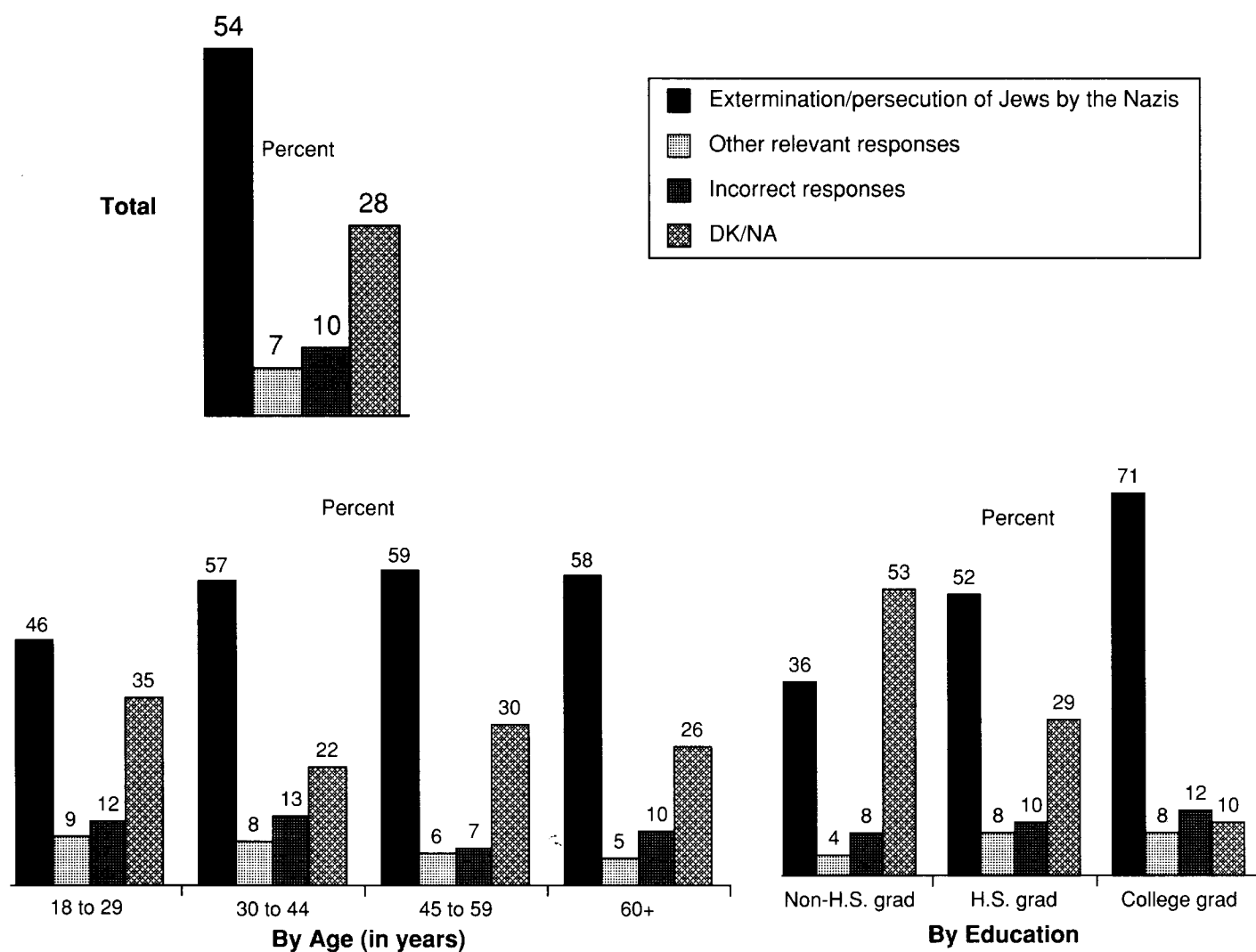


Polling on the Holocaust: The Decline of Historical Knowledge?

Editor's Note: In releasing a recent survey on the Holocaust sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and conducted by the Roper Organization, David Singer, the AJC's director of research and publications, commented that "The survey findings underscore the serious lack of knowledge that exists for disturbingly large numbers of both adults and youth in the United States with regard to basic knowledge about the Holocaust." The same battery of questions, when asked in Great Britain by Social Surveys Ltd. (Gallup Poll), found somewhat greater awareness. Differences in knowledge by education were quite sharp in the US, much less so in the UK.

Question: As far as you know, what does the term "the Holocaust" refer to?

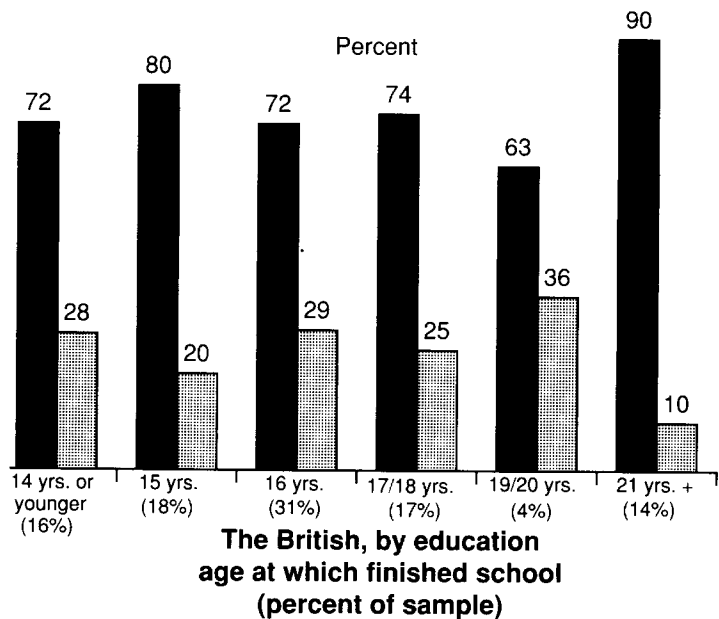
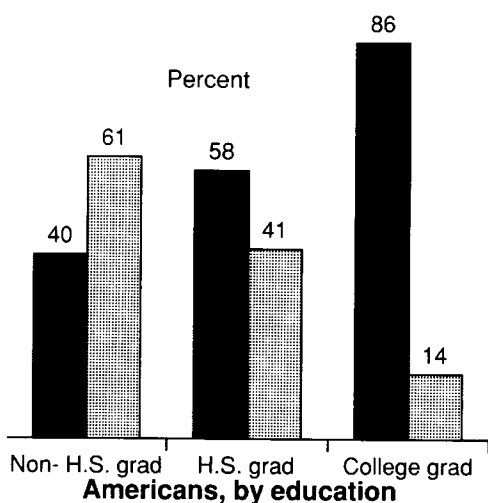
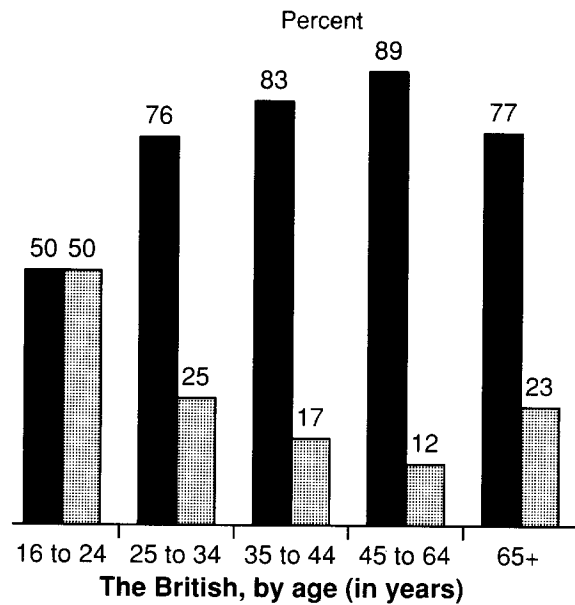
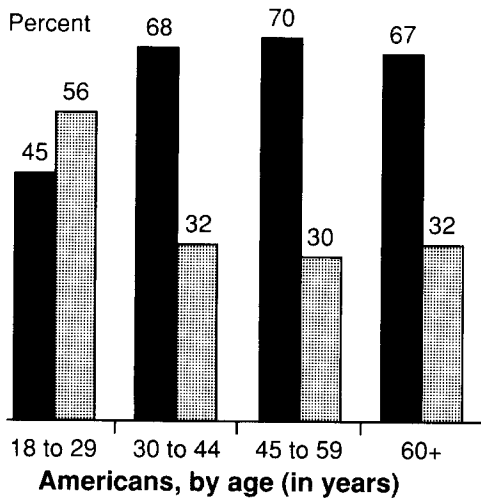
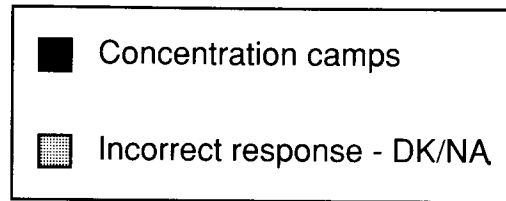
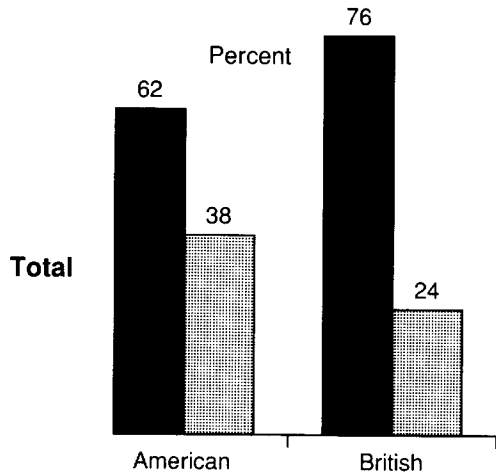


Note: "Other relevant responses" include: concentration camps, German death camps, Hitler, Nazis, Germans, World War II, and the 1940s.

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization for the American Jewish Committee (AJC), November 14-21, 1992.

Knowledge of the Holocaust in the U.S. & U.K.

Question: From what you know or have heard, what were Auschwitz, Dachau, and Treblinka?



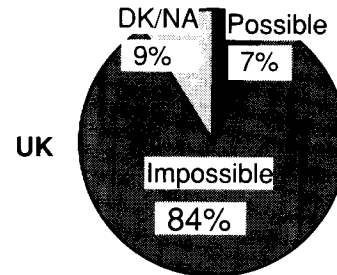
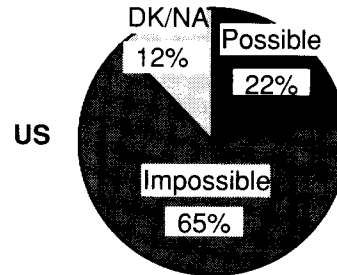
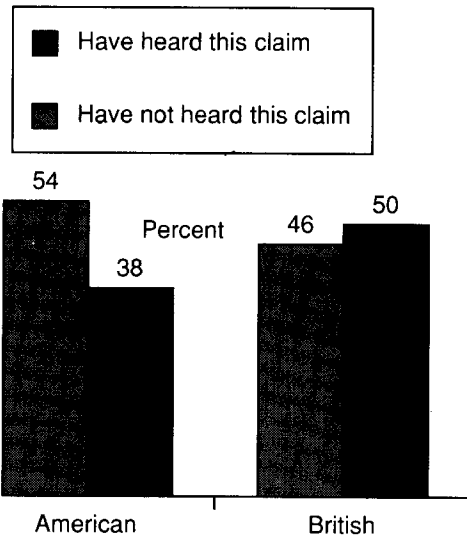
Source: American survey by the Roper Organization for AJC, November 14-21, 1992. British survey data provided by Social Surveys Ltd. (Gallup Poll), May 5-10, 1993.

A Polling Controversy...And Divergent National Responses

One question in the AJC/Roper survey received criticism for its use of the double negative. Respondents were asked whether it seems possible or **impossible** that the Nazi extermination of the Jews **never** happened. Did the fact that 22% of adult Americans answered "possible" reflect a gross lack of understanding on the part of a large segment of the populace, or did the double negative confuse people? If it were the latter, respondents in the UK apparently had much less trouble.

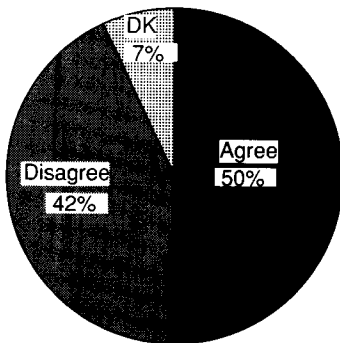
Question: Some people claim that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened. Have you ever heard this claim, or not?

Question: Does it seem possible or does it seem impossible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews *never* happened?

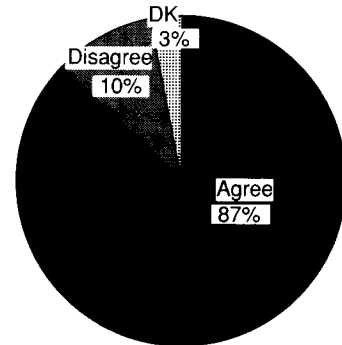


Source: American survey by the Roper Organization for AJC, November 14-21, 1992. British survey data provided by Social Surveys Ltd. (Gallup Poll), May 5-10, 1993.

An Earlier Indication That Confusion Can Result



One half of the sample was asked the left-hand version with its double negative; the other half the "uncontaminated" version on the right.



Question: Do you agree or disagree...It is not true that women don't make as good executives as men do?

Question: Do you agree or disagree...Women make as good executives as men do?

Source: Burns W. Roper, "Are Polls Accurate?," *The Annals of the American Academy*, March 1984.