

Andy Murray and what's changed

By [Tyler Day](#)

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[Rule Britannia!](#) Finally the old country sits atop the tennis throne. On Sunday, Andy Murray became the first British male to win Wimbledon in 77 years—not since Fred Perry won his third straight crown in July 1936.

An occasion like this generates a swarm of reflection pieces. After all, it offers a clear gap in time. It is a marker from beginning to end where you can remember how different things were, and perhaps celebrate how far we've come.

The *AP* [delivers](#) on the political changes within Britain, which include 16 prime ministers and the decolonization of Africa and the Caribbean. The *Daily Mail Online* [highlights](#) a world of wooden rackets, a rising Führer and the death of King George V. Perhaps most pointedly, the *Atlantic* (and others) take the opportunity to [remind](#) the populace of the sexism implicit in the media and major sports—noting that only 36 years have passed since a British woman, Virginia Wade, lifted the home trophy.

So what was the *Century* up to in early July 1936?

The lead editorial from the July 1 issue sarcastically demeans the sluggishness of Congress in the summer:

It did not adjourn because it had ground all the legislative grist in the hopper, but because summer in Washington is hot and sticky, and because there are elections this autumn and absentee landlordism in the months preceding an election is a precarious form of political tenure.

They called people lazy with such wit back then.

The cover story from the same issue warns of the potential crisis in the proposal to transfer displaced Jews to Palestine:

Whenever anti-semitism raises its head the problem of aiding persecuted Jews weighs upon every civilized land, and must pass beyond sentiment to action. But when it is proposed to meet this problem by transferring such Jews in large

numbers to Palestine, the petition cannot go unchallenged. Palestine is totally incapable of developing an emergency capacity at the present moment, except at the cost of such actual hardship and injustice toward the Moslem population as Christians should be the last to forget.

The major domestic news of early July was the Democratic National Convention, which renominated Roosevelt. The *Century* ran a feature in the July 8 issue that decried the way technology changes political relationships. You could substitute the word “internet” or “smartphone” for “radio” and run pretty much the same piece today:

Radio is undoubtedly an instrument with great potentialities for good and evil and for the dissemination of intelligence or whatever one has to disseminate, but it exercises a terribly demoralizing influence on political conventions.... The greater the audience, auditory as well as visual, the greater is presumed to be the propaganda value of demonstrations consisting of pure hubbub.

And finally, the cover story from the July 8 issue, “The United Flag Waving Front,” was on the suffocating nature of patriotism in thoughtful American discourse:

“Patriotism is being put to many strange uses today. We have become familiar with its presence in reactionary or conservative politics, business and economics. We have seen it employed to rap indiscriminately the new deal, labor strikes, income taxes, pacifism, the League of Nations, Roosevelt and Stalin, fascism and socialism.... And as unity continues to grow, which it inevitably must since there is nothing to stop it, the menace to the liberal, social-minded church becomes increasingly greater.”

[Complaints about technology](#), [unrest in Palestine](#), [unbridled patriotism](#), and a [lazy Congress](#). Some things never change.