

Erich Ludendorff on the New German Government, February 1919

(Erich Ludendorff was the supreme commander of the German Army by 1916, and is considered to have been the chief advisor to the Kaiser--if not the actual ruler of Germany--during the war.)

The men who now held the reins of government belonged to those who, previously in Peace times, had labored to bring about the internal weakening of Germany.

They tried...to introduce the Parliamentary form of government, which would break the power of the Emperor and the princes of the land, so that they might put it into their own hands.

This ambition went hand in hand with the desire of pleasing Wilson and thus facilitating a peace. They did not tell themselves that what an enemy wants can only be bad for ourselves. They were strong alone in the fervor with which they believed in the mission of the President of the United States to establish the happiness of the whole world...

When the terrible conditions of the Versailles Treaty became known in May, 1919, the democratic deputy, Conrad Haussman, who had probably foreseen the disastrous consequences of a Wilson peace, gave expression to the following opinion: "Had our army, on the 5th and 9th of November, known that peace would have looked that way, the army would not have laid down its arms; it would have held out."

The military command had warned the political leaders against disarmament, because, in its instinctive knowledge of the mode of thinking of the enemy, it had gauged with correctness what was to come. Our brave army did not lay down its arms; it was forced to do so by our political leadership.

The people followed their bad leaders - and "misleaders" - and rushed blindly to their fate. They could and would not, even now, understand the aims of the military leaders, who had demanded, as the only possible protection, the utmost resolution and exertions of a united people.

When the Reichstag had robbed the Kaiser of all power, and had strengthened their own, the government surrendered to the enemy. In the spirit of total submission they called the prospective peace of annihilation a "peace of justice."

Finally, the political leadership disarmed the unconquered army and delivered over Germany to the destructive will of the enemy in order that it might carry through the revolution in Germany unhindered. That was the climax in the betrayal of the German people.

Thus was perpetrated the crime against the German nation. No political regime has ever committed anything worse. Not the enemy, but our political leadership broke down the power of our military command, and consequently of the nation - that power which was embodied in the officers' corps and in the army.

