

Le Journal de la Liberté

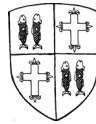
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Editors in Chief: M. Michael Richardson, M. Scott Allie, Mlle. Freddye Lins. **Story Editor:** M. Arvid Nelson. **Art Editor:** M. Juan Ferreyra. **Photography Editor:** M. Eugène Atget. **Layout Supervisor:** M. Cary Grazzini. **Editors Emeritus:** M. Clark A. Smith, M. Howard P. Lovecraft, M. Robert E. Howard. *Le Journal de la Liberté* is printed under the benign auspices of his eminence David-Louis Plantard de St. Clair, Duke of Lorraine, Emperor of the Franks, King of Jerusalem, Defender of Christ, &c., &c.

✠ GOD SAVE THE EMPEROR ✠



the
Emperor

TZAR LAUNCHES SURPRISE OFFENSIVE

The Opening of a Grim New Phase of This Great War

Stettin, Pomerania — For weeks, Russian and Frankish troops were locked in a high-stakes staring contest across the Oder River.

The staring contest is over.

Russian forces launched a massive offensive just before dawn yesterday morning, minutes after a formal declaration of war against the Frankish Empire.

"The ferocity and suddenness of the attack have been astonishing," the Count of Champagne, commander of the Frankish troops along the Oder, said.

So far, the Russians have been unable to break through the Frankish defenses, and all Frankish counterattacks thus far have been repulsed.

Initial casualty counts already number in the tens of thousands on both sides.

"The scale of the carnage is appalling," Major General Georges Cheval said. "Entire regiments have been wiped out. And we haven't seen the worst of it."

Frankish commanders attribute the soaring casualties to the



Entrenched soldiers fire over the bodies of their fallen comrades. There is no time to recover the dead.

vast networks of trenches both armies have dug.

"The trenches are easy to defend. But they work against us on the attack," Cheval said.

The Count of Champagne expressed confidence, despite the heavy losses.

"We shall attack, and attack and attack again until we break them," he said. "We fight for our beloved Emperor David, and we cannot fail. Christ is on our side."

In the East, Russian and Frankish forces are racing to gobble up chunks of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. Frankish troops have occupied the Holy Land, while a Russian force has pushed deep into Ottoman Romania.

It is only a matter of time before these armies clash as well.

"Yesterday, the Russians were our allies. Now, they're our mortal enemies. That's war for you," Cheval said. ✠

Emperor David I, Frankish War Council Still Missing

Paris — The Frankish emperor and his top military advisors remain absent from public view, despite the massive Russian surprise attack.

Yesterday the Roman Curia announced the Holy Inquisition would investigate the disappearances.

The Church's power has been severely curtailed since the outbreak of war. Some speculate the investigation is a papal strategy to put pressure on Emperor David.

Young prodigy Brother Matthew Feraud will lead the investigation. Although just 15 years old, Matthew has already solved a number of cases sensationalized by the penny press, including "Professor Pendleton's Circus of Death" and the notorious "Montmartre Murders" in the Hôtel Duc de Berry.

"The emperor's disappearance might be linked to research the archbishop here in Paris was conducting right before the outbreak of war," Matthew said. "But His Excellency vanished before he made his findings public. It's strange

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Piteous women and children, already uprooted multiple times in the back-and-forth contest of empires, flee the latest fighting. As is always the case in war, those least able to defend themselves suffer the most.



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RUSSIAN ADVANCE STALLS; STRIKES, RIOTS PARALYZE ST. PETERSBURG



Wounded Frankish soldiers recover at a farmhouse converted into a rude field hospital. The Great War has virtually annihilated an entire generation, and there is no indication the unrest in Russia will halt the devastation for long.

Collapse of Tzarist Regime Imminent?

The Marne River, the Western Front — The Russian war juggernaut has lumbered slowly and relentlessly towards Paris for two months. Now, just 43 miles from its objective, it may finally be grinding to a stop.

Widespread rioting erupted throughout Russia yesterday, paralyzing Moscow and its capital, St. Petersburg.

The entire Russian military apparatus on the Western Front also seized up as commanders hastily diverted troops home to quash what Russian officials are terming "spontaneous riots."

Field Marshal Arkadi Vasilyevich Golenishchev, commander of the Russian forces advancing on Paris, denied rumors the upheavals are coordinated in any way.

"This is not a revolution, and

we expect to have the situation under control in a matter of days," he said.

Many in the Frankish military command dispute this assertion.

"The timing of these outbreaks is too precise, and the scale is too vast for it all to be coincidental," Col. Ullrich Faulhaber of the Intelligence Corps said.

He speculated the unrest might be due to an underground movement of political agitators dedicated to an uprising of the "proletariat masses" against the forces of "totalitarianism and capitalist feudalism."

"They take an obscure German political theorist as their prophet and his writings as their holy scripture," Faulhaber said.

Whatever the motive for the uprisings, discontent, poverty, and hunger are a fact of life for the vast majority of the czar's subjects. The bloody, hard-fought war against the Franks, already estimated to have cost over two mil-

lion lives, may have proved to be more than those subjects could bear. Indeed, there are rumors of mass insurrection within the Russian army itself.

Unconfirmed reports are also trickling westward that revolutionaries have captured Tzar Nicholas II and members of his immediate family.

A spokesperson for the czar denied this.

"The Tzar and his family are quite safe, in a secure location," Yuri Zolutkin said. He refused to elaborate further.

The sudden halt to the fighting couldn't come sooner for the beleaguered Frankish forces opposing the Russian advance. The Frankish lines were beginning to buckle under the pressure of months of Russian artillery bombardments and massed assaults.

"This gives us a chance to regroup," the Count of Champagne said. He promised retribution would be "swift and brutal." ✠

The Frankish Emperor: Dead, or Ascended to Heaven?

Paris — Emperor David I and most of his high command are still unaccounted for, more than two months after their last public appearance.

The leadership vacuum has thrown the Frankish military into disarray. Commanders have abandoned the Holy Land to support the increasingly desperate situation on the Western Front, although they insist the withdrawal is temporary.

Many of the common soldiery have begun to wonder if David I hasn't "ascended to Heaven with Christ," as one sergeant put it.

Papal authorities launched an investigation into the disappearance several months ago, but last week the Roman Curia closed the inquiry without comment.

"I didn't find anything of interest," Brother Matthew Feraud, the young inquisitor who helmed the short-lived investigation, said. "It's best to leave it at that."

It was in stark contrast to his earlier expressions of excitement.

"Events right here in Paris before the outbreak of war, including a rash of murders and a gas explosion at the rectory of the Church of the Magdalene, all seem to be part of a larger pattern," he said several weeks ago.

He hinted an ancestor of David I might have found something "of considerable spiritual significance" during the First Crusade and taken it to a remote location in the Pyrenees Mountains.

Matthew visited the supposed site, but denies he found anything.

"There was nothing but some scorched trees and a mountain of rubble. I'm telling you, it's nothing," he said.

"Some mysteries are better left unsolved." ✠

REX MUNDI

April 1934



The Frankish Empire



The Empire of Russia



Russian territorial gains



Major civil unrest

Russian and Frankish forces are forced to retreat from Persia and the Middle East to support the fight on the Western Front.

Frankish troops withdraw before capturing Jerusalem.



Revolutions across Europe bring the war-weary Frankish and Russian Empires to their knees.