- ◆ AERI (Association pour des Etudes de la Résistance Intérieure). *La Résistance dans l'Ain et Le Haut-Jura* [DVD-ROM]. Paris (France). Histoire en mémoire 1939-1945. 2013. Accessed on 11/07/2025.

Credits

- ◆ **DVD-ROM The Resistance in the Ain and Haut-Jura regions**
– *Imprimerie républicaine Michallat (1945) (674W5)* (Figure 3)
- ◆ **“La Résistance au lycée Lalande” Association – Lalande2**
– *Portrait de Marcel Thenon* (Photographie de classe (1941-1942)) (Figure 2)
- ◆ **Maquis of Ain and Haut-Jura**
– *Portrait photographique du capitaine Paul Pioda* (Figure 1)

Infographic created based on the work of the Seconde D class (class of 2023-2024) at Jérôme Lalande High School to commemorate the mass arrest carried out by the Militia at the school on 5 June 1944.

This is not a work of historical scholarship, but rather an attempt to popularise history.