

Machine gun post of the Volksmarine in front of the Berlin City Palace (December 1918)

Abstract

The People's Naval Division was a paramilitary security force, initially under the control of the Berlin chief of police, to guarantee the public peace and protect the new government. This force was filled with revolutionary naval soldiers and civilians. Part of it was billeted in the Berlin Palace, a former residence of the Hohenzollerns. These troops soon proved difficult to control, however, so on December 23, 1918, the Council of People's Representatives ordered a considerable reduction in the force's size and its withdrawal from the palace. But the soldiers refused to vacate the palace without the pay still owed them, leading to armed encounters – supported by other revolutionary elements – with the regular army, the Reichswehr. The mutineers occupied the Reich Chancellery and brought the city commander, Otto Wels, under their control. After a bloody rebellion on December 24, when the People's Naval Division gained the upper hand, the Council of People's Representatives had to give in. The peaceful revolution had begun to manifest violence. The photograph shows a machine gun post of the Volksmarine at the Neptun fountain in front of the Berlin City Palace.

Source



Source: Revolution in Berlin, 1918. Machine gun post of the Volksmarine. Division at the Begas (Neptune/Castle) Fountain in front of the Berlin Palace. Photographer: unknown. BA, collection of repro negatives, image 146-1971-038-54, available online on Wikimedia Commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_146-1971-038-54,_Revolution_in_Berlin,_MG-Posten_vor_dem_Schloss.jpg

Recommended Citation: Machine gun post of the Volksmarine in front of the Berlin City Palace (December 1918), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:image-3990>> [March 16, 2026].