

THE BRETON MOVEMENT AND THE GERMAN OCCUPATION 1940-44 - ALAN HEUSAFF AND BEZEN PERROT: A CASE-STUDY

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1. Introduction

In recent years much research work has been conducted on the activities of the Breton Movement during the German occupation of Brittany 1940-44, which has resulted in a number of publications¹.

Prominent in the Breton Movement at that time were activists such as Olier Mordrel, Raymond Delaporte, Frañsez Debauvais, Célestin Lainé, etc². One such prominent activist on the paramilitary side at that time was a certain Pierre-Alain Heussaff (Lan Heussaff, or Alan Heusaff³ (1921-1999))⁴. In this article his situation will be looked at as a case-study in the context of relationships and connections with the Breton Movement and its paramilitary wing, as well as any “spin” put on events by him and others after the war with regard to the same movement and to their activities within it.

Alan Heusaff was born in Saint Yvi (Sant Ivi) parish, east of Quimper (Kemper), on 23 July 1921. His nickname was *Mab Ivi* ‘son of (Sant) Ivi’⁵. His family came from Toulgoat in the same parish near La Forêt-Fouesnant. His father was Sébastien Heusaff and his mother Marie-Anne Faron. He had a brother Jérôme (Jerm) who was not involved in any political activity (Gary German pc: 02.03.04, Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach 2003: 52). In an interview with Hervé Person of *Le Peuple breton*, organ of the UDB (*Union démocratique bretonne*), in 1992 Alan Heusaff himself adds (Person 1992: 20):

Mes parents étaient des petits fermiers, qui possédaient trois vaches vivant sur cinq journaux. Mon père a fait la première guerre mondiale. Il fut aussi domestique. Ma mère faisait des journées par ci, par là (Person 1992: 20).

Concerning his schooling he says (Person *ibid.*):

Je suis arrivé à l'école sans savoir un mot de français. Puis, j'ai eu une bourse pour aller à l'école primaire supérieure à Concarneau. Après avoir décroché le Brevet élémentaire, puis l'École normale, je suis devenu instituteur[...] (Person 1992: 20).

¹ Prominent among these are Caerléon (1974), Leroux (1975), Frélaut (1985), Fréville (1985), Fournis (1995), and more recently Hamon (2001, 2004), Fouéré (2002), Giolitto (2002).

² For details of these personalities see Frélaut 1985, Hamon 2001, 2004.

³ The surname appears variously spelt, viz. *Heussaff*, *Heussaf*, *Heusaff*, etc. Alan Heusaff, so far as I can assess, regularly spelt his surname with one -s-.

⁴ After the Second World War Heusaff involved himself in various Celtic organisations, such as the Celtic League, which he co-founded in Wales in 1961 (cf. Mac Aonghusa 1999: 5).

⁵ He wrote articles under this nickname for the Breton magazine *Galv* in 1941/42. For his pseudonyms see below.

It was while he was at Concarneau, he tells us, that he first became interested in nationalist politics (Person 1992 *ibid.*):

À Concarneau, des copains m'avaient donné „Breiz Atao“⁶ à lire (c'étaient des articles sur la guerre d'indépendance irlandaise). J'ai rencontré Jean Bourhis⁷ à l'École normale. On s'est fait remarquer par nos idées... (Person 1992: 20).

Heusaff joined the Breton National Party (*Parti national breton* (PNB) - *Strollad Broadel Breiz* (SBB)) in 1938 at the age of seventeen:

Me zo aet e-barzh Strollad Broadel Breizh e 1938 d'an oad a 17 vloaz
'I joined Strollad Broadel Breizh in 1938 when I was 17 years old' (Heusaff 1995: 283)⁸.

In the interview with Person (1992: 20) Heusaff explains that his main function was to disseminate propaganda for the movement:

J'ai rejoint le PNB en 1938. J'ai suivi des cours de breton (pour le lire et écrire) avec Karlann⁹ (Ar Falz¹⁰) et Ober. Lainé¹¹ nous a recrutés et nous a donné des séances d'entraînement. La guerre est venue et, graduellement, on a repris la propagande. J'ai fait de la propagande à "l'Heure Bretonne" et à "Arvor" avec Yann Ar Beg¹². On a fait beaucoup de propagande (Person 1992: 20).

In 1938-39 Heusaff underwent military training in various camps (Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach 2003: 52, Le Gall 2005), seemingly as a member of Lainé's *Service Spécial* (see below). In late 1943 he became party to the activities of the Breton paramilitary grouping *Bezen Perrot* 'Perrot Army', also known as *La Formation Perrot*, *Perrot Gruppe* and more informally *Der bretonische Waffenverband der SS* or *Die bretonische SS*¹³. However, before looking at the activities of Bezen Perrot and Alan Heusaff's association with that organisation, it may perhaps be pertinent here to sketch briefly the reasons for Heusaff's involvement with the Breton Movement altogether.

According to Gary German (pc: 02.03.04), whose mother originates from Keronsal in St. Yvi parish and who lives in St. Yvi today, Alan Heusaff's interest in Breton nationalist

⁶ organ of the PNB, for which see below.

⁷ According to Charles Le Gall (Charlez ar Gall), Brest (comm. April 2005), Jean Bourgeois (Yann Bourc'hiz), born ca. 1921 in Pluguffan, died 02.07.1953 in Dublin, was an old schoolfriend of Alan Heusaff's from their Concarneau school days. From 1938-41 both attended the Quimper Teacher Training College. Le Gall was also a contemporary of their's at the college but one year above, i.e. 1937-40. Later Bourc'hiz became a member (along with Heusaff) of Neven Hénaff's *Service Spécial*, thereafter commander of the Bezen Perrot group *Dahut*. His cover-name was Guével. See below.

⁸ Translation of this and other passages in Breton in this article courtesy of Albert Bock, Vienna.

⁹ or Kerlann, i.e. Jean Delalande (1910-1969), schoolmaster, member of *Ar Falz*, secretary of PNB for Finistère. Founded the first Breton school in Plestin-les-Grèves in 1942 (Hamon 2004: 58, fn. 15).

¹⁰ seemingly a Breton pro-communist organisation (Gwendal Denis pc: 08.07.04).

¹¹ i.e. Célestin Lainé (Neven Hénaff). See below.

¹² PNB chief for Quimper district (Hamon 2001: 257).

¹³ Bezen Perrot was always regarded as a German military unit, never a "milice française", and its members always wore the uniform of the Waffen-SS (Hamon 2004: 13).

politics seemingly stems from his interest in and concern for the Breton language¹⁴. He continues:

Heussaff's argument was basically that since the First World War the Breton of Saint Yvi had degenerated under French influence to the extent that it was barely intelligible to anyone who had spoken pre-war Saint Yvien. Although there can be no doubt that Saint Yvi Breton has evolved, particularly with regard to lexical borrowing from French (e.g. French *chagrin* [ʃa:grɛ̃] for Breton *glac'har*)¹⁵, the phonology, morphology and syntax have hardly changed among native speakers (although there is linguistic variation within the parish). It seems that Alan Heussaff has exaggerated this in his puristic attempts to portray Breton as a formerly normalised language. Having said that, some older people in the parish regarded younger people, such as Alan Heussaff, as different in their Breton speech, because they had had schooling. In his case his Breton was "not at all like ours", though his brother Jerm "spoke like everyone else", as it is said. Nevertheless, it is a fact that Saint Yvi Breton is much reduced phonologically (in comparison with that of Léonais, for example), and seems to have been so for quite some time (Gary German pc: 02.03.04).

This view is also largely echoed by Breton / Welsh historian Iwan Wmffre. In a personal communication to me dated 19.07.04 he noted:

Heussaff's Breton was undoubtedly not deficient, but his attitude from his exile in Ireland was purist and neologist and he subscribed to the [...] popular notion [...] that late twentieth century Breton was simply the language of "terminal speakers"[...] ¹⁶. His articles for Carn¹⁷ had appended to them glossaries with 'rare and not commonly known words' (translation of the Breton original if my memory serves me right). My own interpretation is that, not able to mix with many native speakers [in Brittany] due to his political choices, he [Alan Heussaff] latched on to [Roparz] Hémon's version of the literary language [...] (Iwan Wmffre pc: 19.07.04)¹⁸.

Alan Heussaff's involvement with Breton nationalism and co-operation with the Germans allegedly brought much anguish, disappointment and shame on his own family. Gary German (pc: 02.03.04) notes:

The people I have spoken to in Saint Yvi who have known the Heussaff family have told me, without exception, that they were all extremely kind, wonderful people. This is why Alan Heussaff's adherence to the Breiz Atao [i.e. *Strollad Broadel Breiz*] came as such a shock and disturbed the people of Saint Yvi so much! I heard people say that after the fall of France, he arrived with the Germans dressed in a German uniform!¹⁹ I don't know if it is true, however, but I have heard it said on more than one occasion. People felt especially badly about this considering the shame it placed on his family [...]. All the World War I veterans - including my grandfather - were understandably horrified by this. In his own defense (*sic*) Heussaff said he was only 19 when he joined the B.A. and he attributed it to the folly of youth. One old friend told me that Heussaff [had] been involved in the torture and killing of resistance people, but I am

¹⁴ This was the justification. Alan Heussaff told me (ca. 1978) that the motivation was gross disenchantment with the constant hostility from the French authorities towards matters Breton, particularly the language, and their promotion. His membership of PNB would have reinforced that position. See also Heussaff's "Déclaration" below.

¹⁵ In addition, Gary German notes (pc: 20.04.04): "Many words linked to outdated rural tasks, etc, are being forgotten by the last generation of speakers for whom Breton was truly a first language. My aunt (who died last year at the age of 95) used the word *prezen*, for instance, for the place under the hearth where firewood was placed to dry and so on. I would guess that most younger speakers (in their early 60s now) would not know what this means".

¹⁶ It is not unusual for nationalists to attribute "defects", as they see them, in their home or national language to the intrusion and influence of an outside dominant language. The "defects" may in fact be internal developments. A case in point is Manx Gaelic (cf. Broderick 1999a).

¹⁷ magazine of the Celtic League.

¹⁸ In the time that I knew Alan Heussaff (1975-1999), he was always insistent that the national language was essential to a country's national identity. He thought very little of Celtic nationalists who did not take seriously their respective home or national language.

¹⁹ The memory of his wearing a German uniform may possibly derive from his activities with Bezen Perrot after December 1943 (see below).

very wary about such rumours and one must be very cautious with regard to such talk in small villages (Gary German pc: 02.03.04)²⁰.

However, in an interview with Ronan Caerléon in Dublin in 1970 (Caerléon 1974: 142) Alan Heusaff in a “Déclaration” is unequivocal in his stance vis-à-vis the Breton Movement and Bezen Perrot:

Dès 1938 je partageais les convictions que la Bretagne ne pourrait pas regagner sa liberté “dre gaer” (de gré); l’Etat français s’y opposerait de toutes ses forces. J’étais d’accord pour que nous recherchions des appuis à l’extérieur où qu’ils soient, puisque nous n’étions pas assez forts pour atteindre notre but seuls. Pourquoi ne ferriions-nous pas ce que font tous les pays libres dont la liberté est menacée: rechercher des alliances? En le faisant, nous témoignons que nous-mêmes, nous étions libres déjà.

Pour être libres, il faut accepter de payer un bon prix: rupture avec la famille (qui craint pour notre avenir), avec les voisins (qui ne veulent pas que l’on sorte de son rang), avec la majorité de ses compatriotes qui n’ont pas encore vu qu’on les traite pire que des nègres et se veulent deux fois français. Au bout du chemin, il y avait de fortes chances de trouver la prison ou la mort.

Je m’engageai donc pour l’insurrection armée sous la direction de Lainé²¹, celui des leaders nationalistes qui accordait le mieux ses actes avec l’idée nationale. Lorsqu’il m’apparut que l’Eglise catholique en Bretagne s’abaissait à coopérer avec l’Etat français pour poursuivre la politique d’extermination du breton et d’opposition au mouvement national, je rejetai son autorité et, finalement ses dogmes, pour chercher une base philosophique en accord avec ma volonté bretonne en particulier, dans les meilleures oeuvres de la culture celtique de l’Irlande.

Peu m’importent les accusations telles que celles contenues dans des articles de journaux français et dans certains ouvrages même écrits par des Bretons que “le Bezen Perrot se couvrit d’autant de crimes que la milice Darnand”²²...D’un côté, les combattants seraient donc des saints et de l’autre des brutes?

Pour moi, ce que j’ai vu de l’action du Bezen Perrot se compare avec les actes des combattants d’autres guerres et c’est un lieu commun de dire que la guerre n’est pas un jeu.

Je fus blessé assez grièvement pour devoir rester l’hôpital plus de quatre mois et ceci, dans un combat à découvert, au cours duquel Larnikol de Plovanaleg et Lezet de Sant-Malo tombèrent pour la Bretagne (Caerléon 1974: 142).

In addition, in a letter to the Breton magazine *Al Liamm* 290/291 (1995) Alan Heusaff himself tells us why he was prepared to collaborate with the Germans:

[...] *Klask harp ur galloud bennak o stourm a-enep unan all ne dalvez ket e vezer a-du gant kerment tra a ra henezh. Evidon-me e oa ar gudenn zifraeüsan en em zizober eus ar galloud gall e Breizh araok ma teufe ar brezhoneg da verzanñ re wan, rak n’eus nemet ur Stad vreizhat a c’hall e harpanñ da adsevel. D’ar gudenn-se e tleemp gouestlanñ hon holl nerzh*²³

‘To seek to help a foreign power in a war against another does not mean that one agrees with every act carried out by this régime. For me the compelling motivation in co-operating with a foreign power [Germany] in Brittany was to arrest the decline in the Breton language, which risked becoming so weak that only the establishment of a Breton state could ensure its survival: to this problem we had to devote all our strength’ (Heusaff 1995: 284-85).

²⁰ But see below. Gary German (*ibid.*) adds: “[...] As for the nationalists, the expression people use around here [Saint Yvi] for a laugh is: *Breiz atao, mad da lao* (‘(members of) Breiz Atao good to kill’). Beneath the surface though...!’. For this slogan see also Hamon (2004: 169).

²¹ Alan Heusaff returned to this theme in an interview in 1989 with Harlech Television: *Ac mi ofynodd Hénaff i bob un ohonom ni, ar ei ben ei hun yn gyfrinachol, a fydden ni’n fodlon cymryd rhan mewn gwrthryfel pe deuai’r rhyfel. Mi ddweddes i mod i’n barod. Ro’n i n meddwl bod hi’n angenrheidiol gwneud rhywbeth cyn bo hir, neu mi fyddai’r iaith yn cael ei cholli* ‘Hénaff asked each one of us confidentially on his own, if we were willing to take part in a rebellion should war come. I said I was. We thought it would be necessary to do something before long, or the language would be lost’ (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/I). The idea for the insurrection was evidently inspired by the Irish Rising of Easter 1916 (Heusaff 1991/92: 10).

²² i.e. Joseph Darnand, head of the PPF militia. See below.

²³ Gary German notes (pc: 15.07.04) that the Breton here is “literary”, which would not be readily understood in St. Yvi.

In the interview with Harlech Television in 1989 for the programme *Y Byd ar Bedwar: Llydaw* Alan Heusaff reiterated his position:

Mi oeddwn ni'n barod i gydweithio â'r diafol ei hun, os bydde' hynny'n cael gwared o'r Ffrancwyr. Y Ffrancwyr oedd gelynion mwyaf cenedl Llydaw
 'We were prepared to co-operate with the devil himself, if that would get rid of the French. The French were the greatest enemies of the Breton people' (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/I).

Frañsez Debauvais, president of *Conseil National Breton* (CNB), always believing in a German victory, also saw the Breton cause allied to the Germans. In his testament published in *Breiz Atao* in May 1944 he wrote:

Camarades de la Formation Perrot. Je vous salue. Je salue en vous la première formation bretonne armée, depuis la disparition de l'armée chouanne [...]. Vous luttez, d'abord et avant tout pour notre patrie la Bretagne, en pleine et loyale collaboration avec l'allié allemand [...]. (Debauvais *Breiz Atao*, May 1944, after Hamon 2004 : 63).

The “received view”, i.e. Heusaff’s interpretation of events, passed on down through the years is that Bezen Perrot served the interests of the Breton Movement in its fight for Breton independence. Bezen Perrot chief Neven Hénaff, according to Alan Heusaff, made that clear:

Roedd Hénaff yn dweud - yn y rhyfel yma, os oes raid ymladd, ymladdwn dros Lydaw. Ac mi fydd hanes yn dweud - beth bynnag fydd yn digwydd yn y rhyfel ac i'r Almaenwyr - mi fydd yna hanes bod Llydawyr wedi ymladd dros Lydaw yn erbyn Ffrainc
 'Hénaff said (to us) - in this war, if it is necessary to fight, we will fight for Brittany. History will tell, whatever happens in the war and to the Germans, history will tell that Bretons had fought for Brittany against France' (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/I).

This view is reiterated by P. A. Bridson, editor of *Carn*, in her obituary to Alan Heusaff in 1999:

[...] In 1943 Alan, aged twenty-two, joined the Bezen Perrot, a Breton military unit, to fight for Breton independence. Alan, like many other youthful Bretons at that time, saw an opportunity to end the French occupation of Brittany once and for all (Bridson 1999: 2).

In addition, Bezen Perrot fought against actions from the French government, resistance organisations, both Breton and French²⁴. Bríd Heusaff²⁵, Alan’s widow, notes the following:

[...] He [Alan Heusaff] joined Bezon (*sic*) Perrot after its formation at the end of December 1943, shortly after the assassination of Father Perrot on Dec. 6th [i.e. 12th] 1943 and of a number of other Breton patriots in the previous months²⁶. One of the conditions established by the Bezon Perrot was that its members would not be involved in any actions beyond the borders of Brittany and this condition was maintained until the Bezon was disbanded. They were not fighting as Nazis, but as Breton patriots whose sole concern was to oppose the French in Brittany (Heusaff 2001: 23).

As a result of his activities in the Breton Movement and Bezen Perrot Heusaff was allegedly one of a number sentenced to death (in his case *in absentia*) by the French authorities after the war for collaborative activity with the Germans. This finds expression in Bridson’s obituary:

Alan was sentenced to death *in absentia* by the French state. Nearly thirty years after, he was to benefit from an amnesty from the French government, but like many of the other Breton refugees, Alan did not

²⁴ The French Resistance seemingly contained a substantial communist as well as a small Breton element.

²⁵ Alan Heusaff married Bríd Ní Dhochartaigh of Donegal in 1953. They have six children.

²⁶ For details of the killing of other Breton nationalists, cf. also Frélaud (1985: 115, 215).

return to Brittany to live because the French state was still as repressive as ever to the Breton national movement²⁷ (Bridson 1999: 2).

This assertion is also repeated by Ní Mhurchú and Breathnach (2003: 52):

I 1945 dhaor rialtas na Fraince chun báis é in absentia

‘in 1945 the French government condemned him (Alan Heusaff) to death *in absentia*’²⁸ (Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach 2003: 52).

However, what is the reality of the situation and how much does the “received view” correspond with it?

2. Bezen Perrot

In the light of recent research (see above) the situation regarding Bezen Perrot seems to be as follows: The unit, which later became Bezen Perrot, was initially the brainchild of a certain Célestin Lainé (1908-1983 of Nantes²⁹), better known perhaps by his Breton name Neven Hénaff, as his *Kadervenn* (‘Sillon de Combat’ or ‘Service Spécial’)³⁰, a paramilitary unit modelled on the IRA set up in 1936 comprising some dozen or so members engaged in military manoeuvres (Hamon 2004: 28). It was intended as an embryo Breton army to serve the envisaged new Breton state³¹, but in reality functioned as Hénaff’s private army³². On 11 November 1943 Neven Hénaff transformed the *Kadervenn* into the *Compagnie Bretonne en guerre contre la France* under the name of Bezen Kadoudal in a formal signing with Hartmut Pulmer, head of the Gestapo / SD³³ in Rennes³⁴, thereby throwing in his lot with the Germans (see also below). Also in November 1943 the Germans armed the *Milice Darnard* (‘Darnand Militia’, under one Joseph Darnand), the paramilitary wing of the PPF (*Parti populaire*

²⁷ For a different interpretation see Iwan Wmffre’s comments above.

²⁸ Bezen Perrot cases and other cases of collaboration were tried by the Cours de Justice established in Rennes in 1944. These powers were transferred to the Tribunal Permanent des Forces Armées in Paris on 1 February 1951 which was charged thereafter with reviewing cases. However, to date there seems to be no evidence of any condemnation of Alan Heusaff by the French courts post-1944. In 1998 Heusaff mentions (*Al Liamm*, no. 311, p. 520) that of some twelve exiled Bretons in Germany in 1946-48 at least five had been condemned to death *in absentia* (including Yann Bourc’hiz), but apparently not Heusaff himself, though this is not clear. If not, then this may be because the French authorities at that time were not in possession of all the facts relating to Bezen Perrot. However, the French Government proclaimed a general amnesty in 1971.

²⁹ For details of his life and times see Frélaud (1985: 133-35).

³⁰ The formula *Service Spécial* is found for various developments of Hénaff’s paramilitary group from the mid-1930s to November 1943. Heusaff’s involvement with the *Service Spécial* appears to have begun in 1938.

³¹ « *L’Heure de la race bretonne sonnera bientôt au cadran de l’histoire [...]. L’État breton n’est pas loin* » Breiz Atao 301 (1 May 1938).

³² In May 1938 Hénaff was arrested following a slogan-daubing campaign on public monuments. He refused to speak French at the tribunal. He was given a three-month prison sentence (Frélaud 1985: 134). The fact that Hénaff, evidently unilaterally, put his unit at the disposal of the Germans in November 1943 makes clear that he had complete control of it.

³³ *Sicherheitsdienst der SS*, the SS security police. The SD was responsible *inter alia* for round-ups, detentions and deportations to concentration camps (cf. Höhne 1996: 183-209).

³⁴ This action led to a temporary split within the Breton Movement, involving the creation of a second PNB, which lasted some four years, and the “Néo-Breiz Atao”, which lasted a few months in 1944 (cf. Frélaud 1985: 116-21, Heusaff 1995: 283). It is evident that Hénaff was desperate to curry favour with the Germans.

français) (Hamon 2004: 54)³⁵. This was evidently in response to increased Resistance activity. Matters had deteriorated to such an extent that on 4 December 1943 Hitler bitterly complained to Petain about the “intolerable” situation, whereupon it was decided to extend counter-resistance action to the northern part of the country. On 15 December 1943 Bezen Kadoudal, at the suggestion of one of its leaders, Ange Péresse, and backed by its 33 “premiers volontaires” (Hamon *ibid.*), was officially renamed Bezen Perrot³⁶ following the shooting of Breton activist Father Yann-Vari Perrot on 12 December 1943³⁷.

As already noted, Bezen Perrot was headed by Neven Hénaff (Frélaut 1985: 114-16)³⁸. Accompanying Hénaff as leaders were Jean Chanteau (alias Mabinog) and Ange Péresse (alias Carcal or Cocal) (Hamon 2001:197, 209). On entering Bezen Perrot on 15 December 1943 Alan Heusaff was immediately appointed commander of Section 2 of that unit as its *kerrenour* (lieutenant) and had four groups under his charge: Dixmude, Cadoudal, Dahut³⁹, and Budoc (Hamon 2004: 59, 68)⁴⁰. According to Caerléon (1974: 141):

La Formation [Perrot] fut ensuite dirigée par un triumvirat: Heussaf, Guiriec et Péresse, qui gardait la haute-main sur les opérations militaires. En fait, Péresse prenait toutes les décisions et les autres s'inclinaient (Caerléon 1974: 141).

Heusaff clearly held a senior position within Bezen Perrot. He belonged to Hénaff's inner circle and enjoyed his trust. He remained a close friend until Hénaff's death in Ireland in 1983.

³⁵ This unit was evidently particularly brutal in the discharge of its duties with the SS/SD. In this respect Bezen Perrot became associated with this unit in the eyes of many Bretons (Hamon 2001: 203, fn. 22; see also Heusaff's comment on this in his “Déclaration” above).

³⁶ For its flag Bezen Perrot adopted that of the Breton combatants of the 15th century, namely a black cross on a white background (Caerléon 1974: 38).

³⁷ According to police reports and statements from other interested parties quoted by Hamon (2001:211ff.), Perrot was killed by a certain Jean Thépot of Morlaix who was never arrested (he ended up in the French army). He appears to have acted alone but on instructions. Perrot was evidently shot on suspicion of collaborating too closely with the Germans (Hamon, *ibid.*, Transcript HTV1989/I). Nevertheless, Perrot's death occasioned much emotion and sympathy among Breton nationalists and activists and also had the effect of doubling the membership of Bezen Kadoudal / Bezen Perrot (Frélaut 1985: 116).

³⁸ In 1938 Hénaff and others made a two / three day visit to Ireland in order to to make contact with the IRA, but in vain (Heusaff 1991/92: 10). In 1939 Henaff also sought to procure guns for the Breton Movement from Germany (Frélaut 1985: 134). Heusaff (1991/92: 10) notes: “[...] Henaff was able to obtain [...] from Germany a shipload of 2.5 tons of arms and explosives which were brought safely to land on the eve of the war in 1939. The outbreak of war occurred however before preparations for a Breton rebellion could be completed”. However, in the HTV interview of 1989 Alan Heusaff added: *Mi gwymppodd bocs o'r papurau i'r môr pan oedd y llong yn trosglwyddo'r arfau i long Lydewig. Cafwyd hyd i'r bocs ger Jersey. Mi rowd y bocs wedyn i'r Ffrancwyr. Ac o ganlyniad i hynny cafodd saith neu wyth eu rhoi yn y carchar* ‘A box containing papers (leaflets) fell into the sea as the ship (from Germany) was transferring arms into a Breton boat. The box was retrieved near Jersey. The box was later handed over to the French. As a consequence of this seven or eight (people) were put in prison’ (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/I).

³⁹ commanded by Jean Bourhis [Bourc'hiz] (Hamon 2001: 198). See also above.

⁴⁰ According to Hamon (2001: 198), Bezen Perrot below the level of General Staff (*l'état major*) was divided into two sections, each section comprising four groups of five men each. As noted, Heusaff commanded the second of these sections.

In organisational terms during the German occupation Bezen Perrot came directly under the responsibility of SS-Obersturmbannführer Hartmut Pulmer, head of the Gestapo / SD in Rennes (see also above), and under the military command of SS-Hauptscharführer Hans Grimm, and was attached to the SD in that town. At the end of January 1944 it was based at 7, rue de Vincennes in Rennes⁴¹. It wore the uniform of the Waffen-SS⁴², and comprised some 80 personnel, of whom the pseudonyms of some 65 activists have thus far been identified (Hamon 2001: 208-09). As with the Resistance, such pseudonyms served to protect them from possible assassination. Alan Heusaff's cover names were "Professeur" (Hamon 2001: 209, 268) and "Rouat" (Hamon 2004: 35, 68). Bezen Perrot was composed of a motley crew drawn from various nationalist organisations; most of its members were quite young, some very young (Frélaut 1985: 116-21, Hamon 2001: 197-98).

Some had also served in anti-partisan activity for the Germans in the LVF (*Légion des Volontaires français contre le Bolchévisme*), a French right-wing collaborationist organisation active at the time. The LVF was set up on 8 July 1941 with a view that its members serve on the Russian Front⁴³. It comprised ca. 12,000 men, of whom some 110 were Bretons. A recent trawl of LVF archives in Rennes has revealed that Breton nationalists Yves Le Négaret, Taldir Jaffrennou and Alan Heusaff were associated with this organisation as "Amis de la LVF" (Hamon 2002: 11-12).

According to his own testimony Alan Heusaff served on the Russian Front. Former Manx Language Officer with the Isle of Man Government, Dr. Brian Stowell, recently told Iwan Wmffre and myself at his home in Douglas that he was present at an address delivered by Alan Heusaff to the short-lived Celtic League Youth in Dublin in 1966 on the occasion of the

⁴¹ For other addresses used see Hamon (2001: 197). The General Staff was seemingly installed in 29, quai d'Ille-et-Rance in Rennes (cf. Hamon *ibid.*).

⁴² For the first three months Bezen Perrot members wore civilian clothes. It was not till the end of March 1944 that they began to wear SS uniforms (Hamon 2004: 57). In his reminiscences former Bezen Perrot activist Maudit notes: *Nous portions donc l'uniforme vert, avec le calot à tête de mort, épaulettes noires avec liséré vert, chemise brune, cravate noire, ceinturon SS avec la devise: Meine Ehre heisst Treue (Mon Honneur s'appelle Fidélité). Nous étions appelés: SS man, nous les volontaires de la Bretonische Waffenverband der SS !* (Caerléon 1974: 140).

⁴³ This was its main purpose. The LVF was set up in response to a German request for military support from the occupied territories to fight on the Russian Front "against bolshevism", as it was put. Many French and Bretons took up the cause with the LVF (Hamon 2004: 13-15; see also below). In July 1944 the LVF was reorganised as the *Sturmbrigade der SS Frankreich*, from September to November of the same year as the *Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS "Charlemagne"* (franz. Nr. 1), and from November 1944 to May 1945 as the *33. Waffen-Grenadier-Division der SS "Charlemagne"* (franz. Nr. 1). Between February and April 1945 SS-*Charlemagne* saw action in Pomerania, but was decimated in the area of Hammerstein-Neustettin, near Danzig. What was left went into action around Belgard-Körlin but suffered heavy casualties. Reorganised into *Kampfgruppen* around Kolberg and Greifenberg, they then moved westwards to Neustrelitz, finally defending the centre of Berlin in the area of the Reichstag in April 1945. They were taken prisoner by the Russians on 2 May 1945 (Hock 1986, Hamon 2004: 14-17).

50th Anniversary of the Easter Rising of 1916. In speaking about the activities of the Breton Movement during the Second World War, Alan Heusaff alleged

that he and other Breton nationalists had fought with the “Charlemagne Brigade” on the Russian Front where he had been wounded. Thereafter they gave themselves up to the Americans for fear of maltreatment by the French. Later he managed to escape to Ireland on a coal boat from somewhere in the Low Countries (Brian Stowell, Douglas, 18.09.04; see also below).

According to Hamon (2001: 130, 199), the aforementioned Yves Le Négaret, a young PNB activist, served on the Russian Front with the LVF between 16 June 1943 and May 1944 when he seemingly went absent without leave and returned to Brittany after finding out about the existence of Bezen Perrot, joining its ranks on 6 June 1944. This, if so, would seem to strengthen the case that Heusaff had also served in the LVF (after September 1944 the “Charlemagne Brigade”; see fn. 43). If so, then this would most likely have been 1942-43, as he was a primary teacher at Querrien (Kerrien) near his home area until 1942 (Person 1992: 20, Heusaff 2001: 23). He took part in the 1942 Breton summer-school for children at Begmeil, near Fouesnant. According to Charles Le Gall (April 2005), Heusaff then resigned his teaching job in the autumn of 1942 to become an instructor in the *Lu Brezhon* (‘Breton army’; Hénaff’s secret army) in order to devote his whole energies to fighting for Breton independence:

I 1942 d’érigh sé as obair chun a bheith lánpháirteach sa troid chun an Bhriotáin a shaoradh ó smacht na Fraince
 ‘in 1942 he resigned his job to be full time in the fight to free Brittany from French control’ (Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach 2003: 52).

This, if correct, would suggest that any action Heusaff would have seen on the Russian Front would have occurred in the ‘academic’ year 1942-43.⁴⁴ For his part, Heusaff tells us that after Querrien in 1942 he took part in military service with the *Service Spécial*:

[...] on m’a appelé pour faire des manoeuvres à Gouezeg. C’étaient des instructions de Service Spécial
 [...] (Person 1992: 20).

Later, after running a Breton school in Quimper with Jean Bourc’hiz, he says he was asked if he could go to Rennes to be an instructor with the *Service Spécial*:

[...] on m’a demandé si je pouvais venir à Rennes pour être instructeur du Service Spécial (Person 1992: 20).

Working as an instructor in Rennes is undoubtedly true, but may be a coy understatement of what he was really doing at the time. The period as an instructor for Hénaff’s paramilitaries in Rennes in 1942-43 would be the ideal time for any activity he may have seen on the Eastern

⁴⁴ According to the evidence of « Docteur », Heusaff, along with Hénaff, Hénaff’s brother, Chanteau, Feutren, Bourc’hiz and Louarn (members of Hénaff’s *Service Spécial*) took part in an exercise along with two SD officers during the evening of 13 August 1943 at the château of the Du Guerny family near the forest of Boquen (ADIV 213 W 38 quoted by Hamon 2004: 45).

Front (in part as possible German-sponsored military training, in part as a way to demonstrate loyalty to the Germans). Such service in that sphere of operations would almost certainly have brought him into prominence with Bezen Perrot as an officer in late 1943⁴⁵.

Right from its inception in December 1943 Bezen Perrot, according to available evidence, solely served German interests.

The rôle of Bezen Perrot was to help the German Army to rule Brittany and in particular to pursue the Resistance [...] (Transcript HTV1989/I).

During the first three months of 1944 it was deployed either to guard or to keep under surveillance German installations. In addition, it took part in arrests⁴⁶, including those of Jews⁴⁷. As D-Day came and went the increase in Resistance activity led to mass shootings by the SD/SS of what were termed “anti-German elements”, and Bezen Perrot according to accounts took part in some of these⁴⁸. In a personal communication to me dated 20.04.04 Gary German noted that Heusaff

[...] was active with the local milice [militia] and that he had even been present and participated in the interrogation and execution of captured resistance fighters [...] (Gary German pc: 20.04.04)⁴⁹.

However, Alan Heusaff sees his activities within Bezen Perrot somewhat differently:

Roeddwn i'n cydweithredu â'r Almaenwyr. Ac mi gymrais ran wrth gasglu arfau roedd y Saesson yn eu gollwng efo parashwt yn y nos. Wnes i ddim cymryd rhan mewn gweithredoedd lle roedd 'na ymladd - dim ond weithiau. Unwaith pan oeddwn i'n ymladd cefais fy anafu

'I co-operated with the Germans. I was party to collecting weapons which the English had dropped by parachute at night (for the Resistance). I did not take part in operations where there was fighting - only occasionally. Once when I was (involved in) fighting I was wounded' (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/I).

It was during the summer of 1944 that Bezen Perrot evidently took part in some quite vicious activity⁵⁰. On 7 July 1944 Hitler ordered the “liquidation of all terrorists and suspects”, i.e.

⁴⁵ Whatever the case, it is clear that Heusaff was not simply a schoolteacher who, outraged, upon hearing of Perrot's assassination impulsively joined Bezen Perrot. He had been working for Hénaff for quite some time before his engagement in Bezen Perrot.

⁴⁶ On 7 February 1944 at 3am members of Bezen Perrot accompanied the SD in an arrest of 37 people regarded as “anti-German” from several of villages, of whom 12 were deported (to concentration camps) (cf. Leroux 1975: 270, Hamon 2001: 201). For details of other sorties of this sort, see Hamon (2001: 202).

⁴⁷ Rounding up of Jews was evidently part of Bezen Perrot's duties with the SD. Hamon (2001: 200) quotes the following from former Bezen Perrot activist Jégou: [...] *En janvier 1944 j'ai été commandé pour aller chercher une vieille dame israélite à Rennes avec Konval et P.C., emmenée au SD [...]*. Once arrested Jews were then handed over to the SD for deportation to concentration camps (cf. Höhne 1996: 183-209). As a senior member of Bezen Perrot Alan Heusaff's participation in arrests of this sort is very plausible. He would almost certainly have known of such actions whatever the case.

⁴⁸ In an interview with Alan Heusaff in Ramsey, Isle of Man, on 24 July 1993, he was quite tight-lipped about the actions of Bezen Perrot. When I asked him, for instance, what rank he had held he refused to say. However, he did tell me that there was a sort of *quid pro quo* arrangement with the Germans, i.e. they had helped us promote Breton, he said, we would help them on the military side (see also above).

⁴⁹ But added: “it is terribly hard to get to the real facts, mainly because the subject is still a very emotional one and the feelings against collaborators intense” (Gary German pc: 20.04.04). Nevertheless, there are a number of stories current that Heusaff was involved in such actions, sufficient to arouse suspicion. It may be that such stories are apocryphal and/or unfounded, but given Heusaff's senior position within Bezen Perrot and bearing in mind that it was Bezen Perrot's main task to assist the Germans in combating the Resistance, any involvement by Heusaff in actions of that sort would seem quite probable.

partisan and resistance fighters, and this quickly became a matter of routine, particularly after the attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July of that year (Hamon 2004: 131). Hamon (2001: 206ff.) lists a number of actions involving SS/SD with Bezen Perrot support from archive sources. These include the following:

1. 19 June 1944 arrest of three Resistance members, all of whom "disappeared".
2. 3 July 1944 some 31 people from Locminé were killed, many of whose bodies were later found in a ditch. Five were deported to Germany and four sent to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria where they were killed.
3. 14 July 1944 a massacre of 57 partisan fighters in the town of Saint-Hilaire. This was followed a few days later by the shooting of six partisan women in a chapel in Quistinic.
4. Additional activity of this sort involving Bezen Perrot took place in various villages in Brittany on the following dates: 16-17 & 30 May, 22, 27 & 29 June, 2, 11 & 23 July.
5. 15 August execution of 49 alleged Resistance prisoners at Créney⁵¹, etc.

After the D-Day landings Bezen Perrot evidently took part in the retreat of the German army across France, arriving in Strasbourg in October, and then into Germany, ending up in Tübingen in south-western Germany in December 1944 (Frélaut 1985: 222-25, Lerchenmüller 1994, II: 219ff, Hamon 2004: 157). On 16 December 1944, on the first anniversary of Bezen Perrot, Alan Heusaff with others received the German wounded medal. A number of members received promotion in the Waffen-SS. Neven Hénaff was promoted to *Untersturmführer* (sub-lieutenant), Ange Péresse to *Sturmscharführer* (major), Alan Heusaff to *Hauptscharführer* (chief adjutant). Six were promoted to *Unterscharführer* (sergeant) and eleven others to *Rottenführer* (corporal) (Hamon 2004: 157).

On 29 December 1944 Neven Hénaff totally reorganised Bezen Perrot, dividing it into four groups of eight to ten men each. Group 1 went with the Waffen-SS, Group 2 set up a school

⁵⁰ After his arrest in Colombey-les-deux-Églises Bezen Perrot activist Cadoudal said at his interrogation: [...] *Péresse, qui était une véritable brute, était accompagné d'officiers de la SD. Comme papiers militaires, les Allemands nous avaient donnés des Ausweiss. Les atrocités consistaient en exécutions sommaires et sans jugement, quelquefois sans interrogatoire par coup de pistolet dans la nuque* [...] (Hamon 2001: 198).

⁵¹ See also Hamon (2004: 130-46). For details of Bezen Perrot action against the Breton maquis see Hamon (2004: 146-51). Heusaff in his memoirs tells us he was badly wounded in the upper left arm in operations against the Resistance on 13 June 1944 in Ploërdut, Morbihan, and hospitalised altogether for some three months. In the same action Bezen Perrot activists Laizet and Larnicol were killed (cf. Heusaff's "Déclaration" above and Hamon 2004: 125-28). Heusaff's widow Bríd (Heusaff 2001: 23) notes "In June 1944 [...] Alan Heusaff was seriously wounded in an encounter in which two other member[s] were killed. Later he was moved to a hospital in Montabaur in Alsace-Lorraine where he remained for three months until late September in 1944". Montabaur, if correct, is in fact near Koblenz in western Germany. According to Hamon (2004: 129), Heusaff, after two weeks in hospital at Pontivy, was transferred with other wounded to Rennes, thereafter to Paris, then into Germany (probably to Montabaur).

for sabotage and Group 3 a school for radio. Groups 2 and 3 were then sent to the Black Forest for instruction. Group 4 was to be the *Propaganda-Staffel* (propaganda unit). The rest would remain with Hénaff in Tübingen. However, on 25 April 1945, with the Allied advance, Groups 2 and 3 moved out of the Black Forest and into a boys' school at Fürstenfeldbruck, near Munich. However, with the advance of the Americans, the groups were ordered to return to Brittany as best they could and to continue the work of the PNB, but not in places where they might be known, and to seek work on farms after their arrival. The order was to keep in contact and await Hénaff's return for the reconstitution of Bezen Perrot (Hamon 2004: 159)⁵². However, Hénaff went to Ireland in 1947/48 (see also below).

Celtic Professors Leo Weisgerber (Bonn) and Ludwig Mühlhausen (Berlin), who led the promotion of matters Breton for the German authorities during the war years in Brittany⁵³, were charged in 1944 by the SS in Germany to look after Breton nationalists and activists till the end of the war. Some were seemingly brought to Marburg in western Germany (Weisgerber had been Professor of Celtic and Comparative Philology there 1939-41; cf. Lerchenmüller 1997: 408-09). Heusaff had evidently been in Germany since before September 1944 (see above). In the Ramsey interview Heusaff told me he studied maths and physics for two years after the war at the University of Marburg⁵⁴. In 1949 he met Mühlhausen in Marburg. Mühlhausen, he said, was still as enthusiastic as ever for matters Breton and added that he had got on very well with him in Brittany. The extent to which Breton was promoted in Brittany seems due more to the interest and enthusiasm of Weisgerber and Mühlhausen than might otherwise have been the case⁵⁵. In this regard Per Denez, Emeritus Professor of Breton at the Université de Haute-Bretagne, Rennes, who lived through the period, notes:

⁵² For details of what became of other members of Bezen Perrot see Hamon (2004: 160-66). Bezen Perrot in total sustained six dead and three seriously wounded, including Heusaff (Hamon 2004: 164).

⁵³ For details of Weisgerber's and Mühlhausen's activities in Brittany for the German authorities during the Second World War see Simon 1982, Lerchenmüller 1997, Dutz 2000.

⁵⁴ Before that he had worked a short while as a farm hand (Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach 2003: 52).

⁵⁵ The Germans were anxious to nurture the support of those Bretons who were patriotic and wished to safeguard Brittany's identity. They granted resources to promote the Breton language in particular. It was German money that was financing the revival (Transcript HTV1989/I).

Nevertheless, German support for matters Breton, particularly relating to any special political status and cultural autonomy, had its price. In his report dated 17 May 1944 SS-Untersturmführer (F) Ludwig Mühlhausen (to give him his service title; he had been seconded to the SD in mid-May) outlined discussions with other SS personnel (Schröder) to encourage Bretons to join the ranks of the French Waffen-SS; *verstärkte Werbung für die französische Waffen-SS* is how it was put. Mühlhausen wrote: [...] *dass man den Bretonen keinerlei Zusagen oder Versprechungen für die Zukunft machen kann, weder in Richtung auf eine politische Sonderstellung gegenüber Frankreich noch auch auf eine Art kultureller Autonomie (Schutz des bretonischen Volkstums vor der Französisierung). Ohne einen solchen Anreiz scheint aber eine erfolversprechende Werbung unter den Bretonen von vornherein schwer möglich* (Bericht des SS-Untersturmführers (F) Mühlhausen, 05.-17.05.1944 Personalakte Ludwig Mühlhausen; cf. also Lerchenmüller 1997: 407).

In a letter to me dated 29 July 1993 Alan Heusaff comments on Mühlhausen's report as follows: *An t-eolas a thagann sa tuairisc sin ar an agallamh idir Mühlhausen agus Schröder (1944:1/5) réitíonn sé leis an eolas*

Nid oedd fawr ddim awdurdod gan Ffrainc yn Llydaw ar y pryd. Roedd hi'n bosib i bobol siarad dros Lydaw, ysgrifennu dros Lydaw, argraffu llawer o lyfrau Llydaweg. A fe sefydlwyd am y tro cyntaf orsaf radio Lydaweg

'France didn't have much authority in Brittany at that time. It was possible for people to speak in favour of Brittany, to write in favour of Brittany and to print a lot of Breton (language) books. For the first time a Breton radio station was set up' (Per Denez HTV1989/I).

Alan Heusaff remained in Germany until 20 May 1950 when he came to Ireland (Person 1992: 20, Heusaff 2001: 23). He was evidently one of the last to arrive and first went to Galway where his comrade Neven Hénaff had worked as an engineer since 1948 (see also below). He used the opportunity to complete his studies there at the university (Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach 2003: 52).

3. Anti-semitism within the Breton Movement

Anti-semitic sentiment seems to have been quite prevalent within the Breton Movement (in line with what was also rife throughout France in general), even before the Second World War. These sentiments find expression in the following Breton publications: *Breiz Atao*⁵⁶ 20.11.1932 and 11.12.1932 (*Le Juif et «Notre Juif»*), 11.12.1938 (*La France aux Juifs, la Bretagne aux Bretons*); *L'Heure Bretonne* 05.07.1941 (*Comment la Bretagne se défendit contre les Juifs*) 18.07.1942 (*A la Porte: les juifs et les enjuivés*), 15.08.1942 (*Nous devons connaître nos ennemis...*), 19.09.1943 (*ar Iudeuion hag ar Franmasoned a oa da benn er Frans - les Juifs et les Francs-Masons étaient à la tête de la France*); *Dihunamb* Aug. 1943, pp. 265, 272 (concerning the excesses against the Jews of Duke Jean le Roux of Brittany in 1240), to give just a few examples⁵⁷.

Alan Heusaff in his letter to *Al Liamm* (1995: 284) maintains he had nothing to do with anti-semitism and denies that he ever heard any anti-semitic comment from his associates in the Breton Movement or that it had played any part in their activities or in those of Bezen Perrot:

[...] E-pad ar bloavezhioù 1940-1944 en em ouestlis da gentan d'ar bruderezh evit degas tud a-du gant ar Strollad ha goude d'an aozadur milourel. N'he doa an enepsemitegezh perzh ebet en obererezh-se. E

a bhí againn cheana: ní raibh aon rud geallta dúinn, ach ní raibh siad ag casadh a ndruim linn ná i n-ár gcoinne Bhí siad ag fanacht go mbeadh an cogadh thart roimh aon rud a shocrú 'the information given in the report of the discussion between Mühlhausen and Schröder agrees with the information we had already: nothing was promised us, but they weren't turning their back on us or against us either. They were waiting till the war was over before doing anything' (Alan Heusaff pc: 29.07.1993).

⁵⁶ Editions of this publication during the 1920s carried the swastika as its emblem on the title page (cf. the edition for 02.09.1928, for example). It fell out of use for a while, but was revived in 1933 on Hitler's accession to power. For the use of this emblem in Manx cultural circles also during the 1920s see Broderick 1999b.

⁵⁷ Even Father Perrot himself is recorded as having made anti-semitic comment in 1940, glorifying the systematic persecution and murder of Jews by Duke Jean le Roux of Brittany in 1240 (cf. *Feiz ha Breiz* Nov.-Dec. 1940). Whether or not he would have supported the Final Solution / Holocaust is quite another matter, however.

Roazhon ne oa ket anv eus ar Yuzevien gant ar re a oa en-diudin, ha heñ vel e oa e Kernev-Izel evit ar vroadelourien a geien ganto

‘During the years 1940-44 my main concern was publicising the Strollad with a view to gaining popular support, and later with the military formation (Bezen Perrot). Anti-semitism had no part in any of this activity. Among my associates in Roazhan there was no mention of Jews, nor in Lower Cornwall among the nationalists’ (Heusaff 1995: 284).

Indeed, he makes clear he did not support the Final Solution / Holocaust at all:

[...]. Krediñ a ran koulskoude e kollas e-leizh a Yuzevien (ha re all) o buhez en trevvac’hoù. Ha n’eus digarez ebet, din da c’houzout, evit bezañ o lazhet pe lezet da vervel

(...) ‘Yet I do believe that many Jews (and others) lost their lives in concentration camps. And there is no excuse - in my view - for having killed them or having let them die’ (Heusaff 1995: 284).

Nevertheless, as a member of PNB he would have come across anti-semitism within the Breton Movement, as well as in PNB publications at the time (such as the above). As a senior member of Bezen Perrot he would also have known of the arrest of Jews by members of that organisation (see above). His uncritical acceptance of a downward re-assessment of the Final Solution / Holocaust figures in his letter in *Al Liamm* (1995), if not injudicious, would seem to tar him with the anti-semitic brush:

[...] N’em eus lennet nemet daou levr gant Faurisson, anezho disoc’h enklaskoù graet gantañ hag em eus kavet doare perverzh hag onest dezho. Ha dall e oan ouzh nammoù enno? [...]. N’em eus ket gwelet c’hoazh levr na danevellskrid ebet o tiskouez e oa faos an disc’hoù-se

‘I have only read two books by Faurisson containing the results of his research - which seemed meticulous and honest to me. Was I blind to errors in them? (...). I have not yet seen one book or article which would show that these results [re-assessment of the Holocaust figures] are wrong’ (Heusaff 1995: 284).

Faurisson is a known apologist for the Third Reich. Heusaff could have got to the truth of the matter had he or his agent visited the relevant archives. He seems to have been blind to matters he did not wish to see.

4. After 1945

It is not known whether Bezen Perrot survived the war⁵⁸. But there was a group of Bretons in Ireland⁵⁹ who had come there via Wales in 1947/48 to escape French government harassment in Brittany⁶⁰.

⁵⁸ Apart from his position in Bezen Perrot, Alan Heusaff does not seem to have figured prominently in the Breton Movement until the mid-to-late 1950s by which time he was in Ireland.

⁵⁹ Ireland’s neutrality was one reason why they were accepted there. But the prime reason was that no extradition treaty existed between Ireland and France for the return of wanted persons. (Transcript HTV1989/II).

⁶⁰ cf. Transcript HTV1989/II: “In the midst of the chaos at the end of the war, five war prisons were set up in Brittany, and six thousand Bretons were imprisoned in them for collaboration with the Germans. The St. Charles School in Quimper was used as one of these sites. Among the prisoners were more than 1500 Breton Nationalists, including Yann Fouéré. Torture and rape were commonplace in the camps”. This assertion evidently stems from Fouéré. The persecution of Bretons at the hands of the French authorities in 1946 was such that it attracted the attention of British Government ministers. Arrangements were then made for persecuted Bretons to escape to Ireland through Paris, Dover, London and Wales. The Welsh National Party *Plaid Cymru* played a pivotal rôle in this undertaking. “The leaders of Plaid Cymru did not wish to know all the details of the backgrounds of those they were helping”. However, given the nature of the persecution, it

Heusaff confirms that a number of the members of a regiment of Breton Nationalists [i.e. Bezen Perrot] which had fought alongside the Nazis came through Wales before crossing to Ireland (Transcript HTV1989/II).

Alan Heusaff was one of those who went from Germany to Ireland⁶¹:

Mi oeddwn i wedi cael enw ffug, Bernhard Heubacher, enw Almaenwr. Mi oedd 'na ddeuddeg ohonom ni wedi cael enwau Almaenwyr. Mi wnaethom ni groesi ffiniau Belgium a Ffrainc yn y nos heb bapurau. Mi aethon ni i Baris a chael papurau ffug i fynd i Gymru - dau ohonom ni. Mi aeth y gweddill o Lydaw i Iwerddon

'I received a false name, Bernhard Heubacher, a German name. There were twelve of us who received German names. We crossed the borders of Belgium and France by night without papers. We went to Paris and got false papers to go to Wales - two of us. The rest went from Brittany to Ireland' (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/II).

The Irish authorities, according to Heusaff, were seemingly happy to grant asylum to Neven Hénaff and other Bretons:

Mi ddwedon nhw wrth Hénaff a phobol eraill - arhoswch yma. 'D oes 'na ddim peryg i chi yma. Wnawn ni ddim eich trosglwyddo chi i'r Ffrancwyr. Ond os ewch nôl i Lydaw - wel, fyddwn ni fel gwlad fach ddim yn gallu rhoi unrhyw help i chi

'They (the Irish authorities) said to Hénaff and others - stay here. There is no danger for you here. We will not hand you over to the French. But if you go back to Brittany, - well, as a small country we will not be able to give you any help' (Alan Heusaff HTV1989/II).

However, Hénaff and Heusaff were evidently still interested in conspiratorial politics in 1960, according to the testimony of Jean le Dû, Emeritus Professor of Breton at the Université de Bretagne Occidentale, Brest, and a native Breton speaker, in a letter to me dated 24.04.03:

[...] Did I tell you I met the man [Heusaff] in Ireland? He came to visit me with Lainé and another activist a short time after I had arrived in Galway in 1960. I told him [Heusaff] he was a Nazi (by the way he addressed me in English!) and he corrected me [by saying he was] a National Socialist. Amazing. The other two remained in the car, as I did not seem to be a possible recruit. I met him later in Dublin. He spoke Irish at home, his wife was from Donegal [...] (Jean le Dû pc: 24.04.03.).

Hénaff had seemingly been involved in secretive conspiratorial activities since the early 1930s and Heusaff since 1938, as already noted. There does not seem to have been any "coercive movement" in Ireland, but it can hardly be doubted that these people were extremely circumspect with outsiders. It could possibly be argued that there was an "atmosphere of fear", i.e. a fear of talking about people's backgrounds and / or about what they had done. However, a refusal to talk derives also from group interest and the natural desire not to upset people with whom one may have dealings.

was decided to help the Breton nationalists irrespective of whether they had collaborated with the Germans or not (Transcript HTV1989/II).

⁶¹ A number of Breton nationalists were apparently assisted in their flight to Ireland by a certain Friedrich Hielscher, a Nietzsche ideologue and anti-imperialist. He was seemingly party to the German "Neo-Nationalists" or "Nazi Left" (advocating a mixture of nationalism and bolshevism) during the 1920s. The Nazis suspected him of being involved in the July Plot against Hitler in 1944 and as a result he was imprisoned in a concentration camp till the end of the war. Once liberated Hielscher began obtaining false papers for Breton nationalists then resident in Germany to enable them either to remain there or to flee to Ireland. Two of Hielscher's close friends and contacts, Ernst Jünger and Fritz Heimsheimer (a German Jew),

5. Conclusion

Bezen Perrot, if the foregoing is correct, in its entire short existence served the interests, not of the Breton Movement at all, but those of the German occupying power, essentially as an ancillary arm of the SD/SS, operating out of conviction in arresting “anti-German” elements, as well as Jews, and in combating Resistance activity. Alan Heusaff’s senior position in Bezen Perrot would indicate that his role in that organisation was not insignificant and he would almost certainly have known what was going on. In addition, his apparent association and that of other Breton nationalists with the LVF⁶², i.e. with a French right-wing collaborationist organisation, would indicate that their main interest lay in promoting an “anti-bolshevist” ideology (however that may be interpreted) in which the Breton Movement would form part. In other words, the Breton cause for Heusaff and his colleagues seems to have played a subordinate rôle to their political philosophy⁶³, which, if so, would go quite some way to explaining their conviction in supporting German interests.

However, as always, the problem is justification with hindsight. A number of Breton nationalists, including Hénaff and Heusaff, felt that an unequivocal alliance with the Germans was the only way to ensure that Breton independence would win respect (see also above). When I met Neven Hénaff (the only time) at Alan Heusaff’s home in Dublin in September 1975, he told me that for him and his Breton comrades “Hitler was the best thing that happened to the Breton Movement” (his actual words). He added they were in no doubt they had done the right thing in co-operating with the Germans⁶⁴. Alan Heusaff reinforces this view and justifies the stance that he and others had taken for the Breton cause:

[...]. Par le Bezen on a montré que des Bretons étaient prêts à tout endurer, la mort comme la diffamation parmi leurs concitoyens contemporains, afin que dure la nationalité bretonne. Grâce à cette occurrence la foi en la Bretagne sera renforcée. La Bretagne nationale a fait ce que fait tout peuple qui combat ses despotes : s’allier à ses ennemis [...]. Pour la première fois depuis La Rouërie (1791) des Bretons se sont groupés pour combattre avec des armes pour les droits de la Bretagne. Et le coup a été mené à terme. Nous n’avons pas lutté comme les Chouans de Cadoudal dans le but de remplacer une classe de Français par une autre. Hénaff a toujours refusé d’avoir à faire avec des collaborateurs comme Doriot⁶⁵, car

evidently kept up contact with Bezen Perrot leaders Neven Hénaff and Ange Péresse after the war (Hamon 2001: 36-37, Heusaff 2001: 23).

⁶² In spite of Hénaff’s refusal to have anything to do with such organisations as being “too French” (cf. Hamon 2004: 17), Breton participation in the LVF and SS-*Charlemagne* seems to have been a quid-pro-quo arrangement with the Germans (see also Heusaff’s comment above).

⁶³ This seems to be the reality of Heusaff’s new *base philosophique*, as alluded to in his “Déclaration” above.

⁶⁴ At the same meeting in 1975 Hénaff also told me that he was pagan and an adherent of Celtic religion and belief (see also Hamon 2001: 154 where this was used to engender a certain amount of religious mystique and fervour in his *Kadervenn*). This may have been partly responsible for his interest in the Nazis, among some of whom pagan belief was actively encouraged (cf. Lixfeld 1994). For details of Nazi overtones in the PNB, in its presentation, symbols and rallies, etc, see Hamon (2001: 154-55).

⁶⁵ i.e. Jaques Doriot, founder of the right-wing PPF (*Parti populaire français*), who was put in charge of the enforcement of the STO (*Service du travail obligatoire*), an edict introduced by the Germans in 1943 obliging French males to work in German factories in support of the German war effort (cf. Hamon 2004: 5,

jusqu'à preuve du contraire, toute la classe politique française est équivalente pour nous (Alan Heusaff, *Memoirs*, after Hamon 2004: 168-69).

In seeking refuge in Ireland⁶⁶ in 1947/48 Neven Hénaff had left the Breton Movement in ruins as a result of his political and military alliance with the Germans 1943-45 (Frélaud 1985: 135; see also above). As Alan Heusaff held a senior position in Bezen Perrot, he was, intentionally or otherwise, also party to that débâcle, from which it has taken the Breton Movement some time to recover. He was asked by HTV in 1989 whether the co-operation with the Germans had not been a big mistake. He answered:

Mae'n rhaid cymryd siawns. Os oes llawer yn y fantol - mae'n rhaid bod yn barod i fentro er gwaetha'r peryg
 'One has to take a chance. (Even) if a lot hangs in the balance, one has to be prepared to venture even in the face danger' (Alan Heusaff HTV 1989/II)⁶⁷.

However, Heusaff (1991/92: 10) later admitted that Breton military co-operation with the Germans towards the end of the war did not receive popular support in Brittany:

Thos who were engaged in an armed struggle for a Breton Brittany towards the end of the war [i.e. with the Germans] went ahead in spite of the absence of popular support for their action, for which they have been criticised (Heusaff 1991/92: 10).

The alliance with the Germans in the form that it took was evidently not a requirement from the German side, but seems to have been an exercise in currying favour on Hénaff's part. As we have already seen, the only known German military requirement to secure any political and cultural autonomy for Brittany was Breton recruitment into the French Waffen-SS. Hénaff's formal alliance with the Germans, whilst it may have had different aims in mind, made clear that Bezen Perrot solely served the interests of the SS and SD, as we have seen, with Bezen Perrot unnecessarily involving itself in SS excesses⁶⁸. It is unfortunate that the actions of Neven Hénaff and his supporters led to Bretons taking up arms against Bretons.

fn. 1). In addition, Doriot was more interested in seeing a federal Europe rather than Breton autonomy (Hamon 2001: 76). In the 1920s/30s he had been a member of the central committee of the PCF (*Parti communiste français*, the French communist party) (Gwendal Denis pc: 08.07.04).

⁶⁶ Of Hénaff's refuge in Ireland it is said: [...] *Il vit dans un complet dénuement, exilé sur un roc celtique, dans un isolement mystique, foudroyé par la défaite qui anéantit ses projets d'indépendance bretonne. Vingt-cinq ans après sa chute, il justifie opiniâtrement sa révolte: Plus tard, on s'apercevra que j'ai eu raison [...]. Mon temps viendra!* (Caerléon 1974: 50-52).

⁶⁷ At the Celtic League annual general meeting which I attended in Edinburgh in 1976, if I correctly recall, Alan Heusaff was quizzed by members of the Breton delegation about his activities in Brittany during the war. He was careful in his response. He then added, "we backed the wrong horse" (his actual words). He offered to resign as General Secretary there and then, if the meeting felt that his activities had been unacceptable. Nothing further was said on the matter.

⁶⁸ Alan Heusaff sought to continue to promote the Breton cause after the war via involvement in Celtic organisations, such as the Celtic League. In 1993 he was awarded the prestigious Prix Xavier de Langleiz of the Institut Culturel de Bretagne for services to Breton literature, and not for any activities with Bezen Perrot. The prize was evidently recommended by individuals prominent in the Breton national movement who, nevertheless, would undoubtedly have been aware of Heusaff's "past" with Bezen Perrot.

Alan Heusaff died in Galway, Ireland, on 3 November 1999 and lies buried near his home at An Spidéal in Conamara⁶⁹.

Abbreviations

ADIV - Archives départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine.
 BA - Breiz Atao.
 CNB - Conseil national breton.
 Gestapo - Geheime Staatspolizei.
 HTV - Harlech Television; v. *Y Byd ar Bedwar: Llydaw*.
 LVF - Légion des Volontaires français contre le Bolchévisme.
 PCF - Parti communiste français.
 PNB - Parti national breton.
 PPF - Parti populaire français.
 SBB - Strollad Broadel Breiz.
 SD - Sicherheitsdienst.
 SS - Schutzstaffel.
 STO - Service du travail obligatoire.
 UDB - Union démocratique bretonne.

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⁶⁹ Ní Mhurchú & Breathnach (2003: 53). I am grateful to Albert Bock, Vienna, Gwendal Denis, Rennes, Gary German, Saint Yvi / Brest, Pierrick Le Guennec, Vannes, Sabine Heinz, Berlin / Pošnaň, Brian Stowell, Douglas, Iwan Wmffre, Koatiluarn / Lublin, for helpful comments and suggestions in the preparation of this article. Any mistakes that remain are my own.

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