

BRETON NEWS



A Bulletin issued by
The Breton Information Bureau

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No. 26

Dublin

April 15th, 1962.

OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE MOVEMENT FOR THE ORGANISATION OF BRITTANY.

Public Meetings forbidden. A member of the M.O.B. Central Committee, Mr. Yann Fouéré was due to speak publicly at Rennes on March 14th and at Nantes on the 16th. His theme was : For a union of the European Peoples as against a union of European States. The idea that a European federation should be built on an ethnical basis is shared among the small European nations, whereas a federation of the existing states, corresponding to De Gaulle's conception of a Europe of Fatherlands, risks leading to a new imperialism or to rivalries between the bigger member-states.

On March 12th, the superprefect of Brittany forbade the Rennes meeting, allegedly to safeguard public order. He was prompted by -- or had prompted himself -- a coalition of local French party bosses which included Communists and Christian-Democrats.

On his injunction, the Prefet of Loire-Atlantique gave a similar order against Y. Fouéré's meeting as well as against a public lecture by Yann Poupinot scheduled for April 6th in Nantes. The argument here invoked was that the situation in France was too grave at the present.

The meetings took place privately, by invitation, in the M.O.B. halls.

Y. Fouéré had spoken publicly on the same subject in Paris a few days earlier.

Posters

No MOB/in Finistère. BRETON NEWS of Feb. 15th reported that MOB posters had systematically been torn down by policemen in Brest. In fact, the repression of MOB propaganda was ordered by the prefet of Kemper throughout the Finistère département. It is in this area that the most serious troubles occurred last Summer (Pont 'n Abad, Montroulez) and that a huge military training camp is to be built.

(Avenir, 5/4/'62)

"La Methode de l'Amalgame". This official offensive is accompanied by an underhand campaign in French newspapers and party organs tending to assimilate the Breton political movement with O.A.S. in the public mind. As an example, the prohibition of Y. Fouéré's lecture in Nantes was announced in Le Monde immediately underneath a series of news about the repression of OAS activities in the "West" of France.

National liberation movements in Africa, Asia etc. are often described by their opponents as inspired or led by the Communists. This method of assimilation is used in reverse by the communists in Brittany when they attack MOB leaders as "fascists". L'Avenir (5/4) reports also that in a large Breton town, when policemen stop OAS suspects, they first ask: "Are you in the MOB?"

Reason for Calumnies. At the MOB National Council of St-Brieg (18/2/62), a resolution was adopted condemning the OAS and Communist extremists alike and placing responsibility on the French Government, should their quarrel (as exemplified at Issy-les-Moulineaux) spread to Brittany. The Students section of the MOB, Rennes, was still more outspoken in its condemnation of the OAS.

(Avenir, 1/3/'62).

B.N. Comment:

The Breton struggle is no more fascist than communist: it is only Breton, nationally-conscious or not. To increase its chances of success against the French State, it calls on those who have the future of Brittany at heart to unite. This unity would relegate French party issues to a secondary rank. Hence the animosity.

PENALISED FOR BEING NEGLECTED. On Sept. 13th 1961, the French government promised a reduction of rail transport costs to enable Breton goods to compete on external markets. This promise came after the threat of renewed troubles in Brittany. It has not been implemented.

On the contrary, the French Nationalised Railway Company has now proposed a reform, the application of which will heavily handicap the Breton economy. Transport costs will be calculated in terms of the weighted distances, i.e. the real distances modified by a coefficient depending on slopes and curvatures. They will thus be increased by 17-30% on most stretches in Brittany, whereas on the main French lines, improved thanks to State credits in recent years, they will be decreased by 10-18%.

As an example, the distance from the vegetable market centre of St-Pol (NW Brittany) to Lille becomes equal to that between Avignon and Lille, although in reality 164 km shorter.

The Breton organisations are all protesting against a treatment whereby Brittany will be penalised because of State neglect. J. Martray, in La Vie Bretonne (March) denounces it as a provocation. The Bretons have 2½ months to bring about a revision in their favour. On July 1st the reform will go into effect and so will the Brussels agreements on agriculture.

It is not only agriculture, from which 70% of the Breton population lives, that will be affected by the reform. Industrialists will also be discouraged from establishing factories in Brittany. (Ref. La Vie Bretonne, March; Le Pt Bleu, 31/3)

SALE OF BRETON BOOKS IN KEMPER. Mrs. Kemere runs a handcraft shop in Kemper, but she reserves space for the sale of books in Breton as well. In 1961, she sold 690 of these; in fact 420 were for learning the language, and 270 for reading. A comparison with previous years shows a steady increase: 1958, 407 books, 88 for reading; 1959, 449, 150 reading; 1960, 560, 169 reading. 1961, 690, 270.

Mrs. Kemere writes: "It is a pleasure to see that people who bought grammars and dictionaries a year or two ago are coming back for books to read now. And a lot of them speak Breton quite well now." (Al Liamm, Jan, Feb '61).

LIVELIHOOD of 8-10,000 threatened in HENBONT. 1500 workers accompanied by 3,500 sympathisers (farmers, teachers, business people) staged a 10km march to the Lorient sub-prefecture on 28/3 to demand that the present level of employment at the Henbont foundries be maintained.

A request for 7,000 millions francs necessary for the modernisation of the factories was recently forwarded to Paris for transmission to the Coal and Steel Authority. It was rejected by the French minister for Industry, who proposes to leave enough work for only 200 men at Henbont and to 'reconvert' the rest in the Lorient area.

The workers do not trust the Government promises, and demand that the machinery be installed where they live, not that they be shifted about to suit the technocrats.

The Henbont foundries constitute one of the few basic industries in Brittany and have their place within the framework of the industrial expansion demanded by all Breton organisations. (Vie Bretonne, Telegramme)

Need for short cuts in 2 directions. Speaking of the necessity of a Law-programme for Brittany before a numerous audience at Rennes, R. Pleven denounced the French Government for preventing Brittany from appealing directly to the European Investments Bank. Yet, he stressed, "Brittany will not be saved only with the State's investments."

Pleven thinks that a Regional Assembly would not have enough financial power to be efficient. He favours however the pulling together of the Breton political forces through the General Councils of the 5 departements. (Avenir, 5/4).

STATE OFFENDED Mr. Ch. ar Gall, responsible for the half-hourly Breton programmes of Radio-Rennes was suspended for a month in March for having broadcast a popular humoristic song about the "occupation" of the Morlaix subprefecture last summer. Following protests gave Bretons an occasion to manifest their union. (Breiz, April).

EFFORTS ABROAD. Thanks to the Interprofessional Committee of Propaganda for the Breton Products, Brittany will be represented this year at the Milan Fair (12-27-4), at the Dublin French Festival (27/4-8/5), at the Saarbrücken Festival (4-9/5), at the Exhibition of Breton Artichokes in Switzerland (June), at the London Food Fair (28/8-12/9), at the New-York Food Fair and A.I.D.A. (8-16/9) at the Brussels Food Fair (10/10-4/11). (La Vie Bretonne, March).

F.U.E.N. Congress. The 12th Congress of the Federalist Union of European Nationalities will be held at Flensburg (Germany) from May 30th to June 2nd. For information, write to the Secretariat-General of the FUEN, Rolighed, Rungsted Kyst, Denmark.

A considerable effort of modernisation and equipment was made by the Breton farmers in the last 10 years. The number of tractors increased from 10,000 to 50,000, of yearly inseminated cows from 52,000 to 686,000. They have now 8 S.I.C.A. (Societies of Agricultural Collective interest), 85 co-operatives for purchase and sale, 49 for cereals, 93 specialised ones. (La Vie Bretonne, March).

A BRETON CULTURAL HALL, with 5 rooms, was opened in the centre of St-Brieg on March 11. It will be opened on Saturdays after 3 p.m.

The Bill for a Breton Law-Programme which has been in preparation since last July, and results democratically from consultations with various professional organisations and discussions within working groups, was presented to the CELIB Commission for Economic Expansion at Rennes on April 2. It constitutes a document of 100 pages, a synthesis of 53 different reports which will be sent to all the Breton collectivities, for them to propose amendments if need be. After that the CELIB General Assembly will decide and ask its Parliamentary Commission to present the bill in the French Parliament.

The bill's essential aim is to bring the mean standard of living in Brittany up by 20% to the same level as the French mean, and to reduce the catastrophic emigration. It has a cultural section which, if adopted, would provide some basis for an effective teaching of Breton. (Bretagne Dimanche 3/4).