

The Year Was... 1942

It is hardly surprising that in 1942, one subject absorbed the attention of the American people like no other: World War II. The polling record for that year attests to its dominance in the public mind. Out of 636 polling questions asked by the Gallup Organization, not including those on elections or taxes, nearly half referred directly to the war or national defense; many more alluded to them.

War permeated every aspect of life on the home front. Families gave their loved ones to the military and their own efforts to civil defense. Scrap metal drives and the rationing

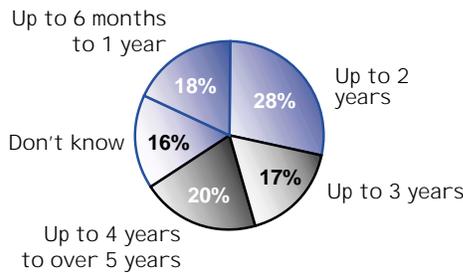
of sugar, clothing, tires, and even movie film transformed what used to be ordinary activities into opportunities—or expectations—for patriotic participation.

In those early months following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, nobody knew how long the war would last; but many already suspected it would be a part of everyday life and thought for a considerable time. Sometimes demanding people's full attention, sometimes hovering at the periphery of their days, it never quite went away.

—Lisa Ferraro Parmelee

In It for the Long Haul

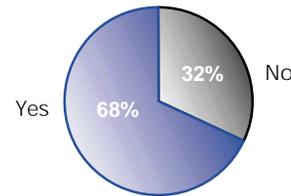
Question: How much longer do you think the war will last from now?



Source: Survey by the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, July 1942.

Sense of Mission

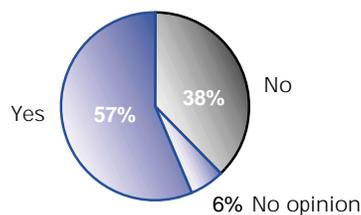
Question: Do you feel that you have a clear idea of what the war is all about—that is, what we are fighting for?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 4-9, 1942.

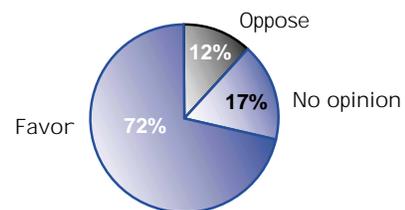
Small Sacrifices

Question: Would you be willing to take the bumpers off your car and give them to the scrap metal drive?



Note: Asked of car owners.
Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, October 1-6, 1942.

Question: It has been suggested that the government issue an order forbidding double feature movies for the duration of the war, in order to save film. Would you favor or oppose such an order?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, August 15-20, 1942.

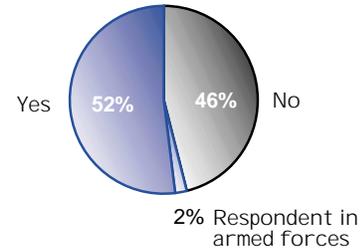
Hard Choices, Sleepless Nights

Question: If the government had to choose between drafting 18 and 19 year old men, or married men without children, which should it choose?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, July 16-21, 1942.

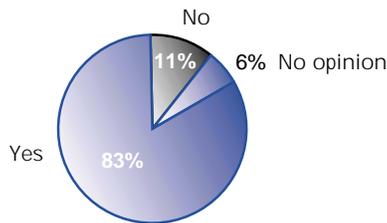
Question: Is any relative or member of your family in the armed forces?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 17-23, 1942.

Patriotic Duty

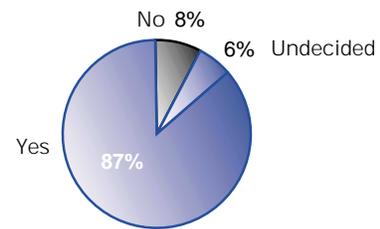
Question: Should all men and women over 18 who are not already in military services be required to register with the government for some kind of civilian defense or war work?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 25-March 2, 1942.

The Enemy Among Us

Question: Should spies caught in this country be punished by death?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, July 16-21, 1942.

No Turning Back

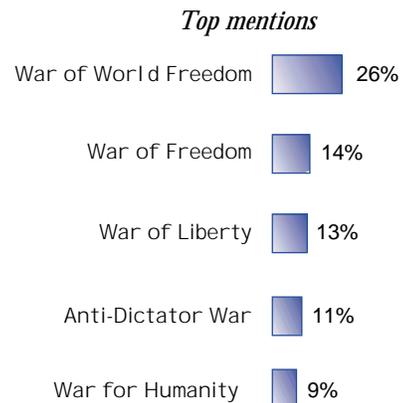
Question: If Hitler offered peace now to all countries on the basis of not going farther, but of leaving matters as they are now, would you favor or oppose such a peace?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 5-11, 1942.

World War II

Question: Here are a few names that have been suggested to call the present war. Which do you like best?



Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, April 17-22, 1942.