



MEMORIAL CIRCUIT IN BOURG-EN-BRESSE





B1: Gateway to Lalande high school



B2: Paul Pioda's glazing, mirror-making and framing shop



B3: Le Français restaurant



B4: Rue des casernes: Theft of STO files



B5: War memorial



B6: Avenue Alsace-Lorraine



B7: Former Quinet high school



B8: The station and its neighbourhood



B9: 41 Boulevard Voltaire



B10: The ABC cinema



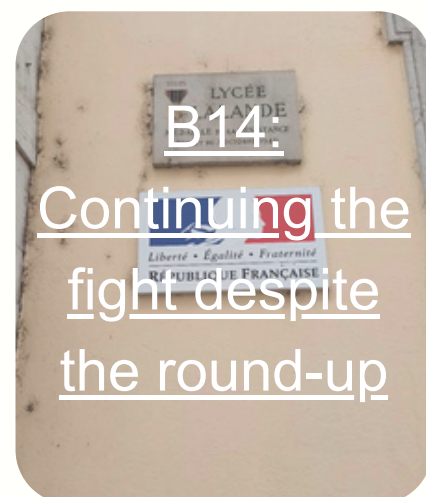
B11: 16 Boulevard Voltaire



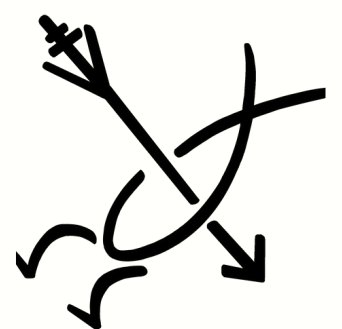
B12: Rue Teynière: attack on the Treasury



B13: Hôtel de l'Europe: headquarters of the Militia in June 1944



B14: Continuing the fight despite the round-up



B1- Presentation of the high school



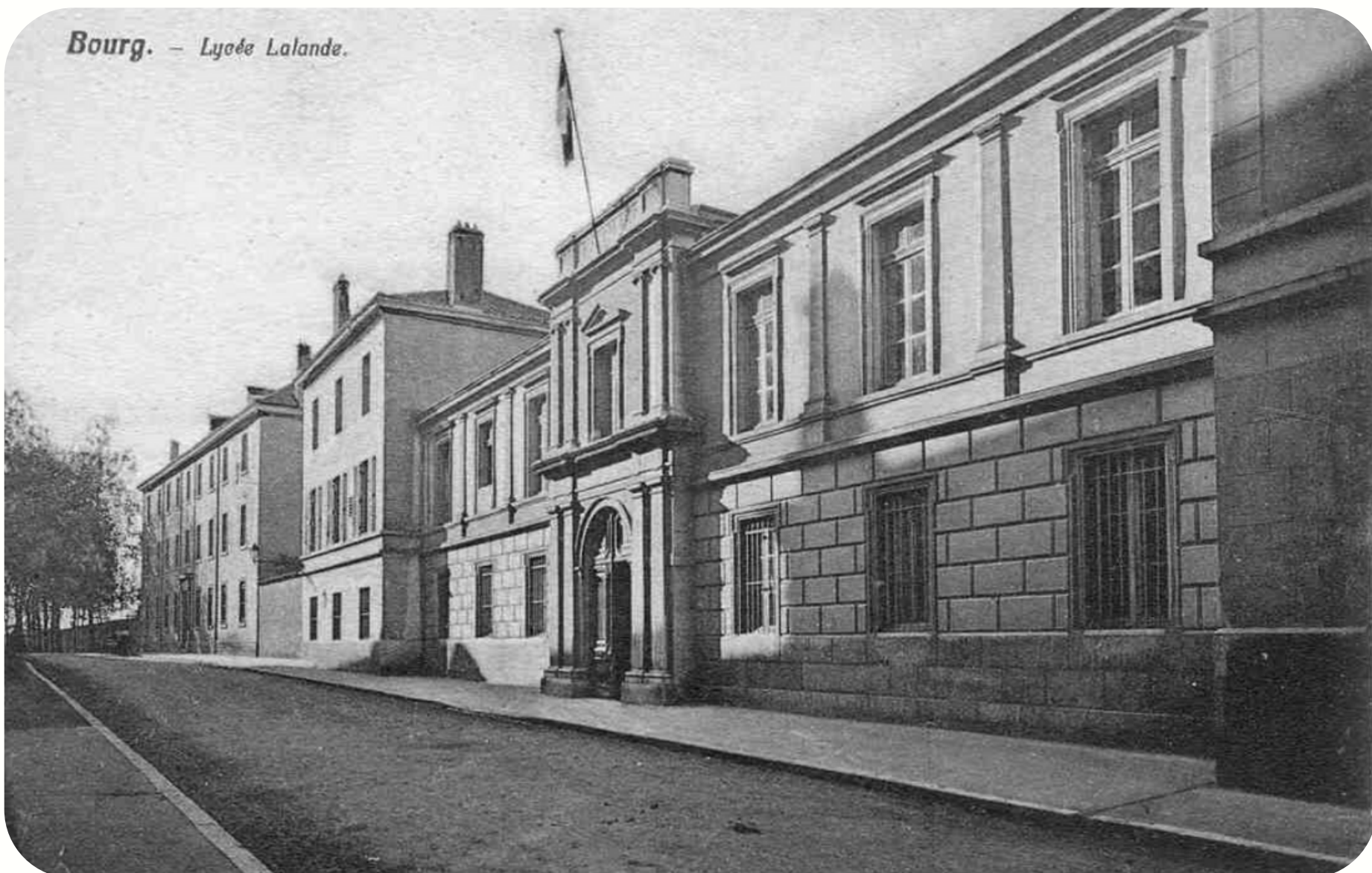
On June 5th, 1944, members of the militia entered Jérôme Lalande High School during the final baccalaureate exams and conducted a violent roundup of students and staff. How can we explain this aggressive event?

We, the students of Seconde D, are here to tell the acts of resistance by our predecessors, that they modestly named "Little Ordinary Stories of Ordinary Students" (Histoires peu ordinaires de lycéens ordinaires).

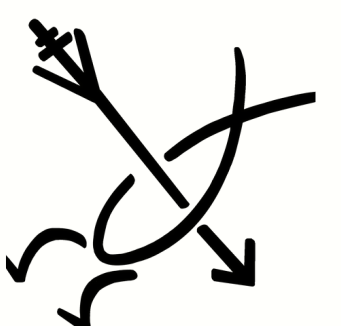
Our high school was one of the most active in the French Resistance and is the only civilian school establishment in France to have been awarded the Resistance Medal. This is commemorated by the plaque on the school's facade. Indeed, students and staff members sacrificed themselves to liberate France from dictatorship and Nazi collaboration: 32 people were killed, and 20 people were deported. These losses were significant considering the demographics of the time: 70 to 80 students per year group, according to Paul Morin, a former Lalande student. It is important to understand that at the time, high schools were not free, meaning only individuals from affluent backgrounds could afford to enroll their children.

Also, the Vichy regime, hostile to the republican school system it deemed individualistic, closed the "Ecoles normales" that were charged with teacher training in 1941. Consequently, student-teachers, often from modest backgrounds, were transferred to high schools like Lalande. Paul Morin was one of them, and tells about it in his book *I was twenty years old at Dachau*. He joined Lalande High School with sixteen classmates. Since October 1940, the school has thus brought together students from more varied backgrounds.

[1 Little Ordinary Stories of Ordinary Students (Histoires peu ordinaires de lycéens ordinaires): a book of collective testimonies by former resistance students published in 1995]



Departmental Archives of the Ain, 5Fi53-528



B2- Paul Pioda's glassware-mirroring-framing shop, located at 21 Basch Street (formerly Government Street): the epicenter of resistance at Lalande High School



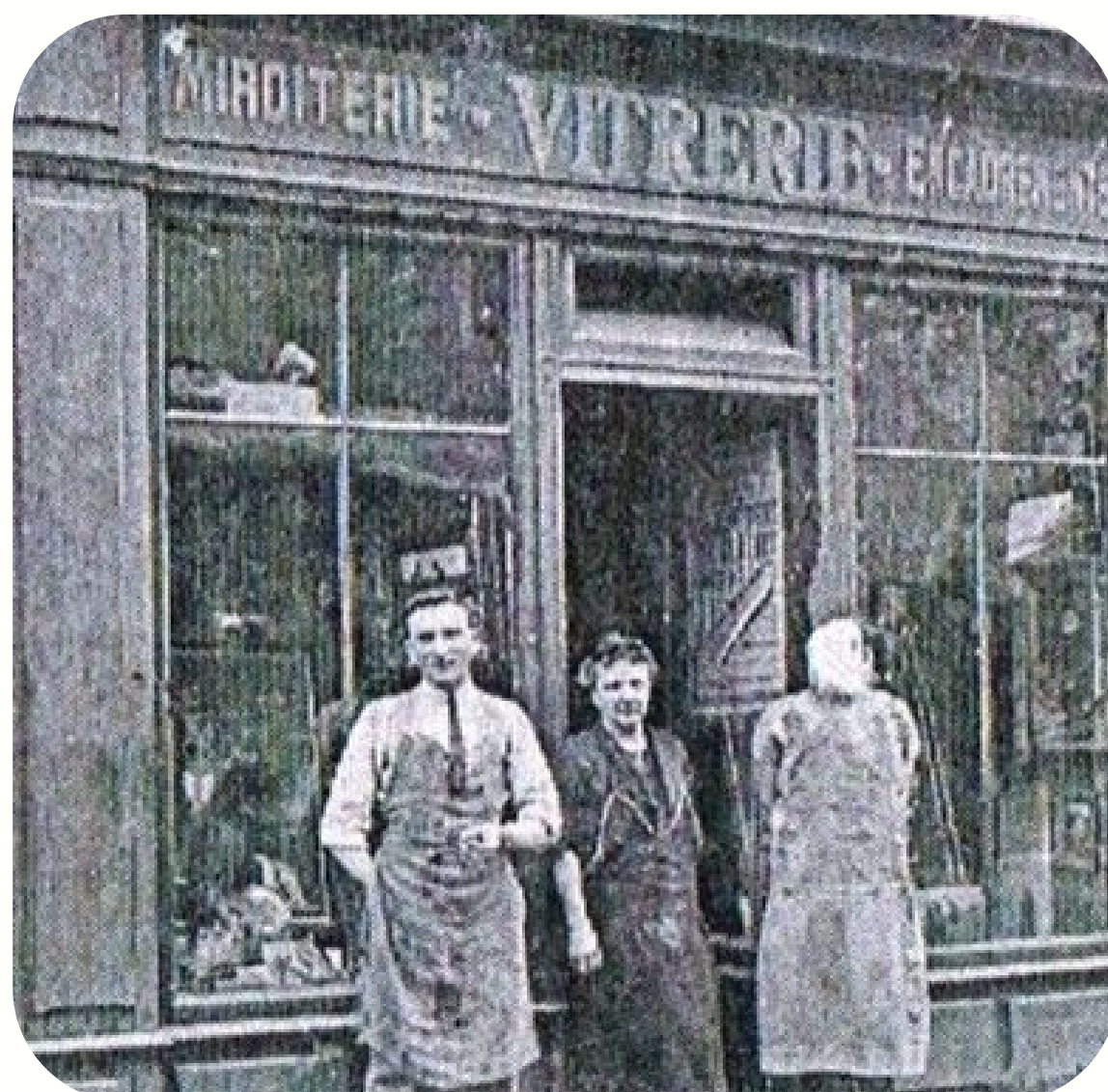
Paul Pioda, a reserve officer and the leader of the Liberation movement in Ain, assisted by his sister Louise, plays an essential role in the development of the Resistance at Lalande High School.

Since autumn 1941, high school student Marcel Thenon has been regularly meeting the shopkeeper because, from a modest background, he searches for second-hand books stored in the back of the shop, on Government Street, within walking distance of Lalande High School. Quickly, Paul Pioda notices that the senior student, accompanied by his classmate Paul Morin, share the same ideas. After several visits to the back of the shop, Paul Pioda entrusts them with leaflets, resistance newspapers, as well as portraits of General Charles de Gaulle and Lorraine crosses to be distributed cautiously to their friends.

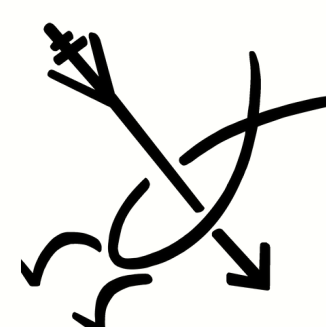
The leaflets and newspapers, essential for recruiting new members, are partly produced clandestinely at night in Joseph Michallat's small printing house, very close to Pioda's shop.

It is also Paul Pioda who advises the high school students to organize themselves. The first group of six is created in October 1941, followed by the first group of thirty in January 1942. In 1943, two groups of thirty are established.

The merger of Liberation, the Combat movement, and the « Franc-Tireur » movement gives birth to the MUR (United Movements of the Resistance), and subsequently to the FUJ (United Youth Forces) in autumn 1942. In June 1943, the FUJ have about 400 members, including one hundred students from Lalande High School."



DVDROM Resistance in the Ain and Haut-Jura regions



B3- Restaurant Le Français, an important meeting place for the Resistance



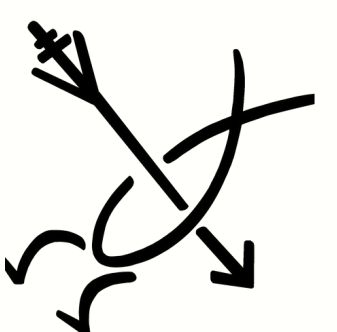
The resistance fighters gather at "Le Français," where they cautiously exchange information, discreet packages, or documents.

For example, in October 1942, Marcel Thenon and Paul Morin arrange to meet a Gaullist from Quinet and Henri Bailly, whose real name is Guerchon, one of the leaders of the Liberation movement. The purpose of the meeting is to exchange instructions for future air drops, but above all a package containing a small-caliber pistol and a box of bullets. From this meeting onwards, the resistance at Lalande takes on another dimension with the arrival of weapons, such as the famous Sten submachine gun.

Avenue Alsace-Lorraine in 1940 with the restaurant on the left, behind the car



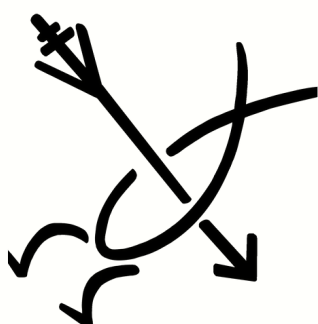
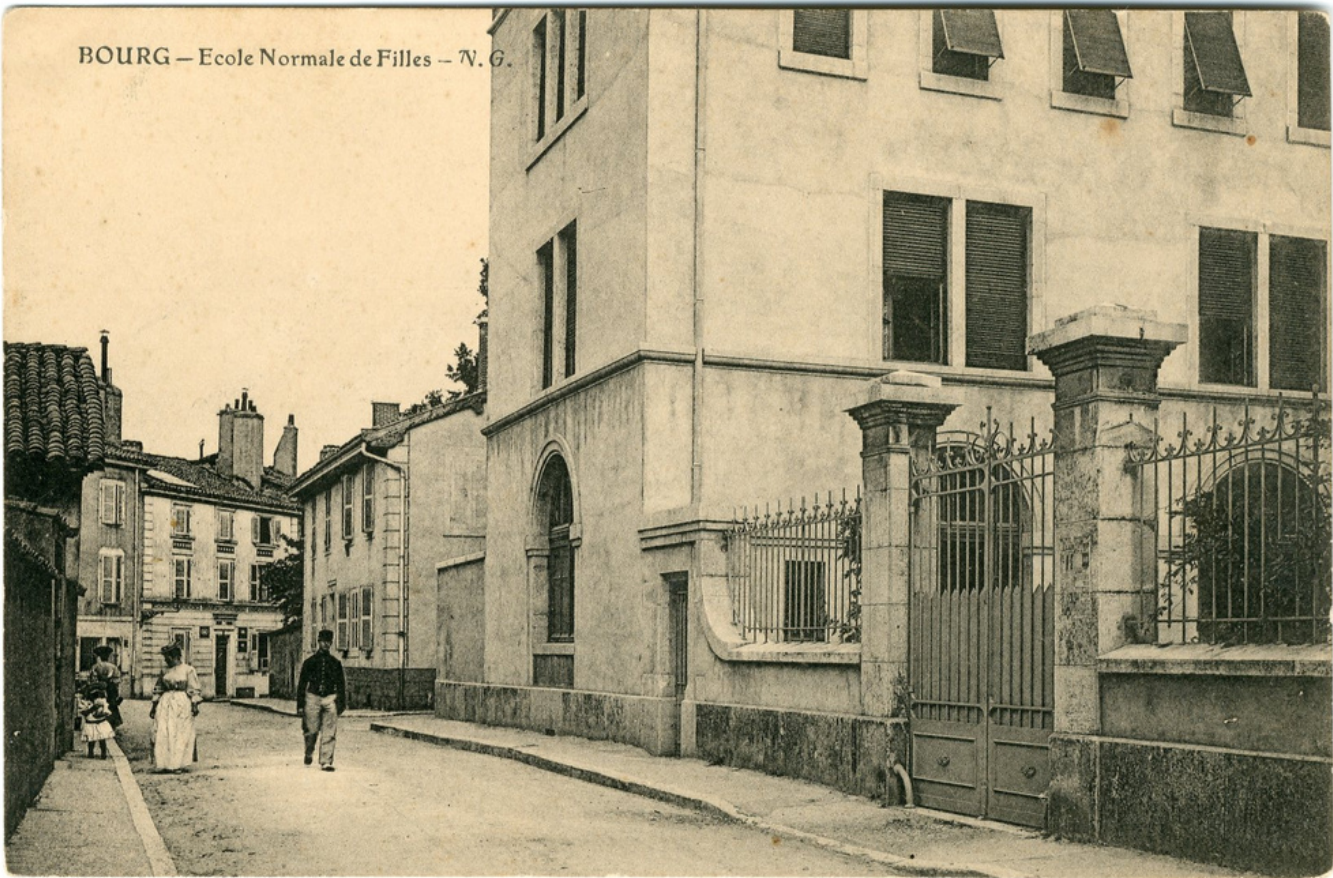
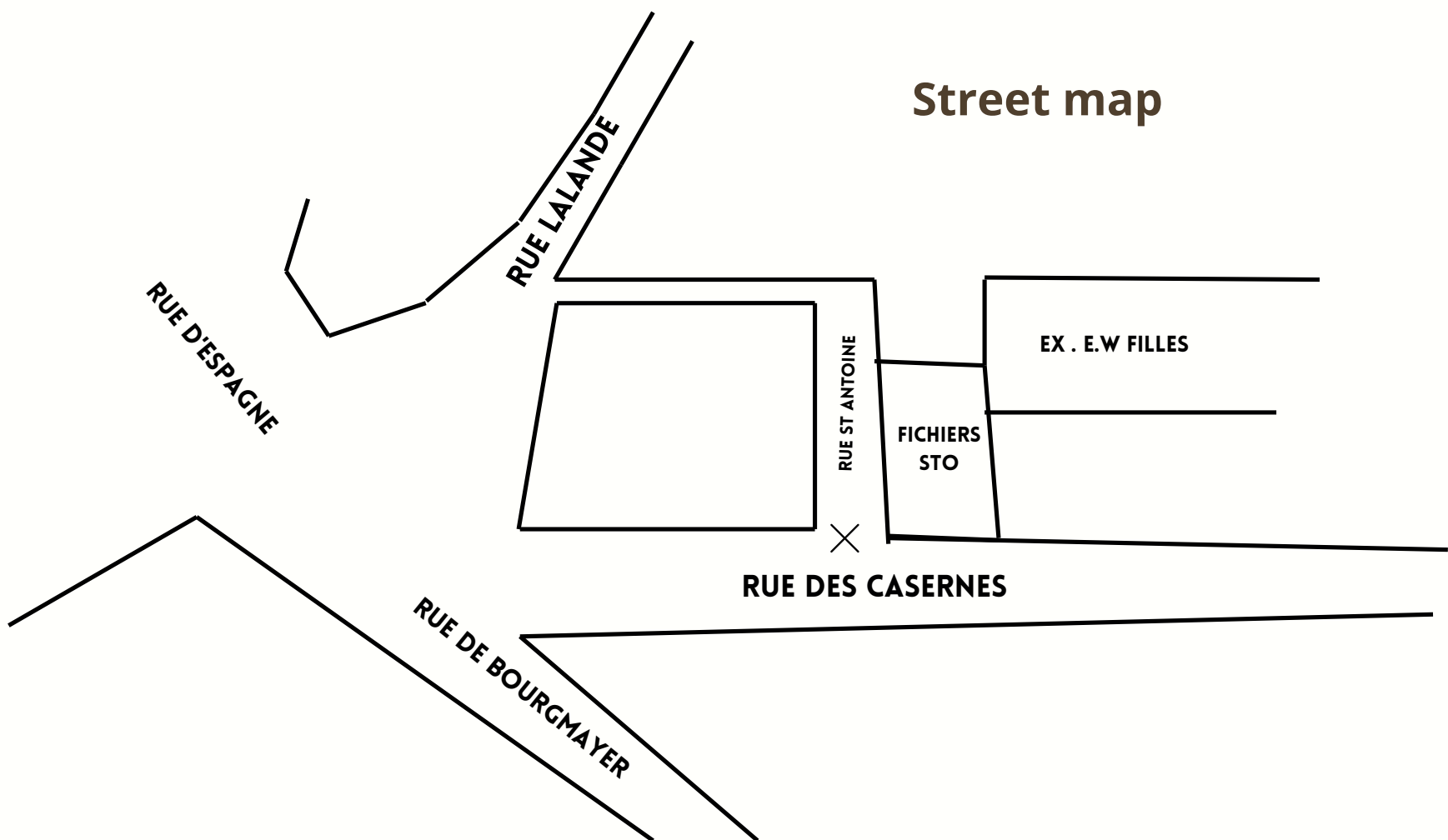
Municipal Archives of Bourg-en-Bresse, 33Fi0175



B4- Labor inspection (in the building of the female teachers’ training school) on Rue des Casernes: getting hold of the STO files



In February 1943, the establishment of the S.T.O. (Compulsory Labour Service) leads to the registration of young people (born between 1920 and 1922) to provide labor to Germany. This service worries many people, and numerous complaints are voiced. Additionally, in Bourg, new groups of young people are being formed to express their disagreement. Quickly, the F.U.J (Forces Unies de la Jeunesse = United Forces of Youth) organize a commando to steal departure order files from the S.T.O. The files are centralized at 3 Rue des Casernes. Many meetings are organized with prominent figures of the resistance in Ain, such as Paul Morin or Marcel Thenon, the leader of the F.U.J. There are also Roy and Bollon, both employees at the labor inspection and responsible for the registration of young people for the S.T.O, who become accomplices; their presence is of great help for the success of the theft. In total, 9 people participate in this operation under the direction of Marcel Thenon. On Friday, May 21, 1943, the burglars make off with 25 to 30 kilograms of files. This is the first action in which high school students participate. The burglars climb a three meter high wall bordering Rue Saint-Antoine. The theft is a success thanks to Roy and Bollon. They freeze the registration of young people in Ain for a certain period of time. Then, around noon, Roy and his comrades put the files in trailers attached to some bicycles and transport them. The files are burnt at Gabriel Pobel's parents’ farm on Chemin des Dîmes in Bourg. The destruction of the S.T.O. files enables to delay the mobilization of young people by two months. However, following a denunciation in the following days, all the participants, except Paul Morin, are arrested, tortured, and deported.

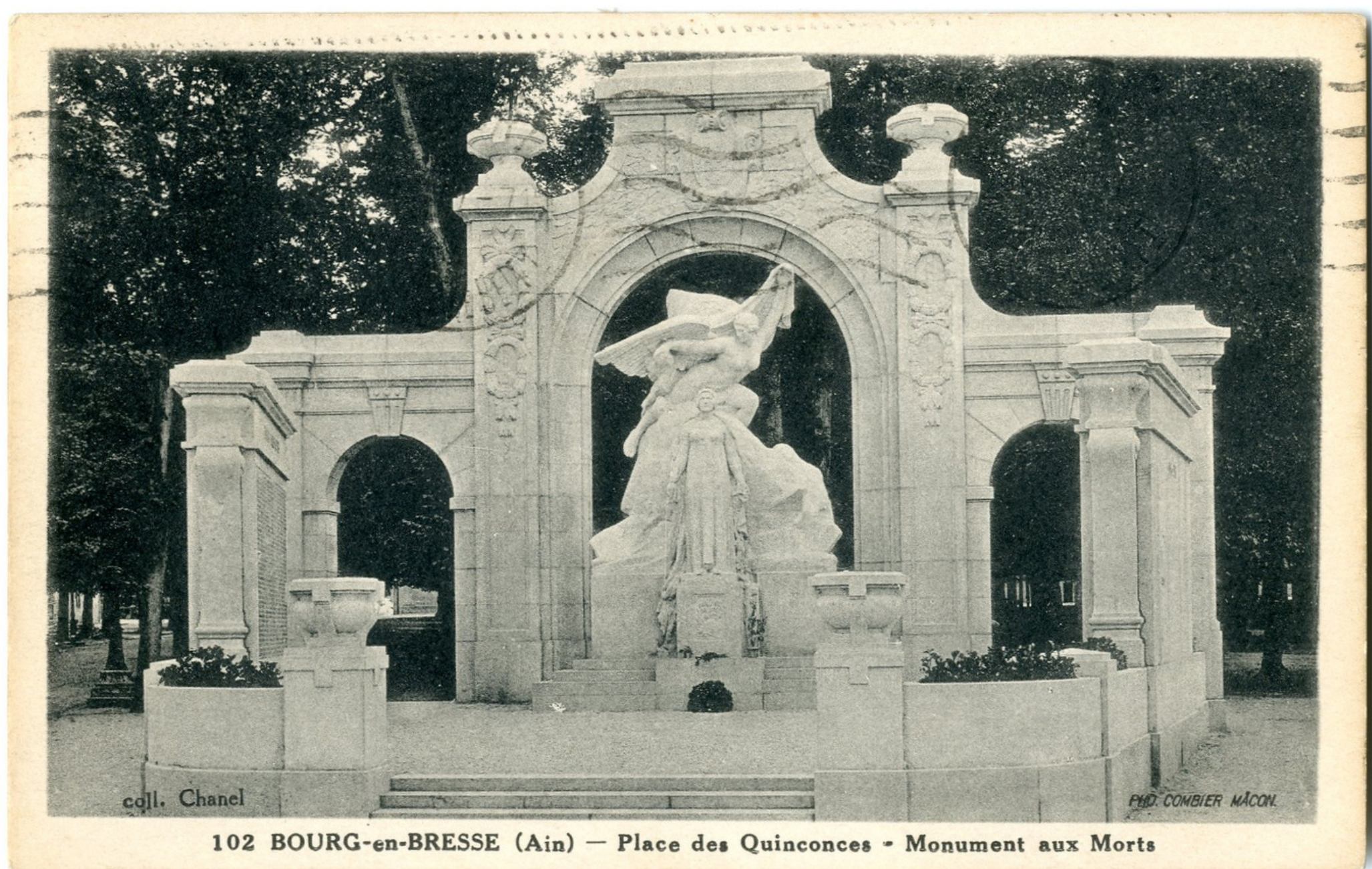


B5 - War Memorial: Participation in Prohibited Ceremonies

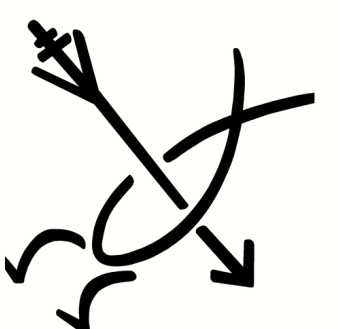


While the Vichy regime prohibits all commemorations, leaflets encourage high school students to participate in the celebration on July 14, 1942, in front of the war memorial. A police report mentions a gathering of 30 high school students. Roger Page from Lalande is arrested. He is beaten up in the basement of the Hotel de l'Europe and then released. On November 11, 1942, some students, eager to pay tribute to the heroes of World War I (1914-1918), once again go to the war memorial. The police, busy securing a bicycle race taking place in Bourg that day, are not immediately informed of the clandestine gathering, allowing the ceremony to proceed smoothly. However, the large crowd eventually alerts law enforcement, who disperse the clandestine protesters. According to Paul Morin, two students from Lalande High School, Roger Page and Petit, are arrested and taken to the police station for a control, only to be released later in the day.

The town's war memorial in 1937



Municipal Archives of Bourg-en-Bresse, 33Fi0806



B6 - Alsace-Lorraine Avenue: Bravado of Lalande Students in Front of the Occupier

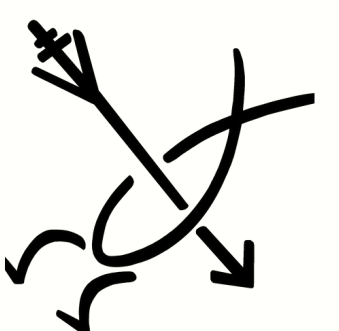


Following the Allied landing in North Africa in November 1942, German troops now occupy the entire country. Bourg-en-Bresse, previously in the "free zone," is therefore affected by this change in situation. During the winter of 1942-1943, around fifty students from the first and final years of high school, returning from their sports session at Marcel Verchère Stadium, encounter German soldiers marching to a military song. One of the young Lalande students, François Rabuel, with the active complicity of the sports teacher Marcel Cochet, shouts, "Vous n'aurez pas l'Alsace et la Lorraine" (You won't get Alsace and Lorraine), echoed by the entire group. They deviate from their usual route and follow the soldiers along Alsace-Lorraine Avenue. Though the headteacher and the prefect are very angry about it, fortunately there will be no untoward consequence.

The prefecture, avenue Alsace-Lorraine in 1944



Municipal Archives of Bourg-en-Bresse, 617W117



B7 - Former Quinet High School (Current Pardé High School): Role of Other Schools in the Resistance



While the majority of high school resistance activities are focused at Lalande High School, this school has also dragged the high school resistance movement along. For example, the first group of six at Carriat High School is formed at the beginning of the 1942 school year with the participation of Roger Pollet, René Morin (Paul Morin's brother), and Houppert. Subsequently, Roger Pollet joins the FUJ along with other Carriat students in October 1942. Yet, Paul Morin's arrest on June 17, 1943, is facilitated by an infiltrated student from Carriat: Houppert. As for Quinet, a girls' High School, resistance efforts are organized under the leadership of Colette Lacroix. In 1941, she joins the "Libération" movement in Bourg-en-Bresse alongside Paul Pioda and forms her own resistance group within her school, distributing flyers, underground newspapers, and photos of General Charles de Gaulle. She also joins the "Combat" group in Lyon, where she makes false documents. Additionally, a Gaullist girl student from Quinet is also present at the meeting between Paul Morin and Bailly, at the Restaurant le Français, where she insists on obtaining weapons too.

Carriat School

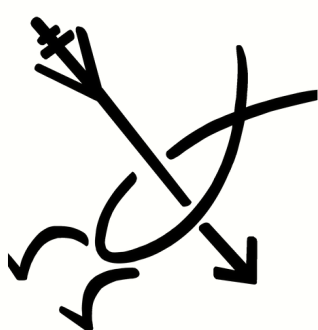


Departmental Archives of the Ain, 5Fi53-23

Quinet Girls' High School



Departmental Archives of the Ain, 5Fi53-363



B8 - The Train Station and Its Neighborhood: A Very Important Place for the Lalande Resistance

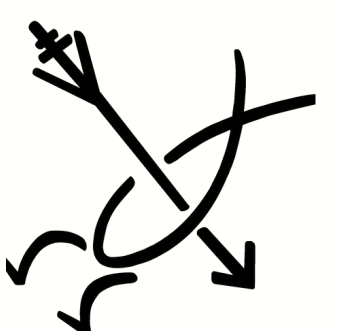


Indeed, it is here, in March 1943, that a demonstration is organized by Paul Pioda and his comrades, to protest against the departure of conscripts to the STO. Some individuals, including Lalande residents like Marcel Rosette, gather before curfew and shout slogans such as "Vive de Gaulle" or "Laval au poteau" (Laval to the execution post). However, the Milice members are surprised by the demonstration and violently drive away the participants. This gathering is successful as no one is arrested, and many young people, now considered "réfractaires," meaning resistance fighters, manage to escape. A little further away, on Rue du Peloux, one Sunday during the winter of 1943-1944, at the request of the F.T.P. 2 "the Avenger" camp, which needs vehicles in good condition, Lalande residents Paul Millet and Marcel Rosette, along with two other resistance fighters, steal the Prefect's cars from a garage where they are kept in Bourg en Bresse. All these resistance operations would not have been possible without weapons, especially without the Sten submachine gun. To learn how to handle it, high school students organize training sessions at Marcel Thenon's SNCF (French National Railway Company) apartment on Rue Girod de l'Ain, as well as at Roger Bouvet's parents' farm. In small groups of 4 to 5, they meet every Thursday, blindfoldedly dismantling and reassembling the weapon to be operational at night.

Bourg en Bresse railway station decorated with flags for the visit of Marshal Pétain in 1942



Municipal archives of Bourg-en-Bresse, 674W01_001

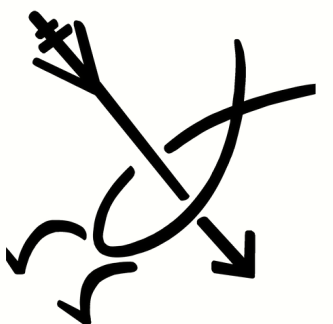


B9- 41 Boulevard Voltaire: the commitment of high school student François-Yves Guillin alongside General Delestraint



Here lies the residence of General Delestraint, a retired military officer who settled in Bourg-en-Bresse.

François-Yves Guillin from Lalande, whose family is acquainted with the general's, becomes close to him. Indeed, the young man cannot tolerate the racist and anti-Semitic acts occurring within the school, which motivates him to join the Resistance. After high school, he undertakes medical studies. When General Delestraint is appointed leader of the secret army by De Gaulle in September 1942, Guillin becomes his liaison agent and later his private secretary. This provides him with opportunities to meet many important figures of the internal Resistance, particularly Jean Moulin, to whom he announces the arrest of the general on June 9, 1943, in Paris.

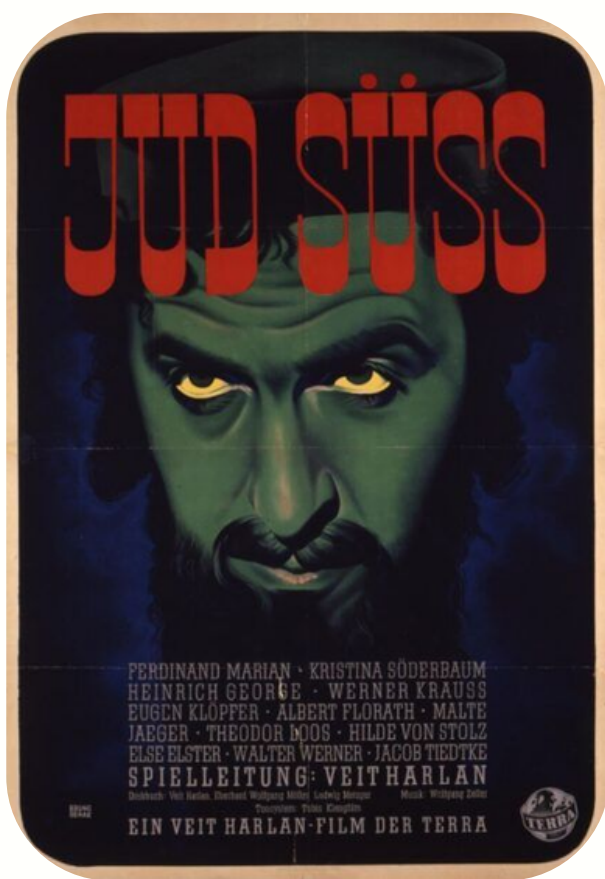


B10 - Cinema ABC, 28 (or 30?) Boulevard Voltaire: Resistance to Vichy Regime Propaganda Films



During the Vichy regime, students from Lalande are subjected to Nazi propaganda. The school compels them to attend the screenings of several films such as "Le Juif Süss" (Süss, the Jew) or "Français, vous avez la mémoire courte" (French people, you've got a short memory). Marshal Pétain also seeks to "purge" the teaching staff of Jews and political opponents. At the school, the adults tend to be passive. However, some of them express their disagreement during film screenings, like 3 teachers, Mr. Merle, Mr. Mandouze, and Mr. Audierne.

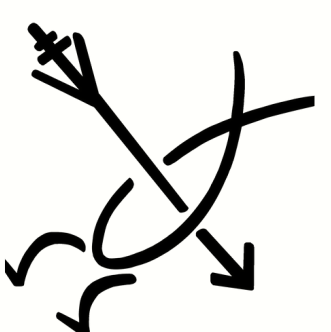
Poster of the film "Le juif Süss" (The Jew Süss)



Mr Audierne



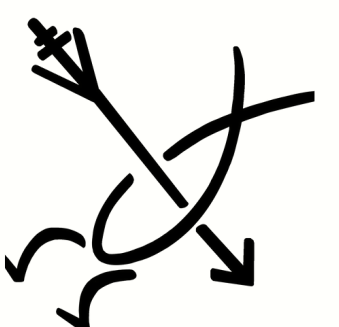
The old cinema before demolition



B11 - 16 Boulevard Voltaire, Propaganda Headquarters:



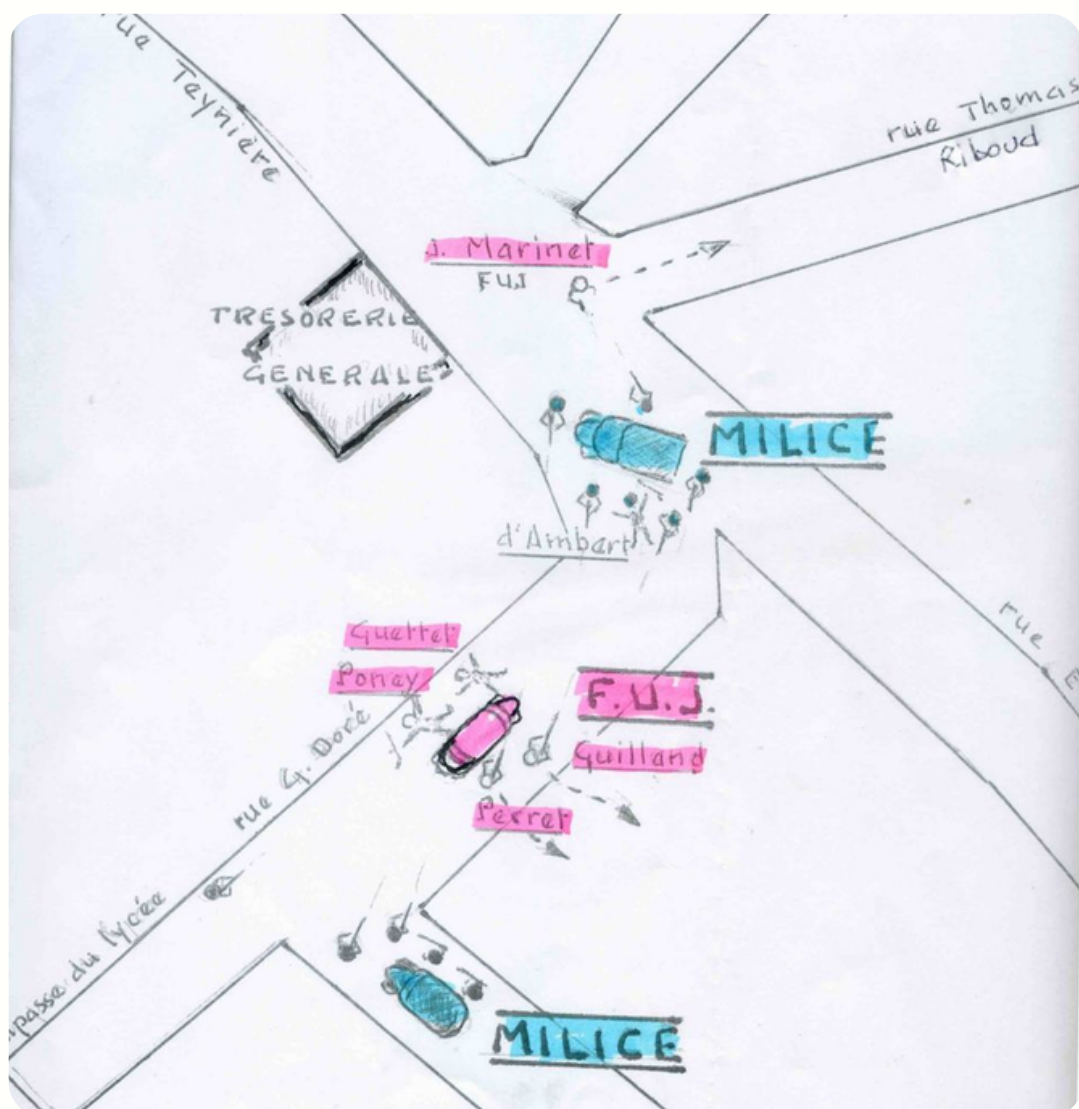
Even outside of the high school, certain staff members at Lalande are active in the resistance and play significant roles. First and foremost, Marcel Cochet helps the young people who are hostile to the Vichy regime in getting organized, while the majority of the teachers and the school administration do not follow this path. Pierre Schmidt, known as Bourgeois, has also significantly contributed to the resistance. He joins the ranks of the United Forces of Patriotic Youth (FUJP), a movement founded by some teachers and students of the school. Hugues Barange, also known as Micky or Nicky, an assistant teacher, is a resistance fighter as well as the national leader of the United Forces of Patriotic Youth, the commander of the French Interior Forces, and an imprisoned resistance fighter (DIR). Barange, along with other resistance fighters, uses a house at 16 Boulevard Voltaire for making propaganda, storing weapons, and also as a meeting place to plan resistance activities.



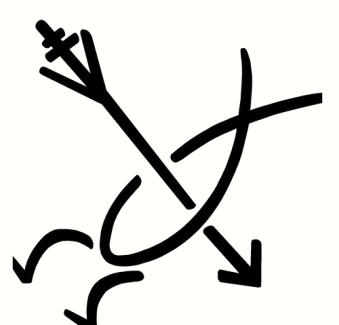
B12 - Teynière Street: Attack on the Local Finance Office Building on June 5th, 1944



In 1944, the resistance urgently needs money to provide financial support for the liberation of the territory. After two failed attempts, the first on May 27th and the second on May 29th, a third attempt is organized. On June 5th, 1944, in the morning, this third attempt, called "the attack on the Local Finance Office Building" ("la Trésorerie Générale" in French), occurs on Gustave Doré Street. It is led by two resistance fighters from the Gravelle maquis: Paul Baillet, nicknamed "Poney," and Roger Perret, accompanied by three members of the FUJ and high school students from Lalande: Gilbert Guillard, nicknamed "Luy," Roger Guettet, and Jean Marinnet. However, this attack also fails. Due to a denunciation, the Milice (Militia) arrives on the scene, a gunfight ensues. Jean Marinnet, Roger Perret, and Gilbert Guillard escape, while Roger Guettet and Paul Baillet are wounded and arrested. Yet, they later manage to escape and join the FUJ company. That same afternoon, there is a roundup at Lalande High School during the final exams. Even if nothing is quite certain, there may be a connection between this event and the attack on the Local Finance Office Building. June 5th, 1944, is therefore a very important day for both the Resistance and the Lalande students.



Plan of the attack on the General Treasury by Jean MARINET



B13 - Hôtel de l'Europe, Rue Debenay, Headquarters of the Milice in 1944



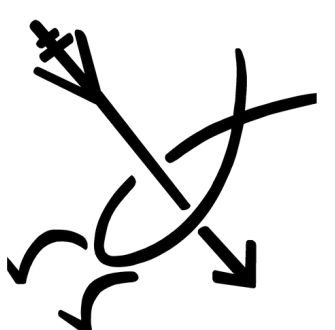
In early June 1944, the Milice settles in Bourg-en-Bresse, at a well-known location, Hôtel de l'Europe. Initially used as a sales room, the Milice unfortunately transforms it into a

prison, with their leaders establishing offices there. The hotel and its cellars then become a living hell. Every day, the Milice tortures detainees through flogging or making burns. It is a true horror, right in the center of Bourg... Witnesses, such as Mr. Charvet, describe these cellars. He says: "ten meters of a stone staircase leading to the cellars through a long corridor, dimly lit by a 15-watt lamp. The first cellar is packed with wood bundles, leaving a space of 60 cm up to the vault. One cannot stand up. In the second, three tons of fermenting potatoes serve as mattresses for the detainees." And our group of 10 Lalande students is held there for 15 days, after the interrogation of the 40 students in Saint Amour, following the roundup at the high school. To keep the detainees in horror, the Milice blocks the openings like the cellar vents, through which the resistant students were previously able to pass on provisions to their detained friends, allowing the stench to settle in. Between 80 to 100 people are held captive at the same time in this hell. The owner of this building, a certain Madame Denizot, closely follows these horrors by managing to bring a little water to the detainees. Despite some promises of freedom, they will be forced to take a train to the Heydebreck camp in Upper Silesia (now Poland).

Hôtel de l'Europe, headquarters of the Milice in June 1944



Municipal archives of Bourg-en-Bresse, 33Fi1518

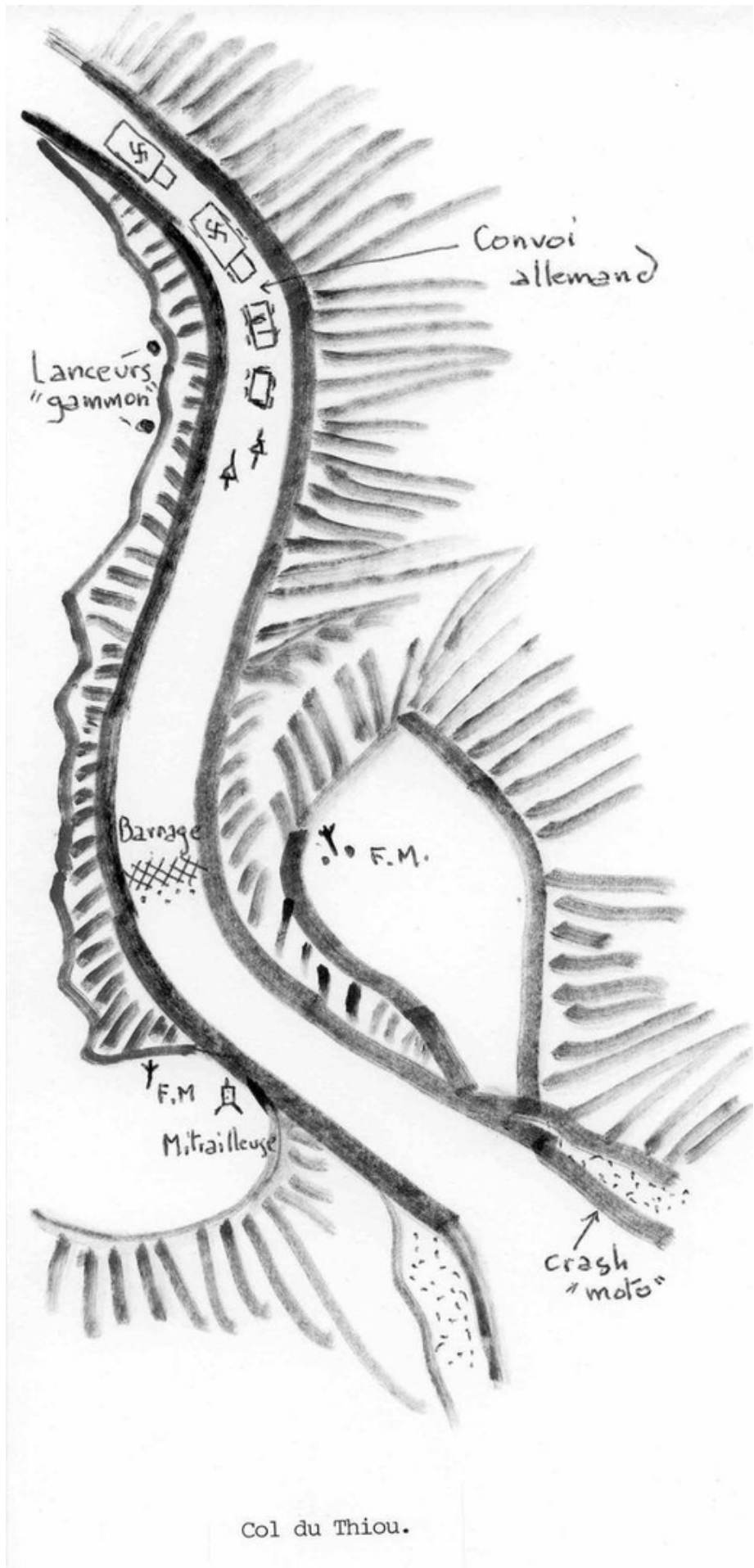


B14 - The Continuation of the Struggle Despite the Raid

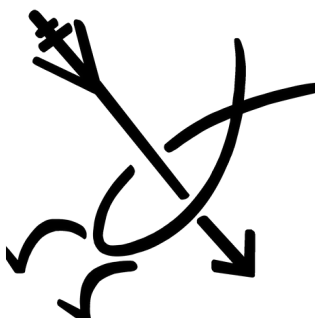


During the roundup on June 5, 1944, ten students and one supervisor from the Jérôme Lalande High School are arrested. This date marks the partial destruction of the FUJ. Despite this repression, some students do not flee from the enemy and decide to continue to fight. The resistant students then join the FUJ company. Upon the announcement of the Allied forces' landing in Normandy on June 6, 1944, various resistance movements get together. Thus, the members of the maquis, the Secret Army (AS), the FTP, and the FUJ form the French Forces of the Interior (FFI), under the command of Colonel Henri ROMANS-PETIT for the Ain (01) and Haut-Jura (39) departments. This resistance movement lends a hand, by organizing for example the attack on an armored train near Tenay on July 7 or the one on August 18 in Montluel, to retrieve supplies and equipment. They also directly fight the Germans in battles such as those at Col de la Lèbe on June 22 and 23 (resulting in three FUJ members being captured and shot) and at the Hauteville quarries on July 12 (resulting in three FUJ members being killed in combat and three being captured and shot), as well as in the Battle of La Valbonne – Meximieux from August 31 to September 2, where the resistance fighters fight against the 209th Armored Regiment of the XXI Panzer Division alongside American military vanguards. The outcome of this battle is seven dead and three wounded among the resistance fighters. Lalande students like Jean MARINET also participate in other battles, such as those in Bellegarde-sur-Valserine.

On September 25, 1944, the FUJ company is disbanded. Yet, as the resistance fighters wish to continue the fight, they join the Army of the Alps to combat on the Italian border. The involvement of a significant number of Jérôme Lalande High School students in resistance acts leads to the school being awarded the French Resistance Medal. This medal, authorized by a decree on October 3, 1946, is awarded during a ceremony on January 12, 1947. It honors this high school in Bourg-en-Bresse as it is the only civilian French high school to have been awarded this designation.



Drawings by Gilbert GUILLAND



SOURCES

B1:Presentation of the high school

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- AERI (Association pour des études sur la Résistance intérieure). Musée de la Résistance en ligne. Consulté le 08/04/2024 sur <https://museedelaresistanceenligne.org/>
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B2: Paul Pioda's glassware-mirroring-framing shop, located at 21 Basch Street (formerly Government Street): the epicenter of resistance at Lalande High School

Livres :

- Association Résistance Lycée Lalande (ouvrage collectif) (1995) , Histoires peu ordinaires de lycéens ordinaires, Bourg-en-Bresse, imprimerie du Conseil Général de l'Ain.
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- Archives municipales de Bourg-en-Bresse. Consulté le 25/03/2024 sur <http://archives.bourgenbresse.fr/>

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- 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.

B3:Restaurant Le Français, an important meeting place for the Resistance

Livre :

- Mercier, P. (2023) Lalande se rebelle. (4e édition de la Collection « L'Ain : Résistance et Déportation). Association des amis du Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation de l'Ain

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