

## Analyzing Propaganda Posters Lesson Plan

**Description:** In this lesson, students learn to analyze some basic propaganda techniques. Students will look at the way images and words are combined to create effective propaganda messages. Students will demonstrate their understanding of this by creating their own First World War propaganda poster.

### Recommended Grade Range

All provinces and territories except Quebec: Grades 7-9

Quebec: Secondary 1 to 3

**Prerequisites:** This lesson should follow previous discussions and lessons on the First World War.

### Objectives:

Students will:

- develop an understanding of basic propaganda techniques;
- learn how propaganda was used in Canada during the First World War;
- learn to use visual and textual techniques to convey messages by creating their own First World War propaganda poster.

**Estimated Time:** 3-4 class periods

### Materials Required:

- Overhead transparency of two Canadian posters from the resources section (if you have access to the required technology, project the image directly from the web site), or copies of the posters to hand out to students (preferably in colour), downloaded from the resources section;
- Projector (if not using copies);
- Plain sheets of paper;
- Pencil crayons, coloured markers, paint – anything that will help students design a great poster.

### Lesson:

Write the word “propaganda” on the board. Ask students to define the word for you. Either combine student suggestions into a working definition, or provide them with a pre-existing definition.

*Propaganda is the organized dissemination of information to influence thoughts, beliefs,*

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*feelings, and actions.*

Show students one of the posters you have selected from the Web site. Briefly describe the poster by telling the class

- the overall message of the poster (what it wants the public to do);
- any emotions the poster plays upon;
- the effect that the poster would likely have on people at the time.

Ask students to help you with a more detailed analysis of the poster, providing guidance if necessary, by asking them to describe how the overall message is conveyed by the

- symbols and images;
- words;
- arrangement of the images and words;
- colours of the poster.

Repeat this process again on the second poster you have chosen, this time encouraging students to explain all aspects of the poster, including the overall message, the emotions played upon, etc. Again, provide guidance if necessary.

Once you feel that students are comfortable with the concepts, explain that they will be making their own First World War posters. You may wish to provide them with a list of potential topics (recruitment, victory bonds, food rationing, etc.), or have them select their own. Remind students that their poster should have a clear message, and that all aspects of the poster should contribute to that message. You may wish to have students conduct a bit of research on their topic so that they understand it in some detail, and can make their poster as historically accurate as possible.

Once students have completed their posters, display them around the classroom. Have students vote on which posters they find the most effective and why.

### **Assessment:**

Assess the posters based on how well the students have incorporated the concepts discussed in class. Images, colours and words should all work together to clearly convey a message. Posters should be as historically accurate as possible.

### **Extension Activities:**

- Have students make propaganda posters about contemporary issues such as drinking

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- and driving, smoking, or environmental concerns.
- Ask students to consider where they see material that they would consider propaganda in their daily lives. Ask students to bring examples to class for discussion and analysis.

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**Description:** In this lesson, students discuss and develop an understanding of the techniques used to create effective propaganda. Using this knowledge, students work in groups of three or four to analyze posters from the First World War. Groups present their findings to the class.

### Recommended Grade Range

All provinces and territories except Quebec: Grades 10 to 12

Quebec: Secondary 4 and 5

**Prerequisites:** This lesson should follow previous discussions and lessons on the First World War.

### Objectives:

- Students will develop an understanding of the techniques and goals of propaganda;
- Students will learn how propaganda was used in Canada during the First World War;
- Students will learn to analyze propaganda.

**Estimated Time:** 2-3 class periods

### Materials Required:

- Overhead transparency of a Canadian poster from the resources section (if you have access to the required technology, project the image directly from the Web site), or copies to hand out to students (preferably in colour), downloaded from the resources section;
- Projector (if not using copies);
- Copies of posters from the Web site for groups of 3-4 students (a different poster for each group);
- Copies of the Poster Analysis Worksheet.

### Lesson:

Write the word 'propaganda' on the blackboard, and engage students in a discussion of its meaning. Make note of their suggested definitions on chart paper or the blackboard. Use these suggestions to create a working definition of propaganda that includes its purposes and use, or provide them with a pre-existing definition.

*Propaganda is the organized dissemination of information to influence thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and actions.*

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Project or hand out the poster you've selected from the gallery. Ask students to describe the poster. Prompt them for responses, using questions such as the following:

- Who created this poster?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the message of this poster?
- What propaganda techniques are used?
- How is this message conveyed?
- What purpose did the poster serve for the Canadian war effort during the First World War?
- What is the effect of this poster?

Repeat the analysis process with another poster if you are unsure of whether the class is comfortable with the concepts presented.

Next, organize students in groups of three or four. Hand out a copy of a different poster to each group. Have the groups analyze the posters using the Poster Analysis Worksheet while you circulate, providing encouragement and feedback. Keep the class definition of propaganda on display for students to refer to as they work.

Groups should present their findings to the class.

### **Assessment:**

Ask groups to turn in their worksheets. Base marks on the group work, presentation and the worksheet. Look for their:

- understanding of the concept of propaganda;
- ability to relate these concepts to the images and text in their poster;
- ability to situate the poster and its messages within the context of the First World War.

Also check for the:

- clarity with which the argument is presented;
- ability of the group to cite specific examples to support their analysis;
- active participation of all group members.

### **Extension Activities:**

- Have students make propaganda posters about contemporary issues such as drinking and driving, smoking, or environmental concerns. Put the posters on display and have students vote on which poster is most effective.

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- Ask students to consider where they see materials that they would consider propaganda in their daily lives. Ask students to bring examples to class for discussion and analysis.

## Poster Analysis Worksheet

Can you tell who created this poster? If so, list the organization, government or individual. If not, provide suggestions for who you think might have created it.

What do you think were the creator's motives for making this poster?

What is the overall message of this poster?

How is this message conveyed (consider the use of language, colours, symbols, shapes)?

Which propaganda techniques are used? Refer to examples from your poster for any techniques you identify.

What other techniques are used in the poster to convey the message (consider the use of language, colours, symbols, shapes)?

## Poster Analysis Worksheet

What kinds of emotions are conveyed by the poster?

Who is the target audience?

What does this message suggest about the values and beliefs of this audience?

Is the poster effective in conveying its message to you? Do you think that it would have been effective during the First World War?



### **This is Your Flag**

Recruitment poster for the 207th Battalion of Ottawa-Carleton. Recruitment took place at the recruiting office on Sparks Street. The unit went overseas in 1917, but was broken up and its men sent to reinforce other front-line infantry battalions, including the 2nd, the 21st, the 38th Battalions and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Wartime Recruiting Poster, CWM 19820376-008



### Shall We Help to Crush Tyranny?

Patriotic symbols such as the maple leaf and the Union Jack were familiar images in recruitment posters. Patriotism was a driving factor in early enlistment, as many Canadian and British-born recruits flocked to serve King and country.

Wartime Recruiting Poster, CWM 19800283-010



**Heroes of St. Julien and Festubert**

This is the English version of a Canadian recruitment poster. Produced in both French and English, it was meant to encourage recruitment by highlighting the Canadians' heroic stand at the battles of St. Julien (Ypres) and Festubert.

Wartime Recruiting Poster, CWM 19750046-010



**Les Heros de St-Julien et de Festubert**

This is the French version of a Canadian recruitment poster. Produced in both French and English, it was meant to encourage recruitment by highlighting the Canadians' heroic stand at the battles of St. Julien (Ypres) and Festubert.

Wartime Recruiting Poster CWM 19880207-002



### Canadiens-Français, Enrolez Vous!

This recruitment poster for the 163rd Battalion depicts a Canadian infantry soldier standing shoulder to shoulder with a French soldier. This image, made an appeal to French-Canadians' illustrious military history with specific references to famous soldiers, including the Marquis de Montcalm, who had died in 1759 attempting to defend Quebec against British attack. It also highlights the links that existed between Canada and France, and asks French-speaking Quebecers, in an oblique reference to the Quebec Act passed in 1774, if they would prefer Prussian (German) institutions to their own. The unit is named after Charles-Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry, who raised and commanded a French militia unit during the War of 1812, and successfully defeated a stronger American force at the Battle of Chateauguay in 1813.

Wartime Recruiting Poster

CWM 19750046-009



### 150ieme Carabiniers

A uniformed soldier of the 150th Battalion urges enlistment in this French-Canadian recruitment poster. Because this battalion was unable to meet its authorized strength, it was broken up, its troops sent as reinforcements to the 22nd Battalion, the only French-Canadian infantry battalion that served at the front.

Wartime Recruiting Poster

CWM 19820376-009



### The Happy Man

This poster for the 73rd Battalion, the Royal Highlanders of Canada, promises that the happy man today is the man serving at the front. Montreal, Canada's largest city during the war, sent several infantry battalions overseas. The 73rd Battalion served with the 4th Division from 1916 to its demobilization in 1919.

Wartime Recruiting Poster

CWM 19900348-020



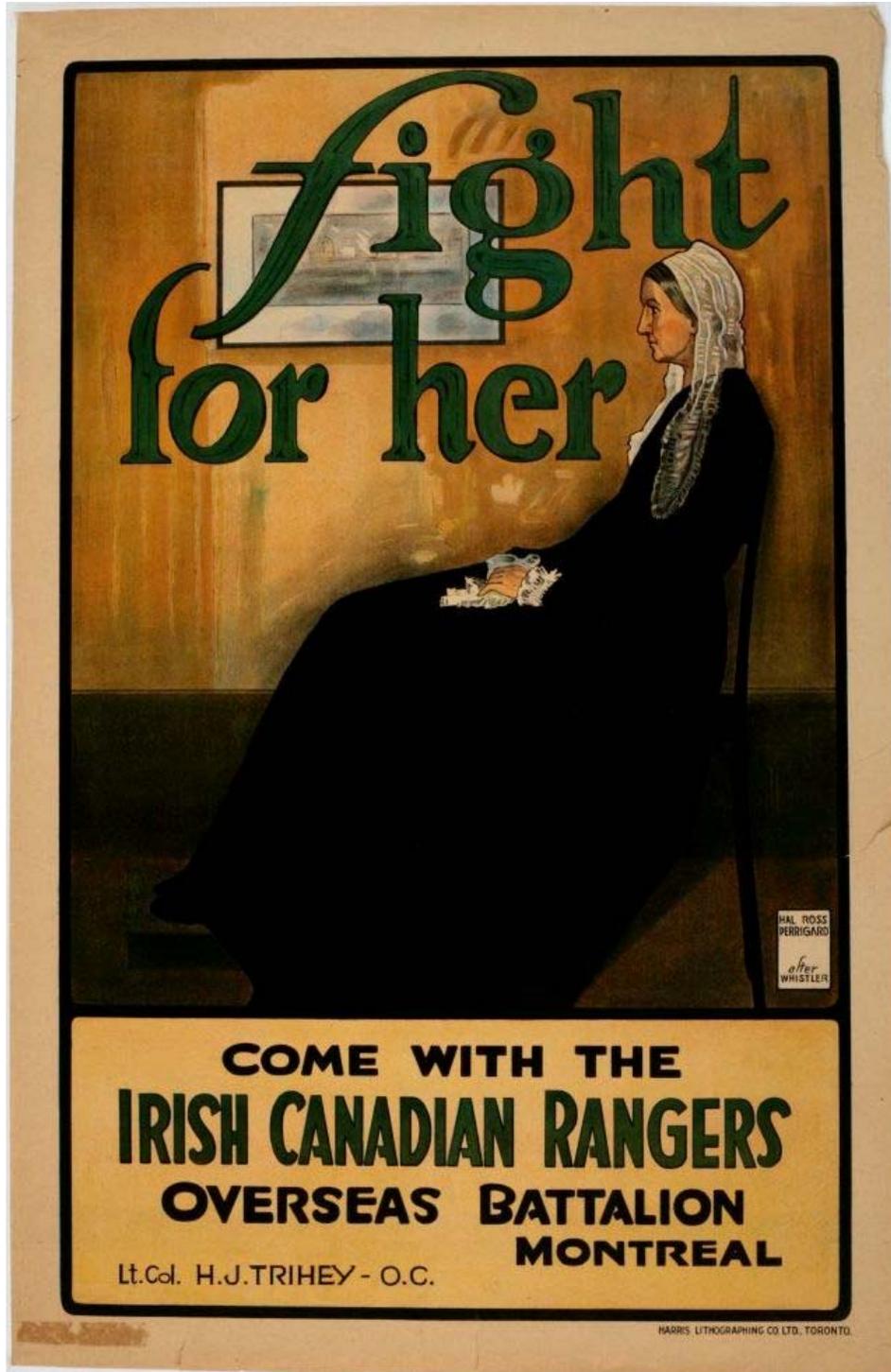
### Help the Boys

Shells explode and German soldiers flee in panic, in this colourful recruitment poster for the 245th Battalion, Canadian Grenadier Guards. Raised in Montreal, the 245th sailed to England in 1917 where the battalion was broken up and absorbed by the 23rd Reserve Battalion. The soldiers were subsequently sent to the front as reinforcements for numerous other front line battalions.

Wartime Recruiting Poster

CWM 19820376-004

Propaganda Posters, Grades 7 to 12  
Resources: Propaganda Posters

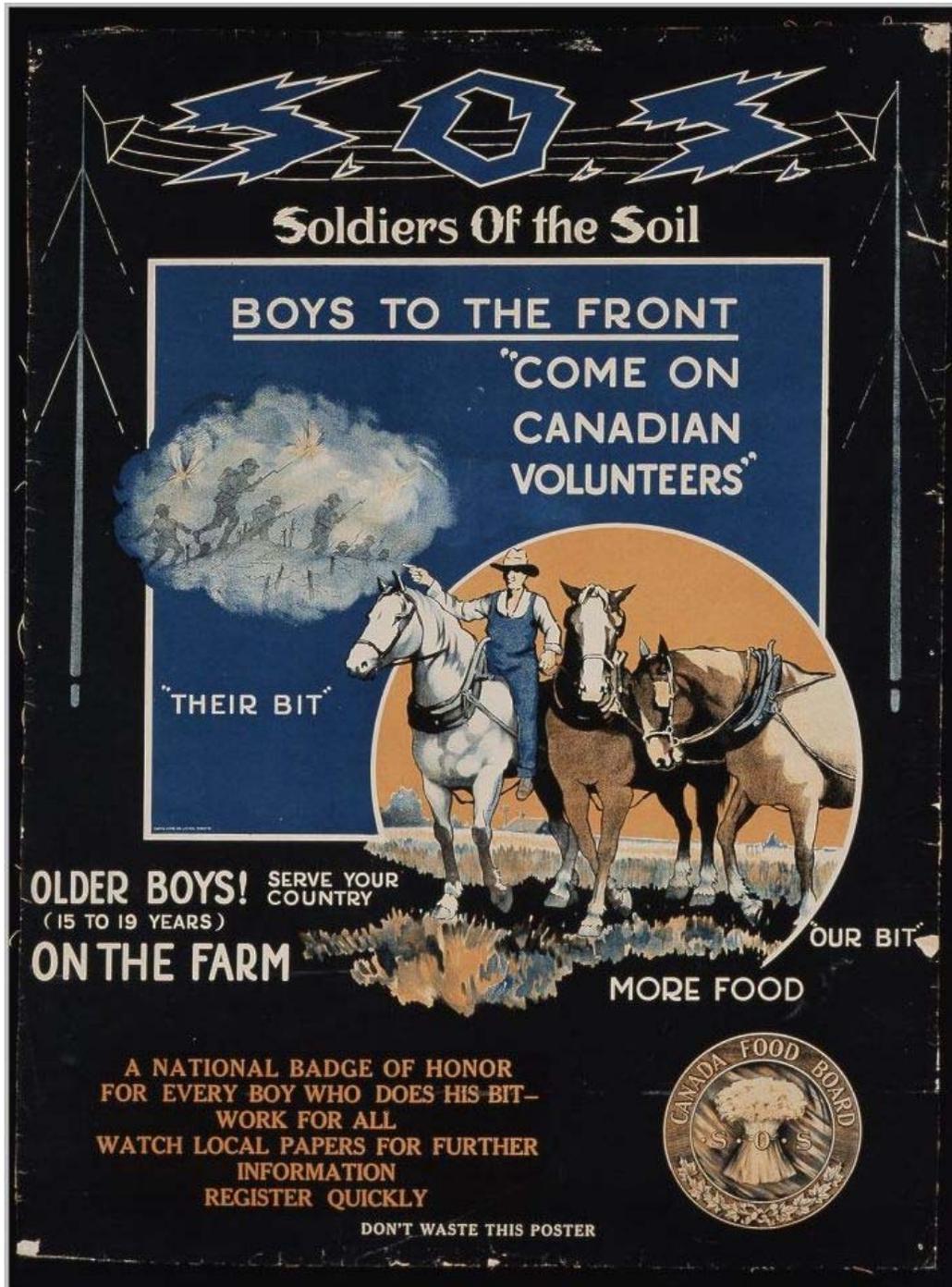


**Fight for Her**

Based on James Whistler's famous painting of his mother, this poster urges men to enlist with the Irish Canadian Rangers and to fight for the women in their own lives. It appeals to notions of motherhood and family values that were popular at the time, and often attributed to this painting.

Wartime Recruiting Poster

CWM 19780473-011



### Soldiers of the Soil

The Canada Food Board issued this poster in a national appeal for farm labour. It asked boys aged 15 to 19 to volunteer their summers as "Soldiers of the Soil" on farms desperately short of labour. 22,385 "soldiers" would serve, replacing farm hands who had enlisted for military service.

Wartime Recruiting Poster

CWM 19890086-885

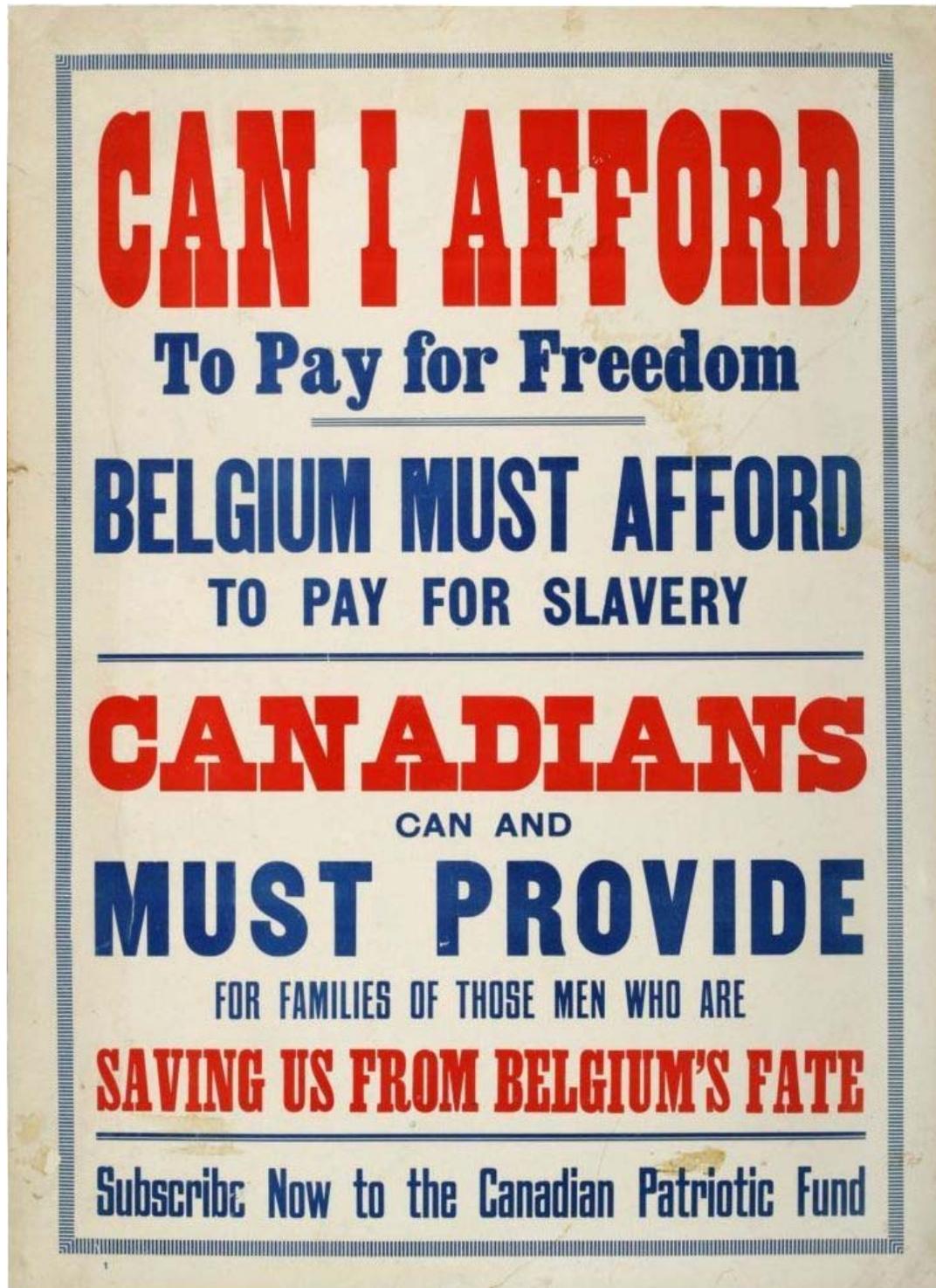
**Propaganda Posters, Grades 7 to 12**  
**Resources: Propaganda Posters**



**Souscrivez a l'Emprunt de la Victoire (Subscribe to the Victory Loan)**

Canada created the War Poster Service in 1916 to produce posters in both official languages. As the war progressed and the need for money and soldiers became more pressing, posters became more graphic and direct in their messages. In this poster, a Canadian soldier pointedly asks members of the public to buy war bonds in support of the war effort. The design was based loosely on the popular and mass-produced 1914 poster of Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of State for War, exhorting Britons to join the British Army

Fund-Raising Poster      CWM 19920166-186



**Canadians Must Provide**

Appeals from the Canadian Patriotic Fund (CPF) used the hardships of Belgium, most of which was under German occupation, to elicit donations from Canadians. By war's end, the CPF had raised nearly \$50 million through voluntary efforts in order to care for the families of soldiers overseas.

Fund-Raising Poster CWM 19890086-884

Propaganda Posters, Grades 7 to 12  
Resources: Propaganda Posters



**Once a German - Always a German!**

An outrageous anti-German propaganda poster that draws upon stories of the atrocities committed by Germans during the war, from the occupation of Belgium, the bayoneting of a baby, the execution of civilians, the murder of Nurse Edith Cavell, and unrestricted submarine warfare that targeted innocent civilian ships. This British poster encouraged citizens not to hire Germans or buy German goods.

Propaganda Poster CWM 19720121-086

**Propaganda Posters, Grades 7 to 12**  
**Resources: Propaganda Posters**