

Street Clashes in Berlin during the January Uprising (January 1919)

Abstract

In January 1919, the revolution took a decisive and violent turn, shaking the foundations of the emerging republic. After the Christmas rebellion in Berlin and the collapse of the SPD–USPD governing coalition, the atmosphere in the capital was inflamed. When the Berlin police president, Emil Eichhorn (USPD), was fired on January 5 for ostensibly supporting the People's Marine Division, the Spartacus League took the opportunity to incite revolutionary workers and soldiers to rebellion and to declare the dismissal of the Council of People's Deputies. Left-wing extremist revolutionaries occupied Berlin publishing houses, and a revolutionary committee was formed, albeit one that proved incapable of acting. After negotiations with the Council of People's Deputies collapsed, Gustav Noske ordered the Reichswehr to put down the rebellion. Ruthless, civil war–like street fighting ensued, permitting the Reichswehr to strengthen its own position. This photograph by Alfred Grohs, a possible reenactment, shows a scene from the street fighting at the corner of Grosse Frankfurter Strasse today Karl-Marx-Allee) and Lebuser Strasse in Berlin-Friedrichshain. The violence did not end with the defeat of the rebellion. In a political clean-up operation, the army and free corps combed through Berlin's working-class area to find and eliminate revolutionary workers. This operation also took the lives of the Spartacist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

Source



Source: Barricade fighting during the November Revolution 1918-19 in Berlin, January 1919, photo by Alfred Grohs, scan from a postcard, available online at Wikimedia Commons, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/92/Alfred_Grohs_zur_Revolution_1918_1919_in_B

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%A4hrend_der_Novemberrevolution_in_Berlin_02_Bildseite_Schaulustige.jpg](#)

Another version, in lower resolution and cropped, is also available from the Bundesarchiv, Aktuelle Bilder-Centrale Georg Pahl, image 102-00540A.

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