

BRETON NEWS



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DUBLIN.

Winter 1964-65.

Economic Balance Sheet. "In spite of some improvement in November and December, 1964 was a bad year for Brittany".

The Plan for the Development of Neglected Areas, which the French government was pledged to adopt already before Jan. 1, 1964, and which would have been given force of law, was discreetly shelved. Up to April 1964, ministers had assured that they were determined to bring it out, but after that, all questions concerning it were met with silence in high places. What had happened? (Answer in our next article).

The industrial decentralisation which had been given some momentum in 1960-62 came to a stop. Factories closed (canning factories along the South coast) or went bankrupt, (the Magadur animal food factory and chicken slaughterhouse); others, due to be set up, cancelled their plans (Alsthom, in Lorient, which would have given substitute employment to the Henbont foundry workers). There were various reasons for this set-back: the relaxation of the farmers' pressure, the adoption of more liberal conceptions by a banker-led government; the financial stabilisation plan which discouraged investments in underdeveloped areas; the abolition by decrees, in May 1964, of incentives to the decentralisation of industries.

The only noteworthy relief was the installation at Rennes of a Centre of Electronics Studies for the Army (this reinforced the military occupation of our country - B.N.) The 1964 reverse in industrialisation will be felt for years to come.

Two new elements were introduced towards the end of the year: a government decision to reserve an important percentage of the new industrial employment for the "Western" regions (see below); another government decision to restore some of the incentives to industrialisation which had been cancelled in May.

But there is a major difference between offering local incentives and putting into application a legally-binding programme covering many years, for a substructure to industrialisation in the whole region.

Yet, the Committee for the Study and Coordination of the Breton Interests (CELIB) which was the driving force behind the Bill for a Breton Plan, has chosen to continue negotiating with the French government with the aim of obtaining improvements, particularly in the fields of vocational education and communications.

(Editorial, *La Vie Bretonne*, Jan. 1965.)

LAW-PROGRAMME FOR UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS OPPOSED BY DE GAULLE.

One of

the architects of the CELIB Plan, Professor Philipponneau, confirmed what another CELIB member had revealed: that it was De Gaulle no less who vetoed the discussion in the French National Assembly of the promised Plan for the Development of Neglected Areas.

Prof. Philipponneau, an adoptive Breton -- his wife is from Kemper -- is the president of the CELIB Commission of Economic Expansion. He took position, more vigorously than anyone else, against the French government's betrayal of their pledge. He is now convinced of the need for political changes before any further progress can be made. But his search for a solution remains within the framework of the French State.

In an interview which he gave at his house -- its name "Al Lezenn-Stur" means "the Law-Programme": it symbolises his concern with the Breton Plan as well as his sympathy for our language struggle -- he gave much the same analysis and explanation of the Breton economic crisis as the editor of *La Vie Bretonne*. The regression happens at a time when an abnormally high percentage of young people, born immediately after the war, are coming on the labour market: for 1965 the number of the 18 year-old (in 4 of the 5 Breton departments) is 45,000, as against 32,000 in 1962.

For him, the newly created and very official "Commission of Regional Economic Development" (CODER) has been constituted in such a way as to prevent the discussion of awkward problems: it will be allowed only to record the decisions of the Government.

The adoption of a Law-Programme for the Underdeveloped Areas was vetoed by President De Gaulle. On May, 11, 1964, this document of 48 pages lay on the desk of the Finance Minister. It was to be tabled for discussion in the Chamber of Deputies before July 1. But preliminary approval by De Gaulle was needed. He was against: "A Law-Programme for underdeveloped areas would risk cutting France in two" he is reported to have said.

So, Prof. Phlipponneau thinks that a solution of the Breton economic problem depends first on the outcome of the French presidential election next autumn. He advocates the regrouping of all the Breton forces around a satisfactory candidate. For him, G. Deferre, mayor of Marseille, is the man. (BREIZ, Jan. 1965)

Editorial comment : Mr. Deferre, like the Communists, the Poujadists, the French-Fascists and the Gaullists themselves, senses a definite opposition to De Gaulle's policy in Brittany. He is doing his best to win the affection of the Bretons. No doubt, many of them will be seduced. But it is misleading to make the Bretons expect a remedy to their ills from a change in the French leadership; it diverts them from the central issue : to put their interests first, and, corollary, to aim at self-determination. It is a hard way, but it is no side-track. Prof. Phlipponneau recognises that CELIB lost its efficacy after the 1962 elections, when the majority of its parliamentary Commission vouched to give to unconditional Gaullism precedence over the defence of the Breton interests. By confining itself to the role of a study group, or regional brain-trust, as is its present policy, CELIB ceased to be the organ of pressure which could make the French government tremble.

PRIORITY FOR THE FAR-WEST ? OR FOR NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS ? OR ...

During the discussion of the main themes of the Fifth Plan of Equipment and Productivity (24-26th November), new baits were held out to the Bretons by the French leaders.

The Plan Superintendent, M. Masse, undertook to channel 35-40% of the industrial jobs which will be created towards the West of France : this is the area to the west of the line Le Havre-Montpellier, it covers 56% of the French territory, includes 37% of its population, but with only 24% of its industrial workers, it has a low standard of living and a high rate of emigration.

He proposed to favour simultaneously the installation of heavy industries (in harbours) and of light industries. He hinted that the latter would have a better chance as the net cost of their production would be less affected by transport costs. He could not vouch however that the employment targets would be reached.

Comment (Le Peuple Breton, December 1964) : Even if Brittany were to get her fair share in the 35 - 40% figure, she would still be left with a deficit in her migratory balance. An analysis of industrialisation under the previous Plan shows that our country got much less new employment, in relation to her population, than neighbouring areas.

Former Prime Minister Debre, a staunch centralist, spoke of the political aspects of the 5th Plan :

"Priority must be given to the Extreme-West" he said. Like Pompidou afterwards, he avoided calling the thing by its real name : he must believe in the magic power of words. Anyway, this Far-West does not appear to be identical with Brittany : in addition to the 5 Breton departements, it would include the "Manche" department to the North-East and Vendee to the South. That it might not be said that the Bretons get special treatment.

"The renovation of these departements" added Debre, "is a national concern. It is a political problem". He criticised the "bad regionalists" and the federalists. He did not conceal that the areas which are now internationally competitive must remain so, and that the 5th Plan must allow them quasi-priority..

Mr. Pompidou specified that commissions would study concrete proposals to put the Western regions, especially the Extreme-Ouest, on the way to a progressive autonomous development. (Ref. La Vie Bretonne, Dec. '64.)

Will the Fifth Plan turn Brittany into a desert?

The only priority in French policy applies to the nuclear armaments for which credits had been increased by 63% under the 4th Plan and will be increased by a further 36% under the 5th.

The Plan's principles, competitiveness, concentration of industries, mobility of manpower, are all adverse to a country which, like Brittany, has no control over its own affairs. Bigger profit-making will be tolerated and employers will be free to cut down on wages and social benefits for the sake of reinvesting dividends. The people will be subjected more closely than ever to technocrats in the service of capital, not of man.

An official document "Reflections for 1985" considers it unavoidable that in France, beside areas where living conditions and population density will resemble those of Germany, England and Belgium, there will be deserts, and that the disparity will increase between the two categories. (Le Peuple Breton, Dec. and Vie Bretonne, Nov '64.)

DARING THESES. The sub-prefect of Brest (Government representative), speaking to geography students on Regional Planning, insisted on the necessity for the mobility of manpower. He referred to federalism as a daring thesis : in Federal Europe, regions like Brittany could not prosper because French solidarity would not be replaced so soon by so-called European solidarity. (Peuple Breton, Dec. 1964.)

The sub-prefect also dared to assume that his audience ignored that - for example: it was the French government which prevented a Breton request for credits from the European Investments Bank;

the mean monthly income of a worker in Paris is equivalent to £90, and in Brittany to £52 (Ar Vro 27).

between 1954 and 1962, 100,000 Bretons emigrated to Paris and 10,000 to other areas. Half of them were under 25. Of the 35,000 inhabitants of the Paris area which settled in Brittany, -- mostly Bretons --, a high percentage were retired.

(La Vie Bretonne, Nov. '64.)

Brittany will pay the bill for the concessions that France made to her Common Market partners in return for the Brussels agreement (Dec. 15th) on cereal prices. These concessions concern the chicken and egg production as well as the pork production, which at the difference of wheat, both play an important part in our economy. The Brussels agreements of Dec. 1963 had already had a very adverse effect on our poultry farming (culminating in the bankruptcy of the Magadur company). In the competition to sell their chickens and eggs, the Dutch and the Belgians will have an advantage over the Bretons because of the backing of their government. Each time that the Common Market agreements entailed temporary difficulties for farmers, the governments provided compensations. But not so in the case of the Breton farmers. This was illustrated by the lack of allowance for their higher transport costs. (La Vie Bretonne, January).

The 1964 agreement secured advantages for the French wheat growers of the North, Beauce and Brie at the cost of the Breton pig and poultry farmers. For small countries like the Netherlands, it is possible to negotiate a satisfactory policy for all their agriculture. Similar possibilities exist in Federal States: the Bavarians intervened many times to defend their interests in the Common Market. In Italy, the regions with Special Statutes have a right to send their presidents to Cabinet meetings for the same purpose.

Brittany also has special economic interests, but no such freedom exists in France. Brittany cannot prosper under French rule.

President Pleven intends to have recourse to European Community institutions. It is suggested that the new Breton Commission of Economic Development send a permanent delegation to Brussels, to represent our country in the Common Market.

(Avenir, 14. January).

FIRST MEETING OF THE BRETON C.O.D.E.R.

A French government decree of March 14, 1964 instituted in each of the 21 French administrative regions a Commission of Regional Economic Development whose function will be to advise the government on the regional aspects of the application of the 5th Plan.

The C.O.D.E.R. for the Rennes Region (4/5 of Brittany) held its first session on Dec. 19. It overstepped its attribution by appointing, in addition to a President (R. Pleven), a secretary (J. Martray) and a 7-member Bureau and by creating in addition to its 9 working groups, two sections to ensure coordination. The "Breton" CODER has thus expressed its intention to define its own way of operating and to maintain continuity between its sessions.

Its president and secretary are the same as the president and secretary of C.E.L.I.B.; and this organisation has a large majority among the 44 members of the C.O.D.E.R. "Thus, the continuity and the unity of regional action is guaranteed".

(La Vie Bretonne, Jan. '65.)

The Commission was to have 48 members: half of them representing trade, industry, agriculture and fishing; a quarter representing the departmental and municipal councils; & the rest nominated by the French government.

But the 4 seats attributed to the two largest workers unions in Brittany, the CGT and the CFDT, remained vacant, following their refusal to cooperate in the work of the Commission. The CGT could not be represented because:

1) they assume that the Commission's role will only be to ratify government decisions in economic matters; 2) being unable to modify these decisions, they would appear as supporting government policy; they disagree with the latter however, because the credits for the development of the region are insufficient, while those attributed to military matters are increasing.

The CGT will continue its cooperation with the Committee for Economic Expansion, which is doing useful work, in accordance with the workers' interests.

A CFDT statement pointed out that of the 48 members, only 7 would represent the salaried workers. These however were 50% of the active population of the region. So long as this disproportion existed, and there was no change in the Constitution of the CODER, they would abstain. A similar attitude was adopted by the two unions in the Nantes area.

(Avenir 17-12-'64).

In his opening address, President Pleven stated that they were ready to give the new institution a trial: "if our action proves useful, we shall cooperate; if we are

used just for ratifying government decisions, our good will^{will} give way to disappointment and bitterness. We want to point out the urgent needs of the near future.

"One of my duties will be to tell clearly to the French, and also to the European authorities, as well as to the Bretons, what our economy needs in order to develop. We must find ways of mobilising our own resources, so that we don't depend only on Government credits.

I accepted this post in order to make a last effort to obtain recognition for Brittany's particular situation by the French government as well as by the appropriate European institutions." (La Vie Bretonne, Jan. '65.)

"The aim of the Breton CODER is undoubtedly to become the Economic States-General (Parliament) of a region which will have regained juridical status". (Bretagne Economique). There is a clash however between this dynamic conception and that of the French officials, for whom the role of the Assembly should be purely technical.

A genuine Regional Assembly should be composed of representatives elected by universal suffrage in the 5 Breton departements. None should be nominated by the French government. The assembly should be free to determine its agenda, and to choose its secretary (B.N. : this was done); it should be entitled to prepare and vote its budget, have a staff of experts and civil-servants subject to its sole authority, and have power to decide all that concerns Brittany's own affairs. (Editorial, L'Avenir 17 - 12).

MEETINGS AND CONGRESSES

Kuzul ar Brezhoneg, a Council which links the great majority of the publications in Breton, held its annual meeting at Lannuon, at the beginning of the autumn. A new committee was elected. The Kuzul's main objectives are to defend the unified Breton standard, to federate all the groups which constantly use Breton in their work, and to undo enemy propaganda.

The unified Breton standard is based on the work of Fransez Vallee and Roparz Hemon, and on the 1941 agreement.

U.D.B. Congress. The Union Democratique Bretonne, a leftist party founded a year ago, held its first congress at Kemper (26-27 December). The UDB makes its appeal chiefly to young Bretons. Reports and discussions were frank. There was satisfaction with the regular publication of the party organ, "Le Peuple Breton", and with the sound financial situation. They fell short of membership targets. (Peuple Breton, Jan. '65.)

The 6th National Congress of the Movement for the Organisation of Brittany is to be held at Rennes on January 31. A charter will be proposed, and Dr. Yann Fouere will explain the political orientation of the M.O.B. (Avenir, 14-1-'65)

At the General Assembly of Emgleo Breiz, the efforts of this association to obtain better conditions for the teaching of Breton were reviewed. The French minister for Finance had opposed the discussion in Parliament of a new bill (Barniaudy bill) in favour of such an improvement. Ch. ar Gall, the producer of the Breton language radio-and-T.V. programmes, spoke of the effort needed to maintain and develop these; on the radio, a half-hourly variety broadcast on Sundays and a 5mm news broadcast daily; on the Rennes T.V. (Tele-Bretagne Programme), 1 mn every Friday. Emgleo Breiz hopes for further concessions : these depend on massive support from the people. (Breiz, Dec. 1964.)

An Exhibition of books and Newspapers in Breton will be open at Kervarker, 15 rue Guy Moquet, Paris 17 daily from 1600 to 2000 hours during the week 6-13 March. All the books and periodicals published since 1920 will be displayed. The sponsors are the Entente Culturelle Bretonne, Kenvreuriezh Sonerien Paris and the Association of the Teachers of Breton. (Communiqué)

A Breton Language Club was founded at Kemper (8-12-'64). Its president is P. Lemoine, architect. -- A day-course in the Breton language was conducted at Gwezeg (N. of Kemper) under the direction of L. Roparz (13-12-'64), secondary school teacher.

The Sixth season of Beilhadegou Treger (Popular Theatre in Breton, in Northern Brittany) began on Nov. 28 at Plounerin, with a full house. They had the same success on Dec. 12 at Treleven and on the 19th at Pluzuned. They are to stage 3 performances in January and 2 in February. The programmes include 10 new songs (sung by 5 different singers), sketches and 3 one-act plays (6 actors). The company enjoys the friendly cooperation of Breton authors in the area : Evnig Penn-ar-C'hoad, Maria Prad, Anjela Duval, Yann Derrien, Fanch Danno. (Breiz, Jan. '65.)

St-Erwan Brotherhood. "Breton catholics, disappointed to see priests adopting French more and more in their work, have decided to associate in order to restore our language to its rightful place in the Breton religious life. They will act in a spirit of obedience to papal encyclicals and of love of their neighbours.
(Skol, Dec, 1964.)

MENEZ KAMP. During the whole summer, young Bretons helped by Flemish, Basque, Welsh and Scottish friends, worked hard to renovate the long-disused hunting lodge of Menez-Kamp, Spezed, Upper (Breton) Cornwall. Every second or third week, since, 20-30 people continue the voluntary work at week-ends: replastering and decorating installing electricity and water supply etc. The house will be the home of the "Breton Cultural Association". Already, as the renovation proceeds, it is a centre of Breton community life. During the Summer, with a number of non-Bretons present, French had to be used as a means of communication, but Breton was the language most used (it was almost exclusively so in the discussions and conversations which followed the lectures of the Summer course organised at Menez Kamp by the direction of the bimonthly AR VRO.)

Menez Kamp has got, but needs still more, donations of material and furniture. An appeal has been made to artists for paintings to cover walls formerly adorned with hunting pictures.

40 people took part in the study sessions at the end of August. Attention was focussed on the lack of integration i.e. of close contact and cooperation between those who are engaged in the cultural struggle on one side, in the economic struggle on the other. More Bretons than ever were engaged in the struggle but many lacked a clear policy. They would not succeed until they recognised that the aim and policy should be national: that Brittany had the same rights as all other nations.
(Ar Vro No. 27)

Economic Expansion and Breton Language. The Commission of Economic Expansion for "Region Brittany" has asked the French minister for Education to allow the use of Breton in teaching. It stated two reasons for this:

- a) the Commission considers it its duty to struggle for all that belongs to Brittany. The Breton language is one of the most precious elements of our patrimony.
- b) The teaching of Breton will benefit, not only the young Breton speakers, but all the Breton population (if only psychologically): it would remove the sense of shame which, for many, attaches to their mother-tongue, and causes timidity and lack of initiative. The Breton economy needs men and women with a strong spirit of enterprise & a culture based on their own traditions, so that they could resolutely turn towards new techniques. The Breton language would free their mind and thus allow such progress.

POPULARITY OF BRETON BROADCASTS

A reporter, J. Fontaine, asked 20 persons belonging to various fields of activity to give their opinion on different aspects of the Rennes T.V. programme "Tele-Bretagne". Concerning the 1 mn- announcement made in Breton every Friday, and constituting so far the only concession to our language on the (State-controlled) T.V. Y. M. Rudel, literary critic of the daily "Ouest-France" welcomed the item, as it brought with it the atmosphere of the country. A teacher from Upper Brittany on the contrary thought it useless because it was illustrated only by still pictures, and "literary Breton" was understood by few Bretons". (True: because it is not taught in the schools. Why not give short but frequent and stimulating lessons of standard Breton on T.V.? The French authorities argue that curricula are too crowded for a regular teaching in the schools. All the more reason why the language should be taught on T.V.)

Following this enquiry, the producer of the Breton Radio and T.V. programmes, Charlez ar Gall, stated that there had been an enthusiastic response from viewers and listeners each time the duration and form of the broadcasts had been improved. The one-minute Friday announcements served only to draw attention to some point of the following Sunday sound broadcasts: only static pictures were available for this purpose. A film sequence had once been shown: it was widely acclaimed. Simple but correct Breton was used. If films were allowed, the Breton-speakers would be delighted: all those who have expressed their view -- in Breton in most cases -- regret that so little time is granted. The language has still no recognised place in the televised newsreel proper.

A radio electrician reported that in his district (NW Brittany) dozens of families did not buy a TV set until they discovered that the language which they used daily would thus come in "visual form" into their homes. (La Vie Bretonne, Nov. & Jan. '65). The Brest daily "Telegramme" published on Oct. 30 an objective history of the Breton language broadcasting (B.N.: also for the period 1940-44?) and quoted the example of

womenworkers in a factory in Upper Brittany who wait to listen all together to the 5 mn daily news broadcast before leaving their place of work.

"Nearly every Sunday at 1340, Radio Rennes broadcasts Breton songs of the Gwened area. In Karnag, Mendon, Baod, young people have now undertaken to collect songs and dance airs in these districts. Their merit is all the greater that they cannot spell Breton, but they have filled copybooks with treasures of popular music. (Breiz).

Anti-Gaullist Demonstration in Brest.

On the occasion of a visit by the French Defence minister, on Nov. 5, thousands of demonstrators, naval dockyard workers and farmers, sacked the office of the U.N.R (Government) Party. Furniture and correspondence files were thrown out through the window. Neighbouring streets were littered with letters and documents a few minutes later. The workers were aroused by a government decision to adopt a smaller wage scale in the "provinces" than in Paris, in State-owned enterprises such as the Brest dockyards. The farmers stressed their solidarity with the city workers. One of their leaders said: "Do away with the useless nuclear armament, use the money instead to build factories in Brittany so that we can work for peace. The financial stabilisation plan benefits only the bankers and capital owners, not the workers."

(Telegramme de Brest, 6-11-'64.)

Breton Short Stories.

"Brittany suffering in her body and soul", that is how the editor of AL LIAMM sums up the work of Youenn Olier, who is to-day one of the most prolific Breton writers. His short stories (Ar Fest-Noz, An Deiz-ha-Bloaz are the titles of two collections) give a comprehensive picture of Breton society in the middle of the 20th century. In our novels, the Brittany that is described is not the real one, but in our short stories in general we find a detailed precise account of our fellow-countrymen's life since 1914 : of the common people of Brest by Roparz Hemon, of the farmers of Breton Cornwall by Jakez Riou (in Geotenn ar Werc'hez), of the farmers and workers of Leon by Abeozen, of present-day Bretons in general by Youenn Olier and Ronan Huon,

(Al Liamm. Nov. Dec. 1964.)

Children's existence not recognised. The French Cour de Cassation has upheld, against the Rennes Appeal Court, the decision to deprive Mrs. Manrot-Goarnig of family allowances for her five youngest children following the refusal by the Boulogne/Seine Registration Office to accept their Breton first names. On the 9. January, 1962, the Rennes Appeal Court had agreed that the allowances were due, if it could be verified that the children really existed and were in the care of their mother. The Cour de Cassation has cancelled that sentence, stating that in the absence of a complete birth registration, family allowances could be paid only in case of dire necessity. The 5 children thus returned to complete legal non-existence or illegal existence.

(Avenir. 19-12).

"Les peuples heureux n'ont pas d'histoire" (happy peoples have no history) says a French proverb. The paper "Rappel du Morbihan" denounces gross carelessness in transcribing Breton place-names on road sign-posts : Kroaz-Hent (meaning crossroad) becomes Croissant (crescent), Kroaz-Verr (Short Cross) becomes Croix Verte (Green Cross), Poull-Kannan (Washing Pond) becomes "Poule-Canard (Hen-Drake). These are only a few examples among thousands.

In every free country, people may find in their place-names and in their personal names marks of their history and of their own national spirit. Why is this right denied by the French State to the Bretons? Must Breton ignorance be maintained for the sake of so-called French Unity?

(Avenir, 19-12)

The Bretons in general know nothing of their own history as an independent nation till the end of the 15th century. The teaching of Breton history is officially considered as still more dangerous than the teaching of the Breton language.

L'Avenir mildly asks: "Who gains from this distortion of facts, from this ignorance?" Obviously the French leading class thinks it gains thereby. An ignorant uprooted mass is more easily led and misled than a people which knows itself.

Political Risk. Mgr. Gouyon, now Archbishop of Rennes, was asked last year to allow the creation in Rennes of a parish in which Breton would be used at Masses. He refused for the present and for the future because a political issue could be made of it.

(Ar Vro No. 27)

Would the French government strongly object? Is there no risk in refusing the Breton faithful recognition of their language? A number of priests in Brittany consider that the terms of the Encyclical "Pacem in Terris" relative to the fostering of the culture of national minorities do not apply to Brittany. Ar Vro has distributed thousands of copies of this encyclical throughout the country in recent months.

A new collection of songs in Breton, published by SKOL, BP 70, Lannion, Cotes-du-Nord, contains 74 songs, both traditional and modern, for young people. It gives the texts with indications as to where the music can be found. 1.50 fr per copy.