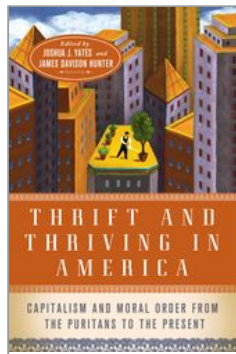


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Thrift and Thriving in America: Capitalism and Moral Order from the Puritans to the Present

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Saving for Democracy

Thrift, Sacrifice, and the World War II Bond Campaigns

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter recounts the war bond campaign of the Second World War, illustrating a notion of thrift fully embedded in a social attempt to serve the greater good. Saving money was equated directly with service to the nation and was pitched as a duty of sacrifice to support the war effort. One of the central characteristics of this campaign was that it enabled everyone down to newspaper boys to participate in a society-wide thrift movement. As such, the World War II war bond effort put thrift in the service of democracy, both in the sense that it directly supported the war being fought for democratic ideals and in the sense that it allowed the participation of all sectors in the American war effort. This national ethic of collective thrift for the greater good largely died in the prosperity that followed World War II, and it has not been restored even during subsequent wars in the latter part of the 20th century.

Keywords: Second World War, war bonds, thrift, democracy, war effort

The story of savings bonds during the Second World War is an intriguing episode in the saga of the thrift ethic in America. We often think of thrift in individualistic terms, but World War II provides a dramatic example of thrift collectively conceived. When Treasury secretary Henry Morgenthau initiated the savings bond program, one of the goals was to “instill into the minds of the American people the habit of thrift.”¹ Yet thrift was not considered an independent virtue. It was saving for a greater good. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt emphasized that the defense bonds and stamps would be “the outward and the visible tokens of partnership through sacrifice,” a way to “perpetuate democracy in the New World” and “aid embattled democracy in the Old World and everywhere else.”²

Roosevelt spoke in a language that moved easily from high ideals to everyday life: “In this time of national peril what we all must realize is that the United States Government is you and I and all the other families next door all the way across the country and back again.” Each family had the opportunity to share in the common defense “at the threshold of every home in America.”³

The American people embraced this opportunity in record numbers even before the attack on Pearl Harbor. After Pearl Harbor, the defense savings bonds were renamed “war bonds,” and saving for the national defense took on a new and urgent meaning. From May 1941 to December 1945, eight out of every thirteen Americans, 85 million people, invested \$185.7 billion in war bonds.⁴ Citizens were encouraged to save 10 percent of their income in bonds, and many did, usually through payroll savings plans at work.⁵ Schoolchildren and newspaper carriers purchased an additional \$1.5 billion of war savings stamps.⁶

After the war, the thrift ethic lost its civic force. Peace and prosperity ushered in a newly invigorated culture of consumption fueled in part by the pent-up savings of the war years. From the postwar years to the present, savings bonds have become a decidedly private affair, a strategy for individual **(p.381)** investment.⁷ Popular advertising slogans of recent times such as “Take stock in America” make the government sound more like a financial planner than a civic leader. Of all the reasons listed by the government to invest in U.S. savings bonds—easy to buy, safe and secure, market-based rates, liquid long-term investment, education savings, tax advantages—only the very last reason, “Good for America,” makes a vague gesture toward civic goals.⁸ Savings bonds have become so emptied of civic meaning that few Americans were even aware of the Patriot Bond, issued after September 11, 2001, because the government did so little to publicize it.⁹

The history of war bonds during World War II provides a perspective from which to ponder some questions about the ethic of saving and sacrifice today. After September 11, when the American people were eager to be summoned to sacrifice, President George W. Bush urged citizens to express their patriotism by consuming rather than conserving. In fact, there have been no major mobilizations to save and sacrifice during any of the conflicts after World War II—the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Iraq War, or the “war on terrorism.” We seem to be living in an era when sacrifice is outsourced to a volunteer army, paid military contractors, and low-paid service workers at home and abroad.

Recalling the spirit of sacrifice that animated the war bond campaigns of World War II may help us remember that thrift is not a virtue in itself but a means to an end. The case for thrift always begs the question, “Thrift for the sake of what good?” The war bond campaigns offered a resounding answer: saving for democracy. This is not to suggest that American democracy during the war years was without deep flaws. It was marred most glaringly by the persistence of segregation and the Japanese internment camps. But the civic project of the war bond campaign left room for dissent and provided the opportunities for citizens to recast the campaign within their own culture, politics, and language. It did not demand a shallow patriotism or 100 percent Americanism. It espoused the ideals of unity in diversity.

The war bond campaigns were doubly democratic. They were fought under the banner of democratic ideals, and they were carried out in a way that promoted civic participation from the grassroots to the national level, bringing Americans together in common cause, across differences of class, ethnicity, and region.¹⁰ When sacrifice is out of season and consumption is the balm for every ailment, it is important to recall the larger civic project that saving sometimes serves.

War and the Summons to Sacrifice

Seven months before the attack at Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt prepared to address the American people. The world was at war. The Nazis had conquered much of Europe. Japan continued its conquest of Asia. A million **(p.382)** American men had already been conscripted in the first peacetime national draft. Congress had approved economic and military aid for America’s allies. Yet the American public remained divided about entering the war. Strains of isolationism, pacifism, disillusionment with the idealism of the First World War, anticommunism, and the seeming security of two yawning oceans provided ample room for ambivalence.

Roosevelt wanted to animate the democratic energies of the American people in the fight against fascism and prepare for America's entry into the war. He had already delivered his annual message to Congress, in which he outlined the "four essential human freedoms": freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear. For Roosevelt, these freedoms formed the foundation of the "good society" and of a world "moral order" that would combat the forces of tyranny. To secure these freedoms, Roosevelt had asked the American people to accept the "sacrifice" of increased taxes to support defense spending.¹¹ Now, on April 30, 1941, as Americans gathered by their radios, Roosevelt announced a new campaign "to save and sacrifice in defense of democracy"—the defense savings bond and savings stamps program. The "character of the campaign," Roosevelt explained, would be "national and homey at the same time." It would "reach down" to "the individual and the family in every community." To show just what he meant, Roosevelt told the people that he was buying ten savings stamps for each of his ten grandchildren, and his first savings bond would name Mrs. Roosevelt as beneficiary.¹²

The U.S. government had vital economic interests at stake in encouraging the American people to save and invest in war bonds—financing the war and curbing inflation. Economic recovery from the Depression had already begun as the country prepared for war; now the economy had to operate in full gear. As millions of men left to fight the war, women replaced them in the plants, and men and women worked round the clock to meet production goals and generate the vast amount of military equipment and home-front goods needed to win the war.¹³ Yet, "the paradox of wartime prosperity" was that although people had more money to spend, there were fewer goods to buy.¹⁴ The demands of the wartime economy meant that vital goods and industries had to be used for the war effort. Companies that once produced cars, refrigerators, and washing machines were now producing tanks, Jeeps, and other military equipment. Gasoline, rubber, and food staples like sugar, meat, and coffee had to be rationed. The government's solution for all the new money in people's hands, colorfully labeled "wild money" or "dangerous dollars" by Treasury officials, was to encourage savings.¹⁵

War bonds were an ideal solution. Though the war bond campaigns did include appeals to individual economic interests—the benefits to the investor of saving for future purchases once peace and prosperity returned—the value of individual thrift was not the central feature of the war bond campaigns. **(p.383)** Thrift was nested within a constellation of values connecting the individual to the collective through work and savings, production and consumption, self-interest and the obligations of community. The war bond drives focused on savings as an obligation of citizenship, as a way of honoring the sacrifices of America's fighting men, and as an expression of national and intergenerational solidarity.

The war bond campaigns were not only animated by democratic ideals; they were democratic in practice. "I'm going to do it the hard way," Secretary Morgenthau announced in the first few weeks of the campaign, "which is the democratic way."¹⁶ The democratic way meant tapping into every sector of society and conducting a grassroots campaign: "Nothing short of a savings crusade to reach every man, woman and child in the country would do."¹⁷ A small, bipartisan team in the Treasury Department, many of whom were Washington outsiders with an antipathy to conventional bureaucrats, organized and coordinated the bond campaigns at the national level. The Treasury Department's strategy was to work through established national and local associations. To work with various constituencies, the Treasury Department created the Inter-Racial program, the Retail Stores Program, the Labor and Business Programs, the Women at War Program, the Schools at War Program, and even the Grandmothers' War Bond League.¹⁸ State and local field organizations energized the campaigns from the bottom up, enlisting volunteer leaders from every walk of life and coordinating their efforts with a rich array of civic, business, labor, religious, educational, media, farm, ethnic, and immigrant associations—from the Boy Scouts to the B'nai B'rith, from the American Legion to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), from the American Federation of Labor to the Farmers' Alliance. Half a million committee volunteers and 5 to 6 million local volunteers, called "Minute Men and Minute Women" and "Victory Volunteers," could be called into action for war bond drives.¹⁹

Campaigns for war bonds were waged person-to-person, door-to-door, neighbor-to-neighbor, and worker-to-worker. The most effective technique by far was being asked face-to-face. During the third war bonds drive, for example, surveys showed that while almost half the people who were asked bought bonds, only 17 percent of those who were *not* asked purchased bonds. This was a sobering statistic given the intensity of the national advertising and publicity campaign. In rural areas, the statistics were even more dramatic. Only 2 percent of farmers bought bonds because they responded to general promotion, but more than half bought bonds when personally asked.²⁰ This puts in context the national media campaigns of radio, ads, movies, and posters. The influence of the media was limited unless the message was mediated through conversations at the workplace, front door, or schoolyard. As Peter Odegard, a young political scientist and member of the Treasury Department's team, observed, "The experience of participation in a joint effort breeds **(p.384)** community of purpose.... National unity is not so much the precursor as the product of united action."²¹

The war bond campaigns transcended the usual divisions between public and private life and civic and commercial space. People assembled in ballparks for “Baseball Defense Bond Day,” in department stores for the “Four Freedoms War Bond Tour,” on the Mall in Washington to witness military displays and hear testimonials of war veterans, and in their own town squares, meeting halls, and movie theaters to participate in war bond drives.²²

The World War II war bond campaigns were designed to build unity through affirming diversity. “Instead of seeking to eradicate differences—of religion, race, class, section, or party,” the Treasury Department wanted to make these differences a “source of strength and unity by finding a common cause in which all could work.”²³ Affirming diversity meant opening up democratic discourse, even if it meant criticism of the government. A striking example of this was the “Double V” campaign organized by African American newspapers and civic organizations. A vigorous campaign to combat racism and segregation on the home front was matched by vigorous participation in the war bonds campaigns, victory gardens, rationing, recycling, and other civic activities.

Another great part of the success of the war bond campaigns was the way the government harnessed the power of popular culture and advertising. Advertisers, ardent purveyors of the culture of consumption, were enlisted as purveyors of the ethic of thrift and sacrifice as well. The Roosevelt administration encouraged the founding of the War Advertising Council—an independent, voluntary organization of advertisers, newspapers, and related business and media organizations that ran the entire advertising campaign for war bonds. Advertisers did not give up on promoting their own products or fostering dreams of future consumption. Many used the government’s tax break for “goodwill” advertising to hawk their wares. Ads selling lipstick, stockings, china, liquor, and shaving cream sometimes displayed only pro forma patriotism—a small box inserted near the bottom of the ad urging the purchase of war bonds.²⁴ Yet volunteers from advertising agencies were enormously successful in promoting the government’s aims using the power of their selling techniques. “Ironically, when advertising did go off to war,” notes historian Frank Fox, “it went more resolutely, more evangelically, than all the entertainment media combined, and it wound up taking its morale-building responsibilities much more seriously.”²⁵ In fact, the war bond campaign helped rescue the advertising industry from the financial doldrums of the Depression.

In coordination with the Office of War Information and the War Advertising Council, advertising firms saturated the country with compelling ads for war bonds in newspapers, radios, magazines, and movies and on billboards and the products people used in everyday life, like grocery bags, milk cartons, and chewing gum wrappers. In addition, the government enlisted artists to (p.385) design thousands of posters encouraging Americans to produce, conserve, and save. Combining the power of art and advertising, posters were displayed in work spaces and public spaces where ads could not penetrate.²⁶ A huge mural in Grand Central Station in New York City, touted as the largest mural in the world, urged people to invest in savings bonds and stamps and quoted Abraham Lincoln's words from the Gettysburg Address: "Government of the people—Shall not perish from the Earth."²⁷

Hollywood lent its full support to the war bonds campaigns, making newsreels and sending out its biggest stars—Humphrey Bogart, Carole Lombard, Spencer Tracy, Betty Grable—to lead war bond drives. All kinds of celebrities joined the war bond campaigns, from boxing hero Joe Louis to baseball great Joe DiMaggio. Albert Einstein donated the original copies of his manuscript on the theory of relativity for auction to raise money for war bonds.²⁸ Kate Smith, beloved for her rendition of "God Bless America," an Irving Berlin song written in 1938, which became an anthem of World War II, raised \$39 million for war bonds in a single daylong radio marathon.²⁹ Bing Crosby crooned another popular Berlin tune from the radio hit parade, "Any Bonds Today?": "Buy a share of freedom today.... We'll be blest if we all invest in the U.S.A."

Beyond the explicit mention of war bonds, the core themes of solidarity and sacrifice that infused the war bond campaigns pervaded American popular culture during the war years. Sometimes it came in the understated voice of the maverick hero and ostensible cynic played by Bogart, who was willing to forgo his romance with Ingrid Bergman for the greater cause of the war resistance in the hit movie *Casablanca*. Other times, the movies spoke in the same democratic language of sacrifice as Roosevelt's fireside chats. As survivors gather in a bombed-out church in England to mourn the loss of their loved ones in the 1942 movie *Mrs. Miniver*, the vicar asks, "Why should they be sacrificed? I shall tell you why. Because this is not only a war of soldiers in uniform. It is a war of the people, of all the people. And it must be fought not only in the battlefield ... but in the home and in the heart of every man, woman, and child who loves freedom.... This is the people's war. It is our war. We are the fighters. Fight it then!"³⁰

The war bond campaign was conceived and run as a people's campaign. It enlisted the power of sentiment to inspire civic action and lifted sentimentality from its familiar habitation in private life and infused it with civic purpose. It was the most important home-front campaign to galvanize support for the war effort. The war bond campaign succeeded not only by galvanizing resources from every sector of American society but also by situating itself in the lived experiences of everyday life. It united the war front and the home front by making "home" and "hominess" central features of its symbolism and grassroots door-to-door campaigns. Even the so-called mass media was not some vast and distant presence. It too exerted a "homey" presence. Into the home came the voice of Roosevelt in his fireside chats. Into the home came the **(p.386)** portraits of ordinary people—soldiers, workers, homemakers, parents, and children—featured in newspapers, magazines stories, and ads. Into the home came the necessities of everyday life: milk cartons, bags, and savings stamp books with patriotic pictures and slogans.

Home was not an entity distinct from civic life but a locus for civic engagement.³¹ Norman Rockwell illustrated two of the "four freedoms" with images of home: "freedom from want" with a family gathered around a Thanksgiving dinner and "freedom from fear" with a mother and father standing by the beds of their sleeping children. These paintings were made into popular posters in the war bond campaigns. It was no accident that Roosevelt made home a central image in his radio address introducing Defense Bonds to the American people. "At the threshold of every home in America," Roosevelt reminded his listeners, "each family shared in the common defense."³² The power of home and longing for home were expressed in the most popular song of the war years and a great favorite of soldiers on the war front, a song that made no mention of patriotism, country, or war bonds: "White Christmas."

The tangible and symbolic meaning of home and family unified the multiple, interwoven layers of savings that defined the war bond campaigns—saving and producing for the war, saving to honor the sacrifice of the soldiers, saving to preserve democracy, saving to defend freedom, saving for future consumption, saving for the family's security. By "saving for his individual future," noted a member of the Treasury Department's war bond staff, a purchaser of a savings bond guaranteed the "collective future." "National morale" depended on the "awareness that the future welfare of each member of the community is inextricably tied up with the future of the community as a whole."³³ This same collectively conceived thrift ethic pervaded the rationing, recycling, and victory garden campaigns.

Before exploring in greater depth how the war bond campaign brought diverse groups together in a common effort to save and sacrifice, it is useful to review briefly the historical role of war bonds, particularly the role they played in World War I.

Bonds and the Civic Project

The sale of government bonds goes back to the founding of the Republic. During the Revolutionary War, buying bonds was a risky venture. Unlike modern savings bonds, the government bonds were not guaranteed. When citizens of the colonies loaned the Revolutionary government money by investing in bonds, they realized they could lose their money if the British won the war. Nonetheless, private citizens purchased more than \$27 million in bonds to help fund the Revolution, and the newly formed American government made good on these bonds.³⁴

(p.387) War bonds played a role in every war to follow. During the Civil War, the Treasury learned the value of person-to-person bond sales. The Spanish-American War demonstrated the popularity of small-denomination bonds.³⁵ Government bonds also offered Americans the opportunity to invest in public projects such as the Louisiana Purchase, the building of the transcontinental railroad, and, later, the construction of the Panama Canal and the acquisition of Alaska.³⁶

It was not until World War I, however, that government bonds—called Liberty Bonds and later Victory Bonds—played a major role in the lives of American citizens.³⁷ The Liberty Bond campaigns were part of a broader ethic of thrift and sacrifice during the war years. Soon after Congress approved his declaration of war, President Woodrow Wilson emphasized: “This is the time for America to correct her unpardonable fault of wastefulness and extravagance. Let every man and every woman assume the duty of careful, provident use and expenditure as a public duty.”³⁸ Herbert Hoover, Wilson’s food administrator, reiterated the message, urging the “elimination of waste and actual and rigorous self-sacrifice on the part of the American people.”³⁹ The government sponsored wheatless Mondays, meatless Tuesdays, and porkless Thursdays and Saturdays.⁴⁰ Banks also became apostles of thrift. The “Three Great Mottoes” espoused in a Bankers Trust Company pamphlet were “Know Thyself, Control Thyself, Deny Thyself.”⁴¹

Yet, the Liberty Bond campaign differed in important respects from the World War II war bond campaign. First, the Liberty Bond campaign committees were controlled and directed by the Federal Reserve banks and dominated by bankers, brokers, and security dealers. Second, Liberty Bonds, like earlier government war bonds, were negotiable and tied to the fluctuations of the market.⁴² If Liberty Bond holders needed cash before their bonds matured, they could not turn to the Treasury Department to redeem them. Instead, they had to sell them at market value, often at substantial losses because of higher interest rates. Professional security dealers made handsome profits at the expense of the ordinary citizens, and Liberty Bonds sold as low as eighty-two cents on the dollar.⁴³ Many citizens became disillusioned with government savings bonds when they realized after the war that the bonds were worth less than the original purchase price.

The Liberty Bonds campaigns were also more stridently patriotic, sensationalistic, and high-pressured than the World War II war bond campaigns. Slogans such as “Surely Your Patriotism Equals the Cost of a Bond” and “Are You 100% American? Prove It! Buy U.S. Government Bonds” exemplified this tendency.⁴⁴ Instead of encouraging immigrant and ethnic groups to express national loyalty through their distinctive languages, customs, and rituals, the Liberty Bond drives often defined Americanism as white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Government-sponsored patriotic groups included the Committee on Public Information, led by George Creel, which preached “100 percent **(p.388)** Americanism” and enlisted 75,000 “Four-Minute Men” to give speeches urging people to buy Liberty Bonds.⁴⁵

Liberty Bond advertisements played more frequently on hatred and fear of the enemy than did war bond ads in the Second World War.⁴⁶ Even though the government declared that the purchase of war savings bonds and stamps was not compulsory, local groups sometimes resorted to overzealous shaming techniques to get people to participate. In Nebraska, a local “council of defense” called a meeting to reprimand farmers for failing to buy savings stamps. In other parts of the country, self-styled patriots painted people’s homes and barns yellow if they failed to subscribe.⁴⁷

The Liberty Bond campaigns do not, however, fully represent the thrift ethic of the World War I period. Civic and religious thrift movements sprung up around the country and gathered a large public following. One of the most prominent was the War Savings movement led by New York banker, Frank Vanderlip. The emphasis of the War Savings movement was on education and participation in civic life, not selling bonds. “Millions and millions are yearning for an opportunity to do something in this war, to deny themselves, to sacrifice,” proclaimed a business leader affiliated with the movement. “The War Savings Movement is an answer to that yearning. It brings to every man, woman and child the opportunity to help.”⁴⁸ The movement focused on reducing consumption, inculcating the habit of thrift, and sacrificing for the war effort.⁴⁹

The War Savings movement of World War I respected and drew upon the distinctive languages and cultures of the participating groups, and it valued democratic organization. This more pluralistic approach became a prototype for the World War II war bond campaigns. The War Savings movement had a high-profile national committee and was directed by a well-run national organization based in Washington, but the movement was rooted in local civic, religious, and business associations, which formed their own War Savings committees.⁵⁰

The War Savings movement also inspired the formation of school thrift programs and worked collaboratively with the National Education Association.⁵¹ Lesson plans in the World War I school programs encouraged older children to write essays on such topics as “The First Time I Ever Admired Savings” and “History of Savings in Other Countries.”⁵² Teachers encouraged younger children to be frugal in their purchases of pencils, books, and clothes and to save their money for war stamps. Every student received a Thrift Card with sixteen squares to paste in their savings stamps, and each square contained a pithy saying of Benjamin Franklin’s on the virtue of frugality. School plays and songs emphasized the virtues of thrift and patriotism:

Save up your pennies for a rainy day.
It’s not always what you earn but what you put away.
Uncle Sam has need of thrift.
So do your best, and give him a lift.⁵³

(p.389) The thrift movement of World War I was also bolstered by religious organizations. The YMCA incorporated thrift into its “Christian Financial Creed,” noting that it had come to see that “habits of wastefulness and extravagance rot character.” A YMCA poster slogan reprised the words of Methodist minister John Wesley: “Make all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.” The Y sponsored a National Thrift Week and distributed sermon outlines for local congregations that included lines like “Thriftlessness—debt—mars and stains the soul.”⁵⁴ Like earlier incarnations of the Protestant ethic, the Y’s thrift ethic saw work and frugality as bulwarks against sin and pathways to salvation.

Despite the strong support for the thrift ethic during World War I, when the war ended “the mood of patriotic self-sacrifice quickly dissipated.”⁵⁵ As one reformer lamented, “During the war we accustomed ourselves to doing without [but now] reckless spending takes the place of saving, waste replaces conservation.”⁵⁶ Historian David Shi notes, “Such assessments have a familiar ring and a familiar hyperbole. Yet what differentiated the postwar buying binge from its predecessors was its scale, and the vigorous and imaginative support it received from public figures and business spokesmen.”⁵⁷ New York City businessmen, for example, formed a National Prosperity Committee and condemned thrift: “Buy what you need now,” their posters declared with a picture of Uncle Sam at the throttle of a locomotive.⁵⁸

Even Henry Ford, once a member of the War Savings Division's Central Committee, announced that thrift was passé. "Economy is a waste: it is waste of the juice of life," remarked Ford. He urged young men to "spend your money on yourself, get all the experience you can. Don't try to save money and be a miser."⁵⁹ President Warren Harding espoused the value of thrift but promoted material prosperity, reminding his critics that America was "essentially a business country."⁶⁰ The government had other priorities than thrift education. The public schools remained a bastion of the thrift ethic, but funds for school savings programs were drastically cut back. "Every war brings after it a period of materialism and conservatism," observed Roosevelt, then a defeated vice presidential candidate; "people tire quickly of ideals."⁶¹

The stock market crash of 1929 and the bank failures during the Depression shook people's confidence in financial institutions. With millions out of work and widespread destitution, Americans had to do without. Yet thrift was more than a virtue of necessity. During the early New Deal, the thrift ethic took on a renewed civic dimension backed up by government reforms. Keynesian economics, with its rival paradigm of spending rather than thrift, would not take hold until the postwar period.⁶² In 1935, in the midst of the Depression, the Roosevelt administration enacted some of its key and most enduring legislation that provided a new infrastructure for thrift—the Banking Act, the Social Security Act, and the modern savings bond program. These pillars of the New Deal were designed to renew confidence in financial institutions, provide **(p.390)** unemployment insurance and old-age pensions, and ensure the savings of citizens.⁶³

The U.S. savings bond program promoted thrift for the sake of an explicit civic purpose—to encourage the small investor to have a stake in America. First offered for sale in March 1935, U.S. savings bonds were designed to protect the small investor. They were safe, nonnegotiable, registered in the bearer's name, and replaceable if lost, damaged, or stolen, and they provided a reasonable interest rate. Individuals could invest in a savings bond for as little as \$18.75 and redeem it in ten years for \$25. Individuals could also redeem their bonds before they matured and recover their initial investment plus interest. At first, only post offices sold bonds over the counter. The government's promotion of savings bonds in magazine ads, posters, and leaflets was modest. The field organization was modest as well. One enthusiastic Treasury official became a "One-Man Chautauqua," traveling up and down the land "preaching the gospel of thrift" to any group that would listen.⁶⁴ By the late thirties, however, under Secretary Morgenthau's able direction, the savings bond program was well established. A Treasury survey of the first million bond buyers "framed a picture of national prudence and purpose and patriotism."⁶⁵

As Roosevelt prepared the country for war in May 1941, the first series A savings bonds were reissued as series E defense savings bonds. They were renamed war savings bonds in June 1942. Savings stamps could be purchased for as little as ten cents and collected in a “Victory” booklet for a future bond purchase. No one in Treasury wanted to repeat the mistakes of the Liberty Bond campaign of World War I. Morgenthau wanted “no quotas ... no hysteria ... no appeal to hate or fear.”⁶⁶ Citizens would never again be subjected to “the wicked devices of bond sharps and swindlers.”⁶⁷ Some in government even lobbied for a mandatory savings program to avoid the problems of the World War I campaigns, but Roosevelt and Morgenthau insisted that the program be voluntary. As an early internal Treasury Department memo made clear, the new bond program would emphasize “participation rather than propaganda” and “local organizations” rather than the “creation of new machinery,” and they would transform people from being “mere observers” to “active participants” in the national defense effort.⁶⁸

Judged in purely financial terms, the participation of ordinary citizens in the war bonds program played only a small role in financing World War II. Of the \$304 billion spent on the war, current taxation accounted for 45 percent of the bill, a much higher percentage than in either the Civil War or World War I, and borrowing accounted for the rest.⁶⁹ Most of the \$185.7 billion raised in war bonds resulted from purchases by large investors—banks, insurance companies, and corporations. Individuals accounted for only 28 percent of the sales, and of the \$43.3 billion sold to individuals, the small, investor-friendly E bonds accounted for \$19.9 billion in sales.⁷⁰ These numbers, of course, are not the full measure of the story.

(p.391) Unity in Diversity: A Civic Thrift Ethic

The war bond campaign was enormously successful in uniting and galvanizing the country. Between 1941 and 1946, well over half the population of the United States invested in war bonds and Victory Bonds during eight bond drives.⁷¹ Yet the persistence of religious and ethnic intolerance, racism, and institutionalized segregation testified to how incompletely America had realized its democratic promise. The 1930s witnessed the growth of labor unions but also turbulent and bloody battles between labor and industry. The New Deal programs of the Depression did forge a renewed sense of social solidarity, and movies, radio, and advertising drew people from different regions, cultures, ethnicities, and classes into a common culture, but this did not erase profound social and economic inequalities.

Once the United States entered the war, the country united behind the war effort, despite the fact that all citizens were not treated equally. The war bond campaign contributed to this unity by waging a grassroots campaign that acknowledged and respected ethnic, cultural, and regional diversity. It brought rival groups together in a common cause by encouraging them to participate through their own organizations and associations. This is aptly illustrated by the highly successful war bond campaigns of organized labor and African American civic groups and newspapers. Despite school segregation, the war bond campaigns provided public schools with common material for young people to be schooled in democracy, sacrifice, and a renewed civic thrift ethic.

Labor's Leadership

In April 1942, women from three powerful rival unions—the CIO, the AFL, and the Railroad Brotherhood—met for a joint bond rally in New York City. Betty Hawley Donnelly of the New York State Federation of Labor declared, “We trade women recognize only three letters of the alphabet and those letters are not AFL or CIO—those letters are the U.S.A.” Beatrice Abramson of the CIO emphasized, “Part of the job of defeating fascism is the regular, systematic saving of our pennies and nickels and dimes.”⁷² Two months earlier, the powerful leaders of these same unions had joined forces for Labor Defense Bond Week. “On this we are united,” declared Allen Haywood of the CIO as he stood beside George Meany of the AFL. “Our country is in danger. Everything we have hoped for is in danger. The AFL, CIO, and the [Railroad] Brotherhood are behind MacArthur.... This is a people's war.”⁷³

The mission of working, saving, and sacrificing for democracy infused labor unions from the national to the local level. Workers saw in Adolf Hitler's doctrine of racial superiority a direct challenge to America's principles of **(p.392)** equality. The Roosevelt administration's message of democratic inclusiveness also profoundly touched many union members. In the New England textile city of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Catholic unionists declared, “We shall protect and amplify ... democracy in America and in every peace-loving nation of the world, so that the soldiers of every race, creed and color ... ‘SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN.’”⁷⁴ Historian Gary Gerstle compared war bond appeals made by labor and business in Woonsocket and discovered that while corporate and business groups emphasized financial or consumer benefits, labor unions appealed to democratic principles and civic solidarity.⁷⁵

The outbreak of World War II revived labor by creating a huge demand for industrial production. Unions had made great gains during the 1930s, and labor saw President Roosevelt as a friend and ally. By 1937 and 1938, however, the economy had taken a downturn, slowing production and union organizing. Labor mobilized for the war effort by working around the clock in the war industries and by leading the country in war bonds investments, usually through payroll savings plans that regularly deducted 10 percent for bonds from the paycheck.⁷⁶ Workers in the war industries—steel, iron, ships, aircraft, electronic equipment, and automobiles—invested most heavily in bonds because they were acutely aware of war production needs, better organized, and relatively well paid.⁷⁷ By April 1943, CIO president Philip Murray announced on the radio that more than four-fifths of all industrial workers in the country regularly saved their money through the war bond program.⁷⁸ Rival unions engaged in spirited competitions to buy and sell war bonds, and union leaders also played prominent roles on state and local war bond committees.⁷⁹

Labor also worked with management on joint war bond campaigns. Using the slogan “Banded Together to Bond-Bard the Axis,” the United Rubber Workers formed a committee with the Firestone, Goodrich, Goodyear, and General Tire companies in 1942 and successfully enlisted full participation in the 10 percent payroll deduction plan.⁸⁰ A subsequent national government-sponsored study showed that among large corporations, those with joint labor-management committees led the nation in payroll-savings-plan bond purchases.⁸¹ As one union president affirmed, “The joint labor-management effort follows the basic tenet of democracy. Dictatorship is the enemy of democracy and of the trade union movement which can function only in the free air of democracy.”⁸²

Despite highly successful joint campaigns for war bonds, tensions between labor and management remained. One issue was “equality of sacrifice.”⁸³ To support the war effort, labor pledged not to strike, to work around the clock, and to forgo overtime and premium pay. Yet workers did not want management to exploit their sacrifices by war profiteering. Roosevelt was alive to the issue of equality of sacrifice before war broke out. It is “a damn sight simpler for all of us to appeal to [worker] patriotism,” he noted, “if we say we are using **(p.393)** exactly the same principle for the owners of industry as we are for the workers of industry.”⁸⁴ The chairman of the National War Labor Board put the matter bluntly: “If you say to the boys, ‘Why don’t you make a sacrifice for your country?’ they are going to say, ‘That is fine ... but I am not going to make it to increase the profits of General Motors.’”⁸⁵ To ease the fear of its members, the executive committee of the United Automobile Workers publicized a broad-based “Victory through Equality of Sacrifice Program,” which included a government-controlled ceiling on profits and executive salaries and democratically controlled rationing and price controls.⁸⁶ Despite Roosevelt’s support of core elements of the “Equality of Sacrifice Program,” opposition by congressional conservatives and the antiunion bias of newly recruited wartime workers blocked its adoption.⁸⁷

While the Treasury Department praised labor’s “almost boundless” cooperation in war bond drives, Treasury officials acknowledged that even within its own national War Savings organization, the “promotional experts,” drawn mostly from the business community, were “hostile to, or at least barely tolerant of, the increased importance of organized labor in national affairs.”⁸⁸ Labor’s war bond campaigns coexisted with flare-ups between labor and management, wildcat strikes, and protests over discrimination in the defense industries. Yet the persistence of these tensions did not stop labor leaders from organizing highly effective national and regional campaigns through the War Savings organization. Unions were highly effective in promoting their patriotic efforts. The Treasury’s Film Section also featured movie shorts of union bond drives and war production, and Secretary Morgenthau “seized every opportunity to publicly praise labor’s support of bonds.”⁸⁹

Treasury's war bond poster campaigns featured the worker as a "production soldier" and stalwart citizen in overalls. "Make Every Pay-Day BOND-DAY," declared an early bond poster with a smiling face of a workman holding up a bond framed in a red-white-and-blue background.⁹⁰ A later poster with the slogan "The Sky's the Limit: Keep Buying War Bonds" shows a woman working with two men to assemble part of a fighter plane, an unusual image before the war, but familiar once women entered the defense industries.⁹¹ Rosie the Riveter, of course, was one of the most compelling images of the war years. Both labor and management generated and designed their own poster campaigns as well. Company posters blended the theme of workplace discipline with images of patriotism and sacrifice, while labor touted the patriotism of its unions with slogans like "A.F. of L. 100% for Defense."⁹² After the war, the tensions between labor and management rapidly resurfaced. In 1946, labor unrest was higher than in all previous years, with 4,990 reported strikes involving more than 4.5 million employees. By 1948, the labor-management committees that had been so instrumental in fostering cooperation in war production and war bond drives had all but vanished.⁹³

(p.394) African American Support of Bonds and the "Double V" Campaign
In response to a request from a government press office, Walter White, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, sent a telegram in support of the fifth war bond drive on June 15, 1944. As on earlier occasions, the NAACP's enthusiastic support of war savings bonds was accompanied by a critique of the unfulfilled promise of American democracy for African Americans:

Despite the fact that American Negroes so frequently are denied the democracy for which they are asked to fight and pay, it is imperative that all Americans, including thirteen million Negro Americans, make every sacrifice through the purchase of bonds.

... We urge all Negro organizations and individuals to invest to the limit in democracy while they work to make that democracy real for all irrespective of race, creed, color, or national origin.⁹⁴

In order to build national unity and a strong democratic coalition, the Treasury Department's War Savings Organization made it a priority to reach out to African American civic, religious, and business associations, as well as to other ethnic and immigrant associations. Immigrants often saw participation in war bond campaigns as a pathway to assimilation and Americanization. African Americans already had a long and noble history of fighting and sacrificing in American wars, but military and civilian sacrifices had not resulted in liberty and equality. During World War I, W. E. B. Du Bois urged blacks to "close ranks" with whites and "forget our special grievances." When liberty did not follow in the wake of war, the embittered Du Bois revised his slogan: "*We return, we return from fighting, we return fighting.*"⁹⁵ For some the mismatch between democratic ideals and practice was a cause for cynicism, but for many it was a call to civic action, a call for America to be true to its deepest ideals. "America was never America to me," wrote the poet Langston Hughes in 1938. "And yet I swear this oath—America will be!"⁹⁶

The espousal of democratic ideals by the War Savings Organization, however genuine and well intentioned, rested uneasily with the Roosevelt administration's policy of segregation in the military, segregated blood banks, lack of support for antilynching laws, and appeasement of southern Democrats. Under Roosevelt, Jim Crow segregation remained entrenched in the South, as did de facto segregation and racial prejudice in the North. How could African Americans reconcile support for the war as a fight for democracy when they were not experiencing full democracy at home? How could they give real substance to the war slogan "A Fight for the Four Freedoms"? The answer was to fight for democracy on two fronts.⁹⁷

The *Pittsburgh Courier* summed up this idea in the symbol of the “double V”: “Democracy: At Home and Abroad.” The “Double V” campaign made a **(p.395)** direct link between fascism abroad and segregation at home. It allowed African Americans to be patriots and critics of the government at the same time and provided African American civic organizations a way to galvanize support for war bonds and continue their fight for civil rights. Following the *Pittsburgh Courier’s* lead, the black press, the NAACP, churches, and civic groups took up the symbol of double V.⁹⁸ Whether or not the symbol was used, the commitment to fight for democracy on two fronts characterized African American civic activism during the war. “Now is the time *not* to be silent about the breaches of democracy here in our own land,” editorialized the NAACP’s main publication, the *Crisis*, after the United States entered the war.⁹⁹ “In the interest of national unity,” declared A. Philip Randolph, labor activist and leader of the March on Washington Movement, “every law which makes a distinction in treatment between citizens based on religion, creed, color, or national origin” must be abrogated.¹⁰⁰ Beyond the statements of leaders, polls conducted by black newspapers and the government revealed a renewed militancy among many African American citizens. A poll reported in the *Pittsburgh Courier* found that “88.7 percent of those asked felt that the Negro should ‘not soft-pedal his demands for complete freedom and citizenship.’”¹⁰¹ African American soldiers were not fighting and dying for their country to return home to segregation and discrimination. A poem of a black soldier fighting overseas captured the prevalent sentiment:

So while I fight
Wrong over there,
See that my folks
Are treated fair.¹⁰²

Just as labor unions invested in war bonds and pursued the cause of workers despite opposition, so African American organizations pursued their quest for equality and justice despite Roosevelt’s attempts to quiet the “subversive language” of the black newspapers’ “Double V” campaign.¹⁰³ After the Roosevelt administration sent the FBI to visit the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the paper cut by half the space devoted to the campaign.¹⁰⁴ The spirit of the “Double V” campaign, however, continued in black newspapers and in the publications of black civic organizations. A study published by Lester M. Jones in 1944 revealed that editorials in black newspapers devoted 50 percent more coverage to national and international aspects of race relations than they did during World War I.¹⁰⁵

African American civic groups transformed the war bond campaign into another way to continue the fight to redeem democracy. Many of the most vociferous critics of the administration's failure to move rapidly enough on civil rights—such as Walter White of the NAACP—were also patriotic leaders in war bond campaigns. Similarly, Joe Louis, Duke Ellington, Marian Anderson, and other black sports figures and performers who spoke out **(p.396)** against race discrimination also spoke out in support of war bonds.¹⁰⁶ Black newspapers promoting the “Double V” campaign devoted considerable space to promoting war bonds.

The war bond campaign conducted through the Inter-Racial Section of the Treasury's Defense Savings Program was a microcosm of the democratic organizing techniques that characterized the war bond campaign as a whole. The Treasury Department recruited William Pickens—a Yale graduate, dynamic public speaker, and field director of the NAACP—to coordinate the war bond campaigns in African American communities. Pickens traversed the country recruiting church leaders, college presidents, business leaders, and members of women's organizations and a range of other African American civic groups. From church pulpits, Pickens directly addressed the congregation's concerns about racial inequality, arguing that just as the church was the church for all its members, even the wayward and fallen, so America was still a democracy for all the people, despite intolerance and prejudice.¹⁰⁷ Churches in turn urged their members to buy bonds as a patriotic act and as a sound investment.

The backbone of support for the war bond program in many African American communities came from the Negro Savings Clubs. The idea for these came from P. L. Prattis of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the same paper that had spearheaded the “Double V” campaign. The clubs, which were made up of members of the black middle and professional classes, worked closely with the Inter-Racial Section but were not part of the government. The clubs, particularly popular in the South, were led by a national organizing committee, which was composed of representatives from prominent African American organizations: the National Council of Negro Women, the Fraternal Council of Negro Churches in America, the National Urban League, the National Negro Land Grants College Presidents' Association, and the National Negro Housewives League.¹⁰⁸ The clubs focused on savings as a means of economic empowerment and civic virtue. The NAACP also linked liberty with economic power in encouraging its members to invest in bonds. In fact, the combination of thrift and work, of sacrifice and civic action, and of national unity and independent economic and political power was a central feature of the civic thrift ethic among African Americans during the war years.

Savings and Civic Virtue in the Schools

On September 25, 1942, 4,000 children carrying flags of the United Nations marched along Constitution Avenue to the Department of the Treasury to launch the Schools at War program. Eleanor Roosevelt was present along with Secretary Morgenthau, who told the assembled children that he could count on them “to enlist 100 percent in our fight for freedom—by buying War Savings Stamps and Bonds.” Liberty Bricks were unveiled—saved from the renovations **(p.397)** of Independence Hall in Philadelphia—and were offered as rewards for the best-performing schools in the war bond and stamp campaigns. The motto for the Schools at War program embodied core elements of the civic thrift ethic: “SAVE, SERVE, CONSERVE.” Government officials urged students to “SAVE money to buy War Savings stamps and bonds”; “SERVE your school, community and nation”; and “CONSERVE all kinds of materials, service, and money” by recycling aluminum foil, paper, string, cloth, kitchen fat, and scrap metal, by “preserving Victory Garden foods,” and by “wasting nothing.”¹⁰⁹

Children, like adults, were encouraged to see themselves as soldiers on the home front. “Boys and girls of the United States of America,” declared a wartime book, “you are enlisted for the duration of the war as citizen soldiers. This is a total war, nobody is left out, and that counts you in.”¹¹⁰ School war bond campaigns made the link between war front and home front tangible and dramatic. Beginning in 1943, school children were encouraged to buy enough stamps and bonds to equal the price of a Jeep. The Triple Threat Jeep campaign captured children’s imaginations: schools could sponsor the land-going Jeep, the amphibian Jeep, or the flying Jeep, called the Grasshopper.¹¹¹ Plaques were placed on the Jeeps with the name of the school, and sometimes servicemen wrote appreciative letters to the children from the war front. Patriotic songs sung to familiar folk tunes cemented the bond between the home front and the war front. Jerold Oldroyd of Utah remembered his favorite song as a boy:

Buy Jeeps, buy Jeeps,
Send thousands of Jeeps o’er the sea, the sea
Buy Jeeps, buy Jeeps,
And bring back my loved one to me.¹¹²

Children sponsored 40,000 Jeeps in the closing months of the school year and an additional 50,000 the following year.¹¹³ The campaign was expanded so that children could sponsor other military equipment—parachutes, lifeboats, planes, and ships. In addition to Jeeps, schools financed 2,900 planes and 11,690 parachutes during 1944.¹¹⁴

However exciting it was to sponsor military equipment, the primary mission of the Schools at War program was “education for the preservation of democracy and good citizenship.”¹¹⁵ Educators and government officials built on the successful War Savings programs of World War I. They developed lesson plans in civics, thrift, and conservation across the curriculum and at every grade level. Knowledge was not simply top-down. Students had to act in the world—to gather scrap metal in the neighborhood, to buy war stamps, to encourage their parents and neighbors to conserve and save, to collaborate in recycling drives or cultivating victory gardens. During the summer and after school, children carried on their thrift campaigns through the Boy Scouts, Girl Schools, 4-H clubs, Campfire Girls, and other local and national civic and religious organizations.

(p.398) Saving and conserving for democracy gave children an active role as citizens and a real sense of agency. “We built Mount Scrapmore,” children declared, as they stood proudly atop a mound of scrap metal in Waterbury, Connecticut.¹¹⁶ “Here’s our answer, Mr. Roosevelt,” proclaimed a banner held by two Boy Scouts as they led a parade of cars and trucks carrying spare tires for a rubber recycling drive in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.¹¹⁷ Children took up broomsticks in New York City to defend a three-ton pile of scrap metal they had collected from sanitation workers who planned to cart it away. The standoff was resolved only when a sanitation driver promised the children they would receive “official recognition” and a police officer wrote down all their names.¹¹⁸ When a war bond buy-a-Jeep campaign looked like it would not meet its quota in Philadelphia, children organized a “commando attack” to raise funds during the final week.¹¹⁹ In fact, the survey research conducted after every bond drive discovered that children were just as effective as adults in person-to-person solicitations for war bonds.¹²⁰

For adults and children alike, recognition and honor were important parts of the war bond campaigns. The government presented special flags to factories with high participation in the payroll savings plans, special certificates and medals to civic and business groups, and lapel pins for individuals who bought extra bonds or distinguished themselves in bond sales for their achievements.¹²¹ Similarly, schoolchildren were honored with awards and certificates for their participation in war bond and other thrift campaigns. On occasion, they were even given the honor of naming a ship. New York City children named a ship *Lou Gehrig* after the late great baseball hero, and Florida children named a ship the USS *Colin Kelly* after an American pilot who was shot down in the Pacific after saving his crew.¹²²

The Schools at War program knitted together the campaigns for war bonds, victory gardens, rationing, and recycling, and it provided a vital line between home, school, and neighborhood. The educators and government officials who designed the school curriculum hoped that through “thrift education” children would grow up to be “more substantial and financially secure citizens” once the crisis had passed, perhaps even be “prospective candidates for payroll savings plans.”¹²³ The lessons of thrift would linger, but postwar consumerism would become a heady rival to the values of saving, sacrifice, and national unity, which formed the three pillars of the Schools at War program.

The Home-Front Media Campaign

Some historians have written about the patriotism of the war bond campaign as if it were just a form of government “propaganda,” a campaign ultimately held hostage to “private values” or “consumerism.”¹²⁴ This debunking view misunderstands the rich and varied uses of the media during the war, the range **(p.399)** and depth of patriotic expressions, and the extent of grassroots involvement. The war bond media campaign consisted of far more than the shallow sell of Madison Avenue. The campaign was waged on both the national and local level, in big and small media: in Hollywood movies and newsreels and 35 mm slides used in local community organizing; in Roosevelt’s fireside chats and local radio commentaries in towns and cities across the United States; in posters designed by renowned artists and posters produced by labor unions, schools, and community groups; in editorials in the *New York Times* and in local, ethnic, and immigrant newspapers. An essential part of the war bond media campaign included local coverage of community events, ceremonies, and drives: photos of African American children dedicating two Jeeps at Eliza Randall Junior High School in Washington, D.C., and photos of Poles, Czechs, Serbians, and Chinese in native costumes at the opening of their war bond booths in Pittsburgh.¹²⁵

The government, members of the media, writers, and artists tapped into a wellspring of powerful symbols, images, and narratives that framed and defined the bond campaigns. Because the stakes were so high—uniting the home front and the war front for victory against fascism—little was left to chance. The Treasury Department, in coordination with the War Advertising Council and the Office of War Information, carefully outlined the themes of the national media campaign and the eight national bond drives.¹²⁶ Teams of social scientists and pollsters employed by the government and advertising agencies continually surveyed the public’s responses and modified appeals accordingly. From 1942 through 1945, the Treasury used more than forty special surveys, many under the direction of Dr. Rensis Likert and known as the Likert surveys.¹²⁷ In addition, social scientists in academia published detailed studies of the war bond campaign during and immediately after the war. All this research, combined with more recent scholarly studies, provides an unusually rich empirical base from which to assess the home-front media campaign.

The Likert surveys tracked the multiple appeals made in the war bond campaigns ranging from savings as a “safe investment” to savings as a civic obligation. The first survey, based on interviews with workers in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, discovered that “most people felt they were buying bonds to help the Government win the war.” A second reason was to “make a good investment for themselves.”¹²⁸ Few people mentioned a concern about curbing inflation. As the war progressed, surveys identified the “paramount” motive for buying bonds as “patriotism.”¹²⁹ Buying bonds provided citizens with a “tangible,” “personal” way to be a part of the war effort and the fight to defend American freedom. War bond appeals contributed to “home-front morale” and “aroused patriotism and a spirit of sacrifice.”¹³⁰ Surveys showed that ardent patriotism blended with a prudential view of long-term individual savings and investment. In a survey conducted after V-J Day, for **(p.400)** example, people interviewed cited “the spiritual value of participation in a common national effort” and the “continuing advantages” and increased financial “security” to be gained from regular bond purchases.¹³¹

In his book *Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive*, published in 1947, Robert Merton argued that the spirit of sacrifice was a prime motive for buying bonds. Merton and a team of researchers studied in depth the public’s response to Kate Smith’s eighteen-hour war bond radio marathon on CBS on September 21, 1943. Surveys had shown that radio was the most powerful way of reaching citizens in the war bond campaigns.¹³² Popular radio programs regularly made appeals for bonds, and stations ran marathons featuring celebrities. As noted earlier, the *Kate Smith Hour* radio marathon, which occurred during the third war bond drive, raised an astounding \$39 million.¹³³ Aware of the findings of the Likert surveys, Merton was struck by the fact that Smith said “*nothing*” about “bonds as a sound investment, a nest egg of security, a promise of good things after the war.”¹³⁴

The keynote of Smith’s appeal was the theme of sacrifice, primarily the sacrifice of the soldiers fighting overseas and the sacrifices of their families back home. Smith devoted fully half of her broadcast time to the theme of sacrifice, in addition to the related themes of civic participation (16 percent of the appeals) and the meaning of family (6 percent of the appeals): “It’s not as if those boys are strangers to us. They are our sons ... and our neighbor’s sons,” confided Smith in her homey voice.¹³⁵ “Now they are braving swamps and jungles, risking illness and wounds, pain and death, ... staking their lives so that you and I may never know the horrors of a blitz or a bombing.”¹³⁶ Over and over again Smith reiterated that by buying bonds her listeners could hasten the homecoming of the men fighting the war: “That’s what war bonds are to every one of us, a chance to buy our boys back.”¹³⁷

Merton discovered that for many people, buying war bonds was not like a normal financial investment, such as buying railroad bonds or stocks. It was more analogous to a collection made in church, which congregants viewed as an “offering.” As opposed to the “profane” realm of economic negotiations and interests, war bonds had a “sacred” quality. War bonds were associated with “blood and suffering and national unity,” and “to tinge such contributions with commercialism would profane the sentiments centered on war bonds.”¹³⁸ “You don’t sell your patriotism,” noted one woman interviewed at length. “I don’t want any prizes for my money.”¹³⁹ Another respondent observed, “What’s patriotic in saving money and getting more for it? It’s my duty.... The boys are doing the noble work.”¹⁴⁰

The themes of sacrifice, patriotism, civic participation, and the fight for freedom were given primacy in war bond slogans, posters, and ads as well.¹⁴¹ Gordon F. Streib, a colleague of Merton’s at the Bureau of Applied Research at Columbia University, analyzed the themes in war bond advertising in the *New York Times* for the first, third, and fifth war bond campaigns (a period that **(p.401)** overlapped Merton’s study) and discovered that most ads focused on the “sacred” values of patriotism, honor, and loyalty.¹⁴² When he broke down the specific emphasis (using the same categories as Merton), Streib found that the majority of ads, 57 percent, appealed to civic participation, and only 20 percent of the ads specifically mentioned sacrifice.¹⁴³

“Back the Attack” was one of the most popular slogans to rally support for the war. I analyzed war bond advertisements in *Life* magazine for the first, third, and fifth war bond drives (the same period studied by Streib) and discovered that 36 percent of the ads focused on this theme, stressing how companies supported the war through military production and how civilians could also support the military by investing in war bonds. The theme of “Back the Attack” was closely connected to two other major themes: civic participation and community (18 percent of the ads) and the sacrifice of soldiers or civilians (10 percent of the ads).¹⁴⁴ Nash-Kelvinator ads exemplify how companies interwove the themes of war production and civic participation. One full-page ad that appeared in *Life* during the first war bond drive, titled, “Nazi Nightmare,” shows an U.S. Navy cargo plane built by Nash-Kelvinator flying over the ocean against a moonlit sky. “Let this be an example, Hitler, of how America is fighting the war,” the text reads. “Men who yesterday made refrigerators and automobiles are now turning out more deadly, precise instruments of destruction than a Nazi mind ever dreamed. And we are *all* in this fight to win—buying War Bonds ... bringing in scraps for victory.... The might of America is on the wing.”¹⁴⁵

War bond posters also took up the “Back the Attack” theme, showing soldiers charging a hill or airmen fighting enemy aircraft accompanied by slogans like “Let ‘Em Have It—Buy Extra Bonds,” “Keep Us Flying—Buy War Bonds,” and “Buy That Invasion Bond.”¹⁴⁶ Many posters portrayed the youth and humanity of the soldiers, with close-ups of their faces, creating the same bond that Smith evoked in her radio broadcasts—that the soldiers are “our sons” and “our boys.” A 1942 “Buy War Bonds” poster shows a smiling soldier waving from the porthole of a ship with the words “Till We Meet Again” written in chalk above him.¹⁴⁷ A 1943 poster portrays Robert Deiz—a member of the elite Ninety-Ninth Pursuit Squadron of African American aviators established at Tuskegee College who flew ninety-three successful missions over North Africa and Italy—with the logo “Keep us flying!—BUY WAR BONDS.”¹⁴⁸

As the war progressed, the theme of sacrifice emerged more prominently accompanied by increasingly grim and gritty portraits of America’s fighting men. The slogan for the second war bond drive, “They Give Their Lives—You Lend Your Money,” set the tone.¹⁴⁹ Posters and ads depicted dead or wounded soldiers or poignant portraits of families that had lost a father or son, accompanied with captions such as “I Died Today ... What Did You Do?” “His Patriotism Is Written in Blood,” “I Gave a Man—Will You Give at Least 10% of Your Pay in War Bonds?,” and “Remember Me? I Was at Bataan.”¹⁵⁰ The cover (p.402) of *Life* magazine on July 3, 1943, portrays two war-weary soldiers walking arm in arm, one supporting the other, who is wounded. Superimposed on the photograph is a picture of a war bond and the simple, bold message “Buy War Bonds.”¹⁵¹ A particularly powerful poster designed by Sergeant Ardis Hughes in 1944 pictures a soldier as a Christlike figure with crosses over his shoulder and a shovel in his hand, with the slogan “War Bonds—Are Cheaper Than Wooden Crosses.”¹⁵² A Nash-Kelvinator ad in the June 12, 1944, issue of *Life*, titled “The Church in the Jungle,” depicts soldiers praying before battle with an accompanying first-person narrative: “I ask only this.... If we must die, let us be worthy to die.... If we must fall, let our fall be not unnoticed and alone.”¹⁵³

The danger and suffering faced by the soldiers fighting overseas loomed large in the public's imagination as millions listened to Edward R. Murrow's radio reports, read the dispatches of Ernie Pyle, and followed the course of the war in their local newspapers and popular picture magazines, like *Life* and *Look*. One out of three men between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five served in the armed forces, and approximately 16 million men were in uniform; 405,399 servicemen died during the war, 291,000 in battle, and more than 600,000 were left physically and psychologically wounded.¹⁵⁴ The war was far from home, but it was not emotionally distant. It was as close as the family, the neighborhood, the radio, the magazine, the newspaper, and the posters and ads that were everywhere. The July 5, 1943, cover of *Life* magazine, for example, pictures six soldiers in military fatigues carrying a simple wooden, flagged-draped coffin past a field of corn.¹⁵⁵ "Somebody has just kept his bargain with you," begins a war bond ad that appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1945 with a big picture of the helmet and rifle of a "kid" who died at the front. It was a "simple bargain," the ad continues. "He would fight, die if necessary. You would back him up."¹⁵⁶

The strong identification with the sacrifices of the American armed forces and of America's European allies provided the impetus to sacrifice and save on the home front. Yet there was a general sentiment of modesty about what home-front "sacrifice" meant. When Roosevelt spoke to the American people about a "partnership through sacrifice," he gave primacy to the sacrifices made by the soldiers fighting the war. "Your Government is asking that you make this sacrifice," Roosevelt noted in announcing the bond program. "But is it a sacrifice? Is it a sacrifice for us to give dollars when more than a million of our finest young men have been withdrawn from civilian life to accept military life in defense of our country?"¹⁵⁷ Magazine and newspaper ads took up this theme as well. An ad for war bonds that ran in *Life* and *McCall's* sponsored by Vicks shows a downed American pilot stranded at sea with the caption, "and YOU Talk of 'Sacrifices'!" The text continues, "Is there any 'sacrifice' you can make to equal that of a man who gave his life? ... To win this war we Americans Must buy War Bonds.... Let's forget the interest, the safety, and the security. LET'S **(p.403)** WIN THIS WAR! ... Every dollar you put into War Bonds is life insurance for our boys. That's what counts!"¹⁵⁸

The magnitude of the sacrifices made by America's allies was a theme emphasized as well. In a fireside chat, Roosevelt reiterated the importance of buying bonds in conjunction with participating in rationing and other forms of conservation: "I told the Congress yesterday, 'sacrifice' is not exactly the proper word with which to describe this program of self-denial.... Ask those millions who live today under the tyranny of Hitlerisms.... Many thousand of civilians all over the world have been and are being killed or maimed by enemy action.... Our own American civilian population is now relatively safe from such disasters."¹⁵⁹ Roosevelt, like the citizens who responded to Smith's radio marathon, cut home-front sacrifice down to size. Sacrifice was not a point of pride but the simple duty and obligation of citizenship. It could be demonstrated in small acts that taken together added up to a larger sense of solidarity. As Roosevelt noted during the sixth war bond drive: "We cannot all fight the enemy face to face.... But there is one front on which all of us—every man, woman, and child—can serve, and serve for the duration. We can all practice self-denial. We can all sacrifice some of our comforts to the needs of men in the service, and yes, even some of our needs to their comforts."¹⁶⁰

Palimpsests of Patriotism

It is not possible to make sense of the media campaigns for war bonds without understanding how nimbly and adeptly they drew on familiar symbols and stories. The multiple overlapping appeals of the war bond campaigns formed palimpsests of patriotism. Like old manuscripts of papyrus or parchment that have been written on more than once, with earlier words still detectable among the new ones, or like cities and sites that bear the multiple imprints of their history, the themes of the war bond campaigns were continually reinscribed with multiple markers, symbols, images, and stories that "thickened" their appeal and connected them to resonant ideas and images of the past—particularly the fight for freedom and democracy. The Treasury Department chose Daniel Chester French's famous statue of the Minute Man as a logo and central icon.¹⁶¹ Posters and ads blended images of the minutemen and World War II soldiers or featured scenes of the battles of Lexington and Concord with slogans such as "They fought for Freedom—We fight to keep it."¹⁶² More than an image, the minuteman and minutewoman was an identity, the names given to the millions of volunteers in the war bond drives.

Abraham Lincoln emerged as an icon of equal or even greater power. Lincoln's words from the Gettysburg Address—"A Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from this earth"—appeared over and over again in giant banners, posters, and ads. Lincoln was the subject **(p.404)** of documentary articles and feature pieces as well. Soon after Pearl Harbor, *Life* magazine ran a huge six-page picture spread of Lincoln titled "Lincoln in Wartime."¹⁶³ The accompanying text begins, "On January 5, 1862, as on January 5, 1942, the American people were engaged in a titanic war. Then, as now, the nation's existence, its territorial integrity, its destiny were at stake."¹⁶⁴ Lincoln's face and pictures of the Lincoln Memorial appeared with other famous quotes such as "This World Cannot Exist Half Slave and Half Free."¹⁶⁵

Roosevelt's image was not used on war bond posters until after his death to avoid partisanship,¹⁶⁶ but excerpts from his "Four Freedoms" speech were rapidly incorporated into posters and ads, most prominently in Norman Rockwell's popular illustrations. Sober text-based ads sponsored by large corporations often incorporated the four freedoms theme or words from the Constitution. "This is the glory of democracy;" declares an ad sponsored by IBM in the January 1942 issue of *Life* magazine, "that a man may think as he will, speak as he will, vote as he will, and worship God in his own way."¹⁶⁷ Westinghouse sponsored a double-spread full-page ad in *Life* showing a painting of the Constitutional Convention with the words "Provide for the Common Defense" in bold letters.¹⁶⁸ As the war progressed, excerpts from Roosevelt's fireside chats quickly became captions for ads and posters with a range of patriotic images.

The American flag was a central and resonant symbol continually reconfigured in war bond posters and ads. One of the most popular poster and billboard designs of the bond campaign was a picture of a huge American flag with a tiny Minute Man logo on the side and a quotation from Roosevelt—"WE CAN ... WE WILL ... WE MUST!" The billboard industry displayed this poster at more than 30,000 locations in some 18,000 towns and cities across the country in 1942, and the Treasury brought back the billboard in campaigns in 1943. Public demand for copies of the American flag billboard was so great that the government printed 4 million small color reproductions.¹⁶⁹ Many ads and posters incorporated the flag as part of a patriotic pastiche or used the colors of the flag to deepen the patriotic appeal of pictures of soldiers, workers, and other citizens. The image of the U.S. Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima was quickly incorporated in the seventh war bond drive, becoming one of the powerful images of the entire campaign. The logo for the flag raising on Iwo Jima read simply: "Now All Together."¹⁷⁰

The phrase “Now All Together” captures the sense of collective purpose that animated the civic thrift ethic during the Second World War. This civic ethic reached beyond the war bond campaigns. It infused many aspects of community life—planting victory gardens, organizing recycling and scrap drives, canning and conserving goods, and rationing of scarce resources. Nearly 20 million Americans planted victory gardens during the war,¹⁷¹ and more than 8 million tons of produce was grown on these plots in 1943 alone.¹⁷² The Boy Scouts alone collected 109 million pounds of old rubber and 370 million **(p.405)** pounds of scrap metal during the war.¹⁷³ Despite administrative problems, most people complied with the rationing of gasoline, rubber, sugar, meat, coffee, shoes, and other goods as a necessity of wartime.¹⁷⁴

No civic ethic is so thoroughgoing as to command universal allegiance. Some people never bought war bonds. Others circumvented the rationing program by buying on the black market. One of the most intriguing features of the civic ethic of thrift during World War II is that it arose amid a rising tide of abundance. The war brought economic recovery and prosperity, and with it came new opportunities to buy goods, go to the movies, frequent clubs and ball games, and otherwise have a good time. Yet people saved, worked hard, and pulled together. As one popular logo of the food conservation campaigns put it, “Produce and Save, Share and Play Square.”¹⁷⁵ The word *thrift* had not yet gone out of fashion, though Roosevelt rarely used it in his speeches and fireside chats, preferring instead the words *save*, *conserve*, and *sacrifice*. Thrift was not yet the hollowed-out virtue it has become. It was resonant with civic meaning—not as a virtue in itself but as a means to a greater good.

The waning of the civic thrift ethic in our times does not mean that it cannot be revived. It receded after World War I and rose again in World War II. The values of savings and sacrifice remain a reservoir of cultural values, buried below the surface, ready to be summoned again if the nation finds the will to produce, conserve, and sacrifice for the sake of the common good.

Notes

I would like to thank James Hunter for his intellectual vision and the way he has fostered a spirit of collegiality at every stage of this overall project; Josh Yates for helping guide the project from beginning to end; the contributors to this volume for their helpful comments on this chapter; Daniel Horowitz and Michael Sandel, especially, for a close reading of an earlier draft; and Meg Parekh, Matthew Cutler, and Amanda King for their able research assistance.

(1) Lawrence M. Olney, *The War Bond Story* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), 2.

(2) . Quotations from Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Radio Address on the President's Purchases of the First Defense Savings Bond and Stamps (April 30, 1941)," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1942), 10:138-41. For a complete set of Roosevelt's speeches online, see the American Presidency Project, University of California at Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>. (accessed January 26, 2006).

(3) Ibid.

(4) Jarvis M. Morse, *Paying for a World War: The United States Financing of World War II*, manuscript (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), 269-86.

(5) . At the peak of participation in the payroll savings plan, during the summer of 1944 and spring of 1945, 27 million Americans participated, with an average 76 percent participation in companies offering the plan. These statistics are cited in Lawrence R. Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1997), 30. A Treasury Department publication cites a slightly different statistic, noting that nearly 28 million workers participated in payroll savings plans by June 1944, with monthly deductions totaling \$500 million. See U.S. Savings Bonds Division, Treasury Department, *The Book on U.S. Savings Bonds* (Washington, DC: U.S. Savings Bonds Division, Treasury Department, January 25, 1984), 92.

(6) . Olney, *War Bond Story*, 105-6; and Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 36-37.

(7) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *A History of the United States Savings Bond Program* (September 1984), 26.

(8) U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt, "Series EE/E: Seven Great Reasons," <http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/sav/savbene1.htm> (accessed January 27, 2006).

(9) <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/po854.htm><http://www.savingsbonds.gov> John Decker in "Neglected Patriot Bonds Still Make Sense," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 20, 2004, 14.

(10) . The argument I am advancing differs from some influential works by historians. John Morton Blum, in *V Was for Victory* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), explores with a critical eye the failures of American democracy and provides an important corrective to the idealized portrayals of the home front during World War II. His discussion of war bonds, however, is flawed in several respects. In an attempt to debunk the importance of civic ideals, Blum's account focuses too narrowly on the role of advertisers and inflates their influence. He argues that the messages Roosevelt hoped to convey about "liberty and freedom" were undermined by the "technicians" and "copy writers" of the War Advertising Council, who were "trained to sell products rather than principles" (ibid., 19). Blum's assertion that "advertising sold the war as if it were fantastic gowns, flat silver, or bright-red lipstick" rests on an analysis of only three ads from *Glamour* magazine, which is not a systematic sample or representative of war bond advertising (ibid., 20, 344). Robert Westbrook argues that appeals to "private interests" and "private moral obligations" trumped appeals to civic obligations or the sense of "political community" in advertisements and posters during the war years (see Robert B. Westbrook, "Fighting for the American Family," in *The Power of Culture*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993], 198). I admire Westbrook's works, but he, like Blum, does not provide any systematic analysis of advertisements to back his claims. For another influential study that examines the tension between writers and advertisers in the Office of War Information, see Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978). In a later section, "The Home Front Media Campaign," I show that civic participation and sacrifice were central themes in the war bond campaign, drawing on studies of ads, posters, radio, and survey research conducted during and immediately after World War II; on contemporary studies; and on my own analysis of the war bond advertising in *Life* magazine and of war bond posters from archives and books. For an excellent, well-researched study of civic participation in the war bond campaigns, see Samuel's *Pledging Allegiance*, cited above. Recent works by historians that focus on in-depth studies of particular communities have stressed the importance of civic participation and patriotism in World War II home-front campaigns. See, e.g., Gary Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); and Barbara McLean Ward, ed., *Produce and Conserve, Share and Play Square* (Portsmouth, NH: Strawberry Banke Museum, 1994).

(11) Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Annual Message to Congress (January 6, 1941)," in *The Roosevelt Reader*, ed. Basil Rauch (New York: Rinehart, 1957), 272-74.

(12) Roosevelt, "Radio Address (April 30, 1941)."

- (13) Alan M. Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America during World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2000), 25.
- (14) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 22.
- (15) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 60.
- (16) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 20.
- (17) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 22.
- (18) . Ibid., 155; Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 33.
- (19) . Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 272; Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 43.
- (20) . Olney, *War Bond Story*, 70–71; Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 262–66, 270, 274.
- (21) Peter H. Odegard and Alan Barth, “Millions for Defense,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 5 (Autumn 1941): 401.
- (22) . Olney, *War Bond Story*, 26–29; Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 67–68.
- (23) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 6.
- (24) “Kayser—Gloves, Hosiery, Underwear—Buy War Bonds Too!” *Life*, November 30, 1942, 6.
- (25) Frank Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War: The Strange Military Career of American Advertising 1941–45*, Charles E. Merrill Monograph Series in the Humanities and Social Sciences 4 (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 11.
- (26) William L. Bird Jr. and Harry R. Rubenstein, *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 1.
- (27) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 29.
- (28) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 94.
- (29) Robert K. Merton, *Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), 3.
- (30) . *Mrs. Miniver*, directed by William Wyler (Culver City, CA: Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1942), quoted in Jordan Braverman, *To Hasten the Homecoming: How Americans Fought World War II through the Media* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1996), 7.

(31) . Westbrook presents a different interpretation of Norman Rockwell's "four freedoms" posters, suggesting that Rockwell translated Roosevelt's universalistic moral language into a "particular moral language centering on private obligations and interests." Westbrook further argues that "this sort of translation is one of the most significant features of American propaganda during World War II" ("Fighting for the American Family," 207). Empirical studies of ads, posters, and radio programs show that the family theme as described by Westbrook is not prominent in war bond advertising. George F. Streib discovered that only 14 percent of war bond advertising dealt with the theme of the family (compared with 57 percent on the theme of civic participation), and Merton notes that only 6 percent of Kate Smith's appeals in her radio marathon focused on familial themes. When family is mentioned, it is often connected to the themes of civic participation and honoring the sacrifice of the men fighting overseas and their families at home. See George F. Streib, "Idealism and War Bonds: Comparative Study of Two World Wars," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12 (Summer 1948): 272-79, and Merton, *Mass Persuasion*. Westbrook does argue that Rockwell's illustration for freedom of speech—a man standing up in a New England town meeting—evokes civic participation.

(32) Roosevelt, "Radio Address (April 30, 1941)."

(33) Odegard and Barth, "Millions for Defense," 402.

(34) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *A History of the United States Savings Bond Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1984), 2.

(35) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *The United States Savings Bonds Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1981), 13.

(36) . Department of the Treasury, *History of the United States Savings Bond Program*, 2.

(37) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 3.

(38) David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 215.

(39) Ibid.

(40) Ibid., 216-17.

(41) Banker Trust Company, *Our United States* (New York: Banker Trust Company, 1917), 1.

(42) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 29-30.

(43) . Department of the Treasury, *United States Savings Bonds Program*, 13.

- (44) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 4, 6.
- (45) . Ibid., 4; and Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.*, 2-3.
- (46) Streib, "Idealism and War Bonds," 274-76.
- (47) . David M. Tucker, *The Decline of Thrift in America: Our Cultural Shift from Saving to Spending* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 91; and Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 29.
- (48) Tucker, *Decline of Thrift in America*, 86-87.
- (49) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 32.
- (50) Ibid.
- (51) . The antecedents of public school thrift programs go back to the common school movement. J. H. Thiry, an immigrant and successful businessman, established school banking programs in 1885, and mortgage banker Simon W. Strauss established the American Society for Thrift in 1914 to support school banks and school gardens.
- (52) Tucker, *Decline of Thrift in America*, 94-95.
- (53) Ibid., 89.
- (54) *ibid.*, 92-93.
- (55) Shi, *Simple Life*, 217.
- (56) Ibid., 216.
- (57) Ibid.
- (58) Tucker, *Decline of Thrift in America*, 96.
- (59) Ibid., 96-97.
- (60) Shi, *Simple Life*, 217.
- (61) Franklin D. Roosevelt to Mathew Hale, November 6, 1920, quoted in Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: The Beckoning of Destiny: 1886-1928* (New York: Putnam, 1971), 642.
- (62) . Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (New York: Knopf, 1995); and Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 258-73.

(63) David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 242, 783.

(64) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 35.

(65) John Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis 1928–1938* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), 341.

(66) Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 626.

(67) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 23

(68) *Ibid.*, 40.

(69) Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 625.

(70) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 284–86.

(71) *Ibid.*

(72) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 86.

(73) *Ibid.*, 87.

(74) Gary Gerstle, “Interpreting the ‘American Way’: The Working Class Goes to War,” in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, ed. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 114.

(75) Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism*, 291.

(76) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 92.

(77) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 204.

(78) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 89.

(79) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 202.

(80) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 88.

(81) *Ibid.*, 88.

(82) *Ibid.*

(83) . For an excellent discussions of the issue of “equality of sacrifice,” see Mark Leff, “The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II,” *Journal of American History* 77 (March 1991): 1296–318, and Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor’s War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 82–109.

- (84) Leff, "Politics of Sacrifice," 1302.
- (85) Ibid., 1302.
- (86) . Ibid., 1301; Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 99-103.
- (87) Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 102.
- (88) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 202.
- (89) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 92.
- (90) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 21.
- (91) Derek Nelson, *The Posters That Won the War* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks, 1991), 70.
- (92) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 54, 78.
- (93) Ibid., 78.
- (94) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 158.
- (95) Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976), 12.
- (96) Nelson, *Posters That Won the War*, 70.
- (97) . For an excellent account of the experiences of African American soldiers during the war and how these experiences shaped African American home-front politics, see John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 6th ed. (1947; New York: Knopf, 1988), 385-410. See also Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (New York: Arno and the New York Times Press, 1968), 306-26.
- (98) Wynn, *Afro-American and the Second World War*, 100.
- (99) Ibid.
- (100) Ibid., 101.
- (101) Ibid., 100.
- (102) Ibid., 96.
- (103) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 138.
- (104) Ibid.

(105) Lester M. Jones, "The Editorial Policy of Negro Newspapers of 1917-18 as Compared with That of 1941-42," *Journal of Negro History* 29 (January 1944): 24-31.

(106) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 176.

(107) *Ibid.*, 142.

(108) *Ibid.*, 197.

(109) U.S. Office of Education Federal Security, "Replacing School Life for the Duration of the War," *Education for Victory* 1, no. 15 (October 14, 1942): 7.

(110) Angelo Patri, *Your Children in Wartime* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1943), 89.

(111) . Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 175; and William M. Tuttle Jr., *Daddy's Gone to War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 126.

(112) Jerald Oldroyd, "Patriotic Fire Burned Bright in Boy's Heart," in *We Pulled Together ... and Won!* ed. Deb Mulvey (Greendale, WI: Rieman, 1993), 42.

(113) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 175.

(114) Jack Goodman, ed., *While You Were Gone* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 75.

(115) . Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 172; and Olney, *War Bond Story*, 20.

(116) Frederick Chesson, "We Built Mount Scrapmore," in *We Pulled Together ... and Won!* ed. Deb Mulvey (Greendale, WI: Rieman, 1993), 52.

(117) Ronald H. Bailey et al., *The Home Front: U.S.A.* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life, 1977), 126.

(118) Tuttle, *Daddy's Gone to War*, 124.

(119) *Ibid.*, 126.

(120) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 266.

(121) *Ibid.*, 277.

(122) Tuttle, *Daddy's Gone to War*, 123.

(123) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 172.

(124) . See Blum, *V Was for Victory*; Westbrook, “Fighting for the American Family”; and Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*. Blum argues that “even sacrifice had a lesser part in the general experience of war than did temporary inconvenience” and that a “lack of idealism” characterized “government propaganda in general,” but he provides scant evidence for these claims. I am surprised how frequently historians cite Blum’s statement that among the great powers, only the United States was “fighting the war on imagination alone,” since the source for this quotation, by Blum’s own account, is one “rueful American” (see Blum, *V Was for Victory*, 16, 21). The hundreds of thousands of Americans who were killed or injured during World War II and the suffering of their families and friends signify an immediate, not an imaginary, form of sacrifice.

(125) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 115–16, 199.

(126) . The Office of War Information (OWI) developed six themes to guide the production of all war posters: “(1) The Nature of the Enemy, (2) The Nature of Our Allies, (3) The Need to Work, (4) The Need to Fight, (5) The Need to Sacrifice, (6) The Americans—we are fighting for the four freedoms, the principles of the Atlantic Charter, Democracy, and no discrimination against races and religions, etc.” This list was written by Alan Cranston, chief of the OWI’s Foreign Language Division, to Norman Ferguson, November 17, 1942 (cited in Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 32–36). See Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 223–39, 260–86, 306–9, for a detailed discussion of the themes guiding the national and local grassroots media campaigns for war bonds.

(127) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 262.

(128) *Ibid.*, 262–63.

(129) . *Ibid.*, 262–67. See also Rensis Likert, “Opinion Studies and Government Policy,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 92 (November 1948): 343. Likert noted that “when respondents were asked why they bought War Bonds, most of them gave a patriotic reason.”

(130) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 262, 272.

(131) *Ibid.*, 267.

(132) *Ibid.*, 260.

(133) Merton, *Mass Persuasion*.

(134) *Ibid.*, 45, 50.

(135) *Ibid.*, 57.

(136) Ibid., 52.

(137) Ibid., 58.

(138) Ibid., 46–47, 76.

(139) Ibid., 47.

(140) Ibid., 46.

(141) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 50–52.

(142) Streib, “Idealism and War Bonds,” 274.

(143) Ibid.

(144) . For this present essay, I analyzed all the war bond advertisements that appeared in *Life* magazine for the first war bond drive (November 30 to December 23, 1942), the third drive (September 9 to October 2, 1943), and the fifth drive (June 12 to July 8, 1944). There was a total of 244 war bond-related ads during this period. (The totals are as follows: first drive, 73; second drive, 91; third drive, 80.) Like Streib, I analyzed the major themes in each ad. The tally of ad themes reflected multiple appeals in ads: e.g., if an ad focused both on civic participation and on sacrifice, it was tallied in two categories. I wanted to be attentive to both the themes emphasized in Merton and Streib and the themes of consumerism raised by historians such as Blum and Westbrook.

My findings strongly support Streib's study of war bond advertisements in the *New York Times*. Streib discovered that 57 percent of the ads appealed to "participation," and I discovered that 54 percent of the ads appealed to this theme. Unlike Streib, I broke the "participation" category into two subcategories: backing the attack (supporting war production and financing the war through the purchase of bonds) and explicit mention of civic participation and community. The most prevalent theme, encapsulated by the slogan "Back the Attack," was generally found in advertisements by companies that had switched from peacetime to wartime production (36 percent). These advertisements reminded people of the war effort, describing how the companies were supporting the military and how, in turn, with the purchase of war bonds, civilians could also support the military. Civic participation, the second most common theme (18 percent), emphasized the importance of participation in the war effort for the sake of the community and the nation. The theme of sacrifice, either civilian or military, was less common, accounting for 9 percent of the total ads. Advertisements focused not on what people were giving up but rather on what they could do to help the war effort. References to purchasing bonds purely for the sake of economic benefit or the prospect of present or future consumption were even rarer, present in 6 percent of the total advertisements in *Life* during this period. Only 20 percent of the advertisements in my study focused on consuming a product with no rationale for buying a war bond other than affixing a war bond logo or stamp at the bottom of the ad. These findings contradict the conclusions of historians, such as Blum and Westbrook, who argue that advertisers generally defined the advantages of war bonds in ways that emphasized consumption or private benefits.

(145) . The Nash-Kelvinator ad appears in *Life*, November 30, 1942, 53.

(146) . Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 36, 44-45; Olney, *War Bond Story*, 83.

(147) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 45.

(148) *Ibid.*, 36.

(149) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 66.

(150) . *Ibid.*, 83; and G. H. Gregory, *Posters of World War II* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1993), 42.

(151) . Cover, *Life*, July 3, 1944.

(152) Nelson, *Posters That Won the War*, 87.

(153) Nash-Kelvinator advertisement, "The Church in the Jungle," *Life*, June 12, 1944, 64.

- (154) <http://www.va.gov/pressrel> William L. O'Neill, *A Democracy at War* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 429.
- (155) . Cover, *Life*, July 5, 1943.
- (156) Calvert Distillers Corporation, "Somebody Has Just Kept His Bargain with You," *New York Herald Tribune*, 1945. <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/wwad-history.html>
- (157) Roosevelt, "Radio Address (April 30, 1941)."
- (158) Vicks advertisement, "And YOU Talk of 'Sacrifices'!" *Life*, December 14, 1942, 6.
- (159) Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Price for Civilization Must Be Paid in Hard Work and Sorrow and Blood—Fireside Chat to the Nation (April 28, 1942)," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1942), 11:233.
- (160) Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The President Opens the Sixth War Loan Drive (November 19, 1944)," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1944), 13:424.
- (161) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 8.
- (162) Gregory, *Posters of World War II*, 40.
- (163) "Lincoln in Wartime," *Life*, January 5, 1942, 50–55.
- (164) *Ibid.*, 50.
- (165) Gregory, *Posters of World War II*, 35, 39.
- (166) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 23
- (167) International Business Machine Corporation advertisement, "The Glory of Democracy," *Life*, January 21, 1942, 20.
- (168) Westinghouse advertisement, "To Provide for the Common Defense," *Life*, February 2, 1942, 69.
- (169) . Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 9. The source for these statistics is Outdoor Advertising Association, *Outdoor Advertising: A Channel of Communication in the War Effort* (Chicago: Outdoor Advertising Association, c. 1944).
- (170) Nelson, *Posters That Won the War*, 122.

(171) Harvard Sitkoff, "The American Home Front," in *Produce and Conserve, Share and Play Fair: The Home Front Battlefield during World War II*, ed. Barbara McLean Ward (Portsmouth, NH: Strawberry Banke Museum, 1993), 43.

(172) O'Neill, *Democracy at War*, 137.

(173) Sitkoff, "American Home Front," 43.

(174) Bentley's chapter "Rationing Is Good Democracy," in *Eating for Victory*, 9-29

(175) Ward, *Produce and Conserve*, 173.

Notes:

(1) Lawrence M. Olney, *The War Bond Story* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), 2.

(2) . Quotations from Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Radio Address on the President's Purchases of the First Defense Savings Bond and Stamps (April 30, 1941)," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1942), 10:138-41. For a complete set of Roosevelt's speeches online, see the American Presidency Project, University of California at Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>. (accessed January 26, 2006).

(3) Ibid.

(4) Jarvis M. Morse, *Paying for a World War: The United States Financing of World War II*, manuscript (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), 269-86.

(5) . At the peak of participation in the payroll savings plan, during the summer of 1944 and spring of 1945, 27 million Americans participated, with an average 76 percent participation in companies offering the plan. These statistics are cited in Lawrence R. Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1997), 30. A Treasury Department publication cites a slightly different statistic, noting that nearly 28 million workers participated in payroll savings plans by June 1944, with monthly deductions totaling \$500 million. See U.S. Savings Bonds Division, Treasury Department, *The Book on U.S. Savings Bonds* (Washington, DC: U.S. Savings Bonds Division, Treasury Department, January 25, 1984), 92.

(6) . Olney, *War Bond Story*, 105-6; and Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 36-37.

(7) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *A History of the United States Savings Bond Program* (September 1984), 26.

(8) U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Public Debt, "Series EE/E: Seven Great Reasons," <http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov/sav/savbene1.htm> (accessed January 27, 2006).

(9) <http://www.ustreas.gov/press/releases/po854.htm><http://www.savingsbonds.gov> John Decker in "Neglected Patriot Bonds Still Make Sense," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 20, 2004, 14.

(10) . The argument I am advancing differs from some influential works by historians. John Morton Blum, in *V Was for Victory* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), explores with a critical eye the failures of American democracy and provides an important corrective to the idealized portrayals of the home front during World War II. His discussion of war bonds, however, is flawed in several respects. In an attempt to debunk the importance of civic ideals, Blum's account focuses too narrowly on the role of advertisers and inflates their influence. He argues that the messages Roosevelt hoped to convey about "liberty and freedom" were undermined by the "technicians" and "copy writers" of the War Advertising Council, who were "trained to sell products rather than principles" (ibid., 19). Blum's assertion that "advertising sold the war as if it were fantastic gowns, flat silver, or bright-red lipstick" rests on an analysis of only three ads from *Glamour* magazine, which is not a systematic sample or representative of war bond advertising (ibid., 20, 344). Robert Westbrook argues that appeals to "private interests" and "private moral obligations" trumped appeals to civic obligations or the sense of "political community" in advertisements and posters during the war years (see Robert B. Westbrook, "Fighting for the American Family," in *The Power of Culture*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993], 198). I admire Westbrook's works, but he, like Blum, does not provide any systematic analysis of advertisements to back his claims. For another influential study that examines the tension between writers and advertisers in the Office of War Information, see Alan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978). In a later section, "The Home Front Media Campaign," I show that civic participation and sacrifice were central themes in the war bond campaign, drawing on studies of ads, posters, radio, and survey research conducted during and immediately after World War II; on contemporary studies; and on my own analysis of the war bond advertising in *Life* magazine and of war bond posters from archives and books. For an excellent, well-researched study of civic participation in the war bond campaigns, see Samuel's *Pledging Allegiance*, cited above. Recent works by historians that focus on in-depth studies of particular communities have stressed the importance of civic participation and patriotism in World War II home-front campaigns. See, e.g., Gary Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998); and Barbara McLean Ward, ed., *Produce and Conserve, Share and Play Square* (Portsmouth, NH: Strawberry Banke Museum, 1994).

(11) Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Annual Message to Congress (January 6, 1941)," in *The Roosevelt Reader*, ed. Basil Rauch (New York: Rinehart, 1957), 272-74.

(12) Roosevelt, "Radio Address (April 30, 1941)."

- (13) Alan M. Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America during World War II* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2000), 25.
- (14) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 22.
- (15) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 60.
- (16) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 20.
- (17) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 22.
- (18) . Ibid., 155; Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 33.
- (19) . Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 272; Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 43.
- (20) . Olney, *War Bond Story*, 70–71; Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 262–66, 270, 274.
- (21) Peter H. Odegard and Alan Barth, “Millions for Defense,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 5 (Autumn 1941): 401.
- (22) . Olney, *War Bond Story*, 26–29; Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 67–68.
- (23) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 6.
- (24) “Kayser—Gloves, Hosiery, Underwear—Buy War Bonds Too!” *Life*, November 30, 1942, 6.
- (25) Frank Fox, *Madison Avenue Goes to War: The Strange Military Career of American Advertising 1941–45*, Charles E. Merrill Monograph Series in the Humanities and Social Sciences 4 (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 11.
- (26) William L. Bird Jr. and Harry R. Rubenstein, *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 1.
- (27) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 29.
- (28) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 94.
- (29) Robert K. Merton, *Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946), 3.
- (30) . *Mrs. Miniver*, directed by William Wyler (Culver City, CA: Metro Goldwyn Mayer, 1942), quoted in Jordan Braverman, *To Hasten the Homecoming: How Americans Fought World War II through the Media* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1996), 7.

(31) . Westbrook presents a different interpretation of Norman Rockwell’s “four freedoms” posters, suggesting that Rockwell translated Roosevelt’s universalistic moral language into a “particular moral language centering on private obligations and interests.” Westbrook further argues that “this sort of translation is one of the most significant features of American propaganda during World War II” (“Fighting for the American Family,” 207). Empirical studies of ads, posters, and radio programs show that the family theme as described by Westbrook is not prominent in war bond advertising. George F. Streib discovered that only 14 percent of war bond advertising dealt with the theme of the family (compared with 57 percent on the theme of civic participation), and Merton notes that only 6 percent of Kate Smith’s appeals in her radio marathon focused on familial themes. When family is mentioned, it is often connected to the themes of civic participation and honoring the sacrifice of the men fighting overseas and their families at home. See George F. Streib, “Idealism and War Bonds: Comparative Study of Two World Wars,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 12 (Summer 1948): 272–79, and Merton, *Mass Persuasion*. Westbrook does argue that Rockwell’s illustration for freedom of speech—a man standing up in a New England town meeting—evokes civic participation.

(32) Roosevelt, “Radio Address (April 30, 1941).”

(33) Odegard and Barth, “Millions for Defense,” 402.

(34) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *A History of the United States Savings Bond Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1984), 2.

(35) U.S. Department of the Treasury, *The United States Savings Bonds Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 1981), 13.

(36) . Department of the Treasury, *History of the United States Savings Bond Program*, 2.

(37) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 3.

(38) David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 215.

(39) Ibid.

(40) Ibid., 216–17.

(41) Banker Trust Company, *Our United States* (New York: Banker Trust Company, 1917), 1.

(42) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 29–30.

(43) . Department of the Treasury, *United States Savings Bonds Program*, 13.

- (44) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 4, 6.
- (45) . Ibid., 4; and Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.*, 2-3.
- (46) Streib, "Idealism and War Bonds," 274-76.
- (47) . David M. Tucker, *The Decline of Thrift in America: Our Cultural Shift from Saving to Spending* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 91; and Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 29.
- (48) Tucker, *Decline of Thrift in America*, 86-87.
- (49) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 32.
- (50) Ibid.
- (51) . The antecedents of public school thrift programs go back to the common school movement. J. H. Thiry, an immigrant and successful businessman, established school banking programs in 1885, and mortgage banker Simon W. Strauss established the American Society for Thrift in 1914 to support school banks and school gardens.
- (52) Tucker, *Decline of Thrift in America*, 94-95.
- (53) Ibid., 89.
- (54) *ibid.*, 92-93.
- (55) Shi, *Simple Life*, 217.
- (56) Ibid., 216.
- (57) Ibid.
- (58) Tucker, *Decline of Thrift in America*, 96.
- (59) Ibid., 96-97.
- (60) Shi, *Simple Life*, 217.
- (61) Franklin D. Roosevelt to Mathew Hale, November 6, 1920, quoted in Kenneth S. Davis, *FDR: The Beckoning of Destiny: 1886-1928* (New York: Putnam, 1971), 642.
- (62) . Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (New York: Knopf, 1995); and Michael Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 258-73.

(63) David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 242, 783.

(64) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 35.

(65) John Morton Blum, *From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis 1928–1938* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), 341.

(66) Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 626.

(67) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 23

(68) *Ibid.*, 40.

(69) Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 625.

(70) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 284–86.

(71) *Ibid.*

(72) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 86.

(73) *Ibid.*, 87.

(74) Gary Gerstle, “Interpreting the ‘American Way’: The Working Class Goes to War,” in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, ed. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 114.

(75) Gerstle, *Working Class Americanism*, 291.

(76) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 92.

(77) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 204.

(78) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 89.

(79) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 202.

(80) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 88.

(81) *Ibid.*, 88.

(82) *Ibid.*

(83) . For an excellent discussions of the issue of “equality of sacrifice,” see Mark Leff, “The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II,” *Journal of American History* 77 (March 1991): 1296–318, and Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor’s War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 82–109.

- (84) Leff, "Politics of Sacrifice," 1302.
- (85) Ibid., 1302.
- (86) . Ibid., 1301; Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 99–103.
- (87) Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home*, 102.
- (88) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 202.
- (89) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 92.
- (90) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 21.
- (91) Derek Nelson, *The Posters That Won the War* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks, 1991), 70.
- (92) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 54, 78.
- (93) Ibid., 78.
- (94) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 158.
- (95) Neil A. Wynn, *The Afro-American and the Second World War* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976), 12.
- (96) Nelson, *Posters That Won the War*, 70.
- (97) . For an excellent account of the experiences of African American soldiers during the war and how these experiences shaped African American home-front politics, see John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans*, 6th ed. (1947; New York: Knopf, 1988), 385–410. See also Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (New York: Arno and the New York Times Press, 1968), 306–26.
- (98) Wynn, *Afro-American and the Second World War*, 100.
- (99) Ibid.
- (100) Ibid., 101.
- (101) Ibid., 100.
- (102) Ibid., 96.
- (103) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 138.
- (104) Ibid.

(105) Lester M. Jones, "The Editorial Policy of Negro Newspapers of 1917-18 as Compared with That of 1941-42," *Journal of Negro History* 29 (January 1944): 24-31.

(106) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 176.

(107) *Ibid.*, 142.

(108) *Ibid.*, 197.

(109) U.S. Office of Education Federal Security, "Replacing School Life for the Duration of the War," *Education for Victory* 1, no. 15 (October 14, 1942): 7.

(110) Angelo Patri, *Your Children in Wartime* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1943), 89.

(111) . Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 175; and William M. Tuttle Jr., *Daddy's Gone to War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 126.

(112) Jerald Oldroyd, "Patriotic Fire Burned Bright in Boy's Heart," in *We Pulled Together ... and Won!* ed. Deb Mulvey (Greendale, WI: Rieman, 1993), 42.

(113) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 175.

(114) Jack Goodman, ed., *While You Were Gone* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 75.

(115) . Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 172; and Olney, *War Bond Story*, 20.

(116) Frederick Chesson, "We Built Mount Scrapmore," in *We Pulled Together ... and Won!* ed. Deb Mulvey (Greendale, WI: Rieman, 1993), 52.

(117) Ronald H. Bailey et al., *The Home Front: U.S.A.* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life, 1977), 126.

(118) Tuttle, *Daddy's Gone to War*, 124.

(119) *Ibid.*, 126.

(120) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 266.

(121) *Ibid.*, 277.

(122) Tuttle, *Daddy's Gone to War*, 123.

(123) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 172.

(124) . See Blum, *V Was for Victory*; Westbrook, “Fighting for the American Family”; and Winkler, *Politics of Propaganda*. Blum argues that “even sacrifice had a lesser part in the general experience of war than did temporary inconvenience” and that a “lack of idealism” characterized “government propaganda in general,” but he provides scant evidence for these claims. I am surprised how frequently historians cite Blum’s statement that among the great powers, only the United States was “fighting the war on imagination alone,” since the source for this quotation, by Blum’s own account, is one “rueful American” (see Blum, *V Was for Victory*, 16, 21). The hundreds of thousands of Americans who were killed or injured during World War II and the suffering of their families and friends signify an immediate, not an imaginary, form of sacrifice.

(125) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 115–16, 199.

(126) . The Office of War Information (OWI) developed six themes to guide the production of all war posters: “(1) The Nature of the Enemy, (2) The Nature of Our Allies, (3) The Need to Work, (4) The Need to Fight, (5) The Need to Sacrifice, (6) The Americans—we are fighting for the four freedoms, the principles of the Atlantic Charter, Democracy, and no discrimination against races and religions, etc.” This list was written by Alan Cranston, chief of the OWI’s Foreign Language Division, to Norman Ferguson, November 17, 1942 (cited in Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 32–36). See Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 223–39, 260–86, 306–9, for a detailed discussion of the themes guiding the national and local grassroots media campaigns for war bonds.

(127) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 262.

(128) *Ibid.*, 262–63.

(129) . *Ibid.*, 262–67. See also Rensis Likert, “Opinion Studies and Government Policy,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 92 (November 1948): 343. Likert noted that “when respondents were asked why they bought War Bonds, most of them gave a patriotic reason.”

(130) Morse, *Paying for a World War*, 262, 272.

(131) *Ibid.*, 267.

(132) *Ibid.*, 260.

(133) Merton, *Mass Persuasion*.

(134) *Ibid.*, 45, 50.

(135) *Ibid.*, 57.

(136) Ibid., 52.

(137) Ibid., 58.

(138) Ibid., 46–47, 76.

(139) Ibid., 47.

(140) Ibid., 46.

(141) Samuel, *Pledging Allegiance*, 50–52.

(142) Streib, “Idealism and War Bonds,” 274.

(143) Ibid.

(144) . For this present essay, I analyzed all the war bond advertisements that appeared in *Life* magazine for the first war bond drive (November 30 to December 23, 1942), the third drive (September 9 to October 2, 1943), and the fifth drive (June 12 to July 8, 1944). There was a total of 244 war bond-related ads during this period. (The totals are as follows: first drive, 73; second drive, 91; third drive, 80.) Like Streib, I analyzed the major themes in each ad. The tally of ad themes reflected multiple appeals in ads: e.g., if an ad focused both on civic participation and on sacrifice, it was tallied in two categories. I wanted to be attentive to both the themes emphasized in Merton and Streib and the themes of consumerism raised by historians such as Blum and Westbrook.

My findings strongly support Streib's study of war bond advertisements in the *New York Times*. Streib discovered that 57 percent of the ads appealed to "participation," and I discovered that 54 percent of the ads appealed to this theme. Unlike Streib, I broke the "participation" category into two subcategories: backing the attack (supporting war production and financing the war through the purchase of bonds) and explicit mention of civic participation and community. The most prevalent theme, encapsulated by the slogan "Back the Attack," was generally found in advertisements by companies that had switched from peacetime to wartime production (36 percent). These advertisements reminded people of the war effort, describing how the companies were supporting the military and how, in turn, with the purchase of war bonds, civilians could also support the military. Civic participation, the second most common theme (18 percent), emphasized the importance of participation in the war effort for the sake of the community and the nation. The theme of sacrifice, either civilian or military, was less common, accounting for 9 percent of the total ads. Advertisements focused not on what people were giving up but rather on what they could do to help the war effort. References to purchasing bonds purely for the sake of economic benefit or the prospect of present or future consumption were even rarer, present in 6 percent of the total advertisements in *Life* during this period. Only 20 percent of the advertisements in my study focused on consuming a product with no rationale for buying a war bond other than affixing a war bond logo or stamp at the bottom of the ad. These findings contradict the conclusions of historians, such as Blum and Westbrook, who argue that advertisers generally defined the advantages of war bonds in ways that emphasized consumption or private benefits.

(145) . The Nash-Kelvinator ad appears in *Life*, November 30, 1942, 53.

(146) . Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 36, 44-45; Olney, *War Bond Story*, 83.

(147) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 45.

(148) *Ibid.*, 36.

(149) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 66.

(150) . *Ibid.*, 83; and G. H. Gregory, *Posters of World War II* (New York: Gramercy Books, 1993), 42.

(151) . Cover, *Life*, July 3, 1944.

(152) Nelson, *Posters That Won the War*, 87.

(153) Nash-Kelvinator advertisement, "The Church in the Jungle," *Life*, June 12, 1944, 64.

- (154) <http://www.va.gov/pressrel> William L. O'Neill, *A Democracy at War* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 429.
- (155) . Cover, *Life*, July 5, 1943.
- (156) Calvert Distillers Corporation, "Somebody Has Just Kept His Bargain with You," *New York Herald Tribune*, 1945. <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/wwad-history.html>
- (157) Roosevelt, "Radio Address (April 30, 1941)."
- (158) Vicks advertisement, "And YOU Talk of 'Sacrifices'!" *Life*, December 14, 1942, 6.
- (159) Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Price for Civilization Must Be Paid in Hard Work and Sorrow and Blood—Fireside Chat to the Nation (April 28, 1942)," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1942), 11:233.
- (160) Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The President Opens the Sixth War Loan Drive (November 19, 1944)," in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1944), 13:424.
- (161) Olney, *War Bond Story*, 8.
- (162) Gregory, *Posters of World War II*, 40.
- (163) "Lincoln in Wartime," *Life*, January 5, 1942, 50–55.
- (164) *Ibid.*, 50.
- (165) Gregory, *Posters of World War II*, 35, 39.
- (166) Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 23
- (167) International Business Machine Corporation advertisement, "The Glory of Democracy," *Life*, January 21, 1942, 20.
- (168) Westinghouse advertisement, "To Provide for the Common Defense," *Life*, February 2, 1942, 69.
- (169) . Bird and Rubenstein, *Design for Victory*, 9. The source for these statistics is Outdoor Advertising Association, *Outdoor Advertising: A Channel of Communication in the War Effort* (Chicago: Outdoor Advertising Association, c. 1944).
- (170) Nelson, *Posters That Won the War*, 122.

(171) Harvard Sitkoff, "The American Home Front," in *Produce and Conserve, Share and Play Fair: The Home Front Battlefield during World War II*, ed. Barbara McLean Ward (Portsmouth, NH: Strawberry Banke Museum, 1993), 43.

(172) O'Neill, *Democracy at War*, 137.

(173) Sitkoff, "American Home Front," 43.

(174) Bentley's chapter "Rationing Is Good Democracy," in *Eating for Victory*, 9-29

(175) Ward, *Produce and Conserve*, 173.