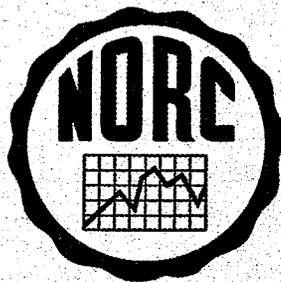


*The Public Looks at
Trade and Tariff Problems*



**The National Opinion Research Center
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

Report No. 36

50 cents

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Trade and Tariff Problems*



THE NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER

University of Chicago

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THE CROSS-SECTION

The cross-sections used by the National Opinion Research Center vary from survey to survey and are adapted to the particular problems and specific purposes of each research project. The samples employed in the surveys on which this report is based were miniatures of that portion of the population of the United States 21 years of age and over, stratified according to a number of relevant characteristics.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION: Within each of four regions, interviews were properly apportioned among metropolitan districts, towns, and rural areas.

AGE AND SEX: Similarly, interviews were apportioned among the different age and sex segments of the population in accordance with the most recent reliable estimates available in Census data.

RACE: Within each of the regions, the number of Negro respondents was proportionate to the Negro population of the area. Negro respondents were also properly distributed as to urban and rural residence.

ECONOMIC STATUS: The white rural non-farm and urban portions of the sample were also apportioned according to four standard-of-living categories, as follows:

- A. This group is drawn from among those people who, in their respective communities, comprise the top 2% of the families, arranged according to their wealth or economic prosperity.
- B. This group is drawn from the next 14% of families.
- C. This group is drawn from the next lower 52% of families.
- D. This group is drawn from the lowest 32% of families.

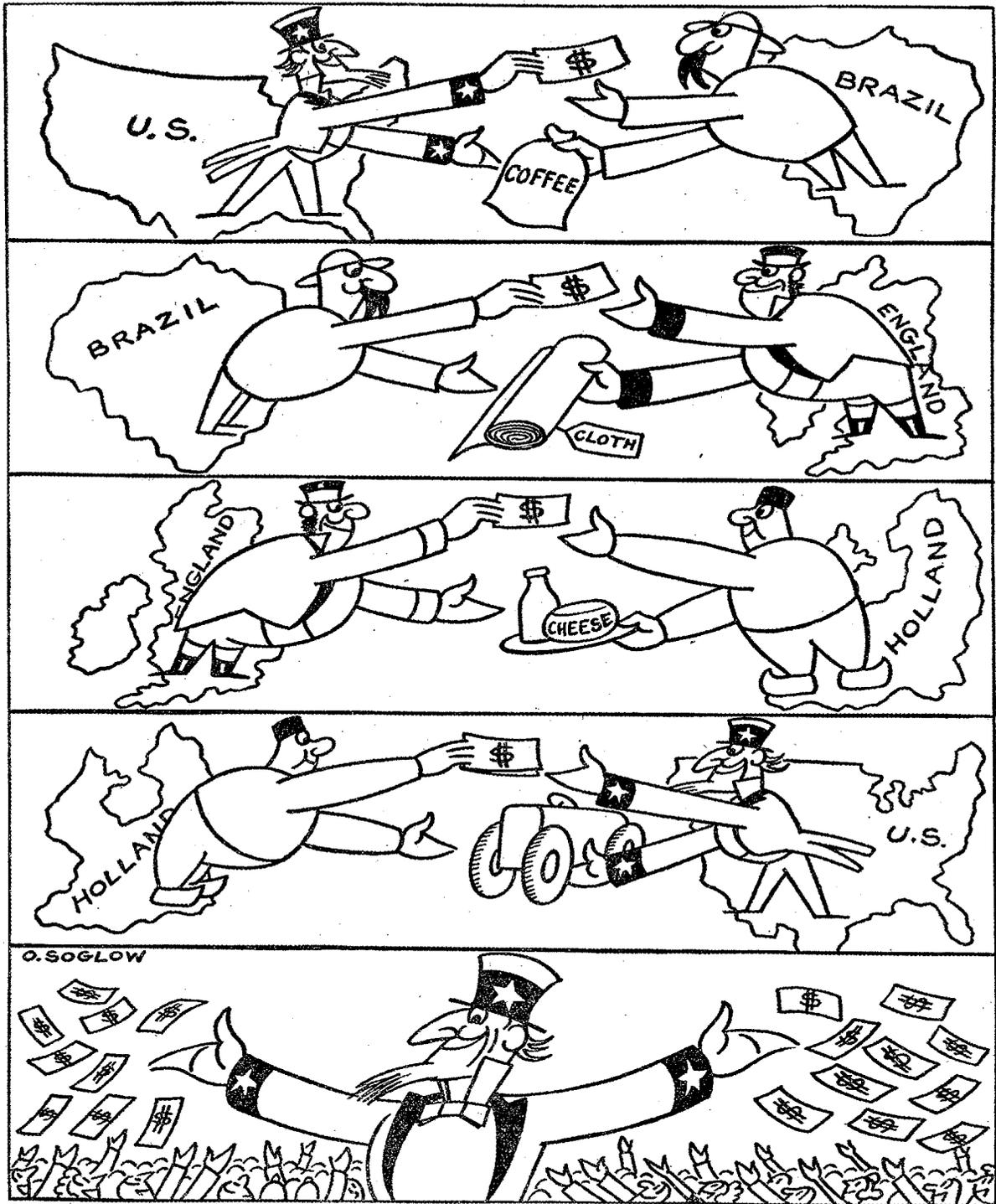
For purposes of tabulation the two upper categories (A and B) were combined; this joint group is referred to in the report as the **"wealthy and prosperous."** The C and D groups are referred to as the **"middle class"** and the **"poor"** respectively.

SIZE OF SAMPLES: The March, 1946, survey included 1,285 interviews; the August, 1946, 2,504.

Interviewers' assignments were made, on a quota basis, in such way as to secure a sample of the foregoing design.

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Popular Understanding of What Tariffs Are And How They Work

The importance of United States trade and tariff policy not only to the national economy but to the welfare of the world as a whole would be difficult to exaggerate, particularly today, when the economic interdependence of nations is becoming more fully understood and recognized. How far and how fully can this country be counted upon to cooperate with the International Trade Organization—the United Nations body which is undertaking the Herculean task of bringing order out of the chaos of international trade and organizing world resources toward constructive ends? A partial answer to this question may be suggested in an analysis of public attitudes and information in this all-important area.

This analysis might almost bear the sub-title "A Study of Ignorance and Indifference," so noticeable is the degree of confusion and misunderstanding, so widespread the misinformation and lack of information about tariff and trade questions. Popular attitudes toward specific trade and tariff policies must be evaluated in the light of the limited understanding of their implications on the part of a majority of the public.

Most of the data is drawn from two nation-wide surveys made by the National Opinion Research Center, one in the spring and one in the fall of 1946. While attitudes toward trade problems closely connected with the United Nations and possible international regulation in certain specific areas may have shifted during the interim, there is no reason to believe that popular information and understanding have increased materially. Neither is it likely that the myth of the favorable balance of trade—with its profound influence on American thinking—has been dispelled.

WHAT IS A TARIFF?

As part of the study of attitudes and information on trade and tariff problems made last fall, the National Opinion Research Center asked people to explain what the term "tariff" meant to them—their ideas of what a tariff is. Less than half the public, NORC found, had a reasonably clear idea of what tariffs are or how they work. About a third of the nation-wide sample of adults interviewed on the survey answered "I don't know." The remainder of the answers included a

range of a few vague but partially correct notions, a number of indefinite and confused explanations, and some replies which could only be classified as completely incorrect.

Evaluation of popular conceptions of tariffs was based on answers to the following question:

"Do you happen to know what a tariff is? (What is it?)"

- 42% indicated a reasonably clear understanding of what tariffs are or how they work.
- 4 gave vague explanations, but gave some evidence of a correct understanding.
- 9 indicated some confusion in that they believed that tariffs are commonly levied on exports as well as imports.
- 8 knew that a tariff is a tax, but could not differentiate between tariffs and other kinds of taxes.
- 5 gave definitely wrong or irrational explanations, or vague explanations evidencing incorrect understanding.
- 32 answered "I don't know."

100%

Information Differentials

A reasonably clear understanding of what tariffs are was evidenced by people with some college education three times as often as by those with no more than an eighth-grade education, NORC analysis showed. Republicans were somewhat better informed than Democrats, and residents of the Mountain and Pacific states and of the New England and Middle Atlantic areas were better informed than people living in the Midwest and South. Answers evidencing a REASONABLY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING were given by the various groups as follows:

All adults interviewed.....	42%
Attended college	64
Attended high school.....	50
Eighth grade or less.....	22
Republican voters, 1944.....	55
Democratic voters, 1944.....	37
Did not vote, 1944.....	29
Residents of:	
Mountain and Pacific states.....	49
New England and Middle Atlantic states.....	47
Midwest	39
South	36

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The qualitative as well as the quantitative aspects of popular understanding of tariffs can be shown only by a consideration of some of the actual verbatim answers given to the question by people interviewed. These answers were chosen carefully to show the types of understanding or misunderstanding most frequently found as well as the range of ideas and means of expressing them.

Correct Explanations

Some people answered in terms of what a tariff is, others in terms of what a tariff does. Many of the 42% of answers considered CORRECT were simple definitions such as these:

"A tariff is a tax our government puts on goods coming in from foreign countries." (Automobile mechanic, Rutland, Massachusetts)

"What we charge a foreign nation for selling goods in this country." (Editor, West Orange, New Jersey)

"It's a charge they have on material they bring in from other countries." (Production manager, Kansas City, Missouri)

A farmer near Clarion, Iowa, remarked somewhat caustically: "A tariff is a rake-off the government collects on anything imported." A California school teacher pointed out: "The people we trade with pay a tax on the goods we send them."

Respondents who answered in terms of what the purpose of a tariff is or how it works often laid emphasis on the protectionist aspect of tariff policy. Very common were such answers as the following:

"A tariff is a tax used to keep foreign competition down, because of low cost labor and wages—and by that keep our standard of living up high." (Jewelry appraiser, Brooklyn)

"It's a tax on foreign goods coming into this country, to protect our markets from cheap goods at lower prices." (Housewife, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania)

"It's a charge added to goods brought to this country to enable our own industries to compete with goods made in foreign countries; it's also a source of revenue." (Civil service worker, Hot Springs, Virginia)

"A tariff is a law passed by Congress whereby certain articles that come into our country carry a tax, the idea being to protect our workmen from being under-sold." (College instructor, Pennsylvania)

Others said: "A tariff is primarily a tax on imports for vested interests." "It's a duty on foreign goods to encourage using our own products." "It's to keep the price of foreign goods up."

The political context in which the discussion of tariff usually takes place was reflected in replies like: "Republicans put taxes on foreign goods to keep them out of the country," or "The Republicans wanted protec-

tive tariff; the Democrats wanted producer revenue. Tariffs prevent certain things from coming in."

Less precise, but AT LEAST PARTIALLY CORRECT, understanding was revealed by answers like these: "A tariff is a charge on trade for the support of the government." "A tariff is a tax for the ostensible regulation of our foreign trade." "It's control over different commodities coming into this country."

Confused Definitions

The Constitution of the United States expressly forbids the levying of export duties, and such duties are found only rarely anywhere in the world today. Because of this fact, answers that are apparently based on the assumption that exports as well as imports are commonly covered by tariffs are WRONG IN FACT, although they may be correct in an abstract sense. One of the CONFUSED, a Butte, Montana, housewife, thought: "A tariff is a tax on everything brought into this country or going out of this country." An Endicott, Nebraska, woman explained: "A tariff is a law raising the price of material going in or out of a country." Other answers of this sort were: "A tariff is a tax on imports and exports," "It's a trade barrier, either export or import," or "It's a law governing the import or export of goods." An occasional respondent limited the meaning to exports alone: "A tariff is about the same as a tax on exported goods."

Incorrect Answers

Some of the answers which had to be classified as INCORRECT evidenced faint inklings of understanding—associated tariffs with taxes, with trade or movement of goods, with politics and legislation, or with high prices.

So unprecise as to be unacceptable as definitions were statements recognizing that a tariff is a tax, but showing no further definite understanding. For example: "A tariff is some kind of tax, what kind I am not sure." "I should know; it's a tax but I don't know on what." "Taxes of some kind, all kinds of taxes, just taxes."

Among the incorrect answers, some indicated at least a faint recognition of the fact that tariffs have something to do with trade or movement of goods: "It's a trade treaty," "It's some kind of term connected with shipping," "It's used in getting trade between the different countries," "It has something to do with freedom of the seas." A Justice of the Peace in Raleigh, North Carolina, answered: "Tariff is a type of commerce. It seems to have political implications."



Majority of Us Don't Know What Tariffs Are

(ACCORDING TO A NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER SURVEY OF U. S. PUBLIC OPINION)



CORRECT ANSWER

46%



CONFUSED ANSWER

17%



WRONG ANSWER

5%



DON'T KNOW

32%

Better Education Brings Better Understanding of Tariff ...



COLLEGE EDUCATED



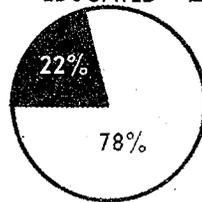
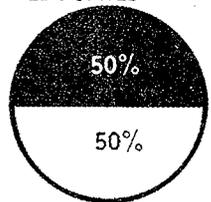
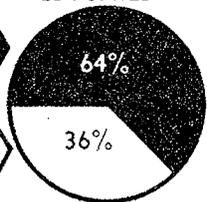
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATED



GRADE SCHOOL EDUCATED

DEFINE TARIFF CORRECTLY

CAN'T DEFINE TARIFF CORRECTLY



Far Westerners Score Highest



ROCKY MOUNTAIN & PACIFIC STATES



NEW ENGLAND & MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES



MIDWESTERN STATES



SOUTHERN STATES

DEFINE TARIFF CORRECTLY

CAN'T DEFINE TARIFF CORRECTLY

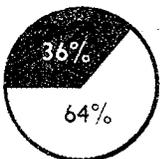
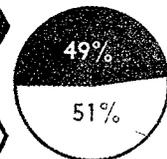


CHART BY GRAPHICS INSTITUTE, FOR NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER

Other people, although unable to define the term, evidenced an awareness of its *political* and *legislative* connotations by such statements as these: "It's something to do with politics." "A tariff is what the Republicans stand for." "It's a plank in a political platform." "It's rules and regulations on something." "A bill that Congress signs."

Still others connected tariffs with *high prices*: "It means high prices." "A tariff is putting too large a price on everything, everywhere." "I know what it is generally, but I can't explain it. It has something to do with higher prices." "That's the difference in the price that the manufacturer gets and what we pay."

A few of the incorrect answers bordered on the *ridiculous*: "A tariff is the same thing as the old OPA." "A tariff is something that's imposed on debts. It's a penalty." "Isn't it something like a depression?" "Change of money." "A quarrel or being terrified."

HOW DO HIGH TARIFFS AFFECT TRADE?

One of the most immediate and obvious results of a high tariff policy which may be practiced by the United States or any other country is the tendency to decrease foreign trade, which is then inclined to seek more profitable markets. This relationship between tariff policy and volume of trade is reasonably clear to part of the public, but by no means all, according to results of two questions asked by the National Opinion Research Center. In the fall, 1946, study, people who had previously indicated an incomplete or inadequate understanding of what a tariff is were told: "Well, a tariff is just another name for a tax on foreign goods coming into a country." The entire sample was then asked:

"In your opinion, would high American tariffs on foreign goods coming into this country increase our foreign trade, decrease it, or make no difference?"

66% had a correct understanding that high tariffs decrease foreign trade.

34% lacked a correct understanding; specifically:

12% thought high tariffs made no difference in foreign trade;

5 said that high tariffs increase foreign trade; and

17 answered frankly, "I don't know."

100%

Among people who had evidenced a correct understanding of tariffs when asked to define the term, a substantial majority also indicated an understanding of the effects of tariffs; though a few even among this group did not know that high tariffs operate to decrease foreign trade. Among those who had no such prior understanding, however, less than half understood the

effect of tariffs on trade, even after they were given the definition.

People who said they had a good deal of interest in foreign trade were much more likely to know how tariffs function than were people who said they had little or no interest in the subject. The correct answer—"decrease"—was given by 83% of persons who had attended college and 74% of those who had had some high school experience, but by only 48% of those with no more than an eighth grade education.

Seventy-four per cent of Republicans, 63% of Democrats, and 57% of people who did not vote in the 1944 Presidential election answered that high American tariffs decrease foreign trade. These differences appear to be largely the result of differences in educational background rather than of political leanings.

In the earlier NORC study, made in the spring of 1946, a question was asked which approached the problem of high tariffs and their effect in a somewhat different way—by an open question. About one person in four frankly admitted confusion and lack of understanding, and almost as many indicated by their answers that they did not understand the relationship between tariff policy and foreign trade. About half of the public, however, seemed to have some idea at least of the effects of high import duties, when asked:

"From what you've heard, what kind of an effect do you think a high American tax on foreign goods would have on our trade?"

51% had a REASONABLY ACCURATE idea of some of the effects of a high tariff; among these:

24% stated in rather general terms that a high tax on foreign imports would decrease the volume of foreign trade;

22 suggested more specifically that a high tariff would decrease exports, decrease imports, or result in retaliatory high tariffs being placed on American goods by other countries; and

5 emphasized the international economic and political implications, such as delayed reconstruction abroad, or strained diplomatic relations which might lead to another war.

49% were CONFUSED AND MISINFORMED or entirely UNINFORMED regarding the effects of high tariffs on foreign trade; specifically:

10% thought the United States would lose all foreign trade;

9 replied "No effect";

1 believed high tariffs would increase trade; and

29 answered "I don't know."

100%

Only Half of Us Understand Effect of a High U.S. Tariff

(ACCORDING TO A NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER SURVEY OF U. S. PUBLIC OPINION)

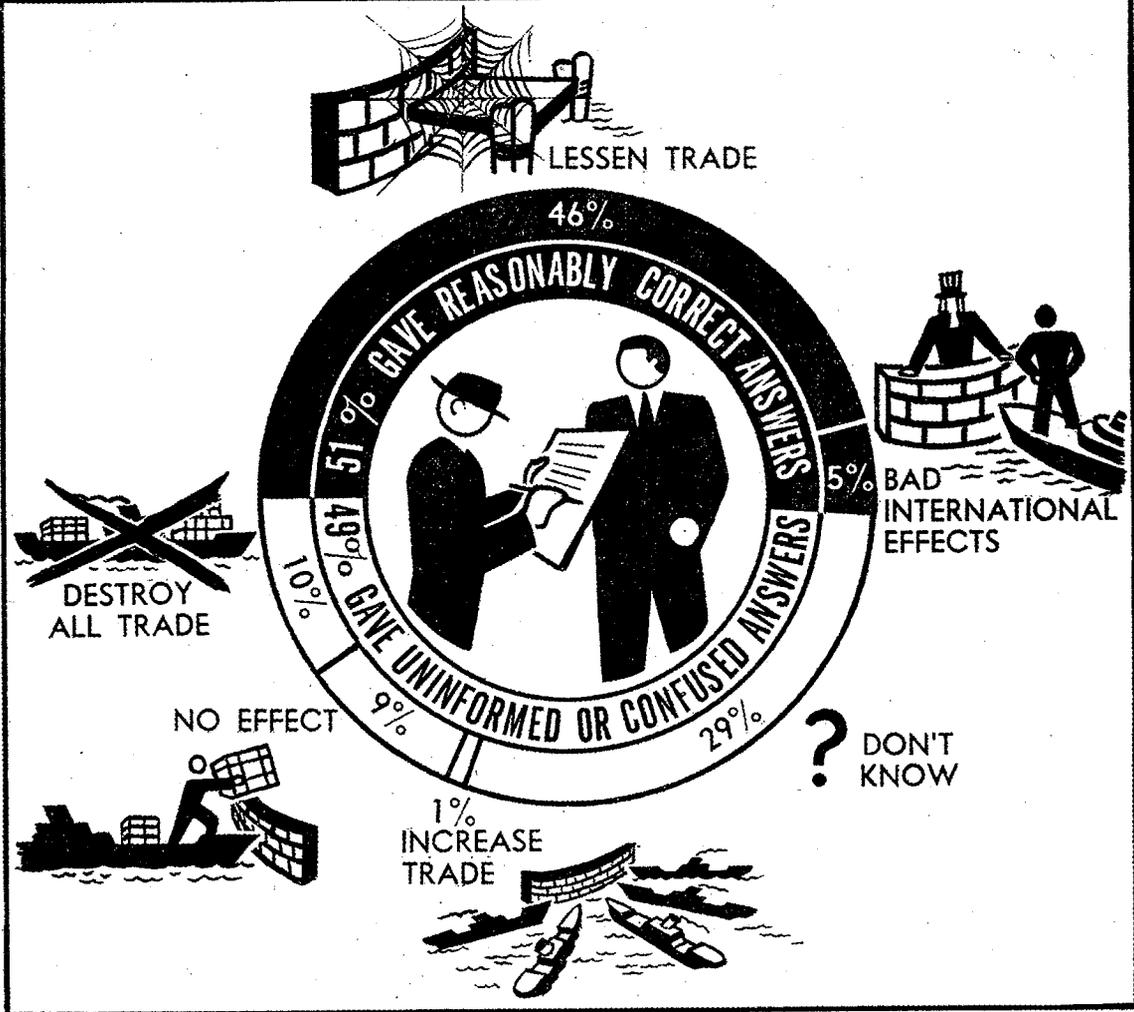


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Group Differences

As on the categorical question in the fall, 1946, survey, greater knowledge of tariff and the effects of high tariffs was shown by people in the more privileged occupational, economic, and educational groups. Best informed were professional men and women, 77% of whom gave answers classified as correct. These and other variations are shown in the chart opposite.

The open-ended question probably furnishes a more accurate indication of the degree to which people understand how tariffs function than does the categorical question. A categorical question on a little-understood problem tends to encourage guesswork on the part of people who actually don't know the answer, while a less firmly structured open-ended question usually elicits not only a truer proportion of honest "I don't know" responses but also tends to "catch" the guessers. For example, on the open-ended question only 1% volunteered the explanation that high tariffs increase trade, while on the categorical question 5% chose this answer.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The actual verbatim answers of respondents to the open-ended question put flesh and blood on the bare bones of the statistics. The selected responses presented in the following section illustrate vividly the various shades of opinion and points of view expressed by the people interviewed in the survey. (Comments volunteered by those answering the categorical question tended to bring out much the same points.)

Lessen Trade

Among those people who indicated a REASONABLE UNDERSTANDING of the effects of a high tariff on trade, some merely suggested in categorical terms that high tariffs, *lessen foreign trade*. A Syracuse, New York, bus driver, for instance, answered: "Our foreign trade would go down eventually." Others stated simply but effectively, as did a Flint, Michigan, clerk: "If those people can't sell to us, they can't buy," or a West Virginia businessman: "High tariffs would make foreign trade fall off; we'd sell less and buy less."

Still others added the thought that decreased foreign trade is a bad thing. According to the wife of a Pennsylvania farmer, "If our tax was high, less countries would want to trade, and we must have trade." A construction superintendent in Clayton, New Mexico, replied: "High tax on imports would decrease trade and eventually hurt us worse." A Manning, South

Carolina, salesman advanced the idea: "It would cause a general slow down of foreign trade which would be bad for us and the other countries, too."

Loss of Markets

A still more specific effect—*loss of markets*—was emphasized in answers such as these: "It would cut down our trade. They wouldn't buy from us. Our markets would soon be overstocked." "It would limit our foreign trade. Our customers would buy from other countries in preference to us."

Retaliation

That high duties on imports into the United States must of necessity be followed by—*retaliation*—equal duties imposed on our imports into other countries was pointed out by a number of those interviewed. For example: "If we put a high tariff on incoming trade, the other nations will retaliate and raise their tariffs so that we would not be able to trade with them to our advantage." "They would charge more foreign tax on our goods—tit for tat!" "In the long run, it would decrease our foreign trade. If we have high tariffs, then other countries will raise barriers against us. Thus we'll get into the old economic friction." "Probably they would tax us as much as we tax them."

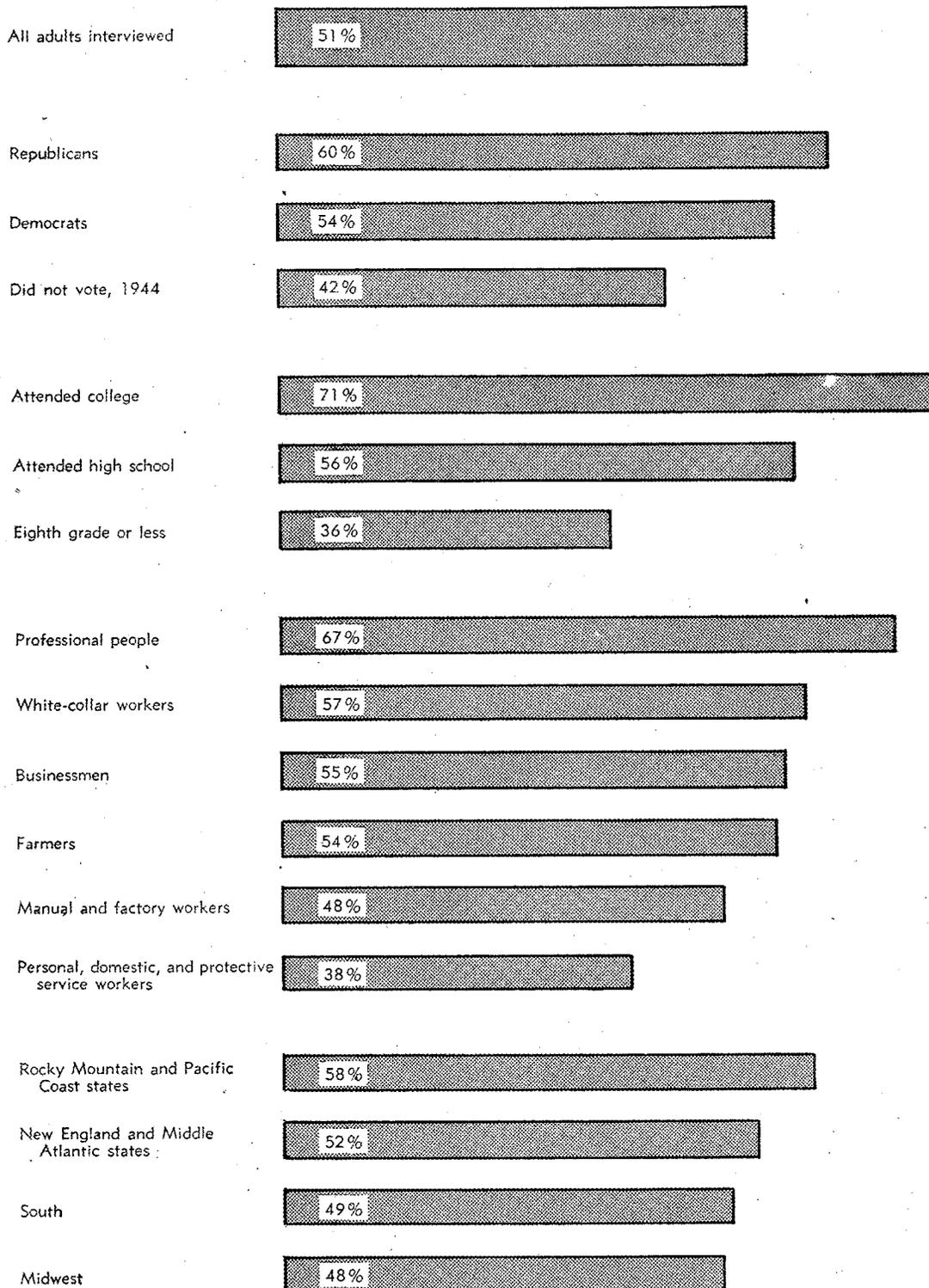
Loss of Imports—A Bad Thing

Some people further emphasized the loss of imports consequent to a high tariff policy from the viewpoint that such a loss would be a *bad thing* for the United States. As a Washington, D. C., grocer put it: "We have to import as well as export; foreign markets create prosperity in the United States. So we need a low tariff to admit the goods." "Well, I think if we keep the tariff up too high, they won't have money to trade with us, and we need things from over there," answered a beauty operator in Kokomo, Indiana. An Oak Park, Illinois, businessman thought: "If we tax foreign goods, naturally we will keep them from coming in. We should have our tax low enough to give them a chance."

We'd Be Better Off

A few of those who realized that a high tariff policy would mean less foreign trade considered such a result *desirable*. An Iowa farm girl, for example, said: "A high American tax might scare these foreigners from trading with us. Who cares? They haven't a thing to offer us to sell. Let's cut them off our list." That the United States should strive to become completely self-sufficient was suggested by a Morristown,

WHO HAVE A REASONABLY ACCURATE IDEA OF SOME EFFECTS OF A HIGH TARIFF?



New Jersey, housewife: "Naturally it would lessen our trade, but I don't think it would do much harm. We can make everything we need."

More often respondents returned to the theme of protectionism: "There would be less trade, but it might benefit the manufacturers here." "It would keep our standard of living higher than that of other countries. We wouldn't get a flood of exported sweat-shop goods, as we did from Japan." "A high tax on imports would keep out foreign trash, but still let in the better merchandise and give our workmen a chance to make simple goods. Quality merchandise will still come in." "It would give the American manufacturer a chance to sell his products before those of foreign countries, which have cheaper labor." "A high tariff would probably shut off some goods coming in, but that's what we want, to pay labor's wages in this country." "Well, we'd more or less be on our own here and stay out of foreign entanglements—we'd be isolationists."

International Tension

That *strained diplomatic and economic relations*, possibly leading to another war, might result from a return by the United States to an uncompromising high tariff policy was sometimes suggested:

"A high tariff always makes for hatred and trouble with other nations." (Salesman's wife, Norwich, New Jersey)

"We would have the same economic structure we had in the past—and eventually get into more war." (Hotel man, Logan, Utah)

"It would be pretty hard on foreign countries if they couldn't sell goods here. They have trouble enough paying their debts now, and would want to borrow more money, then." (Unemployed man, Kansas City, Missouri)

"At the present time a high tariff would hinder foreign trade. We are in the position of either having to loan other countries money or stopping trade altogether." (Accountant, Chicago)

"If we have too high a tax, we won't be able to sell to other countries. It would only make for less trade and another war." (Farmer, near Amherst, Ohio)

No Effect

Answers of those people who LACKED understanding of how tariffs work were equally revealing. The small group who felt that high import duties would have no effect on foreign trade seemed to base their thinking on the belief that the United States does not need goods from abroad, but other countries do need our products. For example: "A high import tax will have no effect on our trade. We will use our own goods and buy only what we need." "Not too much effect. Our country can produce far above other countries, and, if we have to, we can easily do without too much foreign trade." "Not much—they need our stuff and we don't need theirs."

Loss of All Foreign Trade

The fear that a high tariff policy would mean the loss of all foreign trade was sometimes expressed simply: "A high tax on imports would probably kill our foreign trade." Some pointed out the reciprocal nature of international trade. A Negro housewife in South Carolina, for instance, replied: "A high tariff might ruin our foreign trade. If it was so high other countries couldn't sell us goods, they wouldn't be able to buy from us." A Connecticut housewife believed: "We would be almost shut out from foreign trade. If they couldn't sell, they couldn't buy."

Others emphasized the importance of foreign trade and underlined various implications of a high tariff policy, some of which were mentioned also by the group who believed that such a policy would lessen trade, but not necessarily eliminate it: "A high tariff would break down our own foreign trade and world trade." "If the tax is too high, it will force foreign countries to find other markets. We'll lose work and production in our own country and throw people out of work and stop our exports." "It would shut us off from foreign goods, and of course, that's the only way other countries can pay us back what they owe us."

Who Pays the Import Tax?

The few (1%) who believed that a high tariff increases trade seemed to belong with the larger group who were confused to the point of believing that an import duty or tariff is paid by a foreign country for the privilege of selling goods in the United States. These people failed utterly to understand that it is the American businessman and, ultimately, the American consumer who pays the tax on imported goods—sugar or rubber or coffee or watches or woollens. Basic confusion and misinformation lies behind such a comment as this: "A high tax would be good for foreign trade. It would mean more money for us—less taxes for us to pay," or this: "It would have a bad effect. It would be hard for the struggling people on the other side to pay a high tax," or this: "Foreign countries couldn't afford to pay such a high tax."

More examples include:

"Then we'd have to pay a high tax, too, to get our products into their countries." (Plumber, Milwaukee)

"A high tax would lessen foreign trade. By the time foreigners paid a high tariff, they would have no profit and no incentive to trade." (Housewife, Baltimore)

"We couldn't raise it very much. The countries couldn't afford a high tax now. They are just getting back on their feet." (School teacher, Birmingham)

"They would probably put a high tax on our goods, but I think we can pay their high tax better than they can ours." (Laborer, Elmwood, Connecticut)

How Important Is Foreign Trade To the United States' Economy?

Several National Opinion Research Center questions were designed to study popular attitudes toward the more general aspects of world trade and the implications of national trade policy. Opinions in this area seem less closely associated with political and sectional prejudices than do attitudes regarding more specific tariff problems.

A majority of the general public agree with most economic experts that national self-sufficiency is unrealistic—that prosperity knows no national boundaries, but that the economic welfare of the United States depends upon the prosperity of the whole world. The widespread acceptance of the facts of economic interdependence is shown by results of two NORC questions:

- 75% of the public believe that the United States is better off when other countries are also enjoying economic prosperity; and
- 76% realize that, in order to sell goods abroad, the United States must also buy goods from foreign countries.

Other findings furnished further indications of the fact that people often see little or no relationship between export and import trade. For instance:

- 66% of the public consider it very important to increase United States exports, while only
- 55% think it equally important to increase United States imports.

NATIONAL BOUNDARIES FOR PROSPERITY?

On this issue, fundamental to all tariff and trade problems, Republicans and Democrats thought alike, according to NORC findings:

"Generally speaking, do you think the United States is better off when foreign countries are well-to-do, or are we just as well off when other countries are having depressions?"

	All Adults Interviewed	Republicans	Democrats	Did Not Vote '44
THE UNITED STATES IS:				
Better off when foreign countries are well-to-do	75%	80%	77%	69%
Just as well off when other countries are having depressions	17	15	18	18
Undecided	8	5	5	13
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Group Differences of Opinion

It is interesting that group opinion on the general issue differed in degree rather than in kind, with majorities of every population group studied recognizing, in theory at least, the interdependence of the United States and the rest of the world. Educational background seemed to influence opinion more than any other single factor. Whether or not people understood that high tariffs operate to decrease foreign trade also affected answers to the question somewhat. The most interesting comparisons are shown in the chart on page 15.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Interdependence

A few of the 75% who believed that prosperity in the United States is dependent on prosperity in other countries made comments explaining or amplifying their viewpoint. A foreman in a Cleveland automotive factory, for example, suggested: "We have a ready market when other countries are not depressed." A farmer in the same state remarked briefly: "The United States is an exporting country."

A Virginia photographer believed: "No country can survive without world trade." A steel foundry worker in Hammond, Indiana, expressed another viewpoint: "When other countries are prosperous, they don't have to come over here for loans." And a small businessman in Washington, D. C., added the thought: "When people are hungry, they become envious and have loose morals—they tend to thieve and make war."

Self-Sufficiency

A number of the 17% minority who could see no relationship between economic well-being in the United States and depressions or booms abroad made comments which revealed a somewhat limited understanding of world trade problems. For example: "I have too much respect for this country to think we have to depend on other countries." "Other countries do not affect us commercially." "We can cut out that foreign trade. We can still get along with less export trade."

Along somewhat similar lines, an auto repairman in Denver suggested: "When other countries have nothing to sell, the United States gets more business." Others

added such comments as these: "We're the only country that is self-supporting." "We have plenty in this country and now every one has money, yet there is certainly a depression most everywhere else." "When other countries have depressions, they don't have so much to fight us with."

MUST THE UNITED STATES BUY IN ORDER TO SELL?

"Yes" answered a majority of every population group studied, when asked a question fundamental to all tariff and trade problems; understanding, as always, increased with educational background and economic level. Sectional differences are of interest, yet political leanings seemed to influence opinion on this point not at all. In fact, opinion differed more between voters and non-voters (largely a reflection of education) than between Republicans and Democrats:

"In general, do you think we need to buy goods from foreign countries in order to sell goods to foreign countries, or isn't it necessary?"

	All Adults Interviewed	Republicans	Democrats	Did Not Vote '44
Need to buy.....	76%	78%	77%	73%
Not necessary	18	19	19	18
Undecided	6	3	4	9
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Other significant group differences are shown in the chart on page 17.

When the same question was repeated in the fall, 1946, study, results were almost identical, with 74% of the general public answering "Need to buy," 18% replying "Not necessary," and 8% undecided.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Need to Buy

The mutual value of exchange—the basis of all trade—was explained in a number of different ways by the many respondents commenting on their understanding that the United States must buy foreign goods in order to be able to sell in foreign markets. A Huntington, West Virginia, engineer said: "We must have reciprocity in all things, particularly trade." Other comments of this same type include:

"We need what other countries have and they need our goods. If we don't buy from them, they can't or won't buy from us." (Truck farmer, near Blacksburg, Virginia)

"If we don't buy, naturally other countries will not give us their business." (Insurance adjuster, New York City)

"There are some things we have to buy from other countries in order to have them buy from us." (Tool maker's wife, Elmwood, Connecticut)

"Then foreign countries will have more money to buy our goods." (Negro maid, Oklahoma City)

Some people commented chiefly in terms of the goods which the United States needs to import, generally mentioning "raw materials we need" or "minerals"; or specifically naming such items as coffee...rice...tea...sugar...raw rubber...manganese...silk...woolens.

The implications of international trade for world peace and prosperity were also suggested:

"We can't be isolated. The world is getting much smaller, and trade is a good method of understanding each other." (Housewife, Cape Girardeau, Missouri)

"Trade makes for brotherly love and more work for us all." (Wife of railroad inspector, Lorain, Ohio)

"If we didn't sell and buy, that would be basis for another war." (Truck driver, Chicago)

"Trade relations help to introduce American ways of living into other countries." (Businessman, Clayton, New Mexico)

"Shipments into this country can be applied against the debts foreign countries owe us." (Housewife, Clio, Michigan)

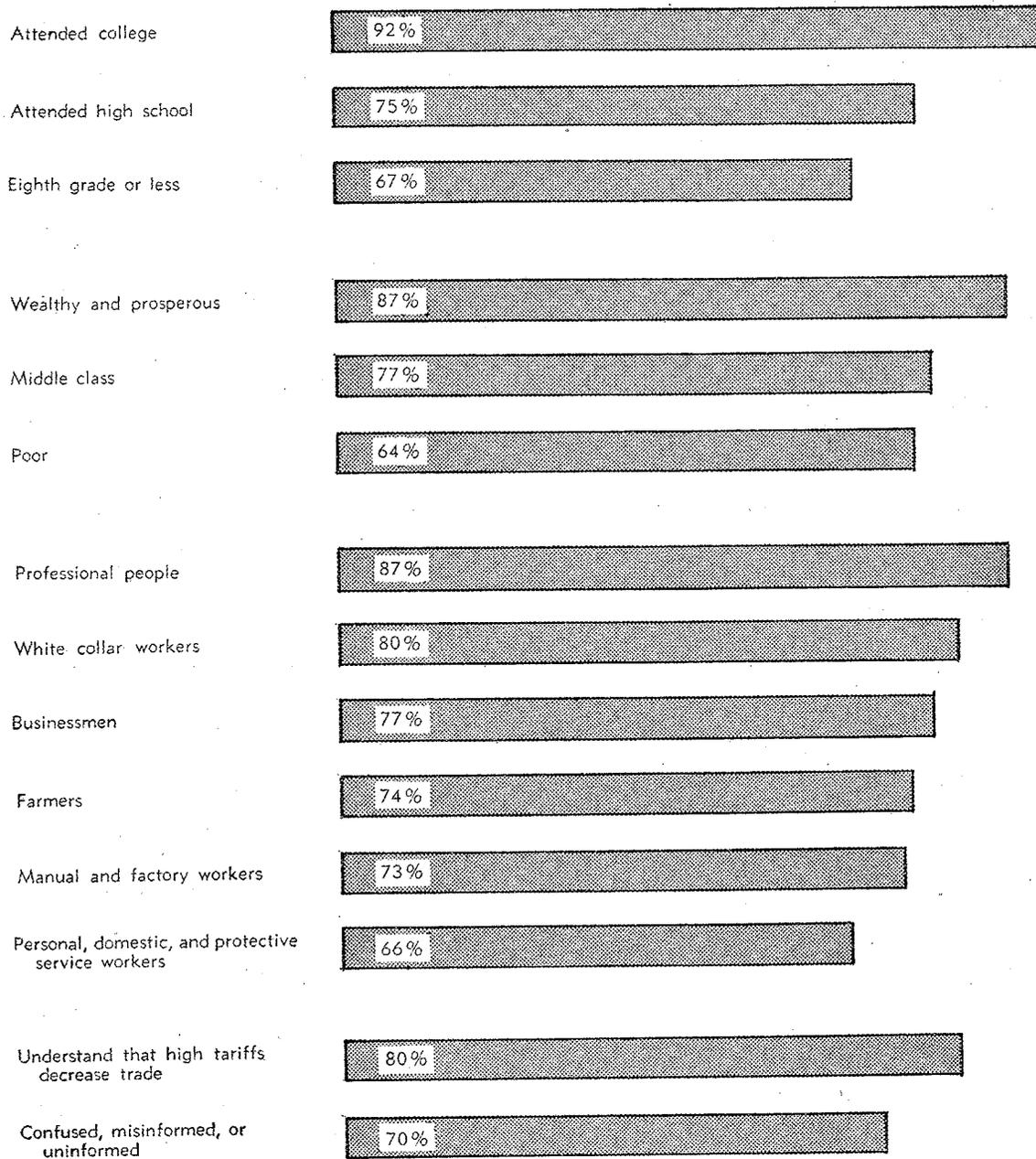
Not Necessary

"Other countries have nothing we need. We have everything they need"—the naive belief of a Philadelphia shopkeeper—epitomizes the almost unanimous misconception of those who added a comment to their "Not necessary" replies. Stressing his faith in national economic self-sufficiency, a Houston, Texas, factory employee said boldly: "I think we can make our own stuff." Others expressed the same idea in different words: "We have proved during the war that we have everything we need." "I think our country should make all our own stuff. I think we could do it, don't you?" "If we keep our stuff at home, we'll have enough of it." A housewife in Sheffield Village, Ohio, put her faith in the magic formula: "'Supply and demand' governs trade. If foreign countries need a thing, they'll buy regardless." The same inaccurate oversimplification is the common denominator of such comments as these: "Other countries have to come to us for most everything." "They'd always have to buy certain things from us." "We sell other countries what they can't produce." A Kentucky coal miner felt this way about it: "If foreign countries want our stuff, let them buy it. If they don't, it don't make no difference to us!"

HOW IMPORTANT IS FOREIGN TRADE?

That the old question, "What is a favorable balance of trade?" is still being answered in the traditional way is suggested by the fact that, on an earlier NORC survey made a year ago, 66% of the public considered it very important to increase United States EXPORTS, while only 55% considered it very important to increase IMPORTS. NORC asked:

THE UNITED STATES IS BETTER OFF WHEN FOREIGN COUNTRIES ARE WELL-TO-DO



"How important do you think it is for the United States to SELL more things to foreign countries (to BUY more things from foreign countries?)—very important, only fairly important, or not important at all?"

	To SELL More Things Abroad	To BUY More Things Abroad
Very important	66%	55%
Fairly important	22	32
Not important at all.....	7	8
Don't know	5	5
	100%	100%

On both these questions, Republicans attached more importance to foreign trade than did Democrats—an apparent reversal of traditional policy. Likewise, the better educated answered "Very important" oftener than did those with limited education. Considering SELLING more abroad very important were: Republicans—72%, Democrats—66%, attended college—81%, attended high school—69%, eighth grade or less—58%. Judging BUYING more abroad very important were: Republicans—62%, Democrats—54%, attended college—72%, attended high school—56%, eighth grade or less—48%.

Implications to the Individual

Another pair of questions, asked in the fall of 1946, approached perhaps more realistically the problem of how important foreign trade actually is to the average American. Despite the general awareness of this country's need to buy foreign goods, only a minority of the population feel any personal stake in the issue. And a larger volume of foreign trade would make no difference at all personally to nearly half the public. The questions:

"Do you think you personally would be better off or worse off if the United States would sell more things to (buy more things from) foreign countries, or wouldn't it make any difference to you personally?"

	If We SOLD More Abroad	If We BOUGHT More Abroad
Better off	35%	30%
Worse off	14	13
No difference	42	46
Don't know	9	11
	100%	100%

Those who said they would be better off if this country bought or sold more abroad sometimes commented in terms of the general prosperity which would result, sometimes in terms of its effect on their own jobs, and sometimes in terms of specific commodities. Those who

saw themselves as worse off with a larger volume of foreign trade most frequently mentioned the effect of exports on present shortages, and of imports on American employment.

Even those who, on a previous question (see page 14), had asserted that this country "needs to buy" foreign goods were generally unable to see any personal advantage in enlarged purchases from abroad. It seems apparent that their endorsement of the United States' "need to buy" was based rather on acceptance of the logic of the principle than on any feeling of personal involvement. The figures:

	% of Those Answering "We Need to Buy"
Better off personally if we bought more.....	37%
Worse off personally if we bought more.....	12
No personal difference.....	43
Don't know	8
	100%

Belief in a personal stake in foreign trade was more characteristic of the upper economic level, the college-educated, business and professional people, and those with an "internationalist" viewpoint on world affairs. Approximately half these groups said they believed they would be better off personally if the United States bought and sold more abroad. Yet even among these, about one person in three said "it wouldn't make any difference" to him personally. In other words, people are generally far removed from the realization that foreign trade affects them personally.

Interest in Foreign Trade

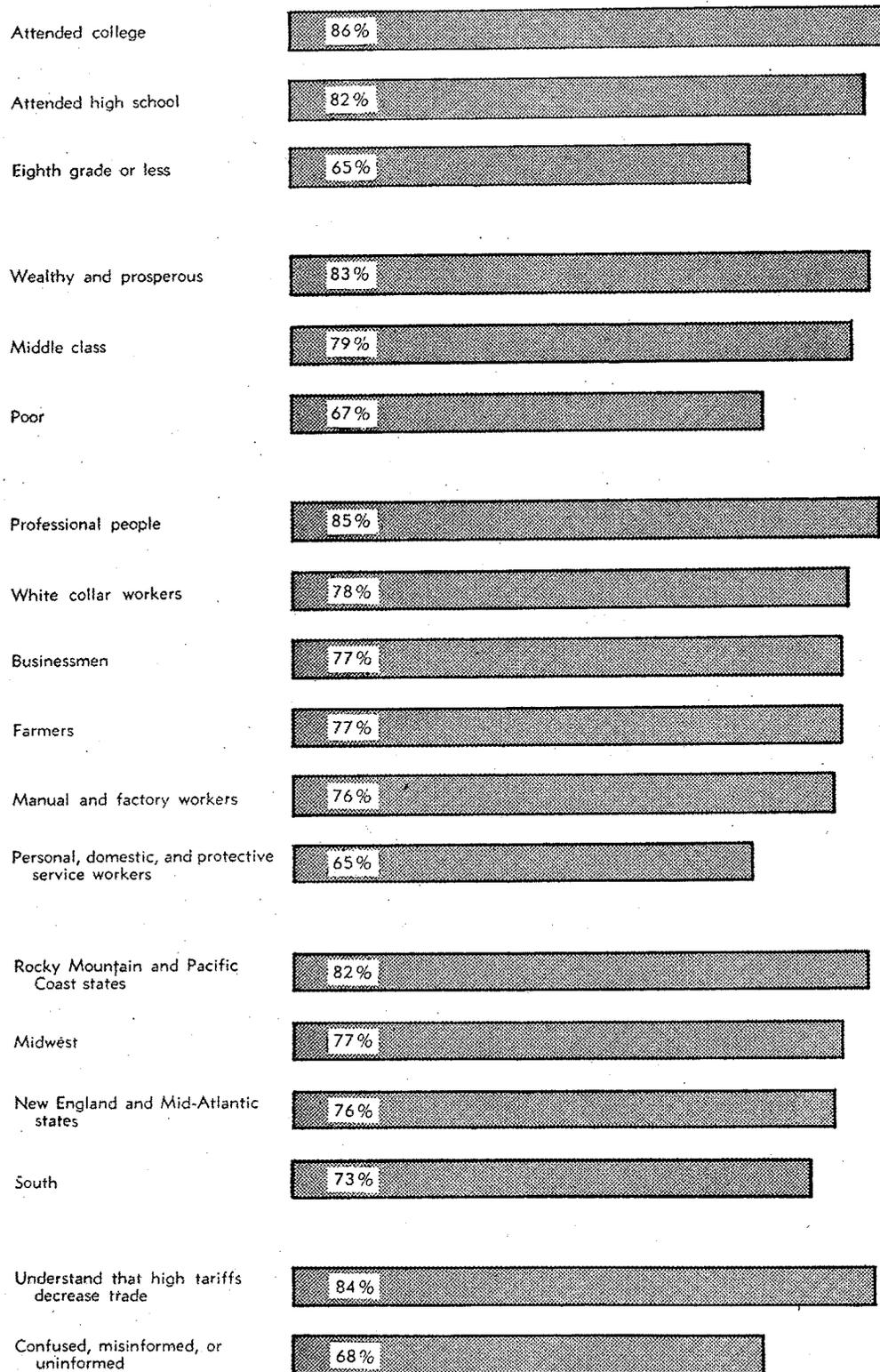
The somewhat apathetic attitude toward foreign trade suggested in answers to other questions may be either a cause or an effect of the fact that, when asked specifically, a majority of the public reported little or no interest in foreign trade:

"Do you yourself take a good deal of interest, only a little, or no interest at all in the subject of our trade with other countries?"

Good deal of interest.....	39%
Only a little.....	34
None at all.....	21
Don't know	6
	100%

Even the 39% is probably somewhat inflated as an index of interest, since, by and large, opinion polls have shown that the public tends to give easy verbal support to plausible generalities.

THE UNITED STATES MUST BUY ABROAD IN ORDER TO SELL ABROAD



Trade and Tariff Policy

UNITED STATES TARIFF POLICY

Should the United States' foreign trade policy be based on high or low tariff? The initial question of the spring '46 NORC series found the American public almost equally divided on the issue:

Out of every 10 civilian adults in the United States:

- 3 favored a "fairly high" tax on foreign imports,
- 3 favored "fairly low" duties on foreign goods, and
- 4 either volunteered the compromise suggestion of a "medium" tariff or were admittedly undecided.

Although the wording of the actual question was simplified to avoid the term "tariff" (not easily understood by many of the less educated), there are indications that a certain amount of confusion and misunderstanding is implicit in almost all popular thinking and discussion of trade and tariff problems. NORC asked:

"Do you favor a fairly high or a fairly low American tax on foreign goods coming into this country?"

A fairly high tax.....	31%
A fairly low tax.....	31
None	1
Medium	17
Don't know	20

100%

When only persons with a clear-cut preference for fairly high or fairly low import duties are considered, 50% want tariffs high and 50% want them low.

"Party Line!"

Historically, the Republican Party has been the high tariff party in the United States, while the Democratic Party has at least given lip-service to low tariffs. Among rank-and-file party members, NORC found Republicans following the "party line" more consistently than Democrats. Republicans favored a high rather than a low tariff by almost 2-to-1, while almost as many Democrats wanted a high tariff as wanted a low one. The comparison:

	Republicans	Democrats
A fairly high tax.....	45%	30%
A fairly low tax.....	24	33
None	1	2
Medium	21	18
Don't know	9	17
	100%	100%

When "High" and "Low" answers only are compared, 66% of Republicans favor a high tariff, and 34% a low one; 47% of Democrats vote for a high tariff and

53% for a low. Persons who did not vote at all in the 1944 Presidential election (basis for political classification) seem to feel more strongly in favor of a low tariff than do Democrats: in the two-way comparison, 43% of non-voters favor a high tariff and 57% a low.

Other Group Differences

Occupation (which also reflects educational and economic factors) is an important determinant of opinion on the tariff issue. More likely than any other group to advocate a low tariff were professional people. More likely to recommend a high tariff than a low one were white collar workers, businessmen, manual and factory workers, and farmers. Sectionally, residents of the South favored a low tariff in preference to a high one, while persons in other parts of the country advocated high import duties more frequently than low ones.

Distribution of total replies to the question suggests that possibly people in the more privileged groups tended, when they wished to compromise between high and low tariff policy, to suggest, voluntarily, import duties in the "medium" brackets. Under similar circumstances, respondents in the less privileged (and less informed) groups expressed indecision by answering "I don't know."

The table opposite shows both the two-way high-low division of opinion among various groups, and the complete distribution of all possible answers.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

A study of the comments volunteered by those interviewed in the NORC survey reveals certain quite clearly defined lines of thinking regarding "a tax on foreign goods coming into this country." To summarize:

1. Some people misunderstand the operation of a tariff; they think that the foreign firms or foreign countries pay the tax, not the American businessmen who import the goods—and, ultimately, the consumer who buys them. This misunderstanding was evidenced more often by those who advocated a high tax on imports than by those giving other answers.
2. Many supporters of a high tariff wish to protect American industries, employment, and standard of living; others are frankly isolationist and want to keep foreign trade to a minimum or do away with it entirely. A few mentioned their Republican allegiance as a reason for their advocacy of a high tax on imports.

3. The desirability of stimulating world trade, either for reasons of "enlightened self-interest"—benefits accruing specifically to national trade or to consumers in the United States, or to the end of bringing about world prosperity and world peace, seems behind the thinking of many who want a fairly low or medium tariff.
4. Others who answered either "Low" or "Medium" commented that duties should be higher on luxuries than on necessities, particularly food items, that we should tax foreign imports no more than our goods are taxed when they enter foreign countries, or that tariff levels should be designed to give some protection yet still encourage foreign trade. Some who answered "I don't know" made similar comments.

High Tariff

One widely accepted viewpoint expressed by many of the 31% who favored a fairly HIGH tax on imports was the conviction that a high tariff is essential to a prosperous domestic economy. For example:

"We should protect our industries. The cost of living in foreign countries is different, and they can produce cheaper." (Contractor, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania)

"Labor on the other side is so cheap they would undersell us on everything." (Wife of munitions worker, Morristown, New Jersey)

"Tariffs have to be kept high to keep foreign goods on the same level with ours." (Fruit farmer, near Sturges, Kentucky)

Of the purely isolationist school were comments such as: "Let other countries dispose of their stuff over there and we dispose of ours here. I don't believe in sending back and forth," or "I guess we shouldn't let too much foreign stuff come into this country."

More moderate views were suggested by remarks such as these: "High—just so our own goods get as fair a chance and our own comes first." "As far as food is concerned, low; luxuries, high. I'd say high; we don't import much food." "Only high enough to protect our own workmen." "I guess I'm a Republican."

Confusion as to who pays tariff charges is suggested by such reactions as the following: "Tax foreigners all you want to. We don't need their stuff." "In that way we could get back some of the money we lent them foreign countries."

What Tariff Policy for the United States?

	"HIGH" OR "LOW" ONLY		Fairly High	Fairly Low	ALL ANSWERS		
	High	Low			None	Medium	Don't Know
All adults interviewed.....	50%	50% ^a	31%	31%	1%	17%	20% ^a
Republicans	66	34	45	24	1	21	9
Democrats	47	53	30	33	2	18	17
Did not vote, 1944.....	43	57	24	32	1	13	30
Rocky Mountain and Pacific states	55	45	35	28	2	20	15
New England and Mid-Atlantic states	54	46	35	29	2	14	20
Midwest	52	48	31	29	1	19	20
South	41	59	24	35	2	16	23
White-collar workers	58	42	37	27	3	18	15
Businessmen	54	46	34	29	2	22	13
Manual and factory workers	52	48	32	30	1	13	24
Farmers	52	48	30	28	1	23	18
Personal and protective service workers	41	59	23	33	3	11	30
Professional people	31	69	21	46	1	26	6
Wealthy and prosperous.....	53	47	36	33	2	20	9
Middle class	53	47	34	31	2	17	16
Poor	42	58	22	30	1	14	33
Attended college	42	58	28	38	3	24	7
Attended high school.....	56	44	39	30	1	15	15
Eighth grade or less.....	46	54	24	27	2	16	31

Low Tariff

Of the 31% who advocated a fairly LOW tax on foreign goods, a number pointed out that *such a policy may benefit the American consumer*. A Reading, Pennsylvania, housewife stated succinctly: "A big tax makes the goods too high priced." A housewife in Van Buren, Arkansas, exclaimed: "Prices are so high now, you can't hardly buy things!" "With a lower tax, we'd get more and cheaper sugar," a Nashville, Tennessee, housewife believed. Other comments supporting this viewpoint included: "If goods come in here high, it sells for a high dollar. I believe in a low tax for the American people's benefit." "If it's low, we could buy more." "Encourage competition, and keep prices in this country at a fair level."

Stressing the relationship between United States tariff policy and *world trade and prosperity*, respondents made comments such as these:

"If foreign countries can't sell to us, how will we build up a world trade?" (Engineer's wife, Newington, Connecticut)

"We can best profit by a fairly low tax because we can sell more goods to other countries." (Contractor's wife, Carpinteria, California)

"The lower the tariff, the more prosperous all nations will be. Free trade would be even better." (Businessman, Highland Park, Michigan)

"A fairly low tax will help other countries get back on their feet." (Manager of food shop, Washington, D. C.)

"We should have a low tax or no tax at all on goods that need to come in to help our economy. The cause of the war was attempts at economic domination by one country over the other." (Electrical engineer, Oak Park, Illinois)

Medium

Some of the 17% who voluntarily suggested a MEDIUM tax on imports made comments similar to those made by persons answering "Low." For example: "We should encourage world trade, as it is the best way to get along with other countries." "There is going to have to be a world market." "If the tax is too high, lots of things we need and want would be kept out—like rubber from the East Indies."

Others who thought the United States should compromise on a "medium" tariff answered in terms bordering on indecision. "I favor a sort of middle course. You have to let some come in so we can sell our goods," was the view of a Chicago accountant. "If it's too high, it's not fair to other countries; if it's too low, it brings in too much junk," according to a Portland, Oregon, housewife. "If it is too low, our labor will have to compete with labor over there," a Kansas farmer remarked. Of the same type are comments such as these: "We need protection but others must work,

too." "We've tried high and low both, and it didn't work either way."

Don't Know

Even more obvious indecision—and realization of the complexity of the problem—was evidenced in some of the comments from the 20% who admit they DON'T KNOW what our tariff policy should be. A retired businessman in Birmingham, Alabama, for example, answered: "I can't answer that in general. It depends on what goods and how bad we need them, and it also depends on what country it is and what we are selling them." "On some things there should be a high tax and on some low. It should be flexible," said a sheet metal annealer in Milwaukee. "If we produce the commodity, the tax should be high; if we don't have it, it should be low," according to a Chicago vegetable dealer.

None

The 1% advocating no tax at all on foreign imports sometimes answered: "I believe in *free trade*," or "Free trade should be encouraged between countries." Others suggested: "We do not need to tax goods coming into this country. It just raises prices for our own people." Misunderstanding as to who pays the tax was again indicated, this time by a truck farmer near Blacksburg, Virginia, who answered: "There's no reason for a tax—trading is trading. Why should a country pay tax to sell goods to a country? There's no sense to that."

THE RECIPROCAL TRADE PROGRAM

Although Democrats and Republicans in Congress appeared to be rather sharply divided on the question of continuing the reciprocal tariff program, no such division appears among the people generally, according to results of an NORC survey completed last fall. Differences between rank-and-file supporters of the two parties were infinitesimal, with 74% of Democrats and 72% of Republicans in favor of reduction—on a reciprocal basis—of tariffs placed on goods imported into the United States.

Among the public as a whole, 73% endorsed the continued lowering of tariff barriers under a reciprocal trade program. Not quite half of these—35%—thought tariff reduction, even without reciprocity, "would be a good thing for the United States." An equal 35%, however, thought general tariff reduction would be a bad thing. Democrats were only slightly more in favor than against (36%—32%). Republicans leaned somewhat more in the opposite direction: for, 33%; against, 43%.

The two NORC questions found a clear majority of every population group studied supporting— theoretically, at least—the principle of reciprocal tariff reduction:

“Do you think it would be a good thing for the United States, a bad thing, if we reduced our tariffs on the goods that we buy from other countries?”

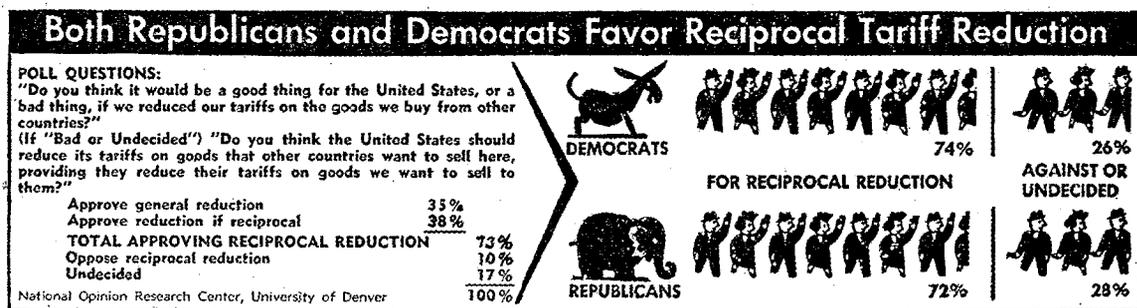
(If “Bad thing” or “Undecided”) “Do you think the United States should reduce its tariffs on goods that other countries want to sell here, providing they reduce their tariffs on goods we want to sell to them?”

	All Adults Interviewed	Democrats (F. D. R. Voters)	Republicans (Dewey Voters)
Approve general tariff reduction	35%	36%	33%
Approve reduction if reciprocal	38	38	39
Total approving reciprocal reduction	73%	74%	72%
Oppose reciprocal reduction	10	9	14
Undecided	17	17	14
	100%	100%	100%

Information and Attitudes

When people who understood that high tariffs decrease foreign trade (see question on page 8) and people who did not have this understanding were compared with respect to their attitudes on tariff reduction significant differences in opinion as to general and/or reciprocal tariff reduction were found between the two groups, the “informed” and the “uninformed.” This is the exact distribution of opinion on the two questions combined:

	Informed (Understand that high tariffs de- crease trade)	Uninformed (Do not understand that high tariffs de- crease trade)
Approve general tariff reduction	40%	25%
Approve reduction if reciprocal	40	36
Total approving reciprocal reduction	80%	61%
Oppose reciprocal reduction	11	8
Undecided	9	31
	100%	100%



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It is significant that people who, even when the term “tariff” has been explained to them, do not understand that high tariffs operate to decrease foreign trade are much more likely than others to be undecided about tariff reduction. Among those who understand that high tariffs decrease trade, only 19% were undecided whether tariff reduction in general is a good thing or a bad thing. Among the uninformed, 51% were undecided. As to reciprocal reduction, more than three times as many of the uninformed are undecided.

Findings From Other Polls

An American Institute of Public Opinion study, published in May, 1945, found only about one person in 10 familiar with the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. Among this small informed group, 75% favored continuing the trade agreements program, and 57% approved of “using this program to get further reductions of tariffs in both the United States and other countries.”

In March, 1947, the *Fortune* Survey reported results of a question which presented some of the arguments for and against reciprocal trade agreements, without mentioning the program by name. Clear majorities of people of various political persuasions endorsed the program in principle. The question:

"What do you think we should do about tariffs and our foreign trade—keep competition from other countries by raising our tariffs, even if this means we don't have as much foreign trade, or, try to increase our trade with other countries by agreeing with them to lower our tariffs if they lower theirs, even if this means some competition from foreign goods?"

	Raise	Lower	Don't Know	
All those interviewed....	19%	57%	24%	=100%
Consistent Democrats*	16	63	21	
Converted Republicans*	18	67	15	
Consistent Republicans*	25	60	15	

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

For General Reduction

Those who said that general reduction of United States tariffs would be a GOOD thing commented chiefly in terms of the advantages of a larger world trade (often implying that the reductions should be reciprocal), and of the larger volume of foreign goods which would help relieve shortages in this country. Representative of the range of comments NORC interviewers recorded are the following:

"Lower tariffs would create a free flow of goods." (Bank manager, Birmingham)

"That would give us a lot of trade and the life blood of the country is trade." (Teacher, Melrose, Massachusetts)

"I think at the present time it would help to build up world trade, which is necessary to world prosperity." (Steel worker, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania)

"Everybody should get rid of tariffs for the next five years until the whole world gets part way caught up on essential needs." (Housewife, Minneapolis)

"It would cause more trade—in fact, I think free trade would be a good thing." (Odd job man, Portland, Oregon)

"It might encourage other countries to do the same thing for us." (Painter, Decatur, Georgia)

"Right now it would be a good thing—foreign countries are not financially able to pay high tariffs, and if we really want them to get back on their feet financially and industrially, we'll have to help them by reducing our tariffs." (Laborer's wife, Minneapolis)

"For the time being—as long as other countries don't flood our market with cheap foreign merchandise." (Businessman, Falmouth Foreside, Maine)

**Fortune* considered "consistent Democrats" and "consistent Republicans" to be those who had voted for their respective parties in both the 1944 and 1946 elections. "Converted Republicans," who might also have been termed "disgruntled Democrats," were those who voted Democratic in 1944 and Republican in 1946. It is obvious from the percentages shown that the "non-voter" group was more undecided and less in favor of lowered tariffs than voters in any of the three categories.

"We'd get more goods to help relieve our shortages." (Factory foreman, Hartford, Connecticut)

"It would be especially good to reduce tariffs on sugar and rubber and things we need and haven't enough of." (Farmer, near Van Buren, Arkansas)

"Lower tariffs would reduce retail prices to consumers." (Businessman, Clinton, Oklahoma)

Against General Reduction

Comments of those OPPOSED to tariff reduction usually reflected a fear of "cheap foreign goods flooding the market." For example: "We'd get too much foreign goods of a poor quality." "If we reduce tariffs, we get a lot of junk from Japan and Czechoslovakia and our own industry suffers." "We can't permit cheap merchandise to come into our country and destroy our standards." "Other countries can manufacture so much cheaper, it would ruin our business here." "It would throw people out of work." "Goods can be manufactured so much cheaper in China and the Philippines and those other places where people work for such a small wage that it would ruin our business here—especially dresses and clothing and weaving of cloth and rug-making."

Approve Reciprocal Reduction

Among those who said they would like to see RECIPROCAL tariff reduction comments like that of a Butte, Montana, housewife, "Reciprocal trade agreements are the only way," or a Chicago porter, "If it were a 50-50 proposition, I'd say 'Yes,'" were most common.

A Texas postmaster remarked: "Argentina could put meat in this country now cheaper than we could raise it. If it's not already changed, it should be." "We'd get a better exchange of goods which would improve production and eventually improve the quality of the goods," was the viewpoint of an office manager in Minneapolis. A San Francisco salesman believed: "It would lower the cost of living in both countries." "I think that if we took each country individually, it could be worked out all right," remarked a service station manager on the Maine coast.

Other scattered reactions included: "Lowered tariffs might create a better feeling between countries." "We always get hooked, but if it was certain that they'd reduce their tariffs, too, I'd say go ahead." "They really should have free trade both ways."

Disapprove Reciprocal Reduction

The comments of the 10% who were AGAINST even reciprocal reduction of tariff levels followed a pattern very similar to the comments of those opposed to a general tariff reduction. Comments like "Foreign countries would flood our country with cheap things," and "There's too much difference in labor standards," were made most frequently. A retired Massachusetts businessman believed: "High tariffs always mean good business for us." "We can do better without their stuff than they can do without ours," was the viewpoint of an Elyria, Ohio, taxi driver. A Wichita architect stated, somewhat ambiguously: "We should buy their raw materials and sell them our manufactured goods."

THE CASE FOR PROTECTIVE TARIFFS

As indicated by answers and comments to many of the questions on the two NORC surveys, the conviction that high tariffs (or at least some tariffs) are essential to protect American industry, the American workingman, and the American standard of living is deeply ingrained in popular thinking. Two questions on the spring, 1946, survey endeavored to explore certain apparent inconsistencies in American thinking on the tariff question. The first NORC question found a majority of every population group studied *against* allowing the importation of foreign goods that would sell at a lower market price than similar domestic products. Differences between Republicans and Democrats on this point were negligible. Even among the college-educated—the most "liberal-minded" on the issue—only 29% favored giving foreign competition free rein.

The question:

"Would you be in favor of or would you be against letting goods come into this country which would sell for less than our goods?"

Against	74%
Favor	20
Don't know	6
	100%

The implications of the issue were clarified in a further question, asked of those against allowing competitive goods to enter the United States.

"Do you think any foreign countries **COULD** ship very much into the United States if their goods sold for more than American goods?"

55% answered "Could not."
12 replied "Could"—somewhat inconsistently.
7 said "Don't know."
74%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

The 74% majority OPPOSED to allowing foreign competition often repeated the familiar arguments: "We'd have to close our factories here." "It would lower our standard of living." "It would bring down prices of things we make, and that would cut wages." "I don't want competition with our products here." "If their standards of labor were up to ours it would be all right, but they're not." A Kentucky farmer answered: "I'm against it—but we sure ought to get our prices down some."

Among the 20% in FAVOR of admitting foreign goods which would sell for less than domestic products, a number commented: "It would help bring prices down." A Negro farm woman near Sumter, South Carolina, asked: "It would make things cheaper for us, wouldn't it?" A public school caretaker in eastern Pennsylvania remarked: "Then we poor people could buy goods." And the wife of a Utah accountant thought: "If other countries sent them in, it would force our prices down and be a blessing."

A few believed that "a little competition would not hurt." Others suggested that "the quality is usually inferior, so we need not really fear foreign goods." The wife of a Virginia college professor commented: "The stuff that comes in to sell at lower prices is lower quality so it wouldn't affect our market." "I am thinking of the Jap competition before the war. It didn't hurt us any, and it gave us lots of cheap things to buy. It really *made* the 'ten cent' stores," remarked a California ranch woman.

On the subsidiary question persons replying "Could" as well as those replying "Could not" considered certain foreign specialties and "luxury goods"—diamonds, perfumes, Paris fashions, silks, woolens, oriental rugs, art goods, and the like—non-competitive. Some of those saying that foreign countries *could* continue to import goods selling for more than the American product insisted that low labor and production costs abroad make this possible!

THE QUOTA SYSTEM

Approaching the protective tariff problem in a different way, NORC posed a question in terms of a specific application of the quota system—the degree to which the importation of shoes from abroad should be restricted. Because many imported products are seldom the center of intense and bitter wrangling, the target of high pressure lobbying activities, the subject of wide and often inaccurate publicity, shoes—in preference to wool or beef—was selected as a relatively non-controversial test item.

When presented with a three-point attitude scale, more than half of the people with opinions chose the middle position—that quota imports of shoes are preferable to either complete exclusion of the product or importation without any restriction. The question read:

“Which one of these three ideas comes closest to what YOU think?”

“A. Our government should not allow any shoes from foreign countries to be sold in the United States. 56%

“B. Our government should put a limit on the number of shoes from foreign countries which are sold in this country. 54

“C. Our government should allow foreign countries to sell as many shoes in the United States as they can.” 20

Don't Know 100%
6%

While a plurality or majority of every population group studied chose the quota system as the most desirable of the three possibilities presented, some differences in response are observed from group to group. The more privileged, educationally, economically, and occupationally, were more likely than the less privileged to choose the second alternative. Although in most population groups the percentage suggesting that no imported shoes at all be allowed to enter this country was larger than the percentage advocating no restriction on shoes, the reverse was true of the college-educated and of Southerners. Democrats were more likely than Republicans to favor allowing foreign countries to sell as many shoes in the United States as they can.

Some of the interesting comparisons are shown in the chart on the opposite page.

SAUCE FOR THE GANDER?

After securing respondents' opinions on how the United States should handle the tariff problems, NORC turned the question about and asked:

“Would you consider it fair or unfair if foreign countries put such a high tax or tariff on American goods that we couldn't sell our goods to these countries?”

Unfair 73%
Fair 15
Don't know* 12
100%

*Grouped with other “Don't know” answers are a few (3%) who would judge other countries in terms of United States policy at any given time: “It would depend on how high or how low the American tariff is at the time.”

Twice as many Republicans as Democrats would concede foreign countries the right to levy prohibitive tariffs against American goods. Perhaps the traditional high tariff preference of Republicans sometimes carries with it an acceptance of high tariffs on the part of other countries as equitable. The comparison:

	Democrats	Republicans
Unfair	80%	63%
Fair	11	24
Don't know	9	13
	100%	100%

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Of the 73% majority who answered “Unfair,” a number made comments like these: “It's unfair, especially if we allow their goods in at a low tax—what's fair for the goose is fair for the gander.” “It's not fair if we do it or they do it.” “We shouldn't put a high tax on their goods either,” admitted the wife of a California contractor. “It would be unfair if we had a free trade policy,” a government statistician living in Maryland believed.

Scattered comments touch upon other aspects of the issue: “Damned if I know what you mean by fair or unfair. It would be a very shortsighted, detrimental policy.” “It would stop trade altogether.” “You can't maintain a trade balance and do that.” “It would create war.” “If foreign countries expect us to feed them, it looks like they'd not make us pay tax.”

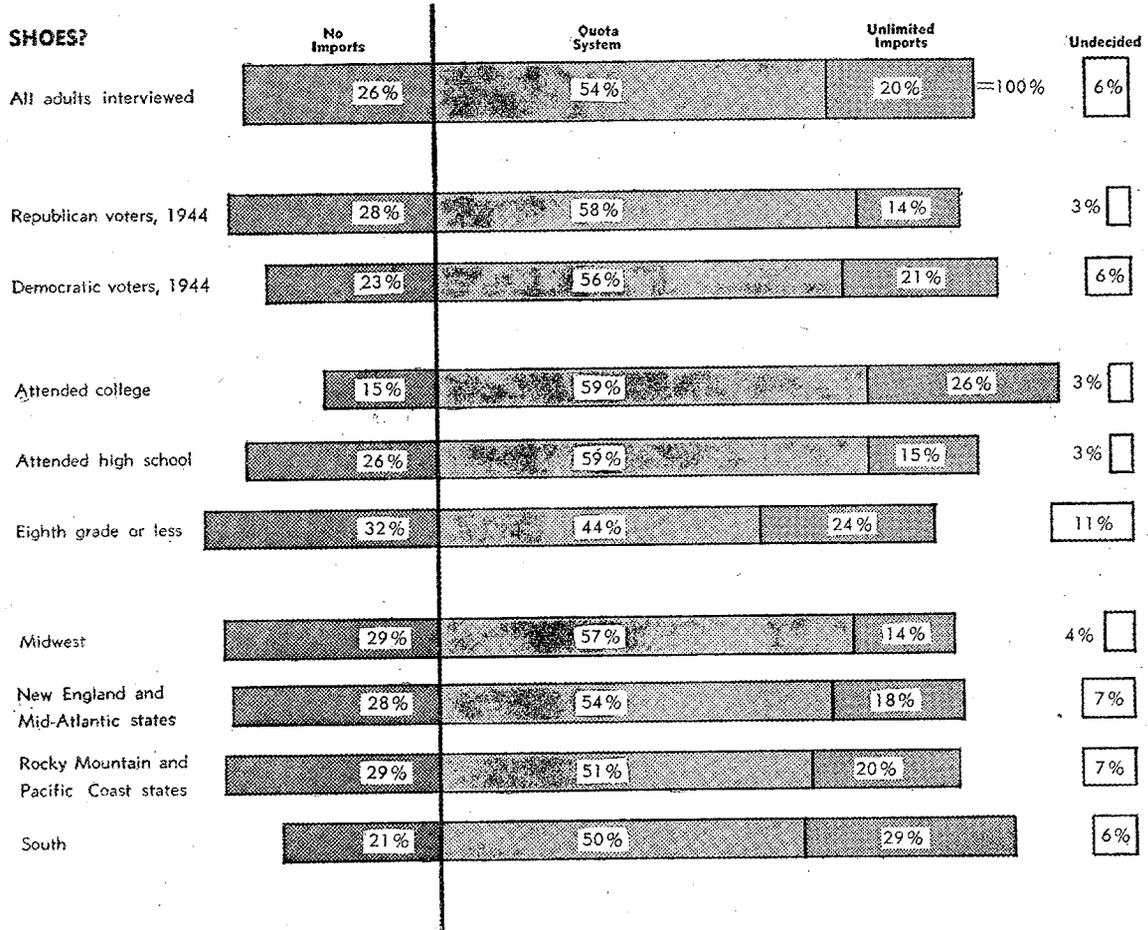
The 15% minority who believed other countries would be justified in placing sky-high tariffs on American goods sometimes commented: “They have the same rights that we have,” “Turn about is fair play—it's what we have to do,” or “They have a right to put taxes on just as we do.” A New York City housewife suggested, with a shrug, “If they don't want our stuff, that's their worry.” And the wife of a Philadelphia booking agent remarked: “If they did that, we would know they didn't want our goods very bad.”

A slightly different sort of confusion is suggested by answers such as these:

“It might cut down our trade a little, but foreign countries need goods so much they'll pay the tax.” (Shearing worker, Philadelphia)

“It would raise the price of goods so high that foreign countries couldn't afford to buy them.” (Laborer's wife, Oklahoma City)

SHOES?



Part IV

The United Nations and International Trade Regulation

Findings on both National Opinion Research Center surveys suggest that there is little opposition in any population group to the establishment of an international organization to promote world trade. People taking a great deal of interest in trade problems, feeling a personal stake in foreign trade, or regarding tariffs as an important cause of war were most favorable to the idea of the establishment of such a body as the International Trade Organization. But the general level of answers in terms of the importance of such an organization is probably considerably inflated.

These questions and others, particularly those on more specific aspects of trade and tariff problems, offer substantial evidence that, even when a point of national sovereignty is at issue, people are often more willing to make concessions in the political sphere than in the economic sphere.

TRADE PROBLEMS AS A CAUSE OF WARS

Attitudes regarding the international regulation of world trade are undoubtedly influenced by the fact that, according to findings on the fall '46 survey, only 28% of the population regard "high tariffs and other restrictions on trade between countries" as an important cause of wars. The majority believe that trade restrictions have "little or nothing" to do with starting wars. The National Opinion Research Center asked:

"Do you think high tariffs and other restrictions on trade between countries are an important cause of wars, or do they have little or nothing to do with starting wars?"

Important cause of wars.....	28%
Little or nothing to do with it.....	57
Don't know	15
	100%

Those who considered trade restrictions an important cause of wars usually commented to the effect that wars are often fought for economic reasons or that trade wars lead to political wars. Those who felt that trade restrictions have little or nothing to do with starting wars usually attributed wars to other causes which they regarded as much more important—"political

arguments," "political greed and power," "jealousies and wanting land," and many more.

In no population group did a majority see tariffs as an important cause of wars, though twice as many of the college-educated as of those with no more than an eighth-grade education held that view.

However, an earlier NORC question, phrased more broadly, found that three out of four saw "problems of trade between countries" as having *something* to do with starting wars. In September, 1943, the Center asked:

"Do you think problems of trade between countries have anything to do with starting wars?"

Yes	73%
No	19
Don't know	8
	100%

THE IMPORTANCE OF A WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

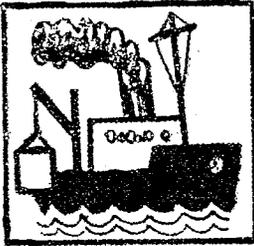
In the fall of 1946, the National Opinion Research Center found a majority of every population group studied giving lip-service at least to the belief that a world trade organization is "very important":

"How important do you think it would be for all nations to get together and set up a special organization to increase world trade—very important, only fairly important, or not important at all?"

Very important	60%
Fairly important	23
Not important at all.....	7
Don't know	10
	100%

When persons who said a world trade organization is "not at all important" were asked why they took this view, almost half felt that such a body "just wouldn't work," because of jealousies between countries, too much talk, or failure to live up to agreements. About a fourth said that such an organization was not needed. Others said that foreign trade was unimportant, or gave still other reasons.

PUBLIC DIVIDED ON POSSIBLE U.N. REGULATION OF WORLD TRADE

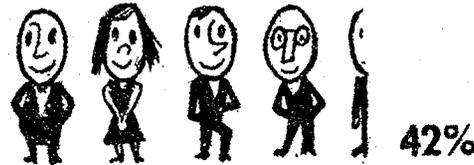


"Should each country make its own laws under which foreign goods can be shipped into its own country, OR do you think the United Nations Organization should make such laws?"

UNITED NATIONS



EACH COUNTRY



UNDECIDED



National Opinion Research Center, University of Denver.

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UNITED NATIONS AUTHORITY

On the spring, 1946, study, the issue was put up to the public somewhat more squarely:

"Should each country make its own laws under which foreign goods can be shipped into its own country, or do you think the United Nations organization should make such laws?"

United Nations	47%
Each country	42
Undecided	11
	<hr/> 100%

Group Differences of Opinion

As might be expected on a question where the public as a whole is almost evenly divided, some population

groups studied leaned toward one of the possibilities suggested and some toward the other. Republicans (51%) and farmers (51%) were the only groups to register even bare majorities in favor of national regulation of trade. The differences between Republicans and Democrats, however, amounted only to a 5-to-4 Republican preference for national regulation as compared to a 4-to-5 Democratic ratio against it.

Education was a more important opinion-determining factor, with United Nations regulation the choice of 53% of persons with high school or college training but only 37% of those with no more than an eighth grade education. The most interesting comparisons follow:

TRADE SHOULD BE REGULATED BY	United Nations	Each Country	Undecided
All adults interviewed..	47%	42%	11% = 100%
Democrats	50	40	10
Republicans	42	51	7
Attended college	53	43	4
Attended high school.....	53	40	7
Eighth grade or less.....	37	44	19
Adults 21-39	53	38	9
Adults 40 and over.....	41	45	14
Women	49	36	15
Men	44	48	8
Midwest	50	39	11
Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states..	49	45	6
New England and Mid-Atlantic states	48	41	11
South	40	45	15

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

United Nations Regulation

Exceptionally revealing of popular thinking on this issue were comments volunteered by respondents. Some of the 47% who thought the UNITED NATIONS should establish regulations to govern international trade suggested that *such action is an accepted and expected function of the organization*: "That's what we have the United Nations for." "Isn't that the purpose of the United Nations—to make such agreements?" "That's the idea of a world union."

Many people said they believed *the United Nations would make fairer and more satisfactory laws than individual countries*. To cite a few such comments:

"The United Nations would be more just in its decisions." (Mechanic's wife, Newington, Connecticut)

"Then every country could get an even chance." (Guard, Morristown, New Jersey)

"After all, it would be fair; what's good for the dog is good for the goose." (Mortician, Chicago)

"They probably would make a fairer price for all nations concerned." (Housewife, Reading, Pennsylvania)

"If all nations get together, the laws will be more satisfactory to all." (Wife of gas station attendant, Detroit)

A few suggested that *one UNIFORM set of regulations ought to be better than so many different laws*, or "would stop conflict among present laws." An Ohio farmer believed that the law "should be enforced partly by the United Nations and partly by each country." "That's a prerogative that nations will give up reluctantly," commented an Iowa housewife.

Others tended to *qualify their answers by adding such remarks as: "... if the nations could get together," "... if it could be worked out," "... if ALL countries are represented,*" or "*... if it comes under United Nations jurisdiction, and if the United States has a good representation.*"

National Regulation

Of the 42% who believed that "EACH COUNTRY should make its own laws under which foreign goods can be shipped into its own country," the most common reaction, to judge by the comments recorded, was that *to allow the United Nations to regulate trade would be an infringement of national sovereignty*. "I think each country should have the right to make their own laws." "That's outside of the range of the UN." "Each country should take care of itself." "Each country should govern its own imports." "It's presuming too much to say that three countries can dictate to the whole world."

A related line of thought was expressed by those who feared that *the United Nations could not make regulations which would handle fairly all different local trade problems*:

"The United Nations doesn't know enough about conditions in each country." (Wife of steel mill worker, Amherst, Ohio)

"Each country knows its own conditions better than the United Nations. They know the prices they need for their goods." (Cigar maker, Pennsylvania)

"Each country knows how imports will affect their own manufacturing." (Clerk, Flint, Michigan)

"The United Nations couldn't do that because of the many different local laws." (Printer, Hackensack, New Jersey)

"All nations do not belong to the United Nations, so each should decide its own problems." (Housewife, near Santa Barbara, California)

That trade regulation might *eventually* become a legitimate function of the United Nations organization was sometimes suggested: "At present each country should make its own laws; eventually the United Nations should." "The United Nations is too young now—maybe later it would work." "It's too soon for the United Nations to do that." "The United Nations have enough to do now without bothering with trade." Another idea was that "Each country should make its own laws, and squabbles between countries should be submitted to the United Nations for adjustment."

Others had no confidence whatsoever in the future of the United Nations: "The United Nations is only a flash in the pan; it will soon be over." "United Nations will be busted up sooner or later." "Right now each nation should make its own—I think the United Nations is going to flop."

EARLIER FINDINGS

A series of questions asked by the National Opinion Research Center in September, 1943, found almost three-fourths of the public (as cited above) expressing the belief that problems of trade between countries have something to do with starting wars. Smaller majorities, however, thought that a world organization should be concerned with trade problems or that the United States should surrender any measure of its economic sovereignty.

The second 1943 question and the 1946 question on whether the United Nations or each separate country should regulate trade were both designed to study opinion on the same basic issue—the degree to which the American public will accept placing under the jurisdiction of an international organization trade problems heretofore considered matters of national economic sovereignty. Because the later question named a tangible and specific organization—the United Nations, and because "make . . . law" suggests a more immediate violation of national sovereignty than "to decide," only a 47% plurality said they thought the United Nations should make laws to regulate trade, in contrast to the 65% willing to let a "union of nations decide how trade between countries should be handled.*

The 1943 question read:

"Do you think it would be a good idea for countries to get together in a union of nations to decide how trade between countries should be handled, or do you think each country should handle trade any way it wants?"

Union of nations.....	65%
Each country	29
Undecided	6
	100%

A *Fortune* Survey question, reported in March '44, explored opinion on the possibility of having a world organization regulate tariffs. While tariff regulation might be implied by the NORC question, the issue was not raised directly. According to *Fortune*, a plurality of 45% of the public thought that, "if a general international organization should be set up," it should "be organized"—among other functions—to "decide

*The order in which the two possible alternatives were presented and the lapse of time may also have influenced opinion.

what tariff rates should be charged by member nations." Against the idea were 23%, and undecided 32%.

The third question the NORC survey asked in September '43 read:

"If the United States could not become a member of the union of nations unless we were willing to trade according to ways decided upon by ALL MEMBERS of the union, would you want to join or stay out?"

Join	57%
Stay out	31
Undecided	12
	100%

On all three of the NORC questions, persons with a college background indicated stronger "internationalist" leanings than any other population group studied. The spread of opinion among respondents of varying educational experience is particularly revealing:

	Attended College	Attended High School	Eighth Grade or Less
Yes—International trade problems may cause wars.	87%	73%	63%
No	10	21	24
Undecided	3	6	13
	100%	100%	100%
Yes—A world organization should make decisions on trade problems	75%	65%	59%
No	21	30	31
Undecided	4	5	10
	100%	100%	100%
Yes—The United States should join a world organization with will- ingness to accept trade regula- tion as a prerequisite to mem- bership	71%	57%	47%
No	21	33	37
Undecided	8	10	16
	100%	100%	100%

It is obvious from a study of the several questions discussed that, the more specific the terms in which international regulation of trade is broached, the more reluctant the people of the United States are to endorse such a policy, even in theory. A consideration of opinion research findings is particularly significant in view of the degree of misunderstanding and misinformation which exists in the United States in regard to international trade policy. At a time when the United States Congress has under consideration tariff measures which have a direct bearing on the success of the World Economic Conference and the International Trade Organization, information and attitudes held by the people of the United States give pause for thought.

NORC Reports

Every year the National Opinion Research Center issues several research reports, each of which presents a detailed analysis of public opinion in a given area as revealed by one or more NORC surveys, often supplemented by findings from other opinion research organizations. The complete roster of reports follows:

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