**Broad outlines of the German Revolution and Civil War**

November 1918 to January 1919

On November 9th, 1918, the Revolutionary Stewards and USPD, lead by Emil Barth and with the support of Karl Liebknecht and the Spartacists, successfully conduct a revolutionary session on the Circus Busch where the preliminary councils vote to deposit revolutionary executive powers on the newly created Executive Committee, made up of mostly USPD and Spartacist members, rather than the Council of People’s Deputies, strongly controlled by the MSPD.

This initial show of strength by the USPD leads Chancelor Max von Baden to finally announce that Wilhem II had abdicated and that he was handing over his office to the Executive Committee, whom broader German society see as the leftist leaders. At this point, a fracture begins to show in the MSPD, as some members show tacit support for the Committee, while the leadership protested the vote and the formation of the Executive Committee. This was the beginning of the split that would be the origin of the MSPD-Links and MSPD-Rechts.

The weeks between the declaration of the Executive Committee as the principal revolutionary council and Christmas were fraught with increasing tensions as important decisions were made. The Reich Congress of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils finally met in the Prussian Landtag, being composed of 450 members – 243 were USPD (of which 37 were Spartacists, with Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg being chosen as members) and 182 were MSPD (of which 69 were MSPD-L). The Congress established some of the key policies of the revolution going forward. Of particular importance were:

* A proposal by the USPD to retain the council system as the basis for a socialist republic and to give the councils the supreme legislative and executive power.
* A proposal by the Spartacists to vest legislative and executive power on the Executive Committee, until council elections could take place nationwide.
* A recognition of the of the successful Soviet revolutions in Bavaria, Saxony, Bremen, and Würzburg and of their (predominantly USPD) council governments as the legitimate local governments.

The culmination of the brewing tensions came when, on Christmas Day of 1918, an Army force attempted to dislodge the Volksdivisions and other leftist militias from the Landtag, Imperial Palace, principal industrial sectors, and press printers. While initially put under strain, after two days, the revolutionary forces pushed back and successfully repelled all assaults by the military, primarily aided by the broader Berlin populace, who helped disrupt military actions from the Army. This action was also echoed by separate, weaker assaults on other revolutionary cities, like Bremen and Munich, which met the same fate.

The reactions to this seemingly unprovoked and coordinated attack were of broad condemnation and the calling of a national general strike by the USPD, Spartacists, and MSPD-L. The initial silence of the MSPD-R, both during the fighting and the aftermath, casted serious suspicions of collusion, which were later confirmed when a horrified Otto Landsberg revealed to the press that Friederick Ebert and Gustav Noske had struck a deal with the General Quartermaster of the Army Wilhelm Groener, which would later be known as the Ebert-Groener Pact.

The response to this revelation by the various workers’ and soldiers’ councils was of almost unanimous denunciation. The few SPD members of the Executive Committee were expelled and replaced with USPD members, and the Spartacists labelled “Ebert and his reactionary cabal” as “traitors to the Revolution”. Otto Landberg would lead the MSPD-L to a very public split with the rest of the MSPD, where he made the declaration that the SPD was “effectively dead”. The broader revolutionary cities would also recognize the Executive Committee as the primary authority behind the Revolution and coordinate all maters of defence and political direction.

The aftermath of the Christmas and New Year Crisis was the dissolution of the SPD and solidification of all revolutionary control under the Executive Committee, the USPD, and the Spartacists.

January 1919 to March 1919

Having solidified their political control over the Revolution, the Executive Committee votes and agrees to send diplomats to negotiate with the Entente powers. A temporary ceasefire had already been in effect since November 11th, with a proper Armistice and treaty to be negotiated at a later date.