

Worksheet 3 – The Spartacist Uprising

Review: Lecture 3.2 (The German Revolution)

In the first lecture of the unit, we discussed the end of the First World War in Germany, including reasons why the Kaiser and his High Command were ultimately deposed.

- ✓ Why do you think organised opposition to the war started to become a serious problem in 1918?
- ✓ Have the protests of (particularly) urban women been overlooked?

Recall: Lecture 3.3 (The Spartacist Uprising)

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

1. If the country were to become a Soviet-style republic, in which organisation would much of the power be concentrated?
 - a) Workers councils
 - b) Military High Command
 - c) Elected parliaments
 - d) Police
2. In which month was the Spartacist Uprising?
 - a) July 1919
 - b) December 1919
 - c) January 1919
 - d) January 1918
3. Who were the Freikorps?
 - a) A regular army unit
 - b) Right-wing paramilitary group
 - c) Political party
 - d) Socialist revolutionary movement
4. Which notable Socialist Parliamentarian was murdered during the Uprising?
 - a) Rudolf Breitscheid
 - b) Karl Liebknecht
 - c) Friedrich Ebert
 - d) Paul Levi

Analysis

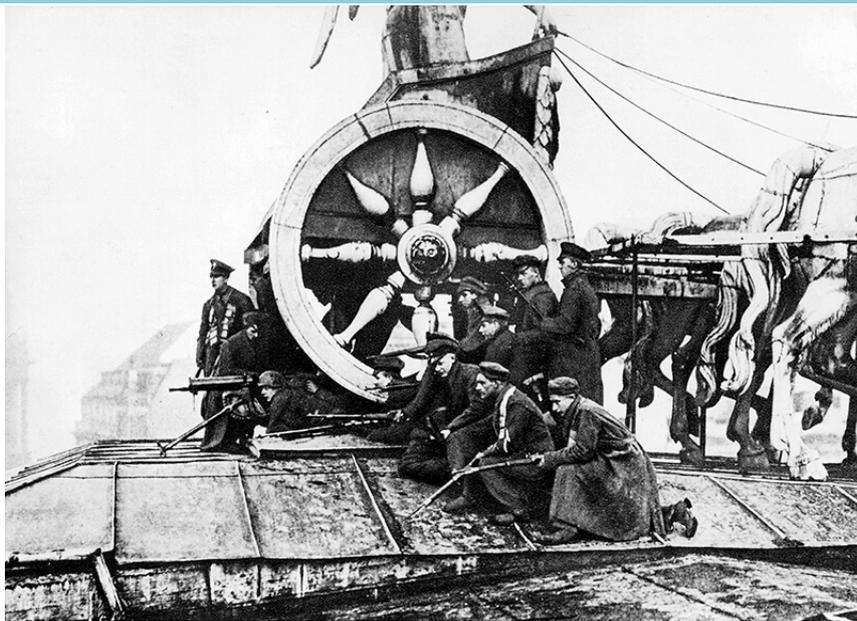
5.
 - a) Beginning at 3:45, does Dr Rossol believe that the Social Democrats are **ultimately responsible** for the Spartacist Uprising? Explain her view in no more than five full sentences.
 - b) According to Dr Rossol at around 5:00, **what role do the Councils play** in the events of early 1919? Explain her view concisely, as above.

Evaluation

6. **‘The Spartacist Uprising can be attributed to a series of lost opportunities in democratisation, where political elites’ refusal to make meaningful change resulted in an insurrectionist anger.’**
To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Be sure to include the following:

- a. An **introduction** that provides an overview of the points you intend to make and your final judgement;
- b. A paragraph in which you **make your argue either in support of or against the statement**;
- c. A paragraph in which you **acknowledge the opposing position (and any third positions)**;
- d. A **conclusion** which links back to the question, and which summarises your evidence and overall judgement



Soldiers on the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin during the Spartacist uprising (Landesarchiv Berlin/Public domain)

Challenge: In historiography, thinking on the Spartacist Uprising has changed in recent decades. In (Communist/Socialist) East Germany, it was judged very positively. That view has widely changed since the reunification of Germany in 1990.

Why do you think this might have been?

Glossary

- Spartacist League – a German Marxist revolutionary movement founded by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg In 1914.
e.g. The Spartacist League was dissolved in early 1919.
- Democratisation – the act of moving towards becoming a democratisation.
e.g. Universal suffrage is considered an important first step in democratisation.
- Historiography – the study of the writing of history and of written histories.
e.g. The historiography of the Uprising changed significantly after 1990.
- Insurrectionist – a person or group who rises up against authority, usually through violent means.
e.g. The Spartacists have been described as an insurrectionist movement.

