

# BRETON NEWS



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## POLITICAL SCENE

November Elections. The campaign for the November elections to the French Parliament revolved in Brittany around the Breton question. All the candidates elected had pledged to act in favour of the adoption by the French government of the CELIB bill for a Breton plan of development in the course of the year. No candidate went forward on a M.O.B. ticket. Some of the candidates were M.O.B. members; One of them got elected in Fougères. Candidates otherwise favoured by the M.O.B. got 46% of the poll (L'Avenir, 6-12).

Candidates got favourable results when they had won credit previously through their work in public bodies (local or district councils, trade unions). This has led the M.O.B. to adopt a plan to set up "shadow" councils everywhere possible in preparation for future elections. (L'Avenir, 20-12).

The 4th National Congress of the Movement for the Organisation of Brittany was held in the Municipal Theatre at St -Brieg on Dec. 9th.

It was open only to the 200 delegates sent by the M.O.B. sections in Brittany and in Paris. The various reports given by the officials indicate : a strong activity in Brest and Rennes, but the need for a deeper implantation in other towns; the need for a well defined social programme; support for the federation of Europe on the model of the Federal German Republic, the members being the ethnical entities and the natural regions instead of the present States; a claim by the young elements for a more important part in policy-making.

Yann Fouere, president of the Congress, outlined the M.O.B.'s political aims; priority to Brittany's interests; unity of all "local" forces; necessity to recast the political and administrative structure of the French State; federalism as a means to achieve our freedom within a general reorganisation of Europe.

The Bretons should be prepared to take over the administration of their own country. To that effect, the proposal to set up "shadow" municipal and departmental councils as well as a "shadow" Assembly of Breton M.P.'s, to deal with public matters in the same way as the actual councils, was adopted as a resolution.

Observers at the Congress gathered the impression that the M.O.B.'s aspirations go beyond the French framework : they would lead Brittany to participate directly in a Federation of European Regions (ref. Combat, 12-12).

Signs of a more conservative and timorous approach could be seen at the Congress in the presence of the French flag between the Breton and European ones; in the submission to the slanders of Brittany's enemies implicit in the repudiation of the two "bugbears" of autonomism and separatism; in the proclamation of federalism in the double framework of France and Europe.

An outgoing member of the Central Committee advocated a permanent tension, but no opposition, between the M.O.B. and the French State as a way to bring about progress. He favoured also direct contacts with the French authorities, and coordination of action with the reformist groups (CELIB, etc.) The M.O.B. should drop all nationalist claims, and patiently explain that the work for the Breton language was not directed against French unity ( ... as for the past 100 years).

This member was not successful when elections took place to renew one third of the 20-man strong Central Committee. The result of the election is considered in AR VRO (Dec. 1962) as indicating a hardening of the M.O.B.

Resolutions were passed concerning

a) the adoption of the Law-Programme, the need to recast France's politico-administrative structure, the institution of Brittany as a Region endowed with legislative and executive powers, elected and controlled by the Breton popular forces; finally the creation of economic, social and cultural councils as a first step towards these objectives.

b) Britain's and Ireland's application for EEC membership, favourable to a strengthening of the bonds between the Celtic countries, and to a renewal of activity in the cross-channel trade. This resolution expressed dismay at the French tactics seeking

to postpone or avert Britain's entry in the Common Market.

**ILLEGAL ACTIONS.** On Dec. 11th, members of the Association of the Young Breton-Speakers, including their president Erwan Evenou were accused at Lanuon of having made inscriptions, calling for the teaching of Breton in schools.

French parties can make such propaganda without being prosecuted.

The defence was to be presented by G. Toublanc who possessed the qualifications required in a police-court.

The judge refused to hear him, and had him expelled by force.

The editor of Barr-Heol (Dec.) questions the effectiveness of acts of an illegal nature committed recently in Brittany: pulling down of French flags, distribution of leaflets, painting of inscriptions at night. Even if their authors were prepared in case of arrest and trial to defend firmly the Breton case, there is little likelihood that the State would allow publicity for their defence. As regards the painted slogans their meaning is often insufficiently clear to the uninformed readers. A better understanding of their psychology is required if the efforts are to be rewarding.

**BRETON CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL** Towards 1930 there was sufficient proof that petitions to 30 YEARS OLD ++++++ the French government requesting the teaching of Breton were useless. The lesson was: "Teach it yourself" as well as you could

A first correspondence school had been organised by F. Vallee and R. Hemon in 1928. Marc'harid Gourlaouen took over in 1932, with 59 pupils. Textbooks, grammars and dictionaries were supplied by R. Hemon. By 1942, she had 165 pupils. In recent years, other similar schools have been set up, but in 1962, SKOL OHER (Action) continues with 150 pupils. M. Gourlaouen looks now after the beginners which she prepares for the Trec'h Kentan (= first victory) examination. For the advanced class, she is assisted by Y. Thomas-Ravallig, whose pupils are enabled to pass the Trec'h Meur.

The courses are free of charge, except that pupils have to pay for their stamped envelopes. More than 3000 have learned to read and write their language thanks to Marc'harid. The school has been a nursery of Breton writers and many prominent figures of the National movement have gone through it.

In 1954 the textbooks were rewritten by R. Hemon according to his method of Basic Breton, developed before the war.

100 friends paid tribute to her perseverance and devotion to our language when they gathered around her at Kallag (C. Brittany) on Dec. 23rd. Among them were renowned Breton writers and a large proportion of young people. (Al Liamm, Dec.).

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"We shall have a culture of international rank, with Breton as its means of expression, in a Brittany freed from French meddling, or our present turbulent Movement will be replaced by well polished museums of Popular Culture and professional folkloric troops, subsidised from Paris or Rennes. A law-programme would change nothing." (Ar Vro, Dec.)

AR VRO will now be published every second month. It gives the best information, mainly in French, about the trends of Breton political thought. Its contributors have their eyes wide open on the world. The Dec. issue contains a study of the Kurdish question, and a correspondence about the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Breton movement. Its "Chronicle of Nations" covers 15 pages.

Subscription 15 Nf/-annum to J. Desbordes, Bat. H 4, Ker Andon, Concarneau, Finistère.

**AR HED Keltiek.** "Each of our magazines has its role. A.B.K.'s is to report the main events and the significant developments of our time in every field: politics, science, culture, etc.

Without such a newspaper, the Breton language would be unable to express the things that are on our contemporaries' minds: an abyss would open between it and life, becoming wider every day." (Dec.)

**BRETON BOOKS FOR CHILDREN** There are now over 20 booklets in this collection, published by Per Denez in association with AL LIAMM. 3 new ones are due out in February. They cost 3/- each, are agreeably illustrated, and suitable for age group 7-10 approx.

Little has been done so far to provide reading material for age group 11-15.

**IF BRITAIN JOINS...** The Economic Commission of CELIB met in Rennes on Dec. 12th to examine the consequences of the eventual entry of Britain (and Ireland) in the Common Market. They considered what Breton action should be taken.

CELIB is to seek contacts with British experts with a view to set up a series of working sessions in common with them and other C.M. leaders, culminating in an international conference early this Summer. This would be CELIB's most important manifestation in 1963. (Vie Bretonne, Dec.)



EXTERNAL RELATIONS. Brittany is ahead of a number of French regions in planning because of the attention given by her representatives to foreign experiments (English trading-system for the building of factories, development of Southern Italy, recourse to the European Investment Bank): this enabled them to introduce new methods and techniques.

Numerous foreigners are now interested in the Breton experiments in agricultural reform, industrial development, regional planning. Bretons are being invited abroad to communicate the result of their work. The head of CELIB's Econ. Commission was invited to Belgium, Germany, Morocco, Canada. His experience was availed of in planning the development of eastern areas of the Quebec province. He advised the Canadians to accept the cooperation of regional representatives, thus avoiding errors committed by the French government in respect of Brittany. (vis Bretonne, Dec.)

FORECAST. In the same issue of "la Vie Bretonne", A. Burlot, chief inspector of Economic investigations in Paris forecasts that the world's economic evolution points towards a spectacular development of Western Europe's coastal regions. He bases his argument on:

- 1) an expected reduction in the price of energy (cheap American coal used for thermal production of electricity becoming a fundamental factor in European economy;
- 2) an irreversible decrease in costs of water transport;
- 3) the relative proximity of ore deposits: bauxite (Canada, Jamaica), copper and iron (Guinea, Gabon, Mauretania);
- 4) the pleasant climate as a social factor;
- 5) hinterland resources as a basis for secondary industries;
- 6) the availability of manpower;

and concludes that Brittany is in a privileged position for development in the next decades.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION: not enough credits. The European zone of OECD is lagging far behind the U.S.A., Canada and the Soviet Union in providing educational facilities: this is shown by the percentages of young people studying in secondary schools and universities. This lag will persist till at least 1970, and will be felt for a long time, since research and technical knowledge are now essential factors of economic growth and influence in the world.

The shortage of technically trained workers is an important aspect of Brittany's underdevelopment. It is proving a handicap in her industrialisation. An example is given by the Citroen company, which has built an important branch in Rennes recently. Having experienced difficulties in finding qualified workers in the area, the firm has now decided to stop its expansion there and to move on to Caen (Normandy) where technical schools are more numerous. (Avenir, 1/11).

The CELIB plan puts at 240 million Nf the credit needed for the next 3 years to redress the situation in 4 Breton departments. It is an emergency minimum.

It has now been announced that only 110 million Nf have been allocated for the purpose. The figure is totally inadequate. In protest, the Commission in charge of the distribution of the credits in the Rennes academy has refused to do the job. They have just classified the projects for which money is needed. (Petit Bleu des CdN) 29-12)

At the same time, J. Trébert, General Inspector officially in charge of Brittany's economy, writes in LE PAYSAN BRETON that "the main cause of Brittany's renaissance is the dynamism of her people. More than anywhere else, the eagerness to learn shown by her youth justifies an increase in public investments in the field of classical and technical education, and offers to industry a guarantee of quality for workers and staff alike."

INDUSTRIALISATION is coming to a start in Brittany. As many jobs were created in 1962 as between 1949 and 1961. This is due to the Breton anger. Nothing was done between 1949 and 1957. created

Sixty delegates from the groups in secondary schools in Cotes-du-Nord to study various aspects of the Breton question have decided to form a federation. They are resolved to build their future in Brittany. (Avenir, 1/11)

Because of a system of differentiation in salaries which fixed pay rates in Brittany at 40-50% those given in Paris, the Breton workers are being deprived yearly of the equivalent of £100 million. Low salaries in Brittany have been vaunted as a bait to industrialists, but this was a fallacy: because of the very low buying power of the Breton masses, there is but a poor market for the products of industry, a fact which opposes industrialisation.

In Finistere, W. Brittany, the mean annual salary is 5672 Nf, whereas in Paris it is 10,277 and in France 7701. (Pays Breton, Dec.)

KELO'H SEVENADUREL AR BREZHONEG, in Rennes is now in its 4th year. Its meetings are held at 30, place des Lices, Rennes. Its principal activities are its beginners and advanced Breton classes. Its lending library contains periodicals and books published in the past 50 years. Its social activities include singing, dancing, lectures, parties. In spite of difficulties its promoters have succeeded in arranging for a Breton mass to be celebrated in Rennes on the last Sunday of every month. There is now in the Breton capital the nucleus of an Association of Breton-speaking families, whose children are often brought to gether. The Circle lends its material to all associations wishing to put a Breton note in their manifestations: many have made use of such facilities. Thanks to its intervention, 10 of the best bookshops in Rennes offer Breton books, the sales for which amounted to £250 in 1962. (Keleier Roazhon; Breiz, January).

BEILHADEGOU LEON. Encouraged by the success of Beilhadegou Treger, - a kind of Variety Show that has been produced in the Treger area for the last 2-3 years - a group has been formed for a similar purpose around Kastell-Pol, North East of Brest. These shows are playing a capital role in reinstilling respect for their own language among the Breton-speakers.

. PURELY CULTURAL? Until quite recently, a number of organisations in the Breton Movement obstinately refused to venture outside the cultural field. But after witnessing the widespread disturbances of the past two years they are beginning to recognise that the Breton struggle concerns all aspects of life: that it is political.

This was always evident to the nationalists. It was reaffirmed in April 1959 by the Breton Language Council.

To-day thousands of the members of KENDALC'H, an organisation limited by its constitution to cultural matters, may be seen walking down the streets, claiming for Breton in the schools and work to stop emigration.

Last Summer, the purely Cultural Bleu-Brug organised a conference on economic questions which lasted 4 days. It was attended by 200 people, including the bishop of St-Brieg, who was amazed at the gravity of the situation depicted by the secretary of CELIB.

The anti-nationalist Emglev Breiz (Breton Alliance) has asked its members to support all the efforts to obtain the Law-Programme (Barr-Heol, Dec.)

CELIB remains above party differences in its effort to mobilise Brittany. It is chiefly concerned with economics - but how long can it keep out of (Breton) politics? It depends on the French treatment of the bill for the Breton Law-Programme.

. BREIZ ATA0 : a Flemish novel. "Set without distortion in the historic context of the Breton Movement before, during and after the war, this novel of 230 pages is considered by the critics as one of the best by the well-known Flemish writer Valere Depauw. It tells the dramatic story of Maiwenn, whose husband dies for Brittany. It was published last November by Uitgeverij Westland, Merkssem, Belgium. A German edition will be printed soon in Munich, and there are negotiations for a French edition. (Ar Vro, Dec.)

. Biological transmutations. The Breton biologist, Louis Kervran, has published his book on biological transmutations. His discovery brings a solution to numerous problems of biochemistry. He has proved that nature operates the transmutation of elements (Ca into Mg, Na into K and vice-versa) with low energy. This opens new horizons for science, and interest is being shown in his work all the world over. (Bretagne a Paris).

. In order to adapt the Breton agriculture to the situation created by the Common Market, its leaders are making a quantitative study of the conditions under which a farm can give full and remunerative employment to two workers (working 2400 hours a year). To save the Breton rural population from a massive exodus, efforts are being made to bring about cooperation in groups of 3-6 small farmers (pooling their machines). There are 600 such groups at present in Brittany as compared to 2100 in France. (Vie Bretonne).

. The highest concentration of Breton products is to be seen at the Lorient fair, covering an area of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, May 17th-26th. 400 stands are available to non-Breton buyers. (Breiz, Jan).

. The Finistere General Council has voted a credit of one million Nf to help towards the industrialisation of Western Brittany. Among other schemes to which it is giving support, there is the Breton School by correspondence directed by V. Seite: it gets a 1000 Nf- grant. (O.F.)

. 77% of the farms in Ille et-Vilaine have no running water. 53% of houses and flats in the same area are over-populated (O. F. 24-11).