

La Jacquerie des Croquants

GRANDE BATAILLE

13 AU 20 AOÛT 1023



DUCHÉ DE BICOLLINE

La Grande Bataille 1023



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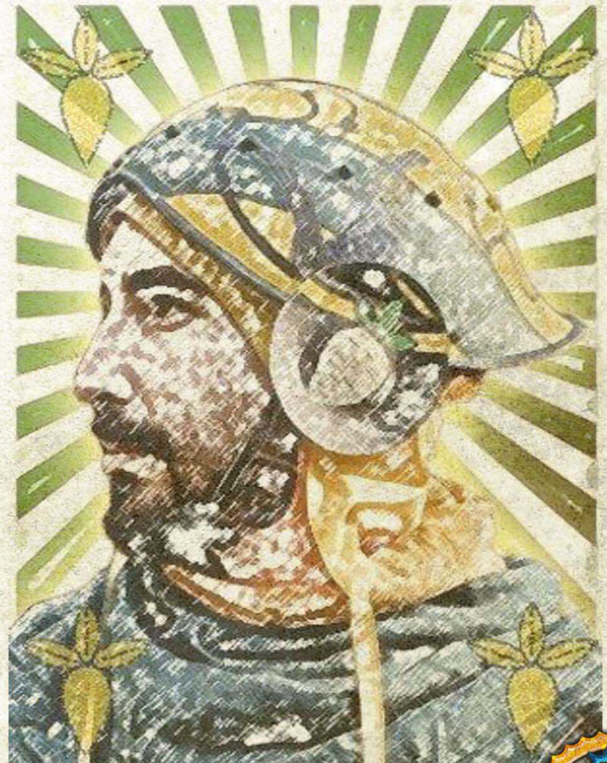
Known as "la Révolte Généreuse"
(The Generous Revolt)



The rumor spread like wildfire. In the depths of winter, while Archduke Hans Garder was touring Schwarsembourg's working-class districts, a figure appeared in front of his coach. "Down with tyrants!" it exclaimed simply, firing a fateful bolt before vanishing into the stunned crowd. With his side pierced, the Archduke lay in bed for two weeks, feverish, between life and death. Alchemists and priests took turns trying to stem the infection in his blood. The question on every nobleman's lips was: how could a simple peasant girl dare to commit such a heinous and unnatural attack?

The investigation revealed that the suspect, Mariana Müller, was a simple peasant girl from Turenne. Born around 984, she had the misfortune to lose her husband in the destruction of Bridier, the former imperial capital. A few years later, her only son also disappeared in a paranoid raid by the fallen Lord Bescheral d'Ax. She was left alone to cultivate her plot of land with her last ox, ironically nicknamed Maigrelet (skinny). Unfortunately, Mariana's demise did nothing to reduce the quotas and taxes she had to pay to Baron Schellag Gwerf. The Great Evil took its toll and, faced with successive tax hikes, Mariana was forced to take out a loan with the Kintzheim Bankers in order to survive, knowing that unless fate changed, the loan-shark interest rates would eventually reduce her to servitude.

One evening, in a tavern, a company from Kafe, armed with subversive leaflets produced in Foinville by the frenetic rotary presses of the Union Paysanne Inclusive Révolutionnaire, gave her hope for a better world. In the words of the guild's spokesman, these agitating troubadours denounced the lords "crunching the people" to the bone:



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"People of the seahorse, unite!

For too long the mighty of this world have enjoyed the softness of silk and the comfort of good wine, while we have had a front-row seat to famine, disease and war. Whether you call it a republic or a monarchy, the people suffer, that's a fact. The people are hungry; the people are cold. Misery drives them to crime, or worse, vice!

So don't blame the revolt on the humble peasants, but denounce misery, the scourge of one class and the peril of all. Peasants, tradesmen and women of all horizons, let's unite! Let us denounce this misery, which is not only the suffering of the individual, but the ruin of the whole kingdom.

If you think this is just a fight for the peasants, think again! Like King Lunelame and the nobility of Kafé, who for decades have demonstrated their magnanimity and support for their people, warriors, nobles and monarchs, join the UPR troops to assert the rights of the people, the new slaves of this world. Answer the call of Alain Généreux, the people's paladin, so that peasants of all horizons can enjoy the same quality of life as those of Rougebourg! Together, let's overthrow tyranny! The revolution is today! "

This revolutionary propaganda, signed by the self-proclaimed "people's paladin", Alain Généreux, resonated with Mariana, who had nothing left to lose.



The Garder family knew they were paying the price for all those nobles who shamelessly exploited the people. They were only one target among many in this naive uprising, and Mariana Muller, as yet untraceable, was only a symptom of a far more perfidious evil. Hans had barely emerged from his feverish limbo when his only daughter, High Queen Julia Franz Garder, ordered that she be left alone with ink and parchment at her father's bedside. At dawn, ravens, pigeons and owls flew out of the family turret, carrying the following message to the squires of the known world:



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"People of noble family, hear our call.
Highnesses, majesties, ladies and sirs, to arms!



In the west, enraged villains are fomenting revolt. Their assassin tried to kill our father, dynast of the House of Garder, with a vile bolt. By Grace, he does! It takes more than a coward's weapon to strike down an Archduke of the ancient Sword Nobility! This affront reveals the true enemy! In August, interrupt your internal quarrels in these sadly fragmented Terres du Centre. It's time to reiterate the temporal order, to prove that our dignity emanates from the divine warrant. Let the banners of the old houses rise again! Honor demands retribution; the heads of this peasant hydra must roll. Rise and shine!

Let us don the robes of royalty! Harnessed in polished armor, mounting gleaming steeds,
join us against these bold brigands!

Our Chevanchée des Couronnés will trace a furrow of iron and blood, our lances will cut through the heart of this insurrection!
Together, we'll crush the rebellion and burn its roots, before those lowlives claim any more noble victims!

Be brave! Glory! Justice!"



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The letter bore the inimitable seal of the Archduke himself, but the graying lords were surprised; used as they were to the sword, rather than the verb, being the strength of Emperor Gar III's former warlord.

News of the attack reached distant Foinville, along with the call to the Chevauchée des Courronés, whose ranks were already swelling with noble families from several nations. At the emergency general assembly, the more cautious peasant representatives gnashed their teeth, not wishing to inspire bloodshed, but the more radical voices, seeing this as confirmation of their accelerationist theories, soon persuaded the hesitant.

The People's Paladin, having no choice but to accept the mandate of the warring faction, addressed the assembly:

"So, not content with jousting against a windmill, now the nobles would trample on the miller! Let's shape our ploughs into blades, let's upholster our jacques! This monopoly of violence must end! Before they eat brioche from their palaces, they'll have to digest our parsnips first!"

Thus began the conflict that would go down in history as the Jacquerie des Croquants.

