

# BRETON NEWS



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

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**RIOTS IN KEMPER.** At the end of a demonstration by 25-35,000 farmers in Kemper on April 7, 73 mayors tendered their resignation to the French Préfet. 74 others proposed to do the same after seeking their councils' advice. The "Finistère" department comprises 300 "communes". Half the local administration of this division could therefore be paralysed by these resignations.

The demonstrators marched past the Prefecture. Their organisers, anxious to avoid clashes, kept urging discipline and dignity. With difficulty they succeeded in preventing a siege of the government building. From 1530 to 1800 hours 2 or 3000 demonstrators occupied the railway station, blocked 3 trains and delayed 1½ hours the departure of a fourth. At 18.00 the police charged with guns at the ready, threw tear gas. A riot ensued. The demonstrators then tried to hold the Prefecture bridge. Again there were stones, tear gas, blows, and some men were detained.

A similar meeting in Sant-Brieg, attended by about 35,000, took place in a tense atmosphere. (Ref. Ouest-France, Telegramme de Brest, 8-4-)

Our comment: The farmers campaign is carried out on a professional basis. Yet it finds in Brittany a much more determined support than elsewhere. The leaders apprehend a stiffer official attitude should they recognise, as is widely done, that their problems are an aspect of the Breton problem. That is why one of them said in St-Brieg: The Bretons must not form a band apart.

**AVOID MASS MEETINGS.** According to "La Terre Bretonne-Douar Breiz", 9-4. big meetings were avoided in the Gwened (Vannes), and Naoned areas, the demonstrations taking place instead in a number of small towns, with a total attendance of the same order as in Kemper and St-Brieg. The farmers of the Roazhon (Rennes) sector were sent to Laval, outside Brittany, to swell the ranks of the thinly represented farmers from Normandy, Anjou, Maine. "This dispersion, it is said, was decided in order to avoid mass gatherings of Bretons".

The newspaper further reports that many manifestants attacked directly the head of the State and the Prime Minister. They were appearing for the first time. They represented the extremist elements who have been recently elected in some communes. Their speeches were aggressive, they no longer attacked the usual middlemen (technocrats, MPs, Ministers) but Debré and De Gaulle himself.

**BOYCOTTS AND STRIKES.** The crisis will extend to industry and commerce, at least in Brittany. The farmers have decided: at St-Brieg: to stop buying material, to boycott the dealers in fertilizers who oppose indexation of agricultural products. At Kemper: similarly, but also to refuse paying taxes on agricultural benefits.

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**SKOL SANT ERWAN:** Everywhere in Western Europe the right of a child to be educated in his mother tongue is recognised ... except in De Gaulle's France, and, we are told, in Franco's Spain. The teaching of Breton has to depend mainly on the teachers' initiative, and the scope allowed to them is extremely narrowed by the State control of curriculum and examinations. In our next issue, we shall report on Skol St-Erwan, the one school where the utmost is being done within existing regulations and thanks to the immense courage of its director, Fr. Kalvez, to give an elementary teaching of Breton, and of some subjects through the medium of Breton. Fr. Kalvez has assumed a nearly superhuman task, as he has charge of the 'normal work of a teacher, to teach all subjects through French.

FESTOU-NOZ. For the past few years, a new expression of Brittany's cultural life has become increasingly popular in two Breton-speaking areas, Kernev (Cornwall) and Treger-Gouelou (in the North). At evening gatherings in village halls, singers and storey-tellers alternate with pipers in providing an entertainment which is characterised by its peculiar atmosphere. Everywhere people of all age, crowd in, the halls are too small. Everywhere the same enthusiasm, the same eagerness for collective joy and frank gaiety. Not a single one of these "Festou-Noz" has failed (La Terre-Bretonne 9-4). "People come for the pleasure of hearing their language on the stage, as if hungry", writes a witness in Barr-Heol (March 60). "And they want to hear Breton: as soon as somebody goes over to French, e.g. to give advice, they show disapproval. More details in "Breiz", March-60, the monthly organ of Kendalc'h.

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#### A COMPARISON WITH THE NETHERLANDS

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BRITTANY  
35.000 km<sup>2</sup>  
2.907.000 inhabitants 1860  
the most neglected "French" province 1960  
3.100.000 inhab.  
all her harbours declining  
her shipyards threatened or already condemned

A leaflet distributed by the Movement for the Organisation of Brittany makes this striking confrontation.

#### THE NETHERLANDS

34.200 km<sup>2</sup>  
3.057.000 inhab.  
the richest country in Europe  
11.900.000 inhab.  
the 1st harbour in the world: Rotterdam  
her shipyards in full development

#### W H Y ?

Brittany can do nothing without Paris authorisation

The people of the Netherlands can look after their own affairs

#### BRITTANY'S PLACE IN TO-DAY'S FRANCE

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in "L'Avenir" (April-60) shows for Brittany in relation to the territory of the French State:

- a very strong rural population.
- a higher representation for youth, with childbirth in excess of the French average
- Town development not sufficient to absorb our demographic possibilities (under-industrialisation)
- a rarity of foreigners
- proportionally speaking, farmers are twice and seamen 6 times more numerous in Brittany than in France.
- a high figure for independent employers, due to the small size of enterprises.
- a very low representation for liberal profession, officials, and a low one for industrial workers.
- a very low figure (53 as against 100) for mechanical energy, showing how Brittany lags in industry and commerce. Things would be still more unfavorable but for the area around Nantes.

A remark by the B.I.F.: The statistics say nothing of the numerically small but politically and economically important element of population of French origin in Brittany. It would be interesting if Y. Poupinot could compute this figure. It appears to be current practice to give high administrative posts to Bretons outside Brittany while giving similar posts to Non-Bretons in B. In the economic field, French societies have also a large direct control.

"WE ARE THE WEALTHY PEOPLE", said De Gaulle in Washington", Satisfied in comparison with the other people" (2 milliards of destitute men in the under-developed countries). And he went on to propose France's participation in such projects as the development of the Nile Valley.

Bretons are in favour of aid to underdeveloped countries: theirs is an underdeveloped country. But there is no need for De Gaulle's charity. They would be satisfied if they could invest their own money in Brittany. As the General himself said: One must not look too far nor see too big! (Ref. Figaro, 25-4-).



A LAND OF HOPE. (Excerpts from the editorial of "Ar Vro", March-60).  
 ----- Recent history is full of examples which all point towards the decongestion of Brittany recommended by the French Prime Minister to his associates in January.

1924. Promise by the State of 10 millions francs to help building a tidal power station near Brest. Work begins with private capital.

1930: work stops. 1932: the Society is dissolved. The State subsidy never came. November 1930: Plans to reclaim the (potentially) fertile Vilaine marshes are ready but depend for their realisation on State authorisation and grant towards 1/7 of the total cost. This grant has been promised 2 months ago.

December 1932: The Minister for the Merchant Navy deprives St-Nazaire of its leading position in the trade with Central and South America and gives it to Le Havre, of which town he is the mayor.

1932-33. The customs war between England and France resulting from protective tariffs on coal imports from Britain causes Brittany to lose its prime vegetable and potatoe market across the channel. Breton farmers "convert" to sugar beet but a 1933 law forbids them, thus keeping a monopoly for the big planters in the North.

At the same period, to protect the spirits industry in the South of France, duties on Iberian porto are doubled. Portugal and Spain strike back with duties on cod imports, and St-Malo declines.

Emigration steps up. Passes for the U.S. and Canada are blocked. Bretons are thus directed towards the depopulated French South-West, the colonies or the army.

The Editor gives other examples and could give many more.

To-day uranium is extracted in 3 Breton departments, with Breton labour. So far the material is taken out of Brittany for use.

"In conclusion, where does our money go? The "regional" press has told us complacently that the Reggane atomic bomb had cost 126 milliards francs. Enough to modernise our agriculture.

... In 1933, clashes occurred already in Kemper, St-Brieg, Rennes, between farmers and police. Promises were made. Nothing happened except more emigration".

And, we shall add, a dogged struggle by enlightened Bretons to shake the French rule, and win control of their own affairs.

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NANTES IS IN BRITTANY :

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Various initiatives have been taken by Breton groups to oppose an incipient partition of Brittany. The latest is an open letter by the

Paris Branch of the widespread cultural organisation KENDALC'H requesting all public and private agencies, especially the Government and the Press, to avoid speaking of Brittany when only 4 of the Breton departements are meant. Brittany comprises since the time of her first king Nomenoe (845) the areas now administratively called Finistere, Cotes-du-Nord, Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan and Loire-Atlantique. Nantes, to all Breton speakers known as Naoned, was for a long period the capital of independent Brittany.

Kendalc'h, Paris, asks that in the administrative reform now being prepared, Brittany's historic and human limits be respected. Other groups have warned of widespread resentment in the Breton population, should the request be ignored.

The B.I.F. would almost prophecy that such will be its fate in the reform being prepared. The French rulers are aware of Breton potentialities. Debre repeating in Rennes "You are here France" reminds of Gambetta during the French defeat in 1870 beseeching the general commanding the Breton army: "Forget that you are Breton".

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 CRISIS IN THE BRETON SHIPYARDS WORSENING.

At the same time as De Gaulle proposes to increase aid to under-developed countries far away, and to continue the Algerian war ad infinitum, the Government is compelled to reduce the credits for internal equipment, particularly in Brittany, where the industries of the Nantes area are threatened with asphyxia. Thousands of technicians and workers are directly involved: the prospect for them is unemployment or forced exile. Trade Unions as well as managers recognise that a reconversion of factories is in many cases impossible (keel assembling, for instance) Workers from 45 to 65 cannot be readapted either.

The demographic evolution in the Nantes area is also causing great concern. The number of young people from 15 to 19 will increase by 70% between now and 1965. Where are they going to be employed? As a reporter writes, in

Le Figaro, 26-4-, "the social climate in this area is fragile".

This fact is stressed by the latest news according to which the launching of the steamer "France" (33,500 tons) scheduled for May 11th, with De Gaulle presiding, may have to be postponed for at least 4 weeks, because the workers and the managers of the Loire-Atlantique shipyards have failed to renew agreement. There seems to be a question of solidarity with the numerous workers unemployed or threatened with unemployment in this industrial area.

"FRANCE DOES NOT COMPEL..."

Our point of view.

"Wherever the French flag floats, floats perhaps more than anywhere else in the world this great idea that politics (...) must ensure the dignity of life of all men through the free expression of their will.... France does not compel anybody to be French."

Those noble words were spoken by Debre in Algiers on April 12. It is a lofty talk. So much like De Gaulle himself.

How does it apply to the Bretons?

We say nothing of old times. Let history be history. In 1937-38 and ever since 1951, a majority of our people have expressed their will, through their councils and elected bodies, to have our language officially taught in public schools. But the higher councils of the French State, le Conseil supérieur de l'Education namely, are adamant in their resolution to exclude it from all effective recognition. There lives the spirit of France. It is pretty certain that so long as the French flag floats in Brittany, the Breton people will be denied the dignity of having their language officially recognised. France does not compel anybody to be French, but under the Government of De Gaulle himself, the very personification of France, many like Leon Jasson, who were only Bretons, and acted as free Bretons, were sentenced to death and executed (1944-46). They were not collaborators as the official lie has it, but Bretons who did not want to be French. They were not compelled to be perhaps, they were killed.

In one breath, their lordships speak of liberty for the Algerians and affirm that Algeria must remain with (?) France. The oracles could speak less equivocally. There is the threat of partition in case of Algerian secession. Partition is a last weapon to keep a people in subjection.

There is little behind Debre's grandiloquence; except the implicit avowal that compulsion is failing in Algeria.

FOLK SONG COMPETITION IN PARIS: The Entente Culturelle Bretonne organised, on March 26, a folksong competition widely open to all amateurs, 44 rue de Rennes, Paris. A big crowd attended. Numerous candidates were introduced by Herve ar Menn who has given many years in the service of Breton music. A great variety was offered: solo, unison singing, kan ha diskan (alternations), melodies, recitation, even poem declamation. Preference was given to original, little-known songs.

Only the Breton-speaking area of Brittany was represented, although the Folklore of the Gallo (Eastern) area has been revigorated during the last decade or two. Most remarkable was the originality of the songs from Cornwall, although the first prize went to a lady from Bro-Wened. The variety of accents was also striking. Every contribution of value was registered on the magneton and will serve for study.

ARMOR PRESSE - in French - a newly created bulletin of informations and documentation for the newspapers of the West (i.e. Brittany and neighbouring area); written by journalists who come from this "region", it means to remain free of all political, denominational, financial and other connections. Informations collected in Paris about the economic and cultural expansion of the region and its problems.

Manager: M. BOURGEOUX, 43 Avenue Emma, La Celle St-Cloud.

Full Scale Desertion in Algeria. In the Sunday Press, Dublin, 24/4/60 we learn of the existence of an underground network engaged in organizing, in co-operation with FLN, the full scale desertion of the young French soldiers in Algeria. Two weeklies, l'Express and France-Observateur, as well as a book, Le Deserteur, have been seized for publishing the news. These deserters have no faith in Debre's High Notion of Liberty.