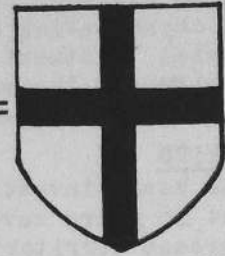


# BRETON NEWS



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FORMER PRIME MINISTER P L E V E N  
URGES SOLUTION  
OF THE B R E T O N P R O B L E M.

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"L'Avenir de la Bretagne" (The future of Brittany) is the title of a book by R. Pleven recently published by Calmann-Lévy, Paris. It has been hailed as an important contribution towards making the Breton people, as well as public opinion in France and Western Europe, aware of the present difficulties in Brittany, thus breaking the wall of silence organised by Paris.

R. Pleven is the chairman of the Committee for the Study and Coordination of Breton Interests, a body which has been striving for the past 10 years to stop the decline of Brittany, or rather of that part of it officially referred to as the 6th Economic Region. Although he shows how indisputably the Nantes area is also Breton, he deals only with that truncated Brittany, and more with its present economic state and resources, than with its future. However the last chapter, "For a Breton programme" is the most important and prescribes what should be done to save the 4 départements.

In their March issues, the two monthlies, LA VIE BRETONNE (1, rue Poullain-Duparc, Rennes), and L'AVENIR (B.P. 89, Brest), give characteristic passages from the book. We reproduce some of them, (underlining and subtitles by us). We specify also that R. Pleven has never championed any but the most moderate reforms to bring improvement to Brittany.

#### COLLECTIVE AWARENESS.

"..." whatever the social milieu, for a large part of the Breton youth, both girls and boys, the future means leaving their country..." "... the question of their future has brought about a sudden collective awareness" (in Brittany).

"In ten years from now, the contest will be won or lost".

"There is a psychological, social, political fact called the Breton temperament, which accepts no longer that Brittany should be considered a reserve of manpower for big industry, the armed forces or the lower ranks of the civil service, to be drawn upon whenever the need arises. France is going towards unsuspected discords if she does not give to Brittany the possibility to develop herself and play her part in the general rise of prosperity."

#### DISAPPOINTMENT.

The official adoption in 1956 of the Breton Plan remained a dead letter, because its implementation was made dependent on twelve different ministries, each making its own decisions, and because no provision was made to ensure that the necessary credits would be available.

In 1959, a total of 1327 billion francs to be distributed over 3 years were provided by the French budget for the general economic equipment of the territory. Two billions only were attributed to Brittany, and these were subsequently "blocked" (frozen).

"Brittany's legendary patience is exhausted... Numerous are the Bretons who now put their hope in a fundamental constitutional reform which would transfer to regional institutions the responsibility for the development of Brittany, thus endowing her like Sicily with a measure of autonomy".

"We must dare to say it: a large sector of Breton opinion suspects the experts in charge of advising on France's economic and social policy of favouring a decongestion of the Breton population to the benefit of the French regions which are in full expansion".

#### A LAW-PROGRAMME FOR BRITTANY.

"It is time to set up and carry out a second Breton Plan specifying the means and modes of implementation and binding the State irrevocably."

A law-programme (loi-programme) is needed "in order first to endow the Breton departments with a modern understructure, i.e. the means of communication power stations, facilities for the storage, preservation and transformation of agric-

ultural products, of which I have shown the lack." Such a law was voted for the French overseas departments (Caribbean, Reunion). There is also a recent law for the organisation of the region of Paris. "We are not therefore asking for any special treatment". To encourage the economic development of Algeria, France was inspired by the examples given by Italy in Sicily and the Mezzogiorno. Experiments in many other countries are there to guide the French authorities if they want.

#### CREDITS

"The basic investments must be provided by the State". "France has given in the last 15 years several thousands of billions (old) francs to her former or present overseas territories. There is no reason why the credits needed by Brittany should be lacking.

"If the Finance department does not think so, we ask that the European Investments Bank be approached : this Bank was created by the Treaty of Rome to promote the modernisation of under-developed areas.

"Brittany is unfortunately in that category. She has a right to participate in the general economic expansion brought about by the Common Market. Europe begins at the Atlantic.

THE PROBLEM OF ENERGY. Electricité de France have signed the agreement to build the + + + + + tidal power station on the Rance estuary near Dinard. This could be hailed as a victory for Brittany. This scheme will be a technological marvel. American and Russian technicians are already interested in it. What will be the repercussions on the Breton economy?

Only secondary work will be done by the local firms. It is not sure that the workers will be recruited in the area either (talk of North Africans). Energy will begin to be produced by 1966, but it is not expected to modify appreciably the present situation where Brittany imports most of her electricity : the Paris industrial area is expected to claim a large share of the supply. Same problem as before.

(Ref. La Vie Bretonne, Feb. 61)

#### SPREAD THE BEILHADEGOU TO ALL THE BRETON SPEAKING AREA.

P. EVEN, who contributed much to renew the success of the "Beilhadegou" in the TREGER area this year, calls for the help of 3 other promoters in order to extend this movement to the rest of Western Brittany. He considers this the most urgent task of the Council for the Breton Language : if not attended to, nothing more could be done in 10 years from now to save Breton from extinction as a popular language. (Ref. Ar Bed Keltiek, March 1961).

LOYAL TO FRANCE? G. Latimier, Professor of English in Lorient, has replied in + + + + + "Ar Soner", January 1961, to an anonymous article in the French monthly "Carrousel" (Nov. 1960), where Breton News was dismissed as not very serious. He refutes the claim that the Bretons have been unreservedly loyal to France since 1532 by pointing to the risings of Mercoeur (1589-1598), the Red Bonnets (1675), the Pontkalleg conspiracy (1718-1720), the resistance of La Chalo-tais (1764-1765), the 2 Chouans wars (1793-1797), the acts of "Gwenn-ha-Du" (1932-39) and the fight of Bezen Perrot (1943-1945): "The latter two organisations were unreservedly anti-French. As regards "living with our time", he makes it clear that, in Brittany, the strongest partisans of European federation are also the people who fight for the recognition of Brittany's rights. The only two countries in Europe where minority languages are excluded from schools are France and Spain, in this sticking to outdated pedagogical principles.

BARZAZ BREIZ, the famous collection of epic and popular songs published in 1867 by Kervarker (La Villemarqué) was reedited in 1959 by the Entente Culturelle Bretonne, 3 rue F. Garnier, Paris 17. This work was attacked particularly during the last 15 years by some people who consider Kervarker as the father of Breton nationalism. F. GOURVIL recently presented a thesis at the University of Rennes, in which he dismissed 33 of the poems as "invented". Less prejudiced critics who have an excellent knowledge of Breton have pointed out the errors and omissions of the thesis (Ar Vro, Al Liamm, Barr Heol, Breiz, etc.). Two issues of PREDER (Dec. 1959 and Dec. 1960) have given a detailed analysis of 18 of the poems, by Abeozen, the historian of Breton literature. The 1959 edition - - - of BARZAZ BREIZ is the same as the 1867 one : the Breton texts are in small type at the bottom of the pages, while most of the space is taken by the French translation and the abundant notes.

WHO WILL BE THE FIRST TO GIVE UP? The "General Councils" (similar to County Councils) of the 3 départements where Breton is spoken have asked again in January 1961 for the admission of this language to regular teaching. For many years past they have adopted similar resolutions regularly. They demand for Breton equality with arabic and berber in the leaving certificate examinations.

"A civilised man's understanding of his own past, of the history, literature and culture from which he springs and which give his life its sense, is what distinguishes him from a savage"

Kingsley Amis and 4 other professors of U.C. Swansea, in The Observer 26/2/61. The French educational system, taken in its widest sense, deprives the Bretons of this understanding.