

The Occupation of the Newspaper Quarter (January 5, 1919)

Abstract

When the Prussian government fired the Berlin Chief of Police Emil Eichhorn (USPD), accusing him of having supported the People's Naval Division during the Christmas Rebellion, it resulted in further unrest and mass demonstrations by the radical left. Armed insurgents occupied the offices of the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts* as well as numerous other press buildings in the Berlin newspaper quarter. This picture shows armed revolutionary soldiers and civilians on the streets of the quarter. Their aim was to prevent elections to the National Assembly (which was supposed to prepare the way for a parliamentary democracy) and instead establish a socialist soviet republic [*Räterepublik*]. A revolutionary committee under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht and the USPD politician Otto Ledebour denied the legitimacy of the Council of People's Deputies, declaring it over. Negotiations between the Social Democratic government and the insurrectionists fell apart. Military suppression of the revolt began on January 8 – on Gustav Noske's orders – and lasted until January 12, costing many lives. In a bloody demonstration of the press's interpretive power over the hectic revolutionary events, the newspaper quarter saw especially heavy fighting. After the January uprising was forcibly ended, military and Freikorps units conducted "clean-up operations" in order to stifle any final revolutionary urges. Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were among the victims.

Source



Source: November Revolution. Occupation of the newspaper district. January 5, 1919. Photographer: Willy Römer.

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