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## ABSTRACT

Michael John Christopher O'Callaghan

## SEPARATISM IN BRITTANY

The introduction to the thesis attempts to place the separatist movement in Brittany into perspective as one of the various separatist movements within France. It contains speculation on some possible reasons for the growth of separatist feeling, and defines terms that are frequently used in the thesis. Chapter One gives an account of Breton history, tracing Brittany's evolution as an independent state, its absorption by France, the disappearance of its remaining traces of independence, and the last spasms of action to regain this independence after having become merely part of a centralised state. Chapter Two examines the beginnings and development of a renewed effort to regain some measure of independence, and covers in some detail the period from the early nineteenth century to the end of the Second World War, known in Brittany as that of the first and second emsavs. To clarify a complicated period of development, a lexicon, a list of parties, groupings and devices of the Breton movement, and two flow charts summarising the movement's development from 1914 to 1939 are given at the beginning of this chapter. Chapter Three deals with the period from 1945 to the present day, known in Brittany as that of the third emsav, and examines in some detail the present state of the Breton movement. Chapter Four examines the work of various Breton writers who have played some part in expressing or shaping the Bretons' awareness of their separate identity, and shows to what extent their writings reflect the historical and political development of Brittany. Chapter Five contains the writer's conclusions and one detailed examination of Breton attitudes to the Breton movement, which helps to put it into its overall Breton perspective. The most important of the appendices to the thesis is the latest available detailed breakdown of the movement.

## SEPARATISM IN BRITTANY

Michael John Christopher O'Callaghan

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts  
at the University of Durham, Department of French,  
in 1982.



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#### DECLARATION

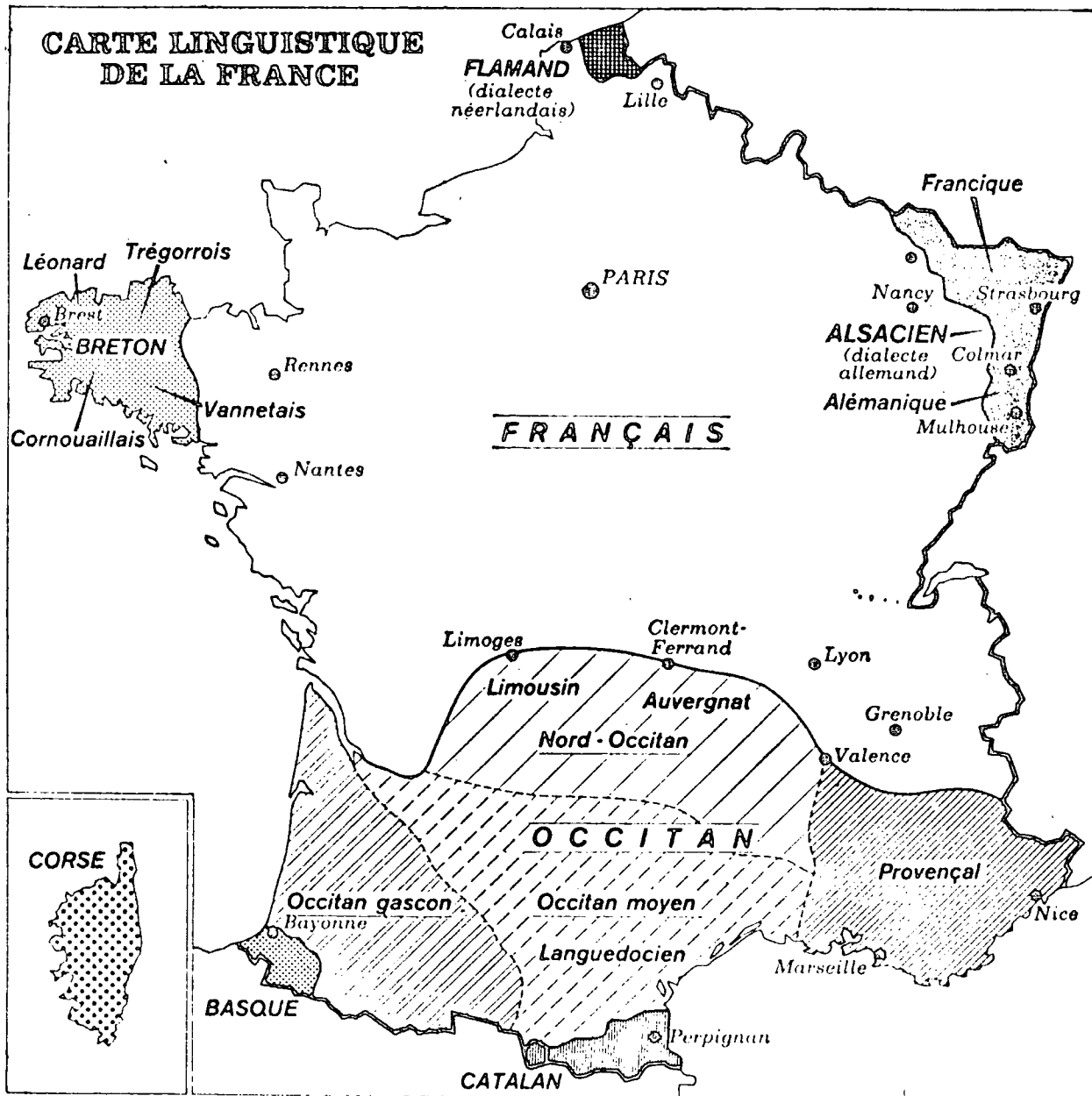
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Source of map: Le Monde de l'Education, no.20, September 1976, p.5.

## INTRODUCTION

In this thesis the writer has made use of material from books, articles, newspapers, magazines and reviews, as well as from correspondence with M. Yann Fouéré, one of the leading figures in the Breton movement during the Second World War, and still actively involved in it.

The term separatism given in the title of the thesis is intended as an umbrella to cover the various political and cultural manifestations of the separate identity of a particular region. Those involved on the political side may call themselves regionalists, federalists or nationalists, terms which will be defined later in this introduction, while they may all be labelled separatists by other people.

Those who take an interest in current affairs and developments in France will be aware of the existence of various separatist movements within that country. The activities of some members of the movement in Brittany have made the headlines on occasions over the past few years and will be examined later in the thesis. The activities of members of the linguistic and autonomist movement in Corsica, which has proved rather effective, have drawn even greater attention from the media. In Occitanie there is a thriving cultural, linguistic and political movement. In Alsace and the German speaking parts of Lorraine the movement is political, and linguistic in so far as it is calling for more effective bilingual education. In the Basque area of France the movement is primarily linguistic, there being some political activity but nothing comparable with that in the Basque area of Spain. Perhaps less well-known is the movement among the Catalans of Roussillon, which is mainly cultural and linguistic,





although a growing political movement began in the late 1960s, while the movement among the Flemings of Westhoek, which has never recovered from its association with the Germans during the Second World War, is limited to linguistic demands, fighting, so far unsuccessfully, to achieve some degree of recognition for the Dutch language which might help save it from imminent extinction.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is to examine separatism in Brittany. That is not to say that it will be limited to dealing only with the activities and motivation of those who seek political separation from France, but will examine each manifestation of the separate identity of Brittany.

The thesis begins with a short account of Breton history which traces the evolution of Brittany as an independent state, its absorption by France, the disappearance of its remaining traces of independence, and the last spasms of action to regain this independence after it had become just one part of a centralised state. This account is given in the belief that we cannot begin to understand the beginning and development of a renewed effort to regain some measure of independence until we have some knowledge of what has gone before.

Chapter two examines the beginnings and development of this renewed effort up to the end of the Second World War, covering in some detail the periods of what are known within the Breton movement as the first and second emsavs.

Chapter three deals with the third emsav, the development of the movement from the Second World War to the present day, examining in some detail both the development and scope of the movement at

1. For a clear illustration of the areas concerned see the map on page 6.

present. The most recently available breakdown of the present scope and content of the movement is given in the form of an appendix to the thesis.

In Chapter Four the literature of Brittany is considered, with an examination of the work of various figures who have played some part in expressing or shaping the Bretons' awareness of their separate identity.

Chapter Five examines Breton attitudes to the movement, considers the recent proposals for regional reform and Breton reactions to them, and gives the writer's conclusions.

Further documents, which expand some of the information given in the main part of the thesis but which would have detracted from a clear presentation in each chapter, are given in the form of appendices.

However, before we begin to consider the Breton movement, it might be interesting to speculate for a moment on the question of why the desire for separatism exists at all, whatever the way in which it reveals itself, ranging from a desire simply to preserve a minority language to a desire for complete political separation from the controlling state.

Is it that the breakdown or change for example of family groupings, temporarily replaced by the material advantages of twentieth century society, have left a void which may be filled by a renewed attachment to traditional but disappearing ties such as language or membership of a smaller more ancient country rather than one unit of a centralised state?

Is it becoming too difficult to perceive oneself as a member of a large nation-state? Might a smaller ethnic or linguistic grouping, transcending religious or political divisions, provide a more recognisable, stable base to give a greater feeling of security to face the complexities of the modern world and deal with the pressures of

everyday life? Such pressures have undoubtedly grown stronger as a result of the vast increase in the amount of information each person has to deal with owing to the improvement of channels of communication and information provided by the press, radio and television.

Might this also explain why, when certain once recognisable communities lost their stable foundation of language because of the activities of an outside power, or had their way of life changed by that power, they lapsed into a state of inertia or apathy, which may only be reversed once they come to believe again in their former values. In other words a revival of former values may even bring about eventual economic revival as people begin to believe in themselves again and work to strengthen their former language and community? This seems to be what Alexis Gourvennec has succeeded in doing to some extent in Brittany<sup>1</sup> and to be the reasoning behind Iain Noble's projects, based on the Isle of Skye, to promote the speaking of Gaelic.

Possibly then the future may lie in federal rather than nation states within perhaps larger groupings which would represent the interests of all the component linguistic or ethnic minorities. Certainly many of those who work within the various separatist movements in Europe would like to see a European community modelled along these lines.

Some geographers also have ideas on the growth of separatist feeling, as in the following lines from Mental Maps by Peter Gould and Rodney White. The authors consider the way in which people can be said to draw maps in their minds, seeing some areas as desirable,

1. See below, p.114.

and forming a peak on their mental map, and others as undesirable, forming low areas on the map. What the authors have to say here about Britain and the South East could equally well be applied to France and the Parisian area.

In Great Britain the images of geographic space are equally crucial. The geographers Keeble and Hauser have documented the enormous growth in new jobs in a broad ring around London during the past two decades, even as work opportunities in other areas of Britain have declined. Is it really going too far to say that the drive to the South East is, in large part, a result of the collective image of geographic desirability held by the decision makers - both private entrepreneurs and politicians? There is only perfunctory support for regional economic development in other parts of Britain, and the drift to the South continues. Decisions are made in or near the capital city, and these appear to have a reinforcing effect upon already deeply entrenched trends. People move to the South seeking work, but they frequently act against a strong desire to stay within their own local domes of desirability. We seem incapable of thinking through the implications. The South becomes more and more crowded, slummy, and traffic-choked, placing even greater burdens upon regional energy-generating and waste-disposal systems in turn. The North, Wales, and Scotland languish, and then politicians are surprised at the rise of nationalist movements, which would cheerfully sever England and its bloated spider of London from their homeland and let it drift out to sea for good.<sup>1</sup>

1. Peter Gould and Rodney White, Mental Maps, (Harmondsworth 1974) pp.176-8.

It would also be appropriate, before beginning a detailed study of the Breton movement, to define some terms which are frequently used in the thesis and which might be otherwise open to misinterpretation.

**Regionalist:-** Favours initiatives which help preserve the different manifestations of the separate identity of Brittany and possibly seeking the introduction of reforms which would allow the clear expression of regional interests, but not seeking political separation from France.

**Federalist:-** Favours and promoting initiatives which help preserve the different manifestations of the separate identity of Brittany, and seeking to further that separate identity by establishing Brittany as one federal state within a system of federal states in France, and/or Europe.

**Nationalist:-** Filled with patriotic feeling for Brittany. This term can also mean favouring and promoting initiatives which help preserve the different manifestations of the separate identity of Brittany to the extent of establishing a Brittany which would be, as far as possible, independent of France.

However, it should be borne in mind that the borderlines between these terms often become blurred, even by organisations that attach these labels to themselves.

Corporatism, a term frequently used in Chapter two, was a fascist doctrine that sought to eliminate class war by 'permanent machinery of government for reconciling the clash of class interests in an equitable distribution of the proceeds of industry'.<sup>1</sup> Wage questions were to be

1. The words are those of Sir Oswald Mosley, cited in Melvin Rader, No Compromise, (London 1939). p.173.

settled by the impartial arbitration of State machinery, rather than by negotiation between employers and trades unions. Impartial arbitration of State machinery meant in practice compulsory arbitration courts.

When used in the text, with a capital letter, except of course in headings, the term Emsav should be taken to refer to the Breton movement as a whole. When used with a small letter it should be taken to refer to one of the three phases of that movement.

## THE HISTORY OF BRITTANY

## PART ONE

## BEFORE THE EDICT OF UNION

During the Iron Age, and especially towards its end, groups of celtophonic populations arrived in Western Armorica, and named a good number of sites, without being in sufficient numbers to supplant or exterminate the previous inhabitants.

Scholars differ on whether or not the Celtic language outlasted the Roman occupation.

Christianity was already implanted in the peninsula before the Breton invasions, which date from possibly the latter part of the 5th century, and certainly the first decade of the 6th. It appears that the Bretons came principally from Wales to escape the pillaging Scots, and settled in northern and western parts of Armorica, ignoring the south-east, where the continental Celtic population had remained.

The pre-Breton populations survived, particularly in the centre and east of Armorica, thus giving two Armoricas - one Breton and one Roman (or rather Merovingian from the 6th century onwards). Gallo-Frankish Armorica comprised the territories of the dioceses of Vannes, Nantes and Rennes.

The Bretons split up into small communities grouped in larger federations - Domnonée, Poher, Cornouaille, Browaroch and Porhoët. (Eventually rivers might define "pays" within these federations.)

The former Gallo-Roman populations were grouped in large domains or small urban centres. The Bretons grouped themselves in parishes - the "plous" - which were later divided into "treves".

The Celtic type of monasticism introduced by the newcomers worried the Gallo-Roman church. The Celts had mixed monasteries, and permitted the distribution of the sacraments by women. We do not

know exactly where these monasteries were, but do know that there were monks in the forest of Brece-lien (Porhoët) and on islands such as the Ile Maudez and Ile Lavret<sup>1</sup>.

Monasteries with abbot-bishops were later established by Bretons at eg. Dol (c.563), Saint-Pol and Quimper.

The Bretons gradually began to adopt Frankish names and Gallo-Roman judicial traditions. They pushed eastwards, and Weroc<sup>2</sup> took Vannes (retaken by the Franks in 590), and pillaged the Nantes area. The Franks managed to contain this push, thus upholding the desire of the three bishops (Nantes, Rennes, and Vannes), to remain under Merovingian rule.

Meanwhile, as late as 563, Frankish aristocrats still possessed lands in Domnonée<sup>3</sup>.

Poisson links this period with the Carolingian period, by pointing out that up to this time the Franks had been too occupied with divisions in their own territories to bother unduly with Brittany. Now the situation has changed:

... Lorsque la famille d'Héristal eut pris en mains le pouvoir et évincé les derniers Mérovingiens il en fut autrement. Pépin le Bref, proclamé roi en 752, se proposa de faire rentrer dans l'obéissance tous les princes qui avaient profité de la déchéance des Mérovingiens pour se débarrasser de la tutelle franque.

Une Bretagne divisée était une Bretagne perdue. Les Bretons le comprirent et se résignèrent à se ranger derrière un chef pour assurer leur indépendance en face d'un pouvoir très fort et qui jouissait, grâce aux services rendus à la Papauté, d'un prestige immense<sup>4</sup>.

1. It is perhaps worth noting that Abbé Poisson in Histoire de Bretagne (first published Rennes 1947, republished 1975) does not mention the specific features of Celtic monasticism that worried the Gallo-Roman church.
2. Waroc in Poisson, op. cit., p.44.
3. In Pierre Riché and Guy Devailly. 'De l'Armorique à la Bretagne', in Histoire de la Bretagne, edited by Jean Delumeau (Toulouse 1969), p.128, it is asserted that no Franco-Breton march was established during this period.
4. Poisson, op.cit.p.48.



Annalists of the Carolingian period were not well-disposed to the Bretons. They considered them rebellious and liable to go back on their word. This hostility was reinforced by the Carolingian mistrust of all things Celtic. However Brittany did take sufficient part in the life of Carolingian Gaul to receive institutions and culture from it.

In c.753 a Breton March was organised, comprising the three Armorican comtés and that of Le Mans. The counts who directed it were Frankish aristocrats of the same family (Roland, Guy and Lambert). There were frequent raids on this area by the Bretons, and Charlemagne was obliged to send in troops eg. in 799 and 811. Similar events occurred in the reign of Louis Le Pieux<sup>1</sup>, in 818 and 824.

Nominoé was a member of the local Breton aristocracy who put himself at the service of Carolingian civil servants. He perhaps replaced Guy as head of the comté of Vannes, before being named "missus" for Brittany by Emperor Louis at Ingelheim in 831. From this time he appears as a high official defending the interests of Louis against the hostility of some Frankish counts (e.g. Lambert de Nantes). When Louis died in 840, Nominoé remained loyal to Lothaire, heir of Louis<sup>2</sup>.

The wars between Lothaire and his brothers Charles le Chauve and Pépin allowed Nominoé to affirm his authority in what became the principality of Brittany. At the moment of the treaty of Verdun, by which western France was given to Charles, Erispoé, son of Nominoé, defeated and killed the Count of Nantes at Messac, near Redon. Charles learning that a party opposed to Nominoé was awaiting his arrival, began a campaign which led to his being defeated at the battle of Ballon on 22 November 845. In 846 he had to make peace with Nominoé, Duke of

1. Whom Poisson refers to as Louis Le Débonnaire, op.cit.p.49.

2. Poisson's interpretation is that Nominoé spent this time gathering the strength of Brittany in order to use it against the Franks at the appropriate time, op.cit.p.50.

Brittany, whose authority was soon to stretch over the former March of Brittany.

Nominoé occupied Rennes and Nantes, and made incursions into Anjou, Vendôme and even Bessin. In western Brittany he used the church to reinforce his authority. On the advice of Convoion, abbot of Redon, four bishops were deposed because of simony and replaced by loyal men of Breton origin. He asked the Pope for the 'pallium' for the bishop of Dol, which would enable Breton bishops to escape the jurisdiction of the metropolitan bishop of Tours. This provoked violent reaction by the French bishops.

In 851 Erispoé succeeded his father. He defeated Charles' army at Juardeil in Anjou, obtained the formal abandonment of the comtés of Rennes and Nantes and the Pays de Retz, and received the insignia of royalty. His daughter married Louis le Bègue, the heir to the French throne. In return for this, Erispoé became loyal to Charles.

In 857 Erispoé was assassinated by his cousin Salomon. By intrigue Salomon eventually obtained, after giving tribute and homage to Charles, the rich abbey of Saint-Aubin d'Angers and the territories that lay between the river Mayenne and the river Sarthe. However, the Pope still declined to recognise Dol as a metropolitan bishopric.

Salomon was assassinated in 875, as the result of a conspiracy of Breton nobles and French aristocrats.

During this period Brittany remained very close to the Carolingian world, in adopting the Carolingian system of counts and "missi", and in the fact that Carolingian art spread into Brittany (though the latter would not seem proof in itself).

The essentially monastic character of Breton religious life was reinforced under Carolingian influence, and the Benedictine order penetrated Brittany. Redon Abbey was founded in 832.

Riché and Devailly also conclude that the Carolingian renaissance penetrated Brittany, and find evidence to support this in the 'Lives' of certain saints (eg. Vie de Saint Guenolé ) which showed that some monks had received a good literary instruction, and knew the classical Christian and pagan poets<sup>1</sup>.

After the death of Salomon there were disputes over who should succeed him. At this time too Brittany was facing Norman invasions. At first Breton princes used these to obtain autonomy from Charles le Chauve, but they were eventually forced to collaborate with Carolingian princes to defend the kingdom. The immediate danger came from the Loire. The Normans had attacked the island of Noirmoutier in 819, forcing the monks to take refuge on the mainland, and had pillaged Nantes and assassinated the archbishop in 843.

Victory over the Normans at Questembert in 888 left Alain (le Grand), the undisputed leader of the Bretons, and gave the Bretons a few years respite. Alain could entitle himself "roi des Bretons par la grâce de Dieu".

On the death of Alain in 907, Norman raids began again in all areas of Brittany.

In 921 Robert (King of the Franks) ceded the comté of Nantes to Ragnold, a Norman. Many Bretons consequently fled to France or England.

There was a disorganised exodus of monks over a period of several years. Wherever they went, they brought about a Breton cultural expansion. Thus Breton manuscripts found their way to eg. Angers, Boulogne, Douai and Lille.

In 936 came the beginning of reconstruction of Brittany when Abbot Jean returned to Landévennec to prepare for the return of Alain Barbetorte, a relation of Alain le Grand, who had installed himself at the court of Athelstan<sup>2</sup>.

1. Riché and Devailly, *op.cit.*p.136.

2. Historians differ as to whether Barbetorte was Alain le Grand's grandson or second cousin.

An English fleet disembarked Bretons, who defeated the Normans at Dol, St. Brieuc (936), Nantes (937), and Trans (939). Reconstruction of the monasteries took years.

During this period the frontier of the area in which the Breton language was spoken retreated westwards ie. from a line from Donges to the bay of the Mont-Saint-Michel, via Blain, Derval, Bain, R.Vilaine, R.Meun and Bazouges-sous-Hédé, to a line linking St.Brieuc, Pontivy and Vannes. The progress of the Romance language was due to the opening of eastern Armorica to influences from the former March of Brittany.

The dukes Alain I and Alain II installed themselves at Nantes, favoured family and cultural relationships with the territories of the Loire, and thus remained loyal to the policy of Nominoé and his successors, who created a Breton principality inclined towards the Frankish kingdom.

It must be remembered that the Norman invasions had totally disorganised Brittany, and also that the authority of Alain II (Alain Barbetorte), was nothing like that of Nominoé or Salomon. He only held sway over the comtes of Nantes, Broërec and Poher.

Alain died in 952, leaving only one legitimate heir-Drogon, a minor, the son of his marriage with a sister of Thibaud le Tricheur, Count of Blois and Chartres. Alain's young widow was soon remarried to Foulque le Bon, Count of Anjou. Drogon died in 958 and there was conflict over the succession.

Thus Brittany passed from the House of Nantes to that of Rennes to that of Cornouaille.

After the death of Conan III (of the house of Cornouaille), there were several dynastic crises, resulting from opposition between the Normans and the Angevins.

In the middle of the century Henry II Plantagenet, Count of Anjou and King of England, became Duke of Normandy, and eventually took in

hand the government of the duchy of Brittany, after the five year old heiress of Brittany, Constance, was betrothed to his son, Geoffrey.

It is worthy of note that the kings of France took no interest in Brittany during this period, and also that, although no definite conclusions have been drawn about the nobility or relationships between vassals in this period, it seems that the authority of the dukes of Brittany and their powers over the comtes, vicomtes and seigneurs was very weak.

The Celtic church was very hard hit during this period. At the end of it the surviving monasteries were either following the order of Saint Benedict, or were soon to adopt it. Riché and Devailly say that the words of the historian A. de La Borderie could also be applied to church history: 'La mort d'Alain Barbetorte ferme l'ère celtique ou celto-bretonne de notre histoire, et ouvre l'ère franco-bretonne'<sup>1</sup>.

Henceforth the Breton bishoprics not only accepted Roman obedience, but also became completely attached to the Frankish Latin tradition. The autonomy of the Breton church ended with the Pope eventually pronouncing against independence from Tours (after debate of the matter in 1081 and 1094, the final ruling was given by Innocent III in 1199).

Simony and nicolaism (the marriage of priests), had been widespread in Brittany. The last married bishop of Quimper only disappeared in 1113.

It was only gradually in Brittany that the new religious movements and reforms gained influence eg. with ending of aristocrats nominating bishops, the move to humility and poverty and the new Augustinian and Cistercian orders.

1. Riché and Devailly, op.cit.p.145.

### The Middle Ages in Brittany

For a considerable time, Brittany was one of the pawns in the conflict between the Capetians and the Plantagenets. Up to 1234 the struggle was indecisive.

By the betrothal of Geoffrey and Constance, Henry II was assured of keeping Brittany until 1181, since he had also brought Conan IV to abdicate in 1166. Geoffrey (1181-1186) and Arthur (1186-1203), grandson of Henry, oscillated between submission to England and collaboration with France, but kept Brittany in the hands of the Plantagenets<sup>1</sup>.

When Arthur was assassinated by John Lackland, the ducal crown came to Alix, daughter of Constance and her third husband Gui de Thouars, and during her minority (1206-1213) the duchy was governed by the King of France. The marriage of Alix to the Capetian Prince Pierre de Dreux (later named Pierre Mauclerc), assured this French victory.

From 1213 to 1224 Pierre was loyal to the "hommage lige" he gave to the King of France, but in 1226 he suddenly allied with Henry III and transferred the homage of the duchy to him. Brittany served as a base for the English in 1230-1231, but finally, abandoned by the English and disavowed by his vassals, Pierre submitted himself to Louis IX "haut et bas" on 4 November 1234.

From this time Pierre (up to 1237), Jean I Le Roux (1237-1286), Jean II (1286-1305), Arthur II (1305-1312), and Jean III (1312-1341) conducted themselves as loyal vassals of the Kings of France. Three major indications that this was the case are that the dukes affirmed that military service given to the King of France was done out of their own free will, and was not due "à coustume ou à servitude", but nevertheless gave unstinting service; they applied royal edicts such as that of Philippe Le Hardi against the Lombards, even though they did this with bad grace; and they obeyed monetary ordinances.

1. Poisson gives the dates of Geoffrey as 1182-1187 and Arthur as 1187-1203.

By the beginning of the 14th century Brittany appeared to be definitely in the sway of France. This was not done without any reticence. Brittany was anxious to keep good relations with England, to counterbalance the influence of a powerful suzerain, to avoid piracy by the English, and to have the revenues and County of Richmond. Pierre was invested with it from 1224-1234, Jean I and Jean II from 1266-1294, Jean III in 1334. The revenues of the County for 1235-1236 had amounted to 1,200 livres.

The eventual waning of the Anglo-French conflict in the second half of the 13th century allowed Brittany to maintain this policy almost without exception.

During this period, peace, the presence of Plantagenet or Capetian Princes on the ducal throne, and the direct authority of Henry II and Philippe Auguste caused the duke's authority and the administrative organisation of the duchy to progress.

The sovereigns regularised an anarchic feudal system in which the pre-eminence of the duke was more easily admitted than his authority. The dukes reinforced their authority over their vassals. The "droit de bail" was regularly used by Jean I, who made it easier to apply by changing it into a "droit de rachat", by which the heirs had to pay one year's revenues of the fief. The "justices seigneuriales" were defined, the duke reserving for himself judgement of crimes committed by foreigners, crimes committed on the public highway, counterfeiting charges, crimes of "bougrerie", and appeals from the courts of his lords.

All this met resistance, but by the second half of the 13th century armed resistance was rare and the duke was seen as the guarantor of peace.

This success was due to the development of a ducal administration. The birth of a local administration had come with the Plantagenets and the appearance of the "bailli", who collected the revenues of the duke,

paid his bills, dispensed justice in his name, and registered private contracts etc. From the time of Jean III baillifs were appointed for the following areas: Rennes, Nantes, Broërec, Cornuaille, Ploërmel, Léon, Tréguier and Penthievre. To help them they had "prévôts", "sergents" etc.

The duke no longer used his vassals as instruments of his power, but humble knights and clerics, who owed everything to him.

The legal usage of Roman law supported solid ducal authority, and the eminent right of justice of the duke over all in his country. His power was increased by the acquisition of land by force, or, increasingly, by purchase or transaction. Thus he had a territorial base for his claims, and his agents had headquarters and resources available on the spot. Such acquisitions also helped bring financial aid to the dukes eg. in 1230 Pierre Mauclerc was able to lend Henry III 6,000 marcs. Revenues grew and systems of payment improved.

In 13th century Brittany was closely integrated to France, particularly through the church. The Pope's nominations for bishoprics were 90% French, and the King of France offered guarantees to churches, monasteries and priories.

Thus Henri Touchard concludes:

Au début du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle le clergé breton, au moins dans sa tête, ne voit dans la Bretagne qu'une dépendance ecclésiastique sans originalité du royaume de France<sup>1</sup>.

By their education and way of thinking the ruling class were no different from French people in similar positions. After receiving the rudiments of an education in the parish schools, they had to leave

Brittany to complete their education, attending, in particular, colleges

1. Henri Touchard. 'Le moyen-âge breton', in Histoire de la Bretagne, edited by Delumeau, p.163 Poisson seems to agree with this conclusion, enough seeing it as part of a plot by the Kings of France to gain possession of Brittany, but does give an example from La Borderie's Cours d'histoire of Saint Yves upholding the rights of Brittany against representatives of the King of France, in op.cit.p.106.



in Paris, where places were reserved for them eg. the Collège de Cornouaille.

Literary works inspired by Brittany hardly existed, apart from the Très Ancienne Coutume. This work, collected between 1312 and 1325, aimed at formulating, describing and explaining Breton custom in civil and criminal law and in the public domain. At the same time it was a kind of catechism and book of morality, condemning the evil and the debauched, exalting charity to the poor and solidarity between men.

Touchard sees the economic life of Brittany at this time as a mere unoriginal prolongation of the French economy. In agriculture oats and rye were grown in coastal areas, and wheat in the interior. There were both wine and beer producing areas. There was exploitation of cleared land, rather than clearing of new land, and a perceptible movement towards enclosure in Haute-Bretagne.

The new phenomenon of the 13th century was the integration of Brittany into the western circuit of exchanges, and the awakening of the coasts, with the transporting of wines from La Rochelle or Bordeaux to England. However the merchants were usually outsiders<sup>1</sup>.

The original features of Brittany can be summarised as follows: French influence only had a mediocre effect on the linguistic evolution of Brittany. The Carhaix dialect became increasingly influential<sup>2</sup>. The growth in population necessitated emigration and meant peasant unemployment, thus favouring the development of rural industry. Impelled by necessity, nobles did not hesitate to enter commerce.

By the beginning of the 14th century the passive role of Brittany in maritime affairs was changing. The development of the herring fisheries in northern seas favoured the exporting of salt from the Guérande area and particularly from Bourgneuf. Cloth of various types was exported from Morlaix.

1. Poisson paints a more independent picture of the Breton economy, without giving much evidence to support it.
2. This according to the hypothesis of Professor Falc'hun of the University of Brest.

In 1341, when duke Jean III died without leaving any direct heir, Brittany appeared about to become an uncontested fief of France, but this was put into question by the Breton War of Succession (1341-1381). This war ended with the Treaty of Guérande, and the peace this brought gave Brittany the illusion of prosperity and power, and the temptation of independence. Such illusions were to be deceived, with the eventual union with France and economic competition, which showed the Bretons how fragile their prosperity was<sup>1</sup>.

### The War of Succession

The issue was whether the ducal crown should go to the niece of Jean III, Jeanne de Penthièvre, heiress of Gui, Jean's brother, or to Jean de Montfort, son of Arthur II and his second wife, and therefore the half-brother of Jean III. Jeanne's husband, Charles de Blois, was eager to defend her rights.

On 7 September 1341 the Arrêt de Conflans attributed the duchy to Charles de Blois. Jean de Montfort then accepted the support of Edward III of England and the struggle became one theatre of the Anglo-French struggle and one episode of the Hundred Years War.

The possibility of obtaining a solution by force seemed unlikely, so compromises were tried. By the first Treaty of Guérande, Jean (IV) was recognised as duke, but was to give homage to the King of France. Trouble broke out again with the renewal of Anglo-French hostilities.

Jean IV played a double game and concluded a secret alliance with England allowing English troops to land in Brittany in 1372. A copy of

1. Poisson's summary of this period differs considerably in emphasis:

sauf pendant la guerre de succession de Bretagne, le pouvoir ducal ira en s'accroissant pour aboutir au xv<sup>e</sup> siècle à la formation d'un véritable Etat moderne

op.cit.p.99.

These differences in interpretation cause one to wonder whether Poisson's enthusiasm for his subject sometimes leads him to draw rather exaggerated conclusions from the facts at his disposal.

the treaty of alliance was found by troops of Charles V of France during their campaign in Brittany. Jean fled to England, and Charles V confiscated the duchy in 1378 and united it with the crown. Violent protest ensued in Brittany, including protest by Jeanne de Penthièvre.

Jean IV benefited from this wave of protest and from 'propaganda' books such as the Livre du bon duc Jean de Bretagne . On 6 August 1379 Jeanne de Penthièvre welcomed him on his return at Dinan.

By the second Treaty of Guérande, in 1381, Jean regained his title, and promised homage to an alliance with Charles VI of France against all enemies of the kingdom.

However the Penthièvres still had pretensions, and, together with the Clisson family, were involved in sporadic revolts and pillaging of ducal lands throughout the XVth century, looking to France for support.

The Montforts were very pro-English at first, but gradually became less so. It seems that by the end of the XVth century the Bretons felt solidarity with the French against the English, even though they felt they had to be wary after the experience of 1378.

At the end of the war Brittany was quite densely populated, with between 1,000,000 and 1,250,000 inhabitants (c.30 per square kilometre). The currents of exchange imposed by the war turned into permanent links eg. the importing of wines from Spain and Bordeaux, and the exporting of cereals to Bordeaux. There was much trade with England, and it was thus in their interest to keep on good terms with that country, whatever their feelings towards it.

Jean V (1399-1442), François I (1442-1450), Pierre II (1450-1457), Arthur III (1457-1458), and François II (1458-1488) were the dukes of Brittany during the period when that country dreamed of independence, owing to the progress of ducal authority and economic prosperity.

This statement by François II in 1485, justifying his decision to create in Brittany a parlement independent of that of Paris, sums up the feeling of his predecessors:

Comme, de toute antiquité, nous et nos prédécesseurs, rois, ducs et princes de Bretagne, qui jamais de nos nom et titre de principauté n'avons reconnu ni reconnaissons créateur, instituteur ni souverain fors Dieu tout-puissant, ayons droit et nous appartienne, par raison de nos droits royaux et souverains, avoir et tenir cour de parlement souverain<sup>1</sup>.

False charters and treaties had also been drawn up over the centuries, upholding the absolute rights of the duke in Brittany.

This aspiration to autonomy became a passionate desire when Louis XI, Anne de Beaujeu and Charles VIII tried to bring Brittany under the influence of France.

Jean V gave little direct help to the French against the English, but his successors gave more direct and less measured help.

However, the dukes, from Jean V on, took on more of the trappings of royalty: they proclaimed themselves "ducs par la grâce de Dieu"; they founded their own orders of knighthood; they continually opposed the judicial authority of Paris eg. by refusing the extradition of French people convicted by French courts. Finally, in 1485, François II created a sovereign Breton parlement.

The church began to escape the influence of the French monarchy. The papal bull of Nicholas V, in 1453, forbade the giving of a living in Brittany to a non-Breton without the specific agreement of the Duke of Brittany. With the opening of the University of Nantes, in 1460, François II felt that the Breton church had been liberated from the French church.

1. Touchard, op.cit. p.187.

The dukes even had gold coins struck, this really being a king's privilege.

In the mid XVth century the ceremony of giving homage was regarded by the dukes as a mere ceremony of protocol, which excluded any actual authority of the sovereign over fief or vassal.

For Louis XI the Duke of Brittany had become a rebellious subject.

François II was involved in various feudal uprisings against royal power, but eventually his allies lost interest. The decisive struggle began in 1480, when Louis XI bought from Nicole de Penthièvre her very debatable rights to the ducal crown.

In 1481 Brittany formed alliances with Austria and England, and a marriage was projected between Anne, heiress presumptive of the Breton duchy, and the Prince of Wales. A feudal coalition was formed with Lescun, Dunois and Orléans, but the plotters were not given enough foreign help.

Louis XI died in 1483, but the regent, Anne de Beaujeu, continued the struggle. In 1488, on 28 July, the Bretons were crushed at the battle of Saint-Aubin du Cormier. No reinforcements were given to the Bretons by Austria or England.

By the Treaty du Verger, on 19 August 1488 (Poisson gives the date as 10 August), the duke agreed not to uphold enemies of the French Kingdom, and the King of France occupied Saint-Malo, Fougères, Dinan and Saint-Aubin du Cormier. As a further condition of the treaty, the princesses (the daughters of the duke), could only be married with the advice and consent of the King of France.

During the XVth century an administrative system came into being which was destined to assure the power of the duke and furnish him with regular resources (this was particularly so in the reign of Jean V, which was peaceful and benefited from having a good chancellor).

Government was carried out through a Council, comprising nine members and two secretaries; through the Etats, which could only be called by the duke; finance was controlled by the Chambre des Comptes. However, the duke's authority was often contested, especially by pro-French elements. Even on the eve of the battle of Saint-Aubin du Cormier the French were helped by rebellious Breton nobles.

The care taken by accountants over the duke's finances was often rendered useless by carelessness or overspending by the duke, while to some he gave exemption from payment. The Breton army was mediocre and low on fire-power - their artillery was outclassed by that of the French at the battle of Saint-Aubin du Cormier<sup>1</sup>.

The maritime prosperity of Brittany increased considerably over the period of the XVth century. The textile industry grew eg. at Morlaix, Locronan and Merdrignac with the increase in commerce. Large sectors of the countryside were involved in textile production. All classes in Brittany were seized with the fever of commerce. Towns such as Nantes and Rennes in particular grew.

Although all this would seem to indicate the power and economic prosperity of the duchy, both were in fact very fragile because of the socio-economic structures of Brittany, and because Bretons were badly prepared for the economic transformations that Europe was to see at the end of the century.

The Breton economy was primarily agricultural, and agriculture was hardly touched by the prosperity of the time. Agricultural production was insufficient for any great increase in population.

C'est un pays pauvre, surchargé d'impôts, à la limite de sa capacité fiscale, un pays qui n'atteint pas un million et demi d'habitants, que François II, témérairement, a rêvé d'opposer au royaume de France<sup>2</sup>.

1. Poisson makes no mention of these failings, and gives the impression that the Breton army and navy were strong and well-equipped.

2. Touchard op.cit. pp. 206-7.

Even the commercial prosperity of Brittany was fragile and relative. Relative, because not all Breton ports profited from it, because the growth of their traffic was not as fast as that of their foreign competitors, (eg. their share of traffic in Devon ports fell from 40% in 1470-1471 to 18% in 1515-1516), and because it depended more on external factors than on Breton initiatives, (eg. depending on who was at war with whom). Brittany also suffered from a lack of solid merchant dynasties, since people saw commerce as a means for the bourgeois to become nobles and for nobles to pay off debts and make their pile. Brittany was ill-equipped for increased competition and new techniques at the end of 15th century<sup>1</sup>.

A few days after the Treaty du Verger, François II died. Charles VIII of France claimed the guardianship and custody of the daughters Anne and Isabeau, the lease of the duchy during their minority and the study by a commission of the right of succession to the duchy. The Maréchal de Rieux, who had been named as Anne's guardian in the will of François II, refused and so, by 7 January 1489, France was officially at war with Brittany.

Anne had numerous suitors and chose to marry, by proxy, Maximilian of Austria on 19 November 1490, thus adhering to the league of Maximilian, Henry VII and Ferdinand of Castile and putting herself in the ranks of the enemies of France. But Anne was betrayed. The Maréchal de Rieux established a separate government at Nantes throughout 1489 and made her pay heavily for his submission. Alain d'Albret handed over Nantes to the French in 1491. Rohan occupied Basse-Bretagne for Charles VIII. Brittany gained respite in 1489-1490, thanks to the landing of German,

1. Poisson does not indicate the economic weakness of Brittany, and for the most part paints a rosy picture of the economy.

Spanish and English mercenaries, and a truce came with the Treaty of Frankfurt in July 1489. But, in 1491, there was a successful French offensive, finding Anne without reinforcements. Anne was isolated at Rennes and forced to negotiate on 15 November 1491. As a result of this, the King of France occupied the duchy, and named Rohan as Lieutenant Général. Anne was authorised to rejoin her husband while the question of the rights to the duchy was to be put to the arbitration of twenty-four eminent persons (twelve to be chosen by each side). This Treaty, (the Treaty of Laval), sanctioned the military defeat of Brittany.

Anne was released from her undertakings to Maximilian and married Charles VIII at Langeais on 6 December 1491, and his successor, Louis XII at Nantes on 8 January 1499. Anne and Charles gave each other a mutual gift of their rights and the traditional freedoms of the duchy were confirmed. Anne tried to salvage what independence she could for Brittany. On her marriage to Louis she had it made clear that the duchy would go on her death to her younger, not her eldest, son. If she were to die childless, it would go to her legitimate heirs (the Rohans), not to her husband. In 1504, she defended the marriage projected between her daughter Claude and the future Charles Quint, so that the duchy Claude would inherit would be separate from the kingdom François d'Angoulême would inherit. However, the King and the Etats insisted on the marriage of Claude to François. In a last effort Anne had reserved in the contract the eventual rights of any son of hers by a possible marriage after the death of the present King.

Anne died on 9 January 1514, and the future François I of France married Claude on 18 May 1514.

François first assured the union of Brittany and France for the duration of his reign and that of his successor: Claude, in 1515, gave him the duchy in perpetuity to use as his own and as his own heritage, and



then in her will attributed it to her eldest son (the Dauphin François).

In 1532, after negotiations with the Etats, the Edict of Union was published at Nantes:

nous unissons et joignons les pays et duché de Bretagne avec le royaume et couronne de France, perpétuellement, de sorte qu'ils ne puissent être séparés ni tomber en diverses mains pour quelque cause que ce puisse être...

In September 1532, the Edict of Plessis-Macé guaranteed the fiscal, judicial and ecclesiastical freedom of Brittany. On 15 August 1532 the dauphin François was crowned Duke François III of Brittany at Rennes. He died in 1536 (10 August), and was the last to bear the title Duke of Brittany. For his successor, Henri II, Brittany was just a province of France.

The conflict with France had severe consequences for Brittany, especially as her neighbours were now enjoying peace. People fled to the towns, towns were sacked, money collapsed in value, and prices rose. Peace and submission to France seemed the only remedy, and indeed there was celebration in Rennes in 1491 when the marriage of Charles and Anne was announced. The desire for peace and memory of the bad years of conflict also had a great influence on the decision of the Etats to seek Union.

## PART TWO

AFTER THE EDICT OF UNION<sup>1</sup>

For this period of Breton history, we will concentrate on the history of protest in Brittany.

After the Edict of Union, the Etats became the essential element of autonomy left to Brittany. They met for four or five days each year. The subject that most occupied them was that of taxes. (The Edict of 1532 had said that no tax could be raised in Brittany without the consent of the Etats.) Whenever necessary they protested against arbitrary measures taken by the kings.

Poisson claims that:

C'est précisément cette lutte des Etats de Bretagne contre les empiétements du pouvoir central qui fait l'originalité et l'intérêt des trois siècles qui ont précédé la Révolution<sup>2</sup>.

The Etats named deputies to represent the Breton nation at the Etats Généraux de France, ie. these deputies, who were to act in concert, represented the whole Breton nation, not different orders.

The Etats brought out new editions of the Coutume de Bretagne in 1538 and 1589. French jurists did not like this, but the Coutume, which reveals a completely Breton mentality, remained in use up to the Revolution.

Henri II eventually published an edict for the creation of a Breton parlement in 1554. The edict declared that it would be composed of 16 Bretons and 16 people not originating from Brittany. The four presidents were taken from the latter (for purely political reasons, it would seem). Throughout the 16th century the Etats protested about the membership of people who did not originate in Brittany in the parlement, but it appears

Delumeau (ed.), Histoire de la Bretagne

1. gives little information on further Breton aspirations towards maintaining their freedoms during this period. The information given below is based principally on Poisson. Where possible, dates and details have been checked.
2. Poisson, op.cit.p.194.

that the latter eventually came to see themselves as champions of Breton independence.

Magistrates of the parlement used what power they had to counter French influence.

In 1561, a royal ordonnance fixed the seat of the parlement at Rennes.

After 1532, contrary to the contract of that year, Breton bishops were replaced by French ones.

In 1582, the Duke of Mercoeur was named Governor of Brittany. He led an open revolt, when he saw that the French succession would pass to the protestant Henri de Navarre. He was unable to take the Breton parlement with him in this, and therefore formed a parlement, at Nantes. Mercoeur was the Breton representative of the Ligue (which was opposed to having a protestant king).

Mercoeur fought on even after Henri renounced protestantism in 1593, but finally submitted on 10 March 1598.<sup>1</sup>

The Breton parlement registered the Edict of Nantes (1598), but under protest. Henri II merged Mercoeur's Nantes parlement with that of Rennes.

In 1657 and 1658 parlement and the Etats sought to defend the independence given by the 1532 Treaty against Louis XIV, who often tried to extract large sums of money from Brittany.

When Governor of Brittany, Richelieu tried to bring the Breton navy under French control, with only temporary success. In 1669, the Governor of Brittany took over the function of Admiral, thus giving Brittany a certain amount of naval independence.

Colbert determined to diminish the influence of the Etats. In 1673, the Etats payed a large sum to avoid the imposition of Colbert's

1. While Poisson believes that Mercoeur was really working for Breton independence, Daru in Histoire de Bretagne (Paris 1826) believes that he was seeking power for himself.

new taxes in Brittany, but the latter still attempted to introduce a tax on tobacco. This led to rebellion in Rennes, (on 18 April 1675), and the pillaging of the bureau de tabacs, the bureau de contrôle, and the bureau du papier timbré.

There were other outbreaks in Nantes, Dinan and Vannes.

The governor, the Duc de Chaulnes, ordered that the offices be re-established. This provoked those who were trying to defend Breton rights. In Basse-Bretagne, some peasants joined in on the side of the townspeople.

The Duc de Chaulnes was eventually obliged to withdraw from Rennes after further confrontation. The peasant revolt, led by Le Balp, continued. This revolt is sometimes known as the 'révolte du Bonnet Rouge'. The revolt collapsed after the death of Le Balp (2 September 1675). Repression began.

The Duc de Chaulnes occupied Rennes with 6,000 troops, thus violating the rights of the town, and the parlement was exiled. Prisoners were taken indiscriminately, and hanged, broken on the wheel, or sent to the galleys. In addition, 10,000 troops were sent to winter in Brittany.

On 1 March 1676 all troops were withdrawn. The amnesty was registered by the parlement (now at Vannes). The parlement refused to allow any garrison at Rennes, and made this a condition of their return to Rennes. The Etats returned to Rennes in 1679.

By the turn of the century, the King's financial demands were bringing considerable financial difficulties to Brittany. From 1689 on the Intendance had been established in Brittany, although Poisson asserts that it had less power than in other parts of France.

The Etats tried to reassert their independence on the death of Louis XIV, by refusing to approve expenses that they had not authorised.

Bishops for Brittany during this period were nominated by the King, and were often involved in Breton affairs.

There was some replacing of Breton local saints by French local saints by priests, influenced by Gallicanism, who were appointed to Brittany. This is one small example of the spread of French influence in Brittany.

In the last years of the reign of Louis XIV there was violent reaction in Brittany to the exaggerated centralisation of Colbert. (Brittany was by this time 30,000,000 livres in debt.)

In 1717 a factum was circulated. It was said to have been published in London, but in fact was the work of a Breton, Talhouët de Bonamour. It demanded urgent reforms, the reduction of the *don gratuit*, the suppression of unpopular taxes such as the capitation and the *dixième*, and that the treasurers should be obliged to show their accounts.

On 15 December 1717 the *Etats*, meeting at Dinan, refused to vote a *don gratuit* of 2,000,000 livres without debating it. Montesquiou, the heavy-handed Commander-in-Chief of Brittany, dissolved the *Etats*, and asked Paris to send two or three regiments to quell 'une troupe de mutins infatués de droits imaginaires'<sup>1</sup>.

This was the most serious breach so far of the 1532 Treaty. Three Breton nobles, reflecting Breton feeling, were sent with a *lettre de cachet* to Paris by the intendant, Feydeau de Brou. They revealed their grievances in a *Mémoire*:

Les peuples sont accablés par le redoublement des fouages, par l'abondance d'une capitation qui excède infiniment le tarif du reste du royaume. La Bretagne doit 36 millions. Les revenus de 1718 sont consommés. Elle succombe sous le poids des intérêts des avances<sup>2</sup>.

Montesquiou and Feydeau tried to bypass the *Etats*. The *parlement* refused to register acts and addressed remonstrances to the King.

1. Words quoted in Poisson, *op.cit.*p.240.

2. Poisson, *op.cit.*p.241.

The Regent, more subtle than Montesquiou, called a meeting of the Etats for 1 July 1718. The *don gratuit* was voted. Ill-feeling between Montesquiou on the one hand and the Etats and parlement on the other persisted.

The Pontcallec conspiracy began on 15 September 1718, when 60 Breton nobles in Rennes signed an act, stating that they would uphold the rights given by the Treaty of Union against the tyranny of the "gens d'affaires".

Because of the violation of some clauses of the Treaty, they sided with the enemies of the Regent in plotting his overthrow and replacement by Philip V of Spain. The greater Breton aristocracy ignored the movement. The main figures were from the ranks of the lesser aristocracy eg. Pontcallec and de Lambilly. They sought help from Spain, but very little was forthcoming.

Troubles began to break out in various parts of Brittany. The conspirators planned to march on Rennes on 6 October 1719, but their secret was betrayed, and a *Chambre Royale* was set up at Nantes to try them. Pontcallec was captured on 28 December, after the others. On 26 March 1720 Pontcallec, Montlouis, Talhouët and Couëdic were sentenced to be beheaded for treason. Various sources say that the trial was rather rushed. The four were executed on 4 May 1720. This stirred up feelings of revolt in Nantes, and the four became martyrs. In the face of this feeling, the *Chambre Royale* was dissolved and a general amnesty given. Montesquiou was now in disgrace, and left Brittany.

Under the successor of Montesquiou a 'commission intermédiaire des Etats' was established which eg. supervised the carrying out of public works, and controlled the treasurer's accounts. The Etats tried to get this commission established on a permanent basis. In 1732, the Etats asked that members of this commission should have a deliberative

voice in it, rather than a merely consultative one. The King supported them. Poisson says of this commission:

A la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, elle avait réussi à attirer à elle la direction de tous les grands services publics et fit une oeuvre considérable pour le bien de la Bretagne. Son institution était une victoire des Etats sur la centralisation<sup>1</sup>.

Poisson maintains that when we consider the above events we can see that the Etats played an important role in the life of Brittany, because they united all three orders. The more conflicts there were with the State, the more Bretons became aware of the feeling of their own nationality. With this, Poisson gives other information which leads him to remark:

Ainsi par l'effort conjugué des Etats et du parlement, la Bretagne vivait une vie vraiment autonome, conforme à l'esprit du traité de 1532. En 1738, le premier commissaire du roi constatait amèrement: 'L'homme du roi n'est plus rien dans cette province! L'homme du roi était l'intendant. Paroles encore plus vraies à la veille de la Révolution<sup>2</sup>.

We might well be justified in feeling that he is basing a sweeping statement on insufficient evidence.

#### The Affaire de Bretagne

This episode occurred when the government, having met opposition to various financial measures, tried to by-pass the Etats by levying a tax on towns in 1764, saying that the consent of the Etats was not necessary. The Etats opposed this and were supported by the Chambre des Vacations. The King's council quashed the supporting Arrêt of the Chambre des Vacations, and forbade it to abet the opposition of the

1. Poisson, op.cit.p.248.

2. Poisson, op.cit.p.250.

Etats. This was a severe attack on the Breton constitution, but the King had eventually to give way.

#### The La Chalotais Affair

La Chalotais was procureur général of the Breton parlement up to 1753, and was then succeeded by his son. In 1764, parlement sent a remonstrance to the King about the despotism of his commanders-in-chief in Brittany. They sent another to protest against the idea of majority (rather than unanimous) voting on exceptional affairs and against the 'corvée'. La Chalotais and four conseillers were called to Paris, and in 1765 the whole parlement was called to Paris to be reprimanded. When they returned to Brittany, 85 of the 97 magistrates resigned. La Chalotais was arrested. A 'parlement-croupion' (a puppet parlement) was formed. At the trial of La Chalotais in 1766 no case could be proved against him, his son, or three other conseillers, but they were exiled nevertheless. It was 1774 before the return of La Chalotais and the true parlement.

The ideas in fashion at the time of the Revolution did not allow Brittany to keep her independence, and survive as a nation. The new ideas gained support in the Breton parlement.

Life returned to normal after the return of the parlement in 1774. The nobles were ardent in defence of the rights of Brittany, but tended to confuse these with their own privileges. Members of the third estate grew tired of their inferior situation and eg. opposed the nobles on the question of the sharing of the tax-burden.

From 1781-1788 the parlement was much more aggressive than the Etats, and made frequent remonstrances, even on minor matters. In 1788 all the parlements objected to Brienne's plan for raising more money. Brienne took away parlement's right of making remonstrances and registering the King's edicts, and created new tribunals to restrain



the area of jurisdiction of the courts administered by the parlement. These tribunals were called 'grands baillages', and there were to be three in Brittany, at Rennes, Nantes and Quimper.

In Brittany there were protests from the parlement and other groups. Thiard, the Commandant of Brittany, wanted to have the edicts registered by force, but the commission intermédiaire asked the King on the same day to suspend execution of the edicts, and recalled to him the guarantees given by the 1532 Treaty.

After further protest at Rennes by the magistrates, Thiard's troops occupied the Place de La Motte. They were opposed by a huge crowd, and forced to withdraw later that day (2 June 1788). On 19 and 20 June, 19 Breton nobles were sent to protest to the King, and were imprisoned in the Bastille.

The edicts were eventually withdrawn on 8 August, after continuing protests. Brienne was replaced by Necker. On 29 December 1788 the last meeting of the Etats took place. The question arose of how to elect deputies to the Etats Généraux. Usually the Breton deputies had represented the nation, rather than one of the three orders. The third estate and the 'bas-clergé' decided to send deputies, but the aristocracy and the 'haut-clergé' refused, while agreeing to equality of taxation and more third estate representation in the Breton Etats. The parlement supported these two orders, and said that all reforms must, as tradition demanded, be voted on by the Breton Etats.

Poisson claims that it is obvious from the Breton 'cahiers de doléances' that the Breton people wanted to keep the privileges of Brittany.

On the night of 4 August the Etats Généraux abolished feudal rights. In the general fever of sacrifice the Breton deputies offered the privileges of Brittany, with the reservation that the Breton Etats must

ratify this. The deputies had no right or authority to do this, and did not, in fact, sign the procès-verbal of this session.

During the absence of the Breton parlement, the Etats Généraux wanted to force the Chambre de Vacations to sanction these decrees. They refused to do this before the Etats and parlement met. The Chambre was summoned to Paris to appear before the constituent assembly. Then the magistrates of the Breton parlement were dismissed, as was the Chambre des Vacations. On 16 January a new Chambre des Vacations was formed, but refused to sit. The parlement was suppressed on 6 September 1790, and a Cour provisoire was formed, and given all the authority of the parlement.

Thus the Etats de Bretagne never met about the abolition of Breton privileges, and this was technically an illegal act.

#### La Chouannerie

In Brittany this was at one and the same time a religious movement, a royalist political movement, and a Breton political movement<sup>1</sup>. It was also due to horror of the idea of military service, and hatred of the agents of the financial policy of the State.

It originated in the Association Bretonne founded by the Marquis de La Rouërie in 1791. He had at first favoured the reforms brought about by the Revolution, but then became a counter-revolutionary. He recruited supporters and received command of the Breton insurgents from the brothers of Louis XVI. La Rouërie died in 1793, before the revolt he had prepared had broken out but the movement continued. The aim of the Breton Association was to restore the monarchy and Breton liberties. The body of La Rouërie was exhumed and beheaded after some of the secrets of the Association had been betrayed to Danton.

1. Thus, as mentioned in Meic Stephens Linguistic Minorities in Western Europe (Llandysul 1976), the movement was joined even by the Breton Republicans, who had supported the Revolutionaries in the early days.

This interpretation is supported by Yann Fouéré in a letter to the writer dated 18 February 1979.

Poisson attributes the peasant unrest to five major factors:

First, to the order of March 1792 that all objects of value should be removed from churches. The peasants were also unhappy at having priests who had sworn allegiance to the Constitution civile, and at the dismissal of priests who had not so sworn (the Pope later supported the latter).

Second, to the requisitions ordering a full investigations of farmers' assets and the delivery of grain to depots. The latter was often an onerous task for peasants.

Third, to the fact that the peasants were for the King and opposed his execution.

Fourth, to compulsory military service.

Fifth, to their ancient Celtic tradition of independence which revolted against the imposition by force of a certain concept of life.

Chouannerie broke out in March 1793, at the same time as the insurrection in Vendée. In Brittany it took the form of guerrilla warfare, rather than direct confrontation as in Vendee.

Revolt broke out for example in areas of Fougères, Vitré, Rennes and Redon, and from 16 to 26 March the town of La Roche-Bernard was occupied.

The government retaliated by repression. After the defeat of the Girondins and the Vendéens, on 23 December 1793, the Montagne ushered in the Terror, which was felt particularly in Brittany. The Terror reawoke chouannerie in Brittany, except in Basse-Cornouaille and Léon. Cadoudal, at Auray, was one of the most prominent leaders.

By February 1794, the chouans were able to prevent mass conscription in Brittany. eg. 322 men were taken by force in the area of Rochefort-en-Terre, but only 82 reached Rennes.

Poisson claims that by December 1794 the chouans were in control of the country. However the movement was directed towards restoration of the Bourbons rather than to the interests of Brittany by the Comte de Puisaye.

Eventually a treaty was signed at the Castle of la Mabilais, in April 1795, on terms very favourable to the chouans, by a Baron Cormartin, in the absence of Puisaye. Fighting soon broke out again though, and Cormartin was arrested in May 1795. Poisson maintains that the chouans were mistaken in allying with émigrés in seeking the help of England which was first and foremost pursuing its own aims. Puisaye raised 5,500 men in England, including 1,500 soldiers of the French Republic who had been taken prisoner. On 27 June the émigrés landed at Carnac and were joined by thousands of chouans. A republican army under Hoche drove them back into the Quiberon peninsula. Cadoudal surrendered later in June and, on 5 July 1796, the Pope, while still opposing the Constitution Civile, asked the faithful to submit to the established government.

Fighting broke out again after the coup d'état of the 18th Fructidor (4.9.1797) and renewed religious persecution. Revolt was also sparked by the Loi des Otages of 1799, whereby the family, relatives and friends of a suspect man could also be imprisoned. Cadoudal seized Locmine, La Roche-Bernard and Sarzeau, and other towns were taken. A truce was agreed up to 15 January 1800 with Bonaparte (by now in power), but he broke it, putting Brune at the head of 60,000 men. The chouans' leaders were forced to give way.

Chouannerie suffered a mortal blow with the Concordat of 1801, which ended the Constitutional Church in the republic and gave the religious appeasement that people wanted. However, Poisson maintains that chouannerie did help to bring about the Concordat.

There was an uprising in Brittany and Vendée during the "100 days" and some towns in Brittany eg. Questembert and Josselin were seized by

Sol de Grisolles, the former chouan leader. The trouble was quelled by the allied armies, who occupied Brittany up to the line of the Oust.

The last spasm of chouannerie was felt in about 1830 with the attempted insurrection of the Duchesse de Berry. The trouble was quelled after some disturbances in the Nantes and Vitré areas.

Bretons played an active part in the 1870 revolution and a Breton army was formed to relieve the capital. The general, Keratry, established himself at Conlie (near Le Mans). From 3 November to 10 December c.60,000 Bretons were assembled there. But the inaction imposed by the Gambetta government, which left the troops without arms, in bad weather and muddy conditions, demoralised the troops. They were eventually given only a few inferior weapons, and, not surprisingly, panicked at the battle of Le Mans.

It is possible that the army was so neglected because the Gambetta government feared a renewed outbreak of chouannerie.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE FIRST AND SECOND EMSAVS

Lexicon<sup>1</sup>

Adsao	Resurrection
An Eost	The Harvest
Ar Brezoneg er Skol	Breton in School
Ar Falz	The Sickle
Arvor	The Land of the Sea
Ar Vro	The Land
Ar Vuhez Kristen	Christian Life
Bagadou Stourm	Combat groups
Bezen	Combat formation unit
Bleun-Brug	Heather
Breiz Atao	Brittany forever
Breiz da Zont	Brittany to come
Breiz Digabestr	Free Brittany
Breiz Dishual	Liberated Brittany
Breiz Kervredel	Federal Brittany
Breuriez ar Brezoneg er Skoliou	The brotherhood of Breton in schools
Dihunamb	Let us awake
Emsav	The name given to the Breton movement. Means rising or standing erect.
Feiz ha Breiz	Faith and Brittany
Galv	The Call
Gwalarn	Nor'wester, wind from the sea
Gwenn ha Du	White and Black (colours of the Breton flag)
Gorsedd	Assembly
Kadervenn	Combat trench

1. The Lexicon and Devices, groupings and parties of the Emsav are based on those given in Alain Déniel, Le Mouvement breton (Paris 1976), a very thorough account of the movement during the years 1919-1945.

Kevredigez Broadel Breiz	Breton Regionalist Union
Lu Brezhon	Breton Army
Ololé	Onomatopoeia, a shepherd's cry
Sav	Arise
Sao Breiz	Brittany arise
Sterenn	The Star
Strollad Broadel Breiz	Breton National Party
Strollad Emrenerien Vreiz	Breton Autonomist Party
Studi hag Ober	Study and Work
Stur	Rudder
Unvaniez Yaouankiz Vreiz	Union of Breton Youth
Urz Goanag Breiz	Order of Breton hope
War du ar pal	Towards the goal
War Zao	Arise

Devices, groupings and parties of the Emsav

A.B.E.S.: Ar brezoneg er skol-Breton in school, a cultural association founded in 1934 to promote the teaching of Breton.

Adsao: Resurrection, a regionalist movement founded in 1929 by Abbé Madec - disappeared in 1935 (newspaper Adsao).

Amis de la Bretagne (Les): groups supporting the regionalist action of Yann Fouéré - founded from July 1941 onwards.

Bezen Perrot: a small Breton military formation integrated into the Sicherheitsdienst of the S.S. - the security service of the S.S. - founded by Lainé at the beginning of 1944.

Bleum-Brug: Heather, a Breton Catholic cultural movement - founded in 1905 by Abbé Jean-Marie Perrot.

Breuziezh ar Brezoneg er Skoliou: Breton in schools, a cultural association created by R. Delaporte in 1937 to promote the teaching of Breton in free schools.

C.N.B.: Comité national breton - founded at Pontivy on 3 July 1940 by Debauvais, Guieysse, Lainé, Mordrel - it was a ghost organisation from October 1940.

F.R.B.: Fédération régionaliste bretonne - founded in September 1911 by dissidents of the U.R.B. (Review: Le Réveil breton).

G.R.B.: Groupe régionaliste breton - founded in September 1918 by Marchal, Prado, de Roince - was replaced by the U.Y.B. in May 1920 (newspaper: Breiz Atao - Brittany Forever).

Gwenn ha Du: White and Black, a secret activist society - founded in 1930.<sup>1</sup>

Kadervenn: Combat trench, a small para-military formation - founded by Lainé in 1935.

1. Named after the colours of the modern Breton flag, which was designed by Morvan Marchal, one of the founders of the G.R.B., in 1925.



L.F.B.: Ligue des frères bretons (a group of Christian Breton nationalists) - founded in February 1932, disappeared in November 1932 (newspaper: Breiz Digabestr - Free Brittany).

L.F.B.: Ligue fédéraliste de Bretagne - founded in September 1931 by dissidents of the P.A.B., disappeared in May 1935 (newspaper: Breiz Kevredel - Federal Brittany).

Lu Brezhon: Breton Army, replaced Kadervenn in 1940.

P.A.B.: Parti autonomiste breton - founded in September 1927, disappeared in August 1931 (newspaper: Breiz Atao - Brittany Forever).

P.B.N.R.: Parti breton nationaliste révolutionnaire - founded in August 1931 by dissidents belonging to the communistic tendency of the P.A.B., disappeared at the beginning of 1933 (newspaper: War Zao - Arise).

P.N.B.: Parti national breton - founded in December 1931, dissolved by Daladier in October 1939 (newspaper: Breiz Atao), reconstituted in October 1940 (newspaper: L'Heure bretonne).

P.N.I.B.: Parti nationaliste intégral de Bretagne - founded in December 1931, of the National-Socialist tendency, disappeared in September 1932 (newspaper: Breiz da Zont - Brittany to come).

U.R.B.: Union régionaliste bretonne - founded in August 1898.

U.Y.B.: Unvaniez Yaouankiz Vreiz (Union de la jeunesse de Bretagne) - founded in May 1920, was replaced by the P.A.B. in September 1927 (newspaper: Breiz Atao).

CHART OF PRINCIPAL BRETON ORGANISATIONS 1918-39

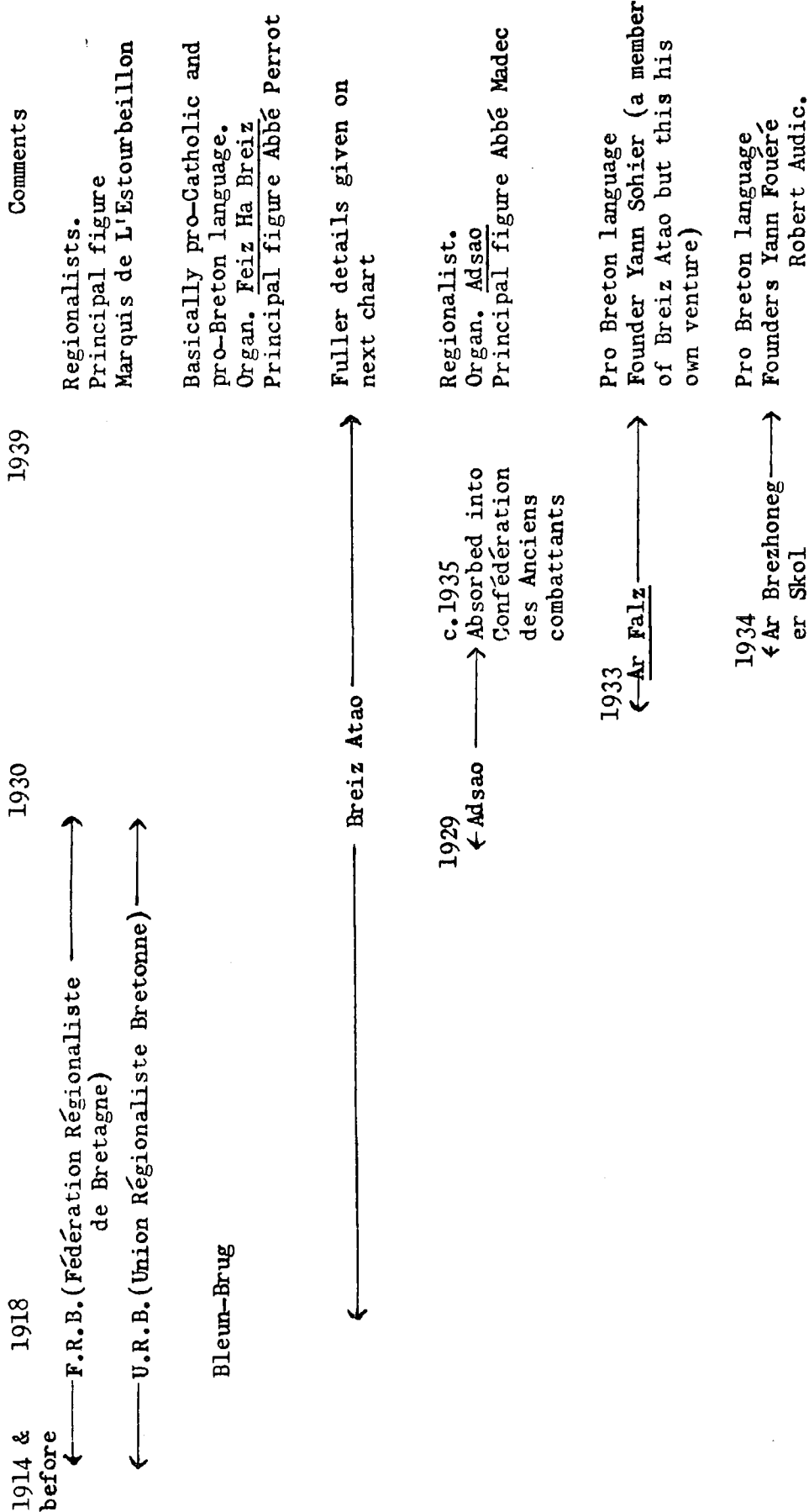
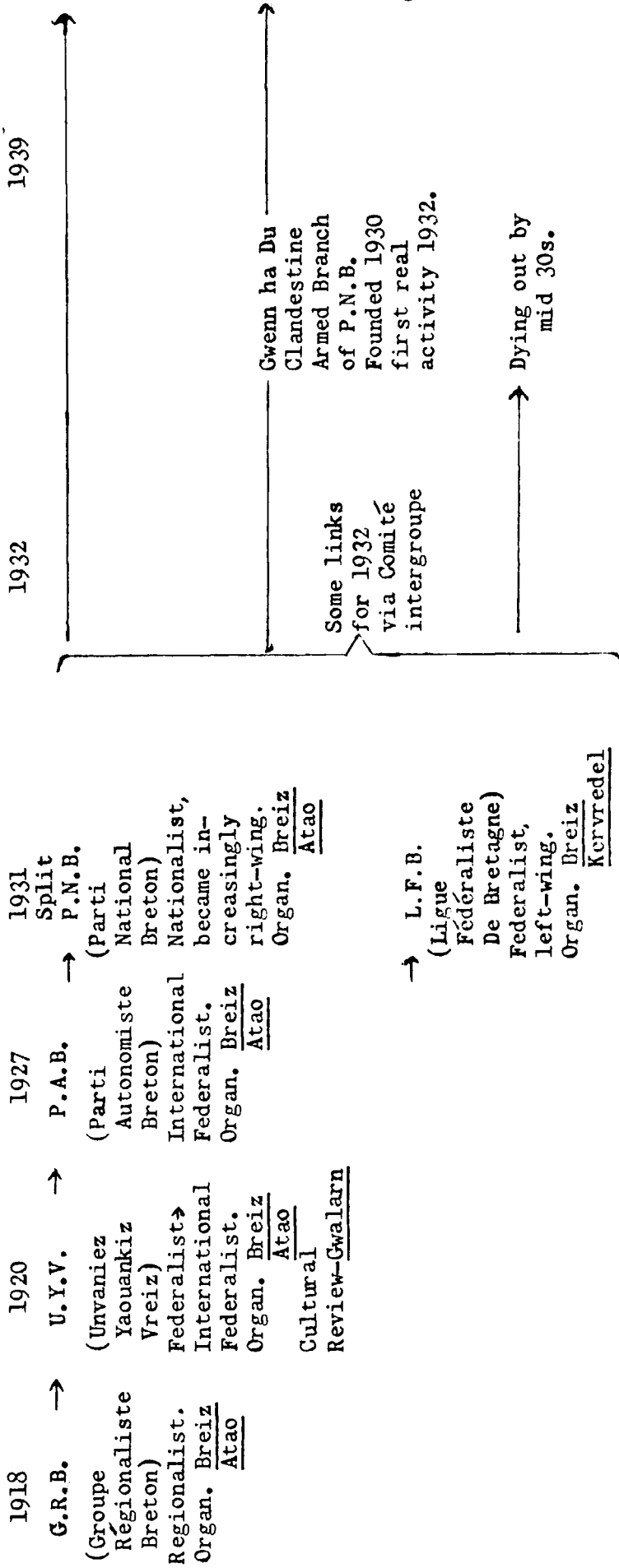


CHART OF DEVELOPMENT (1918-1939) OF ORGANISATIONS

KNOWN BY UMBRELLA TERM BREIZ ATAO\*



\* From the title of the newspaper/review consistently adopted by these organisations.

## Introduction

In the history of their movement, Breton militants generally distinguish three periods:

- the period of the first emsav, before the First World War;
- the period of the second emsav, which began in 1919 and finished in 1945;
- the contemporary period, known as that of the third emsav.

In the case of the first emsav, the groups adopting the Breton cause were composed largely of regionalists. In August 1914, when the necessity of a 'Holy Union' of all French people in the face of the enemy was proclaimed, they readily admitted that it was no longer appropriate to defend their particular cause. It was to be after the armistice before Breton claims were to be expressed again.

Then, at the end of 1918, as many militants had died in the trenches, it was a new generation that renewed the tradition, and in fact brought about a real transformation of the essence of the movement, giving it a nationalist direction. And, when the Second World War broke out in 1939, it pursued its struggle with a policy that it felt to be in accordance with its interests, but which led certain of its members to collaborate with the Germans. Consequently, at the Liberation, the militants experienced harsh repression. Those who escaped imprisonment or death had to lie low. This was the reason for the break between the second and third emsav.

## The First Emsav

The most important early figures of this period were Pitre-Chevalier, Arthur de la Borderie and La Villemarqué.

In 1839, Hersart de La Villemarqué published the Barzaz Breiz, a collection of slightly reworked popular poetry, which was clearly

stamped with a very keen Breton national feeling. The work was very successful, and was edited several times in France and Europe.

Then came the Histoire de la Bretagne of Pitre-Chevalier, and that of La Borderie. Pitre-Chevalier's was published in 1844, and between 1897 and 1901 appeared the six volumes that constituted La Borderie's history of the province. On 4 December 1890, beginning his course of lectures on Breton history at the university of Rennes, La Borderie declared:

La Bretagne est mieux qu'une province, elle est un peuple, une nation véritable et une société (...) parfaitement distincte dans ses origines, parfaitement originale dans ses éléments constitutifs<sup>1</sup>.

As one might expect from this, his book, and that of Pitre-Chevalier, were written in a Breton nationalist perspective. Previously:

Pour les historiens français du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, tout le passé des provinces n'était qu'une longue maturation de ce qui était posé dès le départ comme devant nécessairement se déployer dans l'histoire (la nation française) et devant aboutir à la Cité splendide (Paris)<sup>2</sup>.

To the concept of French nationalism, Pitre-Chevalier and La Borderie opposed that of Breton nationalism by highlighting events of Breton history which might allow one to think that there was in the province an aspiration to autonomy or independence.

Sometimes this led them to distort historical events. Thus when interpreting the revolt of the Bonnets rouges<sup>3</sup>, they stressed the

1. Yann Poupinot, Les Bretons à l'heure de l'Europe (Paris 1961), p.167.
2. J.-Y. Guioamar, E. Masson. Les Bretons et le Socialisme, (Paris 1972), p.196  
Cited by Déniel, op.cit.p.22-3.
3. cf. above, p.35.

nationalist aspect of the episode and minimised the fact that it was above all an extremely violent clash between the nobility and the peasantry. In other words they were reactionary writers, but it was from their work that the Breton movement stemmed.

Towards the end of the 19th century two other factors began to operate that were likely to favour the burgeoning of the movement: the attack on the Breton language by the French political authorities, and the disintegration of archaic economic and social structures.

After 1870, the institution of compulsory primary education was to allow French officialdom to begin reducing the linguistic disparities within its territory.

Various instructions were given to primary school teachers to attack minority languages. Thus the address of the sous-préfet of Morlaix to teachers: 'Surtout, rappelez-vous, messieurs, que vous n'êtes établis que pour tuer la langue bretonne<sup>1</sup>'.

The scale of the attack on the language led a number of people to share La Villemarqué's conviction and feel the need to set up a Breton movement.

In Brittany the movement of population away from the countryside was considerably later than in France and, due to a lack of industry to employ this moving population, resulted in emigration. Thus between 1872 and 1911 the difference in number of those emigrating from and those immigrating into the province was 332,000 (and 206,000 between 1891 and 1911).<sup>2</sup>

These original components of the Breton question, linguistic distinctiveness and the specific nature of the socio-economic problems, played a vital role in the genesis of the Emsav.

The ideas of the pre-1914 Breton organisations were impregnated with monarchism and Catholicism.

1. Morvan Lebesque, Comment peut-on être breton (Paris 1970), p.97. We should remember that at this time there were about 1,200,000 Breton speakers in the province.
2. Figures taken from Alain Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.26.

In 1829 the Association bretonne was established. Two thirds of its 600 members belonged to the nobility. It concerned itself with agricultural studies and archeological work. The association was banned in 1858, probably because of imperial fears that it might foster a royalist conspiracy against the regime.

The Union régionaliste bretonne, set up in 1898, had a similar social composition, and was reactionary and monarchist in character<sup>1</sup>. Its first claim was for the conservation and teaching of Breton. It also favoured a measure of administrative decentralisation and better exploitation of local economic possibilities. The first president was Anatole Le Braz, a teacher and writer. Under the direction of its later president, the Marquis de L'Estourbeillon, its activity was soon reduced to preparing annual congresses, based mainly on a series of accounts of local studies. In 1909, the U.R.B. attempted to win the support of Doumergue, the future Président du Conseil, for the teaching of Breton, but he refused to give them any satisfaction. In 1911, at the Saint-Renan congress, came a schism. Tired of the ineffectiveness of the U.R.B. and its proclaimed links with Catholic and monarchist circles, and also because of certain clashes of personality, about fifty members left to found the Unvaniez Arvor or Fédération régionaliste de Bretagne (F.R.B.).

The statutes of the F.R.B. clarified that it planned to study all questions concerning Breton life in social, economic, intellectual and artistic matters. The great innovation of the F.R.B. was that it declared itself completely neutral in questions of religion and politics. However, its policies proved to be just as timid as those of the U.R.B.

1. From now on the reader should refer to the Lexicon and pages entitled Devices groupings and parties of the Emsav for French, English and Breton names of organisations and reviews, and supplementary information. cf. above pp. 45-8.

Besides these, there were other organisations, such as Abbé Perrot's Bleun-Brug<sup>1</sup>, and the nationalists, a few young people led by Le Mercier d'Erm, disgusted at the regionalists' impotence, who had founded the (first) Parti nationaliste breton in 1911. In their paper, Breiz Dishual, they were determined to demonstrate that only a nationalist approach could restore Brittany to its rightful position. But their statements were often exaggerated, they proposed no practical plan of action, and their audience was tiny.

The more serious later reviews, Brittia and Brug, had audiences which were hardly any greater. The originality of Emile Masson, the founder of Brug, was that he broke away from the idea that Breton was essentially a reactionary language and, being an international socialist, he saw it as a way of spreading libertarian propaganda among the peasant classes. He succeeded in gaining the support of some major political figures. Also in 1909, it was the radical socialist deputy for Lorient, Paul Guieysse, who presented the U.R.B.'s demand concerning the teaching of Breton, but failed to modify the position of the socialist movement on minority languages.

Thus up to 1914, apart from the literary renewal of the Breton language revealed by the existence of nearly one hundred and fifty periodicals, the Emsav had made little progress, and was still primarily under the control of eminent figures and intellectuals and totally lacking contact with the common people.

All activity within the Emsav ceased with the outbreak of war in 1914. Many militants were killed in the trenches. From 1918 to the onset of the world economic crisis many changes took place

1. This organisation will be dealt with in the section on the second emsav.



in Brittany, both economic and social. The new militants and those who had survived the war had new conditions to work in.

### The Second Emsav

The period is complicated in the extreme, with the appearance of a considerable number of organisations and publications. For this reason I will first give an account of the general trend of the second emsav before giving outlines of the various organisations and their publications<sup>1</sup>.

The years 1919-1931 marked a period of major internal changes within the Breton movement.

The method of spreading the idea of Brittany was no longer restricted to the appearance of termly bulletins and the holding of annual congresses. In 1930 a candidate in the legislative elections put the question of autonomy before the electorate. And before this there had been attempts to set up a Breton party in the country and to distribute on a very large scale a pro-Emsav weekly paper.

The new large scale of action was principally due to the efforts of those responsible for Breiz Atao.

There was also an evolution of doctrine, again thanks mainly to Breiz Atao. Breaking with the tradition of closely associating the Breton question and the religious question, Breiz Atao succeeded in making acceptable the idea of a Breton movement which was neutral in religious matters<sup>2</sup>.

In spite of these changes the Emsav had no success in achieving any of its aims, primarily because it was unable to bring about a movement of public opinion favourable to its programme and which might have led the government to reconsider its position.

1. In this section, as in that dealing with the first emsav, the material is principally taken from Alain Déniel, Mouvement breton, but rearranged for the sake of clarity.

2. Déniel believes that frequently in the first emsav religious movements were camouflaged by claims for regional liberties.  
(cf. Mouvement breton, p. 110)

Lack of funds was one reason for this, while the climate of opinion of the period seems also to have been unfavourable to the idea of autonomism.

Nevertheless, with Adsao, Abbé Madec partly demonstrated that not every regionalist claim was doomed to failure, provided that it had the backing of eminent members of the community and members of elected bodies.

But, in 1931, Adsao was about to disappear and the P.A.B. had already done so. Both organisations claimed to be above political or social divisions, and although they could reasonably hope to gain popular support on individual issues which really concerned the whole of the region, it seems difficult to visualise the same support being forthcoming for a body of doctrine which had no political or social content.

Certain of the leading figures of these two movements hoped to attract the support of the middle and lower-middle bourgeoisie by a concept of regionalism or autonomism leading to the end of class opposition. (Businessmen, artisans and members of the liberal professions always formed the bulk of the social categories represented within these organisations). However financial difficulties indicated the limited extent of commitment of these classes. The economic climate in the years preceding 1931 meant that social conflict was seldom very violent.

However, towards the end of 1931, when Brittany was beginning to feel the first effects of the world economic crisis, one might have expected some change in the situation.

The years 1931-1939 were characterised by the continuing extremely limited influence of the Breton autonomist trend whilst a certain regionalist awareness began to reveal itself.

The P.N.B. was unable to rouse support in spite of considerable expenditure of money and effort<sup>1</sup>. Some of its members served terms of imprisonment. The principal mistake of the members of the P.N.B. seems to have been in overestimating the degree of potential support within Brittany for a Breton nationalist party.

Besides this, Breiz Atao never managed to give credibility to the idea of an independent Brittany: 'Quand elle ne scandalisait pas, l'éventualité d'une autonomie de l'ancien duché se heurtait à un scepticisme amusé<sup>2</sup>'.

Other factors were involved in the failure of the movement. In the neutral social content of autonomist doctrine, there was nothing to attract the least favoured sectors of the population. The corporatist ideas adopted in 1937 also failed to attract the support of workers and peasants. Even the proclaimed anti-marxism of the movement failed to woo the support of the middle classes away from the French national political parties.

Finally, the P.N.B.'s position on religious matters deprived it of the essential support of the clergy.

In spite of the failure of the nationalists, the initial success of Adsao and the results of the Breton Front in the legislative elections of 1936 indicated that part of the population wanted greater regional freedom within the framework of the French State, while not agreeing on the content of the regional reform.

The claim to be above social and political divisions, adopted on the formation of the Breton Front was fragile, yet specifying one's position could be dangerous. Déniel claims that by pronouncing in favour of an extremely right-wing regionalism Abbé Madec had signed the death-warrant of Adsao<sup>3</sup>.

1. Debauvais, one of the leading figures in the P.N.B., was financially crippled by his involvement.

2. Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.215.

3. Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.216.

Yet the interest roused in regionalism underlined how people's thinking had developed since the late 1920s.

The success of the campaign of *Ar Brezoneg er Skol* was equally significant. By 1939 most communes were supporting the case for the teaching of Breton.

It is perhaps easier to understand why most militants were not prepared to leave things at that when we consider the hostility of the government towards such legitimate claims as for the teaching of the Breton language.

For many of the militants of the *Emsav* 1940-1942 was a period of great hope, as they succeeded in wringing more concessions from the French government during this period than during the two decades preceding the Second World War.

The Vichy government seemed to want to abandon the centralist policy of its predecessors. After Pétain's declarations about the restoration of the provinces, regionalism seemed to be in favour with the press, clergy, eminent figures and the people. The moderate Breton movement could exploit the situation more fully, now that it was no longer hampered by administrative and police interference. No longer did they suffer from a lack of financial support, as certain elements of commerce and industry were anxious to play the card of corporative regionalism. This allowed the movement to print more and longer copies of a greater number of newspapers and thus increase its audience. Hence the success of the early war years. However, after the Allied landings in North Africa, it was the beginning of the end.

It was the development of the international situation that brought about the final failure. In French internal affairs, Pétain had, on 30 January 1944 signed the 'Projet de Constitution de la République'

which expressly provided for the restoration of the provinces. Although this did not completely satisfy the regionalists' claims, their proposed provincial council would probably eventually have enjoyed powers similar to those of the Estates of the former duchy.

As far as the development of the P.N.B. was concerned, the policy pursued by Raymond Delaporte, and his organisational ability, helped considerably in changing the embryonic party of 1940 into a sizeable organisation of 3,000 members. The P.N.B. too was helped by the more favourable conditions of the early war years.

In the later years of the war, however, certain members of the nationalists collaborated with the Germans to the extent of forming a Breton military unit to fight on the side of the Germans. Such moves explain the depth of feeling against these people towards the end of the war (several were assassinated by members of the Resistance). Unfortunately, as the war was ending, and afterwards, this feeling became directed against almost all who had supported the Breton movement, and severe repression of this movement became official French policy. Thus the break in time between the second and the third emsav.

#### An outline of parties and organisations of the Second Emsav

To preserve clarity the period of the second emsav will be divided into two parts, the first covering the years 1918-39 and the second 1939-45.

For the first part those organisations that existed before the First World War and were revived afterwards will be considered first. Then Breiz Atao, the various organisations that sprang from it or were connected closely with it will be examined, followed by the other organisations that appeared at different times during this period.

Charts are provided to give an idea of the chronological overlap of the various organisations<sup>1</sup>.

While this is a satisfactory approach for the first part of the period, in that it can give a clear idea of the complicated development of Breiz Atao, the major organisation during those years, such an approach could only give a fragmented account of the shorter period of the Second World War. The second part will therefore be treated in chronological order.

#### The Regionalist Movement (F.R.B. and U.R.B.)

After the First World War, the surviving regionalists, alarmed by the rapid decline in the use of the Breton language, decided to concentrate on defending it. The principal figure of the regionalist movement, the Marquis de L'Estourbeillon, Deputy for one of the Vannes constituencies, drew up a declaration which was sent to the delegates to the peace conference and to the members of the commission for a Society of Nations. In the declaration the Marquis deliberately placed his demands about the teaching of Breton within the broader framework of the movement which was leading France to demand that Austria and Poland respect their minority groups. The declaration failed to produce any positive response from the French government. A later attempt by Jacob to influence Wilson, President of the United States, to publicly declare his support for the Breton cause also failed, as did a collective petition sent to each of the delegates to the peace conference.<sup>2</sup> However, one French government project for reform, which would have split up the territory of the former duchy, was abandoned. This may have been due in some measure to the protest of all the Breton organisations united by L'Estourbeillon into a Comité de défense des intérêts bretons. The need for united regionalist

1. See above pp.49-50.

2. Jacob was the founder of the first Cercle celtique in 1917.

action, revealed on this occasion, led to the forming of a Confédération des sociétés d'action bretonne in November 1921, which proved ineffective. Support for the F.R.B. and U.R.B. fell away considerably towards the end of the 1920s, as those who favoured effective action were attracted by the development of a new movement Breiz Atao.

#### Bleun-brug and Feiz ha Breiz

Bleun-brug was founded in 1905, by Abbé Jean-Marie Perrot. Its principal aim was to press for the full exercise of Breton rights in education. Also affirmed were the necessity of preserving the Breton language and obtaining full cultural and linguistic freedom. For Abbé Perrot, as for other members of the clergy, the Breton language constituted the best barrier to the spread of secular ideas in the region.

The organisation's main action consisted of holding annual meetings which lasted two days. The first day was a day of study; on the morning of the second there was High Mass with a sermon in Breton, while in the afternoon there were choral and oratory competitions and plays - all in Breton.

Until 1914, Bleun-brug's action was confined to the Léon area.

Abbé Perrot's activities were not confined to his organisation. He also edited a review, Feiz ha Breiz, which had aims complementary to those of Bleun-brug.

The origins of Feiz ha Breiz went back to 1865, when it was a religious paper. It had ceased to be printed in 1884, but had been revived in 1899. At first it had been a bilingual paper published twice monthly, and monthly as from 1907. Abbé Perrot had been involved with the paper since 1902, and had effectively taken over the editorship in 1911. The paper was not printed during the war,

but had been revived in 1919. It is estimated to have had a circulation of about 10,000 from this time, being read mainly by peasant families of the Léon area.

By the time of the 1920 congress of the organisation, Abbé Perrot realised that the spirit of the Breton movement had changed, now that Breiz Atao had pronounced in favour of neutrality in religious matters.

Accordingly, and to try to woo the support of young members of Breiz Atao to Feiz ha Breiz, he decided to transform Bleun-brug and the review into a Breton nationalist organisation. Although he maintained that a Breton nationalist movement could only be Catholic and subject to the hierarchy of the Church of Rome, his superiors openly disapproved of his new position.

Undeterred, in 1925, he revised the statutes of Bleun-brug. These now declared that the organisation was aiming for autonomy, which would allow Brittany to recover the full exercise of her traditional faith and to safeguard her intellectual, political and economic interests. They also stated that Bleun-brug favoured a federative agreement with the other French regions and the establishment of a central power which would maintain religious freedom.

The Bishop of Quimper, Monseigneur Duparc, disapproved of the lack of outright condemnation of separatism, and the references to religious freedom, fearing that this would act against Catholic interests. In reply to the bishop's disapproving letter, Abbé Perrot defended himself, denying that he had ever been a separatist, and stressing that he believed Bleun-brug could help Catholicism:



' Les utopistes de 1789 et leurs partisans actuels veulent que la culture française remplace toutes les autres cultures, que la langue française remplace toutes les autres langues et, par voie de conséquence, que l'irreligion française, avec son nouveau dieu, le soldat inconnu, remplace toutes les autres religions (...). Nous ne pouvons pas, par suite, ne pas nous opposer à la propagation de pareilles erreurs<sup>1</sup>.

In 1927, Abbé Madec joined the organisation and accentuated its political character.

Representatives of Breiz Atao and the Elsass-Lothringisch Autonomisten Partei were invited to the Morlaix conference, and it was agreed that Bleun-brug would join other parties of similar aims in pressing for the adoption of the Walter and Seltz proposals which dealt with provincial freedom and bilingual education.<sup>2</sup>

On 28 October the Bishop of Quimper published a note in La Semaine religieuse stating that priests would only be able to be members of Bleun-brug if it returned to its original programme. Abbé Perrot and the leaders of Bleun-brug accepted this condemnation and acted as it had been suggested they should.

Abbé Madec and other major figures resigned from the organisation.

Thus Bleun-brug and Feiz ha Breiz once more became a propaganda organisation for the survival of the Breton language, and an attempt to establish a Breton nationalist movement of Catholic inspiration had failed.

1. Déniel, Mouvement breton, pp.108-9. Extracts from the correspondence are also given in Ronan Caerleon, Le Rêve fou des soldats de Breiz Atao, (Quimper 1974), pp.23-35.
2. E.g. the proposals of these députés and others to the French parliament of 6 August 1926, which requested, in accordance with the programme of 29 November 1925, a study of how to organise for the whole of France regions having a deliberative assembly and a body wielding decentralised executive power.

Breiz Atao

Breiz Atao was founded in Rennes, in September 1918, by Job de Roince, Henri Prado and Morvan Marchal as the Groupe régionaliste breton. Prado died before the end of the year, and the others had printed in January 1919 the first number of the G.R.B.'s review: Breiz Atao. In the following month, two figures, who were to be prominent in the movement, joined: François Debauvais and Olivier Mordrelle (thereafter known as Olier Mordrel). When, shortly after this, De Roince left the movement, Marchal, Mordrel and Debauvais formed the core of the G.R.B.

Their motivation for joining the movement seems mostly to have been an increased awareness of being Bretons, brought about by armed service, added to the influence of Breton writers.

From January 1919 to March 1920, Breiz Atao was a fully-fledged regionalist movement, concerned with preserving the Breton language, traditions and costume, while asserting its loyalty to France (as L'Estourbeillon and his supporters had done), only differing from other such groups in that its members were younger. The membership was tiny.

However, in April 1920, an article by the sixteen-year-old Debauvais proclaimed the existence of a specific Breton nationality, rejected regionalism and claimed that only federalism could solve the Breton problem and bring, eventually, full autonomy for Brittany. As a result of this development, in May 1920, the Unvaniez Yaouankiz Vreiz was founded. It maintained the organisation of the G.R.B. and, in January 1921, Breiz Atao became sub-titled Revue mensuelle du nationalisme breton (as from August of that year the sub-title

was La Nation bretonne ). In November 1921, an article by Jean La Benelais (alias Mordrel) pronounced that the ruin of Brittany was essentially the result of foreign (i.e. French) domination<sup>1</sup>. This article revealed the Utopian character of this nationalism, which claimed that autonomy would separate the 'bad' French from the 'good' Bretons.

The militants of the movement realised that it would take time to achieve their goal, and that they would need to proceed by stages, beginning with the choice of leaders and organisation of propaganda. They aimed first at recruitment of members of the F.R.B. and U.R.B. Thus Breiz Atao totally condemned regionalism. A number of regionalists were recruited, including all those who were most progressive.

Breiz Atao had at first been a pro-Catholic and traditional movement, but now began to evolve towards a neutral attitude towards religious matters. This attitude crystallised early in 1924, and was revolutionary, being the first time that the Breton question and the religious question had been dissociated. Breiz Atao also declared itself politically neutral. This neutral attitude helped considerably in the recruitment of new members and subscribers.

However, progress was hindered by lack of finance and time (all had full-time jobs). Also the review still only interested a minority, since it hardly ever dealt with economic and social questions. Thus only a tiny number of people had heard of Breiz Atao before 1925.

One of the aims of Breiz Atao and the U.Y.V. was to help create an independent intellectual and artistic movement in Brittany.

1. Déniel proves the invalidity of this argument in Mouvement breton, pp. 63-4.

In accordance with this, in February 1925 there appeared the first issue of Gwalarn. It was to be published entirely in Breton, but this issue contained a manifesto in French. It was first a quarterly review, but from October 1930 became a thirty-six page monthly which continued to serve its five hundred subscribers without interruption until 1944. The review was directed by Roparz Hémon, aided by an able team of young and old writers, and produced poems, plays, novels and general works as well as translations of foreign literature.

Between 1923 and 1926, Breiz Atao adopted a policy first of pan-Celtism then of international federalism. Links between Breiz Atao and the Welsh were established by an exchange of letters and newspapers, and the first official visit to Wales by members of the U.Y.V. took place early in 1923. Shortly after this, Breiz Atao published a supplement in four languages: Panceltia, and Gwalarn began translations of Celtic works. Interest in other minority movements had begun early. In March 1925, Marchal proposed the formation of a Comité international des minorités nationales to the Welsh, Scots, Flemish, Corsicans and Basques. This proposal was ineffective, but in June 1926, Breiz Atao became sub-titled La revue mensuelle du nationalisme breton et du fédéralisme international.

It was the crisis in Alsace-Lorraine in 1926 which first allowed Breiz Atao to catch the eye of the general public. The nationalists supported the stand of the Alsace-Lorraine autonomists against the introduction of secular laws into the provinces by the French government. These provinces did in fact have their own statute. Government repression fell particularly on the militants of the Elsass-Lothringisch Autonomisten Partei. Breiz Atao's intervention brought upon it the condemnation of the press, the Chamber of

Deputies and the government, but the publicity also brought an increase in the membership. This in turn encouraged Breiz Atao to broaden its appeal, and bring in peasants, workers and sailors. To fix their doctrine, the militants met in congress at Rospenden in September 1927, where they founded the Strollad Emrenerien Vreiz, (Parti autonomiste breton).

The organisation of this party closely resembled that of the Unvaniez Yaouankaniz Vreiz. Local sections (which often only existed on paper) were grouped into nine provincial federations, in accordance with the traditional boundaries of Brittany. Doctrine was in fact only defined precisely at a second congress, at Châteaulin, in August 1928. A declaration was published to which every militant could refer when necessary, and which clearly stated that Breiz Atao was not a separatist movement. It was administrative and political autonomy that Breiz Atao was pressing for. The Declaration also proclaimed the inevitable eventual triumph of European federalism.

Breiz Atao continued its policy of neutrality in political, social and religious matters, although this was not always supported unanimously<sup>1</sup>.

The militants now aimed to transform the former review into a newspaper of wide circulation. From September 1927, Breiz Atao became a twice-monthly paper. A printing-plant was set up, along with the Kevredad-Kretaat evit adsevel Breiz<sup>2</sup> (K.A.B.), which was intended to advance money against interest to develop Breton printing and publishing organisations.

The K.A.B. stimulated Breiz Atao to become a four-page weekly paper. Supplements were published, occasionally free copies were distributed, and publication increased to 8,000 copies. However,

1. Its motto was 'Na ru, na gwenn, Breizhad hepken' - Neither red nor white, Breton first.
2. Loan society for the restoration of Brittany .

the paper lost money, and this loss seriously handicapped the movement.

The paper was by now devoting a number of articles to economic problems, articles which often made Brittany appear an under-developed country, laying the blame for this at the door of a French government dominated by the interests of the North, the South and Lorraine, and attempting to win support for the nationalist cause.

The militants also held private or public meetings to explain the P.A.B.'s views and recruit members.

Such attempts to gain public support led to a decision by party leaders to take part in the parliamentary by-election at Guingamp on 6 April 1930. The P.A.B.'s candidate held many meetings and had great support from the party, but failed in the election, gaining only 376 votes out of 16,777 (2.2% of the votes cast).

Undeterred, the Rennes section of the P.A.B. decided to enter a candidate, Ronan Arot, for the parliamentary by-election that was to take place on 12 October in the Rennes-South constituency. Their candidate was not given the unreserved support of the P.A.B. due to lack of funds. He gained only 81 votes out of 16,084 (0.5% of the votes cast). He stayed in for the second ballot, but received only 94 votes.

The P.A.B. took the optimistic view that the propaganda they had spread during these elections might pay off later, and claimed that election meetings had revealed sympathy with and support for their ideas. However various sources would indicate that these and earlier meetings had in fact been rather hostilely received for the most part<sup>1</sup>.

1. cf. Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.91

The federalist aspect of party doctrine led the P.A.B. to align themselves with other national movements. Representatives of such movements had attended the Rosporden congress. More significantly, on 12 September 1927, at Quimper, the Comité central des minorités nationales de France was founded by representatives of Strollad Emrenerien Vreiz (P.A.B.), the Elsass-Lothringisch Autonomisten Partei (Alsace-Lorraine) and the Partitu Autonomista Corsu (Corsica). The committee's doctrine was based on the rights of people to determine their own fate and on international federalism.

The collaboration of members of the committee was revealed at the Colmar trial of 1928. Twenty two militants of the Alsace-Lorraine movement were on trial accused of conspiring against the security of the State. Among these 22 were two whose success in the first round of the parliamentary election had prompted the arrests. Breiz Atao sent a lawyer to defend one of the autonomists, and produced a special number of their newspaper which they sold in the streets of Colmar. Their support may have helped in leading the government to declare an amnesty in July 1928, after which thirteen autonomists were elected in Alsace-Lorraine in the parliamentary elections, including the two who had been imprisoned.

There were claims that the Comité central des minorités nationales de France was financially backed by Germany, but Déniel examines the evidence very closely, and concludes that the movement in Alsace-Lorraine may have received German backing, but that the P.A.B. certainly did not<sup>1</sup>.

The crisis which hit the P.A.B. in late 1930 and early 1931 resulted from financial difficulties after the unsuccessful election campaigns, and doctrinal differences between the nationalist and international federalists. The Rennes congress in April 1931 was intended to settle these differences. In fact, the federalists triumphed.

1. cf. Déniel, Mouvement breton, pp.93-6

Debauvais was left to cope with the debts of his paper - Breiz Atao - and the federalists produced their own paper La Nation bretonne, sub-titled Breiz Atao. Debauvais attempted to counter this by producing a new Breiz Atao (identical to the old one), but his accumulated debts forced him to abandon this.

A new paper - War Zao - the organ of the nationalists of Trégor, Goëlle and Hautes-Cornouailles, appeared in July 1931 which claimed that Debauvais had abandoned true nationalism, which, it claimed, had been watered down continuously since the 1928 Châteaulin congress. It proposed a congress at Guingamp to settle party differences.

However, at the congress the differences were not settled and it was clear that the Parti autonomiste breton was finished.

#### War Zao and the Parti breton nationaliste révolutionnaire

War Zao appeared on the scene in July 1931, claiming to be a truly nationalist paper. At the congress of Guingamp in August, those who supported its line accepted the idea of creating a new group, the Parti national breton, their only reservation being that they wanted the new movement's organisation to be democratic.

War Zao's position seems to have been the following: if the conditions particular to Brittany (with many small-holdings, and greatly influenced by the Church) were able to prevent the triumph of communism, the establishment by peasants (with the help of other sections of the population affected by the crisis) for peasants of a system where they completely possessed the land, the instruments of production and commerce, seemed possible and would be desirable. The system War Zao envisaged was based on that sought by Saore Eire in Ireland.

The paper was the propaganda vehicle of the P.N.B. during the early months of 1931, but early in 1932 withdrew support from this party, claiming that its organisation was undemocratic.



War Zao then became the organ of the newly appeared Parti breton nationaliste révolutionnaire, devoted to defining its doctrine. It succeeded only in confusing most issues.

In the summer of 1932, the P.B.N.R. was very much an embryonic organisation, geographically limited, which had hardly any influence on events.

#### The Parti national breton

The first priority of the P.N.B., founded after the 1931 congress at Guingamp, and rallying the nationalists of the defunct Parti autonomiste breton, was to revive Breiz Atao. It was indeed revived, as a monthly review, in November. The statutes of the P.N.B. were drawn up at a congress in Landernau<sup>1</sup>. The Landernau Declaration proclaimed the nationalism of the new party and its neutrality in religious and social matters.

Breiz Atao ignored economic and social problems (amazingly, at a time when Brittany was beginning to feel the first effects of the world economic crisis) and became a means of liaison between militants.

The party's organisation was not democratic, and the role of the leader, the pennrener, was soon to become glorified.

A programme of action was drawn up for 1932: the P.N.B. decided to support those candidates who favoured the Breton cause in the Spring parliamentary elections, and proclaimed their intention of combatting the celebrations of the fourth centenary of Brittany's union with France by active counter-propaganda.

During May 1932, the P.N.B. supported the five Breton candidates of differing political views who were opposing the banker and vice-president of the Chambre des Députés, Bouilloux-Lafont, in one of the Quimper constituencies.<sup>2</sup>

1. The 'congress' in fact only consisted of 25 people.

2. This is not to say that these five candidates supported the P.N.B.

Bouilloux-Lafont presented himself as the representative of the 'République une et indivisible' and succeeded in gaining only 3,500 of the 20,000 votes cast, (17.5% of the votes cast), the remainder of the votes being shared among the P.N.B. supported candidates.

At Lokournan, in December 1931, Chevillotte, supporting the views of Breiz Atao, had obtained 22% of the votes cast.

These two results indicated that the Breton movement was no longer rejected out of hand by the population.

The struggle against the celebration of the union with France was carried on within the framework of the Comité intergroupe, a new organisation which will be examined below.

However the party was beset by financial difficulties, especially as it had agreed to be responsible for the considerable debts of the former autonomist party.

#### The Ligue fédéraliste de Bretagne

While the nationalists of the defunct autonomist party were regrouping in the P.N.B., the federalists founded the Ligue fédéraliste de Bretagne.

The organ of the League was Breiz Kevredel, which first appeared, as a monthly review, in November 1931.

At a congress in Saint-Malo, in 1931, the league adopted a resolution to observe absolute neutrality in religious and social matters, and consequently attracted the support of militants from various political groupings.

The statement of policy adopted at Saint-Malo was based on three points: Brittany, federation, peace. They demanded a Brittany that would be mistress of her own fate, within a federal French State, itself forming part of the Federation of European Nations.

Since the effects of the world economic crisis were being felt, the league could hardly observe a policy of complete neutrality,

but limited its action to a resolution which condemned as harmful to the Breton economy government measures designed to lessen the repercussions of the crisis.

The federalists maintained a conciliatory policy towards other Breton organisations, and had support from Corsican autonomists for a proposal to revive the Comité central des minorités nationales de France, which was not immediately followed up<sup>1</sup>.

They further decided to support any demonstrations by pacifist movements.

They also took part in protest against the celebration of the union with France, within the Comité intergroupe.

The league took no part in the election campaign of 1932, but, being an organisation composed mostly of left-wing sympathisers, was pleased at left-wing gains.

Generally, the league achieved very little and had little support (one of its four sections only had eight members). Thus its situation in August 1932 was not encouraging.

#### The Comité intergroupe

This committee united the P.N.B. the P.B.N.R. and the L.F.B. to decide a common course of action in protest at the great popular celebrations that were to be organised at Vannes on 6 and 7 August 1932 to celebrate the fourth centenary of Brittany's union with France. The militants decided to go to the celebrations to hold a united demonstration. But, on 7 August, many were detained by the police in Vannes.

While they were being detained, they were amazed to learn that, the previous night, the monument in front of the town-hall in Rennes which commemorated Brittany's union with France had been totally destroyed by a violent explosion.

1. cf. The section on Breiz Atao above, p. 70.

Gwenn ha Du

Responsibility for the destruction of this sculpture, which had always been loathed by militants of the Emsav, was claimed by the secret society Gwenn ha Du in a text circulated to all the newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of arresting and interviewing a number of suspects, the authorities were unable to find those responsible.

The Tribunal du Grand Conseil of Gwenn ha Du later condemned certain Breton militants, imposing fines and announcing in one case that a certain militant must leave Brittany in three months, his sentence for having denounced several Bretons to the police<sup>2</sup>.

In September, Herriot, the Président du Conseil, decided to make an official visit to Nantes to represent the government at the celebrations of the union that were due to take place there. During the night of 19 to 20 November, while his train was approaching Brittany an explosive charge destroyed the track it was due to take, near Ingrandes. He arrived in Nantes an hour late.

Gwenn ha Du once more claimed responsibility, and the police investigations were once more unsuccessful.

Reaction to the events was out of all proportion to what might have been expected. They were violently condemned in the national and local press and Herriot himself hinted that he thought that the act might have been perpetrated by Breton militants under the influence of certain Nazi services. Political reaction varied from condemnation to the communists' sympathy with the cause of Breton autonomy.

Reaction of the various groupings of the Breton movement was varied but less violent. War Zao did not acknowledge the existence of the secret society. The P.B.N.R. thought it might be an act of police provocation. The P.N.B. did not formally deny the existence of the secret society. However, after the second explosion, the

1. The text is reproduced in Caerleon, Complots pour une république bretonne, (Paris 1967), pp.83-4.

2. Cited by Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.151.

P.N.B. said that a certain legality must be respected. Adsao considered the acts childish.

The general public's reaction seems to have been generally one of disapproval.

It was only with the publication of Mordrel's book Breiz Atao in 1973 that it was revealed that most of the members of Gwenn ha Du came from the ranks of the P.N.B. and were led by Célestin Lainé.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the P.N.B. had no control over the actions of Gwenn ha Du, but later, in May 1933, an agreement was made whereby no major decision would be taken without the agreement of leaders of the P.N.B.

The appearance of Gwenn ha Du altered and clarified the situation: most of the small groupings that had emerged from the P.A.B. disappeared, leaving the P.N.B. and the Ligue Fédéraliste de Bretagne. These two organisations gained new recruits as a result of the publicity surrounding the acts of Gwenn ha Du.

Having drawn the attention of the public upon themselves, the two organisations now had to gain approval for their cause, and intended to profit from the economic and political difficulties of the time.

#### The Parti national breton 1933-1939

The early part of the P.N.B.'s history during this period will be linked to that of the L.F.B., which did not survive for very long.

In essence, the studies of economic questions made during this period were very similar to those made previously by the P.A.B. In them, Brittany appeared as the victim of the immeasurable hostility of the French government and authorities.

1. For further information on Lainé see below, p.79. A detailed account of Lainé's involvement with Gwenn ha Du, the Kadervenn (see below, p.79), the Lu Brezhon (see below, p.93), and the Bezen Perrot (see below, p.98) is given in Caerleon, Le Rêve fou des soldats de Breiz Atao.

Mordrel considered that the party had to abandon its policy of neutrality in social and economic matters, and accordingly elaborated a huge programme called Saga<sup>1</sup>, which was published in Breiz Atao in March 1933, though not as approved party policy. Mordrel believed, as he afterwards continued to state in the review Stur, which was founded by the P.N.B. in July 1934 and of which he was appointed editor, that the answer to Brittany's problems lay in corporative capitalism. In doing this, Mordrel was trying to show that he believed it was time that Breiz Atao stood up for its underlying, but previously unstated, right-wing beliefs. Gradually, the P.N.B.'s doctrine was to incorporate the propositions contained in Mordrel's programme.

As a result of this, the federalists decided that they too should take a clear stance on social matters. They adopted a left-wing stance.

Between 1919 and 1930, Mordrel had successively discovered the merits of Breton nationalism, panceltism and international federalism. After this he favoured fascism and its corporative system and the racist doctrines of nazism. Saga was an amalgam of all of these theories.

The P.N.B. and the Ligue fédéraliste both condemned the attempted right-wing coup in Paris of 6 February 1934<sup>2</sup>. This is not surprising, as the right-wing had been particularly hostile to the nationalists since Gwenn ha Du's activities of 1932. The federalists subsequently sought an alliance with the French left. The P.N.B. rejected this course and instead proposed setting up a Front breton as an alternative to the Front national and Front populaire.

1. The initials of Strollad ar Gelted Adsavet: The Gathering of Awakened Celts.
2. In contrast to this cf. the appropriate lines in the section on Adsao. Below p. 83.

Soon after this the federalists disappeared from the scene. Their league was too weak and they were hampered by lack of money. The last copy of their paper - Breiz Kevredel - appeared on 15 May 1935. Federalists continued to be active, but within the framework of their respective political organisations.

The nationalists' idea of a Front breton failed, but for the 1936 parliamentary elections, all the other Breton societies (regionalist and cultural organisations) put forward a programme of basic aims called the Programme du Front breton. Intended to be above the contemporary social and political divisions, it envisaged the establishment of a group of deputies to care for Breton interests, and the putting forward of plans for regionalisation, complete proportional representation and the teaching of Breton.

Finally, 41 candidates from various parties subscribed to the programme, occasionally with reticence over some points.

The P.N.B., while not agreeing with the formula of the Front, nevertheless advised its members to support pro-Front candidates. In the first ballot candidates affiliated to the Front breton received 207,022 of the 686,507 votes cast (30% of votes cast), and in the second ballot 157,806 out of 361,447 (43.6% of votes cast). Fifteen seats in the Chamber were won.

Thus we can say that certain pro-regional support was present in Brittany, although many voters may have voted for aspects of candidates' policies other than regionalism.

The political success of the Front populaire in the same elections meant that the P.N.B. had to reconsider the situation. As one might expect, they were critical of certain of the new government's policies.

The federalist league had condemned the Nazi regime, but Mordrel's review Stur, taking an independent line to Breiz Atao, did not hide its admiration for the newly appeared fascist regimes.

Breiz Atao's analyses of the new situation in Europe remained governed by its concern to defend all oppressed minorities.

By 1937, it was clear that the P.N.B. had failed in its attempt to create a vast movement of public opinion in favour of Breton autonomy. Nevertheless, Mordrel and Debauvais were convinced that armed conflict in Europe was imminent, and thought that the new situation that this would bring about might offer them some new room for manoeuvre.<sup>1</sup> They were convinced that the conflict would be between France and Germany and that Germany would win. Not all the members of the P.N.B. shared these views, but the French government's refusal to satisfy any of the Breton claims was soon to allow the extremists to gain the upper hand.

The Front breton failed totally in its claim for the teaching of Breton and in all its other claims, whether cultural or economic.

Mordrel's review Stur was by now following a national-socialist line, but there was another extremist whose influence led the P.N.B. to follow an extremist line: Célestin Lainé, the founder of Gwenn ha Du.

Lainé was convinced that what the Emsav really needed was a handful of determined men, such as the members of the Irish Sinn Fein. In 1935, he organised a small special combat group, the Kadervenn.

However, certain of the militants of the P.N.B. were worried by such extreme views and rallied around the Delaporte brothers, Yves and Raymond. The latter believed that the P.N.B. should elaborate its own doctrine, rather than adopt that of another country.

Debauvais was forced to stop his activities in February 1937, owing to tuberculosis, but left control of the party in the hands of Raymond Delaporte, who promptly denounced the ideas that Mordrel had put forward in Saga and in Stur. It was only after the congress at

1. Thus Debauvais in conversation with Caerleon in 1936 said: 'Quelques centaines de Bretons résolus peuvent, à l'occasion du prochain conflit, faire de la Bretagne une seconde Irlande'. Caerleon, Complots, p.123.



Carhaix in August 1937, when Mordrel had managed to gain the support of Lainé and the neutrality of Debauvais, that Mordrel was able to impose his views on the party.

Thus, after Carhaix, the party had clearly become a fascist organisation, both as regards its structure and its ideology. Now the P.N.B. officially pronounced in favour of corporative capitalism, and borrowed the fascist cult of force and discipline and the national-socialist racial concepts.

The moderates had left the party by now, and Mordrel and his party were free to seek an alliance with Germany. Contact was established with the German secret service.

However, the pro-German line taken by Breiz Atao from 1937 onwards encouraged repression by the French authorities, which was first prompted by a widespread campaign of writing political slogans on walls, slogans such as 'La Bretagne aux Bretons. La France aux Juifs.<sup>1</sup>' The campaign was launched in May 1938, and by the 25th of the month the Government had introduced a decree against attempts to damage the unity of the nation.

It was forbidden now to sell Breiz Atao in military camps.

Several people had been arrested for writing slogans, including members of the P.N.B. At the trial Lainé created a sensation by refusing to speak French. Prison sentences of two to six months were given (three for Lainé).

However, after the Guingamp congress in August 1938, the P.N.B. adopted the device 'Pas une goutte de sang breton pour des causes étrangères<sup>2</sup>', and produced propaganda condemning the idea of going to war to support Czechoslovakia.

1. Cited in Caerleon, Complots, p.152.

2. Cited in Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.208

On 17 December, for this offence, Debauvais was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, Mordrel was given a one year suspended sentence, and both were fined 22,000 francs.<sup>1</sup>

In reaction, Gwenn ha Du destroyed the monument to Angevin Breton federation at Pontivy, and in February 1939 placed a bomb in the préfecture at Quimper.

Debauvais went on hunger strike, demanding to be treated as a political prisoner. The authorities were forced to concede. Various pleas for clemency were made but it was July 1939 before Debauvais left prison.

At the time of the crisis in Sudetenland, Lainé, convinced that war was about to break out, ordered that nationalists should refuse French mobilisation.

On the night of 7 to 8 August 1939 a cargo of arms and propaganda material was landed near Locquirec and received by Gwenn ha Du. Apparently it had come from Germany with the I.R.A. acting as intermediary.

The boat that brought the arms ran aground and this, together with one chest containing tracts that had been washed overboard, eventually led the police to arrest five nationalists, who were later released due to lack of evidence.

When war did break out, repression of the Breton militants followed; on 20 October 1939, the P.N.B. was dissolved, and later its offices were taken over and its archives were burned.<sup>2</sup>

As in 1914, all autonomist action and expression ceased in France. Only the leaders of the extreme tendency of the Emsav, who had fled to Germany, continued the struggle.

1. Details of the trial are given in Caerleon, Complots, pp.164-71  
 2. The final issue of Breiz Atao had appeared on 27 August 1939.

Adsao

Hardly had Abbé Madec resigned from Bleun-brug in 1929<sup>1</sup> than he began to establish a new Breton movement. In November that year, after a meeting in Brest, a group of twelve people, including the Abbé, laid the foundations of a new regionalist organisation, Adsao. Abbé Madec had considered his position since the failure of Bleun-brug and Adsao adopted a neutral attitude to religious and political affairs, as Breiz Atao had done several years previously.

The neutral attitude was reflected in the composition of the federal council of Adsao, which also indicated that it had attracted some influential support.

Adsao immediately became affiliated to the Union régionaliste bretonne and the Fédération régionaliste française, and joined them in approval of the plan that Jean Hennessy, a former Minister of Agriculture, had twice put before the Chamber in 1913 and 1915. This plan had proposed the abolition of the division into Departments, and the constitution of regions.

Abbé Madec wanted Adsao to be to regionalism what Breiz Atao was to nationalism, and accordingly the movement used newspapers, tracts, posters, lectures and meetings; all methods that Bleun-brug had not employed. The organisation of the movement was also based on that of the autonomist party.

A monthly paper was introduced, which was also named Adsao, and in which economic problems were given prominence. Adsao considered that the future of the Breton language, its literature and art depended on their solution, because of the widespread emigration from

1. See above p. 64.

Brittany. The paper also underlined the indifference of the French government to Breton interests.

By the end of 1930 Adsao had thousands of members or sympathisers, and it seemed that with its essentially regionalist claims, for which he attempted to win the support of prominent people and members of local elected bodies, Abbé Madec had inaugurated a most promising movement.

However, the fragility of the formula was proved in 1931. One member, Etienne Corre, stood in the cantonal elections, but did not adhere to Adsao's political neutrality. This caused friction within Adsao, the newspaper ceased publication and Corre resigned.

Abbé Madec succeeded in relaunching Adsao in January 1932 and the movement very quickly gathered support. Once it had 6,000 members, the movement announced its intention to fill the elected bodies of Brittany with regionalists.

However, after the attempted right-wing coup d'état in Paris in February 1934, the movement clearly revealed its underlying reactionary nature. In the following months the leaders of Adsao fully supported the programme for the renewal of France which had been drawn up by the Confédération des anciens combattants on 25 March 1934.

Adsao soon became absorbed into its powerful ally. Many members left Adsao when they realised the fascist nature of the organisation. Abbé Madec disappeared from the scene in 1936.

Ar Falz and the fight for the Breton language

Political and economic preoccupations after 1933 did not prevent the militants of the Emsav being concerned with the fight for the Breton language.

The prominent figure in this field was Yann Sohier. He was a member of Breiz Atao and editor of the review Ar Falz, which first appeared in January 1933. Its aims were both long-term (Breton as the vehicle of education) and short-term (an optional Breton paper in the C.E.P.<sup>1</sup>, the study of Breton as a second language for the baccalauréat, freedom for teachers to use school buildings to teach Breton as an option on Thursday mornings<sup>2</sup>).

However, Sohier found it extremely difficult to manage financially. He died, at the age of 34, in March 1935. Ar Falz survived him and is still produced today.

Until 1933 the struggle for Breton had always been conducted by a minority, but from 1934 onwards the Breton people as a whole were involved.

This was mainly thanks to two men, Le Cam and Rolland, who persuaded the town council of Guerlesquin to adopt a request for the teaching of Breton. As a result of a widespread campaign, several municipalities were persuaded to adopt this request. Along similar lines, in 1934, Yann Fouéré and Robert Audic founded Ar Brezoneg er Skol (A.B.E.S.), which presented the municipal councils of Brittany with a standardised request for the teaching of Breton. By the end of 1934 27 communes had pronounced in favour, and by the eve of the 1936 elections it had the support of 207 communes.

On 15 February 1936, Gwenn ha Du sent an ultimatum to the Minister of Education demanding that he introduce the teaching of

1. Certificat d'Etudes Primaires.

2. When there were no compulsory classes in schools.

the language in Brittany. On 13 April, no progress having been made in the matter, phosphorus bombs exploded in the préfectures of Rennes, Saint-Brieuc, Quimper and Nantes.<sup>1</sup>

Many people had decided to go ahead with efforts to teach Breton without waiting for ministerial action. Marc'harid Gourlaouen developed Ober, his Breton correspondence course, and the Breuriez ar Brezoneg er Skoliou, founded and directed by Raymond Delaporte, sponsored Breton courses, distributed text books to teachers and gave prizes to pupils of the Poher cantons.

#### The Parti nationaliste intégral de Bretagne

Led by Théophile Jeusset, this party only had 8 members. Its news-sheet, entitled Breiz da Zont, described itself as the 'organe des nationalistes bretons catholiques' and once claimed that: 'Nous, nationalistes, bretons intégraux, nous pourrions aussi nous qualifier de nationalistes socialistes comme les partisans d'Adolf Hitler<sup>2</sup>.'

#### Breiz Digabestr

This was very similar to the news-sheet of the previous organisation, except that this one claimed to be the organ of the 'nationalistes bretons chrétiens' who called themselves the Ligue des frères bretons. They were an extremely confused group, whose general aim was to form a Christian and Breton elite to bring full independence to Brittany.

1. The text of Gwenn ha Du's letter to the press claiming responsibility for these acts is given in Caerleon, Complots, pp.108-9. The date was chosen as the twentieth anniversary of the Easter Rising in Ireland.
2. Cited by Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.146

### The war years and the aftermath

Once in Germany, Debauvais and Mordrel tried to persuade their contacts that it would really be in the Reich's interest to favour the creation of an autonomous Breton State once hostilities were over. They were in permanent contact with the Abwehr. Anti-French, pro-Breton propaganda was diffused in a small bulletin called Quest-Informations published in several languages. The Bretons were careful not to present themselves as mere puppets in the service of Germany, and addressed their propaganda particularly to neutral countries such as Belgium and Holland. In spite of their efforts, there was a total lack of communication between Berlin and Rennes from 1939 to 1940.

The propaganda of the Bretons was aimed first and foremost at the Germans themselves. The amount of potential support for Breton autonomy was exaggerated and a number of members of the Abwehr came to support the cause of Breton autonomy.

When the German offensive against France was launched, a series of broadcasts in Breton and French were beamed to Brittany. However the impact of these broadcasts was minimal. Plans were then made for the nationalists to take over Brittany once the Germans arrived there. These plans were at first approved by the Abwehr, and at the request of the nationalists Breton prisoners of war were grouped in special camps so that support for the Breton cause could be encouraged. However, out of 60,000 Breton prisoners of war, only a few hundred rallied to the views of the former leaders of the P.N.B.<sup>1</sup>

The nationalists at first envisaged a coup d'état, and Debauvais accordingly arrived in Rennes with 130 men to take over key positions on 22 June 1940. However, realising that the plan

1. The reception accorded to Mordrel was sometimes hostile. He was nearly lynched by officers at a camp at Moyerswerda. Cf. Hervé Le Boterf, La Bretagne dans la Guerre, vol.1, (Paris 1969), p.140.

(Mordrel's) was unworkable, Debauvais decided instead to regroup the autonomists and organise a meeting at Pontivy during which the independence of Brittany might be announced, and would inevitably be followed by a declaration of German support.

The meeting was fixed for 5 July, but in the meantime the Germans had decided that they could not now pursue a policy of dismembering France, as this might encourage French leaders to continue the war on the British side. The Abwehr accordingly instructed the autonomists that they were no longer to use such terms as 'Etat breton', 'nation bretonne', 'indépendance', 'séparatisme' or 'autonomie'.

The meeting actually took place at Pontivy on 3 July, and involved several hundred people. Mordrel, Debauvais and Lainé easily persuaded the meeting to accept the idea of creating a Comité national breton, (C.N.B.).<sup>1</sup> A Déclaration du C.N.B. was adopted which in its political and economic terms was identical to the Saga programme of 1933<sup>2</sup>.

The members of the executive shortly decided to launch a new weekly paper: L'Heure bretonne. The first issue appeared on 14 July 1940, and was printed on the presses of L'Ouest-Journal with the permission of the occupying forces. However, in accordance with revised German policy, permission to use the presses of the big regional daily paper was soon withdrawn, and the new weekly was henceforth printed on the presses of the former Breiz Atao.

In the months following its appearance, a relatively large number of copies of L'Heure bretonne were printed, but by no means all of these were sold.

1. Lainé had responded to mobilisation, but had been arrested at the front for anti-French propaganda and imprisoned. He had later escaped to join Debauvais.
2. The Déclaration and the Saga programme were both the responsibility of Mordrel. For details of the Saga programme see above, p.77.



The paper was hostile to the Pétain government's plan for the restoration of the provinces, and anti-British in the extreme.

The attitude of the religious authorities towards the nationalists of the C.N.B. contributed largely to their downfall. The newly appointed Bishop of Rennes, and the Bishop of Quimper<sup>1</sup> declared their opposition to the separatists and forbade priests and the faithful to support the movement. The few dissenting priests were soon brought into line, and the Bishop of Quimper's excommunication of the autonomists further alienated support from them.

By the end of the summer of 1940 it was clear that the Germans had no intention of proceeding with the creation of an autonomous Breton State. The C.N.B., realising that it had failed in this respect, decided that a change of policy was necessary, and accordingly agreed to abandon the title of C.N.B. and relaunch the P.N.B. On 20 October Mordrel, profiting from the absence of Debauvais due to illness, officially became leader of the party.

A few days later, Hitler met Pétain at Montoire and it became clear that future policy would involve close collaboration between France and Germany. For Mordrel, who had always rejected the idea of any rapprochement with Vichy, the situation became impossible. He resigned as leader of the P.N.B. on 14 December 1940. He was succeeded by Raymond Delaporte.

Realising in their turn that a change of policy was essential to ensure the survival of the P.N.B., Debauvais and Lainé also resigned from the party to leave the field clear for Delaporte.

The departure from the scene of Mordrel, Debauvais and Lainé, who had been the principal figures in the most active faction of the Breton movement for twenty years, marked the end of an era.<sup>2</sup>

1. Monseigneur Duparc, an old opponent of any measure of Breton autonomy. See above pp. 63-4.

2. Paul Serant, in *La Bretagne et la France*, (Paris 1971) points out that there was pressure from the Germans on Mordrel and Debauvais. Caerleon supports this in *Complots*, p. 250.

During the period of the German occupation, the German authorities afforded their protection to the P.N.B. because Hitler never made his views on the future of Brittany clear to anybody and the authorities wanted to be prepared for any eventuality.

The militants of the moderate section of the Breton movement reacted favourably to Pétain's proposal for the restoration of the French provinces, although it soon became clear that Pétain did not so much envisage this as leading to administrative decentralisation, but more as a means of reinforcing the government's power by the easier transmission and execution of its directives.

However, the Marshal had let it be clearly understood that prominent local figures would be associated with the direction of regional affairs, and the 'militants' of the U.R.B. and the Association bretonne were the first to react favourably to his declarations.

Petitions were made to the Marshal that the teaching of Breton language and history should be made obligatory in primary and secondary schools in the region<sup>1</sup>, but in March 1941, Barthélémy, the Minister of Justice, declared his opposition to the teaching of Breton in primary schools.

Yann Fouéré was one of those who had signed one of the petitions and it was he who was to play the principal part in the Breton movement in the years following the armistice of 1940. At the time of the armistice, Fouéré was sous-préfet at Morlaix. He soon realised the unwillingness of Vichy to bring about any real decentralisation, and saw the ineffectiveness of trying to petition Pétain. He believed that regionalist organisations would

1. e.g. The petition of Jaffremou, president of the college of Breton Bards. The texts of these petitions, or extracts from them, are given in Caerleon, Complots, pp.265-70.

only be able successfully to press their claims once they had gained the support of Breton public opinion. Accordingly Fouéré, the president of A.B.E.S.<sup>1</sup>, sought financial backing for the establishment of a regional daily paper. He was successful in this, as in obtaining the authorisation of the occupying power and, on 20 March 1941, the first issue of the regionalist daily paper La Bretagne was published.<sup>2</sup>

La Bretagne pursued a policy of hostility towards free-masons, Jews and communists, and adhered to the principles of corporatism held by Vichy.

Divergences between the views of the paper and those of Vichy really only appeared over the question of the restoration of the provinces. While the paper supported the view of Vichy that the future provincial council should represent the interests and aspirations of the province, and consist of nominated rather than elected members, it opposed the idea that it should be a purely consultative body.

The paper aimed at gaining the support of the public for regionalism by presenting a picture of Brittany as being poorly treated in comparison with the other provinces, and as a region whose interests were sacrificed to those of France, but which, given its own institutions, would be able to defend itself and end any abuses.

In order to develop support for the regionalist movement, groups of Amis de la Bretagne were founded in large centres of population, then in the principal town of each arrondissement. Their task was to distribute the daily paper, increase the number of subscribers and readers, and spread its ideas.

1. Ar Brezoneg er Skol. cf. above, p. 84.

2. The text of Fouéré's first editorial is given in Le Boterf, La Bretagne dans la Guerre, vol.2, pp.294-5.

The movement's claims were listed and sent to Pétain and the government, and also put to municipal councils for their approval. In addition to the claims concerning the Provincial Assembly, the document sought respect for the historical limits of Brittany, the teaching of its language and history, and the nomination for Basse-Bretagne of Breton-speaking civil servants of Breton origin<sup>1</sup>.

In March 1942, Fouéré became editor of the Dépêche de Brest, and this considerably reinforced the influence of regionalism, giving the movement a second organ.

When Raymond Delaporte took over the leadership of the P.N.B. the party had about three to four hundred members and probably about ten thousand sympathisers<sup>2</sup>. The vast majority of the Breton population was openly hostile to the nationalists. In the course of the next two years Delaporte did a great deal to improve on this situation.

Supported by his brothers, Yves and Hervé, his policy was essentially one of keeping open as many options as possible for the nationalists. Thus he adopted a conciliatory attitude towards Vichy, even when the French authorities were openly hostile to the P.N.B. Thus too his support for the German concept of a new Europe at a time when German victory seemed imminent.

In order to demonstrate his support for the Germans, Delaporte was quite prepared to put forward theories he had rejected in the past when they had been put forward by Mordrel. Thus the P.N.B. and L'Heure bretonne glorified the concept of the Breton race, manifested hatred towards England, and subscribed to the principles of corporatism.

1. Roughly speaking, Basse-Bretagne is the western part of Brittany; the Breton speaking area.

2. Figures given in Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.256

In order to appease Vichy he even stated in L'Heure bretonne of 14 March 1943 that Brittany would be able to take its place in the new Europe without necessarily being separated from France and that the P.N.B. would settle for a federal system in France.

Then, once the possibility of an allied victory began to emerge, Raymond's brother, Yves, began to establish contact with some groups of Gaullist resistance workers, while Hervé, a doctor, treated a number of resistance workers in the Châteauneuf-du-Faou area.

Finally, early in 1943, after the German defeat at Stalingrad, L'Heure bretonne developed an attitude of strict neutrality, and Yves Delaporte tried to establish contact with groups of communist resistance workers.

In spite of efforts by the P.N.B. to soften the Church's attitude to the cause of Breton nationalism, little progress was made.<sup>1</sup>

Under Raymond Delaporte L'Heure bretonne lost its strictly militant role. From July 1941 a new rubric was adopted - the Chronique de Bretagne - containing births, marriages, deaths and the kind of articles that would be found in most newspapers. Circulation increased to about 25,000<sup>2</sup>.

The propaganda that was given in the paper was supplemented by the publishing and distribution of numerous brochures, giving the aims of the P.N.B. and its policy on various issues.

The P.N.B. did try spreading propaganda by holding public meetings in the early part of 1943. At such meetings the organising body was referred to as the Front breton, but was in fact the P.N.B. The idea of holding such meetings was soon abandoned in favour of newspaper propaganda.

Although the membership of the P.N.B. grew under the leadership of Raymond Delaporte, the movement failed to attract support for its

1. Caerleon points out in Complots, p.310, that on 21 July 1943 Mgr Duparc instructed his priests to refuse the sacraments to leading separatists.

2. Figure in Deniel, Mouvement breton, p.204

corporatist ideas from the working class. The membership was predominantly middle-class.

The P.N.B., under Delaporte, had its own para-military groups, the Bagadou Stourm (combat groups) led by Yann Goulet.<sup>1</sup> Its members wore leather boots and a uniform based on the colours of Brittany - black trousers and jackets with a white tie - with an armband bearing a Celtic emblem, the Triskell.<sup>2</sup>

The reactions of the political groupings inside France to the nationalists were varied, but there was considerably less hostility towards the party from right-wing groups than in the pre-war years, although clashes between the members of the Bagadou Stourm and the Francistes were frequent.<sup>3</sup>

Lainé's activities at the fringe of the P.N.B. were concerned mainly with reviving the Kadervenn. Shortly after his return to Brittany a small group of para-military elements was founded. The group was known as the Service spécial, and was mainly composed of the Breton prisoners of war that Debauvais and Mordrel had succeeded in having released. Lainé intended that the Service spécial should be the basis of a Breton army modelled on the Irish Republican Army. The army was named Lu Brezhon (Breton Army), and was armed with the weapons that had been smuggled into Brittany in 1939.<sup>4</sup>

On 10 May 1941, Lainé relaunched the action initiated by Gwenn ha Du by sending a communiqué to the secretariat of the Conseil national at Vichy. The advisors, whose task it was to draw up the boundaries of the provinces, were strongly warned to respect the historical boundary of Brittany. Although the German authorities made it clear that they would not tolerate acts of violence against the French authorities and their premises, an explosive charge was

1. For details of Goulet's activity since the Second World War see below, p.121.
2. The Triskell is one of the Celtic representations of the solar disc.
3. The Francistes were an anti-semitic league led by Marcel Bucard.
4. See above, p. 81.

placed in front of the gendarmerie at Carhaix, and Lainé was shortly afterwards obliged to hand over his weapons to the Germans.

There were, during this period, no signs of the former rift between the Service spécial and the P.N.B.

During the period 1940 to 1943, both the authorities and the nationalists had to reckon with the growing strength of the regionalist movement.

In the cultural sphere a number of reviews defended the individuality of the province. Some dated from the pre-war years<sup>1</sup>, while others had appeared more recently<sup>2</sup>. These reviews were mainly concerned with the teaching of Breton. In July 1941, to this end, the principles of a unified system of orthography for Breton were agreed. The activities of the reviews were greatly aided by the creation, in October 1941, of the Institut celtique, under the presidency of Roparz Hémon and the direction of a committee of nine members. The Institute's aim was to co-ordinate all intellectual forces in Brittany to prepare for the resurrection of the province. Each year the Institute held a congress at which various cultural activities took place.

The cultural movement was supported by the political newspapers, L'Heure bretonne, La Bretagne and La Dépêche de Brest, and awoke a good deal of sympathy and interest in the population which had been made aware of the problems by the propaganda of the pre-war years.

Vichy found itself obliged to move from words to action. The first concession, late in 1940, was to allow radio broadcasts in Breton. Under the direction of Roparz Hémon a weekly one hour programme of bilingual discussions about Breton culture, history and

1. eg. Gwalarn, Feiz ha Breiz, Dihunamb, Sav, Studi hag Ober.

2. eg. Galv, Ar Vuhez Kristen, An Eost, Arvor.

the economy of the province was transmitted from Rennes. In response to popular demand, the one hour programme soon became a daily broadcast.

Vichy's next concession came in December 1941 with the authorisation to begin optional Breton lessons in primary schools, such lessons having to take place outside normal school hours and to total no more than one and a half hours weekly. In March 1942 a circular specified that primary school teachers taking such lessons would be paid. In July of the same year a summer school was established at La Haye-Mordelles for would-be teachers of Breton.

The cultural organisations made the most of these modest concessions.

Vichy was more ready to satisfy claims for the introduction of regional history into the school curriculum. On 3 July 1941 a commission was appointed to draw up a manual of Breton history for use in public (as opposed to private) schools. The chair of Breton history at the University of Rennes, vacant since 1894, was filled in August by Pocquet du Haut-Jussé, author of several books on the subject. Early in 1942 a compulsory test in regional history and geography was inserted into the examination for the certificate of primary studies.

On 12 October 1942 Quénette, the newly appointed prefect of the region, established the Comité consultatif de Bretagne, which was to be composed of Breton 'personalities' and representatives of the principal cultural groupings or federations in Brittany, all nominated by the prefect. No representative of the P.N.B. was nominated to the committee.

In the months following its establishment the committee obtained a number of positive results. Breton was soon allowed as an examination subject in the certificate of primary studies and in admini-



strative examinations and competitive exams (especially for such jobs as policeman, secretary in a town hall or draftsman in a préfecture), and the post office no longer refused to deliver mail addressed in Breton.

On 18 June 1943, the prefect decreed that a summer school for would-be teachers of Breton should be established near Ploërmel.

The committee obtained control of the history and geography papers for the certificate of primary studies and instituted a prize of 10,000 francs for the best history of Brittany. It also allotted four grants, one per département, for those young Bretons who wanted to follow a course at the Institut d'urbanisme parisien<sup>1</sup>.

Thus the cultural regional movement obtained some results, even though the principal claim, for the teaching of Breton, was not met in full.

In contrast to this, none of the Emsav's political claims were answered by the authorities.

As the Vichy government began to be discredited towards the end of 1943, as a result of the developments on the international scene, all organisations and people who had collaborated with or been supported by it also became discredited. The mass of the population turned away from the section of the Emsav that had supported Vichy's plans, and without popular support, the regionalist movement was unable to impose its plans for reform on the régime. Even the concessions that had been obtained were threatened.

The period from September 1943 to 1945 saw the crushing of the Breton movement.

1. Students receiving such grants did so on condition that they afterwards returned to work in Brittany.

Once the possibility of an allied victory was seen, the leaders of the Breton movement, not wishing to compromise themselves any further with the occupying power, opted for a position of strict neutrality in the conflict. However, the opportunist nature of this change of political direction was obvious to the resistance movement in Brittany, and from the end of 1943 resistance members began killing members of the Emsav.

Feelings began to run high. Inside the P.N.B. a faction led by Lainé, and opposed to the wait and see policy of the Delaporte brothers, adopted a clear pro-German policy. It was this move which encouraged particularly savage repression after the Liberation.

The situation was different for the regionalists. Yann Fouéré had obviously had to have German permission to publish La Bretagne and was obliged to publish German war communiqués, but in his editorials he carefully avoided major issues and restricted himself to the study of strictly local problems and the scrutiny of methods of applying regional reform.

However the Resistance considered all who collaborated with Vichy as its enemies and thus the regionalists appeared just as much compromised as the nationalists.<sup>1</sup>

The killing of members of the Emsav began with the shooting of Yann Bricler, a relation of Olier Mordrel and an important figure in the Breton movement, on 4 September 1943.

After the start of this campaign against the militants of the Breton movement a steadily increasing number of members began to leave the P.N.B. Delaporte made it clear that he intended to stress the moderate aspect of his policy.

1. Sérant in La Bretagne et la France and Le Boterf in La Bretagne dans la Guerre remind us that there were some Breton militants who were members of the Resistance and some who were shot by the Germans (e.g. Thomas, Dr Leclerc and Dieulesaint).

Lainé, who was still convinced that Germany would win the war, gathered his supporters about him and, with the support of Debauvais, split with the P.N.B. He decided, in March 1944, to found a 'true' Parti national breton, with Breiz Atao as the title of its newspaper. The party would collaborate whole-heartedly with the Germans, who were the only people in a position to help the creation of a Breton State integrated into the new Europe. The party was to have a military organisation, known as the Bezen Perrot<sup>1</sup>. It was 20 May before Lainé and his supporters held the meeting to constitute the new organisation. Debauvais had died in Colmar two months previously. Since Lainé's organisation also entitled itself the P.N.B., members of the Breton movement were understandably confused.

The Bezen Perrot were in fact enrolled into the ranks of the Sicherheitsdienst der S.S. (the security branch of the S.S.), although Lainé often claimed that it was a Breton army. Very few nationalists supported Lainé by joining the Bezen, probably only about seventy<sup>2</sup>, but it nevertheless acquired a very bad reputation, as, in addition to policing operations, it engaged in direct action against the resistance.

The disastrous consequence of all this was that the action of the Bezen Perrot was blamed on the entire Breton movement. The evidence indicates that this confusion was carefully maintained by the French authorities who took over after the Liberation.

Yann Fouéré remained in Rennes. On 7 May 1944 he was named secretary of the Comité consultatif de Bretagne, but it was by now too late for him to be able to achieve anything that might last.

The members of the (Delaporte) P.N.B. stayed in Brittany, and Delaporte pursued his moderate policy. This almost led to the

1. Named after Abbé Perrot, the founder of Bleun-Brug, who was killed by members of the resistance on 11 December 1943. Such a moderate man would have been horrified to see his name given to such an extreme and violent organisation. In a letter of 29 September 1943 he had described it as 'à fuir comme la peste.' Cf. le Boterf, La Bretagne dans la Guerre,  
 2. This figure is cited by Déniel, Mouvement Breton, p. 306. Vol. 3, p. 366.

lifting of the excommunication of members of the movement, but before this could happen the P.N.B. had disbanded. The last issue of L'Heure bretonne appeared on 4 June 1944, the organisation's files were destroyed and the leaders of the party went into hiding.

At the beginning of August, as the American forces were approaching Rennes, the members of the Bezen Perrot were ordered to withdraw to Angers, and eventually fled to Germany in the company of other members of the Breton movement.<sup>1</sup>

When the allied invasion of France was imminent the number of killings of members of the Emsav increased. Some of the killings were particularly gruesome and some members of the Emsav were tortured. In theory, this wave of summary executions should have ended once a 'Commissaire général de la République pour la Bretagne' arrived in Rennes, whereas in fact repression increased after this date. Since the police had not been able to obtain the dossiers of the P.N.B., they used outdated registers they had drawn up in the 1930s. In November a huge police raid known as the 'rafle Allard' led to the arrest of a number of suspects, who were tried in a series of trials which continued until some way into 1947.

As a result of these trials twenty death-sentences were pronounced, mainly for members of the Bezen Perrot and the former leaders of Breiz Atao. Twelve of them managed to escape this fate, including Mordrel and Lainé, the former fleeing eventually to South America and the latter to Ireland.

There were lighter sentences for the members of the (Delaporte) P.N.B.: twenty years hard labour for Raymond Delaporte, and ten for his brother Yves.

Regionalists too were sentenced: hard labour for life for Yann Fouéré.<sup>2</sup>

1. A vivid account of this retreat is given by Gilles Eskob, a former member of the Bezen, in Caerleon, Le Rêve fou des soldats de Breiz Atao.
2. For details of what subsequently happened to Fouéré see below, p.121. Mordrel eventually returned to France after 22 years in exile in Argentina, his death sentence no longer being applicable after 20 years. Lainé is still living in Ireland, in isolation, and keeping a low profile. The above information was supplied to the writer by Yann Fouéré, in a letter dated 22 January 1980. For details of Fouéré's trial cf. Youenn Didro and Yann Fouéré, L'histoire du quotidien 'La Bretagne' et les silences d'Henri Fréville, (Saint-Brieuc 1981)

There were dozens of sentences of five, ten or fifteen years imprisonment, and hundreds were sentenced to loss of rights<sup>1</sup>.

The French government maintained that it acted in the same way towards the Bretons as towards the rest of the French<sup>2</sup>.

Militants of the Breton movement would disagree with this, as did many people in Wales<sup>3</sup>. Eventually, a delegation of eight Welsh people was allowed into Brittany to investigate such claims. The delegation was in Brittany from 22 April to 14 May 1947, and, on its return to Wales, published a report giving the results of its enquiry. The report concluded:

Consequently it is difficult not to conclude that the mere fact of having taken part in any kind of Breton activity was a sufficient motive for the French government to indulge in persecution<sup>3</sup>.

Thus it would appear that, while the sentences on members of the Bezen Perrot were obviously to be expected, and some of the other sentences could no doubt be justified, there is a suspicion that in some cases the sentences were unmerited and that the French government may have used the opportunity to put an end to all forms of Breton activity, no matter how moderate or inoffensive they might have been.

However, although this was to mark the end of the period of the second ensav, the Breton movement was eventually to flower again.

1. Details of all these sentences are taken from Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.315.
2. Sérant, in La Bretagne et la France, p.312, says that this is true to the extent that regionalist movements in other parts of France were equally severely repressed during this period.
3. Cited by Déniel, Mouvement breton, p.319

## CHAPTER THREE

THE BRETON MOVEMENT FROM THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO  
THE PRESENT DAY <sup>1</sup>

In considering the history of this period the writer experiences two major difficulties. First in distinguishing fact from subjective interpretation in many of the books which deal with it, whether this be due to political or ideological commitment or whether it be, as in the case of Olier Mordrel, an apparent attempt to justify his extreme, pro-Nazi attitude during the Second World War by his analysis of events in Brittany since that time.<sup>2</sup> Second in giving a reasonably ordered account of events and developments which are, by their very nature, often fragmented and confused.

We will consider the period under four broad headings. First we will consider the nature of the 'problème breton actuel' as it is most objectively stated.<sup>3</sup> Then we will consider the various reactions to and manifestations of the problem in the broad spectrum of organisations, political, cultural and linguistic, that is known as the Breton movement. For the sake of clarity, and also because little seems to be known about its activities, at least outside Brittany, the FLB/ARB merits a separate section.<sup>4</sup> Finally we will examine the present scope and content of the movement in some detail.

The Breton Problem

Probably the most objective statement of the problem is given by Gilbert Le Guen, who defines it as lying essentially in the necessity and difficulty of promoting the economic life of the region. Much to the



1. Since the most recent detailed survey of the Breton movement is that undertaken by Jacques Gallo in Panorama du Mouvement breton (Rennes 1973), present day may mean 1973, except in the many cases when more up to date information is available on individual organisations.
2. Cf. above p 77. Mordrel had been sentenced to death, after the Liberation, for his activities.
3. Gilbert Le Guen, 'D'une révolution manquée à une révolution possible.', in Histoire de la Bretagne, edited by Delumeau, pp.463-521, which will from here onwards simply be referred to as Le Guen.
4. Initials of the Front de Libération de la Bretagne/Armée Républicaine Bretonne. The latter is sometimes also known as the Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne.

annoyance of many members of the Breton movement this problem of regional development is now generally analysed within the administrative framework of the new economic region known as Brittany, which excludes the prosperous département of Loire-Atlantique.<sup>1</sup>

The most worrying aspect of the problem is that of the decreasing number of agricultural jobs which will increasingly threaten the employment prospects of young people. An increase in emigration of young people from Brittany is no longer an acceptable solution. Between 1954 and 1962 Brittany lost 100,000 people of less than 35 years of age in this way, while gaining only 5,000 people, all retired. This 'haemorrhage', as Le Guen terms it, which has already lasted too long because of industrial under-development, would only accentuate the imbalance between French regions and increase the disparity of incomes to the detriment of Brittany, which in 1969 only had an average income equivalent to 80% of the average French income. To Le Guen then it seemed that the only solution would be the creation of 10,000 to 12,000 new jobs in industry per year.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Breton Movement 1945-51

Although there is some disagreement about exactly when the Breton movement began to reassert itself in the post-war years, authors who have dealt with the period are agreed that the Liberation and the anti-Breton reaction that it entailed brought about the virtual extinction of any open activity by the movement. Thus Mordrel wrote that '... les premières années de l'après-guerre offrent le panorama d'un vide absolu...'<sup>3</sup>, and Lebesque that 'Politiquement, la cause bretonne entraine pour dix ans dans le désert.'<sup>4</sup>

Even the output of Breton vernacular literature fell steeply, from the 105 new titles that had appeared during the period of the German occupation to only 36 in the period 1945-50.<sup>5</sup>

1. Loire-Atlantique, which had traditionally always been part of Brittany, was lost to the region as the result of a government reform of 1960.
2. Although this analysis by Le Guen dates from 1969 it can still be substantially applied, as in René Tugdual, Vivre en Bretagne, (Rennes 1972), and in many, more recent, newspapers of the Breton movement.
3. Mordrel, Breiz Atao, (Paris 1973) p.437.
4. Lebesque, Comment peut-on être breton?, (Paris 1970) p.165.
5. Figures given in Mordrel, *op.cit.*, p.438.

Feeling against the Breton movement was so strong that even the unified Breton orthography, which had been established in 1941, had to be rejected. Popular opinion held that this orthography was tainted by nazism, since, it wrongly maintained, the entire Breton movement had actively collaborated with the Germans during the occupation. Bretons returned to the pre-war variety of spellings, in a move which could only slow the linguistic renaissance of Breton.<sup>1</sup>

In some areas, however, life did continue normally. The number of cercles celtiques and sonneurs increased considerably, and Breton wrestling and the Fêtes de Cornouaille grew in popularity.<sup>2</sup> Young Christian Celts had more or less re-established Abbé Perrot's Feiz ha Breiz under a different name through the review Sked.<sup>3</sup> The driving force behind this review, Keroad, had also founded an organisation of Breton scouts - the Bleimor scouts - which still exists today.

The manifestations of the Breton movement that did take place before 1950 were of minor significance. In October 1947, Joseph Martray, a communist, but a former colleague of Yann Fouéré, had a review, Le Peuple Breton, published, which took up again the idea of European federalism and of greater powers for the French regions as a means to this end. The review aroused no real passion in any quarter. In the following month there appeared an issue of a neo-Breiz Atao, which was written in Ireland and printed in Holland. Only two issues of this paper were ever printed.

However it was the man responsible for the first of these unsuccessful publications, Martray, who later abandoned his political line and was with Jo Halleguen, député for Quimper, responsible for the founding of CELIB.

1. There are four Breton dialects; cornouaillais, léonard, trégorrois and vannetais. The first three had had their spelling unified, at the beginning of the twentieth century, into the KLT spelling. In 1944 they had been united with vannetais to form KLTG, known as ZH, orthography. In 1953 a rival spelling, devised by Professor Falc'hun and later known as 'Orthographe universitaire de Brest' (UB) was adopted by certain university teachers to counter the accusation that ZH orthography was tainted with nazism. The two spellings still exist side by side today. For example, the university of Haute-Bretagne (Rennes) is the stronghold of ZH and the university of Bretagne occidentale (Brest) that of UB.
2. Sonneurs are pipers, playing either the biniou, (Breton bagpipes) or the bombarde (a woodwind instrument, ancestor of the oboe).
3. For Feiz ha Breiz, see above, p.62.



CELIB

The first post-war attempt to answer the Breton problem was made by the Comité d'Etudes et de Liaison des Intérêts Bretons (CELIB), which was set up in 1951. CELIB was composed of prominent local figures and representatives of regionalist associations, and saw its role as one of studying Breton problems, promoting solutions, and encouraging and co-ordinating initiatives in favour of Brittany.<sup>1</sup> It made rapid progress, and in 1955 became the official regional committee responsible for economic expansion, drawing into its ranks the Breton parliamentary delegation (except for communist deputies and some senators), representatives of numerous public bodies (conseils généraux, conseils municipaux, chambres de commerce, chambres d'agriculture), and representatives of banks, cultural associations, professional bodies and trade unions. CELIB made a considerable impact as an organ of study and co-operation and as a pressure group. Its success was at the origin of the later appearance of the Comité d'Expansion Economique Loire-Atlantique-Vendée and of committees within each département.

CELIB published the results of its work in the monthly issues of La Vie bretonne ( a regional publication of the Bulletin Fédéraliste Français), and conducted an active propaganda campaign in favour of Brittany,<sup>2</sup> but its main task was the elaboration, in 1952 and 1953, of a report on the development of Brittany which was at the origin of the first loi-programme (outline law) in favour of action in the region, published by the government in 1956. It was the government's failure to follow through this loi-programme, which appeared in the Journal Officiel only as a theoretical

1. To the dismay of many Bretons, CELIB, to avoid accusations of hidden political sympathies, limited its action to only four of the départements of Brittany, thus excluding Loire-Atlantique from its definition of the territory of the region.
2. For example, by a twice-yearly exhibition of Breton produce, first staged at Lannion in 1963, and by the launching of a regional label.

document with all the figures edited out, which led CELIB to conceive another, which made greater demands on the government, with which CELIB then entered into open conflict.

For ten years CELIB tried to influence government decisions to favour Breton interests, using personal contact, information campaigns, and the action of the parliamentary committee and of professional bodies. It scored some brilliant successes, as in the 'bataille du rail' in 1962, when a noisy information campaign, followed by the barricading of railway-lines, forced the government to abandon the application of new SNCF tariffs, in a region where they were shown to be prejudicial to agricultural and industrial activity.

However, it also experienced failure, as in its lack of success in keeping open the Forges d'Hennebont. In spite of many demonstrations between 1961 and 1966 by the Comité de défense des Forges to keep open this last major sector of the steel industry in Brittany, they and CELIB failed to persuade the government to help the company to modernise. The Forges were eventually forced to close in 1966.

By 1964 it became clear that the government had no intention of adopting a loi-programme for Brittany. Since this meant defeat for one of CELIB's main objectives, it was perhaps inevitable that this failure should cause a split in its ranks. While the majority of its members remained in favour of being apolitical, an active minority demanded that their struggle should take on a political dimension.<sup>1</sup> The situation worsened as government policy towards the region was modified and favoured the Paris agglomeration. CELIB lost its vitality, becoming entrenched in its mission of study and propaganda, while Brittany experienced sporadic agitation by workers and peasants.<sup>2</sup>

1. Michel Phlipponneau, President of the Comité d'expansion, was forced to resign in 1965 for wanting to politicise the debate.

2. See below, p.113.

The Mouvement pour l'Organisation de la Bretagne (MOB)<sup>1</sup>

This movement was founded later than CELIB, but ran parallel to it. Its origin was when Yann Poupinot drafted a Projet d'Organisation de la Bretagne (POB) in 1956. This called for eventual political and administrative decentralisation, the granting of a special status for an area consisting of the five Breton départements, and the creation of an elected regional assembly with legislative authority in all areas directly affecting the social, economic and cultural interests of the Breton people. The POB also proposed a number of interim goals, such as the creation of a regional executive commission made up of delegates from the five Breton departmental councils, and urged the training of Breton language teachers for all levels of the education system and the addition to the curriculum of courses in Breton history.

Yann Fouéré later joined Poupinot in support of the POB. By the Spring of 1957, 6,200 signatures of support for the Programme had been obtained, including those of Bretons involved in local and national politics. Fouéré and Poupinot arranged a meeting for 10 November 1957, at Lorient, to launch the MOB. The POB was adopted as the movement's charter, and L'Avenir de la Bretagne founded as its publication, with the first copy appearing in January 1958. In an editorial Fouéré emphasised that the MOB was a neutral meeting ground for Bretons of all political persuasions. The new interpretation of Brittany's plight as being the result of French 'colonialist' domination and exploitation rallied people of all persuasions, except Breton nationalists, whose highlighting of the protection of the Breton language as the major issue could not hope to attract many Gallos (Bretons who speak French only).

1. Much useful information for the sections on the MOB and UDB has come from Jack E Reece, The Bretons against France, (Chapel Hill 1977), a work which has only come to the writer's attention during the final stages of preparation of this thesis.

However this rallying of different viewpoints also produced the problems that led to the decline of the MOB. Because of the desire to keep the movement together and not offend any of its constituent elements, it tended to avoid clear-cut decisions. During the peasant unrest of the early 1960s it managed to maintain its political neutrality by supporting CELIB's loi-programme, which was also supported by Gourvennec and the peasant leaders. However the Algerian problem proved its downfall. The MOB displayed an ambivalent attitude, with L'Avenir advising abstention in the January 1961 referendum in favour of self-determination for the colony, while continuing to blame Brittany's plight on colonialist domination by France. When it was seen that popular opinion was widely in favour of independence for Algeria, L'Avenir shifted to recommend support for De Gaulle in the referendum in April 1962 on the Evian accords, which brought the Algerian war to an end. Tension between left and right-wing elements in the MOB continued to grow after the Gaullists came to power in the Autumn 1962 parliamentary elections. At the November 1963 Brest Congress, with the left wanting the MOB to become a left-wing anti-Gaullist movement and the conservative majority wanting it to adopt a loyalist and moderate stance, the inevitable split came. The left-wingers left to form the Union Démocratique Bretonne, and the MOB went into decline.

The decline was influenced by another factor. The MOB had played an important part in popularising CELIB's programmes for economic recovery. At the height of its success, in 1962, the MOB had persuaded 84 candidates in the parliamentary elections to make a solemn undertaking to support CELIB's loi-programme in parliament. However, where such candidates were elected and were Gaullists they fell into line with party instructions and did not give their support to the loi-programme. Inevitably these factors led to the movement being abandoned by its supporters and leaders. By 1973 it had only a nominal existence.<sup>1</sup>

1. Jacques Gallo in Panorama, p.15, calls the MOB 'Un mort qui se refuse à y croire'.

### The Union Démocratique Bretonne (UDB)

The leaders of the newly emerged Union Démocratique Bretonne gradually established for it a democratic, socialist and Breton nationalist identity in its monthly newspapers Le Peuple Breton and its Breton language version Pobl Vreizh. First editions of the papers appeared in January 1964. By 1975 total sales were between 7,000 and 10,000 copies per month.

Thus, unlike the MOB, the UDB was giving the Breton language a prominent place in its work, while freeing it from its traditionally clerical and reactionary associations.

Over the years the socialist aspect of the UDB became more pronounced as its action became increasingly concerted with that of the left-wing opposition in Brittany, especially the communists, socialists and PSU (united socialists). Thus, during May and June 1968, the UDB plunged into the general strike movement. In return the communist, socialist and PSU candidates in the parliamentary elections of June 1968 publicly endorsed a programme drafted by the UDB, which it believed to be the minimum requirement for regional reform. The programme called for the abolition of départements and préfets in Brittany, the reorganisation of the Breton CODER<sup>1</sup> into a truly regional and democratic economic council with majority representation for workers, the creation of an elected regional parliament with real legislative authority, and the encouragement of a genuinely popular culture in Brittany based on defence of the Breton language.<sup>2</sup> The UDB naturally championed local causes in Brittany, such as the protest by unemployed stevedores in St. Nazaire in early 1964. It also led Breton opposition to the development of atomic weapons in France and demanded that the money be spent on the development of the economies of the poorer regions, such as Brittany.

1. The initials stand for Commission de développement économique régionale. See also below, p.130.

2. Details of the programme from Reece, The Bretons against France, pp.196-7.

, The membership of the UDB, which had at first been composed largely of university students, steadily became more representative. By the end of 1967, for example, about 20% belonged to the working class.<sup>1</sup>

Even the right-wing Olier Mordrel admitted in 1973 that the UDB 'est probablement la formation politique la plus active dans le pays'.<sup>2</sup>

Although the UDB is perhaps the only Breton party to have made an impact on the political scene, it has not had much electoral success. Meic Stephens puts it into perspective:

It is generally agreed that no more than 5% of Brittany's population are active in the autonomist or nationalist cause; out of some 280 mayors of communes in Finistère, about eleven are committed nationalists while many of the others would welcome a greater degree of autonomy. At the municipal election in Brest of 1971 the UDB won only 2,618 votes (4.8%), although its members had been elected on United Left Wing tickets at Auray where its candidates had polled 12% of the votes in the previous year. Since then there has been little evidence that Brittany does not continue to be in the grip of the right-wing and Gaullist parties. At the Brest election of 1971 the moderate right-wing won 24,506 votes (45%), the Gaullists 12,767 (23.5%), the French Communist Party 8,059 (15%) and the French Socialist Party 6,198 (11.4%).<sup>3</sup>

Like many organisations within the Breton movement the UDB has experienced internal divisions. First with the emergence of the FLB, which led to the expulsion of younger, more nationalist members, and

1. Figure given in Reece, The Bretons against France, p.198

2. Olier Mordrel, Breiz Atao, (Paris 1973), p.499

3. Meic Stephens, Linguistic Minorities in Western Europe, (Llandysul 1976), p.386.

to the UDB drawing closer to the communist party, and second with the expulsion of a group who had contradicted the Marxist-Leninist line by displaying excessive intellectualism, individualism and neglect of the proletariat.

Thus the UDB is essentially a successful (in relation to other organisations in the Breton movement) left-wing, doctrinaire, political party.

### Strollad Ar Vro (SAV)

Strollad Ar Vro is the principal group on the non-socialist wing of the Breton movement. It was founded in 1972 by Yann Fouéré as the 'parti national breton et fédéraliste européen', and proposes as the solution to Brittany's problems, a Europe which would be a federation of the various ethnic minorities within it, rather than its present composition of national states vying with each other, and paying little, or no attention to those minorities. This idea had previously been proposed in books by Fouéré and Yann Poupinot, who had both been closely involved with the MOB.<sup>1</sup>

SAV embraces most political views outside the Breton left and uses Fouéré's newspaper L'Avenir de la Bretagne as a platform for its ideas.

In 1973 it put up candidates in the parliamentary election but met with little success.<sup>2</sup> Two years later Fouéré was arrested along with about forty Breton nationalists suspected of being involved in preparation for a bombing campaign against the French government's campaign for the building of nuclear power stations in Brittany. Although he was committed to a programme of non-violence, Fouéré was detained without trial from October 1975 to February 1976 but released by a decision 'taken at what French sources refer to as "the highest political level"' after mounting protest in Ireland, Walès and the European Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

1. In Yann Fouéré, La Bretagne Ecartelée, (Paris 1976), and Yann Poupinot, Les Bretons à l'Heure de l'Europe, (Paris 1961).
2. Mordrel in La Voie Bretonne, (Quimper 1975), p.77, attributes this lack of success to SAV's having participated in the elections before it was sufficiently established and before sufficient groundwork had been done.
3. The words quoted are from an article in The Guardian, 14 February 1976.

, SAV has been involved with the work of the Bureau des Nations Européennes sans Etat since it was first founded at Brussels in June 1975.<sup>1</sup>

The problem for Yann Fouéré and for SAV is that the mutual suspicion between the political spectrum it contains and the left hinders attempts to provide solutions for Brittany that those of all beliefs can subscribe to, and thus prevents the Breton movement from adopting a strong united front with which to oppose the French government.<sup>2</sup>

The reawakening of Breton nationalism and initiatives in favour of the Breton language

According to Olier Mordrel, the decisive turn in the reconstitution of the nationalist movement was the appearance of the review La Bretagne Réelle in March 1954.<sup>3</sup> The review was directed by Jacques Quatreboeufs, better known as Jacques Gallo. La Bretagne Réelle took up particularly the cause of the French-speaking population of Haute-Bretagne, denying that the Breton-speaking population of Basse-Bretagne had any right to model them, the Gallos, in their own image. The review was the first to publish articles by such controversial figures as Mordrel, and although it was generally ignored, he at least claims that it played a part in rehabilitating the idea of Breton nationalism.<sup>4</sup> Reece gives us some idea of the mixture that could be found in La Bretagne Réelle:

.. it has functioned primarily as a forum for the rather bizarre ideas of its founder, which have included since 1954 admiration for Celtic pagan Christianity, paramilitary fascism, authoritarian government, militant anti-Communism, racist ideology, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy . .. its federalism actually masked a separatist motive.<sup>5</sup>

1. The Bureau also represents the movements in Wales, Alsace-Lorraine, and the Basque Country and is a base in the fight for their cultural and political autonomy within the EEC.
2. See below, p.190. for Fouéré's comments and further information.
3. Mordrel, Breiz Atao, p.451
4. Mordrel, Breiz Atao, p.452-3. Mordrel was a controversial figure in that he had been condemned to death after the Liberation, but had fled to South America.
5. Reece, The Bretons against France, p.187



In 1958 a duplicated bulletin Argoad appeared, claiming that Brittany would quite simply have to fight for whatever it wanted.

In 1962 there appeared a publication called Stourmer which attempted to place Brittany's claim to independence within the context of the anti-imperialist struggle of Egypt. This received no support, not surprisingly since the writers called themselves 'national socialists', named Hitler as their spiritual father and adopted the title of the original national socialists' newspaper. No real support was given either to another neo-Breiz Atao, which appeared in 1963 and 1964, calling itself the organ of the PNB and written very much in the style of the Breiz Atao of the inter-war years.

The struggle for the survival and spread of the Breton language also continued. The establishment of youth hostels for young Breton-speakers, which had been interrupted by the war, was begun again. Breton language summer schools for people of all nationalities (Camps Interceltiques de Bretonnants) were also established, with the intention of allowing students to perfect their spoken Breton and live for a week or two in a Breton atmosphere.

In 1963 Strollad Deskadurezh an Eil Derez (SADED) was founded by Dr. Guy Etienne. SADED is an institute to teach higher secondary level studies entirely in Breton by correspondence. With the help of Goulven Pennaod, an eminent Celtic scholar, it has endowed written Breton with a vast scientific and philosophical vocabulary. This effort is supported by the review Preder and its series of publications which now also reach university level. It is not surprising that the militant attitudes SADED teachers attempted to instil led several of their pupils to eventually join the FLB, which will be examined in detail below.

' Bleun-Brug changed during this period from being a rather docile diocesan association to become a round table for all those interested in the fate of Brittany.

On the spiritual side, from 1954 onwards there were attempts to reconstitute a Celtic church on the lines of the one dissolved by Rome between the 9th and 12th centuries. The writer has been unsuccessful in attempts to obtain information from the spiritual movements, but it appears that Celtic monks are trained at Redon and Lannion and then return into society to spread the faith.

#### Unrest in Brittany in the 1960s and early 1970s

The worker and peasant unrest of the 1960s and early 1970s is thoroughly documented in Jean-Pierre Le Dantec's book Bretagne: Renaissance d'un Peuple. However, the reader has continually to allow for the exaggerated nature of his writing, as, for example, when he is dealing with the peasant unrest of 1961-2 and the attack on the sous-préfecture at Saint-Nazaire in 1966:

Confrontée à la plus gigantesque mutation économique de son histoire, qui finira d'intégrer définitivement l'économie bretonne, en particulier l'agriculture, au marché capitaliste, la population dans son ensemble se sent menacée et réagit en masse.<sup>1</sup>

The chronicle of unrest in Brittany runs as follows:<sup>2</sup>

1960 - The battle of the artichoke: very low prices were being paid to the producers while much higher prices were being charged in Paris (artichokes bought at 20 centimes a kilo in Brittany were sold at 1.60 francs in Paris). The producers decided to organise themselves and to

1. Jean-Pierre Le Dantec, Bretagne: Renaissance d'un Peuple, (Paris 1974), p. 322.

2. This chronicle excludes events for which the FLB claimed responsibility. These will be dealt with in the section devoted to that organisation.

transport their goods to Paris and sell directly to the public. A compromise was eventually reached with the government.

1961 - As a result of action initiated by Alexis Gourvennec, due to government failure to apply a promised loi d'orientation (a proposed law to change the direction of policy) for the Breton peasants, a whole series of events took place: demonstrations, the occupation of the préfecture at Morlaix, the sabotage of telephone lines, tractor blockades of road and railway lines.<sup>1</sup> Gourvennec and another peasant leader, Léon, were arrested but acquitted after a short trial. The government made some concessions, but unrest spread to a total of 40 départements by the end of June. Eventually talks began in spite of opposition from some peasants, but were inconclusive. The government refused to give way to an ultimatum that they must give clear evidence of intent to produce a loi-programme for Brittany by 15 September and agitation began again. Eventually the government made other concessions, and further concessions in 1962 after renewed agitation.

1962 - The 'Bataille du rail'.<sup>2</sup>

1968 - Various demonstrations from January onwards resulted in the eventual satisfaction of the demands of the workers of Garnier at Redon.

From May onwards was of course a time of unrest in Brittany as elsewhere in France, especially in Nantes.

In the early 1970s there were protests at the growing number of public places being taken over as private property by individuals, and the taking over of large areas of land by large concerns (in the Rhuy peninsula for example) for conversion to huge holiday and commercial centres and marinas. In many cases local government money was used to partly finance such operations, but all the profits went to the private firms.<sup>3</sup>

1. Gourvennec has since become a major figure in Breton agricultural and economic life, being, for example, largely responsible for the setting up of Brittany Ferries.
2. Cf. p. 105 above.
3. Similar allegations have been made about the road bridge across the Loire at Saint-Nazaire, opened in 1975.

1972 - Two days of rioting by artisans and small shopkeepers in Plouévez-du-Faon.

- A strike at the Saint-Brieuc factory of the Joint Français: occupation of the managerial offices (three important members of the managerial staff had to be rescued by the CRS), support from shopkeepers, CELIB, Breton pop singers, demonstrations. The strike was given an undoubtedly Breton context.

- The milk war: The falling price per litre paid to the farmer (in April 1972 it dropped from 60 to 56 centimes) by co-operatives and private firms caused considerable friction between the two sides. Milk lorries were hijacked and then kept under guard by the producers, who were by now on strike.<sup>1</sup> Most producers eventually obtained their 60 centimes per litre.

The FLB/ARB (Front de Libération de la Bretagne/Armée Républicaine Bretonne)<sup>2</sup>

In this section we shall first detail the various acts of the organisation and then consider the evolution of the ideas that animated these acts.

#### FLB/ARB Action

The organisation's action began on 11 March 1966 when three young people hurled a Molotov cocktail at the sous-préfecture in Saint-Nazaire. On 17 June it was discovered that there had been an unsuccessful attempt to set fire to the tax office in Saint-Brieuc.

In 1967 there were further attacks on targets in Saint-Nazaire, Saint-Brieuc and Vannes.

In 1968 there were five different attacks in January alone. In February 775 kilos of explosives were stolen from a depot in Loudéac forest.

1. More than 100 lorries were at one time under guard in Guiscriff.
2. Sometimes referred to as the Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne. Further explanation of this will be given below. Details of the internal organisation of the FLB are given in Mordrel, Breiz Atao, p.473.

In April the CRS vehicle depot in Saint-Brieuc was destroyed by bombs and incendiary devices. In September there were seven simultaneous operations effected in Lannion, Lorient, Hennebont, Pluvigner, Rochefort-en-Terre, Questembert and Nantes. In spite of an FLB communiqué, authenticated by the Comité National de la Bretagne Libre, arriving from Dublin and promising a pause in activities during De Gaulle's planning for the regionalisation of France and his projected visit to Brittany, there were further incidents at Nantes and Briec in October. The campaign spread as the water supply to Paris was damaged in two places by explosives.

In 1969, after two FLB members were discovered trying to steal arms from a barracks in Nevers, a huge police operation was launched against the FLB and put an end to its operations for a number of years.

During the period 1966-9 a total of 33 successful FLB operations had taken place; 14 directed against tax and finance offices, 8 against administrative buildings, 5 against electrical installations, 3 against gendarmeries, 2 against water supplies and 1 against a military establishment.

By early 1969 the police had arrested 53 suspects, and had recovered large amounts of explosives. The suspects came from a surprisingly wide range of social backgrounds and included factory workers, farmers, university intellectuals, military officers, businessmen and even four priests. However, De Gaulle, presumably anxious to avoid a major confrontation with the increasing number of supporters of those who had been arrested, eventually freed more than half of those who had been arrested. Later his successor, Pompidou, gave an amnesty to the remainder.<sup>1</sup>

1. De Gaulle had resigned after the population had failed to support his referendum on regional reform. It must be remembered that too much cannot be read into this rejection since the referendum also required approval of a proposal for reform of the Sénat. Many voted against the referendum because they objected to having to vote yes or no to both measures at once.

It was 1971 before FLB activity began again. This time most of it was directed against the property of companies and individuals involved in the redevelopment of Brittany. Administrative buildings were also targets for attacks. These operations continued into 1972 and seem to have been the work of three different networks, one operating from Paris and two from northern Brittany.

Police enquiries led to a number of arrests and eventually eleven members of the organisation were brought to trial in October 1972 before the Cour de Sûreté de l'Etat,<sup>1</sup> charged with 'infraction commise en relation avec une entreprise privée ou collective tendant à substituer une autorité illégale à l'autorité de l'Etat'. The trial seems in fact to have provided an ideal platform for the accused to air their views on the Breton problem as they saw it.<sup>2</sup> Various demonstrations of support for the accused took place, and were followed by further demonstrations when eight suspended sentences of up to five years were pronounced, even though such sentences may not seem particularly severe. Three of the accused were acquitted. All eleven were released immediately after the trial.

1. The Cour de Sûreté de l'Etat was established in 1963 to deal with the OAS. There was no jury, the accused appearing before a panel of two army officers and three civil judges. The court was convened at the order of the Minister of Justice at the behest of the government and had no rules but those that the government decided. It could refuse evidence that the defence was to present. The only way in which the appeal process could favour the accused was in ordering a retrial by the same body. The court was described by The Guardian of 29 May 1976 as 'the last special tribunal of its kind left in Western Europe'. The court was abolished on 29 July 1981, after the election of Mitterand as President.
2. Mordrel, Breiz Atao, p.482 and Le Dantec, Bretagne: Re-naissance d'un Peuple, p.325, both comment on what an ideal propaganda platform the trial provided, while the former was surprised at how freely the accused and their supporters were allowed to express themselves, in view of the limited rights the defence had in this court:

Il est vrai que le spectacle offert frôla par moments à tel point la licence qu'on fut en droit de se demander si le but recherché en haut lieu n'était pas de retirer toute gravité de l'affaire, afin de justifier par anticipation la benignité des condamnations à venir.

Caerleon also supports this claim in the detailed account of the hearings, which lasted from 3 to 10 October, given in Les Bretons le dos au mur: le FLB devant la Cour de Sûreté de l'Etat, (Paris 1975) pp.93-200

Less than two years later, in February 1974, the ORTF television transmitter at Roc Tredudon was destroyed by explosives, but this act, directed at what was seen as one of the main instruments of oppression of the Breton language, meant that Breton viewers were without programmes for a considerable time, and in fact alienated some of those who had previously been sympathetic to the FLB.

The summer of 1975 was a particularly difficult time for the authorities in Brittany. In June extensive damage was caused at the cité administrative in Rennes by an explosion. In mid-July an explosive device was discovered at the entrance to the army camp at Coëtquidan, at the bases of statues of Jeanne d'Arc and Du Guesclin.<sup>1</sup> During the last weekend in July four separate attempts were made to sabotage official buildings and other targets. In Nantes, explosives were discovered at the Direction départementale de l'Agriculture. In Quimper, also at the Direction départementale de l'Agriculture, extensive damage was caused by an explosion, this coming after an explosion there two years previously, in March 1973. In Vannes a fire was started near the offices of a firm involved in a controversial scheme to develop one area of the town for tourism. Finally, in Rennes, there was an explosion at the entrance to one of the buildings in the army camp at La Lande-d'Ouée. Only two days after this, three kilos of explosives were discovered at the cité administrative in Vannes.

Although the FLB/ARB only immediately claimed to be responsible for one of these acts, the fire at Vannes, it seems reasonable to assume that all of them could be attributed to it. The logic behind the selection of the targets is clear. The Direction départementale de l'Agriculture played a large part in the hated process of 'remembrement', the compulsory re-allocation of small areas of land, which aimed to

1. A hated pro-French figure in Breton history.

produce more viable farms, but went against the Breton peasant's traditionally passionate attachment to his land. This attachment also helps to explain the antipathy towards redevelopment for tourism. The attacks on military establishments can be explained by the inscription found at the scene of the explosion at Rennes which read 'Accepter de servir fait grossir les rangs de la dictature militaire.'<sup>1</sup>

The bombings have continued. The electricity board headquarters in Rennes were seriously damaged in March 1977 by an FLB attack on the eve of the trial of seven Bretons in connection with violence. There were 33 other bomb attacks that year. In 1978 there were four attacks in one weekend in accordance with a statement made by the FLB the previous month that there would be a series of attacks during this specified weekend. This time a tax-office at Ploermel was among the targets. In May 1978 the bomb blast that wrecked the State broadcasting studios in Rennes was the eighteenth of the year. In June of the same year, in what was described by one English newspaper<sup>2</sup> as 'the most spectacular action since the Second World War by a French separatist group', more than 500,000 pounds worth of damage was caused by an explosion which damaged 10 rooms in the Château of Versailles. The ARB claimed responsibility for the act, and, in a letter left in a phone box, said it was a protest by the oppressed Breton people 'against the occupation of Brittany by the French, and the destruction by the "imperialist power" of the Breton language and culture'<sup>3</sup>

Within the next month many arrests were made, and by mid-July the special State security court, the Cour de Sécurité de l'Etat, had begun its first sitting to hear evidence against the prisoners who were charged with bomb attacks on banks and public buildings since 1975.

1. Ouest-France 28 July 1975.
2. The Guardian 27 June 1978.
3. The Guardian 27 June 1978.



After, an eight day trial Serge Rojinsky, who police said was the leader of the ARB, was sentenced to eight years in prison. Seven other members of the group were sentenced to between two and six years imprisonment. Five others received sentences of between two and ten months. The defendants did not deny the charges, but refused to testify in French, and challenged the jurisdiction of the court.

Because of these sentences, and the number of arrests made, more than thirty in all, it is likely that FLB/ARB activity will be limited for some time, but, judging from previous experience, and the government's hardening of attitude towards any real measure of regional reform,<sup>1</sup> it will inevitably resume.

#### Evolution of FLB/ARB doctrine

During the very early years of its activity the FLB seems to have had no clear doctrine to explain its acts. It appears to have been seeking the rights of the province in accordance with the treaty of 1532, providing a united front of different classes in favour of independence and being inspired by a vague mixture of celticism and europeanism.<sup>2</sup>

The ARB, whose name was obviously inspired by that of the IRA, seems to have been the armed wing of the FLB, and to have carried out the acts, up to 1972, mentioned above, but although each of the early acts seems to have been directed against symbols of the French 'occupation' of Brittany, each of the ARB commandos operated autonomously. This helps to explain the movement's lack of a precise political line.

The Comité National de la Bretagne Libre (CBL) was founded in late 1967 immediately after General de Gaulle's visit to Canada. His famous remark 'Vive le Québec libre!' which caused the Canadian government so much annoyance, caused even more annoyance among the various regionalist and separatist movements in France. The reaction is well summarised by

1. See below, p. 132.

2. For the treaty of 1532, cf. above, p. 32.

Lebesque

Grands dieux! Ce livre n'aurait aucune raison d'être si les Bretons possédaient le statut que le colon anglais concède aux Québécois: gouvernement autonome, Assemblée élue, enseignement obligatoire de la langue nationale.<sup>1</sup>

The idea was that the CBL would group representatives of all the nationalist movements inside Brittany, and publicise their point of view to the international press, the French government, and the emsav itself. The secretary-general of the CBL was Yann Goulet, who also made himself available to the FLB to publish its communiqués.<sup>2</sup>

It was Christmas 1968 before the first documentary attempt to unite the doctrine of these separate elements. This was a manifesto of the Conseil Politique National and the ARB, which was published in Yann Fouéré's paper L'Avenir de la Bretagne.<sup>3</sup>

The manifesto made it clear that the FLB sought to defend the right of the Breton people to possess its means of production, but rejected the marxist solution of a totalitarian state. The manifesto pictured

1. Lebesque, Comment peut-on être breton?, p.194. Some writers believe that another catalyst to Breton activity was the granting of independence to Algeria, since some Bretons saw themselves as in a colonial situation and being an ethnic entity, two important ways in which their situation was similar to that of Algeria.
2. Before the 1939-45 war Goulet had been the leader of the Bagadou Stourm - the militia of the PNB. He had fled to Ireland after the Liberation, and since then had been trying to get back into the centre of affairs. Various Breton groups had found him useful for handling their communications, but, according to Le Dantec, he had used this to try to monopolise the political management of the clandestine FLB through a 'phantom' Conseil National de la Bretagne Libre. However, we have to allow for Le Dantec's undisguised hostility to Goulet, to whom he at one point refers as the 'salopard réfugié en Irlande' and a 'mythomane'.
3. Since the Second World War Fouéré has alternated between his home and business life in Ireland and his continued involvement in Breton affairs, particularly through this paper.

Brittany as a colony suffering the foreign domination of France:

... Nous sommes dans une situation coloniale type, où une poignée d'entrepreneurs capitalistes étrangers, représentés par l'Etat français, exploitent et transforment à leur gré, et selon leurs idées et leurs intérêts, les richesses naturelles et humaines d'une communauté indigène, impuissante et asservie, c'est à dire presque détruite ..<sup>1</sup>

The FLB sought for Brittany a socialism that would be neither bureaucratic nor authoritarian, would be inspired by Brittany's Celtic heritage, would maintain the liberties that Brittany most cherished and would give Bretons of all classes the opportunity to lead a full life.

Thus while the manifesto was still rather vague as to proposed solutions to Brittany's problems, it did give a clear picture, no matter how extreme the language used, of how it visualised Brittany's present position and a general political line in which it would try to direct the region's future.

In September 1969 there came into existence a legal FLB known as FLB-2, which had a very brief existence, having disintegrated by Autumn 1970. Most of its erstwhile members then joined with an expelled Maoist faction of the UDB in January 1971 to form a Parti Communiste Breton (PCB), which has a publication entitled Bretagne Révolutionnaire.

On 29 May 1972, however, a text was published which seemed to contradict the 1968 manifesto. Published by the Agence Presse-Libération, the text placed the FLB's actions firmly within a Marxist framework. It was this document that gave the ARB's title as the Armée Révolutionnaire Bretonne, rather than Armée Républicaine Bretonne.

1. Cited in Caerleon, La révolution bretonne permanente, (Paris 1969), pp. 289-90

The two above-mentioned documents would seem to indicate, as far as it is possible to comment on the activities of an organisation which is essentially clandestine, that there are two political tendencies within the FLB, although both seemed united in their immediate aims.

Le Dantec comments further on these two tendencies. He believes that the trial of FLB militants aggravated the differences of opinion within the FLB/ARB, which had already arisen when the political front, in Spring 1972, had organised a series of contacts with the IRA and ETA which culminated in a common declaration on a national liberation struggle to be undertaken jointly in Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> This had all been done without reference to Yann Goulet. Le Dantec believes that by 1 May 1973 the final split had come. The FLB/ARB was now a clandestine, purely military movement which was active, quite well organised and directed from Ireland by Yann Goulet. The new FLB/LNS (Libération nationale et socialisme) clearly condemned the FLB/ARB as a nationalist and neo-fascist organisation, and modelled its organisation on that of ETA, stressing the equal and parallel importance of fighting on the cultural and social fronts. This however presents problems in that by joining Breton cultural organisations, members of the new organisation leave themselves open to police action.

Since that time the French government has outlawed the two FLBs, along with the Corsican FPCL and the Basque movement Enbata. Such an action may well have the opposite effect of strengthening support for these organisations and does not seem to have succeeded in ending FLB activity.

1. ETA is the Basque separatist movement which has long been involved in often bloody conflict with the Franco and post-Franco governments of Spain.

### Brittany-government attitudes and action

Before dealing with the positive and negative aspects of the French government's dealings with Brittany we should be reminded of one rather surprising fact. The majority of voters in Brittany usually vote for the parties of the government majority. Thus even during the period of unrest of the early 1960s,<sup>1</sup> in the 1962 election, candidates of the government majority won 21 of 33 seats, while candidates of what might be termed the determined opposition won only 3 seats. The majority of Bretons also voted yes in de Gaulle's referendums, including the one on election of the President by universal suffrage (58% of Breton voters in favour).<sup>2</sup>

### Legal status of the Breton language. Positive aspects of the government approach<sup>3</sup>

The greatest turning point in the legal status of the minority languages in France came with the passing of the Loi Deixonne on 11 January 1951. This law proposed to 'favoriser l'étude des langues et dialectes locaux dans les régions où ils sont en usage', and applied to four languages: Breton, Basque, Occitan and Catalan. The Corsican language was added to this list by a decree of 16 January 1974.

M. Haby's 'loi relative à l'éducation' of 11 July 1975 reaffirmed this principle, declaring that 'un enseignement des langues et cultures régionales peut être dispensé tout au long de la scolarité'.

Since the Loi Deixonne, several texts have specified how the law is to be applied. The most recent of these are two texts of 29 March 1976, the first dealing with the 'enseignement des patrimoines culturels et linguistiques français' and the second with the in-service training of primary school teachers. The first extends the field of application

1. Cf. above p.113.
2. All these figures given in Gilbert Le Guen, 'D'une révolution manquée à une révolution possible', in Histoire de la Bretagne, edited by Delumeau, p.516. Sérant reminds us, in La Bretagne et la France, p.100, that knowing the political tendencies of Breton voters does not necessarily indicate their feelings about Brittany itself or about its links with France.
3. For details of government reforms the writer is indebted to an article entitled 'Le Réveil des Langues régionales', which appeared in Le Monde de l'Education, September 1976.

of the teaching of regional cultures to the whole of France and not simply to those regions which possess a dialect and also specifies that, wherever different dialects of a language are practised, teaching of the language should be based on the local dialect and spelling.<sup>1</sup>

The present state of the teaching of regional languages and cultures is as detailed below for the various sectors of education:

Primary education (circulars of 17 February 1969 and 29 March 1976).

One hour per week can be devoted to the teaching of regional languages within the framework of the 'activités d'éveil'. For this to happen there must be 'une demande émanant de l'instituteur faisant état de requêtes présentées par les parents' and the authorisation of the Inspecteur d'Académie.

Secondary education-first cycle (same circulars as above).

The teaching of the language can be given in one hour per week of 'activités dirigées'. Rectors are invited 'à satisfaire dans toute la mesure du possible les demandes d'heures formulées à ce titre'.

Teaching of regional civilisations can also be used for history, geography, French and artistic disciplines.

Secondary education-second cycle (circulars of 7 September 1971 and  
29 March 1975)

The teaching of regional languages and cultures is allowed for an optional period of three hours per week where there is a group of at least ten pupils. This three hour period can be included in a teacher's normal weekly timetable or given as overtime (heures supplémentaires).

1. It could be argued that this might lead to linguistic disunity.

Head teachers must 'veiller à placer ces heures de manière à les intégrer au mieux à l'emploi du temps des élèves concernés'.

Baccalauréat (decree of 5 October 1970).

Regional languages can form an optional paper. Only marks above 10 are taken into account for the award of a mention above 'assez bien' after the first group of papers, or to allow a pass after the second group of papers, which are taken by borderline candidates only.

Teacher training (circulars of 29 March 1976).

Initial training is given to primary school teachers in the écoles normales. In-service courses are organised for secondary school teachers. A post of conseiller pédagogique is established in each of the académies concerned. Inspectors must take part in organisation and monitoring. Regional and departmental 'centres de documentation pédagogique' must produce the necessary materials.

Regional study groups are responsible, in each academy, for organising and coordinating initiatives to develop language teaching.

Higher education.

Institutes and chairs of regional languages and cultures have been established in several universities (in Brittany at Brest and Rennes). In certain cases courses are run which can be chosen as a second language in a degree in modern languages.

#### Negative aspects of the government approach to the Breton language

As we have seen above, various concessions to the teaching of Breton have been made by the French government. However, to many of those concerned in the struggle to preserve the language these concessions

do not go far enough. Obviously, the amount of Breton taught will depend considerably on the head teacher. If, at second cycle level, the three hours tuition is to be given as overtime, this places a considerable strain on the teachers involved. Many teachers also advocate a better training course in the teaching of Breton for primary teachers, and believe that until a student can graduate from university with a degree in Breton, rather than in another language and Breton, sufficient numbers of skilled teachers will not be available, nor will teachers of Breton have equality of status with teachers of other modern languages.

The figures for those studying Breton in schools are not particularly encouraging. In the whole of Brittany only about 2,000 pupils are studying Breton at the level of the 'second degree' (15+), and in Ille-et-Vilaine, at the same level, of a possible 40,000 students, only 360 are following Breton courses, outside normal teaching hours.<sup>1</sup>

While the last government's attitude seemed to be summarised by Giscard d'Estaing's comments that one cannot 'rendre obligatoire le maintien d'une culture' or 'rendre obligatoires les langues régionales' although it would be 'triste que le basque disparaisse, comme il serait triste que disparaisse la connaissance du breton en Bretagne ou de telle ou telle langue régionale',<sup>2</sup> it could well be argued that, since French governments played an active and leading part in suppressing the Breton language in the past, they have an equal responsibility to give a real lead in promoting the use of Breton today. It remains to be seen whether the new socialist government will do this.

1. Figures given in 'Le Réveil des Langues Régionales' in Le Monde de l'Education, September 1976, p.8.

2. Cited in the above mentioned source, p.5.



Positive aspects of the government approach to Brittany

It is probably true to say that where the government has taken a positive approach to Brittany's problems, it has largely done so as a result of the regional action undertaken by such bodies as CELIB, even though, as we have seen above, such action has not been well supported by the voters.

While Brittany's agricultural structures have evolved slowly, the new foundations of industrialisation have been laid with the creation of urban industrial zones, societies for regional development and a Société d'Economie Mixte pour l'Aménagement de la Bretagne. The transport network has benefited by the electrification of the railways as far as Rennes, the expansion of the line from Guingamp to Carhaix, the improvement of the road through central Brittany and the ports at Donges, Lorient and Brest, and the organisation of some air-links with Paris. The production and distribution of energy is better assured since the arrival of gas from Lacq, the creation of a second oil refinery near Rennes and the opening of the tidally operated power-station on the Rance. There is also an experimental nuclear power-station at Brennilis.

New universities have also been founded at Nantes and Brest and there has been a decentralisation of some of the Grandes Ecoles.

Le Guen estimates that 25,000 jobs were created in the ten years up to 1969.<sup>1</sup> This is also due to large firms opening factories in Brittany; Citroën at Rennes, Michelin at Vannes, CSF at Brest and Joint Français at Saint-Brieuc to take just four examples. The establishment of such factories has brought other problems, such as industrial unrest, as we have seen above.<sup>2</sup>

1. Le Guen, *op.cit.* p.518

2. Cf. p.115.

All these improvements, in association with urban development,<sup>1</sup> have certainly helped to slow emigration from Brittany,<sup>2</sup> which we have seen to be one of Brittany's major problems, but there has been a slowing in the process of de-centralisation since 1963-4, and a lack of confirmation of what seemed the future role for Brittany in the motor and electronics industries. The latter may yet be attracted by the Centre Electronique de l'Armée which has been set up near Rennes, or the Centre National d'Etudes de Télécommunications at Lannion.

It is also apparent that the movement towards industrialisation has favoured Basse-Bretagne much less than Ille-et-Vilaine and the Basse-Loire. This may well aggravate the already felt local imbalance in population.

Finally we must bear in mind that, while new factories have opened, others have had to close, causing the loss of 14,000 jobs in the ten years up to 1969.

Thus in terms of employment the Breton problem has still to be solved.  
Negative aspects of government attitudes

In most works which deal with the Breton problem it does tend to be the negative aspects of the governmental approach which are stressed, inevitably perhaps if the writer is attempting to create a climate of opinion in favour of the ideas he is putting forward. Mordrel for example spends eleven pages in criticism of the government's approach to the Breton problem since the Second World War.<sup>3</sup> However, some of the examples he gives do show an uncompromising and continuing government hostility to any idea that the Breton problem demands any kind of separate approach.

Thus, in May 1947, M. Naegelen, the Minister of Education, replying to a Breton delegation that had come to press for the teaching of Breton in schools, said that the primary school teacher's essential task, in Brittany as in Algeria, was to assimilate the local population at any price.<sup>4</sup>

1. Rennes has more than doubled its population in the last 30 years.
2. Le Guen, *op.cit.* p.519
3. Mordrel, *Breiz Atao*, pp.456-67.
4. Mordrel, *op.cit.* p.458.

'As late as 1972, speaking at Sarre-Union on 14 April, President Georges Pompidou said:

Il n'y a pas de place pour les langues et cultures régionales dans une France destinée à marquer l'Europe de son sceau.<sup>1</sup>

In between these two dates the government had acted directly against the preservation of the identity of the former province by the Debré decree of June 1960 which separated the prosperous department of Loire-Atlantique from the rest of Brittany. Just three months before that Debré had said in Rennes on 1 March that 'Il n'y a pas pour la France de politique bretonne, il y a une politique française en Bretagne'.<sup>2</sup>

When the government began to realise that CELIB might be an effective body, it tried to by-pass it by creating for the whole of France CODERS<sup>3</sup>, in which half the members were nominated by the government, and which had the right to do no more than formulate proposals.

In many small ways too the government seemed to attempt to stifle any expression of the separate identity of Brittany. Thus on Easter Monday 1957, those who wanted to make their annual pilgrimage to the tomb of Abbé Perrot<sup>4</sup> found their way blocked by 150 armed members of the CRS. Attempts were made to stop the addressing of letters in Breton and to replace the radio station Radio-Bretagne by one named Radio-Ouest.<sup>5</sup>

1. Mordrel, Breiz Atao, p.458

2. Mordrel, op.cit. p.460

3. The initials stand for Commission de développement économique régionale

4. Cf. above p.62 and footnote 1 p.98.

5. The name finally accepted was Radio-Armorique

Sometimes the government was foiled in its purpose. The French Navy's Breton pipe-band was dissolved, but it was later reinstated in the face of pressure from the public.<sup>1</sup> In 1966 the government finally lifted the ban, in existence since the introduction of the Code Napoléon, on parents being allowed to give Breton Christian names to their children. A government decree of 7 August 1967 banned the use of the Bzh car sticker, but the ban was ignored by the public and the decree was later annulled.<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of the French government towards the Breton problem in the second half of the 1970s was influenced not only by the bombings detailed above,<sup>3</sup> but also by the course of events in Corsica in 1975, which need to be examined briefly at this point.

On 22 August 1975, after a campaign of bombings which had continued almost uninterrupted since the Spring, a commando unit of 50 armed Corsican separatists, who had been holding 6 hostages whom they had already released, surrendered after a gun battle with police at a wine depot at Aleria. Two policemen were killed and 3 wounded. The militants were members of the ARC (Action pour la Renaissance de la Corse) and were demanding the 'decolonisation' of Corsica, i.e. that land farmed by former French settlers in North Africa should be returned to the Corsicans, and the release of fellow separatists who had been imprisoned for putting up posters. The leader of the ARC, Dr. Edmond Simeoni, was among the 50 in the depot, and was arrested and taken to Paris.<sup>4</sup> His

1. The dissolution may have been influenced by the discovery that two members of the FLB had been in the band during their military service.
2. Bzh is an abbreviation of Breizh (Brittany). The sticker was similar to the national stickers used on cars travelling outside the country in which they were purchased. Although the ban was a general one against stickers of this type it is believed to have been aimed primarily at the Breton one.
3. pp. 115-19.
4. After spending nearly a year in prison awaiting trial, Simeoni appeared before the Cour de Sûreté de l'Etat in Paris charged with leading an armed group against the authority of the State, illegal arrests, kidnapping, and the attempted murder of policemen in the course of their duty. He was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment with 2 years of this suspended.

arrest was followed by bombings in Bastia which led to further arrests. On 27 August the ARC was banned. Twelve hours later, during further clashes in Bastia, 1 policeman was killed and 18 were injured.

There was a good deal of sympathy in the French press for the Corsicans and criticism of the government's handling of the situation, and pressure was put on the government by the socialists and even the communists to introduce regional reforms which could have benefited Brittany too.

However, in late September the government reaffirmed its support for centralisation and the President later formally rejected his own proposals for regional assemblies which had formed part of his election platform.

In contrast, the Prime Minister of Quebec and leader of the separatist Parti Québécois, M. René Levesque, was rapturously received by the French government during his visit to France in November 1977. He was treated almost as a Head of State, awarded the Grand-Croix de la Légion d'honneur and assured by President Giscard d'Estaing that Quebec could count on France's understanding, confidence and support in whatever course it chose to follow.

Naturally such an obvious double standard in denying regionalist, let alone separatist, aspirations at home while openly supporting separatism in Quebec infuriated the representatives of the Breton movement. In an open letter to the President, the Union Démocratique Bretonne complained that although Spain after Franco had given autonomy to the Catalans and although he had shown complete goodwill to the Prime Minister of Quebec who aspired to the independence of his country, the only reason for the President's forthcoming visit to Brittany was to inspect a marine base.

The whole matter was reminiscent of De Gaulle's pronouncement in Canada ten years previously of 'Vive le Québec libre' which had similarly angered the members of the various regional movements in France.<sup>1</sup>

When we examine the government's approach towards Brittany we can begin to understand why there is a Breton movement, and, given the general nature of politics in France, it should not surprise us that the proposed solutions to Brittany's problems are numerous and varied, ranging from the moderation of CELIB to the extremism of the FLB.<sup>2</sup> There are of course many other parties, organisations and movements within the Breton movement, added to which there are all the everyday activities, peripheral to the movement, but emphasising the uniqueness of the Breton way of life and encouraging Bretons to be proud that they are such.

This is what we shall examine in the next section, beginning with a brief mention of the principal cultural organisation, Kendalc'h, and considering some of the peripheral activities that have not always been accorded the importance they perhaps merit, before moving on to consider the broad panorama of the Breton movement.

#### The cultural movement

The major organisation representing the cultural movement in Brittany is generally recognised to be Kendalc'h, the association of music and dance circles founded at Quimper on 15 October 1950. Kendalc'h has as its organ a monthly publication Breiz which calls itself 'le magazine de la jeunesse bretonne' and deals with all aspects of the cultural question, frequently trying to promote initiatives which might bring about a cultural renewal in Brittany.

1. Cf. above p.120 for the reaction of the Comité National de la Bretagne Libre.
2. For the reforms introduced by the socialist government since the 1981 elections, and Breton reactions to them, see below, pp. 186-8.

The importance of the work of Kendalc'h is generally recognised by those involved in the Breton movement, and there are other organisations which form part of the cultural movement which will be mentioned in the Appendix which deals with Gallo's panorama of the Breton Movement. However the influence of modern music and dance is often overlooked and should be considered at this point.

#### Music and dance

If we were to consider what might be the most effective way in which to influence large numbers of young people to accept certain ways of life, we would certainly have to admit that music and dance play a large part in determining the attitudes of many young people. We have only to recall the phenomena of 'mods' and 'rockers' and 'flower-power' in the 1960s and remember what a tremendous impact these made on young people. If we then add to this kind of 'instant culture' a tradition that dates back hundreds of years, and with which older generations can also identify, we can imagine how effective 'Breton' and 'Celtic pop' have been in stimulating young peoples' awareness of their Breton identity.

If the young person's interest in his identity is sufficient, he will then turn to the various organisations, movements and parties that will be detailed below, and of course to Breton literature, which will be considered in the following chapter. Obviously no-one would claim that pop music forms an essential step in this progression, but it is equally important not to dismiss it altogether.

We have already seen that interest in the traditional Breton music of the biniou and the bombarde had revived considerably after the 1939-45 war.<sup>1</sup> What the exponents of Breton pop were attempting to

1. Cf. above p.103.

do was produce a modern Breton music that was nevertheless conscious of the Breton musical tradition. That the singers of the new music were consciously trying to do this is shown by the words of perhaps the best known of them, Alan Stivell:

Il fallait très vite rompre avec l'image du barde nostalgique. D'où "Pop-Plinn" qui réunit mes deux idées de base: l'enracinement le plus profond et l'actualisation la plus complète.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from Stivell, such singers as Glenmor, Servat, Kirjuhél, Gweltaz, the founding of Breton record-labels such as Arfolk, Drouig and Kelenn and the signing of some Breton singers for the large record companies such as Atlantic and Fontana-Philips all indicate the tremendous impact and popularity of modern Breton music.

Although there has inevitably been a certain amount of commercial exploitation of this music, most of the artists seem sincere. Two influences seem to have been particularly important for them; the Breton musical tradition itself and the turmoil of ideas and ways of thinking that came with the events of 1968. Le Dantec and Lebesque both emphasise that this was an important time in provoking young peoples' awareness of their identity as members of a minority nationality. Thus the Breton singer Gilles Servat:

Je ne m'étais jamais intéressé à la culture bretonne avant mai 1968, pour la bonne raison que j'ignorais qu'il y en avait une.<sup>2</sup>

1. From an interview in Peuple breton, May 1973, cited by Le Dantec, Bretagne: Re-naissance d'un peuple, p.267
2. From the same interview, Le Dantec, op.cit., p.281.



' Many Breton singers have identified with the causes of workers and peasants in Brittany in the conflicts we have examined above<sup>1</sup> and introduced such current affairs into their songs.

As a result of all this, young people could begin to feel that there was nothing inferior or old-fashioned in being Breton, but that on the contrary it was something to be proud of:

Auparavant il y avait un mur de préjugés sur la musique bretonne. Il y avait le complexe d'infériorité, la peur d'être considéré comme arriéré. Or, le fait qu'on entende chanter en breton à des heures d'antenne normale entre des tubes français ou étrangers, le fait de passer à l'Olympia, à Bobino, tout cela a psychanalysé(sic) le peuple breton en quelque sorte.<sup>2</sup>

Linked with the music has been the greatly increased popularity of the fest-noz, the traditional gathering at which cider and cakes (chouchen) are consumed, Breton music, traditional and modern, is played and those present take part in traditional dances such as the gavotte. Such gatherings, which involve people of all ages, must also help convince young people that there is something to be proud of in being Breton. The fest-noz is not just an occasion for dancing, but also for discussion and thus when there has been industrial or agricultural unrest in Brittany, such a gathering is often organised to raise financial support for those involved and to allow those involved to discuss their grievances with those present.<sup>3</sup>

1. Cf. pp. 113-15.

2. Alan Stivell, in the interview cited above. Le Dantec, op.cit., p. 281.

3. The view of the significant role of modern popular music in supporting the Breton cause is underlined in Jacques Vassal, La Chanson Bretonne, (Paris 1980).

The scope and content of the Breton movement in 1973

In his Panorama du mouvement breton, Jacques Gallo gives a detailed analysis of the Breton movement in 1973. This was the last such analysis to be made, and helps to give some idea of the various elements that constitute the movement.

Gallo divides the Breton movement into four broad categories, detailing the various parties, organisations and reviews that form each category and at the end draws conclusions about the way in which the movement as a whole is evolving.

What we shall do in this section is to examine the four categories into which Gallo divides the movement and his conclusions. For the sake of clarity, the names and details of all the reviews, organisations and parties that form the movement will be given in an Appendix to this thesis.

Category One - the 'Breton party':

The basic elements of this category are seen by Gallo as nationalism, clericalism and the Breton language. We should remember here the reasons for which Gallo is hostile to those who form part of this category. The kind of nationalism that Gallo would favour would not have a bias towards clericalism and would most certainly take account of the bi-lingual nature of the area that corresponds to that of the former dukedom, whereas the members of this first category seem to adopt a position in favour of the exclusive use of the Breton language. Gallo is one of the champions of the French-speaking Bretons (known as Gallos, hence his adopted surname) who he believes should have just as much say in the future of the region as the Breton-speakers.

Of the 40 names that Gallo gives in Category one, he makes the following breakdown:

'Favouring nationalism (i.e. a nationalism biased towards clericalism)	40/40.
Favouring the exclusive use of Breton	32/40.
Relatively neutral	18/40.
Absolutely clerical	22/40.

Where an organisation is strongly clerical in policy, Gallo may give more than one plus in the column indicating clericalism. This leads him to give one further figure in the breakdown:

Actual figure for clericalism	59/40.
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#### Category Two - the 'French' party:

Basic elements - regionalism, or a modified nationalism, providing that there be some left-wing element in either of these, and the acceptance of bi-lingualism.

For category two, Gallo gives the following breakdown:

Favouring regionalism	19/20.
French-speaking (but rarely exclusively so)	16/20.
Relatively neutral	5/20.
Left-wing	15/20.
Actual figure for left-wing influence <sup>1</sup>	46/20.

#### Category Three - the independents or 'Celtic party':

Basic elements - nationalism, secularity and tolerance. Practising the formula first coined in the inter-war years 'Na ruz na gwenn, breizhad hepken' (Neither red nor white, Breton first.) Gallo places his own organisation, La Bretagne Réelle-Celtia, in this category.

1. Calculated in the same way as for the clerical element in category one.

This category is broken down as follows:

Favouring nationalism	14/14.
Liberal	14/14.
French-speaking	13/14.

Category Four - Associations, movements and specialist press:

This category comprises numerous associations and the specialist press, which, although often having very close links with the 'Breton' and 'French' parties, nevertheless have, in Gallo's eyes, a certain amount of independence, which brings them closer to the 'Celtic' party of category three.

The breakdown for this category:

Favouring regionalism	47/55.
Favouring nationalism	8/55.
Neutral	36/55.
Left-wing	8/55.
Favouring clericalism	8/55.
French-speaking	46/55.
Breton-speaking	6/55. <sup>1</sup>

Thus Gallo totals 129 different Breton organisations in existence in 1973, a considerable increase on the totals for the panoramas that he wrote in 1965 and 1969, when there were 57 and 86 respectively.

From the panorama he draws a certain number of general conclusions which it is interesting to consider.

1. Nationalists and regionalists, who are often separated only by the finest of nuances and almost all agree on the principle of autonomy, are in approximate balance within the movement with 66 regionalist organisations and 63 nationalist. The regionalists have thus improved on

1. The apparent discrepancy in totals arises because Gallo names three organisations for which he lists no inclination towards either French or Breton.

their position in 1969 when, of the 86 organisations, 55 were nationalist and 31 regionalist.

2. Those who are pro-clerical represent in influence 50% of the movement.
3. The left-wing represents in influence 40% of the movement.
4. The independents' influence therefore counts for 10%. However we should remember that these figures are allowing for Gallo's adjusted figures for clerical and left-wing influence. Taking unadjusted figures the relatively neutral element would account for 50% of the influence within the movement, and the committed element (clerical; left-wing; independent) for 50%.
5. Whereas Breton-speaking organisations were only half as many in number as French-speaking organisations in 1969 (29 to 50), their position had improved considerably by 1973 (55 to 65).

Gallo has emphasised the divisions within the Breton movement in the panorama, almost inevitably since his aim is to categorise the various organisations. However, he does remind us that there are various degrees of communication between the organisations of each category, and between categories, and he concludes his survey by emphasising what unites all these organisations, however disparate they may seem in other ways, and by pleading for tolerance. Thus he borrows these words from Douar Breiz:<sup>1</sup>

Les groupements formant le Mouvement breton sont juridiquement indépendants les uns des autres. Ce qui unit ces groupements c'est un esprit commun et une volonté commune de sauver la Bretagne et sa culture traditionnelle ... L'ensemble est en évolution constante.<sup>2</sup>

1. For Douar Breiz, cf. the Appendix on Gallo's Panorama, p. 202 .  
 2. Gallo, *op.cit.*, p.19.

and adds these words of his own:

Il y a une place pour tous, en Bretagne, et tous, déistes ou athées, marxistes ou antimarxistes y sont chez eux. Il s'agit de cohabiter, se supporter, se TOLERER.<sup>1</sup>

Gallo also emphasises that he is not pleading for a common doctrine to be shared by all those who form part of the Breton movement, indeed he sees the number of different organisations as being, paradoxically, part of the movement's strength. What he feels most strongly is that differences of approach must not distract the various organisations from their common purpose. He finds that his own feelings are best summed up in the following words, which do give a succinct appraisal of the situation in Brittany:

Aujourd'hui, nous voyons une pléiade de groupements fortement structurés et spécialisés, ce qui est l'indice certain d'un développement important ... une nation est un corps complexe qu'il serait vain de vouloir uniformiser, qu'il serait déplorable surtout de tenter d'uniformiser pour nous faire sombrer dans le caporalisme de droite ou de gauche et donner de la Bretagne une image châtrée, figée, hygiénique et bien ordonnée, tout ce que l'on voudra sauf vivante. Cela ne signifie pas évidemment, que je souhaite voir perdurer certaines querelles idiotes, ni les inimitiés inexpiables entre gens de bonne volonté qu'un fêtu sépare.<sup>2</sup>

1. Gallo, Panorama, pp.19-20

2. Gallo, op.cit., p.21.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE LITERATURE OF BRITTANY

In order to attempt to understand the various manifestations of a Breton identity, as distinct from a feeling of being simply French, that are to be seen in Brittany, we have considered the history of Brittany and the Breton movement and attempted to survey the current political and social scene. Yet if we wish to fully understand present day Brittany we must also consider its literature, past and present, for this will also reveal something of the preoccupations and interests of its people.

Obviously it is not within the scope of the present thesis to give a complete picture of Breton literature. The method that will be adopted is to examine various figures who have played some part in the Bretons' awareness of their separate identity. Major literary figures who were Breton by birth will be excluded in favour of writers whose preoccupation is specifically, or for the major part, with the Breton revival.

Thus the work of a writer such as Renan, who seems concerned either with the Celtic spirit, as expressed in early Celtic literature and the 'matière de Bretagne', or with Brittany as a background for his Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse, will not be considered, except for one interesting observation. This is taken from his article on La poésie des races celtiques and seems to have been taken to heart by some Breton writers:

... nous sommes loin de croire que cette race ait dit son dernier mot. Après avoir usé toutes les chevaleries dévotes et mondaines, couru avec Peredur le Saint-Graal et les belles, rêvé

avec Saint Brandan de mystiques Atlantides, qui sait ce qu'elle produirait dans le domaine de l'intelligence, si elle s'enhardissait à faire son entrée dans le monde, et si elle assujettissait aux conditions de la pensée moderne sa riche et profonde nature? Il me semble que de cette combinaison sortiraient des produits fort originaux, une manière fine et discrète de prendre la vie, un mélange singulier de force et de faiblesse, de rudesse et de douceur.<sup>1</sup>

We shall begin by considering the work of two figures who played a major part in rekindling the Bretons' awareness of their separate identity - La Villemarqué and Rio - and, after considering the writings of another major figure of the 19th century - Le Braz - will deal with the work of Malmanche and Per-Jakez Hélias, as representative of trends in the second and third emsav, and finally mention the modern, political writers.

#### Théodore Hersart de la Villemarqué

The writer who must first be considered is Théodore Hersart de la Villemarqué, author of the Barzaz Breiz, and one of the leading figures in the Breton revival in the nineteenth century,<sup>2</sup> whose influence is considerable even over a century later. Thus a leading Breton nationalist can write:

Le plus grand de nos réveilleurs fut Hersart de la Villemarqué, dont le 'Barzaz Breizh' défie un à un les plus que l'école avait fait prendre à notre esprit... "Kervarker", comme nous l'appelions, nous avait rendu sensible une Bretagne qui était naturellement elle-même sans avoir la moindre leçon à recevoir du voisin. Il nous restituait la dimension en profondeur que nos parents avaient perdue depuis des générations<sup>3</sup>.

1. Renan, Oeuvres complètes (Paris 1948), Vol.2 p.300-1

2. cf Chapter 2 p.51.

3. Olier Mordrel, Breiz Atao (Paris 1973), p.24.



La Villemarqué was born into a legitimist family in Quimperlé in 1815. He spent his childhood in the family's manor house at Plessis-Nizon and was educated at the Jesuit college in Auray and the seminary in Guérande, completing his studies at the Ecole des Chartes in Paris. While in Paris he became friendly with a group of Bretons who must have encouraged his enthusiasm for his native Brittany and its language:

Presque tous ceux dont les oeuvres, en quelque genre que ce soit, ont honoré depuis la Bretagne, fréquentèrent la mansarde de la rue de la Victoire. Ils y trouvaient chaque dimanche la patrie, son langage<sup>1</sup>.

His first writing took the form of articles of literary criticism for the Catholic periodical L'Echo de la jeune France, some of his articles being concerned with the literature of Brittany, such as 'Le cycle breton' (1.12.1836) and 'Dans les montagnes noires' (1.10.1837), the latter dealing with popular poetry.

La Villemarqué was a practising Catholic and closely involved with the Saint Vincent de Paul Society from its beginning in the early 1830s.

During this period he was doing preparatory work for the Barzaz Breiz, collecting poems and songs in Brittany, helped in this by his mother, and encouraged by Sainte-Beuve whom he had met in Paris.

The strength of La Villemarqué's feeling for Brittany and its language at this time is apparent from an article entitled 'Débris du Bardisme' that was published in L'Echo de la jeune France on 15 March 1836:

1. Pierre de la Villemarqué, 'La Villemarqué, sa vie et ses Oeuvres' in La Bretagne et les Pays Celtiques, Vol.20. 1926, p.20

Notre langue et notre civilisation envahies se mélangent et se décolorent, nos moeurs se corrompent, notre littérature se disperse en lambeaux, et notre nationalité s'efface: et voilà que les flots montent, montent toujours! Hâtons - nous de jeter un regard, un dernier regard d'amour à notre pays qui s'abîme, à son vieux soleil qui s'éteint.

In the Revue de Paris of 7 May 1837 he had two Breton popular songs with translations published.

In 1838 La Villemarqué visited England and Wales, under instruction from M. de Salvandy, the Minister of Education, to study the relationship between the literature and language of Wales and Brittany. During this visit he took part in the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 10 and 11 October 1838. He was much honoured, his specially composed patriotic song was very well received and he was made a bard. The circumstances of the event will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

The Barzaz Breiz, a collection of Breton poems and songs, was published in 1839. This was the book which has continually been acknowledged as one of the major influences in the Breton revival<sup>1</sup>. Many of the poems and songs are fired with Breton national feeling. The book became the subject of considerable criticism from those who maintained that some of the pieces had been considerably reworked by La Villemarqué and that he should simply have written them down as they were given to him. It was because of such criticism that he wrote in the same year:

1. Selected pieces were translated into English and published in London and Cambridge in 1865 under the title Ballads and songs of Brittany by Tom Taylor. Evidence of the continuing importance of the Barzaz Breiz is provided by its being announced for publication in April - June 1981 by the Paris based Librairie François Maspero.

Ils ont dû éprouver en traversant les siècles bien des altérations; s'il (La Villemarqué) a tâché, autant qu'il a pu, d'en retrouver les versions primitives en se les faisant répéter souvent jusqu'à quinze et vingt fois, par des personnes différentes, il n'ose se flatter d'y avoir toujours réussi. Il n'a pas non plus la prétention de les donner dans le dialecte où ils ont été composés, ils ont dû subir sous ce rapport autant de variations qu'ils ont parcouru de pays et de siècles, et sont actuellement chantés dans nos divers idiomes modernes<sup>1</sup>.

It is generally acknowledged that the reworking hinted at here did in fact take place, though this has not detracted from the influence of the book. It was generally well received and was awarded prizes by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1846 and the Académie Française in 1847.

One example of the content of the Barzaz Breiz will clearly illustrate the method La Villemarqué adopted. 'La Marche d'Arthur', is the eighth song in the first part of the 1867 edition<sup>2</sup>. The title for the first part of the book is 'Chants Mythologiques, Héroïques, Historiques et Ballades'<sup>3</sup>.

The song will be given with the 'Argument' that precedes it and the 'Notes' which follow it, as this is the method the author adopted for each of the songs in the collection. The author's own comments also reveal interesting details of his approach to the song and the collection in general. The only section of the original that will not be given is the Breton song from which the translation was made. In the 1867 edition the Breton is given in small type and occupies the bottom quarter of each page.

1. From 'Notice au Comité littéraire des Travaux historiques sur les Chants populaires de Bretagne, 1839'
2. The original text of the 1867 edition is reproduced in Vicomte Hersart de la Villemarqué, Chants Populaires de la Bretagne. Barzaz Breiz (Paris 1975)
3. The words 'Héroïques' and 'Historiques' are given in smaller type than the others.

## VIII

## LA MARCHE D'ARTHUR

- DIALECTE DE CORNOUAILLE<sup>1</sup> -

## ARGUMENT

La popularité dont jouit en Bretagne le nom d'Arthur est un des phénomènes les plus curieux de la fidélité bretonne. Ce nom, primitivement porté par une divinité guerrière, le fut, au sixième siècle, par un chef illustre, mort en défendant sa patrie, et auquel on attribua plusieurs des vertus surhumaines de son homonyme adoré. Les pères invoquaient le dieu en allant au combat; les fils chantèrent l'homme déifié, le jour de la bataille. Ni la défaite ni l'exil ne purent faire oublier Arthur aux Bretons. Sa renommée magique, traversant la mer avec eux, reçut en Armorique une vie toute nouvelle: il y devint, comme il était dans l'île de Bretagne, un symbole armé de la liberté nationale, et le peuple à toutes les époques, depuis le sixième siècle jusqu'à nos jours, y répéta, en les adaptant aux circonstances, les traditions et les bardits dont il était le sujet." Ainsi, toutes les fois qu'une guerre se prépare, on voit, en signe avant-courreur, l'armée d'Arthur défilier à l'aube du jour au sommet des Montagnes-Noires, et l'on y répète encore le bardit suivant, qui s'est retrouvé, après douze cents ans, dans la bouche des Bretons armés pour défendre leurs autels et leurs foyers. Je l'ai appris d'un ancien chouan de Leuhan, qui l'a souvent chanté, m'a-t-il dit, en marchant à l'ennemi, dans les dernières guerres de l'Ouest.

Allons, allons, allons au combat! allons parent, allons frère, allons fils, allons père! allons! allons! allons tous! allons donc, hommes de coeur!

Le fils du guerrier disait à son père un matin:-  
Des cavaliers au sommet de la montagne!

1. Three type sizes are used in the original. 'La Marche d'Arthur' is given in large capitals, the headings 'Argument' and 'Notes' in medium and 'Dialecte de Cornouaille' in small capitals. Similarly in the main body of the text the French version of the song is in larger type, the author's own observations in medium and the Breton original in smaller type.

Des cavaliers qui passent montés sur des coursiers gris qui reniflent de froid!

Rangs serrés six par six; rangs serrés trois par trois;  
mille lances brillant au soleil.

Rangs serrés deux par deux, suivant les drapeaux que balance le vent de la Mort.

Neuf longueurs d'un jet de fronde depuis leur tête jusqu'à leur queue.

C'est l'armée d'Arthur, je le sais; Arthur marche devant au haut de la montagne.

-Si c'est Arthur, vite à nos arcs et à nos flèches vives!  
et en avant à sa suite, et que le dard s'agite! -

Il n'avait pas fini de parler que le cri de guerre retentit d'un bout à l'autre des montagnes:

«Coeur pour oeil! Tête pour bras! et mort pour blessure,  
dans la vallée comme sur la montagne! et père pour mère,  
et mère pour fille!

«Etalon pour cavale, et mule pour âne! chef de guerre  
pour soldat, et homme pour enfant! sang pour larmes, et  
flammes pour sueurs!

«Et trois pour un, c'est ce qu'il faut, dans la vallée comme  
sur la montagne, jour et nuit, s'il se peut, jusqu'à ce que les  
vallées roulent des flots de sang.

«Si nous tombons percés dans le combat, nous nous baptiserons  
avec notre sang, et nous mourrons le coeur joyeux.  
Si nous mourons comme doivent mourir des chrétiens,  
des Bretons, jamais nous ne mourrons trop tôt!»

---

#### NOTES

Cette dernière strophe, dont les généreux sentiments forment un étrange disparate avec le reste de la pièce et qui y a sans doute été ajoutée par une voix moderne, a dû contribuer à sauver de l'oubli la Marche d'Arthur<sup>1</sup>. Elle était toujours répétée trois fois par les chanteurs, qu'elle enthousiasmait. Les autres ne leur offraient probablement qu'un sens vague; la lettre et l'esprit sont si loin de la manière de parler et de penser d'aujourd'hui! Rien n'empêche de croire, comme on l'a prétendu, que le chant a passé du dialecte cambrien dans le

1. The underlined words are given in italics in the original.

dialecte armoricain, au septième siècle, à la séparation de l'un et de l'autre peuple. La pièce offre effectivement plusieurs tournures grammaticales elliptiques, un grand nombre d'expressions étrangères au dialecte du continent et la forme ternaire et allitérée des poèmes bardiques gallois. J'ajouterai que les connaisseurs s'accordent à trouver à la mélodie, qui est éminemment énergique et martiale, un caractère tout particulier d'antiquité.

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If we consider the author's comments on the text first, the 'Argument' provides an introduction to the song, and also communicates the author's enthusiasm for his subject. La Villemarqué himself, like François Rio, no doubt saw Arthur as a symbol of Breton, and Welsh, freedom<sup>1</sup>.

When he mentions the adaptation of traditions and war songs to circumstances other than those under which they were composed, La Villemarqué is referring back to the introduction to the Barzaz, in which he elaborates his theories on the origin and development of different types of Breton folk songs. The reference to Bretons 'armés pour défendre leurs autels et leurs foyers' is explained in the last sentence. It concerns the Breton 'chouans' and their resistance, as Royalists and Catholics, to the armies of the first French Republic, which was obviously strongly opposed to both<sup>2</sup>. The 'chouans' of course had La Villemarqué's sympathies on both counts, and we must remember that though this song, and his enthusiasm for it, are apparently militant, the militancy is that of a supporter of a hierarchical social order and a conservative Catholic church<sup>3</sup>, and very different from that of the modern political writers or the

F.L.B.

1. See below p. 156 in the last words of Rio's speech to the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 1838.

2. cf. the chapter on The History of Brittany above, pp. 41-4.

3. see below pp. 152-3.

In the 'Notes' his point about the difference in tone of the last verse of the song from the rest is obviously valid. The rest of the song has the martial, rather pagan tone of other early songs in this section, with its reference to the ghostly army carrying the banner of Death, in Breton 'Ankaou', the personification of Death, and a recurring figure in Breton literature up to the present day.<sup>1</sup> Certainly hard, vengeful phrases like 'Coeur pour oeil! tête pour bras! et mort pour blessure' and 'trois pour un, c'est ce qu'il faut', seem to be contradicted by 'nous mourrons le coeur joyeux. Si nous mourons comme doivent mourir des chrétiens, des Bretons, jamais nous ne mourrons trop tot!' La Villemarqué seems very positive that the song passed from Welsh to Breton in the seventh century, but does not specify any supporting evidence, simply writing 'comme on l'a prétendu', and there is a similar lack of support for his statement that 'les connaisseurs' agree that the melody, given, along with others, in the back of the book, has characteristics that would make it appear particularly old. His concern with placing the song as early in time as possible, a concern which is clear in the majority of the songs in this part of the collection, is no doubt meant to counter those who criticised him for reworking some of his material<sup>2</sup>.

Criticisms of his method must however be put into perspective. La Villemarqué was fighting a battle to re-establish Breton as a language, in the face of considerable opposition from the representatives of central government, at a time when the tendency was to belittle the importance of minority languages and actively attempt to suppress their use, in schools for example. The importance of the Barzaz Breiz in that battle is still evident today, and acknowledged by many of the major figures of the Breton revival of this century. Add to this that he himself was consciously making propaganda on behalf of the Breton language,

1. In Pierre Jakez-Hélias, Le Cheval d'Orgueil (Paris 1975), there are many references to this figure.

2. See above, pp. 145-6.

and was one of the pioneers in the collection of Breton folk songs, and it is perhaps easier to understand, if not forgive, faults in method, or an enthusiastic, rather than totally analytic, approach<sup>1</sup>.

In 1842 his article on 'L'Avenir de la langue bretonne' was first published as a preface to a collection of canticles by Abbé Henry entitled Kannouennou Santel. In this article he denounced the mentality and policies which deliberately discriminated against Breton, and stigmatised those responsible, including teachers, printers and some members of the clergy. The teachers of course were acting in accordance with official policy, as we have seen before. In 1831, in a letter to the Ministre de l'Instruction publique the prefects of Finistère and Côtes-du-Nord had advocated:

Par tous les moyens possibles l'appauvrissement, la corruption du breton jusqu'au point que, d'une commune à l'autre, on ne puisse pas s'entendre. Car alors la nécessité des communications obligera le paysan d'apprendre le français. Il faut absolument détruire le langage breton.<sup>2</sup>

Thus La Villemarqué's anger at the teacher:

.. lorsqu'on le voit, furieux de prêcher une morale incomprise, demander au fouet un argument sans réplique, 'pour inculquer, comme il dit, jusqu'au sang, le français aux petits sauvages', le sourire meurt sur les lèvres et fait place à l'indignation. Telle est pourtant la méthode d'instruction élémentaire qu'emploie généralement l'Université dans nos campagnes; aussi les rares écoliers qu'elle recrute appellent-ils leurs maîtres d'un nom énergique, dont le

1. For further comments on his approach see below p.153.

2. Cited in Philippe Durand, Le livre d'or de la Bretagne (Paris 1975), pp.162-3



français n'a pas d'équivalent: Kigherien, Carnifices; et la langue des magisters ne fait pas, grâce à Dieu, de grands progrès chez nos paysans<sup>1</sup>.

His next major work was the Essai sur l'histoire de la langue bretonne, first published in 1847. In this work the reasons for his ardent defence of the Breton language became clearer. The *essai* is not simply a history of the language but also a piece of propaganda on its behalf. Thus it quotes the words of the Lenten sermon that the Bishop of Quimper, Mgr. Graveran, had preached the previous year:

Vous avez besoin, dit-on, d'être polis par la civilisation avancée du siècle; nous ne disputerons pas, mais prenez garde qu'à force de vous polir la civilisation ne vous use, ne vous amoindrisse, n'efface l'empreinte de votre caractère religieux. Voilà le sujet de nos alarmes; voilà pourquoi nous voyons avec un contentement réel que vous tenez à vos vieux usages, à vos vieux costumes, à votre vieille langue, et nous ne parlons pas ici en littérateur préoccupé de questions philologiques, en artiste épris de formes pittoresques, mais en évêque convaincu par l'expérience et la raison de l'étroite liaison qui existe entre la langue d'un peuple et ses croyances, entre ses usages et ses mœurs, entre ses habitudes et ses vertus<sup>2</sup>.

La Villemarqué was obviously just as convinced as the bishop of the link between a people's language and its beliefs, for his comment on these words was 'Peut-on mieux penser et mieux dire?'<sup>3</sup> Both believed that the introduction of French favoured the beginning of dechristianisation and that it was necessary to work for the reinforcement of the local language so that Catholicism would be strengthened,

1. Cited in Philippe Durand, Le livre d'or de la Bretagne (Paris 1975), p.162-3

2. Aux origines du nationalisme breton/2. Essai sur l'histoire de la langue bretonne par Hersart de La Villemarqué suivi de notes et éclaircissements par Bernard Tanguy (Paris 1977), p.78.

3. Tanguy, op.cit.p.78.

and could pursue the task, as defined in the epilogue of the Barzaz Breiz, of preaching to the population 'Le respect pour les gens d'Eglise, pour les propriétaires, pour toutes les personnes d'une condition supérieure'<sup>1</sup>.

His work, as previously stated, was, like that of the early Breton historians La Borderie and Pitre-Chevalier, strongly pro-Catholic and equally strongly in opposition to the principles of the Revolution, and typifies the Breton movement of the early nineteenth century and the Association Bretonne, of which he was a member.

The latest edition of the Essai further reinforces the view that it is also propaganda for the Breton language. Bernard Tanguy's notes make it clear that La Villemarqué often deliberately shortened quotations or drew from them some rather unjustified conclusions to support his case for the Breton language. Thus Tanguy's final note on the text:

...on constate que les textes cités sont trop souvent détournés de leur signification soit par les amputations qui y sont pratiquées, soit par les interprétations tendancieuses qui en sont faites et qui sont trop nombreuses pour n'être pas délibérées<sup>2</sup>.

La Villemarqué was also anxious to purify the Breton language in accordance with the bases laid down by Le Gonidec in his Grammaire bretonne of 1807 and Dictionnaire breton of 1821<sup>3</sup>.

However, the strongest impression of his work that remains with the reader is that of a writer who believed that in the future success of the Breton language lay the future success of Catholicism and conservatism, in both of which he firmly believed.

1. Barzaz Breiz, p.531.

2. Tanguy, op.cit. p.245

3. The Essai sur l'histoire de la langue bretonne had first been published as the introduction to Le Gonidec's Dictionnaire français-breton, which La Villemarqué had completed after the former's death.

### François Rio

While Rio cannot strictly be described as a major figure of Breton literature, he played an interesting role in the early part of the Breton revival, a role which brought him into contact with La Villemarqué.

Primarily known as an art historian and critic, Rio was born in Lorient in 1797 and brought up on the Ile d'Arz in the gulf of Morbihan. He was a firm believer in Catholicism and supporter of the exiled king, Louis XVIII.<sup>1</sup> During his time as a pupil at the Collège de Vannes he led a band of schoolboys against Napoleon's forces during the Hundred Days, in what has been called the 'petite chouannerie'. The band of schoolboys successfully defended the small town of Muzillac against General Rousseau's troops, and Rio was later made a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur. Later in Rio's life the episode was to inspire a poem by Wordsworth, whom he met during his travels in England. The poem, entitled 'The Eagle and the Dove', was included in Rio's book about the episode, La Petite Chouannerie ou Histoire d'un collège breton sous l'Empire, published in London in 1842.

After leaving school Rio eventually worked as a teacher for a time, and then travelled about Italy and Germany. In Rome he met Baroness Bunsen (née Waddington), who was of Welsh origin. Rio's enthusiasm for Breton, and his awareness of the links between it and Welsh, were rekindled when she sang him some of the Welsh songs she had collected:

On eût dit qu'il y avait dans ces fortes et tristes modulations  
je ne sais quelle combinaison mystérieuse qui venait de réveiller en  
moi la fibre celtique.<sup>2</sup>

Through a letter of introduction from the Baroness, which referred to his enthusiasm for Breton and desire to study Welsh, he made contact with other members of the Welsh aristocracy and, in spring 1833, spent

1. The same mixture we have observed in other figures prominent in the Breton revival.  
2. Rio, Epilogue à l'art chrétien (Fribourg-en-Brigau 1870), Vol. 2, p. 150.

a month in Wales, where he was well received by some of the old Catholic families and further inspired by hearing spoken a sister language to his own.

In Wales he met his future wife, Miss Appollonia Jones, of Llanarth Court, near Abergavenny, who was a practising Catholic like himself and shared his enthusiasm for the arts. He married her in February 1834.

There too he became friendly with a clergyman, Thomas Price, a great admirer of the traditions and language of Brittany. Price had been awarded a prize at the 1824 Eisteddfod in Welshpool for an essay on the links between Wales and Brittany, had visited Brittany, and had made the acquaintance of Le Gonidec.<sup>1</sup> Price and Rio wanted to re-establish the ancient link between the two countries. Both were members of the Cymdeithas Cymreigyddion y Fenni (Welsh Literary Society of Abergavenny) and brought about the invitation of a Breton delegation to the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 10 and 11 October 1838.<sup>2</sup>

The delegation consisted of de Blois, Louis de Jacquelot du Boisrouvray, de Francheville, de Kerdrel, de Mauduit, du March'allah and La Villemarqué, all leading figures in the field of Celtic studies. The poet Brizeux was also invited, but could not attend, remaining instead near the dying Le Gonidec. Most of the members of the delegation stayed with Rio's parents-in-law at Llanarth Court.

The re-establishment of the link was a great success. At the main session of the Eisteddfod La Villemarqué proposed an enthusiastic toast to the Welsh and sang in Breton his specially composed 'Kan-aouen Eisteddyod', Francheville recited some of his poems, and Louis de Jacquelot du Boisrouvray, a friend of Lamartine, read the verses, specially composed for the occasion by the poet, and later published in Recueils poétiques, which began

1. Le Gonidec. cf. above p.153..

2. Some useful information on this period of Rio's life was derived from an unpublished typescript by L. Allen, 'French Catholics and the Oxford Movement'.

Quand ils se rencontraient sur la vague ou la grève,  
 En souvenir vivant d'un antique départ,  
 Nos pères se montraient les deux moitiés d'un glaive, . .

Finally Rio made an impassioned speech which ended with the words 'Non, non, le roi Arthur n'est pas mort'. The speech was received with rapturous applause.

The Eisteddfod and Rio's part in it were even reported in France in the Journal des Débats of 21 October 1838.

Rio met La Villemarqué again at a dinner in London given by Rogers, one of the many leading literary and society figures whose acquaintance he made during his stays in that city.

Apart from his interest in Wales and Brittany, Rio's journal reveals his interest in the Irish problem, although this seems to have been focussed on the future of Ireland's Catholic population rather than on Ireland as another Celtic nation.

From this time on Rio seems to have become preoccupied with his work in the fields of history and aesthetics, but he never lost his love of Wales or his native Brittany. His love for his native province is clearly expressed in this entry from his journal, as is his enthusiasm for Catholicism:

... je n'apprécie pas assez l'honneur d'appartenir à une province qui est comme le coeur du catholicisme en France et le dernier asile populaire où la religion se soit réfugiée.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most lasting monument to Rio's part in the Breton revival is the link which still exists between Brittany and Wales, a link which he played a major part in forging.

1. Dom L. Gougaud, La société lettrée de Londres observée par un écrivain français en 1939. Journal inédit de François Rio. Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, Louvain, Vol. 30. 1934, p. 562.

### Anatole le Braz

Anatole le Braz was the foremost of those who published Breton songs, poems and tales in French without reworking them. He was born in 1859 in Saint-Servais (Côtes-du-Nord). He learned Breton from his mother and French from his father. After teaching philosophy at the collège in Etampes, he moved back to his native Brittany to teach in the lycée in Quimper from 1886 to 1901. During this time he made the acquaintance of François-Marie Luzel, who had been collecting Breton folk-lore for twenty years. From now on Le Braz was both teacher and writer.

The first result of this collaboration with Luzel was Soniou Breiz-Izel, a collection of Breton folk-songs, published in 1890. The collection expresses the author's emotion at the gloom and resignation which seem to prevail in Brittany. The theme of death spreading its empire over an abandoned people runs throughout the collection.

Le Braz was also a staunch defender of the Breton cause, playing a central part in the activity of the Union régionaliste bretonne which was founded in 1898.<sup>1</sup>

From 1901 to 1924, two years before his death, Le Braz was a lecturer in the university of Rennes. In 1904 his thesis Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre celtique was published.

The work that established his reputation abroad is La Légende de la Mort, published in 1893 in two volumes. The book deals with the customs, beliefs and traditions of the Bretons in regard to death.

To give a clearer picture of his work, we will examine the collection of short stories entitled Pâques d'Islande. The stories are: 'Funérailles d'été', 'La Nuit des Feux', 'Dans Le 'Yeun'', 'La Nuit des Morts', and, of course, the title story.

1. Cf. above chapter 2 p.54.

As in La Chanson de la Bretagne, published in 1892, the theme of death is present in each of the stories and forms part of a melancholy treatment of the narrative, in which a mixture of the religious and the supernatural plays a large part. Thus in 'Dans Le 'Yeun'' a badly mistreated little girl dies as a result of her parents' neglect, but at the end of the story is taken directly up into Paradise on Christmas Eve with her aged grandfather. The transition between real life and the journey to Paradise is imperceptible.

In 'La Nuit des Morts' the religious, superstitious and supernatural elements are linked as the author gives various traditions and stories associated with Hallowe'en. Thus, following the description of the people of a village in the Montagnes Noires praying at the graves of members of the family, we see them preparing the table at home with a meal that the Anaôn, the spirits of the dead, will take on the occasion of their annual return to their former homes. We also meet Nann Coadelez, reputed to have journeyed to purgatory and returned alive, and Mikaël Inizan, a madman who, in accordance with Breton tradition, is considered to be therefore much closer than normal mortals to the other world.

The link Le Braz sees between the past and present inhabitants of the mountains of Brittany is expressed in more detail in 'La Nuit des Feux'. The fires of the title are not those lit on the feast of Saint John but those lit to celebrate the feast of Saint Peter. Though this is apparently a religious occasion, Le Braz feels that it also represents a return to their ancestors' belief in the power of fire, a grafting of a religious ceremony onto a pagan one:

L'assistance, massée en cercle, garde une immobilité, pour ainsi dire, religieuse ... dans toutes ces âmes continuent de vivre intensément les deux grands sentiments qui se sont partagé l'humanité primitive: la peur de l'ombre et l'adoration de la lumière.<sup>1</sup>

1. Anatole Le Braz, Paques d'Islande, ( Nelson, Edinburgh, n.d.) p.155.

'Pâques d'Islande' is the only one of these stories not set in Brittany. It is set on a Breton fishing boat off the Icelandic coast, but is much concerned with the attitudes of the Bretons on board to religion and death - in this case the death of a member of the crew. To the themes of religion and the supernatural are added the theme of exile from and love for Brittany.

Religion has a dominant place in the minds of the Breton fishermen, to whom it is vital that they should hold a service to commemorate Easter. So the crew gather on deck in the freezing cold to celebrate their service at which one of the crew officiates. The idea of a lay person acting as a priest when there is no ordained priest available has been used more recently by Queffélec in Un Recteur de l'île de Sein<sup>1</sup>, and was enlarged upon by Le Braz in 'La Nuit des Feux' where the prayers at the fire were led by a local lay person, rather than by the priest, who was present, but came from outside the area.

As we might expect superstition and the supernatural are closely linked to religion. During the description of the service on the boat the narrator breaks to say:

Vous savez ce qu'on dit: lorsqu'on prie tout haut à Islande, les âmes des 'perdus', errants dans ces parages, vous répondent.<sup>2</sup>

The death of a crew member also brings in the supernatural as, before his death is known, the others in the crew see what they later realise is his ghost, standing by the mast, smiling at them.

The crew's continuous longing for their homeland, and references to the celebrations at Easter that they remember from the past, lend a particularly Breton flavour to the story.

1. Henri Queffélec, Un recteur de l'île de Sein, (Paris 1945)  
 2. Le Braz, Pâques d'Islande, p.41.



L'apparition de l'andouille ... fut saluée d'un triple hurra ...  
 L'Islande même, Seigneur! que nous en étions loin! Voici que nous nous  
 imaginions attablés à quelque festin de pardon, sur la côte d'Armor,  
 en avril, après carême, alors qu'aux poutres des granges, dans les fermes,  
 pendent les cadavres sans tête des porcs fraîchement tués.<sup>1</sup>

The continuous references to Brittany remind us that for most of the year these men are exiles from their native land and that if they want to be able to live in Brittany one of the few occupations that will allow them to do so will, paradoxically, take them from it. Exile is very much a part of the life of many Bretons, as we have seen from the numbers of Bretons forced to leave Brittany permanently in order to find work. The deprivations of this exile again have a religious flavour as the narrator, a crewman, longs to hear the church-bells and see the steeples of home.

#### Tanguy Malmanche

Tanguy Malmanche has been selected as a representative literary figure of the second emsav on the recommendation of modern Bretons. In its short bilingual survey of Breton literature Skol an Emsav has this to say about his work:

Tanguy Malmanche, mort en 1953, avait dès 1900 publié sa première pièce de théâtre, Le conte de l'âme qui a faim. Parti tôt vers l'exil, il est resté isolé, mais a continué à écrire pour le théâtre: Gurvan, l'AntéChrist, la Veuve Arzur, les Pagans, qui sont aujourd'hui les chefs d'oeuvre du théâtre breton contemporain, certains réédités ou joués récemment, des oeuvres débordantes de merveilleux et d'imagination, tels d'anciennes "gwerz" retrouvées et renouvelées, ou parfois au contraire des tableaux impitoyables de la vie des Bretons au début de 20<sup>e</sup> siècle.<sup>2</sup>

1. Le Braz, Pâques d'Islande, p.53.

2. Skol An Emsav, Sens de la Littérature bretonne/Kompren hon Lennegezh.p.7.

The pamphlet bears no date or place of publication, but was probably published in the early 1970s.

Skol an Emsav also sees him as possibly being the influence responsible for the emergence of the literary movement, centred around Gwalarn, that evolved during the period between the First and Second World Wars.<sup>1</sup>

Thus his work certainly comes highly recommended. The reality, however, is somewhat different. Skol an Emsav give the impression that his work is easily obtainable, but this is slightly misleading. Visits by friends of the writer to bookshops in France and Brittany failed to discover any of his works in stock, although a catalogue issued by Les Librairies de la Cité states that copies of seven of his works can be ordered through them from the publishers Al Liamm.

Given that Skol an Emsav's picture of the availability of his work is rather misleading, we may well wonder whether the statements about the work itself are also somewhat exaggerated, but before examining that it might be interesting to know something about the man himself.

He was born in 1875 in the Léon area, and as a child spoke the Léonard dialect that he was to use in all his written work. His parents wanted him to join the army, but he chose to become a master iron-smith who made, among other things, a 'machine à nouilles' that received a gold medal at the Paris Fair in 1941. Before this he had himself printed his play Gurvan on a hand-press, and opened a workshop specialising in the repair of Renault vehicles.

This gives us an inkling of the mixture of practical skill and creativity in both manual and literary work within Malmanche, but it would also be worth hearing his own idea of himself, from the

1. For more information on Gwalarn see above, p.67.

prologue to Gurvan. We should remember that, in the old Breton mystères, Prologue was also the name given to the character who recited the text.

LE PROLOGUE s'avance, vêtu en forgeron.

Au nom du Père et du Fils

et du Saint-Esprit, Amen.

Que ceux dont le métier consiste à se moquer  
de toute pensée honnête et chrétienne,  
de toute chose pure et d'esprit élevé,  
que ceux-là sortent, ou se taisent.

Mon nom est Tanguy, du Manoir du Rest,

en Plabennec, auprès de Brest.

Maintenant j'habite Paris.

Et voilà que l'idée soudaine m'est venue

de mettre par écrit une sorte de jeu

propre à désennuyer les gens de mon pays

Je suis de métier, maître-forgeron.

Mon tablier n'a pas de trous.

Je sais, comme tout un chacun,

construire une batteuse ou des automobiles.

Tout le long du jour je travaille;

je travaille âpre et dur: il faut gagner ma vie.

Mais quand descend le soir, quand mon corps engourdi

pèse lourdement vers la terre,

quand se ferment mes yeux devant la vilénie

du monde, et devant sa misère,

mon esprit aime à s'envoler

de l'autre côté des étoiles

pour contempler mon pays tant aimé,  
 là-bas, et pour y converser  
 d'anciennes choses disparues  
 avec nos grands-parents, ceux du très, très vieux temps.

J'ai reçu de l'instruction;  
 à Rennes je fus à l'école.  
 je sais français comme latin;  
 J'aurais très bien pu faire un prêtre,  
 je pouvais me mettre notaire.

Et cependant j'ai fait cette pièce en breton  
 parce que j'ai trouvé qu'il faut, comme dit l'autre,  
 aboyer chez les chiens, hurler avec les loups,  
 et parler breton en Bretagne.

Donc moi, Tanguy, dont la paroisse est Plabennec,  
 j'ai "levé" cette pièce en "langage" breton  
 - que Monsieur Combes m'en excuse -  
 en l'honneur de mon Dieu et de mon cher pays.<sup>1</sup>

More than one theme is clearly expressed in this prologue that we have seen or will see in the work of other writers considered in this chapter.

First the clear identification with traditional religious values of the first four lines and identification with Brittany of the next two. The religious commitment is repeated in a different way in the last line, while the identification with Brittany is developed into a clear commitment to the Breton language. This involves a further theme, the treatment of the French language and people as alien to Brittany, and, by implication, the refusal to accept that

1. Cited in Philippe Durand, Le Livre d'Or de la Bretagne (Paris 1975) pp.251-2

Brittany is simply a part of the State of France and has no separate identity from it. This theme is expressed in various ways.

First with the equating of French and Latin, as languages equally foreign to a Breton. This also involves the role of the education system in France in reducing the status and use of Breton, and other minority languages.<sup>1</sup>

Second with the conscious or subconscious implication that those outside Brittany, presumably the French, are 'chiens' and 'loups'. This animosity later becomes directed at M. Combes in particular for his branding of Breton as a 'langage' rather than a 'langue', and the consequent implication that Breton is inferior to French and should be subordinated to it.<sup>2</sup>

This is linked with the third theme, pride in being Breton and speaking Breton, which is obviously aimed at making other Bretons feel the same.

The lines 'je pouvais me mettre notaire. Et cependant j'ai fait cette pièce en breton' might also imply a contradiction between being a notaire and speaking Breton. French was seen as the language that would enable people to get on in the world. This, again, reduced the status of Breton, both in the eyes of non-Bretons and of many Bretons. Again Malmanche is taking a clearly pro-Breton stance.

1. See above, p.151 and the section on Jakez-Hélias, below p.177.
2. M.Combes denotes Emile Combes, Président du Conseil from 1902 to 1905, an ardent anti-clerical who tabled a law for the separation of Church and State in November 1904. We should remember that when Malmanche wrote this prologue, (Gurvan le chevalier étranger was published in 1923), there was a strong identification between the Catholic church and the Breton language and people. Cobban, in A History of Modern France, Volume 3: 1871-1962 (Harmondsworth 1965) describes Combes as 'a second-rate, elderly senator' who only attained such high office because 'as an ardent anti-clerical himself he might be expected to hold an anti-clerical majority together' (p.60), and later states that although Combes' anti-clerical measures aroused strong opposition, 'only in Brittany did disturbances worthy of the name occur' (p.62).

In the section of the prologue where he speaks of himself he reveals the mixture of the thinker and the practical man that he is. The clear statement that he is a manual worker is perhaps aimed at identifying himself with his potential audience and having them identify with him. But he also reveals that traditional Breton, indeed Celtic, preoccupation with the spirit world, and belief in a higher plane of reality, in the same section of the prologue, where he links himself to the spirits of past generations.

It would now seem appropriate to examine one of Malmanche's plays in detail. The chosen play is Les Païens.<sup>1</sup> A brief summary of the plot will be given, followed by comment on plot and character, and consideration of the themes that emerge.

The title of the play should perhaps be considered first. In a note dealing with this, Malmanche states that Les Païens actually means Les Paysans but he is keeping to Païens as the traditional form. Les Païens are the people of the North coast of Brittany, between the bays of Voulgat, to the West, and Goulven, to the East. In the same note, Malmanche goes as far as to say that 'Les Païens actuels sont les propres descendants des Bretons immigrés en Armorique aux premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne'. The statement prompts one to wonder whether he is trying to imply that these are 'pure' Bretons he is showing in the play, especially as the play is set much further back in time, in 1681, and as, later in the note, Malmanche states that they still, when the play was written, maintained their independence because of the 'isolement farouche' in which they had been kept by clan, fief and parish spirit.<sup>2</sup>

1. Tanguy Malmanche, Les Païens. Tragédie en 3 actes. Version française suivie de notes. pp.136. (Paris 1933). The play was first performed in Paris on 14 April 1931, at the Théâtre de l'Oeuvre. The title of the Breton version is Ar Baganziz.

2. Malmanche, op.cit.pp.124-5.

The plot hinges on the announcement of the new Ordonnance de la Marine of August 1681 which, to the consternation of the Païens, forbade the 'Loi de la Mer': the killing of shipwrecked mariners, over whom they had the power of life and death and from whom they could claim ransom, and the taking of 'blé de mer', the harvest of shipwrecks. The early part of the play reveals how the Loi de la Mer, or 'Lagan', can resolve conflicts between the Païens. Its interpreter is Falhan Sezny, who asserts that neither the local priest nor the king can be more right than the Loi de la Mer. His attitude is summarised in these lines:

Celles-là sont paroles d'hommes; elles passeront comme la bourrasque. Mais celles de Dieu ne passeront pas; et le Loi de la Mer, Dieu lui-même l'a faite. A chacun ici-bas il a donné son lot; et je labourerai mon champ, pour ne pas que la faim entre dans ma maison.<sup>1</sup>

Malmanche's sympathies seem to lie with Falhan, as, in a note, he seems to excuse the Païens for their power over the life and person of shipwrecked sailors, which he considers an extension of the principle of rights of property over what is found on the shore:

Ce qui apparait comme une pratique criminelle n'est donc que la persistance, chez un peuple très conservateur, d'un droit ancien on ne peut plus régulier!<sup>2</sup> (Sic!)

A shipwreck, partly caused by Falhan's maid M<sup>o</sup>n luring the ship on to the rocks, leads to the death of the Cornishman Lan, one of its crew, after he has been converted from his bad ways by Falhan's daughter, Del. After Lan's death Del, who has fallen in love with him, goes mad. As a result of conflict between the authorities and the Païens over this first test of the new Ordonnance, Falhan heroically takes another man's crime (the murder of Lan) on himself and is led away by the king's officers.

1. Malmanche, Les Païens. p.62.

2. Malmanche, op.cit. p.128.

One's first reaction to the play may be rather negative. In many ways the plot seems contrived and coincidental, and the action to be seeking to arouse emotion by the juxtaposition of some rather unreal characters who are all good (Del and Fant) or all bad (Goulven). Where the character changes, like Lan, the transformation may seem rather speedy and unconvincing, almost too good to be true. Perhaps it is an admission of present day decadence to suggest that a modern French audience would groan at the set of circumstances which leads Del to be standing, half-undressed, at the bed in which Lan is sleeping, when the other man who wishes to marry her enters, and to ask him to speak quietly. One can certainly say, however that there is an inherent weakness in a dramatic device - Del's misunderstanding of Lan's words - that makes the author feel obliged to explain, in a note:

Del ne peut pas supposer que des mots qu'elle ne comprend soient autre chose que du français, lequel est parlé par les seuls seigneurs. Donc la phrase anglaise que prononce Lan fait naître en elle l'idée qu'il ne peut être qu'un seigneur.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps a weakness peculiar to the French version of the play that Del's continuing misunderstanding of Lan means that we have a Breton-speaking girl misunderstanding a Cornish-speaking man, but that both languages are represented by French, which makes it difficult for the audience to understand Del's problems of interpretation. All in all, to cope with a modern French audience's reaction to his play, Malmanche might need the sense of humour he demonstrates in this note:

1. Malmanche, Les Paiens, p.134



Quimper est en effet le dernier point de Bretagne où la Loi de la Mer continue à être appliquée, et dans toute sa rigueur. Les 'étrangers' qui échouent sur ses rives perfides y sont reçus à coups de fusil, détroussés sans pitié, et finalement égorgés à l'épée. Et ils n'y jouissent même pas du repos éternel, ou tout au moins nocturne; car la bière qu'on leur fournit - à prix exorbitant - est faite avec du bois de genêt, et de si mauvaise qualité, que certains préfèrent la rendre. (Note de l'Auteur, non compris le service - de dernière classe).<sup>1</sup>

In a more positive reaction, however, one might consider the aspects of his characters that the author, who was not a writer by profession, is trying to stress. Thus the simple nobility of Falhan, who lives and dies by his almost fanatical belief in the Lagan, the Loi de la Mer. His offer to take Goulven's crime on himself is noble, as it will probably mean death for him, but he has the motive that he wishes Goulven to survive as the interpreter of the Lagan. The audience may well admire Falhan's ferocious independence of King and priest, while being unable to accept a system that could allow shipwrecked sailors to be killed. There is an inevitable measure of sympathy for the purity and simplicity of Del, who finally goes mad as a result of the tragedy these qualities bring upon her. Fant too is pure, and our sympathy for her is increased by that which Del, the other totally good character in the play, displays towards her, in contrast to the mocking comments by Goulven and the superstitious attitude of other villagers. It is purity too that changes Lan from a rogue into a man who is honestly determined to improve himself, and, for the first time, able to consider someone other than himself.

1. Malmanche, Les Paiens, p.136

Our positive reaction should also include consideration of the themes that emerge from the play. Most of these form part of the strong Breton element. The play was originally written in Breton, and has a truly Breton atmosphere created by the calvary, the church, and primitive tavern that are part of the set for the first act, and the Breton furnishings of the set for the other two acts. The exchanges between the villagers, often amusing, help to establish the nature of this particular part of Brittany. More than this, however, the play contains themes that are of concern to the characters in it but could also, by extension, interest modern Bretons. To begin with the language. The author intended to renew popular theatre in Brittany and show that a play could and should as easily be written in Breton as in French. His interest extended beyond Breton to the Celtic languages in general. Here he shows a character speaking Cornish, a language that could mostly be understood by Bretons. Thus he was teaching his audience something of their linguistic history. His interest is apparent in a footnote in which he comments on attempts to revive the Cornish language:

... de pieux fils de Cornwall s'efforcent, actuellement, de ressusciter l'antique langage de leur pays. Y réussiront-ils? Je le souhaite mais n'ose l'espérer. Une langue est un être vivant, doué d'une âme et d'un esprit que la science et l'art humains seront toujours impuissants à lui insuffler.<sup>1</sup>

This note leads to a further note in which Malmanche clearly expresses his feelings about the future of the Breton language. He takes a dig at the Grand Dictionnaire produced by the Académie Bretonne, and thus reveals something of the interfactional Breton squabbling of

1. Malmanche, Les Païens, p.134

his time, still present today, and defends the natural spoken language that he has used in his play:

Le breton armoricain, abandonné et renié par ses propres enfants, connaîtra avant qu'il soit longtemps le même destin que le cornique. Le ressuscitera-t-on lui aussi? Je le crois tellement que je soupçonne certains de ses amis de hâter sa mort, afin d'avoir plus tôt le plaisir de le faire renaître. C'est ainsi que le Grand Dictionnaire que vient de terminer l'Académie Bretonne est fait, de toute évidence, en vue de ce breton tel qu'on le parlera, puisqu'il semble ignorer l'existence du breton tel qu'on le parle.<sup>1</sup>

A plea for the survival of Breton comes in the play from Del herself:

Et si vous faites fi du parler qu'il entend, semblable aux bêtes dans les champs il deviendra, le pauvre paysan.<sup>2</sup>

Another way in which the Breton element emerges is in the portrayal of the mad woman, Fant. The mad in Brittany have traditionally been treated with deference since madness is considered as a sign of closeness to the world beyond death. Del is totally sympathetic to her, as we have seen, and the other characters, with the exception of Goulven, treat her with a mixture of superstition and deference. Thus, in the first scene, it is clear that three of the villagers half believe that the stones Fant has in her bag are souls. The mad have also traditionally been considered to have the ability to prophesy, and we find that early in the play, when talking to Goulven about Del, Fant predicts the tragedy that is to come:

1. Malmanche, Les Païens, p.134

2. Malmanche, op.cit.p.76.

Non, cette âme-là n'est pas un caillou! C'est un beau livre, aux fines pages de papier, dans lesquelles sont le ciel et la mer, et tous les oiseaux et toutes les fleurs. Et si tu viens à le toucher, ce livre, tout son contenu soudain s'éparpille; il n'y reste qu'un oiseau noir ... un grand oiseau qui bat des ailes, éperdument ... sauvagement!<sup>1</sup>

When, in the tragedy thus predicted, Del herself goes mad, Falhan deferentially crosses himself, and an author's note explains that 'Les anciens Bretons, comme beaucoup de peuples primitifs, attribuaient à la folie une sorte de caractère sacré.'<sup>2</sup>

The theme of religion is treated in a way that can be seen elsewhere in the kind of Breton literature being considered in this chapter. It is a religion tailored to local circumstances, in which a local layman plays a more important role than the priest who originates from outside the local community.<sup>3</sup> Thus Falhan is looked on to interpret the Loi de la Mer and resolve any conflict between that and the teachings of the Catholic church, and it is his opinion that convinces Tangou, not the words of the priest's sermon. A further instance of the mixture of Loi de la Mer and Catholicism is when the maid, M<sup>o</sup>n, leaves the Manoir des Falhan with a lantern to lure the ship onto the rocks, and a rosary so that she can pray while she is waiting. Del is the only character in the play who could be said to be a true Catholic, influenced by the teachings of the priest not the Lagan.

Inevitably, since it has a long coastline, much of Breton life is closely bound up with the sea, and that is really the crux of the problem posed to the villagers by the King's Ordonnance. They

1. Malmanche, Les Païens, p.47

2. Malmanche, op.cit.p.136.

3. As in Pâques d'Islande, cf. above p. 159.

cannot survive without the harvest of wood the sea provides to light their fires and even make their coffins, and wreckage is one of their few sources of wealth. Thus the Loi de la Mer arose, and its good sense in many ways is shown in the first act of the play in its resolving of disputes, through its interpreter Falhan. The King's isolation from local circumstances and failure to consider them means that he has promulgated a decree which will inevitably bring poverty to the Paiens. This has obvious parallels with Paris' failure to consider Brittany's needs sufficiently or at all in framing legislation in the twentieth century, parallels which would not be missed by politically aware Bretons of Malmanche's time or of the present day.

This last theme transcends the Breton context, for it could be applied to many areas of many countries at any time.

Conversely, the battle between coastal dwellers and the authorities over wreckage could be seen as an affirmation of the independence of the former. Thus the enthusiastic support of Edouard Beaufils of Rennes, writing in 1890, for such activity:

Vive Dieu! La vieille Bretagne n'est pas morte toute entière. Ce mois-ci, les journaux nous ont appris qu'il y avait encore des pilleurs d'épaves. (...) Que diable! le droit de bris a toujours été un droit breton. Et s'il est encore en vigueur, tant mieux! Cela prouve qu'en notre fin de siècle, malade et byzantine, en ce temps d'anémies et de chlorotiques, les Bretons sont restés les vigoureux de jadis et que, dans leurs veines, coulent encore quelques globules sacrés du vieux sang des ancêtres. - Vive la Bretagne et vivent les pilleurs d'épaves. <sup>1</sup>

1. From an article in the review L'Hermine, 1890-1891, cited in Philippe Durand, Le Livre d'Or de la Bretagne (Paris 1975), p.253.

The theme of the remoteness of central government transcends the particularly Breton context of the play, and this together with the interest provided by other themes helps to balance some of the weaknesses of plot and characterisation that we have noted.

The aim of this examination of the play has been to give some impression of Malmanche's work, and put perspective on Skol an Emsav's description of it as one of the masterpieces of contemporary Breton theatre.

### Per-Jakez Hélias

The third *emsav* has produced three main types of literature. First, after the inevitably quiet period that followed the end of the Second World War<sup>1</sup>, more works by the authors who had been grouped around Gwalarn were published. Second, a number of new writers appeared. With these writers Breton literature came down from the pedestal on which Gwalarn had placed it and concerned itself with the struggles, anxieties and hopes of the ordinary Breton people. Third, there came into being a new wave of writers who have taken a determined part in the political struggle for the future of Brittany.

Per-Jakez Hélias falls into the second of these categories. He was born at Pouldreuzic in Finistère in 1914 into a family of agricultural workers. He grew up a fluent Breton speaker, that being the only language he spoke outside the classroom. He was educated at the lycée in Quimper and the University of Rennes, and, after teaching at various establishments in Finistère, now teaches as a professeur agrégé at the Ecole Normale there. He is also responsible for the Celtic course at the Université de Bretagne Occidentale.

At the Liberation, after having been chief editor of the weekly Vent d'Ouest, the publication of the Mouvement de Libération Nationale,

1. cf. above p. 102.

he became responsible for the transmission of radio broadcasts in Breton to Basse-Bretagne. For these broadcasts he wrote many dialogues illustrating the most original features of the daily life of Breton speakers. He also used a tape recorder to collect material from town and countryside.

Jakez-Hélias wrote in Breton and with plays such as Le Grand Valet, Le Roi Kado, Yseult seconde he established his claim to be the major Breton dramatist since Tanguy Malmanche. Some of his plays were performed on the radio, such as Le Visiteur de la Nuit des Morts<sup>1</sup>. One of his plays Egile, dealing with peasant life, was performed on French television in 1974 and has been performed all over Brittany by the players of the Centre dramatique universitaire de Brest.

In addition to his plays, Jakez-Hélias has published two volumes of poems in bilingual editions, Maner Kuz (Manoir secret) in 1965 and Ar Maen Du (La Pierre Noire) in 1974, which express his nostalgia for his childhood and a world which has since disappeared.

On a very similar theme, Le Cheval d'Orgueil, published in 1975, originally written in Breton, and subtitled Mémoires d'un Breton du pays bigouden, gives a detailed picture of the everyday world of his childhood and of those closest to him.

The book was well received throughout France, with over a million copies already sold. It gives a detailed account of the local religious customs and celebrations, political allegiances, education, agricultural life, and the author's present attitude to Brittany's political, cultural and linguistic problems.

We will attempt to gain some insight into its nature by looking in detail at two extracts.

1. Performed on Radio-Bretagne on 3 November 1947.

The first is part of the author's treatment of local superstitions and tales of the supernatural. This tale mentions the 'Ankou', the Breton male personification of death, a central feature of many Breton folk-tales. It is quoted in its entirety to give some idea of the author's style.

Corentin Calvez ... était tout pâle et hagard, incapable de parler d'abord. On s'empressa de lui offrir un coup de fort à boire. Il refusa d'un geste. On le fit s'asseoir sur le banc. Quand il retrouva sa langue, ce fut pour dire qu'il avait vu l'Ankou alors qu'il était sur son tas de paille, occupé à le cercler de fil de fer lesté de pierres pour empêcher le vent de le disperser. Et l'Ankou l'avait regardé dans les yeux avec ses orbites vides. Il ne savait pas comment il avait fait pour fuir, mais il était sûr que l'Ankou le cherchait toujours. Il ne cessait de répéter qu'il avait froid. Un seul moyen pour lui d'échapper au pourvoyeur de la mort, disait-il: tenir la main chaude d'un être bien vivant. De fait, il s'était emparé tout de suite de la main du maître de maison et ne la lâchait plus. Un peu de temps passa. Les autres tâchaient de rassurer le pauvre homme, mais rien n'y faisait et eux-mêmes se sentaient gagnés par une angoisse confuse. Soudain, Corentin Calvez se mit à crier: le voilà! Il arrive! Entendez-vous grincer la charrette? Entendez-vous ces voix innombrables autour de lui qui chantent le cantique de l'Enfer? Pourquoi l'Enfer? Le Purgatoire, je ne dis pas, mais l'Enfer! Je ne veux pas y aller. Tenez-moi bien!

Les autres le maîtrisaient à grand-peine car il se débattait avec la force de deux ou trois. Eux-mêmes suaient d'appréhension et pourtant ils n'entendaient rien, pas le moindre bruit de voix ni de charrette. Cela dura si longtemps qu'ils en avaient les bras cassés. Et puis l'homme se détendit, soupira longuement: ils sont partis,



déclara-t-il. Alors, il accepta d'avaler un bon coup de lambig et il s'en retourna chez lui après avoir remercié la compagnie.

Or, voici le plus beau. Le lendemain, on apprit que Corentin Calvez était tombé de son tas de paille la veille, un peu avant le crépuscule. On l'avait porté dans son lit. Il respirait à peine, ne bougeait pas le moins du monde. Toute la nuit il était resté dans le même état, veillé par les siens. Quand l'aube s'était levée, il avait repris ses sens et maintenant il était à son travail comme d'habitude. Mais alors, comment se faisait-il que toute une famille avait pu le voir, assez loin de chez lui, au cours de la scène qui vient d'être décrite? Comment se faisait-il qu'il avait pu serrer si fort la main du maître que ses ongles étaient entrés dans la paume? Il n'y a pas d'explication.<sup>1</sup>

The extract shows us the continuing importance of the oral tradition in Brittany, a tradition that is particularly strong among the Celtic peoples. It also reveals the conversational way in which the author addresses the reader in many parts of the book, particularly in the series of questions at the end of the extract.

It is noticeable too, that, although the growing apprehension of those with the supposed Corentin is well conveyed, there is humour when he says 'Le Purgatoire, je ne dis pas, mais l'Enfer!' in obvious indignation. In Le Braz's Pâques d'Islande there is no such element.

The story emphasises the important place that death and the supernatural have in the Breton mind, or had at the time in which the story is set - the early twentieth century. The twist in the ending shows us that such tales did not always have a sad ending and to some extent reminds us of the character in one of Le Braz's stories who had been to Purgatory and returned.<sup>2</sup>

1. Pierre Jakez-Hélias, Le cheval d'orgueil (Paris 1975), pp.150-1

2. cf. above p. 158

Perhaps most of all this extract helps to show us that the book as a whole is not just a rather dry account of the author's childhood.

The second extract concerns real life rather than the supernatural, being taken from the section of the book where the author tells of his own experience of the anti-Breton language policy of state schools in France.<sup>1</sup> This extract is an amusing example of the confusions that arise in the mind of young children whose own language is Breton but who are obliged to use French from the moment they enter school, but it is underlining the absurdity of the situation. The schoolmistress tries to teach the children a counting rhyme in French:

Elle débite:

Une poule sur un mur

Qui picore du pain dur                      Répétez-le avec moi!

Ce que nous répétons est une cacophonie de barbotements sonores qui n'a de signification dans aucun langage sauf peut-être celui des animaux de l'Arche de Noé. Après mille peines, elle réussit à nous faire décalquer les sons à peu près dans l'ordre. Mais, sortis de l'école, voici ce que nous répétons, deux par deux et face à face, en nous frappant mutuellement la poitrine avec un doigt

Menez Poullou, Sten ar Meur,

Lapin koton leun al leur ...

Le bois de Menez Poullou est un de nos terrains d'exploration, Sten ar Meur est le cordonnier du milieu du bourg, mais qu'ont-ils à faire ensemble, mystère! Quant au lapin de coton qui remplit la cour, il est bien de nature à faire travailler nos imaginations.<sup>2</sup>

1. cf. above p.53.

2. Pierre Jakez-Hélias, Le cheval d'orgueil (Paris 1975) pp.206-7

The author goes on to give many other examples, making, in a sometimes entertaining, sometimes serious manner, the case for the teaching of Breton in schools. The point has been made many times by different authors, representing the Bretons, and other linguistic minorities who find themselves in a very similar situation, but here the use of humour helps make it more effectively.

We must remember of course that the author is writing about his youth, but the general point still applies, especially as the linguistic minorities have since won so few concessions from the French government.<sup>1</sup>

Further interesting points that the author makes on this subject are that very often the very teachers who were so insistent on their pupils speaking French would themselves speak Breton outside school and apparently not see any contradiction in this. Also, when a child was punished for speaking Breton in school, he could expect this to be followed by a punishment from his Breton-speaking parents, who themselves were coming to believe that it was necessary to speak French in order to make something of oneself.

Apart from his writing, Per-Jakez Hélias has for more than twenty years run national and regional courses throughout France in popular civilisation, in his capacity as President of the Commission Nationale de Folklore à la Ligue de l'Enseignement.

### The Political Writers

No one figure stands out among the writers who fall into the third category mentioned above, although Skol An Emsav mentions Paol Keineg, E. Evenou and Yann-Ber Piriou particularly.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the tone of the politically orientated writers could best be illustrated by

1. cf. above pp. 124-7.

2. Skol An Emsav, Sens de la Littérature bretonne, p.14.

these lines from Iffig Pichon's poem, 'Gwerz an everien gwad'  
 ('La Chanson des Buveurs de Sang') published in a collection of poems  
 selected by Yann-Ber Piriou:<sup>1</sup>

J'ai également vu en la ville de Carhaix,  
 La place pleine de C.R.S.,  
 Avec des grenades lacrymogènes  
 Dans je ne sais combien de musettes.

Nous autres ici en Bretagne,  
 Ne sommes bons qu'à faire la guerre.  
 Ils sont deux cent quarante mille  
 Qui dorment là-bas aux frontières.

Des Bretons honnêtes et vaillants  
 Y dorment depuis mil neuf cent quatorze,  
 Et il y en a bien eu autant à revenir blessés  
 Ou à mourir tuberculeux.

Qu'il est triste pour une mère, pour un père,  
 D'avoir un enfant qu'on contraint  
 A aller se battre  
 Là-bas du côté de l'Algérie.

Voilà, bonnes gens,  
 La chanson des buveurs de sang,  
 Nous voyons tous désormais  
 Quel est notre destin.

Debout! Debout Bretons!  
 Car l'heure aujourd'hui a sonné,  
 Debout! debout! Pour qu'à jamais  
 Soit brisé le destin fatal.

1. Défense de cracher par terre et de parler breton (Paris 1971), p.161.  
 Each poem is given in Breton, with a French translation.

These lines were written by a peasant farmer in 1961 and occasioned by the arrest of Alexis Gourvenec and Marcel Léon, leaders of demonstrations by peasants and trade unionists, which took place in Morlaix in June and September of that year.<sup>1</sup> From this particular incident and the hostility it obviously produced towards the central government the attack becomes generalised. The first verse given above refers to the normal response of central government in France to demonstrations against it: to send in the riot police, formed during De Gaulle's presidency and usually rather heavy-handed in their methods.

The second and third verses echo a recurring Breton grievance. During the First World War a total of 240,000 Breton soldiers were killed, one out of every four that fought at the front. Yet the figure for the rest of France was one soldier in eight killed. The Bretons therefore justifiably felt that they had done more than their share in fighting for France, but received no concessions to their language or culture from the post-war government in France.<sup>2</sup>

The writer obviously sees this as a continuing process, with his reference to the war in Algeria, still in progress at the time when he was writing. Being an area of high unemployment, Brittany has traditionally contributed a relatively high proportion of its people to the armed forces.

This is why the writer refers to central government as the 'buveurs de sang' and why in the final verse given above he advocates rebellion against a government that sees this as Brittany's role.

In the strength of its appeal for revolution in the last verse, the poem marks the distance between its own militancy and the Catholic and conservative tones of the work of Théodore Hersart de la Villemarqué, and thus the distance between the beginnings of the

1. cf. above p. 114.

2. cf. above p. 61.

Breton nationalist revival and the extreme trends of one part of the present essay.

From this consideration of the work of some of the figures who represent that aspect of Breton literature that is the subject of this present chapter, that is to say literature preoccupied specifically or for the major part with the Breton revival, the reader should have acquired some idea of both its variety and similarities in the three essays, and of the extent to which the writings mirror the historical and political development of Brittany over the period.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, apart from drawing conclusions, it seems appropriate to consider two other points. First we will consider the results of an opinion poll which gives an indication of Breton attitudes to the Breton movement. The results of the poll are particularly interesting in that they help us to keep in perspective the whole question of separatism in Brittany, a perspective that can easily be lost during a detailed examination of that movement. In order to bring our picture completely up to date we will also examine recent governmental moves towards regional reform and the reactions of members of the movement.

The opinion poll was conducted for Le Nouvel Observateur by Sofres between 15 and 18 November 1975, using a sample of 800 people, aged 18 or over, from the Breton départements of Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Ille-et-Vilaine and Morbihan. The results and a summary of the main points made in the analysis by Jacques Ozouf are given below.

Les syndicats ont décidé une journée d'action pour le jeudi 27 novembre. Approuvez-vous ou désapprouvez-vous cette journée d'action?

- |               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| - Approuve    | 36% |
| - Désapprouve | 31% |
| - Non réponse | 33% |

Certains disent qu'ils se sentent bretons avant de se sentir français, d'autres pensent le contraire.

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| - Vous-même, est-ce que vous vous sentez breton avant de vous sentir français | 22% |
| - Est-ce que vous vous sentez français avant de vous sentir breton            | 26% |
| - Ou bien, est-ce que vous vous sentez également breton et français           | 50% |
| - Non réponse   | 2%  |

Et diriez-vous que vous vous sentez aujourd'hui...

- plus breton 14%
- moins breton 2%
- ou ni plus ni moins breton qu'il y a cinq ans 81%
- non réponse 3%

A votre avis, au cours des trente dernières années, la Bretagne a-t-elle été...

- plus maltraitée 23%
- mieux traitée 14%
- ni mieux ni plus mal traitée que les autres régions françaises 58%
- non réponse 5%

Il y a eu récemment une vague d'attentats en Bretagne. A ce propos, laquelle de ces phrases se rapproche le plus de votre position?

- J'approuve leurs auteurs 1%
- Je n'approuve pas leurs auteurs mais leur acte peut être utile à la Bretagne 7%
- Je n'approuve pas leurs auteurs mais je comprends qu'on en arrive là 23%
- Je désapprouve leurs auteurs 63%
- non réponse 6%

Qui est principalement responsable, selon vous, des difficultés économiques et sociales dont souffre la Bretagne?

- les élus bretons 5%
- l'Etat 28%
- les Bretons eux-mêmes 7%
- le manque de matières premières et la situation géographique de la Bretagne 49%
- non réponse 11%



Diriez-vous que vous avez de la sympathie ou pas pour les mouvements bretons qui luttent actuellement pour que les choses changent en Bretagne?

- OUI 54%
- NON 34%
- Non réponse 12%

Dans l'ensemble, diriez-vous que les mouvements qui luttent actuellement pour l'autonomie de la Bretagne sont...

- des mouvements de droite de type nationaliste 17%
- des mouvements sans idéologie politique 20%
- ou des mouvements socialistes 20%
- non réponse 43%

Pour la Bretagne, êtes-vous partisan....

- du statut actuel, la Bretagne étant une région comme les autres régions françaises 81%
- d'un statut d'autonomie dans le cadre de la République française 12%
- de l'indépendance totale, la Bretagne devenant un Etat souverain 3%
- non réponse 4%

Si la gauche était au pouvoir, à votre avis, les problèmes de la Bretagne seraient-ils mieux ou moins bien résolus qu'à l'heure actuelle?

- mieux résolus 16%
- moins bien résolus 15%
- ni mieux, ni moins bien résolus 57%
- non réponse 12%

The first striking point was that three out of every four Bretons did not feel themselves to be French first, with two in four defining themselves as as much Breton as French and one in four as more Breton than French. This feeling of being Breton did not vary significantly with age or political belief, but did become more pronounced when the linguistic factor (37% of those who understand Breton feel Breton first) and socio-geographic factor (33% of peasants) were considered. The least conscious of being Breton were the 'bourgeois', the town-dwellers and those who did not understand Breton. This feeling did not appear to be affected by time. Generally people felt neither more nor less Breton than five years previously. If the feeling did change it became more pronounced, particularly amongst young people.

Second, the majority of Bretons did not appear to accept the FLB theme 'combattons les abus des fonctionnaires français en Bretagne', and continued to attribute Brittany's problems to geographic remoteness or economic poverty. Old people blamed nature most while the young put more blame on people.

Third, there was overwhelming disapproval of violence throughout the twenty categories of age, sex, profession etc. that were used by Sofres, with one important exception. Of eighteen to thirty-four year olds only 45% condemned all violence without reservation, 4% approved of it, 14% did not approve but judged it useful, and 32% disapproved but understood it. It could be argued that this provided a group that might in certain circumstances be inclined to direct action or at least to complicity, especially when we note that 54% of Bretons sympathised with those who were striving for change in Brittany. The most marked sympathy was among men who were politically left-wing.

Fourth, the generally left-wing nature of the Breton movement was not clearly perceived. Most Bretons could not define the movement clearly although fewer now identified it as right-wing.

Fifth, 57% believed at that time that Brittany's problems would be no better solved if the left were in power. This was a general feeling shared by all categories in the survey. Even among left-wing sympathisers only 42% believed that it would help to have the left in power while 47% believed this would change nothing.

Sixth, there was the same resignation about possible solutions. 81% were in favour of Brittany keeping its status, 3% for independence, and 12% for autonomy. This lack of enthusiasm for an administrative solution was also illustrated by the fact that only one Breton in four blamed central government for Brittany's problems.

Finally though, we should not think of the Bretons as being apathetic since there was a majority in favour of the unions' day of action in Brittany, especially among the young, workers, and left-wingers.

The poll showed little enthusiasm for an administrative solution but administrative reform is what has been proposed and partly become law since the election of the socialist François Mitterand as President and the election of a socialist government in May and June 1981.

The main points of the reform prepared by Gaston Defferre, 'ministre d'Etat, ministre de l'intérieur et de la décentralisation' are that the Préfets will become Commissaires de la République, and that executive power will be transferred from the former Préfets to the Presidents of regional and departmental assemblies, elected by universal suffrage. The problems of the division of responsibilities and resources between communes, départements, regions and the State, and the status of local civil servants are to be dealt with in White Papers due to appear in the course of 1982 and 1983. There is as yet no indication of the method

of election to be used for regional and departmental assemblies, or as to whether Loire-Atlantique will remain in the region of Pays de la Loire or join Brittany as the members of the Breton movement would insist it should.

While Le Monde of 15 August 1981 referred to the reform as a 'revolution', opinion within the Breton movement is generally that it does not go far enough. Thus Yann Fouéré writes:

Si le gouvernement a changé, l'administration hexagonale, elle, n'a pas changé, et elle fera tout pour maintenir ses privilèges et ses pouvoirs. Bien des choses resteront donc en suspens, et il est fort douteux qu'en dehors de quelques concessions minimales d'ordre culturel la Bretagne verra satisfaire ses revendications les plus fondamentales: unité territoriale, dévolution réelle du pouvoir, autonomie administrative et politique.<sup>1</sup>

Ronan Caerleon is equally pessimistic and unenthusiastic about the reform, and maintains that the nature of the French State will not undergo any real change:

La décentralisation annoncée par Defferre n'en sera pas une. Elle contient des arrière-pensées inavouables. Les préfets que l'on devait supprimer restent en place. Le rattachement de la Loire-Atlantique à la Bretagne est très aléatoire; le breton et l'histoire de Bretagne dans les établissements scolaires ou à la radio et à la télévision resteront facultatifs et fort limités dans leur expression. Je ne crois pas à la fin du jacobinisme. Les jacobins sont encore puissants à l'intérieur de l'Etat, qu'ils soient socialistes ou non.<sup>2</sup>

1. Letter to the writer dated 11 November 1981.

2. Letter to the writer dated 14 October 1981.

Olier Mordrel has similar reservations but sees one positive aspect of the reform in that it will at least provide a platform for Breton claims and action which had previously been missing:

Notez que 1<sup>o</sup> l'administration toute puissante freine les réformes de son mieux, et même dans le parti socialiste il n'existe pas l'unanimité à ce sujet - 2<sup>o</sup> Le principe de l'unité nationale et de l'indivisibilité de l'état (législatif et exécutif) n'est pas mis en question. Pour nous donc, nous n'espérons pas autre chose que - si la régionalisation se réalise comme annoncée - d'entrer en possession d'une plateforme de revendications et d'action qui jusqu'ici nous a cruellement manqué. Tout l'essentiel restera à conquérir.<sup>1</sup>

In other reactions, reported by Le Monde, the UDB felt that the proposals revealed some progress but did not go far enough, and M. Patrick Mareschal, deputy-mayor of Nantes was adamant that 'Il faut que la régionalisation aboutisse à un statut d'autonomie interne en Bretagne'. Michel Phlipponeau may have given the government some encouragement by saying that Bretons should quickly agree to the reforms, but this was only because he felt, and in this he echoed other reactions given above, that the administration was reticent about the reform, and the right hostile to it.<sup>2</sup>

Thus members of the Breton movement obviously feel that their struggle is by no means over and we can expect to hear continuing reports of conflict with central government over the years to come.

1. Letter to the writer dated 18 September 1981.

2. Le Monde, 30 July 1981. For Michel Phlipponeau see below, p.197.

## Conclusions

The study of the history of Brittany has shown to what extent Brittany is different from the rest of France as well as indicating that it can be claimed, to a certain degree, that there might be some basis in law for separate treatment of the region. The existence within Brittany of a completely different language also obviously emphasises its separate identity.

What we must ask ourselves now is how much support there is in Brittany itself for any degree of autonomy, and whether the distinctive feature of Brittany - its language - will survive.

We have in fact seen from the opinion poll that only 15% of the sample questioned in 1975 were in favour of total independence or an autonomous status for Brittany. This helps to explain why, during periods when we would have expected, from events within the region, that there would be a good deal of support for candidates advocating some measure of autonomy, such support has not been revealed. Further figures confirm this trend. In the parliamentary election of 1973 SAV (Strollad ar Vro) obtained a total of only 30,166 votes (2.3% of the votes cast) in 26 from a possible 33 constituencies, and the UDB only 6,062 votes (c. 0.5% of the votes cast). Even adding to these totals the votes cast in the first round for candidates of known Breton sympathies, the total only reaches 96,442 votes.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand we have seen that there are a considerable number of organisations concerned with the future of Brittany, and forming part of the Breton movement. This in itself would seem a healthy sign, even though some of these organisations do not have many members. It might be argued that this fragmentation of the Breton movement is an obstacle to progress and that a government will only make significant concessions to a strong, united

1. Figures given by Gallo in Panorama, p.20. Reece, in The Bretons against France, p.222, points out that SAV's 2.3% of votes cast compares with the 2.43% of votes cast that the SNP obtained in the British 1964 general election. It is rather misleading for him then to point out that in the October 1974 general election the SNP obtained 30% of Scottish votes cast, and imply that SAV might take off in the same way.

opposition. After all it is known that the Scottish National Party or Plaid Cymru contain members representing different political tendencies, and their electoral success is undoubtedly due, in part, to the fact that they present a strong united front to the British government.<sup>1</sup>

There is, encouragingly, some awareness of the need for unity within the Breton movement. Thus Yann Fouéré, who has for many years been closely involved with the movement, has written:

Je pense que la constitution d'un Front sur un programme minimum commun est indispensable ... Ce programme minimum peut être limité à la demande de mesures pratiques et concrètes, et d'institutions politiques et administratives tendant à réaliser l'autonomie interne pour la Bretagne.<sup>2</sup>

Gallo estimates that the possible support for the Breton movement might total 300,000 from a total population of approximately 3,500,000 and admits that this is very little.

When we speculate on why there is not more support for the movement we should look again at the results of the opinion poll. Although 81% of those questioned were in favour of Brittany keeping its present status, this may well be because so many Bretons (49%) believe that the reasons for Brittany's problems are geographic or economic. This would suggest that the contrary view expressed by members of the Breton movement has not yet succeeded in convincing the Breton population as a whole. After all the latent sympathy is there; 54% of those questioned said they sympathised with those fighting for change in Brittany. The gap between this figure and the number of votes cast for parties of the Breton movement also suggests

1. There is of course no suggestion that the situation in Brittany is identical to that in Scotland or Wales. The point is simply a general one that a united opposition is more likely to achieve results than a fragmented one.
2. Letter to the writer, 18 February 1979. With the same letter, M. Fouéré enclosed, as an example of a possible common programme, a document which is given in Appendix B.

a certain amount of apathy. Certainly the members of the movement need to try to express their ideas more effectively to counter this. Another problem is that the poll shows that most Bretons have difficulty in situating the Breton movement politically. This again would indicate the need for more effective propaganda and for more united action, as it may well be the fragmented nature of the movement that leads to this confusion in the minds of many Bretons. The fact that 17% of Bretons still believe that the movement is generally right-wing and nationalist means that the taint of fascism still hangs over it as the result of the actions of some extremists during the Second World War even though this is less the case than previously, and suggests another possible reason for lack of support.

On the question of the Breton language we have seen that past governments have taken steps to preserve it, but, as with the present government's regional reform, there are doubts as to whether these measures are adequate. There are at present roughly 700,000 Breton speakers in a population of 3,500,000.<sup>1</sup> Many of these are old people. In spite of government measures and the activities of the various organisations that offer correspondence courses and other forms of language tuition the future of the language is by no means assured. Perhaps we might conclude with the words of Yann Fouéré:

La situation culturelle en Bretagne n'est pas brillante et l'usage de la langue bretonne se perd assez vite: elle n'est pas enseignée et la presse, la télévision etc... sont de puissants instruments d'assimilation et de nivellement linguistique. Par contre il existe une jeunesse enthousiaste qui remet le breton en honneur: mais cette jeunesse et cet enthousiasme existaient aussi en Irlande au moment de l'indépendance. Cependant on n'a réussi que dans peu de cas à refaire du gaélique la langue de la famille et du foyer.<sup>2</sup>

1. Figure given in Le Monde de l'Education, September 1976, p.8.

2. Letter to the writer, 4 August, 1976.



APPENDIX: A. ORGANISATIONS, PARTIES AND JOURNALS INCLUDED IN GALLO'S  
PANORAMA DU MOUVEMENT BRETON<sup>1</sup>

Wherever possible additional information to that given by Gallo has been included, whether under each title or by reference back to more detailed information in the main body of the thesis. Where no information is given, this is because it has proved impossible to obtain. Some of the organisations and publications had only an ephemeral existence.

The writer is grateful to M. Yann Fouéré for information about some of the organisations mentioned in this list.

I The 'Breton' party.

A Grouped within the KUZUL AR BREZHONEG (Breton Council).

1. SKOURR BREIZH AR C'HENDALC'H KELTIEK (Breton Section of the Interceltic Congress), and its bulletin.
  2. KEVREDIGEZH AR SKRIVAGNERIEN (Association of Writers in Breton).
  3. AL LIAMM-TIR NA N'OG. A Breton language literary review. Appears every two months. The most important of its kind. Founded after the Second World War by Ronan Huon. Appears in issues of about 1,000 copies.
  4. EMBANNADURIOU AL LIAMM (Publications of AL LIAMM). Publishers of literary works in Breton, a Breton grammar and a dictionary. The main Breton language publishing-house.
  5. BARR-HEOL WAR FEIZ HA BREIZH. A review concerned with the Catholic faith and Brittany. 'd'un cléricalisme breton ultra-romain'.<sup>2</sup> Founded shortly after Second World War by Abbé Kler.
  6. AR BEDEN EVIT AR VRO. The bulletin of Unvaniezh Speredel Vreizh. 'bulletin spiritualiste (et pas du tout "spirituel") catholique breton ultra-romain'.<sup>3</sup>
1. Published in Rennes in 1973. Gallo also lists the addresses of all these organisations, which provides a useful source of reference. It is worth noting that the same address is often given for more than one organisation, and that therefore the number of organisations, taken by itself, may give a distorted picture of the amount of activity.
2. Gallo, op.cit., p.8.
3. Gallo, op.cit., p.8.

7. SKOL (School). A pedagogical journal. Edited by Per Denez, a writer, specialist in the teaching of modern Breton, and lecturer in the Celtic Department of the University of Rennes.
8. HOR YEZH (Our Language). A linguistic journal, also edited by Per Denez.
9. EMBANNADURIOU AR BIBL (Editions of the Bible).
10. KAMP ETREKELTIEK AR VREZHONEGERION (Interceltic Camp of Breton Speakers). Aimed specifically at study of the Breton language.
11. KEVREDIGEZH SELAOUERION AR SKINGOMZ (Association of Radio Listeners).
12. PREDER (Philosophy). A Breton language philosophical review.
- 12a TALM. A series of printed books by PREDER.
13. WANIG HA WENIG. An illustrated review for children.
14. SKOL OBER. A free Breton language correspondence course, started in 1932 by Marc'harid Gourlaouenn.
15. STROLLAD AN DESKADUREZ EIL DEREZ. An educational course in Breton for second degré (15 plus) level.<sup>1</sup>
- 15a KREIZENN IMBOURC'H STURYEZHOURIEZH (Centre for Research in Normative Philology).
16. LEVRIOU AR VUGALE. Illustrated books for children.
17. EMGLEO AN TIEGEZHIOU. An organisation concerned with education and mutual aid. Also its bulletin AN TIEGEZH.
18. BREURIEZH SANT ERWAN (Brotherhood of Saint Yves) and its bulletin MOUEZ SANT ERWAN, which is a supplement of BARR-HEOL and WANIG HA WENIG. The organisation is Catholic, and helps in the organisation of camps for Breton speakers and learners.
19. KEVREDIGEZH AN DESKADUREZH NEVEZ (The Society for New Education). In 1970-1 it conducted a detailed survey of those studying Breton.

1. cf. above, p. 112.

- B Organisations and reviews not grouped within the Kuzul ar Brezhoneg, but with similar emphasis on nationalism, clericalism, and the Breton language.
20. URZH SKOUTED BLEIMOR (Bleimor Order of Scouts). Attached to the European Federation of Scouts.
  21. STUDI HAG OBER. A Catholic review concerned with theology, scripture, and liturgy.
  22. EMSAV. Organ of EMSAV STADEL BREIZH. A review concerned with political, sociological, and economic studies.
  23. IMBOURC'H. Organ of EMSAV AR BOBL VREZHON. Political, sociological, and economic studies and proposals for action.
  24. KEVREDIGEZH VREIZHAT A SEVENADUREZH (MENEZ KAMM). Arranges holidays and exchanges for young people.
  25. UNVANIEZH SPEREDEL VREIZH (Spiritual Union of Brittany).
  26. BRUDAN HA SKIGNAN. Diffusion of Breton writings.
  27. KER-VREIZ and KANNADIG KER-VREIZ. A hostel for Breton speakers and the Breton cultural centre in Paris, established in the 1930s. Known as a meeting place for Breton militants and the centre of Breton nationalist action in Paris.
  28. GWERIN. Popular culture.
  29. SKOL AN EMSAV. A major cultural association which organises courses and camps for Breton speakers and learners. Closely connected with DIWAN, which organises nursery teaching in Breton. Such teaching receives no financial help from the State.
  30. OADED ST. ERWAN. (St. Yves' Hostel). In Brest.
  31. OADED AB-HERVE. A hostel for Breton speakers in St. Briec.
  32. COMITE D'ACTION REGIONALE. Works at local government level throughout Brittany.

33. THE CELTIC LEAGUE and its bulletin CELTIC NEWS. Responsible for inter-Celtic action within the six Celtic countries (Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man). Most of its publications are in English.<sup>1</sup>
34. BRETON NEWS(The Breton Information Bureau). Run from Dublin by Alan Heussaf.<sup>2</sup>
35. UNVANIEZH KOATKEO. Organises the Easter Monday pilgrimage in memory of Abbé Perrot and other members of the Breton movement who were killed in 1944.<sup>3</sup> Founded after Second World War by Mark Ar Berr.
36. L'APPEL D'OLOLE. An illustrated, cultural publication for young people and families in Brittany.
37. KRISTENIEN VREIZH. Aims to promote Christian action within Brittany.
38. EMGLEO BELEIEN VREIZH. An association of country priests with about 150 members which supports the struggle for Bretons to have the right to work in Brittany and campaigns on behalf of the Breton language.<sup>4</sup>  
(Union of Breton Priests)
39. ILIZ HA BREIZH. A bulletin favouring the retention and increasing use of Breton in the liturgy.

1. The first inter-Celtic congress was held at Saint-Brieuc in 1867.  
 2. Heussaf is a former member of the Bezen Perrot who took refuge in Dublin after the Second World War.  
 3. Cf. above pp.97-98  
 4. Information given in Patricia Elton Mayo, The Roots of Identity, (London 1974), p.50.

## II The 'French' party

1. SAV BREIZH. A review. Very left-wing. Can be regarded as representing the left-wing tendency within the FLB.<sup>1</sup> Originally emanated from the MOB.<sup>2</sup>
2. FONDATION CULTURELLE BRETONNE (EMGLEO BREIZ). Is the cultural commission of CELIB.<sup>3</sup> Specialises in drafting laws and petitions for the government's consideration. In 1967, to no effect, collected 150,000 signatures on a petition calling for the teaching of Breton in Brittany's schools. However, probably as a result of their and GALV's campaigns that Breton admitted with fuller status to the Baccalauréat in July 1970.<sup>4</sup>
3. AMAN EMGLEO BREIZ. A press bulletin. Has succeeded in having Breton language texts published in major newspapers.
4. G.A.L.V. A Federation seeking to defend the Breton language. Formed in 1969, as a result of co-operation between the U.D.B., J.E.B. and Ar Falz.
5. MOUVEMENT AR FALZ. Groups non-Catholic, socialist, Breton teachers. The review is called Ar Falz.
6. SKOL VREIZ. A pedagogical review. 'Un remarquable outil de travail pour l'enseignement'.<sup>5</sup>
7. JEUNESSE ETUDIANTE BRETONNE (J.E.B.) Based in Rennes. Began as a group expelled from the U.D.B.
8. BRUD. A literary review. Appears irregularly.
9. LA BRETAGNE REVOLUTIONNAIRE. The organ of the P.C.B. (Parti Communiste Breton), which was founded in 1970, groups non-violent intellectuals and workers, and is independent of the French Communist Party. The P.C.B. calls for 'the destruction of the anachronistic Jacobin State and the building of a socialist and internationalist Brittany'.<sup>6</sup>

1. cf. above, pp. 120-3.

2. cf. above, pp. 106-7.

3. cf. above, pp. 104-5.

4. cf. above, p. 126.

5. Gallo, Panorama, p. 12.

6. Meic Stephens, Linguistic Minorities in Western Europe, p. 388.

10. U.D.B. (UNION DEMOCRATIQUE BRETONNE). Emanated from the M.O.B.<sup>1</sup>  
According to Gallo, it is now considered as a 'submarine' of the French Communist Party in Brittany.<sup>2</sup> Contested the legislative election of 1973.
11. LE PEUPLE BRETON. The monthly newspaper of the U.D.B.
12. POBL VREIZ. The Breton language edition of Le Peuple Breton.
13. NI. Organ of the J.P.B. (JEUNESSES PROGRESSISTES DE BRETAGNE), a left-wing organisation, founded in 1970, which works mainly among young workers and school pupils.
14. YAOUANK-JEUNE BRETON. Bulletin of the G.E.E.S.<sup>3</sup>
15. BREIS. The press information sheet of the Bureau Régional d'Etude et d'Information Socialiste. Directed by Michel Phlipponeau.<sup>4</sup>
16. MOUEZ AR VRO. Organ of the Collège Breton des Côtes-du-Nord. Deals with linguistic and cultural subjects.
17. A.P.L. BRETAGNE. (Agence Presse Libération).
18. POLITIQUE BRETAGNE. Concerned with politics.
19. LA TAUPE BRETONNE. A group pursuing Breton and international political studies.
20. YOD KERC'H. A Breton language satirical magazine.

1. cf. above, pp. 106-7.

2. Gallo, Panorama, p.13.

3. It has proved impossible to discover what these initials represent.

4. cf. above, p.105.

## III The Independents or 'Celtic Party'.

1. LE GORSEDD (and its review AN TRIBANN). The College of druids, and bards of Brittany, founded in 1898 under the leadership of the Grand-Druid Taldir, who adopted as the Breton national anthem 'Bro Goz Ma Zadou', a translation of the Welsh 'Land of my fathers'. The review appears quarterly.
2. LA BRETAGNE REELLE-CELTIA. Publishers of the Panorama from which this list is taken, and representative of the Gallos of Haute-Bretagne.  
Responsible for many publications dealing with all aspects of the Breton problem. Its output is described, in a cautionary note from Caerleon, as 'toxique à l'état pur qui ne peut être absorbé que par des esprits avertis et aguerris'.<sup>1</sup>
3. LES CAHIERS DE LA BRETAGNE REELLE. The publications of La Bretagne Réelle, appearing approximately four times a year.
4. Keltia and LES CAHIERS Keltia. A supplement of La Bretagne Réelle, published at two-monthly intervals and specialising in philosophical, historical and scientific studies.
5. AN NERZH. A Breton language magazine. Supplement of La Bretagne Réelle.
6. DOUAR BREIZ. A fortnightly publication providing an information service about the Breton movement. Hostile to the 'Goulet' tendency of the F.L.B.<sup>2</sup>
7. L'AVENIR DE LA BRETAGNE. A monthly Breton nationalist and European federalist publication, directed by Yann Fouéré. Now supports SAV<sup>3</sup> and other groups that have similar aims.
8. SAV (STROLLAD AR VRO). Put up candidates in the 1973 parliamentary election, with relatively little success.
9. JEUNE BRETAGNE. A Breton nationalist and European federalist organisation. Many of its militants are now active in various Breton political and cultural organisations.
10. TEST. Deals with current affairs in Brittany. 'supplément de l'Idiot International'.<sup>4</sup>
11. ARMOR MAGAZINE. 'Une grande liberté et objectivité de jugement. Une équipe brillante'.<sup>5</sup>

1. Caerleon, La révolution bretonne permanente, p.41.

2. cf. above, p. 123.

3. cf. above, pp. 110-11.

4. Gallo, Panorama, p.14.

5. Gallo, op. cit., p.14.

12. AN TEODEG. A quarterly publication of the Cercle Dugelez Breiz.
13. LA NATION BRETONNE. Organ of Jeune Bretagne.
14. LE DEVENIR EUROPEEN.
15. ETATS GENERAUX DE LA CULTURE BRETONNE.\*
16. ADSAV 1532. The movement for the application of the treaty of 1532.<sup>1\*</sup>  
Publishes a monthly bulletin, Adsav 1532.

1. cf. above, p. 32.

\* indicates not included in Gallo's statistics for category, (cf. above, p. 139.)  
Late addition to Panorama.



## IV Associations, movements and specialist press

1. CELIB.<sup>1</sup>
2. REVUE BRETAGNE. Deals with the Breton economy.
3. COMITE INTERPROFESSIONNEL BRETAGNE. A technical body.
4. LA BRETAGNE ECONOMIQUE. The monthly publication of the Breton Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
5. M.O.B. (MOUVEMENT POUR L'ORGANISATION DE LA BRETAGNE).<sup>2</sup>
6. KENDALC'H. A confederation of music and dance groups.<sup>3</sup>
7. BODADEG AR SONERION. (Assembly of Sonneurs). Has a review, AR SONER, dealing with musical technique.
8. WAR 'L LEUR. A federation of Celtic cultural, dance and music circles.
9. MOUVEMENT BLEUN-BRUG, and its review BLEUN-BRUG. A Catholic Breton cultural association. The movement's aim is 'la restauration chrétienne de la Bretagne avec ses richesses culturelles, artistiques, folkloriques et spirituelles, sous le signe de la Croix celtique.'<sup>4</sup>
10. LES CAHIERS DU BLEUN-BRUG. A series of publications by Bleun-Brug.
11. AL LEUR NEVEZ. Organises Breton language courses and circles, and camps for Breton speakers and learners.
12. KEVREDAD SEVENADUREL BREZONEG. (Cultural Federation of Breton Speakers).
13. BREIZ. Organ of Kendalc'h, published monthly, and DIHUN, a Breton language supplement.
14. COOPERATIVE BREIZ. Organises the distribution of books and records.
15. DIFFUSION BRETONNE. The commercial branch of B.I.P.
16. BRETAGNE INFORMATION PUBLICITE (B.I.P.)
17. SKOL DRE LIZER AR "BLEUN-BRUG". Gives correspondence courses in Breton. Founded in 1945 by Visant Seite.
18. SKOL DRE LIZER AR GELENNERIEN LAIK. Run by Ar Falz. Gives correspondence courses in Breton and organises the CONCOURS AR FALZ.

1. cf. above, pp. 104-5.

2. cf. above, pp. 106-7.

3. cf. above, pp. 133-4.

4. Cited in Caerleon, La révolution bretonne permanente, p.25.

19. KENVREURIEZ AR BREZONEG. (Brotherhood of Breton) Groups Catholic priests who favour the use of Breton in Church affairs.
20. CAMP B.A.S. A camp for sonneurs.
21. CAMP KENDALC'H. A camp for young people from various Cercles Celtiques.
22. CAMP AR FALZ. A camp for teachers.
23. TI-KENDALC'H. A hostèl for young people belonging to Kendalc'h.
24. L'ASSOCIATION BRETONNE and BULLETIN DE L'ASSOCIATION BRETONNE. First founded in 1829. Concerned with historical research.<sup>1</sup>
25. KOUN BREIZ and its annual bulletin SKOED (Remembrance). Commemorates annually the victories in the Battle of Ballon<sup>2</sup> and the Battle of St. Aubin-du-Cormier.<sup>3</sup> Submitted a propòsal for regional reform to De Gaulle in 1958.
26. MEIN BREIZH (Stones of Brittany). Provides work-forces of young people who specialise in the restoration of old chapels and buildings.
27. BULLETIN DE LA SOCIETE D'HISTOIRE ET D'ARCHEOLOGIE DE BRETAGNE. Organ of the Fédération des Sociétés Savantes de Bretagne.
28. TIEZ BREIZ. (Houses of Brittany)
29. BREIZ SANTEL. A movement for the protection of Breton religious monuments.
30. AR STIVELL. Provides a library service of Breton books for hospitals.
31. AR GWYR.
32. EDITIONS KELENN. Books and records.
33. SKED. The title of a series of booklets of the Jeunes Chrétiens celtes, whose motto is 'Sevel Keltia evit Doue' (Build the Celtic domain for God).
34. ADC'HANADIGEZH VREIZH. Handles the distribution of books and periodicals.
35. FEDERATION DES SOCIETES BRETONNES DE LA REGION PARISIENNE. Also its bulletin Bretons de Paris et de la région.
36. LA BRETAGNE A PARIS. A non-political newspaper, organ of the Breton associations of the Paris region. Published by Ouest-France, which also runs a 'maison de la Bretagne' in Paris and exercises close control over both.

1. cf. above, p. 54.

2. cf. above, p. 16.

3. cf. above, p. 28.

37. MISSION BRETONNE DE PARIS and LA TERRE BRETONNE. The Mission is directed by a Breton priest specially allocated by the Catholic Church authorities in the Paris diocese.
38. LE PAYS BRETON. 'L'Humanité - édulcorée - des Bretons à Paris'.<sup>1</sup>
39. ASSOCIATION DES CADRES BRETONS DE LA REGION PARISIENNE. Publishes a NOTE D'INFORMATION.
40. ORGANISATION DU CONGRES DES BRETONS DISPERSES. Based in Paris.
41. MAR PLIJ BREIZH. Breton press agency in Paris.
42. COMITE D'ENTENTE LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE EN BRETAGNE.
43. BRETAGNE SYNDICALISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE.
44. KER ARVOR. Provides cultural and touristic information and a library service.
45. AN AVEL. Information bulletin of the Pays Pagan.<sup>2</sup>
46. LES ANNALES DE BRETAGNE. Originally the quarterly journal of the Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines of the University of Rennes now published under the revised title Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest by the universities of Angers, Brest, Le Mans, Nantes, Rennes II and Tours.
47. LES CAHIERS DE L'IROÏSE. The review of the Société d'Etudes de Brest et du Léon.
48. PENN AR BED . The review of the SOCIETE POUR L'ETUDE ET LA PROTECTION DE LA NATURE EN BRETAGNE (SEPNB). The review also deals with natural sciences and geography.
49. ASSOCIATION POUR LA DEFENSE DU TERROIR BRETON.
50. UNION BRETONNE POUR LA DEFENSE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT. Groups 52 associations, movements, unions and societies.
51. U.R.B.E. (UNION REGIONALE BRETONNE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT), and its bulletin MIEUX VIVRE.
52. NATURE ET VIE. An association with an emphasis on ecology, biology and health.

1. Gallo, Panorama, p.17.

2. The area in which Malmanche's play Les Païens was set. cf. above, p. 169.

53. DIWALL. Organ of Nature et Vie.
54. BRETAGNE VIVANTE.
55. LE PAYSAN BIOLOGISTE.
56. ASSOCIATION POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT DE LA BRETAGNE (A.D.E.B.)
57. DASTUM. Comprises a Breton tape-library and books of traditional music.
58. CENTRE NANTAIS DE CULTURE CELTIQUE.\*
59. UNION DES SOCIETES BRETONNES DE L'ILE DE FRANCE. According to Gallo this was under communist control in 1973.<sup>1\*</sup>
60. SOLEIL DE L'OUEST. Specialises in economic and political information.\*
61. Ste DUINE, and bulletin Le Rouget de Dol. Deals with history and architecture.\*
62. BULLETIN DE LIAISON ECOSTROUMPF.\*
63. T.V. BRETAGNE. An edition of the Télégramme de Brest.\*

In addition to the organisations mentioned in this list there are of course the very numerous Cercles Celtiques and Bagadou of sonneurs, and the various Amicales des Bretons de ..., the Confréries de Lutte Bretonne, and the 'Breton' churches: L'Eglise Orthodoxe de Bretagne, L'Eglise Catholique Orthodoxe Celtique and its bulletin Hol Levenez, and the monastery at Run-Meno.<sup>2</sup> The latter church began with the arrival at Run-Memo of three monks belonging to the order of St. Columba of the 'Celtic Church' which is centred on the 'Patriarchate of Glastonbury'.<sup>3</sup>

1. Gallo, Panorama, p.21.

\* Indicates not included in Gallo's statistics for the category. Late additions to the Panorama.

2. It has proved impossible to obtain any information about the first of these 'Breton' churches.

3. An account of their strained relationship with the Catholic Church is given in Caerleon, La révolution bretonne permanente, pp.254-63.

**APPENDIX: B. A DETAILED PROPOSAL FOR REFORM IN BRITTANY**

It has already been stated that the Breton movement can only be hindered by its fragmentary nature, and thus any attempt to produce a common approach to the Breton problem is an unusual and interesting initiative. The writer is grateful to Yann Fouéré for the following document, published in 1978, which puts forward a detailed plan for the creation of a Breton region which would have its own administrative, financial and cultural institutions. The document is addressed to national and local representatives of Brittany, and to Breton cultural, social and economic organisations.

## **A MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS**

les Sénateurs, Députés, Conseillers Régionaux, Conseillers Généraux, Maires et Conseillers Municipaux, à tous les Elus et responsables des Associations, Syndicats et Groupements, des Chambres et Assemblées économiques, culturelles et sociales de Bretagne,

## **A TOUS LES BRETONS,**

nous soumettons ce Projet de Loi en leur demandant de bien vouloir nous le renvoyer avec leur approbation, leurs observations et leurs suggestions.

Ce texte est la suite normale et logique du Vœu demandant la création d'une Région de Bretagne dotée d'institutions et de pouvoirs propres, administratifs, financiers et culturels, vœu que nous vous avons soumis en 1962, et qui fut alors approuvé par plus de 600 Conseils Municipaux et par de nombreuses personnalités bretonnes de toutes opinions et de tous les milieux socio-économiques.

De même que le texte de ce vœu fut un véritable programme pour les années à venir, plusieurs de ses dispositions ayant été reprises par la Loi de 1972 qui a créé les Conseils Régionaux, le PROJET DE LOI qui vous est soumis entend lui aussi tracer les grandes lignes d'une organisation régionale complète immédiatement applicable à la Bretagne, mais dont toutes les Régions de France et d'Europe qui ne sont pas encore dotées d'un semblable statut ne peuvent manquer de s'inspirer.

La Bretagne et le Peuple breton doivent se porter à l'avant-garde d'un mouvement général de redistribution des fonctions et des pouvoirs qui donnera à tous les citoyens de l'Etat français et à tous les peuples de l'Europe la possibilité de défendre plus efficacement leurs intérêts, et aussi de participer pleinement à l'exercice du pouvoir et des responsabilités dans leur propre Région.

# PRÉSENTATION DU PROJET DE LOI PORTANT STATUT SPÉCIAL POUR LA BRETAGNE

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## EXPOSÉ DES MOTIFS

Le discours du Président de la République au mois de décembre 1975, le silence significatif opposé par le gouvernement aux demandes des Présidents de Conseils Régionaux tendant à étendre les pouvoirs de ces Assemblées (novembre 1977), ont clairement montré que la politique de l'Etat concernant la décentralisation et la régionalisation était nettement en retrait sur ses positions antérieures. Or la réforme de 1972, qui a créé les Conseils Régionaux, était déjà en retrait sur celle proposée par le Général de Gaulle en 1969. Si le renforcement de l'autonomie communale est nécessaire, celui de l'autonomie régionale ne l'est pas moins. Après quatre ans d'expérience des Conseils Régionaux il apparaît aujourd'hui très nettement que ces derniers ne seront véritablement efficaces, et ne serviront pleinement les intérêts de la Région qu'ils représentent, que s'ils sont dotés de ressources financières plus importantes et de pouvoirs de décision plus larges dans les domaines culturels, économiques et administratifs régionaux (Cf. déclarations des Présidents de ces Conseils, en Bretagne celles de MM. Rouyer, Champaud, etc..).

Il convient donc d'influer sur la politique de l'Etat afin de l'amener à accepter comme inévitable et nécessaire l'avènement d'un véritable pouvoir régional. Une fois de plus la Bretagne doit se porter à l'avant-garde de ce combat.

L'heure paraît donc venue, pour les organismes et mouvements régionaux de toute nature, qui constituent et rassemblent les forces vives de la Bretagne, ainsi que pour les élus de la population bretonne en général, de provoquer un rassemblement de l'opinion bretonne qui, si elle est largement ouverte à l'idée d'un élargissement des pouvoirs des Conseils Régionaux, n'est pas encore suffisamment informée des problèmes précis que pose l'institution d'un pouvoir régional normal.

## OBJECTIFS POURSUIVIS

Les objectifs généraux de cette campagne d'information, et par voie de conséquence de pression sur les Pouvoirs publics, doivent être à la fois simples et limités. Il convient de s'abstenir de toute

prise de position doctrinale et théorique pour s'attacher à la réalisation de buts précis et concrets. Ces derniers nous paraissent devoir être :

- 1) l'autonomie communale
- 2) le pouvoir régional.

- Le renforcement de l'autonomie communale et du pouvoir des maires, l'accroissement des ressources financières des communes, l'allègement de la tutelle préfectorale, figurent dans les programmes de tous les partis politiques français. Il s'agit là d'une revendication essentielle de l'Association des Maires de France. Sa réalisation est cependant liée à une profonde réforme des structures administratives et financières de l'Etat, par la décentralisation et la redistribution des pouvoirs. De ce fait même elle est étroitement liée à la réalisation du pouvoir régional. On peut même dire qu'elle en dépend.
- La notion de pouvoir régional forme l'un des éléments du programme de certains partis politiques hexagonaux, notamment celui des réformateurs et du parti socialiste. L'expérience prouve cependant que cette partie de leur programme est souvent sacrifiée à des considérations de politique nationale centraliste, camouflées sous le nom de nécessités de gouvernement, d'alliances ou de tactiques électorales.

Il apparaît donc en premier lieu que la campagne d'information et de pression pour un pouvoir régional doit se placer au-dessus de toute politique hexagonale partisane : elle fait en effet l'objet de débats dans tous les partis. L'instauration d'un véritable pouvoir régional intéresse le peuple breton tout entier, et toutes ses catégories socio-professionnelles. Elle est nécessaire à son développement et à son épanouissement. C'est pourquoi il nous paraît également indispensable d'affirmer dans cette campagne la spécificité du problème breton. Cette spécificité implique que le pouvoir régional appliqué à la Bretagne ne soit pas forcément le même que celui qui sera appliqué aux autres Régions. Déjà le Parti socialiste a demandé qu'un Statut Régional spécial et spécifique soit appliqué à la Corse. L'Italie, qui a réalisé avec succès le pouvoir régional dans le cadre d'un Etat unitaire, a légalisé l'existence de cinq Régions à Statut spécial, dont l'autonomie, en raison de l'existence de langues différentes ou de facteurs géographiques et économiques comme l'insularité, est plus étendue que celle des Régions ordinaires. La Bretagne mérite le même traitement.

## MESURES CONCRÈTES

Tenant compte de ces diverses considérations il apparaît que l'on peut définir très simplement de la manière suivante le programme et les objectifs concrets poursuivis par la campagne d'information et de pression qu'il nous faut entreprendre :

- Unité de la Bretagne par la réintégration de la Loire-Atlantique dans la Région de Bretagne.



- Assemblée régionale élue au suffrage universel direct. Pour des raisons évidentes qui découlent de ce que nous avons dit ci-dessus, les parlementaires (Assemblée nationale et Sénat) y seront inéligibles, ainsi que tout fonctionnaire d'Etat exerçant ses fonctions dans la Région.
- Conseil économique, social et culturel régional, assurant la représentation des forces économiques, sociales et culturelles de la Région.
- Election par l'Assemblée Régionale d'un Exécutif régional assurant l'administration interne de la Région.
- Autonomie financière par l'attribution à la Région des produits de certains impôts aujourd'hui exclusivement perçus par l'Etat, et par la régionalisation de certaines ressources.
- Pouvoir de décision de l'Assemblée et des autorités régionales pour tout ce qui concerne les intérêts propres à la Région dans le domaine économique social et culturel
- Réorganisation administrative interne de la Région assurant l'élargissement de l'autonomie communale et une plus équitable répartition des ressources et des charges entre les diverses collectivités locales.

Nous inspirant de tous ces facteurs nous avons donc demandé à des spécialistes du droit public et constitutionnel, déjà connus pour leurs travaux sur ces sujets, de s'inspirer des exemples tirés des institutions des voisins les plus immédiats de la France et faisant comme elle partie du Marché Commun (dévolution en Grande-Bretagne, Lander allemands, Régions italiennes, Provinces des Pays Bas, etc...), et d'étudier et d'élaborer un plan complet, précis et détaillé, de statut Régional pour la Bretagne. C'est le résultat de leurs travaux que nous présentons aujourd'hui, sous la forme d'un Projet de Loi détaillé, portant Statut Régional Spécial pour la Bretagne. Notre intention est de populariser ce Projet dans l'opinion publique bretonne, de le faire soutenir par les responsables des organismes, mouvements, associations, collectivités publiques, partis, groupements de toute nature et de toute obédience, ainsi que par les élus de Bretagne, afin de faire pression sur le gouvernement français, quel que soit ce dernier, et l'amener à faire adopter ce Projet de Loi par les Assemblées nationales. Ce faisant il ne fera que rendre justice à l'opinion bretonne, qui, en dehors de toute considération idéologique ou doctrinale, milite depuis de longues années pour la réalisation des objectifs parfaitement clairs et immédiatement réalisables qui sont contenus dans ce Projet de Loi.

**Le Comité d'Action Régionale (C.A.R.)**

6, avenue de la France Libre

29000 QUIMPER

# PROJET DE LOI

## PORTANT STATUT SPÉCIAL POUR LA BRETAGNE

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Le présent Projet de Loi portant création de la Région de Bretagne et la dotant d'un Statut particulier n'est ni spécialement original ni spécialement novateur. D'une manière générale il se borne à reprendre dans leurs grandes lignes, et dans le respect des dispositions et de l'esprit de la Constitution française de 1958, les Statuts qui sont actuellement ceux des Régions italiennes, dont certaines bénéficient d'un Statut Spécial. Ses dispositions sont inspirées principalement de ces Statuts et de la Constitution de l'Etat unitaire italien, et, dans une mesure moindre, de la Constitution de la République fédérale allemande et de la constitution helvétique, tous Etats voisins immédiats de la France. Les dispositions concernant la Cour Régionale s'inspirent de la Constitution italienne et de celle des Etats-Unis. Enfin, pour une part également les travaux du CELIB et le Projet de Loi portant Statut pour la Corse, déposé à l'Assemblée Nationale par le groupe parlementaire socialiste et celui des radicaux de gauche ont servi de référence dans la rédaction du présent Projet.

1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1978

## PROJET DE STATUT POUR LA BRETAGNE

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### TITRE I

## CONSTITUTION DE LA RÉGION DE BRETAGNE

Art. 1. — Il est créé une Région de Bretagne, collectivité territoriale de plein exercice, conformément à l'art. 72 de la Constitution de la République Française. Elle comprend les cinq départements des Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Ille-et-Vilaine, Loire-Atlantique et Morbihan. Son chef-lieu sera fixé librement par ses organes délibérants.

Art. 2. — Les communes, cantons et arrondissements dont le territoire est limitrophe de celui de la Région de Bretagne pourront demander à faire partie de la Région. L'Assemblée régionale de Bretagne est obligatoirement saisie de leurs demandes. Elle est seule compétente pour en délibérer et en décider.

Art. 3. — Par son organisation, son administration et sa législation, la Région de Bretagne favorise la disparition des obstacles qui, limitant les libertés réelles des citoyens, empêchent le développement de la personne humaine et entravent l'effective participation

de tous, sans distinction de sexe, de langue, de travail, de croyance, de pensée et de conditions sociales, à l'organisation politique, économique, sociale et culturelle de la Région ainsi qu'à son gouvernement. La Déclaration Universelle et la Convention Européenne des Droits de l'Homme sont déclarées faire partie intégrante de sa législation.

Art. 4. — Dans sa législation et son administration la Région de Bretagne réalise la décentralisation administrative et les délégations de pouvoirs les plus larges au profit des communes et des autres collectivités territoriales en particulier des « pays » d'une part, des organismes sociaux et professionnels, des établissements publics et semi-publics, ainsi que des citoyens d'autre part.

## TITRE II

### ORGANISATION DE LA RÉGION

#### ASSEMBLÉE RÉGIONALE

Art. 5. — La Région de Bretagne s'administre librement dans la limite des compétences définies par la présente loi, et de celles qui pourraient ultérieurement lui être confiées par les lois de l'Etat. Ses organes sont : l'Assemblée Régionale, la Commission Exécutive Régionale et le Président de la Région. Le Président de la Région et la Commission Exécutive Régionale constituent l'exécutif, ou gouvernement, de la Région.

Art. 6. — Les membres de l'Assemblée Régionale sont élus pour cinq ans au suffrage universel direct. La moitié d'entre eux sont élus dans le cadre des pays ou arrondissements, au scrutin uninominal à un tour, à raison de deux représentants par pays ou arrondissement, les deux candidats ayant obtenu le plus de voix étant déclarés élus. L'autre moitié des membres de l'Assemblée Régionale est élue au scrutin de liste à un tour et à la proportionnelle, dans le cadre de six grandes circonscriptions électorales qui grouperont plusieurs pays ou arrondissements, de manière à former des circonscriptions aussi égales que possible, mais qui, en aucun cas, ne devront comprendre plus de huit cent mille habitants chacune. Les sièges non pourvus par ce scrutin de liste seront répartis dans le cadre de la Région suivant le système de la plus forte moyenne.

Art. 7. — Les représentants régionaux représentent la région entière. Leur fonction est incompatible avec celle de membre d'une des Assemblées nationales ou du gouvernement de la République, d'une autre Assemblée Régionale, du Conseil économique et social et du Conseil de la Culture de la Région, ainsi qu'avec toute charge publique ou semi-publique exercée au service de l'Etat dans la Région.

Art. 8. — Les règles d'incompatibilité et d'inéligibilité à l'Assemblée Régionale sont fixées par les lois en vigueur et par la présente

Loi. L'Assemblée Régionale peut, en ce qui la concerne, décider d'adopter des règles supplémentaires d'inéligibilité et d'incompatibilité pour ses propres membres.

Art. 9. — Les élections à l'Assemblée Régionale sont fixées par le Président de la Région dans les quinze jours qui suivent l'expiration des pouvoirs de l'Assemblée précédente. Elles doivent avoir lieu au plus tard dans les quarante jours qui suivent cette date.

Art. 10. — L'Assemblée régionale élit parmi ses membres son propre bureau et les membres de ses commissions conformément à son règlement intérieur qu'elle élabore librement, sous réserve qu'elle doit faire place dans son bureau à une représentation proportionnelle de la minorité. Elle se réunit de plein droit en session ordinaire, sur convocation de son président, dans la première quinzaine des mois de janvier, avril et octobre de chaque année, et en session extraordinaire sur convocation de son Président, ou à la requête d'au moins un tiers de ses membres.

Art. 11. — Au cours de sa session ordinaire de Janvier, l'Assemblée Régionale vote le budget annuel régional, préparé par la Commission Exécutive Régionale. L'exercice financier de la Région commence en même temps que celui de l'Etat.

Art. 12. — Les décisions de l'Assemblée Régionale ne sont pas valables sans la présence de la majorité absolue de ses membres, et si elles ne sont adoptées à la majorité des présents.

Art. 13. — Les Représentants régionaux ne peuvent être ni poursuivis ni censurés pour les opinions manifestées ou les votes émis dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions. Ils reçoivent une indemnité fixée par une Loi de la Région.

Art. 14. — Les séances de l'Assemblée Régionale sont publiques. L'Assemblée peut toutefois décider de se réunir en séance secrète.

Art. 15. — En cas de décès ou de démission d'un représentant régional au cours de son mandat, le candidat ayant obtenu le plus de voix après lui dans le cadre du pays ou arrondissement, ou le candidat le plus favorisé après lui de la liste sur laquelle il a été élu, le remplace automatiquement.

### TITRE III

## LE POUVOIR EXÉCUTIF RÉGIONAL

Art. 16. — Le Président de la Région est élu pour cinq ans par l'Assemblée Régionale aussitôt après l'élection du Président et du bureau de l'Assemblée. L'élection a lieu au scrutin secret à la majorité absolue, et, après le second scrutin, à la majorité relative, et en présence des deux tiers au moins des membres de l'Assemblée Régionale.

Art. 17. — Le Président de la Région nomme lui-même les membres de la Commission Exécutive Régionale, dont le nombre doit

être de cinq au moins et de dix au plus. Ils peuvent être choisis soit au sein de l'Assemblée Régionale, soit au sein du Conseil économique et social et du Conseil de la Culture de la Région, ou encore, pour des raisons de compétence exceptionnelle, en dehors de ces Assemblées.

Art. 18. — Les incompatibilités fixées par l'art. 7 de la présente loi s'appliquent aux membres de la Commission Exécutive Régionale et au Président de la Région.

Art. 19. — Les membres de la Commission exécutive régionale sont préposés aux différents secteurs de l'administration régionale. Ils sont responsables devant le Président de Région. Ils forment avec lui l'exécutif, ou gouvernement de la Région.

Art. 20. — Le Président de la Région est le chef de l'administration régionale. Il représente la Région. C'est lui qui promulgue les lois et règlements régionaux et en assure la publication au Bulletin Officiel de la Région.

Art. 21. — En cas d'absence ou d'empêchement le Président de la Région est remplacé par le Commissaire Exécutif Régional désigné par lui.

Art. 22. — En cas de démission, d'incapacité permanente ou de décès du Président de la Région, le Président de l'Assemblée Régionale convoque celle-ci dans un délai maximum de quinze jours afin de procéder à l'élection d'un nouveau Président de la Région. Ce dernier reste en fonction jusqu'à l'expiration du mandat de l'Assemblée Régionale qui l'a élu. Le nouveau Président peut procéder à la nomination totale ou partielle d'une nouvelle Commission Exécutive Régionale.

## TITRE IV

### LES CONSEILS RÉGIONAUX

Art. 23. — L'Assemblée Régionale de Bretagne est assistée, avec pouvoirs consultatifs, d'un Conseil Economique et Social et d'un Conseil de la Culture et de l'Environnement.

Art. 24. — L'Assemblée Régionale fixe les conditions dans lesquelles les différents organismes, syndicats, associations et groupements à caractère économique, social, professionnel, familial, scientifique, culturel, religieux, universitaire, sportif, écologique, etc. éliront leurs représentants aux Conseils Régionaux.

Art. 25. — Les Conseils Régionaux établissent leur règlement intérieur. Ils élisent leur Président et leur bureau. L'organisation de leurs travaux est soumise, en priorité, aux directives de l'Assemblée Régionale et de la Commission Exécutive Régionale.

Art. 26. — Le Conseil Economique et social régional est obligatoirement et préalablement consulté sur la préparation des plans de développement, d'équipement et d'aménagement de la Bretagne, la

répartition des crédits de l'Etat destinés aux investissements d'intérêt régional, et d'une manière générale, toutes les matières où la responsabilité financière de l'Etat et de la Région peuvent se trouver engagée.

Art. 27. — Le Conseil de la culture et de l'environnement est obligatoirement et préalablement consulté sur tous les problèmes d'enseignement à tous les degrés, de la radio et de la télévision régionales, de l'action culturelle, du cadre de vie, de la protection des monuments, des sites, des rivages et de l'environnement.

## TITRE V

### ATTRIBUTIONS ET FONCTIONS DES ORGANES RÉGIONAUX

Art. 28. — L'initiative des lois régionales appartient à la Commission Exécutive Régionale, aux membres de l'Assemblée Régionale et des Conseils Régionaux ainsi qu'aux citoyens de la Région. Les uns et les autres exercent ces pouvoirs en harmonie avec la Constitution de la République et celle de la Région, et dans le respect des obligations contenues dans les Conventions et Traités internationaux, protecteurs des droits et libertés fondamentales de l'homme, du citoyen, des groupes humains et des minorités.

Art. 29. — Les lois régionales sont adoptées par l'Assemblée Régionale à la majorité de ses membres après consultation, le cas échéant, des Conseils Régionaux intéressés. Ces derniers peuvent également soumettre à l'approbation de l'Assemblée Régionale des projets de lois qu'ils auront élaboré.

Art. 30. — Les lois régionales ainsi que les règlements édictés par la Commission Exécutive Régionale ne sont applicables que s'ils sont revêtus de la signature du Président de la Région et des Commissaires exécutifs régionaux compétents. Ils entrent en vigueur dix jours après leur publication, sauf disposition contraire prévue par la dite loi ou le dit règlement.

Art. 31. — L'Assemblée Régionale et le Président de Région peuvent soumettre un projet de loi à l'approbation de la population par la procédure du référendum. Dans ce cas le projet ne devient loi que s'il est approuvé par la majorité des citoyens dans la Région.

Art. 32. — Les citoyens possèdent le droit de pétition et d'initiative des lois. L'Assemblée Régionale doit obligatoirement délibérer d'un projet qui a recueilli au moins trente mille signatures d'électeurs ou les délibérations concordantes de trente Conseils Municipaux ou de plusieurs Conseils de pays. Si elle l'approuve, le projet devient automatiquement loi. Si elle refuse de l'approuver le projet est soumis au référendum dans les conditions prévues à l'article précédent.

Art. 33. — Le Président de l'Assemblée Régionale, assisté du bureau et des Commissions, assure la permanence de ses travaux en dehors des sessions : il reçoit à cet effet, ainsi que les membres du bureau, toutes délégations utiles.

Art. 34. — Le Président de la Région est chargé de l'exécution et de la mise en pratique des décisions de l'Assemblée Régionale. Il assume la direction des services administratifs, techniques et financiers de la Région. Il est également responsable de l'application des lois générales de la République et du maintien de l'ordre dans la Région.

Art. 35. — L'Assemblée Régionale ne peut légiférer dans les matières suivantes qui sont de la compétence exclusive des autorités de la République :

- Les affaires étrangères, la diplomatie, les traités et les relations internationales.
- La défense nationale, l'organisation et la direction des forces armées.
- La politique monétaire et le contrôle des changes.
- les poids et mesures
- la politique douanière, les traités de commerce et de navigation, le droit maritime et aérien
- les postes et télécommunications
- le droit des personnes, du commerce, de l'industrie, du travail
- le contrôle de l'immigration
- la fiscalité générale et le recouvrement des impôts d'Etat
- les transports, routes, chemins de fer et lignes aériennes de grande communication, la circulation aérienne internationale
- la coordination des politiques et des législations régionales

Art. 36. — L'Assemblée Régionale a le pouvoir de légiférer et de réglementer dans les affaires suivantes qui sont de sa compétence exclusive

- organisation et recrutement des services publics régionaux
- administration intérieure de la Région et fixation des circonscriptions communales, départementales, d'arrondissement ou de pays
- fiscalité régionale et recouvrement des impôts régionaux
- Emprunts et répartition des subventions et crédits d'Etat et des organismes européens
- politique de l'emploi dans la Région
- politique du crédit dans la Région
- politique foncière dans la Région
- politique de l'énergie dans la Région
- plans de développement économique régionaux
- création, organisation, financement et contrôle d'établissements publics, de sociétés d'économie mixte, d'établissements de crédit, de concessions et de régies présentant un intérêt régional.
- communications et transports régionaux : routes, chemins de fer, ports, rivières, canaux, voirie, urbanisme, travaux publics et réseaux de communication de toute nature d'intérêt régional
- organisation et programmes de l'enseignement : écoles maternelles, écoles techniques, enseignements des premier et second degrés, Universités
- organisation et contrôle des radiodiffusions et télévisions régionales
- maisons de la culture et toutes mesures de promotion culturelle, musées, bibliothèques

- police locale, urbaine et régionale
- tribunaux de simple police, de première instance et Cour d'appel régionale
- Sécurité sociale, hygiène, santé publique, hôpitaux, curisme, sports
- défense de l'environnement, protection des sites, des rivages, des monuments, remembrement agricole, assainissement
- centrales hydro-électriques, thermiques, nucléaires
- agriculture, mariculture, chasse, pêche, mines et carrières
- artisanat, tourisme, hôtellerie
- administration du domaine public régional, plans d'occupation des sols et expropriations d'utilité publique.

Art. 37. — La Région concourt par ses propres initiatives à la détermination des objectifs et des instruments de la planification nationale et établit des programmes de développement économique pour son propre territoire.

Art. 38. — Dans tous les autres domaines, attributions, matières, services qui ne sont pas du ressort exclusif de l'Etat tel qu'il est précisé à l'art. 35 ci-dessus, et qui dépassent le domaine réservé de la Région tel qu'il est précisé à l'art. 36 ci-dessus, l'Assemblée Régionale et la Commission Exécutive Régionale peuvent, dans les limites et principes dont s'inspire la Constitution et la législation de la République, légiférer et régler afin de satisfaire aux conditions particulières et aux intérêts propres de la Région. Les décisions de ce genre sont obligatoirement soumises au Commissaire de la République siégeant dans la Région.

Art. 39. — Les autorités communales conservent les attributions qui leur ont été conférées par la Constitution et les lois de la République. L'Assemblée Régionale a le pouvoir de leur déléguer en partie ou en totalité, ainsi qu'aux autres collectivités territoriales, les attributions qui sont de son domaine exclusif et de leur attribuer les ressources fiscales correspondantes.

Art. 40. — L'Assemblée Régionale peut émettre des vœux ou présenter des Projets dans toutes les matières qui sont de la compétence des Assemblées et du gouvernement de la République et qui peuvent intéresser la Région. Ces projets sont obligatoirement soumis aux Assemblées législatives de la République.

Art. 41. — Les assemblées et le gouvernement de la République peuvent déléguer à la Région des attributions qui ne sont pas comprises dans l'énumération faite par l'art. 36 ci-dessus.

## TITRE VI

### FINANCES DE LA RÉGION

- Art. 42. — Les ressources de la Région sont constituées par :
- le produit des impôts fonciers et contributions mobilières perçues dans la Région
  - les droits de succession, la taxe à l'habitation, la taxe sur les plus values
  - la moitié du produit de la T.V.A. perçue dans la Région



- les droits sur les produits pétroliers et les taxes sur l'automobile (vignettes, cartes grises...)
- le produit des taxes additionnelles aux impôts d'Etat dont le montant est fixé librement par l'Assemblée Régionale
- le produit des autres taxes et impôts que la Région, les communes et les collectivités locales pourront établir
- les emprunts, les dons et les legs
- les produits du domaine régional
- la dotation globale du budget de l'Etat
- les subventions du fonds régional de la Communauté Européenne

Art. 43. — Les biens domaniaux et immobiliers de l'Etat sis sur le territoire de la Région, en dehors de ceux qui intéressent les services qui sont de la compétence exclusive de l'Etat, sont transférés au domaine de la Région. Le domaine maritime, le domaine fluvial, le domaine forestier et le domaine minier de l'Etat sont également transférés au patrimoine de la Région.

Art. 44. — La dotation globale versée par l'Etat à la Région est destinée en priorité au financement des travaux d'équipement et de développement économique. Elle vise à compenser par solidarité nationale la différence entre le produit intérieur brut de la Région et la moyenne nationale. Elle est révisée tous les cinq ans en tenant compte de la variation des données de son calcul.

Art. 45. — Les autorités de la Région édictent les règles d'application nécessaires au recouvrement de leurs ressources, et à leur répartition entre le budget de la Région et celui des communes et autres collectivités territoriales et établissements publics.

Art. 46. — Les services fiscaux de l'Etat communiquent à ceux de la Région les renseignements, informations, statistiques, qui pourraient être nécessaires à l'application des dispositions fiscales prévues à l'art. 42 ci-dessus.

## TITRE VII

### IDENTITÉ CULTURELLE DE LA RÉGION DE BRETAGNE

Art. 47. — Dans la Région de Bretagne la langue bretonne est située sur un pied d'égalité avec la langue française. Les actes publics peuvent être rédigés dans une langue ou dans l'autre. L'usage de la langue bretonne est libre dans la vie publique, les administrations et la justice au même titre que celui de la langue française.

Art. 48. — Le Conseil Régional de la culture et de l'environnement est spécialement saisi de tous les problèmes concernant l'administration, la vie publique et l'enseignement en Basse-Bretagne, en relation avec la promotion, le statut et le développement de la langue bretonne. Une section spéciale du Conseil pourra être constituée à cet effet.

Art. 49. — Sur les recommandations du Conseil de la Culture, l'Assemblée Régionale peut, dans l'organisation de l'enseignement, de l'administration, de la vie publique, des moyens audio-visuels, de la radio et de la télévision, prendre toutes mesures utiles à la sauvegarde et au développement de l'identité culturelle de la Bretagne. L'enseignement de la langue bretonne, de l'histoire, de la géographie, de l'économie et de la civilisation de la Bretagne et des pays celtiques est obligatoirement intégré aux programmes d'enseignement de tous les degrés dans la Région. Un système spécial d'administration, de radio et de télévision, d'enseignement, pourra être institué en Basse Bretagne. L'étude de la langue anglaise, moyen de communication interceltique et international sera favorisé à tous les degrés de l'enseignement dans la Région.

## TITRE VIII

### RAPPORTS ENTRE L'ÉTAT ET LA RÉGION

Art. 50. — Le gouvernement de la République nomme dans la Région un Commissaire de la République. Il réside dans la Région et est chargé des fonctions administratives qui sont du domaine exclusif de l'Etat. Il les coordonne avec celles exercées par la Région. Il représente l'Etat dans la Région. Il transmet les communications du gouvernement de la République à l'Assemblée Régionale et les décisions, vœux et avis de l'Assemblée Régionale au gouvernement.

Art. 51. — Le Président de la Région exerce, outre la direction des administrations régionales, celle de certains services d'Etat dans la Région, mais seulement dans les domaines, matières et services qui sont de la compétence commune ou partagée de l'Etat et de la Région, selon les principes posés à l'art. 38 ci-dessus. Il se conforme dans ce domaine aux directives du gouvernement de la République. Il doit être entendu par le Conseil des Ministres de la République lorsque l'on y traite de questions intéressant la Région ou pouvant avoir une incidence particulière sur son développement économique et sa vie sociale.

Art. 52. — Le Commissaire de la République est saisi des lois édictées par l'Assemblée Régionale dans les limites de l'article 38 ci-dessus. S'il les estime compatibles avec les lois et la constitution de la République, et s'il n'a pas formulé d'observations à leur sujet dans le délai d'un mois, elles deviennent automatiquement applicables et sont promulguées par le Président de la Région.

Le Commissaire de la République peut dans le même délai, saisir l'Assemblée Régionale de ses observations et lui demander une nouvelle délibération qui doit se terminer par un vote à la majorité absolue des membres présents. Si le conflit persiste entre les deux parties, la Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale prévue aux articles 56 et suivants ci-dessous, est saisie de plein droit.

Art. 53. — Le Commissaire de la République peut proposer au

gouvernement de la République la dissolution de l'Assemblée Régionale de Bretagne si cette dernière accomplit des actes contraires à la Constitution ou à la présente Loi, si elle se rend responsable de graves violations des Lois de la Région ou de celles de la République, ou si, par suite de démissions, ou de toute autre cause elle n'est plus en état de fonctionner.

Art. 54. — La dissolution de l'Assemblée Régionale est décidée par un décret motivé du Président de la République, après délibération préalable du Conseil des Ministres et sur préavis de la Commission Compétente de l'Assemblée Nationale.

Art. 55. — En cas de dissolution de l'Assemblée Régionale, l'administration ordinaire de la Région est confiée à une Commission extraordinaire de dix membres choisis par le gouvernement de la République parmi les électeurs de la Région. Cette commission prépare les élections pour constituer la nouvelle Assemblée Régionale. Ces élections doivent avoir lieu dans un délai maximum de trois mois.

## TITRE IX

### COUR ADMINISTRATIVE ET CONSTITUTIONNELLE RÉGIONALE

Art. 56. — Il est constitué une Cour administrative et constitutionnelle Régionale. Elle est chargée de juger les conflits qui peuvent s'élever entre l'Assemblée et les autorités régionales et le Commissaire de la République d'une part, entre les services régionaux et les services de l'Etat dans la Région, entre les collectivités territoriales et les autorités communales, entre ces dernières et les autorités régionales d'autre part.

Art. 57. — La Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale est saisie de plein droit dans le cas prévu à l'article 52 ci-dessus. Elle peut être saisie à tout moment par le Commissaire de la République, le Président de Région, les maires et présidents des assemblées des collectivités territoriales.

Art. 58. — La Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale est juge de tous les conflits qui peuvent s'élever entre les autorités régionales et le Commissaire de la République dans l'interprétation et l'application des articles 35, 36, 37 et 38 ci-dessus. Ses décisions sont susceptibles d'appel, interjeté par l'une ou l'autre partie, devant le conseil d'Etat ou, le cas échéant, le Conseil constitutionnel.

Art. 59. — La Cour administrative et constitutionnelle Régionale juge en dernier ressort des conflits qui peuvent s'élever entre les autorités régionales, locales et communales d'une part, les collectivités territoriales et communales entre elles d'autre part.

Art. 60. — La Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale statue également en première instance sur les recours introduits par tout citoyen ou groupe de citoyens contre les autorités régionales

ou le gouvernement de la République pour violation des libertés fondamentales et de la Convention Européenne des Droits de l'Homme, et autres Conventions internationales tendant à protéger les droits de l'homme et des citoyens et ceux des minorités.

Art. 61. — La Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale est composée de douze magistrats désignés pour une période de douze ans et renouvelables par moitié tous les six ans. Ils sont choisis en raison de leurs compétences parmi les magistrats, les professeurs agrégés de Droit ou les membres des professions juridiques ayant exercé leurs fonctions pendant une période de vingt ans au moins. Quatre d'entre eux sont nommés par le Président de Région sur une liste de dix noms proposés par l'Assemblée Régionale ; quatre d'entre eux sont nommés par le gouvernement de la République sur proposition du Commissaire Régional ; quatre d'entre eux sont élus par les membres des professions juridiques exerçant leur activités dans la Région : ordre des avocats, Chambre des notaires, magistrats en exercice, professeurs et docteurs des facultés de droit.

Art. 62. — Les fonctions de magistrat de la Cour administrative et constitutionnelle Régionale sont incompatibles avec toute autre fonction élective, et avec tout exercice dans la Région d'une activité privée ou publique.

Art. 63. — La Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale organise elle-même son travail. Elle élit elle-même son Président. Elle peut s'entourer dans tous les domaines des avis d'experts qualifiés.

Art. 64. — Les magistrats de la Cour administrative et constitutionnelle régionale ne peuvent être ni inquiétés ni poursuivis pour les opinions exprimées ou les jugements rendus au cours de leurs fonctions. Ils sont assimilés, en ce qui concerne leurs prérogatives et leurs traitements aux Conseillers du plus haut grade de la Cour de Cassation, de la Cour des Comptes et du Conseil d'Etat. Leur indépendance et celle de la Cour est assurée par une dotation spéciale globale, provenant à parts égales du budget de l'Etat et de celui de la Région. La Cour répartit et administre elle-même cette dotation.

## TITRE X

### DISPOSITIONS TRANSITOIRES

Art. 65. — Le Préfet Régional de Bretagne, le Préfet de la Loire-Atlantique, le Conseil Régional de Bretagne, le Conseil Général de Loire-Atlantique, resteront chargés de l'administration régionale des cinq départements bretons jusqu'à l'élection de la première assemblée Régionale, qui devra avoir lieu dans un délai maximum de six mois après la promulgation de la présente loi qui constitue le Statut de la Région de Bretagne.

Art. 66. — La Commission Exécutive Régionale d'une part, désignée selon les modalités de l'art. 17 de la présente loi, le Préfet Régional de l'ancienne Région, le Préfet de Loire-Atlantique, le Tré-

sorier Payeur Régional, le Premier Président de la Cour d'appel, le Recteur de l'Université de Bretagne d'autre part, prendront toutes mesures nécessaires pour régler le transfert des bureaux, des attributions et du personnel, de l'Etat à la Région. Leurs travaux seront dirigés par le Président de la Région, le Président de l'Assemblée Régionale et le premier Commissaire de la République dans la Région.

Art. 67. — Dans les matières soumises à la compétence de la Région selon l'art. 36 de la présente loi, les lois et règlements de l'Etat continueront d'être appliqués jusqu'à leur remplacement progressif par les lois et les règlements de la Région.

Art. 68. — Les différents ministres du gouvernement de la République concernés par les dispositions de la présente loi, sont chargés de veiller à son application.

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APPENDIX: C. ARTICLES FROM NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES OF THE  
BRETON MOVEMENT

The purpose of this appendix is to give a number of articles showing various themes and how they are used by the movement to further its cause.

The first two articles are from Le Peuple breton, the newspaper of the Union Démocratique Bretonne (UDB)<sup>1</sup>. In the first of these articles, apart from the obvious left-wing viewpoint, other Breton preoccupations are revealed. Thus the anxiety that central government should conceive of Brittany's future as lying in the growth of military installations and tourism, and the modern view that Brittany's problems stem largely from the way in which the central government treats it as a colony. The second article enlarges on how this colonialism can affect Brittany, and leads to government repression of those Bretons who oppose it.

The next two articles are from the newspaper L'Avenir de la Bretagne, and offer constructive suggestions for helping Brittany. The first article dates from the time when L'Avenir de la Bretagne supported the Mouvement pour l'Organisation de la Bretagne (MOB)<sup>2</sup>, and the second from the time when it had switched its support to the then recently emerged Strollad ar Vro (SAV)<sup>3</sup>, which it continues to support to this day. Throughout the period though the newspaper has kept the same sub-title Journal national breton et fédéraliste européen, and the articles are to some extent similar. The first emphasises the importance of a united front of Breton interests behind a minimum programme of reforms while the second emphasises that the cultural and political struggle in Brittany

1. For further information on the UDB, cf. above, pp.108-10.

2. For further information on the MOB, cf. above, pp.106-7.

3. For further information on the SAV, cf. above, pp.110-11.

must be fought together if Breton is really to survive. Thus both articles are aiming to unite Breton interests as far as possible.

The final article is from Breiz, the monthly magazine of the cultural association Kendalc'h. The article calls for a united front of cultural organisations and thus emphasises both the extent to which the Breton cultural movement is divided and the difficulty of achieving the united political and cultural struggle that L'Avenir de la Bretagne had called for.

#### Le Peuple Breton, January 1975

La crise de l'économie capitaliste que notre journal a si souvent annoncée bat son plein en ce début d'hiver. Et, comme nous l'avions prévu, la Bretagne est touchée de manière particulièrement grave: Donval, Oberthur, Laïta, Citroën: ces quelques noms symbolisent assez la gravité de la situation.

Pays colonisé, privé de l'essentiel des pouvoirs de décision, lié par une économie insuffisamment développée à des trusts étrangers qui y exploitent à peu de frais les matières premières ou la main d'oeuvre, la Bretagne avait cependant gardé un certain tissu industriel ou artisanal autonome. Or, ce sont ces petites ou moyennes entreprises qui souffrent le plus de la volonté délibérée du gouvernement français de freiner le développement économique de l'Hexagone. Dans le seul domaine des entreprises actuellement en danger, ce sont plus de 10,000 emplois qui risquent de disparaître. Lorsque le crédit est volontairement coupé, les petites entreprises, non intégrées à des groupes bancaires ou industriels, ne peuvent pas trouver d'argent frais sur le

marché international: c'est la liquidation, avec ses conséquences sociales. Ainsi apparaît, sinon l'objectif, du moins le résultat premier de la politique de la droite giscardienne: on aboutit à une concentration capitaliste accrue au profit des grosses firmes qui auront pu résister à la crise. Tant pis pour la Bretagne si le secteur 'petites et moyennes entreprises' y était particulièrement important pour l'emploi!

D'ailleurs, cette procédure a des avantages: la fermeture d'entreprises 'modestes' ne fait pas trop de bruit, même si les colonnes des quotidiens bretons se remplissent de la liste des liquidations (ainsi à Rennes 35 liquidations cette année contre 18 en 1973). Sans compter que les commerces ou les entreprises artisanales qui ferment sans 'casse' financière spectaculaire sont à peine remarqués. Le problème social qui en résulte est pourtant dramatique: c'est l'aggravation insupportable du chômage, c'est l'émigration vers les zones de concentration industrielle française, c'est l'acceptation 'obligatoire' pour ceux qui conservent un 'boulot' de conditions de travail, de salaire et de syndicalisation indignes d'un pays moderne! Mais c'est aussi, bien sûr, un plus grand profit pour les grandes firmes ou commerces - qui savent admirablement jouer de l'ambiance de crise pour épurer leur personnel, rationaliser leur production pour une meilleure rentabilité, spéculer sur les matières premières ou les masses monétaires 'flottantes' ..

Est-il dès lors étonnant que le gouvernement de Giscard et Chirac rejette son masque de libéralisme lorsque cette politique est dénoncée avec clarté? Engagé dans une importante partie en faveur des trusts, des banques et des entreprises multinationales, le pouvoir de la droite moderne n'a qu'une réponse aux inquiétudes de ses victimes: la répression. Et, ici encore, la Bretagne offre un exemple sans ambiguïté.



Le 5 décembre des manifestants paysans du pays nantais ont été très lourdement condamnés pour avoir brûlé des pneus sur une voie ferrée: 500,000 anciens francs d'amende et presque autant de 'dommages' à verser à la SNCF! Le leader paysan morbihanais Edouard Morvan emprisonné depuis un mois - alors que les escrocs des spéculations immobilières ou bancaires ont passé Noël dans leurs châteaux ou aux Baléares! Arrestation d'otages parmi les agriculteurs du Finistère. Les inculpations se multiplient, selon un plan concerté visant les plus 'avancés' des militants paysans pour éviter que ne se répande leur exemple ...

Coincé entre les travailleurs - agriculteurs et ouvriers - qui revendiquent la sécurité de l'emploi et les intérêts du capital qui veut maintenir son taux de profit et concentrer encore la richesse, le gouvernement français montre sa vraie nature et sort ses griffes. L'avenir économique de la Bretagne est en jeu dans cette crise. Le développement de la prise de conscience populaire est visé par la répression policière et juridique. Laisserons-nous se poursuivre cette politique?

Une seule solution! l'unité de tous les travailleurs bretons, ouvriers et paysans, petits commerçants et intellectuels. Giscard a pour lui sa police et son armée, ses juges et son argent. Nous aurons pour nous notre nombre, notre détermination, notre amour de la Bretagne et notre droit!

Le Peuple Breton, February 1975

Des menaces sans précédent pèsent cette année sur la Bretagne. Elles résultent de la poursuite de la politique coloniale du pouvoir français, aggravée considérablement par la crise générale du système capitaliste. Jamais, dans l'histoire de notre peuple, le risque n'a été aussi grand.

L'accaparement militaire s'étend, gagne, est de plus en plus présenté comme une alternative à la non-industrialisation. L'accaparement touristique détourne la Bretagne de sa vocation à être la terre où vit un peuple toute l'année pour transformer notre pays en une zone de loisirs artificiels, animée pendant deux ou trois mois et pleine du silence des pays morts le reste du temps. La langue bretonne et notre culture populaire originale résistent mal à la poussée du mercantilisme et d'une pseudo-culture uniformisée et banalisée. La nouvelle culture bretonne, militante et conquérante, mène un inégal combat contre la puissance des modes et de l'argent. La gravité de la crise actuelle balaye les petites et moyennes entreprises bretonnes à une cadence jamais atteinte et le chômage, notamment celui des jeunes, qui a toujours été un fléau breton, devient parfois dramatique (il a progressé de 53% en un an dans les Côtes-du-Nord).

Face à une telle situation, que nous annonçons depuis tant de mois, il faudrait un pouvoir politique populaire, progressiste, ayant la confiance des travailleurs et soucieux des intérêts légitimes du peuple breton. Or, au lieu de cela nous sommes gouvernés par l'imposture et la mise en scène. Imposture d'un chef de l'Etat et de ses ministres qui ne visitent en Bretagne que les implantations militaires et ignorent délibérément les problèmes concrets de notre peuple. Imposture d'un pouvoir qui, en Bretagne comme aux Antilles, fuit la confrontation et le dialogue avec

le peuple. Imposture d'un pouvoir pour qui un conseil des ministres jacobins à Lyon tient lieu de décentralisation. Imposture d'un pouvoir pour qui un petit déjeuner avec des éboueurs tient lieu de politique sociale pendant qu'un ministre insulte presque les travailleurs en grève des PTT. Imposture d'un pouvoir feignant de mener une politique libérale à l'extérieur, mais vendant ses armes à l'Irak pour poursuivre le génocide du peuple kurde. Imposture d'un pouvoir se prétendant héritier du gaullisme mais inaugurant un nouvel atlantisme et liant chaque jour notre sort à celui de l'impérialisme belliciste des Etats-Unis.

Face à un tel pouvoir, que nous dénonçons depuis tant d'années, il faudrait une opposition populaire, dynamique, unie, appuyée sur la confiance des travailleurs et offrant une alternative crédible au capitalisme centralisateur.

Au lieu de cela, nous assistons avec la stérile querelle des gauches françaises (PC contre PS, PSU déchiré, groupuscules impuissants), à la disparition d'un espoir qui fut celui des 43,5% de Bretons qui votèrent Mitterrand en mai dernier. Les travailleurs sont de plus en plus écoeurés par cette situation. Qui sait si demain, cette division ne gagnera pas le monde syndical? Comme il s'agit avant tout d'une concurrence entre deux partis, d'une concurrence entre des leaders, cette querelle risque de s'aggraver jusqu'aux élections législatives de 1978. Que restera-t-il alors de la Bretagne et des espérances des travailleurs bretons?

L'Union démocratique bretonne a toujours été favorable à l'union des forces populaires. Depuis 11 ans, nous avons toujours fait passer notre intérêt de parti après l'intérêt du peuple breton. Et pour cela nous avons le droit de dire qu'en Bretagne, le socialisme c'est l'affaire des travailleurs bretons et c'est aussi notre affaire.

Nous continuerons à favoriser l'unité des travailleurs, nous continuerons à proposer des actions communes, mais on ne peut indéfini-

ment être unitaires ... tout seul!

Aussi, il nous faudra désormais dénoncer ceux qui, par leur attitude, font obstacle au combat unitaire des travailleurs. Il nous faudra aussi rappeler que, depuis 11 ans, l'UDB donne, avec sérieux, l'image d'une union réelle. Car l'union de la gauche, nous la réalisons dans notre propre parti, dans la clarté et la démocratie.

On a assez reproché à notre Parti de n'être pas crédible, à côté des grandes formations hexagonales. Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur nos forces militantes respectives ... Mais on doit surtout insister sur le fait qu'en adhérant à l'UDB les hommes et femmes travailleurs de ce pays rejoignent la formation militante qui a toujours été le champion de l'union des travailleurs bretons. Renforçons la gauche bretonne: voilà la meilleure réponse à l'imposture du pouvoir.

L'Avenir de la Bretagne, 12 October 1967

Au mois de juin dernier, dans un article intitulé 'Vers une nouvelle étape dans la conquête de nos droits', ce journal se faisait l'avocat d'un nécessaire regroupement des forces bretonnes, politiques ou apolitiques, autour d'un programme minimum commun de revendications et d'action. On trouvera ci-contre les principaux passages de la

'Charte Minimale Bretonne' que vient de diffuser le 'Gorsedd' de Bretagne. Cette Charte apporte une contribution importante à la réalisation de cet indispensable Front commun que beaucoup de Bretons appellent aujourd'hui de leurs vœux.

Il ne s'agit certes pour nous que d'un Programme minimum, alors qu'il peut apparaître comme suffisant à certains. Mais il ne peut y avoir de regroupement assez large pour être efficace et valable qu'autour d'un programme de ce genre. L'éventail qui compose un groupe de pression

doit être le plus large possible.

La Charte Minimale n'invente rien. On y trouve cependant, nettement précisée, l'affirmation de l'identité nationale de la Bretagne et de ses droits inaliénables à l'autonomie culturelle. On y réclame la création des Assemblées et de l'Exécutif régionaux sur la nécessité desquels l'opinion bretonne se trouve aujourd'hui unanimement d'accord. On y fait enfin appel à la création d'un organisme coordinateur qui pourra

'prendre les mesures communes' en vue de faire appliquer les solutions préconisées.

Si tout le monde demande aujourd'hui en Bretagne en effet, la création d'organismes régionaux dignes de ce nom, la Bretagne ne les a pas encore obtenus. Il faut donc, D'ABORD, les obtenir si l'on veut aller plus avant. Là est ce qui importe dans l'ordre des urgences. Toutes les discussions, tous les plans sur l'avenir de notre pays, la forme de son économie ou la couleur de son régime politique, resteront oiseux et frappés de stérilité tant que la Bretagne n'aura pas obtenu ce minimum qui peut, seul, lui permettre de forger son propre destin.

Disons tout de suite cependant qu'il ne peut être question, en ce qui nous concerne, de s'arrêter là: il ne peut s'agir pour nous que d'une première étape.

Fidèle à sa mission, L'Avenir de la Bretagne, par la signature de ses responsables, a donné son accord à la Charte Minimale présentée par la Gorsedd. Il apportera son appui à la réalisation des projets qu'elle contient, des idées qu'elle émet et des mesures qu'elle préconise.

L'Avenir de la Bretagne, October 1974

Beaucoup de Bretons conscients, donnant la préférence au culturel, refusent de s'engager dans une action proprement politique. Et nombreux sont les passionnés de festou-noz, les fervents de philosophie celtique et les ardents défenseurs du patrimoine linguistique de notre pays, qui considèrent les membres d'un parti breton comme des êtres à part, des spécialistes un peu rhéteurs, coupés de la réalité populaire.

C'est là une attitude qui mérite réflexion.

Constatons tout d'abord que le mot culture a été utilisé pour la première fois dans le sens qui nous occupe aujourd'hui.<sup>1</sup>

Vers 1550, c'est-à-dire à l'époque où l'hégémonie du pouvoir royal commence à s'affirmer très efficacement, où le français de la Cour s'impose dans les domaines administratif, juridique, politique: où les poètes de la Pléiade puisant leur inspiration dans les littératures de l'Antiquité méditerranéenne, se détournent d'un art vraiment populaire. Au moyen âge, par contre, il n'était pas question de culture: il y avait le peuple, qui vivait, qui construisait les cathédrales, le peuple anonyme et créateur. Depuis le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, la culture s'est de plus en plus affirmée contre le goût des masses, est devenue propriété de classe. Et de nos jours, l'Education nationale comme la publicité remplissent admirablement leur rôle d'incitation à la consommation du produit culturel.

La culture est une arme de capitalisme, et pour le peuple la course à la culture est aliénation: plus il achète de la culture, plus il se coupe de lui-même. Ce concept de culture est une invention sinistre: à peu de choses près, on veut faire croire que la culture s'identifie aux loisirs. Il y aurait d'un côté le travail et l'asservissement de l'homme par l'homme, et de l'autre des Maisons de la Culture, France-Culture et puis la bibliothèque de l'Homme Cultivé, etc.

Peu de gens contesteront ces propos. Mais allons plus loin. Si l'on prétend sauver l'âme bretonne en conservant pieusement, et même en vivant passionnément ses modes d'expression comme la danse et la langue, alors que l'on nie les problèmes économiques, l'on s'arrête en chemin et en définitive l'on se fait les complices des spécialistes de la culture à la parisienne. Car se consacrer exclusivement à la sauvegarde de ce patrimoine breton c'est le figer, le fossiliser, le placer au musée: et c'est aussi faire le jeu de ceux qui s'en moquent, de ceux qui le vendent et en profitent. Car personne ne peut nier que la culture bretonne a été en partie récupérée par les circuits commerciaux, ni que au fur et à mesure de sa commercialisation elle s'est dégradée ou est devenue, restée même, l'apanage de quelques connaisseurs. Les vrais amoureux de festou-noz fuient comme la peste les rassemblements de juillet et d'août et cherchent à danser entre eux. Belle culture!

Au contraire ceux qui font de la politique ne privilégient pas les loisirs du peuple, mais ils essaient d'analyser dans son ensemble la situation sociale. Ils proposent une forme de société propice à l'épanouissement de l'homme sur tous les plans. Du moins est-ce l'objectif du fédéralisme de SAV lorsque, toute dictature morte, des formes satisfaisantes de vie quotidienne seront trouvées par le peuple, alors il se remettra à créer, et il n'y aura plus de coupure entre le travail et la culture. Faire du culturel seulement c'est faire de la politique à rebours: mais faire de la politique au sens large - sociale, humaine - et non de la politique de politicien et de technocrate, c'est sauver la danse et la langue et le travail aussi.

Le vrai combat politique englobe inévitablement toutes les autres luttes pour l'homme, mais seul il leur donne un sens et leur permet d'aboutir.

SAV conseil politique.

1. Non pas le sens philosophique qui oppose culture à nature, mais le sens que l'on trouve dans les expressions comme mouvements culturels, ministère de la Culture..

Kendalc'h, November 1974

Le mythe de l'unité est un des mythes les plus universels. On le trouve non seulement chez les Celtes, avec le retour d'Arthur, mais chez les Grecs, les Incas, etc. La communion des saints dans le christianisme, c'est le grand rassemblement des croyants d'ici-bas et de l'au-delà...

Platon regrettait déjà que ses compatriotes ne parviennent à s'unir contre les peuples voisins, sans quoi, disait-il, quelle puissance aurions-nous! De même, au niveau politique, le Mouvement breton n'a jamais cessé de déplorer sa division, sans toujours très bien en analyser les raisons. Le plus souvent, on se contentait de dénoncer le démarquage des partis français, car en Bretagne il était impossible qu'il y ait une droite et une gauche. Comment peut-on sérieusement estimer que ces notions universelles puissent nous être étrangères? Qu'on considère ce qui se passe dans tous les pays et l'on verra que nous ne pouvons faire exception ...

Les diverses tentatives de confédération des partis culturels ont avorté, parfois au bout de plusieurs années d'effort réciproques de compréhension et de diplomatie, pour avoir méconnu les divergences d'orientation, d'intérêts et de méthode, qui finissent par venir à bout de la meilleure bonne volonté de parvenir à maintenir les structures en place. On ne fonde pas d'unité organique sans une profonde convergence idéologique, ainsi qu'une identité de vue au niveau des solutions. On ne peut s'unir que sur des bases claires partagées sans réticences, des objectifs précis communs: un large consensus sur les buts et les moyens.

La diversité des orientations est tout ce qu'il y a de plus normal et nécessaire. Nous n'avons pas la même personnalité, la même formation, les mêmes intérêts, les mêmes lectures, les mêmes inclinations ... Comment, par le seul fait d'être tous Bretons, notre conception serait-elle univoque, comme si d'éléments différents au départ nous aboutirions, par le



standard de cette constatation de pure forme, à des produits identiques? C'est fonder une identité sur une abstraction. La réalité est trop complexe pour se plier à une idée aussi simpliste.

#### Vers un Front Culturel

Mais, si l'unité est impossible - sauf circonstances exceptionnelles - et ressemble par trop à un rêve métaphysique, par contre l'union sur des points limités est parfaitement réalisable. Pour cela, il convient de développer les contacts entre les associations existantes, de prévoir des réunions d'échanges d'idées, de préparation des actions retenues. De la même façon qu'il ne doit y avoir aucune exclusive, de même on ne devra pas s'offusquer si certaines ne participent pas à telle ou telle manifestation. S'associe pour un projet commun qui veut. Inutile de mettre en place des structures juridiques à la française: la lettre des statuts a toujours divisé les Bretons, tandis que l'action précise a souvent réussi à les unir et à leur donner une rare efficacité .. Il suffira d'un organisme de liaison, une sorte de secrétariat (comme le BIP, à Rennes) pour relier les différents mouvements culturels. Par la suite, si besoin, on avisera selon les nécessités.

Les buts de ce front culturel, souple dans ses structures comme il convient à notre psychologie de Celtes, pour être d'autant plus vivant dans la pratique, seront l'information réciproque, la coordination des activités, l'action commune. Il n'est pas utile de se donner dès maintenant l'ambition d'une politique et d'un programme culturels d'ensemble. L'action nous montrera si nous pouvons y parvenir et comment. Pour l'heure, le pragmatisme, les réalisations convergentes ponctuelles sont notre meilleure voie.

Plusieurs réunions ont déjà eu lieu, entre organisations dites folkloriques d'abord, avec des associations purement culturelles ensuite.

D'un côté, on a pensé à une réunion statutaire centrée au départ sur une 'représentativité régionale' ; de l'autre, on a réclamé une collaboration dans l'action. L'une n'empêche pas l'autre, si à nos yeux, la seconde orientation semble la plus souhaitable, car porteuse de plus d'avenir. La première s'est nommée 'Dihun', risquant la confusion avec notre magazine en breton. L'autre pourrait s'appeler 'Unanin', s'unir. Mais, au-delà des appellations, l'important est d'engager l'action commune sur un objectif précis et important. Nous attendons qu'un prochain rendez-vous fixe le début et les formes de la première lutte.

L'intérêt de ce rapprochement n'est pas de faire disparaître des différences qui sont fondamentales, mais de cultiver nos convergences, de mieux nous connaître pour nous comprendre et savoir nous respecter mutuellement. L'Emsav doit faire la preuve qu'il est un mouvement majeur, c'est-à-dire montrer son souci d'aboutir à des résultats tangibles, en oeuvrant sur nos points communs, tout en reconnaissant nos divergences par ailleurs. Notre efficacité, peut-être même notre survie en tant que peuple culturellement distinct et original, est dans l'union de nos diversités.

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