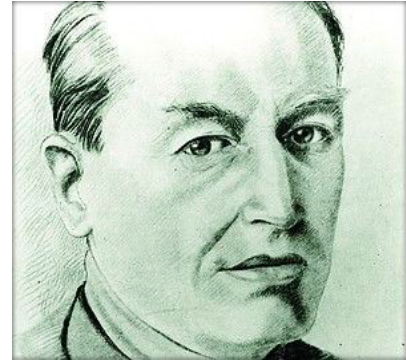


## **Daniel Bouchet** (1894 - 1987)

Born in 1894, was a medical doctor in the region of Deux-Sèvres (the region where our former partner school is located).

In June 1940, in the middle of the *Blitzkrieg*, he became mayor of the town Saint Loup sur Thouet (until 1943, when he was imprisoned by the Nazis) and did everything he could to protect the citizens from the cruelty of the Nazi occupants.

In January 1941, doctor Bouchet slapped a German petty officer in the face (the reason is not known). Bouchet was immediately imprisoned and sentenced to death but then pardoned and released.



While continuing his work both as a doctor and as a mayor, he joined the secret-service network “Confrérie Notre-Dame” and later on the movement “Organisation Civile et Militaire” – both organizations were active in resistance against the Nazis. Bouchet, risking his life each and every day, undertook lots of clandestine trips to organize resistance against the occupants, helped with secret service missions, recruited new members for the resistance organization and helped in missions of saving and hiding material that the British allies dropped on parachutes.

On August 9, 1943 Bouchet was caught by the Nazis, imprisoned (in the jail of Poitiers) and again sentenced to death on December 18, 1943. But, maybe because of a good physical constitution, his sentence was changed to life-long forced labour. This meant that on January 24, 1944 he was deported to the concentration camp Buchenwald in Germany.

The concentration camp Buchenwald was one of few concentration camps located in the middle of Germany and it was close to a number of big sites for the production of airplanes and military weapons. The Nazis sent prisoners from all over Europe to do forced labour under horrible living conditions because they “needed” workers to keep their military weapon production running.

During his detention at Buchenwald, Daniel Bouchet continued to help his fellow prisoners as much as he could.

Other than thousands of other forced labourers, Bouchet survived and returned to his home town when the war was over. He resumed his work as a doctor and stayed politically active until 1973. As a co-founder of the “Conservatoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation” (an organization dedicated to commemorate the Nazi atrocities committed in France and the resistance work of many French people), he dedicated a lot of his time to teaching younger generations the values of the resistance until his death in 1986.

## Story on Daniel Bouchet's life

Composed by Andrea (CZ), Jan (GE), Spyros and Teo (GR)

### Minutes of two police interrogations of Dr Daniel Bouchet in 1941 and 1943

*Interrogation method 1 – ordinary questions: The investigator asks questions related to the case and on the suspect himself. All answers are written down. The investigator asks the same questions over and over, trying to confuse the suspect, and again writes down all the answers. If answers differ, the suspect lies. The only effective defense is: silence.*

#### **Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA), Region Deux Sèvre**

DATE: 20/01/1941

#### **Attack on a German officer, January 20, 1941**

#### **Interrogation of Daniel Buchet, mayor of Saint Loup sur Thouet**

Interrogator 1: Mr. Bouchet, do you understand me?

Daniel Bouchet: Yes, I understand you.

I 1: Good. When did you become mayor of this city?

DB: In 1940. In June.

I 1: Did the mayor before you, Mr Chavrolet, have any contact with resistance?

DB: No, I think he didn't.

I 1: Did he leave you any information about the resistance? The information could have confused you.

DB: No, he didn't. I don't know anything and I don't have any information about any sort of resistance.

I 1: Why did you attack the German officer?

DB: \*silence\*

I 1: Mr. Bouchet, when were you born?

DB: In 1894.

I 1: Do you agree with the Vichy government in free France?

DB: \*silence\*

I 1: Do you have relatives in Vichy France?

DB: No, I don't.

I 1: Was mayor Chavrolet a member of the resistance?

DB: I don't know.

I 1: Did he agree with Vichy France?

DB: As I said: I don't know.

I 1: Why did you attack the German officer?

DB: He was very cruel to my secretary.

I 1: Do you mean Miss Lalique?

DB: Yes.

I 1: Did you know that Miss Lalique was a member of the resistance?

DB: No, I didn't.

I 1: When did you find out that Miss Lalique was a member of the resistance?

DB: \*silence\*

I 1: Did Miss Lalique work for mayor Chabrolet, too?

DB: Yes, she did.

I 1: For how long has Miss Lalique been a member of the resistance?  
DB: As I said, I don't know anything.  
I 1: Do you have relatives living in the area of Vichy France?  
DB: No, I don't.  
I 1: You are lying. Your wife's sister lives in Vichy France. So you have relatives there!  
DB: She is not my relative.  
I 1: As you wife's sister she is. When were you elected mayor of this town?  
DB: As I said, in June 1940.  
I 1: How often do you meet your wife's sister?  
DB: I don't meet my wife's sister.  
I 1: How often does your wife meet her sister?  
DB: My wife hates her sister. They have not seen each other for 5 years.

*Interrogation 2 - method black and white. This method is more complicated because it involves more people. In the first step the suspect is confronted with "bad guys". They are rough and attack the suspect verbally and physically. They want to scare the suspect to make him feel lonely and deserted. The second step is taken over by a "good guy". He seems to understand the suspect and fight for him and makes the bad guys leave. The suspect gets the feeling that the interrogator is an ally. The suspect is supposed to tell the interrogator everything.*

### **Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA), Region Deux Sèvre**

DATE: 15/11/1943

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> interrogation of Daniel Bouchet (countinued interrogation after weakness attack during interrogation 22)**

*Note on 22<sup>nd</sup> interrogation (14/11/1943): Hard interrogation by Obersturmbandfuehrer XY without results; suspect taken to the doctor with several wounds.*

Interrogator 3 ("good guy"): Mr Bouchet, I am very sorry for the bad behaviour of my colleagues yesterday. The surely went too far. How are you?  
DB: \*shows no reaction\*  
I 3: Believe me, I am really sorry for what happened. You know that you are only here to answer a few questions. I know you are a good mayor and that you are willing to cooperate. I'm on your side.  
DB: \*Slight nodding\*  
I 3: Please, help me to clarify the situation by answering a few questions. Would you be so kind?  
DB: (\*hesitantly\*) If I can help ...  
I 3: Have you ever heard of an organization called Confrérie Notre-Dame?  
DB: No, I don't think I've ever heard of it.  
I 3: Well, it's an organization that does everything to destabilize this country. You see, we are only here to keep up a good cooperation and a stable, working government. And I know you are a good mayor and are doing everything that you can to have a well working community, don't you?  
DB: Of course.  
I 3: As a mayor you meet a lot of people – that's your job. Can't you remember people that might work against the government? I'm sure there must have been some people in your community that don't understand that we all do everything for them and not against them. Do you know anybody who could be member of such resistance movements?  
DB: \*no answer, shaking his head\*

I 3: I see. These people are very cautious. They might not trust you. Let me get you a glass of water. Do you need any medicine? You seem tired.

DB: Thank you. No medicine. I'm okay.

\*silence for a few minutes\*

I 3: Something else: Did you leave Saint Loup sur Thouet to visit another city last year? Maybe for a trip to meet some other mayors on behalf of some business?

DB: Yes, I had to go on several trips. I don't remember all of them.

I 3: Did you also go on some private trips?

DB: Once, I visited my wife's sister in southern France.

I 3: Is that your wife's sister that she hates? Or was it another sister?

DB: My wife doesn't know anything about this trip.

I 3: Why did you meet that woman? Was it something very private? I mean, do you have an affair with her?

DB: No. There was some family business to be clarified that I didn't want to bother my wife with.

I 3: Aha, I see. Family business ... Could it be that you made the trip to support resistance? I'd understand if you had slipped into that somehow ...

DB: I'm not a member of the resistance.

I 3: Your office is visited by many people. Of course, this is nothing unusual, I guess?

DB: I'm a mayor and a doctor. It is normal that people want to see me.

I 3: Of course. Tell me, do you still work as a doctor while also being the mayor?

DB: I do whatever I can. People get sick all the time. And there is nobody else in town who could treat them.

I 3: You're a good man, I know. But don't you think that this could be too much for you and sometimes your work as a mayor suffers?

DB: As I said, I do whatever I can.

I 3: Please, have a look at this document. It is about an empty factory building and says that the construction is instable. Do you recognize it?

DB: I actually don't.

I 3: We went to the place to look what we could do. But when we were there we found a number of parachutes and military equipment. And the interesting thing is that you signed the document. Can you explain to me?

DB: No, I didn't know that this building was being used at all.

I 3: Aha. Let me ask you one more question: Do you know the main goal Confrérie Notre-Dame?

DB: Well, I guess they want freedom.

I 3: Mr Bouchet, a few minutes ago you said you didn't know Confrérie Notre-Dame! So you were lying at me. I am really deeply disappointed! There's nothing more that I can do for you now. My colleagues will take over.

*Interrogation continued by Obersturmbandfuehrer XY and assistant. Suspect Daniel Bouchet refuses to answer, faints after 20 minutes.*

18/12/1943 Daniel Bouchet sentenced to death for work as resistance fighter.

2/1/1944 Daniel Bouchet, due to good health and constitution, sentenced to deportation.