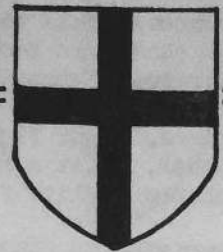


BRETON NEWS



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INTERCELTIC CONGRESS IN LANDREGER (N. Brittany), August 19-22, 1962

This year's Celtic Congress, organised by its President Per DENEZ with the help of a spirited team was outstanding for the seriousness of its working sessions, the excellence of its artistic performances and the importance both in quality and number of the delegations which took part in it.

The Irish delegation led by Prof. Liam O Buachalla, chairman of the Senate, and by Máire Uas. Breathnach, assistant-secretary in the Finance Department, numbered 24. From Scotland came 18, from Wales 25 and from Cornwall 10 delegates.

As regards the Bretons, the presence of a large number of young people left a strong impression on the visitors. Many of them had come from the Camp for Breton speakers at St-Nikolaz ar Pelem (see below) and contributed notably to the predominance of Breton throughout the Congress. They knew English, or even Welsh or Irish. They acted as interpreters, thus enabling the participants to dispense with French in a Congress which, for all its taboo on politics, was meant to buttress or to boost the Breton language.

The Congress received wide publicity. The daily press of Brittany, at least in its local editions, gave detailed and conscientious accounts of its proceedings, both work and entertainment. Numerous recordings were made by Radio-Eireann, BBC-Wales and RTF. A Reuter correspondent was also on the spot during the 4 days, and reported on the discussions concerning the Common Market and the appeal to UNESCO.

At the beginning, Prof. Liam O Buachalla brought a message from Mr. F. AIKEN, in which the Irish Minister for External Affairs expressed his hope that the work of the Congress would contribute to improve the position of the Celtic language

WORK AND ENTERTAINMENT The six working sessions took place according to plan (see B.N. No. 30). At each of them there was a panel of speakers representing the member-countries. A detailed account will be given in Breton in one of the next copies of the periodical PREDER.

It may be noted that the discussion about "the Celtic languages in Education and publication" recorded a fairly satisfactory situation in Ireland, successful private and public efforts both on the primary school and University level in Wales and stagnation under the French regulations in Brittany. The French Unesco Commission was solicitous about small languages only outside French borders.

A wide range of entertainments was offered during the four evenings:

- a concert of modern music of Celtic inspiration by Breton composers, at which pride of place was given to Jef Perven.
- an exhibition of paintings, in particular by Alain Le Nost whose works express a close identification with problem-torn Brittany;
- a film show of Man of Aran and Mise Eire; the latter depicting Ireland's climb to freedom was especially acclaimed by the young Bretons present.
- a Breton folkloric performance, away from the beaten tracks. The new note was due to a harp quartet by 4 young girls; a recital of poems by modern Breton writers sung to music by a living composer; the author-composer and cabaret singer Glen Mor, "whose astonishing verve carries away all listeners, whose passionate devotion to his country coexisting with a concern for down-trodden men everywhere compels recognition.." even from critics of Breton nationalism.

The last evening was reserved to performances by 15 well-known Irish, Scottish and Welsh singers, dancers and players. The Irish ambassador to France arrived during this concert and was received "like a friend, a brother". In an interview, he conveyed the greetings of President DE VALERA to the congress and stated that a close collaboration between the Celtic countries would benefit them all. The Congress closed with the singing of the Celtic national anthem simultaneously with the presentation of the national flags.

FROM Per DENEZ's final address: "Recently I was asked by a priest, who ought to have a better sense of spiritual values: "Why struggle for the Breton language? What chances have you?" I replied: "If you lived in Soviet Russia or China, what

chances would you have for your religion? You wouldn't give up, would you? "For us, we shall win because our will is stronger than the foreigner's. The problem is only how to fight. We fight on the cultural plane and on the socio-economic plane. But we fight also - whatever the false interpretations of the term - on the political plane. Our fight is one. We have to demolish the old structures which mean our death. Let a new federated Europe give Brittany and all the other small nations the chance to live free and remain themselves."

PETITION TO UNESCO. The Celtic Congress thanked the Scandinavian University professors who signed the petition to UNESCO in favour of the protection of small languages (see EN 28-29). Measures have already been taken to organise a similar common petition in the Celtic countries.

THE 15th INTERCELTIC CAMP FOR BRETON SPEAKERS held at St-Nikolaz ar Pelem near Gwengamp between Aug. 1st. and 15th drew its largest-ever attendance: 123 people in all, 83 of whom were under 30 years of age. The organisers, R. Huon (editor of AL LIAMM), V. de Bellaing and P. Kalvez were gratified by such an influx of young people who were equally willing to submit to serious work (every morning Breton and Welsh classes and lectures from 8 to 12) and to enjoy the outing and the entertainments. Among the 8 participants from Ireland and Wales were Prof. Cavanagh (U.C. Cork); Jean Hughes, an Aberystwyth student who is preparing a thesis on the short story in Breton literature; Mr. Lloyd Humphreys, who is doing research on the interpenetration of Breton and French at the limit of the Breton-speaking area.

Among the titles of 19 lectures, we note: the Kurd Problem, (by a lecturer at the University of Tunis); Public relations and Publicity; Heredity; Biology; the Committee for Regional Action; Nationality and State.

Films made by R. Laouenan for the Treger Beilhadegou were shown (Al Liamm, July-Aug.)

MILITARY OCCUPATION. Deep apprehension is felt in Brittany at the announcement by the French Minister for Defence at Rennes, on Sept. 10 that six new regiments will be installed in the "West" next year. For each of them, training grounds of 3-400 hectares will be needed. There is already a 6000 hectares camp at Koed Kidan (Central Brittany), but a larger one, of 10-15,000 hectares at least will soon be required in the region. The new regiments are being brought back from Algeria. It has been decided to garrison them in weakly industrialised areas. Two of them will come to Gwened, two to Dinan, one to Brest. Others are to be installed in a year or two in the SE of Brittany and in the adjoining areas. (Ouest Fr. 11-9) (Refer also to B.N. No. 23).

BRITTANY TO PAY MORE THAN OTHER REGIONS FOR RAIL TRANSPORT?

In B.N. 26, we reported that, instead of reducing rail transport costs as promised by the Government after the 1961 rural disturbances in Brittany, the French Railway Company was going to introduce a reform whereby costs would be increased by 17-30% on the Breton lines while they would be reduced on the more modernised lines elsewhere. This reform, based on a weighting of distances, amounts to a penalisation of Brittany for the French neglect of her transport system and will heavily handicap the already strained Breton economy. A palliative was to be granted in the form of a 10% rebate on 1/3 of the agricultural products imported and exported, but this is no longer firmly promised. The reform will probably become effective on October 1st. The members of the Breton Commission for Economic Expansion (CELIB) have issued a solemn warning, drawing public attention in Brittany to the consequence this application will have. They beseech the French Government to abandon the reform which, "by introducing discriminations between French regions, would endanger national unity."

Farmers organisations are prepared to stop the trains. Industrial workers will join with them in view of the detrimental effect of the reform on industrialisation and employment.

De Gaulle's visit to Lanuon and Pleuveur-Bodou where he is due to inaugurate the French Centre for Telecommunications Studies, on Oct. 2, may take place in a troubled atmosphere. (Mission Bretonne). 15-9-'62.

An account of the teaching of BRETON AT THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ABERYSTWYTH, is given in AR BED KELTEK, September 1962, by A. EVEN. The author is the lecturer for Breton and Cornish at this college. An Honours degree can be taken in the Celtic languages in Wales only with Welsh as the major subject. But in Aberystwyth the part of the other languages is much more important than elsewhere. Here are specially appointed lecturers for Irish and for Breton-and-Cornish. Here only can Irish be taken as a minor subject for the BA; and here only can modern Breton be taken as one of the special subjects for Honours.

Breton is taught to 3rd year students. Middle Breton must be taken by all. From 1 to 4 students take every year Modern Breton: during the previous Summer, they go to the Inter-Celtic Camp for Breton Speakers, with a grant from a special College fund. The (written) Breton test is rather tough. Miss Jean Hughes, who is preparing her M.A. on the Breton Short Story since 1925, is one of A. Even's students.

We should welcome an account on the place of Breton at the University of Rennes.

TONKAD 62 (Destiny 1962) is the title of the July-Aug. issue of PREDER, a collection of political writings in Breton by Youenn Olier which we shall review soon.