



## Source 5

Extracts from a report published in July 1919 on US public opinion towards the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations

(Catalogue ref: CAB 1/28)

### How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. It contains information that could be helpful in deciding why it was so hard to make peace. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- Does this source suggest that the American people are deeply concerned about the treaty?
- What is the attitude of Americans towards the idea of a League of Nations?
- What is the view of American people on how Germany should be treated?
- Would you say that opinions in the United States were closer to the opinions of France (source 1 in this case study), Britain (source 2) or Germany (source 3)?



## Source 5

1. *General Attitude of the American People.*—They are tired of the war and everything belonging to it. They are almost hysterically anxious to get back to peace conditions, and they cannot quite understand why the process takes such a long time. They are still crowing a little and patting the boys on the back and calling them heroes, but they are chiefly concerned with the high cost of living, the housing shortage, the labour unrest, and the elections of 1920. Just now they are saying very little about the Peace Treaty or the League Covenant. The politicians—particularly the Republican ones—and the reformers are doing all the talking along these lines. The mass of the people are waiting for Wilson to return and suspending judgment in the meantime.

4. *The People and the League.*—The League idea has taken deep roots in the minds and hearts of the people. They are for a league, although they are sincerely anxious that the League finally formed shall not interfere with the constitution or the Monroe doctrine, and that it shall not carry too strong a likelihood of American boys having to go fighting in the Old World again. In spite of this feeling, they will not oppose America's taking a mandate in European or Asiatic Turkey, should the President recommend that this be done. The Republican leaders have had matters all their own way so far, because Wilson has been away, and because, as I have already said, the people are waiting for him to return. Thus rocked into a false sense of security and success, they have repeatedly shot over the mark, and all those mistakes of theirs will have to be accounted for. I believe we shall witness a tremendous reaction against the Senate leaders within a couple of weeks.

5. *The People and the Treaty.*—The people want the treaty to be pretty stiff, and they think that, on the whole, Germany has got what she deserves in the dose measured out. On the other hand, their sense of fairness is inclined to object in several instances, and I believe this inclination is growing. Above everything else, they do not want the treaty afterwards twisted into something worse than it is now meant to be. They want Germany's bill fixed and then adhered to. The postponement of fixing exact reparation amounts and some of the measures proposed for the enforcement of payment have little sympathy. Any attempts or desires to control German internal affairs are sure to provoke a serious reaction here within a short time. I regard it distinctly possible that, if the present régime holds in Germany and there is no change for the better in France, we might within a few years find ourselves in a relationship to the new Germany that would closely resemble that of an alliance. The hatred of the Germans still holds here, but it is not going to outlast any palpable unfairness on the part of France and Great Britain.