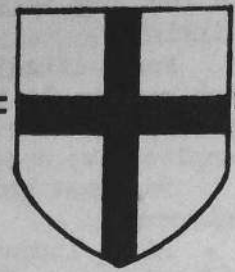


# BRETON NEWS



*A Bulletin issued by*  
**The Breton Information Bureau**

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No. 28-29

Dublin

30th June, 1962.

To our subscribers.

This issue of BRETON NEWS is for June and July. In order to compensate for a single issue, we have made it of 4 pages.

VOTE OF THANKS TO SCANDINAVIAN  
UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

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which the national movements of the Celtic countries are represented has requested us to publish the following communique:

"On behalf of the Central Council of the Celtic League, I wish to thank the signatories of the petition addressed by Mr. P. NAERT, University of Lund, to the UNESCO Councils of the Nordic Countries, requesting them to ask UNESCO to adopt protective measures in favour of the languages and cultures of the small ethnical groups."

Signed: A. Heussaff.

PETITION BY SCANDINAVIAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS.

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A petition, signed by 52 professors and lecturers at 11 Nordic Universities was sent on May 1st by Mr. P. NAERT, assistant professor at Lund University, to the UNESCO councils of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, requesting them to urge UNESCO to adopt measures for the protection of the languages and cultures of the small ethnical groups.

The universities concerned are: Reykjavik, Bergen, Oslo, Aarhus, Copenhagen, Lund, Goeteborg, Stockholm, Upsala, Turku, Helsinki.

Among the languages listed in the appendix, we find, for Western Europe, Scotch Gaelic, Breton, Basque, Occitan, Frisian (in NW Germany but not in the Netherlands).

The Swedish UNESCO Council has already given a favourable reply.

Because of the acute need for such protective measures in the case of the Breton language, we give a detailed account of the text of the petition.

THREAT OF EXTERMINATION. For political reasons or others, the languages concerned are threatened with extermination within one or two generations.

In nearly all countries, there are organisations and laws for the protection of rare plants and animals. But there is not a single officially recognised association for the defence of the small ethnical groups and the preservation of their languages and cultures.

One reason is the ignorance in which the public is maintained concerning them, and the lack of interest and understanding for the values they represent.

But most of the reputedly civilised peoples consider their cultures as superior to those of small nations. Such a superiority may exist from certain points of view, but it does not entitle any people to exterminate others, culturally or physically.

The small ethnical groups are unable to live according to their traditions and to keep their languages because of the expansion or assimilation policies of the big states, where no such pressure exists, like in Iceland and in the Feroes, the native languages are safe.

CULTURAL SUPERIORITY: There is no universally recognised criterion for cultural values. The Western culture presents some characteristics which would make it, by its own standards, inferior to more primitive ones: juvenile delinquency is an example. The developments of hygiene and of technique are not unmitigated blessings: the one may be correlated with wars of mass annihilation and the other with a lowering of the creative powers and of the quality of products. In art, much is now being borrowed from the so-called primitive peoples.

From a cultural point of view it is therefore important to safeguard the small ethnical groups.

LANGUAGE: KEY FACTOR. For the safeguard of their cultures, the defence of their language is of paramount importance. Language is not, as many imagine, an interchangeable instrument for the expression of pre-existing concepts and ideas; it is on

the contrary indissolubly bound with these concepts and ideas, with the way of thinking.

For a linguist, no language is superior to another. Each has its own merits. Each can supply to its deficiencies in vocabulary (in science and technics for instance) by adapting foreign words or by coining neologisms whenever the need arises. All peoples have done so in the course of cultural development.

But most primitive peoples possess in their languages better ways of expressing nuances.

Since language and thought, and thought and culture are so intimately bound, the extermination of a language is tantamount to the destruction of the culture it expresses.

Neither the Nordic peoples nor the Catalans and Basques would abandon their languages for the sake of English or Spanish, however widespread and practical the use of these may be.

In the case of the Nordics and among most others, it is felt that language and culture are inseparable, are in fact the same thing.

But when, as in the case of the Basques and Ainous (in Japan), the languages are subject to a systematic prosecution and depreciation, they are doomed to become extinct very soon, unless the tendency is quickly checked. And the same fate will overtake relatively important languages.

Let nobody misunderstand us: we recognise fully the advantage for most people to know several languages, particularly those of numerically important neighbours. But one should not have to abandon one's own for that! That is evident for us Nordics, but apparently incomprehensible for many members of the big nations.

Summing up, we insist that by killing a language, one kills a culture and a nation. In actual political conditions, it should be already possible to put into effect measures for the protection of the languages. It must be done urgently.

FIRST STEPS: All those who are concerned with the problem should organise a petition similar to the Scandinavian one and send it to the UNESCO council for their own country.

A committee of linguists should be nominated by UNESCO to make a list of the threatened languages and propose measures for their safeguard.

The most radical solution would be to do away with Article 1 : 2, 7 of the UNO statutes, and give the United Nations the right to intervene in the "internal affairs" of the States. But it is still too soon for this to be practicable.

The signatories of the Scandinavian petition request the Nordic UNESCO councils at their next general meeting in August to give their agreement to the petition and decide on common action at the next General Assembly of UNESCO on Sept. 17th 1962.

It is fitting that the proposal should come from the Nordic countries: they understand better than most others the central role played by language in a people's cultural life; however small their population is in some cases, they are among those who endeavour most to preserve their national languages, while protecting the minority languages within their borders.

DRAFT-BILL FOR A BRETON LAW-PROGRAMME  
ADOPTED BY CELIB AT LORIENT

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June 18th and adopted a draft-bill for a Breton law-programme (See B. News No. 27 for a detailed account of its contents).

The General Assembly of the Committee for the Study and Defense of the Breton Interests (C.E.L.I.B.) met at Lorient on

A law-programme is now being demanded by about 1090 municipalities representing more than 80% of the population in the 4 departments of the administrative region called "Brittany". The demand is also supported by 7 Chambers of Commerce, all the Agricultural Chambers and the 5 General Councils of Brittany. No campaign has ever been so successful in Brittany. The question is how will the French Government treat this clear democratic expression of the Breton <sup>will</sup> when it is presented to the French National Assembly by the parliamentary commission of C.E.L.I.B.?

1300 delegates were present at the Lorient meeting which was presided by R. PLEVEN and attended by the prefets of the administrative region.

20 delegates intervened in the discussion to present their mandants' viewpoint: The chairman of the Finistere Federation of Farmers Unions: "If the deputies are not heard by the Government, we shall be ..."

A trade union secretary: "the factories have to be built where the men are."

The Secretary of C.E.L.I.B. asked whether the organisation should limit itself to petitions or rather join with all other forces in order to get the government to act?

He dwelled also on the necessity of re-attaching Loire-Atlantique to the rest of Brittany.

The draft-bill was adopted unanimously. Special attention was given to the question of rail transport tariffs, agricultural production objectives on a regional basis, Breton teaching.

One of the aims C.E.L.I.B. should set itself, said R. Plevén, was to study Brittany's role in the middle of a Common Market including Britain and Spain.

(Ouest-France, 19-6-'62)

The direct participation of Brittany in the talks for the integration of Great Britain in the Common Market is demanded by the Movement for the Organisation of Brittany in view of the primordial importance of her future cross-channel trade.

DUMPING ARTICHOKEs AGAIN. 210 tons of artichokes were dumped on the streets of Kastell-Pol on June 20th. Another 75 tons were thrown away in neighbouring villages in Northern Brittany. This followed a strike in public services, a total collapse of prices and an order by farmers union leaders to destroy unsold crops. After attempts to enforce discipline on independent farmers, there were scuffles with the police. An offensive grenade exploded under a police car. Numerous telegraphic lines were sabotaged in the Kastell-Pol area. 17 tons of artichokes were distributed free to the Brest workers. In Concarneau, 30 tons of fish had to be thrown back into the sea due to superabundance. (Ouest-France, 20-6-'62).

"Agriculture is threatened by capitalist integration. Instances are now frequent of industrial concerns being set up with big capital, for pig or fowl rearing, with the aim of speculating and dominating the trade by ruining the small enterprises. There is only one way to defend ourselves: a powerful and disciplined co-operative.

Industrialists are welcome to Brittany, but we shall not allow our country to be used as a spare colony". (Le Paysan Breton, 12/5).

EXPORTS: French exports of vegetables and fruit increased from 282.000 tons in 1960 to 388.000 tons in 1961. Brittany's part (mainly vegetables) in these figures went up from 29% to 36%. Her main customers were: 1) Germany, 2) Great Britain, 3) Benelux. 16 types of vegetables were involved. Brittany is very much ahead of all French regions in these exports as far as tonnage is concerned. (Ref. Petit Bleu des C-d-N. 9-6-'62).

EUROPEAN FEDERALISTS IN BERN: Representatives of European Federalist organisations in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Euzkadi (Basque Country), Luxembourg, Sweden and Switzerland as well as of the Federalist Union of European Nationalities met in Bern (26-29/4/62) to discuss European federation from the point of view of the small States and ethnical groups.

In their conclusions, they affirmed that federalism was the form of political organisation best adapted to the needs of the European peoples:

1) Federalism only makes possible the peaceful co-existence of nationalities by guaranteeing national, regional and local freedoms, and by forestalling the danger of minorities being oppressed by numerically more important nations:

2) the European federation must be open to all peoples in Europe which are endowed with free democratic institutions:

3) the ethnical groups, now termed minorities, are entitled to effective protection:

b) the Council of Europe should end its discrimination against peoples that do not belong to an ethnical group already in possession of a State: at the moment it recognises only such ethnical groups as have an international status (Editor's note: it recognises for instance the South Tyrolians, but not the Basques and the Bretons).

c) the European Federal Constitution must guarantee the protection of the ethnical groups, thereby creating a climate of trust.

4) It is in the express interest of the small States to take part already in the building of the European Federation. (Ref. Europa, May 1962).

At this congress, Dr. H. Kloss, Kiel, speaking on the Problem of Nationalities in Present-Day Europe, referred to the timid recommendations of the Council of Europe regarding the minorities not legally recognised and stressed the need for more solidarity on the part of the small nations, which risk all becoming minorities if a certain conception of European federation prevails.

A COURAGEOUS FAMILY: It is well known that 5 of the children of the Manrot-Gouarnig family (Moelan, S.W. Brittany) have no legal existence as the French administration has refused to register them under their Breton forenames. Mrs. Gouarnig recently took an action in order to get family allowances, but the Court of Appeal found a loophole and decreed that Mrs. G. was not entitled to the money.

Dailies have also reported about the resistance opposed by the Gouarnig family to the felling of trees on their property, for the sake of putting up an electricity pole. They have reported that a number of policemen forced their way into the property and arrested Mrs. Gouarnig and her 2 eldest children. The following facts, reported by a B.N. correspondent, have not been published:

"The gendarmes have been very nasty. One of them lifted a 4-year old child by the ear. Mrs. Gouarnig was made to kneel by the use of judo. The police lieutenant Bard gave the order: Get them to move, with kicks if need be! A policeman gave a blow with the butt of his rifle to Patrick, 14 year old".

Mrs. Gouarnig had asked the Electricity Company to put the pole at another point, so as to spare her trees.

LAST MINUTE REPORTS: The hand grenade which exploded at Kastell-Pol was thrown into the car of the police lieutenant Bard, who was manhandling the Gouarnigs the previous day.

In the night of June 24th to 25th, Breton farmers set fire to a fowl-rearing

plant. The damage was estimated to be twenty million francs. (B.N. Correspondent).  
Act understood in context of passage from "Le Paysan Breton".

In a communique issued on June 1st, Mr. Boulbain, chairman of the Syndicat d'Initiative of Cotes-du-Nord protests against the publication in the weeklies Ici-Paris and Presse-Magazine of tendentious long-range meteorological forecasts by a self-styled expert. These forecasts have proved erroneous and harmful to the tourist trade in Brittany. Breton representatives have already protested against what appears to be a bias against their area in the official meteorological bulletins, but Mr. Boulbain considers there is a definite hostility in the case of the two weeklies mentioned and threatens retaliation by violent as well as lawful means.

FACTORIES AND POLICE BARRACKS: The threat to close the Henbont foundries (see B.N.No.27) may be averted if negotiations with the Giebel firm, Hohenlinzburg, Ruhr, succeed. From the technical point of view, the deal was nearly completed. The firm is prepared to re-equip and partly re-convert the foundries. The proximity of the harbour of Lorient, which may be revitalised by the expected increase of trade with Africa, appears to be an incentive to the Germans. Only Henbont people will be employed. (Ouest-France, 16-5).  
"Galgenhumor" The Lorient corporation has decided to buy 15 ha of land for the installation of future industries but has rejected a demand by the French ministry of the Interior to give part of the land for the siting of police barracks. The idea seems to be that the police could help as much as industries... (Breiz, June). On the Brest-Rennes road in Treger, a large number of inscriptions have been painted recently. In spite of police efforts to delete them, one can read:

"Up the M.O.B.! Down with fascism and the OAS! Long live Brittany! No military bases in Brittany! A Breton Parliament!" The M.O.B. posters campaign continues in Western Brittany. In spite of government orders, posters showing the enormous credits affected to the army, the police and the military bases were put up in the Bodilis area where the French plan to establish a huge camp. Policemen from neighbouring towns were seen tearing them down on many occasions.

REDUCED TO BEGGING: On May 31st the 11th annual collection for the Breton language was held on the public roads and squares of Brittany with the participation of thousands of young members of the cultural organisations. The proceeds are due to be reserved to support the (voluntary) teaching of Breton. In the absence of any financial allowance from public funds, the Breton youth is called upon once a year to go begging for its language. (The Breton people pay dutifully their taxes. They want Breton taught in the public schools. The fate of Breton should not depend on alms). Between May 26th and June 2nd, Breton books, magazines and records were displayed, in many places under the Breton flag, in the windows of 80 among the biggest shops and stores of Rennes. The population of the capital was thus aware of the existence of a modern Breton literature, a fact which is assiduously concealed by the French propaganda machine.

RADIO BROADCASTS: In a letter dated 15/3, the French Secretariat for Information had notified the Breton Listeners Association that instructions had been given for an improvement both in duration and quality of transmission of the Breton language broadcasts. In its June edition, Breiz could not report any actual change.

The section devoted to "A CHRONICLE OF THE NATIONS" is a regular feature of the quarterly magazine AR VRO (mainly in French). It gives a review of events or developments in the other Celtic Countries, Euzkadi, Catalonia, Alsace-Lorraine, Flanders, Angola, Kurdistan, etc. AR VRO publishes stimulating studies, political, literary, sociological, from a Breton national viewpoint. Yearly subscription: 10 Nf. Write to R. Pennek, 2 Venelle Poullbrikenn, BREST, Brittany.

PREDER is one of the publications which bear witness to the will of a small group to make of the Breton language a complete instrument of expression. It has published political, philosophical and scientific works. One of the best issues was recently BEVONIEZH (Biology) by A. EVEN, editor of the philological magazine HOR YEZH. "Bevoniezh is beautifully duplicated, with numerous pictures as clear as in a printed edition. The text is easy to read for anyone with an ordinary knowledge of Breton, the language is simple and correct, using neologisms from Breton roots as well as adapted international terms." (from AR HED KELTIEK).

TREGER FILM: Roger Laouenan's Treger Film Society presents each week throughout Treger (N. Brittany) a newsreel with various features, including sport, festivals (pardoniou), folkloric activities, farmers demonstrations, documentaries on Holland and seafaring, with sound tracks in Breton. The shows are extremely popular. F. Tremel, in L'Avenir, commenting on this effort "which opens our people's eyes to the world and to their own problems", wonders why similar attempts have not been made in the other Breton-speaking areas. Can the 1962 Bretons struggle only on paper and are they loath to use direct action? He argues that pride in their language is the first condition for providing a large public for the Breton books and periodicals. Treger-Film and Strolled Beilhadegou Treger have well understood this: they now have a public of several thousands.