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Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German Foreign Minister, who headed the delegation, took two speeches with him to the Trianon Palace Hotel. One was conciliatory, the other much more defiant. He did not decide which one he was going to use until he received the peace terms. He chose defiance. Since he looked very much the Prussian Junker, and since nerves forced him to speak seated, the speech made a lamentable impression. If the Allies had felt qualms about treating Germany harshly, they no longer did so.

Von Brockdorff-Rantzau subsequently made a decision, which in retrospect had unfortunate consequences, to attack two clauses in the section on reparations. Article 231 of the Germany treaty has come to be known as the War Guilt Clause. In fact, if you read it, it says nothing about guilt, only about responsibility for the war. It was put in to establish Germany's legal liability. The following article, 232, limits that liability by stating that Germany's reparations obligations had to be based on Germany's capacity to pay. The actual wording came from John Foster Dulles, who was a young lawyer with the American delegation. Von Brockdorff-Rantzau's decision came after considerable debate both among the German delegates and back in Germany. Interestingly enough, none of the other defeated nations, whose treaties included similar clauses, ever made an issue of it. In time, of course, the 'War Guilt' clause became deeply embedded in German thinking about the Versailles Treaty, as it came to be known, and was one of the many grounds on which Hitler and his fellow nationalists attacked the peace settlements. As the years went by and the opening of the European archives suggested that the war may well have started as the result of a series of mistakes on both sides, Germans and indeed many in the English-speaking world, felt that the clause, and by extension, the whole treaty, was unfair to Germany.

In recent years a number of historians, myself included, have come to the conclusion that the German treaty was not as bad as it has been portrayed. Whatever the High Command later said, Germany had lost the war. It should have expected to lose territory. If Germany had won, it certainly would have taken territory from its defeated enemies. It should have expected that the Allies, and particularly France, would attempt to limit Germany's capacity to wage future wars. It should have