

AN APPEAL TO BUY BONDS
ADDRESS AT MASS MEETING
(Also Addressed by President Wilson)
at Metropolitan Opera House, September 27, 1918

Mr. President, and Fellow American Citizens:

During the next three weeks the people of this Second Federal Reserve District must pledge themselves to furnish their Government with not less than \$1,800,000,000 for the prosecution of the war. It is our share of \$6,000,000,000, and it will be forthcoming. They will be the dollars of democracy - which have had peaceful employment in agriculture, industry and commerce, in education, art and science. From now on they must be dedicated to the service of the army and the navy, for they will be militant dollars; but when this war is ended, these dollars of democracy must be rededicated to works of reconstruction and mercy.

But the mission of these Liberty Loans is not simply the raising of money. We could say to every resident and every corporation in this district, "Your share in this loan is so much," and ask, or maybe require, them to take it. But by that method we would lose the moral and spiritual forces which are behind the loan, behind the war, and behind our men in France. We must not only sell bonds - we must sell the war to all the people of the United States. This is a mission of the Liberty Loan Organization which is of greater importance than simply raising money. We shall not be wholly successful in our work unless every citizen becomes a bondholder, and every bondholder becomes a more devoted citizen. So in embarking to-morrow upon this new and larger undertaking, we must have clearly in mind some things to be accomplished for ourselves at home, as well as what these loans must do in their capacity as fighting dollars in France.

One of our organization called at a little farmhouse in the hills overlooking the Hudson River to inquire if the owner could not buy some Liberty Bonds. He was met by a woman, to whom he explained his errand. She said that she lived there alone, that she owned a cow, and some pigs; that she had some potatoes and vegetables in the cellar, and that she was usually snowed in through the winter, and could not get to the village, and so had little use for money. She was glad

of the opportunity, however, of subscribing all that she had - and she gave the canvasser \$4.00. After thanking him for the opportunity of helping, she explained that she was a widow and her three sons were in the American Army. This illustrates what is taking place in the nation to-day. That woman, who is snowed in in the winter, was thankful for the privilege of doing something - and she had given her three sons! No one at this meeting can make as large an investment as she did. When we have examined our accounts, figured our income and expenses and decided the amount we shall take - let us at least double it. In the third loan we were asked in this district to raise nine hundred million dollars, and raised eleven hundred million. In this loan, we are asked to raise eighteen hundred million dollars - twice the amount! We must make the sacrifice, whatever it involves, of doubling what we did last time.

In New York it is necessary that the literature distributed by our committee shall be printed in sixteen different languages. Meetings are held at which speakers deliver addresses in almost every tongue spoken in the city. In the Third Liberty Loan 856,000 people in New York City alone subscribed \$48,000,000 for \$50.00 and \$100.00 bonds, to be paid for \$1.00 and \$2.00 a week. These people were largely of foreign birth or parentage. We now have a great office in 44th Street, where 350 clerks are employed keeping the accounts of that transaction. The statement has been made to me that the sale of Liberty Bonds by this instalment method is too costly. One might as well say that in time of war it is too costly to run the public schools. It would be better for this country, if, within the next three weeks, we sold \$6,000,000,000 of bonds to 60,000,000 people than if we sold \$60,000,000,000 of bonds to 6,000,000 people. The burden of paying the ultimate cost of this war must not fall unjustly upon any class. These great bond issues must some day be repaid out of taxes and if poverty follows in the train of destruction, how much better that those least able to suffer are aided in preparing themselves to bear it! It would be a calamity were this nation to create a preferred and favored class of rich creditors, who, in the time of the nation's need, received

insurance against the losses that should be shared by all in proportion to their means. It is, therefore, desirable and just that those of small means should enjoy exemptions from taxation which those of large means do not need. This principle is established in the graduated income taxes, and applies equally to graduated exemption from taxes.

A great thing is taking place in our midst, which may have escaped general observation. Many of the people who buy these \$50.00 and \$100.00 bonds came to us from foreign lands; - some of them came to escape conditions which made them unhappy. They doubtless came to this country with some suspicions of their new surroundings. They had been accustomed to close Government supervision and military regulation in most of their daily affairs. Here, in this free country, they have, until now, had little contact with their new Government. They recognize the authority of the policeman on the street, who protects them from injury and restrains them from doing wrong, and they know the postman who brings their letters. Beyond that they have had too little contact with their Government. It has not sufficiently influenced their thoughts or lives. These people came here to better themselves, they have made homes, they believe in this country, and are happy here. We are now asking them to invest in their new country, and to become even more worthy citizens. This is a part of the work of the Liberty Loan.

But the mission of the Liberty Loan is not only at home. The effect of this great enterprise must also be felt abroad. Germany, without provocation or warning, swept over Belgium and into France, leaving behind her armies a trail of horror and desolation too sad and terrible to describe. The most sacred cities and buildings in Belgium and France, historical monuments, farmers' cottages, and crops are destroyed. One of the most precious possessions of the French peasant, his fruit tree, for which he cares as a part of his family, has been cut down in wanton rage. The extreme of devilish ingenuity has been applied, not only to the destruction of property, but to the infliction of needless anguish upon a helpless

civilian population. These are the sights now being witnessed by the great army of democracy which we have sent to France. Let us consider the spirit with which our men view this awful spectacle and see whether it bears not some resemblance to the spirit of that woman on the banks of the Hudson. I have just heard that spirit described. A few days ago I asked an army officer what impression our men made in France. He is a grizzled old soldier, who has seen thirty years' service, a captain now in a section of the French Army which makes small claim to sentimentality - the Foreign Legion of France. His reply epitomized the spirit with which this country entered the war. He said, "Of course your men fight magnificently, in fact they have not yet learned when it is time to stop fighting." And then he described the great thing they have done in capturing the hearts of the French peasants. When these refugees returned to their homes in sections now occupied by American soldiers, they were met by our men whistling and singing, who, with smiles on their faces, tossed the children on to their shoulders; took up the bundles for the old and infirm; pushed the barrow loaded with household goods; patched the fences; cleaned the wells; and helped to straighten up ruined cottages. These men, hastily assembled and trained, with new and strange weapons in their hands, have smashed German troops that have been forty years in the training. Our boys do not learn readily when to stop fighting! In their spare time they are employed in bringing joy and hope to hearts that for four years have been filled with misery and despair. These are the soldiers of democracy, raised in the same spirit in which we are raising dollars of democracy.

The world has been awaiting the test of the permanence of democratic governments ever since the Franco-Prussian War. The day of that test has now come. Our army, hastily raised, under the provisions of the most democratic statute ever passed by the Congress, faces Prussian armies which have been educated and trained for the purpose of destroying the only power that Germany fears - the power of enlightened and free peoples of whatever race. This army of ours, once characterized as ridiculous, is there to meet the test. And is now on its way to Berlin!

The time is coming when our great military effort will be crowned with victory. The work of a great army (of men and of dollars) in the military sense will be concluded. When that day arrives, there will then be disclosed to the world at their true value those motives and purposes which, in the excitement and anxiety of war have not been wholly apparent. Our own purpose can be made unmistakably clear. An unselfish, generous people can well afford their share of help to rebuild a devastated Europe. The sorrows of this war will not disappear until cottages are rebuilt, farms are put under cultivation, and fruit trees are replanted. Cities must be restored and the opportunity afforded to those who have suffered the severest penalties of the war to return to their peaceful occupations with some hope of contentment.

Our immediate task is to raise money to win the war. That we must do. But we can also show our people the bitterness of suffering which we have escaped and others have felt. Our work has a loftier purpose than military victory alone. Germany and Austria have made many and vital mistakes, but their crowning achievement in stupidity was in their misjudgment of the people of this country. They must have analyzed our character by some intellectual formula which they use for a study of the German mind. What they should have used was a stethoscope, and they might thus have discovered the American heart.

On April 6, 1917, this country entered the war, not as a military nation, not with a great army and navy, but with a moral force that is greater than either.

And what we are doing now comes from that heart that Germany failed to discover. Great armies and great loans are being raised; ships built, and the business of the nation reorganized for war. This is being done in the spirit of a righteous crusade. And in the same spirit our nation is taking world leadership for humanity, and it is again in this same spirit that the war will be won. We have been led through a maze of difficulties into the presence of a greater and nobler nation. We have discovered that the altruism of America can survive the brutalizing effects of war. And this great conception of an unselfish people and

of a nobler America has been revealed to us by the unerring vision of the President of the United States. And our appeal is no less to the heart than the purse.

This is the message of the Liberty Loan Committee to the people of this district. The people of this great district have not failed us in the past, and will not do so now! When these things that I have mentioned are done, the mission of the American Army, and of the Liberty Loan, will have been gloriously accomplished.