

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Report #1

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NATIONAL SURVEY, DECEMBER, 1941

Report of Nation-wide Survey

MADE BY THE

NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

One Week before War was Declared

(Interviews made between November 24-29, 1941)

Purpose

To ascertain the attitudes of the American people towards the war in Europe and our government's policies and actions towards that war.

Method

A carefully selected nation-wide cross-section of the entire population over 21 years of age was interviewed by the Center's national staff of personally trained interviewers.

Findings

1. If Germany wins in Europe 76 out of every 100 people think that the peace established by Hitler will be "quite harmful" to the United States. Seven in each 100 think such a peace would be "a little harmful," another seven out of 100 think that a Hitler dictated peace would "not make much difference." A handful (1%) believe such a peace would be either "quite helpful" or "a little helpful." The remaining 9% did not express any opinion. (See page 5 for wording of question and further percentages.)

These findings may be interpreted as indicating that a large majority (83%) of the population over 21 years of age believe that a German victory would be injurious in some degree to the United States.

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2. Attitudes towards the Government's war policy. Each person interviewed was handed a printed card presenting four attitudes concerning the U. S. government and the war in Europe. After studying the card each person was asked to indicate which statement came closest to his or her own attitude. Forty-four persons out of each 100 selected this statement: "The government has correctly recognized that Hitler is a threat to the United States, and in general has followed the best course in doing all it can to help defeat Hitler."

Another 24 out of every 100 selected this less pro-government version: "The government may have brought us closer to the war in Europe than is necessary, but now that it has gone as far as it has, the best thing to do is to support the government's program."

Eleven out of 100 chose this isolationist statement: "The government has brought us much closer to the war in Europe than is necessary. The best thing now is to stop doing anything that might bring us closer to the war."

Eleven out of each 100 took the extreme interventionist attitude which reads: "The government has not been active enough regarding the war. The United States should have been of more help to those countries fighting Germany."

Ten per cent were without opinions. (A more complete analysis of this question appears on pages 5-10.)

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3. Repeal of the Neutrality Act. When asked whether the arming of U. S. merchant ships is a good idea or a bad idea, a large majority, 79%, answered "Good Idea;" 11% thought it a "Bad Idea" and 10% were without opinions.

A majority are also in favor of the Congressional action of making it permissible for U. S. ships to carry war materials all the way to Britain and to Russia—63% think it is a "Good Idea" to ship arms all the way to Britain, and 55% favor shipping war materials all the way to Russia.

(For wording of questions and additional findings turn to pages 10, 11, 12.)

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4. Should the U. S. Navy, Air Force or Army be used against Hitler?

In an attempt to find out people's attitudes towards the use of our armed forces, each person was asked a series of questions relating to our Navy, Air Force and Army. Out of each 100 people interviewed, 59 signify their agreement to this statement: "At the present time the United States should send its navy any place where it could best help defeat Hitler." The remaining 41 out of each 100 who either disagree or don't know, were asked this hypothetical second question: "If it appeared certain that Hitler would win the war in Europe, would you agree or disagree that the U. S. should send its navy any place where it could best help defeat Hitler?" Twenty-two of these 41 "Agree" to this second statement. The remaining 19 out of each hundred "Disagree" or "Don't Know."

Those who agree to one or the other of these statements total 81%. Thus, if it appeared certain that Hitler would be victorious in Europe, eight out of ten of the American people as represented by this sample, would agree to sending the Navy where it could best help defeat Hitler.

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When "Air Force" was substituted for "Navy" in the above questions the results were as follows:

A.	B.
Air Force should be sent where it can best help defeat Hitler Now.	"Disagree" and "Don't Know" on A. Air Force should be sent if it appears certain Hitler would win.

Agree	54%	} —————	24%
Disagree	36		15
Don't Know	10		7
	100%		46%

Adding together those who "Agree" to either statement, gives a majority of 78% in favor of our Air Force going into action if it appears certain that Hitler would win.

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Fewer persons, however, agree to sending our Army where it could best help defeat Hitler. Forty-two out of each 100 are prepared to have the Army go into action *now* and 31 out of every 100 if it appears certain that Hitler would win. Those who agree to A and B when the question is related to our Army total 73 out of each 100 people. (See pages 12-19 for complete analysis.)

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5. Is the Defense Program too large? Up to the time this survey was made (November 29th) the principal contact that a majority of Americans had experienced with the war was through our national defense program. It seemed logical, therefore, to include some questions dealing with this closest point of contact with the war, although it already has been established, beyond any reasonable doubt, that the country favors building up American defenses.

However, some people state our defense effort is larger than is really necessary because the U. S. is not likely to be affected by the European war. Others object to our sending war materials to Britain and Russia because they believe that we should keep them for our use.

In order to be able to report how wide a following these viewpoints have in the country as a whole, a series of three questions were asked. The first read: "The war in the rest of the world is not likely to affect the United States and there is no need for such a large defense program. Do you agree or disagree?" Eighty out of every 100 people "Disagree." Twelve out of 100 "Agree." The remaining 8% are without opinions.

The second and third questions concerned sending the products of our defense program to both Britain and Russia. These show that a clear majority of people over 21 favor sending war materials to both these countries—58% are in accord with sending such materials to Britain and 52% agree that they should be sent to Russia. (See pages 19-21 for wording of these questions and additional figures.)

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Detailed Analysis of Questions

All material in this section of this report printed in boldface type was read aloud by our interviewers to each respondent. The light face type was not read aloud.

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WILL A HITLER PEACE AFFECT THE UNITED STATES?

Question:

If Germany wins in Europe, how do you think the peace that will be established by Hitler will affect the United States? Do you think it will:

Be quite helpful to us	}	1%
Be a little helpful to us			
Not make much difference to us.....			7
Be a little harmful to us, or.....			7
Be quite harmful to us.....			76
Don't Know.....			9
			<hr/> 100%

When this question is broken down by sex, economic or educational groups, no significant differences are apparent.

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR POLICY

Each respondent was handed a card on which the following four statements were printed in large type. The statements were "scrambled" so that the two extreme statements appeared in the middle. The order in which they actually appeared was (B), (D), (A), (C).

As each interviewer handed the card to each respondent, he asked:

Which one of the following statements concerning the United States and the war in Europe comes closest to representing your attitude?

(A) The government has brought us much closer to the war in Europe than is necessary. The best thing now is to stop doing anything that might bring us closer to the war	11%
(B) The government may have brought us closer to the war in Europe than is necessary, but now that it has gone as far as it has, the best thing to do is to support the government's program.....	24
(C) The government has correctly recognized that Hitler is a threat to the United States, and in general it has followed the best course in doing all it can to help defeat Hitler....	44
(D) The government has not been active enough regarding the war. The United States should have been of more help to those countries fighting Germany.....	11
Don't Know.....	10
	<hr/> 100%

By selecting attitudes (C) and (D) more than half (55%) agreed with the government's policy towards Hitler or criticized it for not giving more aid to Germany's enemies. Under a quarter (24%), by choosing (B) indicated that although they think the government has brought us closer to the war than is necessary, the best thing to do now is to support Washington. In choosing (A) 11 out of every 100 showed their desire to stop doing anything that might bring us closer to the war. And the remaining 10% were unable to select any of the four statements.

BREAKDOWNS

	Stop anything bringing us closer to war	Too close to war, but support govt's program	Govt. has followed best course	Govt. should have been more active	No Selection
Men and Women	11%	24%	44%	11%	10%

By Sex

Men Only	10	23	45	14	8
Women Only.....	12	25	43	7	13

By Education

Less than Grammar School Graduates.....	12	19	33	10	26
Completed Grammar or Some High School..	13	22	44	11	10
Completed High School or more education	9	27	49	11	4

By Economic Groups*

Upper	10	26	47	11	6
Middle	11	23	47	11	8
Lower	11	22	39	10	18

By Age Groups

Under 40.....	11	24	48	10	7
40 and Over.....	11	24	41	11	13

*See "Factual Information," page 16, for composition of these groups.

The 11 out of each 100 who chose the last statement (D) were asked:

In what way could the United States have been of more help to those countries fighting Germany?

1. Answers concerning aid and defense program..... 69%*
 - (a) Should have sent aid *quicker* to countries fighting Hitler36%
 - (b) Should be getting more aid to countries fighting Hitler21%
 - (c) Defense program should have been started sooner.....12%
2. Should actively enter war with manpower..... 25%
3. Other reasons..... 10%
4. Don't Know..... 4%

As the above figures are based on 11% of the cross-section they should only be regarded as indications. Multiple answers account for the total adding to more than 100%.

*One out of ten in these groups referred to labor strikes as a cause for preventing action.

Neutrality Act

	Stop anything bring us closer to war	Too close to war but support gov't's program	Govt. has followed best course	Govt. should have been more active
Those who think arming ships is GOOD idea.....	44%	81%	89%	92%
Those who think arming ships is BAD idea.....	41	11	5	5
Don't Know.....	15	8	6	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Neutrality Act (continued)

	Stop anything bring us closer to war	Too close to war but support gov't's program	Govt. has followed best course	Govt. should have been more active
Those who think carrying war materials to Britain GOOD idea.....	21%	62%	73%	85%
Those who think carrying war materials to Britain BAD idea.....	67	28	16	10
Don't Know.....	12	10	11	5
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Those who think carrying war materials to Russia GOOD idea.....	17%	50%	65%	79%
Those who think carrying war materials to Russia BAD idea.....	69	35	23	14
Don't Know.....	14	15	12	7
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Defense Program

Those who AGREE Defense Program is too large.....	36%	14%	7%	5%
Those who DISAGREE Defense Program is too large.....	54	80	90	92
Don't Know.....	10	6	3	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Defense Program (continued)

Those who feel . . .	Stop anything bring us closer to war	Too close to war but support gov't's program	Govt. has followed best course	Govt. should have been more active
War materials should be kept here—not sent to Britain	76%	36%	22%	18%
War materials should be sent to Britain	18	56	72	80
Don't Know.....	6	8	6	2
	100%	100%	100%	100%
War materials kept here—not sent to Russia.....	75%	47%	25%	22%
War materials should be sent to Russia.....	16	58	65	73
Don't Know.....	9	15	10	5
	100%	100%	100%	100%

REPEAL OF NEUTRALITY ACT

Question:

Within the past few weeks Congress has changed the law so that the United States can now arm her merchant ships. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Don't Know
Men and Women	79%	11%	10%
By Sex			
Men Only	81	13	6
Women Only.....	77	10	13

By Education

	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Don't Know
Less than Grammar School Graduates.....	73%	9%	18%
Completed Grammar or some High School.....	80	11	9
Completed High School or more education	82	12	6

By Economic Groups

Upper	80	14	6
Middle	80	11	9
Lower	78	9	13

By Age Groups

Under 40.....	82	11	7
40 and Over.....	77	11	12

Question:

At the same time Congress also changed the law so that United States ships can carry war materials all the way to Britain. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

When this question had been answered, each respondent was asked the same question with the word "Russia" substituted for "Britain." For easy comparisons, the answers to both questions are printed in parallel columns.

	... all the way to Britain.			... all the way to Russia.		
	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Don't Know	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Don't Know
Men and Women.....	63%	25%	12%	55%	30%	15%

By Sex	... to Britain		
	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Don't Know
Men Only.....	69%	23%	8%
Women Only.....	56	27	17

By Education

Less than Grammar School Graduates.....	58	22	20
Completed Grammar or Some High School.....	60	26	14
Completed High School or more education.....	67	26	7

By Economic Groups

Upper	65	26	9
Middle	63	26	11
Lower	58	25	17

By Age Groups

Under 40	61	28	11
40 and Over	64	22	14

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SHOULD THE NAVY, AIR FORCE, ARMY BE USED AGAINST HITLER?

Question:

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

(a) At the present time the United States should send its navy any place where it could best help defeat Hitler.

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
59%	32%	9%

... to Russia	Good Idea	Bad Idea	Don't Know
	62%	28%	10%
47	32	21	

52 24 24

51 30 19

58 33 9

59 30 11

56 31 13

49 28 23

51 35 14

57 26 17

The 32% who "Disagree" and the 9% who "Don't Know" were then asked:

(b) If it appeared certain that Hitler would win the war in Europe, would you agree or disagree that the United States should send its navy any place where it could best help to defeat Hitler?

"Disagree" and "Don't Know" 41% of (a).

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
22%	13%	6%

Those who "Agree" on either (a) or (b) total 81% of the cross-section.

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The following table is the result of repeating statement (a) with the word "Navy" changed to "Air Force."

(a) At Present Time AIR FORCE should be sent . . .

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
54%	36%	10%

The 36% who "Disagree" and 10% who "Don't Know" voted as follows on statement (b) with "Air Force" substituted for "Navy."

"Disagree" and "Don't Know" 46% of (a).

(b) If it appears Hitler would win AIR FORCE should be sent.

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
24%	15%	7%

Those who "Agree" to either (a) or (b) on "Air Force" total 78% of the cross-section.

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Finally each respondent was asked statement (a) using the word "Army":

(a) At Present Time ARMY should be sent . . .

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
42%	48%	10%

When the 48% who "Disagree" and the 10% who "Don't Know" were asked for the second part—(b)—they divided as follows:

"Disagree" and "Don't Know" 58% of (a).

(b) If it appears certain Hitler would win ARMY should be sent.

Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
31%	19%	8%

Those who "Agree" on either (a) or (b) in this case total 73%.

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BREAKDOWNS

	(a) At Present time Navy should be sent . . .			(b) "Disagree" and "Don't Know" on (a). If it appears certain Hitler would win Navy should be sent . . .			Total "Agree" on (a) & (b)
	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	
Men and Women..	59%	32%	9%				
	41			22%	13%	6%	81%
By Sex							
Men Only	63	30	7				
	37			19	14	4	82
Women Only.....	54	34	12				
	46			25	13	8	79

(a) At Present time Navy should be sent . . .	(b) "Disagree" and "Don't Know" on (a). If it appears certain Hitler would win Navy should be sent . . .			Total "Agree" on (a) & (b)	
Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	Dis- Agree		Don't agree

By Education

Less than Grammar School Graduates..	62%	22%	16%				
	38			18%	19%	11%	81%
Completed Gram- mar or some High School	63	30	7				
	37			18	14	5	81
Completed High School or more education	54	39	7				
	46			27	15	4	81

By Economic Groups

Upper	55	37	8				
	45			23	17	5	78
Middle	60	33	7				
	40			22	13	5	82
Lower	62	26	12				
	38			20	9	9	82

By Age Groups

Under 40.....	55	38	7				
	45			27	14	4	82
40 and Over.....	62	27	11				
	38			17	13	8	79

	(a) At Present time Air Force should be sent . . .			(b) "Disagree" and "Don't Know" on (a). If it appears certain Hitler would win Air Force should be sent . . .			Total "Agree" on (a) & (b)
	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	
Men and Women..	54%	36%	10%	24%	15%	7%	78%
	46						
By Sex							
Men Only	57	36	7				
	43			22	16	5	79
Women Only.....	51	36	13				
	49			27	13	9	78
By Education							
Less than Grammar School Graduates..	60	22	18				
	40			19	8	13	79
Completed Gram- mar or some High School	58	33	9				
	42			20	16	6	78
Completed High School or more education	48	44	8				
	52			31	17	4	79

	(a) At Present time Air Force should be sent . . .			(b) "Disagree" and "Don't Know" on (a). If it appears certain Hitler would win Air Force should be sent . . .			Total "Agree" on (a) & (b)
	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Know	
By Economic Groups							
Upper	49%	42%	9%				
	51			25%	20%	6%	74%
Middle	53	38	9				
	47			26	16	5	79
Lower	59	27	14				
	41			20	11	10	79
By Age Groups							
Under 40.....	50	42	8				
	50			30	15	5	80
40 and Over.....	57	31	12				
	43			20	14	9	77

	(a) At Present time Army should be sent . . .			(b) "Disagree" and "Don't Know" on (a). If it appears certain Hitler would win Army should be sent . . .			Total "Agree" on (a) & (b)
	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Don't Know	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Don't Know	
Men and Women..	42%	48%	10%				
		58		31%	19%	8%	73%
By Sex							
Men Only	43	49	8				
		57		30	22	5	73
Women Only.....	40	47	13				
		60		33	17	10	73
By Education							
Less than Grammar School Graduates..	49	34	17				
		51		24	13	14	73
Completed Gram- mar or some High School	47	44	9				
		53		27	20	6	74
Completed High School or more education	34	57	9				
		66		38	22	6	72

	(a) At Present time Army should be sent . . .			(b) "Disagree" and "Don't Know" on (a). If it appears certain Hitler would win Army should be sent . . .			Total "Agree" on (a) & (b)
	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Don't Know	Dis- Agree	Don't agree	Don't Know	
By Economic Groups							
Upper	35%	57%	8%				
		65		35%	23%	7%	70%
Middle	41	50	9				
		59		33	20	6	74
Lower	48	37	14				
		51		27	14	10	75
By Age Groups							
Under 40.....	40	51	9				
		60		36	19	5	76
40 and Over.....	43	45	12				
		57		27	20	10	70
» » » »							

Question: **THE DEFENSE PROGRAM**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:
The war in the rest of the world is not likely to affect the
United States, and there is no need for such a large defense pro-
gram. Do you agree or disagree?

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Men and Women	12%	80%	8%
By Sex			
Men Only	12	83	5
Women Only.....	12	76	12

By Education	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Less than Grammar School Graduates.....	20%	60%	20%
Completed Grammar or Some High School.....	15	77	8
Completed High School or more education.....	7	90	3

By Economic Groups			
Upper	9	87	4
Middle	10	85	5
Lower	19	66	15

By Age Groups			
Under 40.....	11	83	6
40 and Over.....	14	76	10

Question:

Our defense program is necessary, but it would be better to keep our war materials here instead of sending them to Britain. Do you agree or disagree?

After answering this question, the question was repeated with the word "Russia" substituted for "Britain." For easy comparison the results of the two questions are printed in parallel columns.

	... Keep here instead of sending to Britain			... Keep here instead of sending to Russia		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Men and Women.....	34%	58%	8%	35%	52%	13%
By Sex						
Men Only.....	31	63	6	33	58	9
Women Only.....	36	54	10	37	46	17

By Education	... to Britain			... to Russia		
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Less than Grammar School graduates.....	47%	41%	12%	44%	37%	19%
Completed Grammar or some High School.....	36	56	8	37	49	14
Completed High School or more education.....	26	68	6	31	60	9
By Economic Groups						
Upper	24	68	8	27	62	11
Middle	32	61	7	35	54	11
Lower	44	46	10	43	40	17
By Age Groups						
Under 40.....	33	60	7	35	54	11
40 and Over.....	34	57	9	35	51	14

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American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup Poll) and the Fortune Survey (Elmo Roper) Questions

Included in this study, the first nation-wide survey of the National Opinion Research Center, was one question that was being asked almost simultaneously by the American Institute of Public Opinion, and one that was asked a few weeks previously and is reported in the December issue of *Fortune*.

These two questions were included to enable the Center to compare its findings with those of the two established and widely known surveying organizations.

Although the surveys were not made on identical days, the findings are remarkably similar.

Gallup Question:

Which of these two things do you think is more important for the United States to try to do:

To stay out of war, even at the risk of having Germany win, or

To do everything we can to help defeat Germany, even if this means getting into the war ourselves?

A.I.P.O. Survey Interviews Nov. 14-22			N.O.R.C. Survey Interviews Nov. 24-29		
More important to:	Excluding Don't Know		Excluding Don't Know		
Stay out of war.....	19%	21%	18%	21%	
Aid even at risk of war	70	79	68	79	
Don't Know.....	11		14		
	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Roper Question:

Taking everything into consideration, which side do you think will win the war?

Fortune Survey December, 1941 (Roper)			N.O.R.C. Survey Interviews Nov. 24-29		
	Excluding Don't Know		Excluding Don't Know		
Allies	72.5%	86.6%	68.9%	89.9%	
Axis	7.	8.3	4.2	5.5	
Neither	4.3	5.1	3.5	4.6	
Don't Know.....	16.2		23.4		
	100%	100%	100%	100%	

The interviews on which *Fortune's* report is based were made some weeks before N.O.R.C.'s interviews. Meanwhile, the British had started their Libyan campaign and Hitler had tried again but failed to enter Moscow. These events may account for the slight differences.

Factual Information

The Cross-Section—The sample population upon which this study was made is representative, within a small degree of error, of the national population over 21 years of age. That is, the sample used is based upon certain sociological characteristics of the adult population of the United States.

Geographical Distribution—Within each of the nine Census Divisions of the country interviews were properly apportioned among the adult population in the urban and rural areas of that Division. For the urban population the interviews were apportioned to cities and towns in the correct size groups; while in the rural areas the interviews were properly apportioned among farmers and non-farmers. The interviews obtained in each Census Division follows:

Census Division	% of Cross Section
New England.....	6.7%
Middle Atlantic.....	22.2
East North Central.....	21.1
West North Central.....	10.4
South Atlantic.....	11.9
East South Central.....	7.3
West South Central.....	9.2
Mountain	3.0
Pacific States.....	8.2
	100.0%

Size of Cross-Section—As a result of statistical research, it is now known that a poll will not be accurate, no matter how large a sample is taken (short of a total census of the entire population), if the cross-section is not an accurate miniature of the whole population.

According to a statistical table copyrighted by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, the number of interviews necessary to be within 3% correct on questions that divide evenly in a national survey is 2,500. This number is sufficient 997 times in 1,000. This same table adds that HALF this sample would be within 3%, 962 times in 1,000. Actually, this survey is based on 2,600 interviews.

Sex—The sample included an equal number of men and women.

Age—Within each sex group half (49%) the interviews were obtained from persons between 21 and 40 years of age and half (51%) from persons over 40 years. The 1940 Census shows 48% between 21 and 40, and 52% over 40 years of age.

Color—Within each Census Division were obtained the number of colored respondents proportional to the colored population in that area. These interviews were properly apportioned among Urban, Rural-non-farm, and Farm residents.

Economic Status—Within each sex group the interviews among the white population were assigned on the basis of four standard-of-living categories. The colored people were not assigned on the basis of economic level since such a large proportion of them fall into the lowest income group. For purposes of tabulation the two upper groups are combined in this report and the colored are all included in the lowest economic group. Persons on relief are also included within this third group. The economic characteristics of persons in each one of these three groups can be defined roughly as follows:

Upper (32% of sample)—Those persons who have all the necessities of life and most or some of the luxuries characteristic to their community. Seven per cent of the sample is made up of what is understood as the prosperous and wealthy group. The remaining 25% is made up of persons who can afford some luxuries, but must choose rather carefully between them.

Middle (45% of the sample)—This group is called the great middle class in America. They have large enough incomes to maintain an adequate standard of living but can seldom afford luxuries.

Lower (23% of the sample)—This group includes both colored and white people from families on relief and also the lowest income non-relief families. These people have difficulty maintaining an adequate standard of living.

National Opinion Research Center is the first non-profit organization established to make public opinion surveys. It is sponsored by the Field Foundation, Inc., and the University of Denver.

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