

*In order to increase public awareness of the seven common propaganda devices identified by the Institute of Propaganda Analysis (see Charles Fleming's article in this issue), its directors devised seven corresponding pictograms. The excerpts below from The Fine Art of Propaganda (Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1939), indicate the sources of the icons and the significance of the labels applied to the "tricks of the propaganda trade." A text adapted from contemporary political sources follows. To illustrate the technique of propaganda "micro-analysis," the editor has inserted icons at the appropriate positions. —JK*

## **THE ICONOGRAPHY OF PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS**

SOME OF THE DEVICES now so subtly and effectively used by good and bad propagandists are as old as language. All have been used in one form or another by all of us in our daily dealings with each other.

Propagandists have seized upon these methods we ordinarily use to convince each other, have analyzed and refined them, and have experimented with them until these homely devices of folk origin have been developed into tremendously powerful weapons for the swaying of popular opinions and actions.

We have all emphasized our disapproval of a person, group, or thing by calling it a bad name. We have all tried to reverse this process in the case of something for which we have had admiration by labeling it with a "virtue word" or

"glittering generality." And thus, we have all used two of the propaganda devices.

In order to avoid technical language, in order to make our findings more generally useful, the popular terms for these propagandistic devices have been retained here. Considerable experience with them by scientific analysts, business men, teachers, and college and high school students indicates that they have the two necessary qualifications for our purpose: *They are workable. Anyone can use them.*

The chief devices used then in popular argument and by professional propagandists — together with our symbols for them — are:

1. *Name Calling*, symbolized by the ancient sign of condemnation used by the Vestal Virgins in the Roman Coliseum, a thumb turned down.



2. *Glittering Generality*, symbolized by a glittering gem that may or may not have its apparent value.



3. *Transfer*, symbolized by a mask such as was worn by ancient Greek and Roman actors.



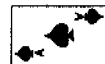
4. *Testimonial*, symbolized by a seal and ribbons, the "stamp of authority."



5. *Plain Folks*, symbolized by that traditional analogue for an old friend, an old shoe.



6. *Card Stacking*, symbolized by an ace of spades, a card traditionally used to signify treachery.



7. *Band Wagon*, symbolized by a bandmaster's hat and baton, such as were once used on old-fashioned band wagons.



To explain fully the uses to which these simple-sounding devices are being put by professional propagandists requires more than a brief definition.

But a brief definition can give the gist of each. It is therefore possible and certainly desirable to get the following thumbnail descriptions of each before us:



*Name Calling* — giving an idea a bad label — is used to make us reject and condemn the idea without examining the evidence.



*Glittering Generality* — associating something with a "virtue word" — is used to make us accept and approve the thing without examining the evidence.



*Transfer* carries the authority, sanction, and prestige of something respected and revered over to something else in order to make the latter acceptable; or it carries authority, sanction, and disapproval to cause us to reject and disapprove something the propagandist would have us reject and disapprove.



*Testimonial* consists in having some respected or hated person say that a given idea or program or product or person is good or bad.



*Plain Folks* is the method by which a speaker attempts to convince his audience that he and his ideas are good because they are "of the people," the "plain folks."



*Card Stacking* involves the selection and use of facts or falsehoods, illustrations or distractions, and logical or illogical statements in order to give the best or the worst possible case for an idea, program, person, or product.



*Band Wagon* has as its theme, "Everybody — at least all of us — is doing it"; with it, the propagandist attempts

to convince us that all members of a group to which we belong are accepting his program and that we must therefore follow our crowd and "jump on the band wagon."

Once we know these devices well enough to spot examples of their use, we have taken a great and long step towards freeing our minds from control by propagandists. It is not the only step necessary, but it is certainly the most important.

*Once we know that a speaker or writer is using one of these propaganda devices in an attempt to convince us of an idea, we can separate the device from the idea and see what the idea amounts to on its own merits.* The idea may be good or bad when judged in the light of available evidence and in terms of our own experience and interests. But a knowledge of these seven devices permits us to investigate the idea. It keeps us from having our thought processes blocked by a trick. It keeps us from being fooled.

In testing each statement of a propagandist, then, we merely have to ask ourselves: *When stripped of tricks, what is he trying to sell us? Is it something we want?*

