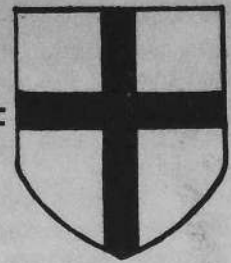


BRETON NEWS



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DE GAULLE'S EXCURSION IN BRITTANY: THE WAY HE WENT:

- 7. September, Brest, Island of Sein, Douarnenez, Kemper
- 8 - 9 Concarneau, Landerneau, Morlaix, Lannion, St. Briec
- 9 - 9 Dinan, Lorient, Pontivy, Vannes
- 10-9 St.-Nazaire, Nantes, Chateaubriant, Rennes
- 11- 9 Fougères, St-Male, Dinard

From the 7. to the 11th September, the Bretons had the opportunity to view France's monarch at close hand and to treat themselves to some of the finest flowers of his rhetoric. The French press - including the officious Breton dailies - has reported how satisfactory the show was. They don't seem to have made any references to the way the stage was set for the "spontaneous" expression of 'mass welcome'. The information we have received in that respect reveals an alarmingly close similarity between De Gaulle's regime and some recent or present European dictatorships. But first a few remarks on the trip in general.

In St-Malo and Rennes De Gaulle expressed France's trust in Brittany and assured that Brittany could also trust France (she had then ground to distrust?) As a rule he was cheered most when he evoked the Bretons difficulties. He evoked but he would leave it to his ministers to work them out (We shall have a wait with the arch-centraliser Debre). Ref. Le Monde 13-9.

De Gaulle visited the 5 Breton departements, shouted "Long Live Brittany" in Nantes, declared in Rennes that in his view the Breton entity was above all administrative divisions (One wonders why he would not allow bits of Flanders or Lorraine to be detached and joined to their northern or eastern neighbours; is France not so strong in those parts that her substance could not dwindle in spite of administrative divisions? Mr. De. Gaulle is the last to allow a supra-national administration to replace - however partially - the French one. By declaring that in Rennes, he acknowledged the unpopularity of the reform separating Nantes and St-Nazaire from the rest of Brittany. (Ref. Ouest-France 12-9). Yet the reform was officially sanctioned precisely during his tour. Can Brittany trust De Gaulle? While he goes on soothing, the machine goes on grinding. Even if he wished, he could not stop it.

The farmers federation had given orders to their members not to welcome De Gaulle. It seems that the orders were well obeyed. The workers of the Naval Dockyard at Lorient as well as those of the Nantes-St-Nazaire industrial area received him coolly (Europe 1) They had told they wanted acts (- to dispel the worry about unemployment), not words. Well, he promised "a great prosperity useful to all sons and daughters of France", "because it is the condition of our greatness".

THE BACK-STAGE OF THE VISIT

SECURITY PRECAUTIONS: It is customary for a certain amount of precautions to be taken when a high State personality travels - especially outside his national territory. It appears from the following that in Brittany De Gaulle was protected as nowhere else during his previous (7 or 8) provincial tours.

1. All names of people living in the buildings sited along his route were noted by policemen.
2. People not declared were strictly forbidden to stand on the balconies or at the windows of those houses. (According to a correspondent it was forbidden to open the windows in Concarneau, Douarnenez, Kemper).
3. Police inspected all printing offices whose directors are not "voluntary informers", to know if leaflets were being printed. Workers were questioned and the offices were watched.
4. Police on motorcycles and in radio-cars patrolled the route to be followed day and night - so as to forestall eventual acts of sabotage.
5. Police and army troops ("tens of thousands") swarmed on the streets and on roofs. The Prefectures where De Gaulle would stay overnight were cordoned off all night. Detachments from the North and Centre of France were reported at Lannion and Guingamp.

6. The leaders of the Breton Movement were questioned and their houses searched and watched, to know to what extent they would demonstrate. A number of nationalists were preventively arrested. Mr. Gouarnig was arrested on the 6th of September and kept at the police station at Kemperle during the 5 days De Gaulle spent in Brittany. His wife and 14 years old daughter were also detained.

20 men were rounded up and detained in Brest from 6 to 12 a.m. while the General was there. Among them were the local secretary of the M.O.B. and Andreu Geffroy who, since his release from the death cell at La Sante in 1953, is always one of the first to receive official attentions on such occasions.

4 young men were arrested in Rennes while distributing leaflets. Other arrests were made, according to a last minute report.

"A MASS WELCOME":

7. Directors of both public and private schools wrote to the pupils' parents requesting them to send their children, in rows, with little flags (provided by the Prefecture) to cheer the hero all along his route. The children were on summer holidays till September 20th.

8. Some garagists were "invited" to "lend" their luxury cars to transport the retinue.

9. Employers were "invited" to allow their workers free - on pay - to go and clap hands.

10. Sextons were ordered to ring bells.

11. The population was requested to deck houses with flags. In fact flags were on public buildings, on some hotels where the retinue was being lodged and on a few business premises. "Otherwise one inhabitant in 500 at the maximum" complied with the request.

All the points 1-8 were confirmed by other correspondents.

BLACKMAILING OF KENDALC'H: The administrative Council of "KENDALC'H" the Federation of Celtic Circles and folklore groups which has thousands of members all over Birttany and among Breton emigrants, issued a circular to the group leaders, of which we give here the essential:

"The President of Kendalc'h was sounded by the authorities in view of the eventual participation of the groups in the reception to be given to De Gaulle. He answered by drawing their attention to the unfavourable state of mind created by the reform cutting Nantes from Brittany, thus ignoring many reasonable appeals made against such a separation. In agreement with the administrative council of Kendalc'h he strongly advised the authorities not to seek a participation which could lead to incidents."

Pressure was then brought to bear from various quarters on the leaders of Kendalc'h. They answered by asking their members not to participate, adding for the Prefet "that the Bretons were not court jesters who could be kicked after amusing the king."

The pressure was then renewed. The Prefet of Finistere ordered two groups of Kemper (Hospital and Green Mill) to take part. The group leader Kamus of Brest was called repeatedly to the sub-Prefecture. Mayors were told to threaten the groups with suppression of the public subventions to the folklore groups.

In Brest a group was hired by the authorities. The men handed De Gaulle a letter from the M.O.B. and managed to have him to pass in front of their flag. A picture in Ouest-France (8-9) shows a peculiar expression on De Gaulle's and Debre's faces as they look away from the Breton emblem.

PEITITIONS: In 7 towns (Brest, Kemper, Lorient, Vannes, Guingamp, Rennes and Nantes), copies of a letter were handed to De Gaulle by high personalities on behalf of the Movement for the Organisation of Brittany asking for: the teaching of Breton, respect for Brittany's integrity, a Breton Parliament.

He received a similar letter from KENDALC'H - which, in view of the non-political character of this association, omitted the third point.

One may surmise that he passed them on to Debre for whom provincial franchises, parliaments or anything "creating" differences among the French citizens constitutes a deadly danger to France's unity. No reply should be expected then.

LEAFLETS: The French press and radio reported the distribution of leaflets in Rennes, Fougères, Dol, St-Malo, etc. by "obdurate autonomists". The leaflets asked for "work in Brittany" and a "stop to deportation", for the teaching of the Breton language. They were published by the youth section of the M.O.B. or by the "Agence Bretagne Nouvelle", Posters were put up, showing a map of Brittany overwritten with the word "AUTODETERMINATION", Leaflets with the simple slogan "FREE BRITTANY" were thrown into De Gaulle's car at St-Thuriau, St-Malo, Rennes, (here the distributors were apprehended).

The Police did their best to prevent the distribution, by searching the houses of suspects, patrolling the roads, and picking up or bearing down the untimely print.

INCIDENTS. CONCARNEAU. The large canvas flag with a Cross of Lorraine hanging on the walls of the festival hall was pulled down and torn. The authors, still under age, were identified by the police. They were also accused of having made on walls and streets "the inscriptions which you know". (to quote "Ouest-France". 12-9-60)

LORIENT: The beginning of De Gaulle's speech was made inaudible when a factory horn started hooting. Our information is that it was done purposely.

MORLAIX: General De Gaulle: Long live Brittany!

The crowd: Bravo!
G. de G. Long live France!

Voices in the front row: Oooo!
ST-THURIAU: G. de G.: Long live France, long live the Republic!

A young Breton in front of him: Long live Brittany, Sir!

"ISLE OF SINNERS: De Gaulle had come to inaugurate a monument on the tiny island of Sein, commemorating the flight to England of all the male population in 1940. He would have said at that time: "Sein is then a quarter of France. I'll remember that at the liberation".

Indeed, one of his first acts was to suppress, in spite of the prolonged resistance of the islanders, their age-old privilege not to pay any taxes. They could be Frenchmen "like the others". How grateful!

CELIB LETTER TO MAYORS: In a letter circulated by the secretary of C.E.L.I.B. to the mayors of townships which are members of that organisation, attention is called to the importance of a consultation which the "Prefets" of Brittany were carrying out, prior to De Gaulle's visit, concerning the problems of the country.

CELIB advised them to write to their respective prefets stressing the following points:

1. Allotment of Credits: Since the end of the 19th century, Brittany has been constantly disfavoured in comparison with the other regions in the allotment of State credits. Whether it was for rural equipment, vocational education or large investments of public concern, -"our province" has never received the share of credits to which it is entitled on a demographic account. That is the essential cause of Brittany's present economic difficulties. A comprehensive plan ought to be worked out by the government in order to remedy this neglect.

2. Immediate measures to solve transport problems arising from Brittany's geographical remoteness.* Railways (electrification does not extend to Brittany; goods tariffs hampering exports of agricultural products; narrow internal railways); highways in central Brittany to be improved; air routes to be opened.

PRICE OF ENERGY: Brittany pays more for the French coal than the Paris area, while her maritime position would allow her to import foreign coal at "very interesting rates"**. This is a penalisation from which our economy suffers. Similarly the application of the "green tariff" has the result that Brittany pays the highest rates for electricity in France.

3. Brittany has recently been classed a "critical zone". But other areas have since been classed "special zones of conversion" ***, granting much more important advantages to industrialists. "We ask for Brittany to be classed as a 'special zone of conversion' in view of her considerable emigration and of her available man-power."

Breton News' notes.

CELIB, the Committee for Study and Coordination of Breton Interests, is a body officially recognised by the French government.

* Remoteness" in the French economic system!

** Coal could be imported cheaply from across the Channel, for ex.

*** "Conversion" of old uncompetitive industries into new ones.

OUR COMMENT:

DOES DE GAULLE RECOGNISE THE BRETON PERSONALITY?

We note the following statements made by De Gaulle in Brittany: "Brittany of course has duties towards France, but also reciprocally France has duties towards Brittany" (Ouest-France, 9-9).

"Brittany must progress, and France must help her," answered De Gaulle to the mayors who were conveying to him their grievances regarding the country's economic difficulties. (Le Telegramme, 9-9)

"France trusts Brittany and Brittany can also trust France" (Le Monde, 13-9)

What is curious in these statements is not that De Gaulle promises to give attention to the Bretons' need, or that he will help: we are used to a lot of promises made in electoral times (and this visit was much like an electoral

campaign). The curious thing is this repeated juxtaposition of Brittany and France, this acknowledgment of reciprocal duties. The rights and duties of Brittany and France were well defined in the treaty of Union of 1532, and this treaty was unilaterally annulled by the French in 1790, in spite of the strongest protests by the Breton Parliament. Would De Gaulle be prepared to guarantee Brittany's rights by revalidating the treaty, or signing a new one? One of these rights concerns the Breton language, the most remarkable characteristic of the Breton "entity" of which De Gaulle spoke. Nothing so far justifies the trust that France would safeguard it. On the contrary!

Of what sort of Brittany was De Gaulle talking?

UNREST IN RURAL AREAS: A "Rueff" committee appointed to investigate ways of removing the obstacles to French economic expansion has made a number of recommendations to the Government. Those concerning rural leases have met with a lively opposition among the farm-tenants. The area held in rent represents, according to "Le Progres de Cornouaille", 27-8-60, 63% of the arable land in the N. and W. of France. Representatives of the farmers of Brittany and of 8 adjoining "departements", gathered in Nantes, expressed their determination to have the threatened "Statute of Land rent" respected, by force if need be. Adoption of the Rueff report, they argue, would lead to the disappearance of family enterprises, and by favouring those who have capitals would aggravate the exodus of the young from the land. The report favours the remuneration of capital and does not take the value of work into account at all. If accepted it would amount to a social regression of half a century.

A Breton News correspondent reports that De Gaulle has denied, during his tour of Brittany, the Government's intention to adopt the report.

According to a communication from the "Agence Bretagne Nouvelle", "the totality of the farmers of the Plouescat district of NW Brittany are refusing to pay their taxes, in spite of threats of prosecution. The big press (Ouest-France, Telegramme de Brest) make no reference to this refusal, and the French administration, conscious of the danger of a spread, seems to have given instructions to maintain a silence about it.

The following episode reminds one of the land evictions in 19th century Ireland. The tenant of a farm at Ar Merzher (West Brittany) was unable to pay a stiff increase in his rent as requested by his landlord and sanctioned by the Rennes appeal court. He was evicted and the farm, which he had cultivated for at least 20 years, was put to auction. A boycott organised by 500 farmers, who feared a similar fate in the present critical situation on the land, made it impossible to sell even a single cow.

Many small holdings in Brittany are uneconomic. The view of the Bretons is that alternative opportunities for work can - and therefore must, be provided by establishing new industries in the country. It is significant of the awakening of Breton consciousness that the Breton federation of the French Communist party has found it expedient to put up this poster (in Henbont) "The Communist Party will not permit the deportation of the BRETON WORKERS to the Ruhr". Such papers as Ouest-France appeared scandalised by the Breton Nationalists' use of the term "Deportation" when referring to the necessity for workers to leave Brittany. The Communists could have objected to the deportation to the East or the Centre of France just as well!

THE FESTIVAL OF CORNWALL IN KEMPER (24-7-1960) and THE BAG-PIPES FESTIVAL IN BREST (7-8-1960) attracted tens of thousands of visitors, Breton as well as foreign. Their splendour has been described in the local daily press. "Ouest-France (26-7-60) states that the Festival of Cornwall received the honours of the American, German, Italian, Belgian and Arab TV broadcasts. We are left wondering what about the French T.V., maybe it was below their standard? The spectators had the opportunity to witness other manifestations, of a non-folkloric character. At various spots in the town of Kemper, notably at the Prefecture (seat of the French Government representative), inscriptions had been tarrred on the walls: NANTES IS IN BRITTANY! ALGERIA x FLN = FACTORIES, but BRITTANY x LOYALTY = NOTHING. To the staffs of the Breton flags carried ahead of the different folklore groups black strips were tied in sign of mourning for the Nantes area separated from the rest of Brittany by a recent administrative reform. This initiative came from the leaders of the Federation of folklore groups. A large Breton flag rose in the air, attached to a balloon. Leaflets published by the MOB (Movement for the Organisation of Brittany) and the association "Youth of Brittany", asking for WORK IN BRITTANY and BRETON SELF-GOVERNMENT were distributed in large numbers. L'Avenir the organ of the MOB was sold by the thousand.

NATIONALIST MANIFESTATIONS IN BREST (7-8-60). The Bag-Pipes Festival which constitutes one of the big events of modern Breton life, was preceded this year by a vigorous campaign of leaflets distribution and wall inscriptions. The themes were: A Parliament for Birttany, Self-Government for Brittany, Nantes in Brittany. This propaganda was provoked by the French Government's parititon of Brittany at the beginning of the summer. The last day of the festival was the 28th anniversary of the blasting by the secret organisation "Gwenn ha Du" of the Rennes monument commemorating France's annexion of Brittany in 1532. At 6 p.m. a huge Breton flag (about 200 sq. yards) hung in front of the new unfinished townhall. At the same time, heading the "triumphal march" of 1000 pipers, twenty young men chosen from the various groups carried another large black and white flag horizontally past the rather perplexed authorities. 4 or 5 rockets went up in the air in the vicinity of the Castle and showered the spectators with thousands of leaflets claiming bilingually "Independence for Brittany". Four students were then apprehended and a fifth, the president of "The Breton Student Youth" was also detained when he tried to intercede. Towards 8 p.m. fifty armed policemen in helmets arrived at the new townhall, occupied the building, and one of them in civilian dress tore and took away the flag. An example which was to be followed by young Bretons on the occasion of De Gaulle's visit in September, but applied to French flags this time. When the arrest of the 5 students became known, a delegation of about 100 members of folklore groups marched towards the police station, shouting in unison "RE-LEA-SE THE PRI-SO-NERS". 5 car-loads of policemen charged the demonstrators and dispersed them. The pipers were forbidden to play after 10 p.m. Something like an atmosphere of curfew descended on Brest after the festivity of the day.

The arrested men were released at 11.30 p.m.

BOLD INITIATIVES: The Breton grocer E. Leclerc has won world fame in recent years by his success in eliminating costly distribution services and thus reducing grocery prices. In our July issue we reported about the "battle of the artichoke" in the Kastell-Pel (St-Pol de Leon) area, and the organisation by the growers of a direct supply line from the fields to the consumers. The scandalous aspect of that crisis was that so much food should be wasted when about half the world population is underfed.

For the last 2 years the farmers of the neighbouring Lendiviziau area had followed the advice to concentrate on cattle rearing, given by government planners. The latter expected an increased demand for meat from the Common Market.

Instead, there was such a slump on the marts at the beginning of the Summer that half the cattle had to be brought back to the farms. This was partly due to imports to France and partly to the failure of the numerous middlemen to effect any reduction at consumption level.* Here again the farmers took the initiative and decided to organise the slaughtering of the cattle and the direct sale to consumers. Ref. Ouest-France, 26-7- 29-7- 20-8-60) (The experiment extended to about 15 "communes")

* The fact noticed at military call-ups that a higher proportion of debilitated young men exist in rural areas than in towns is attributed in the 1st Ouest-France article to the under-consumption of food-stuffs other than bread and potatoes.

BRITTANY IS A NATION: Bretons rejoice when they see "new" nations reaching independence and taking their place at the United Nations.

Brittany is also a nation, an old nation which maintained its independence till 1532, its autonomy till 1790, but had then to submit to superior force.

Brittany is also entitled to her place among the newly freed nations of the world, among the free nations of the world. It is not because the Bretons are white that they are to forgo that right and to allow their national characters to be definitely obliterated. In the near future the fate of the other white nations may be influenced by mote countings at the United Nations. It would be fair to count the voices of all the Celtic nations besides the voices of the Tchad, Formosa, Byelo-Russia, France, etc.