

View into the Courtyard of the City Palace after the So-Called Christmas Fights (December 1918)

Abstract

In December 1918, the confrontation between the People's Naval Division and the Committee of People's Representatives took a violent turn in the so-called Christmas Rebellion. Fighting occurred in the governmental quarter of Berlin, devastating the Berlin Palace. The soldiers there had refused to leave because they had not yet been paid, whereas the People's Representatives had accused the soldiers of stealing works of art from the palace. This photograph shows the condition of the inner courtyard after the fighting. The Reichswehr was forced to pull back, and the palace was finally cleared, but the People's Naval Division continued to exist undiminished in size.

The Christmas Rebellion had grave political consequences. The USPD left the Council of People's Representatives in protest against that body's use of military force, fracturing the alliance between both parties on the left. On top of that, the People's Representatives now supported the recruitment of so-called *Freikorps* in order to guarantee domestic security. The *Freikorps* were paramilitary units of World War veterans recruited by Supreme Army Headquarters, largely privately financed, and fundamentally nationalistic and anti-revolutionary. In order to fight the spectre of Bolshevism, the Social Democrats entered a dangerous alliance with anti-democratic forces.

Source



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Recommended Citation: View into the Courtyard of the City Palace after the So-Called Christmas Fights (December 1918), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:image-4003>> [March 16, 2026].