

Are Wars Inevitable?



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In spite of the lofty ambitions of peace planners about six out of ten Americans with opinions on the subject believe there will always be wars.

Four out of ten Americans, however, think that eventually all wars can be prevented, and more than half of those are hopeful that after this war a way may be worked out to prevent future global conflicts.

The attitude towards the United States' participation in a post-war international union, of both those who think wars are inevitable and those who take a more hopeful view, is strikingly similar. About seven out of ten of those who think wars are absolutely unpreventable and eight out of ten of the more hopeful groups, including those who think it is possible to prevent all wars "but people will never do what is necessary to prevent them," favor the union idea.

Basic attitudes regarding the inevitability of war do not seem subject to quick change. Two questions, presented over a period of about nine months, elicit very similar responses. The wording of the question asked of a nation-wide cross-section in January, 1943, read:

"After the war, do you think we will be able to end all wars between nations, or do you think there will always be big wars?"

Can end wars 37% Always be wars 62% Qualified answer 1% = 100% Undecided 8%

The second wording, used in the June and September surveys, follows:

"Which one of these ideas comes closest to what you think about the chances of preventing wars in the future?"

	JUNE 1943	SEPTEMBER 1943	COMBINED
A. "No matter what is done to prevent them, there will always be wars....."	37%	33%	35%
B. "It is possible to prevent all wars, but people will never do what is necessary to prevent them....."	20	22	21
C. "Some day all wars will be prevented, but this war will not be the last one....."	15	18	16
D. "After this war, it is likely that a way will be worked out to prevent any more wars".....	28	27	28
Undecided	100%	100%	100%
	5%	4%	4%

With an amazing unity of opinion, majorities of all population groups included in the June and September surveys (combined on the chart) select one of the first two choices presented in the multiple choice question.

The differences of opinion between age groups are insignificant, but more persons in the lower than in the upper educational, economic, and occupational groups tend to consider all wars inevitable (choice A). The sharpest differences, those between persons of varying educational backgrounds, are shown on the chart.

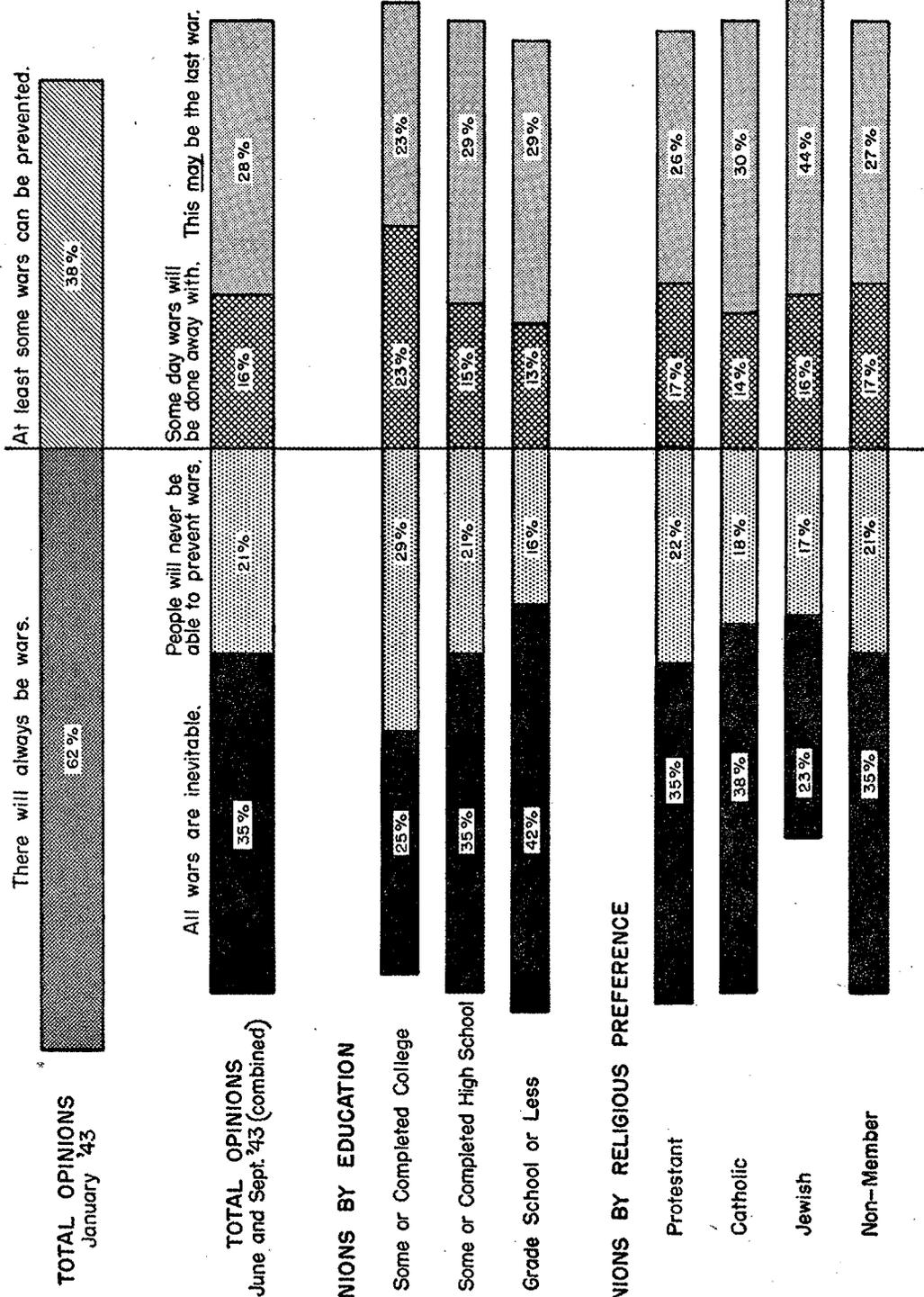
Persons in the more privileged groups more often express the opinion either that

humanity will never take the steps necessary to prevent all wars, or that some day all wars will be ended.

Of those who believe the present war will be the last one, the most significant differences appear along political and religious lines. When voters with opinions are considered, 32 per cent of 1940 Democrats in contrast to 22 per cent of Republicans think a way will be worked out to prevent any more wars after this one.

Most optimistic of all groups regarding a lasting peace are the Jews (see the chart), 44 per cent of whom believe the present world conflict may be the final one.

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Percentages exclude "No Opinion"

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