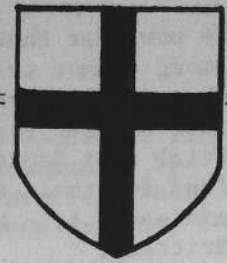


BRETON NEWS



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All correspondence to be addressed to 9, Br Cnoc Sion, Dromchonnrach, Baile Atha Cliath 9, Eire

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MOLOTOV COCKTAILS TO DRAW ATTENTION TO SITUATION IN BRITTANY.

In the night from the 11th to the 12th of March, three bottles containing a mixture of petrol and oil which was lighted by means of a wick were thrown at the sous-prefecture (government building) of Saint-Nazaire, South Brittany. The damage caused appears to have been very small. Three men were arrested shortly afterwards and admitted being the authors of this attempt. They were: Jakez ARVOR, 23, supervisor in a boarding school; Yannig Cocher, 25, aviation laboratory assistant; and Alan Gachet, 24, a secondary school teacher.

The French regional press in Brittany, example L'Eclair, reported this news in as sarcastic a manner as possible in order to try and discredit the three young men. It is obvious that if their aim had been to burn down the building and to get away, their action would have been carried out differently: they could have thrown their projectiles through the windows, they would not have left the scene in a car containing M.O.B. leaflets and the registration plates of which had not been changed and they would not have remained in the vicinity. When questioned they did not deny responsibility for the act.

A few days earlier, they had pulled down French flags from the same building and from the J. Jaures school and set fire to them.

The reasons for these acts are given in a letter from J. Arvor (L'Avenir 14/4): Our aim was to draw the attention of the government to the situation of Brittany by means of a spectacular, symbolical and fairly harmless act.

"We are not anti-French, but we are opposed to the structure of the French State because it is obsolete and threatens Brittany's survival. Instead of a centralised State we need a federal State on the model of West Germany and Switzerland.

"We don't advocate violent means but we deemed it our duty to use them once at least in order to make the French government and the Breton people aware of the peril in which Brittany finds herself".

Call for solidarity. In another letter, Jakez Arvor writes:

"You know why we are imprisoned. We are strengthened by the thought that we are not being forgotten by our fellow-countrymen. We find the time long but we spend it learning Breton and songs from Barzhaz Breizh (a famous collection by Kervarker). We are short of Breton songs and would be glad to get texts and music."

(L'Avenir, 14/4).

In the same issue this paper announced that the three prisoners were trying through their solicitors to obtain political status. Readers were invited to write to the Juge d'Instruction, Tribunal de Saint-Nazaire, Loire-Atlantique, in support of their request.

Copies of a petition to that effect are available from the Breton Information Bureau, Dublin: the text is in Breton with an English translation.

Commenting on the case, AR VRO Nr 36 puts the blame on the French government:

"Whatever our opinion may be concerning the opportunity of their action, we must unite in defense of these three young comrades who are well known for their Breton convictions, who have risked their freedom and their jobs and who now suffer under harsh conditions for having dared to demonstrate the Breton people's will to live.

"The refusal of the French government to give the slightest attention to the Breton claims is at the root of this act of despair. These men saw their compatriots emigrating by the tens of thousands and their language being eradicated. So they decided to strike a blow for their country.

We now hear that Arvor, Cocher and Gachet have been separated and put in dark cells among common criminals. The Prison Authorities have taken away their Breton Books, thus denying them permission to learn the language which they want to save. We must not let them down but make sure that they can be defended when they come up for trial next September, and also that they will later be reinstated in their jobs. A fund for their defense has been opened: any help will be welcomed and should be addressed to - M. Arvor, Senior. (Bank Account) C.C.P. 721-71 Nantes, Loire-Atlantique, Brittany.

DEMOGRAPHIC DECLINE: While the French press of Brittany seeks to vilify the Bretons who get exasperated by the State's systematic neglect of their country's interests, indications continue to accumulate that this formerly prolific area is heading for a steep demographic decline.

A map in LA VIE BRETONNE (Mai 1966) shows that Brittany has by far the highest rate of emigration in all the French-controlled territory. It is taken from a study by the Official "Institut National de la Statistique" and represents the balance of population migrations between 1954 and 1962 for each of the administrative regions. During this period, Paris registered a net gain of 326,000 inhabitants. In 14 departments in the SE (Lyon-Marseille area) the balance was + 130,000. In 2 other regions, it is only slightly positive, but elsewhere the population decreased more or less sharply. The worst hit are 16 departments in the West, but while in 12 of them the net result is a deficit of 141,000, in the four departments of "Region Brittany" it amounts to 93,000.

DON'T DEMOBILISE: How many Bretons outside the nationalist and regionalist organisations realise the danger from this population drain to their livelihood? Some of their elected representatives are courageous enough to exhort them to renewed efforts but their calls are respectful of the French order.

At a Congress attended by 2,000 Finistere farmers in Brest, the mayor of this City, Mr. Lombard, said that "rural and town people must unite in order to win Brittany's struggle. The problem is whether Brittany will keep her men and her soul or become a desert..... The 4th French Plan was for us a failure and the 5th now starting proposes nothing to reassure us. Any industrialisation that is intended has been conceived from a continental point of view and leaves the opportunities offered by our coasts and harbours unused."

Mr. Lombard drew a comparison between Brest and Tarente in South Italy, where the Italians are transforming a poor area into an industrial one with the help of credits from the European Investments Bank. 23 new factories have been built there around a siderurgical complex and an oil refinery.

"We Bretons dare not demobilise: Nothing has yet been won, nor obtained, nor decided in favour of our homeland. The fate of Brittany has never depended as much as to-day on the Bretons themselves".

Mr. Lombard deserves credit for exhorting them to maintain their vigilance, while the Gaullists are trying to soothe them with all the powerful means at their disposal. But like many others who know what is going on and who care enough to speak he has not fully analysed the Breton situation or then he shrinks away from the conclusions. Brittany's soul? Has the Breton language anything to do with that? He does not say a word about its eradication. He calls our country "notre petite patrie", yet with so little love will he not capitulate when it comes to a choice between French and Breton interests? The latest example of opposition between these interests is provided by the refusal of the French government to allow the European Investment Bank to grant credits for the installation of a siderurgical complex in the Nantes St. Nazaire area as was done for Tarente-Bari. The European Institutions were quite prepared to give this help, but this was not acceptable to Paris. (Usine Nouvelle 3/3/66; see also Vie Bretonne, March-April).

It is true that the Bretons themselves will have to determine their destiny but Mr. Lombard does not tell them how far they must be prepared to go in order to control it. Their corporations are spending whatever money they are free to use in order to attract industries but their means are severely limited. We give below the example of the Kemper Corporation. The French government's refusal to allow Nantes-St. Nazaire to receive European credits illustrates still more strikingly that the Bretons' destiny is chiefly controlled by an outside power. Speaking clearly, having "their fate in their own hands" means governing themselves.

And if it is right to say, as Mr. Lombard did, that the Breton problem is a global one, this does not mean only that it concerns both rural and city people, but that it involves inseparably the cultural and the economic aspects of the life of the Breton collectivity.

BREAK OUT OF ISOLATION

From the 6th to the 11th of June, the members of the "European" Parliament's Agricultural Commission will visit Brittany at the invitation of the Committee for Study and Liaison of Breton Interests (C.E.L.I.B.). They will be accompanied by about 15 experts. The Commission has already made study tours of Bavaria, Sicily and Sardinia where it was invited by the governments of these autonomous regions, but it is its first visit on French-controlled territory.

In April 1965, the Rennes Commission of Regional Economic Development or CODER, a body that is well controlled by the French Government, appealed to the E.E.C. institutions for financial help. We have reported in B.N.52 that about 25 million francs had been lent by the European Investments Bank to Breton departments but that this was very short of the needs and that the French government was opposed to further loans of this kind to Brittany.

The "European" Parliament's Agricultural Commission has not got any attributions comparable to those of the E.I.B. or of the E.E.C. Agricultural Fund, but it may be able to influence various authorities in Brussels, Luxembourg or Strasbourg. Anyway, CELIB will try with the help of the Breton Agricultural Chambers, trade unions and Farmers Associations to show the visitors that Brittany's potentialities are not being sufficiently used while her people's dynamism and her natural resources justify a great effort on the part of E.E.C. towards improving her basic equipment.

Two Breton M.P.s, Mr. R. Pleven and Mr. A. Colin, who are also members of the "European" Parliament, went recently on a fact-finding tour of the Puglia region of South Italy, where an industrial "pole of development" is being promoted by means of generous E.E.C. credits. They were struck, and even, as they said "bowled-over" at finding that all what Brittany has been asking for in the way of coastal industrial development is being achieved with European aid in the Taranto-Bari-Brindisi provinces. 23 new factories have sprung up there within a short period, around a metallurgic complex and an oil refinery which are using raw material from overseas.

The considerable financial aid from the E.I.B. to which France contributes her share, could just as well have been obtained for the Breton coast if "Paris" had been interested. C.E.L.I.B. thinks it is not yet too late: "that is why we took the initiative of this visit in June which will allow a first direct contact between the European Parliament and Brittany" (J. Martray in La Vie Bretonne, March - April).

SECOND RATE EUROPEANS

L'AVENIR DE LA BRETAGNE (12 May) devotes its editorial to this latest undertaking of CELIB.

"Our readers are the first to know that the Breton problems have a European dimension and that they will never be solved in the French context alone. CELIB must be congratulated for placing them squarely in the European frame.

Unfortunately, CELIB has no official status. It was not the official Rennes CODER which invited the European Agricultural Commission: this shows that the French Government is anything but keen on this sort of study tour. One is reminded of the regional Committee which brings together representatives of 'French' and Belgian Flanders: it is boycotted by government "prefes" on both sides of the border. The European Agricultural Commission went already to Bavaria, Sardinia and Sicily which have similar problems to those of Brittany. But they were officially invited by regional governments. They had to deal with official spokesmen and democratically elected representatives who have the authority to take and to apply decisions. How much stronger is the position of the Bavarians, the Sardinians and the Sicilians when it comes to apply for European aid! They owe this to their regional autonomy.

Compared to this liberal status enjoyed by millions of other Europeans, what do we Bretons have? C.E.L.I.B. has no powers of decision. Neither has the Rennes CODER. They have no executive attributions, no effective authority; they cannot claim to be anything like a regional government. Paris alone decides whether we shall live or die. This illustrates our inferiority compared to other European peoples. Will the Bretons continue to accept this inferiority or will they be proud and strong enough to reject it, with or without agreement from Paris?"

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY

"If the struggle against regional under-development is to become a Common European concern, we'll have to look more and more beyond the frontiers of St tes. But of all the members of EEC it is France which is most inclined to fall back on herself, her

decision to leave NATO being the last move in this direction.

The resulting degradation in the economic field is felt most sharply and immediately in the regions of the French territory which are least favoured geographically and suffer most from under-equipment.

The last issue of the EEC Statistical Annual shows that among the six it is France which has the slowest progress in industrial production; also that French salaries have increased least, but French prices at consumers' level have increased most; finally, that France leads in the increase of unemployment: if the 1958 figure is represented by the index 100, unemployment in Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Germany in 1965 had fallen respectively to 67, 48, 40 and 19, whereas in France it had risen to 151. Although this is not yet critical for France, for Brittany it has very serious repercussions.

One of the causes for this constant decline is the shortage of investments which tragically affects Brittany. While France prefers to spend her money on her prestige policy, she also discourages foreign investments on her territory.

We are going to feel the effects of her withdrawal from NATO in many economic sectors. A first sign may well be the London government decision to restrict the imports of French agricultural products: Great Britain will now buy only 2,800 tons of French butter instead of the previous 10,200 tons while the Dutch and Danish quotas remain unchanged.

(Ref. La Bretagne at l'Occident,
La Vie Nretonne, March - April)

Never before did Brittany need to control her own destiny so much as to-day

RESOLUTIONS AND PETITIONS . . .

The Petition organised by the Breton Cultural Foundation in favour of the teaching of Breton in schools and its use on Television had gathered over 60,000 signatures by the end of April.

At its meeting on January 20th, the General Council of Finistere voted a resolution in favour of a Breton programme on one of the French T.V. Networks. They referred to the widespread popular support for such a measure evidenced by the petition as well as by numerous letters addressed to the producer of the Breton sound broadcasts and to the Listeners Association "Skingomz and Skinwel"

The Council demanded that proper facilities be provided by the French authorities for the production of the sound programmes and the Sunday broadcasts be brought back to 13²⁰ instead of 14⁰⁰ hours (French time). At present, the production of the programmes relies on voluntary efforts. And the shift to 14⁰⁰ hours since last Summer has caused the number of listeners to drop by half.

The Council also asked that the school curriculum be adapted to the particular resources and needs of Brittany in order to spare the young people the harmful effects of uprooting. It was time the Ministerial Commission, appointed a year ago to "study" the question of the teaching of the regional languages and cultures pronounced on its findings. One of the measures most needed was the creation of a College of Regional Culture . (Breiz, March 1966).

A General Council is comparable to a County Council except that it has very little say beyond advising the government representative (prefet) at the head of the Department. In the past, the Breton General Councils have on many occasions voted unanimously in favour of teaching Breton in Schools. Given the financial restrictions on their budgets, they could not organise Breton evening classes on a wide basis, but it would demonstrate their earnestness if they subsidised such voluntary teaching in the largest towns. Would the prefet veto this? He should be challenged!

BREST STUDENTS ALSO WANT TO REMAIN BRETON

The administrative Council of the Brest Students Association has passed a resolution asking the French Minister of Education to organise the teaching of the "regional languages and cultures" (a phrase that the moderate petitioners think less offensive than "the Breton language") They asked also that regional history, geography and ethnography be taught in the universities and that Breton, Basque, Catalan, be admitted as second languages in university examinations. (Breiz, March).

The Brest students could stiffen their 'regional' line by getting in touch with their colleagues in Loeven or Barcelona . . .

Their association publishes a bulletin "Ar Studier" containing a regular contribution in Breton.

SECONDARY EDUCATION BY CORRESPONDENCE

S.A.D.E.D. the Committee for Secondary Education in Breton, reports an increase in its staff and the number of its students. It now employs 21 teachers, some of them being engaged in preparing courses or in research (normative philology).

S.A.D.E.D. has undertaken in Brittany the task, normally devolving on the State, of providing secondary education in the national language. The organisation is run according to strict rules. It could cater already for thousands of students annually. It is divided into various services: teaching proper, publications, co-ordination, control, information.

Due to its exacting discipline, the number of the students enrolled decreased after the first year. But it returned to the original figure in the 3rd and exceeded it by 50% in the fourth year. Assiduity rose from 67% in 1964 to 82% in 1965.

S.A.D.E.D. worked on a £1000 budget last year, but is expecting to spend £1500 this year. Its staff gave 7,125 hours of work, unremunerated, last year. The term due to start next September will include 12 courses instead of 10 as hitherto.

(Danevellou SADED).

BRETON LANGUAGE CAPITAL: It has often been suggested that Brest, the largest city in the Breton speaking area, could become the centre of Breton studies but according to the bulletin "Skingomz ha Skinwel", the title of "Capital of the Breton language" may be won by Sant-Brieg (St. Brienc) although the surrounding countryside⁺ has spoken French for two or three centuries. There are now nine teachers giving courses in our language in the various schools and cultural centres in the town.

+ to the South and East.

These teachers are convinced that the teaching of Breton is the most important question for the future of Brittany. (Without its language, this country would soon be reduced to a geographical expression, its people being deprived of their main national characteristic and thereby of a strong reason for resisting dispersion and struggling for employment at home).

IN IGNORANCE OF OWN HISTORY

Ronan Caouissin, producer of a historical film on the last Breton ruler, "Anne de Bretagne" takes a complementary view (L'AVENIR, 12/5/66):

"The Breton language is in extreme danger in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of its protagonists. I think this is chiefly due to the fact that the Breton-speakers, have hardly any knowledge of our national history. Even among the members of our various organisations, few have a good knowledge of it. A language is not a sufficient bulwark of nationality nowadays. But when they become acquainted with our history, French-speaking Bretons frequently start to learn our language because they see it clearly then as part of a heritage which they want to maintain."

During the war, the brothers Caouissin published a Childrens' Magazine, whose 40,000 young readers learned the great names of our history, Warok, Morvan, Nominoe, Alan Barvek, Jean IV, Jean V, Francois II, Ann of Brittany, Pontkalleg, La Rouerie, Cadoudal.

These names mean nothing to the vast majority of the Bretons because the French system sedulously keeps them ignorant of their own history, while saturating their minds with records of French "grandeur" and the names of Frenchmen who often enough opposed our freedom. To-day, the teaching of Breton history is forbidden even more strenuously than that of our language. It is consonant with the treatment of colonial peoples. We hear that in the former French colonies of Africa, the teachers which the French Army sends out on duty continue to teach the natives about Charles-Martel, Hugues Capet, Colbert while no attempt is being made to acquaint them with what is known of their history or with their own cultures. "Les peuples heureux n'ont pas d'histoire" * says a French proverb. France, on the contrary, has so much of it that it must be exported to reduce misfortune at home.

* "Happy people have no history".

ENEZ AR VERTUZ (Island of Virtue) is the title of a new novel by Youenn Olier. It might be described as a saga, as its action takes place, not in the past, but in the distant future. A second volume is promised.

Most reviews of this book dwell on its linguistic qualities and defects. Readers who did not go beyond Basic Breton or who persist in believing that our language can be confined to expressing the simple life of easants and fishermen, will have to struggle in these pages with many unfamiliar terms. But the story is exciting enough to pull them over the difficulties. And how else than by using an ultra modern vocabulary could Youenn Olier have recorded this nightmarish dream of a post-nuclear society which is ruled by an omniscient magician or demi-god from an immense fortress equipped with the most uncanny products of technology and applied genetics? The Lord's name is Omeur, an obvious adaptation of Teilhard de Chardin's Omega, but the author was also challenged by a passage from the writings of the Breton Philosopher, Renan:

"One imagines a state of the world in which everything would have converged to a single conscious centre, in which the concept of a personal monotheistic god would have become reality: an omniscient and almighty being may be the final stage of a "deifying evolution".

Many of Omeur's characteristics and powers constitute a parody of the Christian Almighty God. He is served by engineers with Chinese names who have no will of their own, feed on radiation, breed synthetic anthropomorphic beings whom they send in a state of suspended animation on space missions. For his pleasure, he maintains a city which is inhabited by people with nothing to do but enjoy themselves - helpless creatures - and a reserve where the descendants of 20th Century man are allowed to procreate under restricted conditions. How one engineer who was born in this reserve but trained in the fortress manages to bring about the destruction of Omeur's realm remains at the end of this volume a bit unconvincing. "Youenn Olier's purpose is to show that man's nature can overcome the efforts of the scientists to destroy it", says R. Hemon in *Ar Bed Keltiek*. He rejects a humanistic world order. He succeeds in projecting a repulsive image of a society where every life depends on a superman. Death is better than immortality without free will. The Chinese characters are necessarily sketchy, but the tension one expects from a situation of impending doom fails to build up.

I. The Annual Conference of the Celtic League was held in Dublin on April 9 & 10. Its public meetings, on themes such as "European federalism and the Celtic Nations", "The Multi-national State", "The Place of the Nation in the Modern World", were very well attended. Among other resolutions, the Meeting:

- 1) deplored the misinterpretation by the Breton clergy of the Vatican Council decree concerning the use of the Vernacular in liturgy (with a few exceptions, priests in the Breton-speaking area use only French and are thus collaborating with the French government in its policy of cultural genocide).
- 2) denounced the recklessness of the French government in installing a nuclear base in the populous Breton-speaking area South of Brest.
- 3) called on the United Nations to continue and develop the discussions initiated at the Ljubljana Seminar last year on the rights of national groups and minority nations, and called on member-States such as France and England to implement the conclusions on which there was agreement at the Seminar.

II. The Inter-Celtic Camp for Breton-speakers will be held in Logivi-Plougraz, between Gwengamp and Montroulez from July 28 to August 14.

III. A Brittany-Galicia Committee has been created on the initiative of C.E.L.I.B. for the purpose of developing relations between two countries which have much in common, geographically and ethnically.

IV. *AR BED KELTIEK* continues to publish short Breton plays (original works and translations) for staging by small groups.

V. *Preder No. 71* publishes a lecture by Goulven Pennaod on the Weakening of Consonants in Breton: "Here is more erudition and insight than in most of the studies found in renowned philological magazines. On the basis of the available data Pennaod shows that the amount of energy put into the pronunciation of Breton consonants is less each time they undergo a mutation (*Lautverschiebung*).

VI. *AN IRIN GLAS*, a collection of 13 short stories by Ronan Huon, has just been published. Editions AL LIAMM, 2 Venelle Poulbriquen, BREST. 11 Nf.

VII. "*L'Art populaire dans la decoration*" is an album of 10 plates reproducing 195 motifs of popular Breton ornamentation. It will be useful to crockery-makers, decorators, painters, tapestry-workers, art teachers. Studio Herve Lemee, 32 Place des Lices, Rennes. 9.75 Nf.