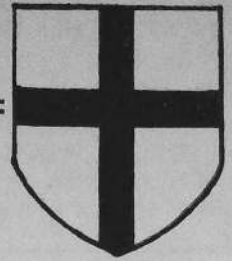


BRETON NEWS



A Bulletin issued by
The Breton Information Bureau

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No. 11

Dublin, Éire.

December, 1960

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APPEAL ON BEHALF
OF BRITTANY TO
THE UNITED NATIONS

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We have received the following communiqué from Strollad Broadel Breizh (Breton National Committee):

"The Breton National Committee, representing the Breton Nation in its struggle for national liberation, has addressed, through the agency of its spokesmen in Ireland, on November 25th, 1960 an

APPEAL ON BEHALF OF BRITTANY
to the representatives of the member-countries of the United Nations Organisation.

"The appeal is based on a United Nations' resolution which lists the protection of minorities as one of the most important branches of the work of the Organisation. It states Brittany's claims as a nation, exposes the policy of oppression and assimilation pursued by France in Brittany, sets forth the Breton efforts to resist it and points to the impending destruction of the Breton nation if this policy is not halted.

"It brings a charge of genocide against the French State and calls for the protection of international law."

"The recourse to the United Nations follows the failure of all appeals to the French governments during the last 60 years."

DOES THE TERM "GENOCIDE" APPLY TO THE CASE OF BRITTANY? In the present United Nations' Genocide Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such:

- a) killing members of the group;
- b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The Bretons constitute a national group, which contradicts the official principle of unity-and-indivisibility of France. In application of this principle, it is official policy to eradicate the Breton language of one million people.

This policy of assimilation has caused and is causing serious mental harm to tens of thousands of Bretons; it results in their being ashamed of speaking Breton, it prevents the normal development of their mind on the basis of their mother tongue.

The colonial type of exploitation applied to Brittany results in the emigration of most of the ablest Bretons as well as of the untrained workers who will swell the lower ranks of the French proletariat. To this "voluntary" exodus can now be added the semi-official scheme for the transfer of populations towards the less populated areas of Central France and the industrial areas ("methodical organisation of the labour market", "decongestion of Brittany"). Conditions of life in Brittany are thus calculated to weaken and finally break up the physical unity of the Breton people.

Many of the Bretons who took a determined stand in defense of Brittany's right to national existence were killed in the name of France and in application of the policy of the French State in Brittany.

The French State is thus guilty in Brittany of the crime of genocide under the headings a), b), and c) of its definition.

France has ratified the Genocide Convention, but does not abide by her obligations. Quoting from the United Nations publication, "The Crime of Genocide", (1959): "Genocide is the most gigantic and atrocious of all crimes. When a nation has been destroyed the great treasures of its spiritual heritage have gone and world culture has been impoverished. The basic resolution of Genocide of December 11, 1946, stresses especially the losses in culture which have occurred because of past cases of genocide. Not only the solidarity of nations in preserving human life, but also the interdependence and mutual borrowing among national cultures is at stake."

BRITTANY, THE LAST FRENCH COLONY, is the title of an article by Andre Figueras in the November issue of "Le Charivari". It does not appear that this French periodical could be sympathetic to Breton nationalism nor that Mr. Figueras would be a Breton. We may take it that he is a fairly impartial witness when he shows that Brittany is subject to a colonial type of exploitation. (He does not say anything about cultural matters). He based his demonstration on a definition of colonialism by Marcel Pellenec:

"A country can be considered as colonized by another when its resources are exploited by its inhabitants, not for their own profit, but for the profit of the other country's inhabitants, who own the means of exploitation and, as a rule, export the raw materials from their colony in order to transform them in their country, thus providing work for their industries and their people."

This type of exploitation, A. Figueras argues, applies to Brittany. Most of his statements seem essentially correct to us.

"There are two important categories of natives in Brittany; the seaman and the countryman. Both toil ceaselessly for the greatest advantage of their exploiters."

THE SEAMAN

"The fisherman risks his life daily on the sea. He dare not stay idle if, after paying for his fuel, nets and quarter-bill, he wants to feed his family. He often works 20 hours a day. He really works like a black!

"Lorient has the biggest fishing harbour in Brittany. It is managed by a Parisian company which pays no rates nor dues to the town. At landing the fish is bought for a derisive price but it will be sold next day for 3 or 4 times that price on the consumers' markets in Paris or elsewhere. The monopoly for the fabrication and sale of the ice needed by the fishermen belongs to the Parisian company.

"A slightly better system exists in Douarnenez and Concarneau but there also the profit goes to the fishmongers."

THE COUNTRYMAN

A. Figueras depicts an analogous situation on the land, in particular among the farmers of North Finistere who go in for market gardening. We have referred in our July and October issues to the initiatives taken by the farmers to counteract this exploitation. A similar crisis developed around St. Malo. A. Figueras agrees with the finding that the collapse of the producer's prices was due to their being exploited by the colonists. A fact that the French press did not to reveal.

MINERALS

Brittany's mineral resources are not needed by the French industries and are practically left untapped. "Kaolin is an exception: the Breton quarries produce 76% of the total French needs. But there again we find the colonial method: as soon as extracted, the Kaolin leaves Brittany to be transformed.

The same method applies to the people: "Due to the lack of industries, and consequently of opportunities for trained personnel, Brittany must export most of her ablest people. But for decades she has also been a reserve of navvies and of maids for the colonial power.

"Whatever money the Bretons may save does not serve to improve their position, since the administration - the Railway Company for example - prevents local investments. Savings also leave the country.

"As for the taxes, they are like a tribute since the credits are for the others.

Brittany is a typical colony with its shanties, its underdeveloped economy, its low energy supply and lack of piped water, its rarity of vocational schools etc...

"France is lavishing her money on her former arab and black subjects who did not hesitate to rebel and appeal to the United Nations.* The Bretons are being taxed to support this prodigal policy and see their standard of living sinking every day."

* Editor's note. See the above communiqué.

Read an excellent article on the Breton summer-schools in "Lettres francaises" No. 842, 22-28 Sept. 1960. More about these schools in a later issue of B.N.

The autobahn from Paris towards the West will stop at Le Mans. There is no question of extending it as far as Brittany for the present (Ouest-France).

The Committee for the Study and Coordination of Breton Interests protests against the insufficiency of the credits provided for agricultural investments in Brittany. (Ouest-France, 17-11-60).