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Education Service



# Convincing the Colonies

**How did Britain try to keep the support of the people of West Africa?**

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## Introduction

Propaganda is information that is spread to promote a cause. During World War Two, Britain and her allies fought against Germany and the axis powers in a war which took place on land and sea in many parts of the world. Both sides made use of propaganda to try and win support from other countries.

Britain was keen to keep the support of the colonies in her Empire, including those in West Africa, and sent propaganda leaflets like the one in this lesson to try and help win their support.

## Tasks

Source 1 is a propaganda leaflet designed for distribution in West Africa. It was printed in the early 1940s.

1. Your task is to study both the words and pictures in this leaflet in order to work out how it tried to persuade West Africans to support Britain rather than Hitler.

The leaflet is a piece of persuasive writing and uses a number of writer's tricks. See how many of the following you can spot being used:

- alliteration (a phrase where adjacent or closely related words begin with the same letter sound)
  - personal pronouns 'you' and 'your'; Count how many times they appear
  - references to the reader's children
  - loaded words – 'partner' and 'slave'
  - repetition of the key idea.
2. How does each of these help to persuade the reader?
  3. Why is the leaflet illustrated?
  4. Why is the leaflet in colour?
  5. Just like the writer the artist also uses their skills to persuade.
  6. Do you think this would this have been a comfortable place to stay? Why?
  7. How do you think the what the artist has drawn has persuaded you?
  8. Look at the Germans. Describe how they are drawn to make them look bad.
  9. Summarise the message of the leaflet.
  10. Do you think it would have worked?

## Background

During World War Two, Germany and her allies were keen to persuade the colonial peoples of the British Empire to take the opportunity to gain their independence. This would have weakened Britain and some of her allies who also had empires, especially the Belgians, Dutch, and French. For example the Indian leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, raised an Indian army that fought alongside the Japanese against the British.

Similarly in the Dutch East Indies, the Japanese installed a government based upon local nationalist movements that, at the end of the war, forced the Dutch to grant them independence as Indonesia.

In fact, during the war, soldiers from many of Britain's existing and former colonies fought alongside the British Army.

## Teachers Notes

This propaganda leaflet is intended to be used as either part of a study of government propaganda over time, as part of a study of the British Empire running across the three years of Key Stage 3, or as part of a study of the world-wide dimension of the Second World War. In all three cases there are obvious links to be made with literacy and citizenship.

### Sources

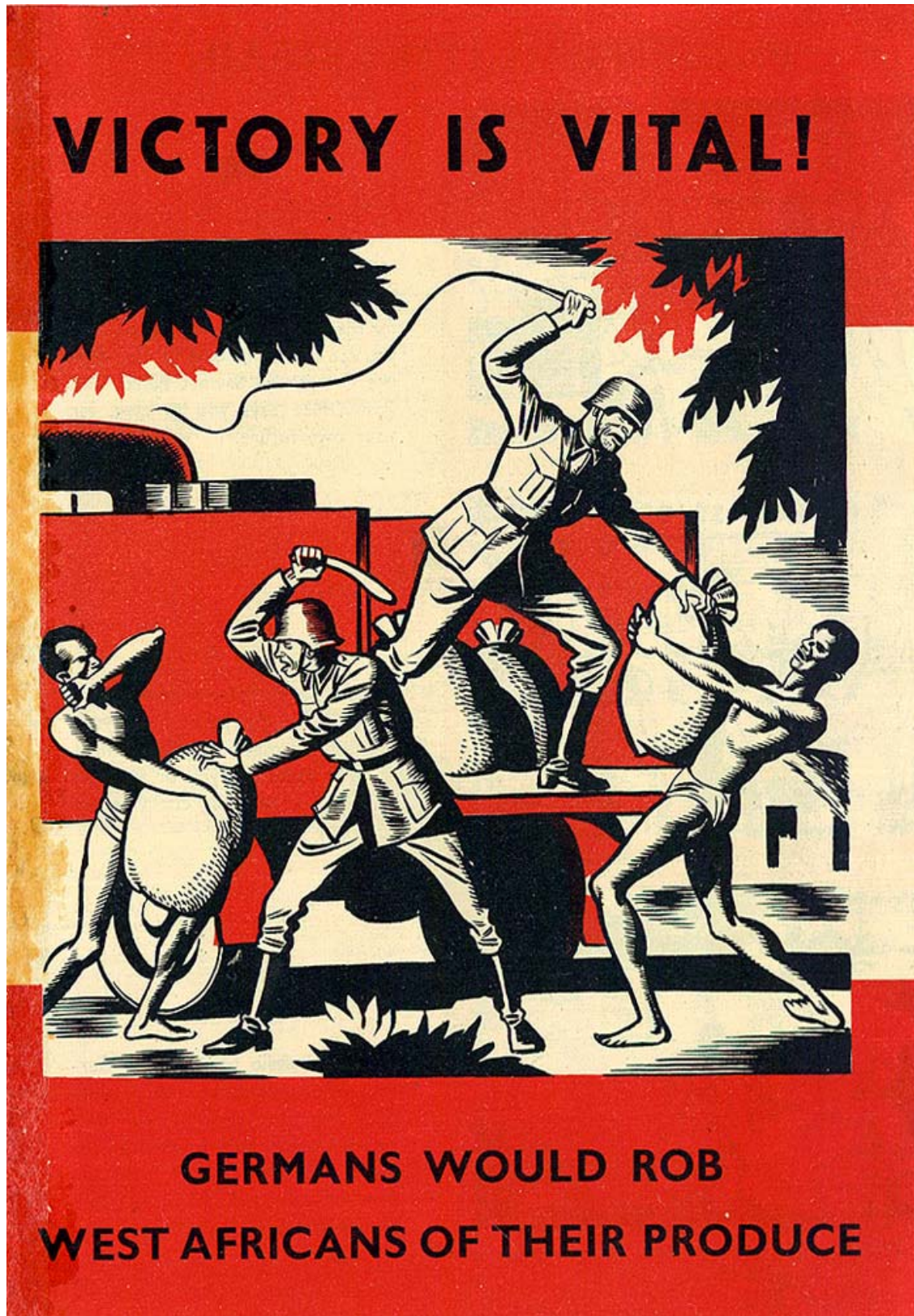
Source 1: A propaganda leaflet designed for distribution in West Africa. It was printed in the early 1940s (INF 2/1 pt. 4)

## Schemes of Work

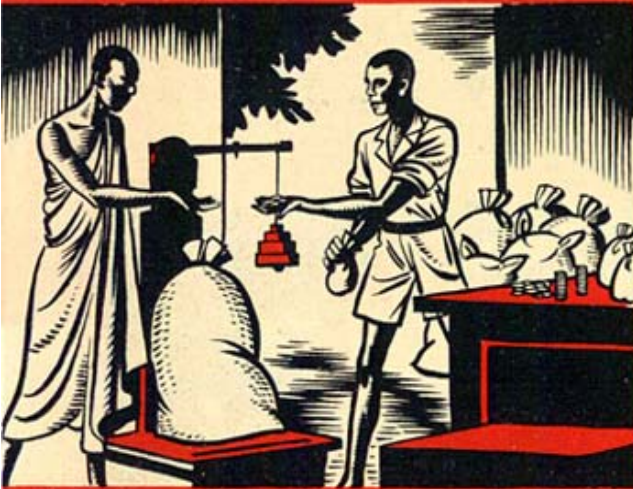
**Hot war, cold war why did the major twentieth-century conflicts affect so many people?**

Key Stage 3, Unit 18.

**Source 1 : A propaganda leaflet designed for distribution in West Africa. It was printed in the early 1940s (INF 2/1 pt. 4)**



## PARTNERS WITH BRITAIN



*You are paid a fair price in cash for your produce*



*You buy where you like, and anything you need*



*Big ships carry your produce to Britain and bring back goods for you*

You are honestly paid in money for the produce you sell. If you like, you can save some of your money in the Post Office Savings Bank. The Post Office pays you to save, for your own future.

With the money you receive, you can buy cloth for yourself and your children, kerosene to give you light at night, food, a bicycle or a sewing machine, or anything else you like from the store.

When Britain has defeated Germany, more ships will be set free to carry your produce to many countries, and your trade will improve. In spite of the war, the British Government is paying you a fair price for your produce.



## SLAVES UNDER HITLER

The Germans rob people whenever they can and they never pay cash for what they take. So you would have no money to buy food or anything else that you wanted, for yourself or your children.

You would be allowed only enough food to keep you working for Germany. You could not build your own house and you could not even have a small business. You could not have bicycles or sewing machines.

You would be a slave, working always for the Germans, from childhood to old age. The produce you bring to market would not be your property at all. You would receive no money and there would be no profit from your work.



*You would not receive cash payment for your produce*



*You would have no money for goods and could not buy where you wished*



*Germans would take your produce and give you no goods in return*



Britain is your friend and  
believes in progress for all



Germany is your enemy and believes  
in slavery for all non-Germans



1260

## Source 1 : Transcript of a propaganda leaflet designed for distribution in West Africa. It was printed in the early 1940s (INF 2/1 pt. 4)

Page 1

Title: 'Victory is Vital!'

Image: German soldiers stealing produce from West Africans and threatening them with whips and knives.

Caption: 'Germans would rob West Africans of their produce.'

Page 2

Heading: 'Partners with Britain'

Image 1: produce being weighed using scales.

Caption: 'You are paid a fair price in cash for your produce'

Text for image 1:

'You are honestly paid in money for the produce you sell. If you like, you can save some of your money in the Post Office Savings Bank. The Post Office pays you to save for your own future.'

Image 2: a general store selling different goods to several people.

Caption: 'You buy where you like, and anything you need'

Text for image 2:

'With the money you receive, you can buy cloth for yourself and your children, kerosene to give you light at night, food, a bicycle or a sewing machine, or anything else you like from the store.'

Image 3: African boats rowing towards British ships.

Caption: 'Big ships carry your produce to Britain and bring back goods for you'

Text for image 3:

'When Britain has defeated Germany, more ships will be set free to carry your produce to many countries, and your trade will improve. In spite of the war, the British Government is paying you a fair price for your produce.'

Page 3



Heading: 'Slaves Under Hitler'

Image 1: a German soldier snatching a bag of produce from a West African man.

Caption: 'You would not receive cash payment for your produce'

Text for image 1:

'The Germans rob people whenever they can and they never pay cash for what they take. So you would have no money to buy food or anything else that you wanted, for yourself or your children.'

Image 2: German soldiers using their bayonets to stop West African people from entering a store that has a notice on it saying "For Germans Only".

Caption: 'You would have no money for goods and could not buy where you wished'

Text for image 2:

'You would be allowed only enough food to keep you working for Germany. You could not build your own house and you could not even have a small business. You could not have bicycles or sewing machines.'

Image 3: a German soldier, holding a whip, stands guard as men load a ship with African produce bound for Germany.

Caption: 'Germans would take your produce and give you no goods in return'

Text for image 3:

'You would be a slave, working always for the Germans, from childhood to old age. The produce you bring to market would not be your property at all. You would receive no money and there would be no profit from your work'

Page 4

Top image: a British soldier shakes hands with a smiling African man.

Caption: 'Britain is your friend and believes in progress for all'

Bottom image: a German soldier beats an African man with a whip, who is lying on the ground.

Caption: 'Germany is your enemy and believes in slavery for all non-Germans'