

The year was...

1946

It should have been a year of celebration—at least, that’s what a romantic outlook would have us see. The most destructive war in the most violent century in human history had ended at last; American heroes were returning home.

And, in many ways, 1946 *was* a time of renewal—quite literally, as the birth rate in the United States jumped some 20% to commence the Baby Boom.

Yet even as the nation rejoiced, shadows remained, and they threatened to grow. The exuberance and relief expressed in that year’s popular song, “Zip-a-Dee-Do-Dah,” were tempered by the anxieties of readjustment to peacetime, as portrayed in the Oscar-winning film, “The Best Years of Our Lives.” The hopes for a peaceful future implicit in the first

meeting of the United Nations General Assembly were counterpoised by Sir Winston Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech, warning of the threat of Soviet expansion.

And even as the synthesizing of penicillin and the publication of Benjamin Spock’s *Commonsense Book of Baby and Childcare* promised a gentler, healthier future for the first postwar generation of children, mass starvation threatened those already living amidst the ruins of Europe and Japan. The worst work stoppages since 1919 hit industries throughout the United States; Nazi leaders hanged in Nuremberg; women put down acetylene torches and returned to homemaking.

In 1946, war was over; life went on.

—Lisa Ferraro Parmelee

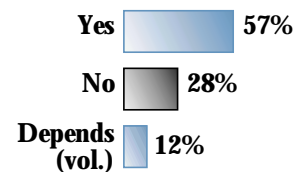
A Helping Hand for Friend... And Foe

Question: Would you be willing to have meat and butter rationed again so that we could send more food to needy countries that fought on our side in the war, or would you rather not have such rationing?



Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, March 1946.

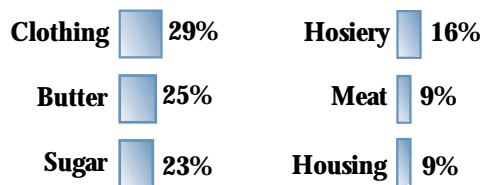
Question: Do you think we should send any food to the German people during the coming winter?



Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, March 1946.

Supplies Still Short at Home

Question: There are still some shortages even though the war is over. Which one or two shortages are you noticing most now?

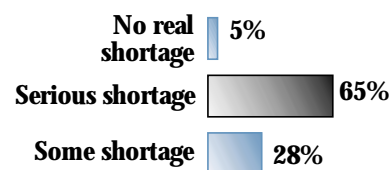


Note: Adds to more than 100% due to multiple responses. Selected responses shown.

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune* magazine, January 22-February 4, 1946.

Seeds of Suburbia

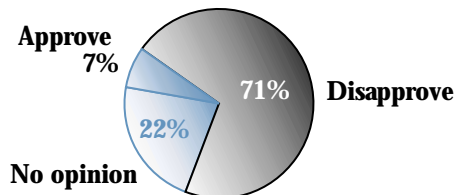
Question: Would your say there is a serious shortage of housing around here, that there is some shortage but it is not serious, or that there is no real shortage at all?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune* magazine, January 22-February 4, 1946.

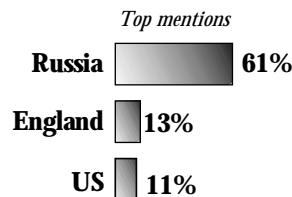
Sleeping Bear Stirs

Question: In general, do you approve or disapprove of the policy Russia is following in world affairs?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, March 15-20, 1946.

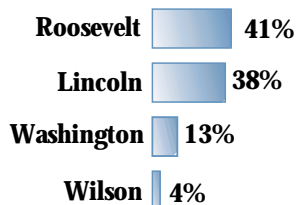
Question: If the United Nations Organization fails to prevent another world war in the next 25 years, which one nation, if any, do you think will be the most responsible for its failure?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 28-March 5, 1946.

FDR a Hero...

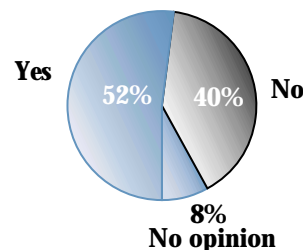
Question: Which of these four US presidents do you think was the greatest—George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, or Franklin Delano Roosevelt?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, January 5-10, 1946.

But No More Four-Term Presidents

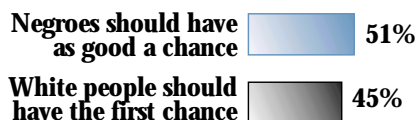
Question: Would you favor adding a law to the Constitution to prevent any President of the United States in the future from serving more than two terms in a row?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 29-December 4, 1946.

Lesson of Oppression Not Fully Learned

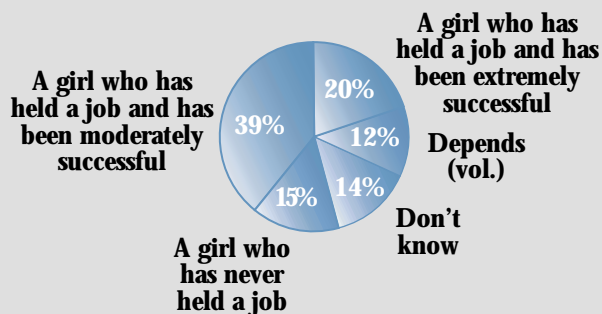
Question: Do you think negroes should have as good a chance as white people to get any kind of job, or do you think white people should have the first chance at any kind of job?



Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, May 1946.

Love After War

Question: Assuming that all three girls are equally good looking, do you think most men would prefer to marry...?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for *Fortune* magazine, April 12-30, 1946.