

The Football League Cup Final between PSG and Lens has again displayed racial hatred and we shall refrain from contributing to it by repeating the words on the banner. Suddenly, racism has become a matter of concern to football and, through it, a matter of high financial interests : the financial impact of sport to the economy is well-known, but this time, enough is enough ! The [French] justice seems prepared to take up the matter and act.

The public Prosecutor's department of Bobigny [near Paris] has set up an inquiry “*into provocation to hatred and violence*”, and police forensics will look for DNA on the bits of the banner they have confiscated through which they hope to identify the culprits. If caught, it has been reported, the culprits risk “*one year's imprisonment and a 15.000 € fine*” [= about £12.000].

We can only approve the healthy awakening of the French Justice system to the problem and we stand firmly with the “People of the North” [North of France] in their indignation.

But what about the insults suffered by the Bretons, the Basques, the Corsicans and Alsacians & co ?

Let us recall the fate of a similar complaint, about “*Les grosses têtes*” [The big – or “bright” – heads or brains], broadcast on RTL radio on Feb 2nd 2006.

Excerpts included :

“Ah ! Are you familiar with Brittany, with its women in head-dresses and its men wearing grass skirts, their children are hydrocephalous, boys are as wicked as the girls are dirty”
(...) ***“In Brittany, in Brittany they drink andouille juice”*** [andouille, as well as being the word for a coarse sausage, is also a term of abuse meaning « *idiot* »] ***“and artichoke syrup, and, run naked through the moors, drunk”*** [in pop. French : “round”] ***“as hats, and spend their nights in the light of the prune lighthouses”*** [this is a pun – a “far” is a Breton cake, “phare” is a lighthouse, both are pronounced the same] (...) ***“And from Quimper to Concarneau, women pass by with pigs in prams, while their sailor husbands relieve themselves in the Ocean waves and refuse to sign the Kyoto Protocol.”***

The **Breton Agreement for Democracy and Human Rights** brought an independent action for damages and its lawyer, Me Choucq, lodged a complaint with the Senior Examining Magistrate of The High Court in Paris, on May 22nd 2006.

“These [artistic] “works”, the humour of which is at the very least arguable”, commented M^e Choucq, “in describing the Breton men as wicked, Breton women dirty, their children hydrocephalic, in attributing to them exhibitionism and orgiastic alcoholic habits, in displaying their descendants as pigs - unquestionably these “works” strike at the honour and reputation of persons originating from Brittany.”

This was the answer from the General Attorney of the Republic in charge at the Paris Court of Appeal, we received on July 19th 2006 :

(...) *“It does not seem appropriate to start proceedings which would have no chance of success, without changing Case Law.”*

As a result, we are impatiently waiting for the French Jurisprudence to get in line with the standards of European Jurisprudence, namely, the Court of Justice of The European Council in Strasbourg [France], to whom we complained at the end of January 2007. We still await an answer.

Traduction Maryvonne Cadiou, checked and corrected by Gwyn Griffiths. Thanks to him.