

# Manipulative Techniques of Propaganda

---

CDSn4104 8 November, 2023

Miloš Gregor





# today's lecture

---

- ▶ differences between propaganda and political marketing
- ▶ components of propaganda
- ▶ manipulative techniques





# part one:

---

propaganda vs. political marketing

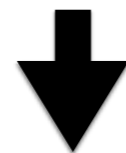


# propaganda vs. political marketing

---

## propaganda

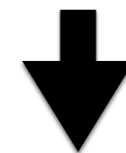
replace education  
 tries to convince no matter what  
 (usually) in authoritarian regimes  
 secret  
 true purpose is hidden



you **do not know** it when you face it

## political marketing

commercialized approach  
 refers to consumer approach  
 only in democracy  
 public  
 everyone knows the message



you **know** it when you face it



# propaganda vs. political marketing

---

spinning & spin-doctoring?



# propaganda vs. political marketing

---

- ▶ term spin-doctor was created in the U.S. in 1980's
- ▶ management of how political messages are going to be interpreted
- ▶ to 'spin' = to give the policy, personality or event a favorable gloss
- ▶ sinister connotation (manipulator, propagandist, conspirator)

*(for more info: McNair 2000, 2005; Maloney 2000)*

- ▶ unscientific neologism coined by journalists
- ▶ neither scientific concept  
nor the self-labeling of a branch
- ▶ demonization of spin as a journalistic  
counterstrategy





# Dustin HOFFMAN     Robert DE NIRO

A Hollywood producer. A Washington spin-doctor. When they get together, they can make you believe anything.



"OUTRAGEOUS  
FUN!  
Hoffman  
hasn't  
been this  
hilarious since  
"Hushie"  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A COMIC  
TRIUMPH."  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"A GLOSSY  
CYNICAL  
BLACK COMEDY!  
WICKED  
SMART SATIRE"  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"HILARIOUS  
and impossible to resist"  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

A DAVID LEVISON FILM

# Wag the dog

A comedy about truth, justice  
and other special effects.



© 1999 New Line Cinema. All rights reserved. WAG THE DOG is a trademark of New Line Cinema. Distributed by New Line Home Video. New Line Cinema logo.



**Sorry  
Iraq.**





## part two:

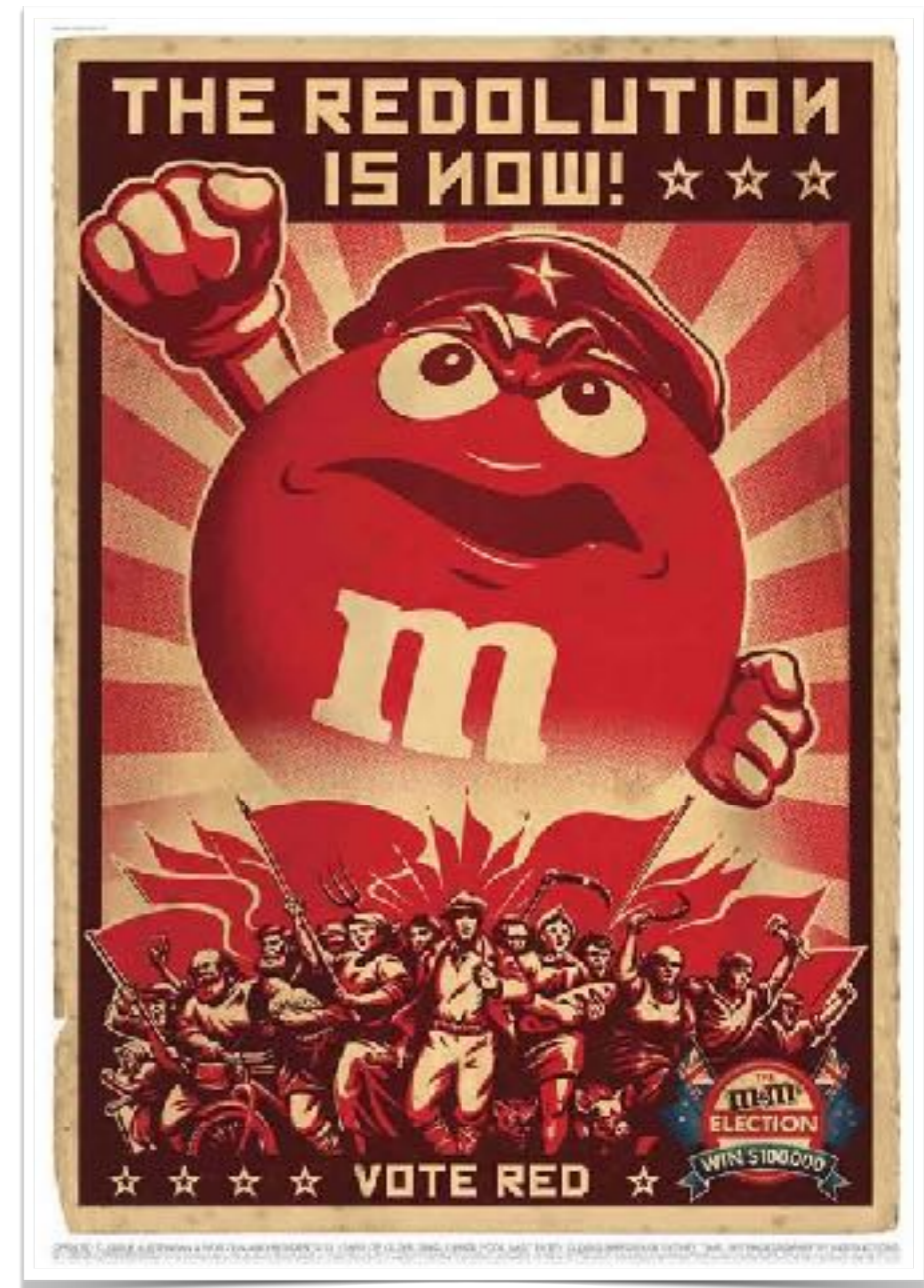
---

components of propaganda



# how does propaganda work

- ▶ modern propaganda draws upon techniques and strategies used in advertising
- ▶ simplifies
- ▶ always biased
- ▶ geared to achieving a particular end
- ▶ employs symbols
- ▶ employed by governmental and private organizations





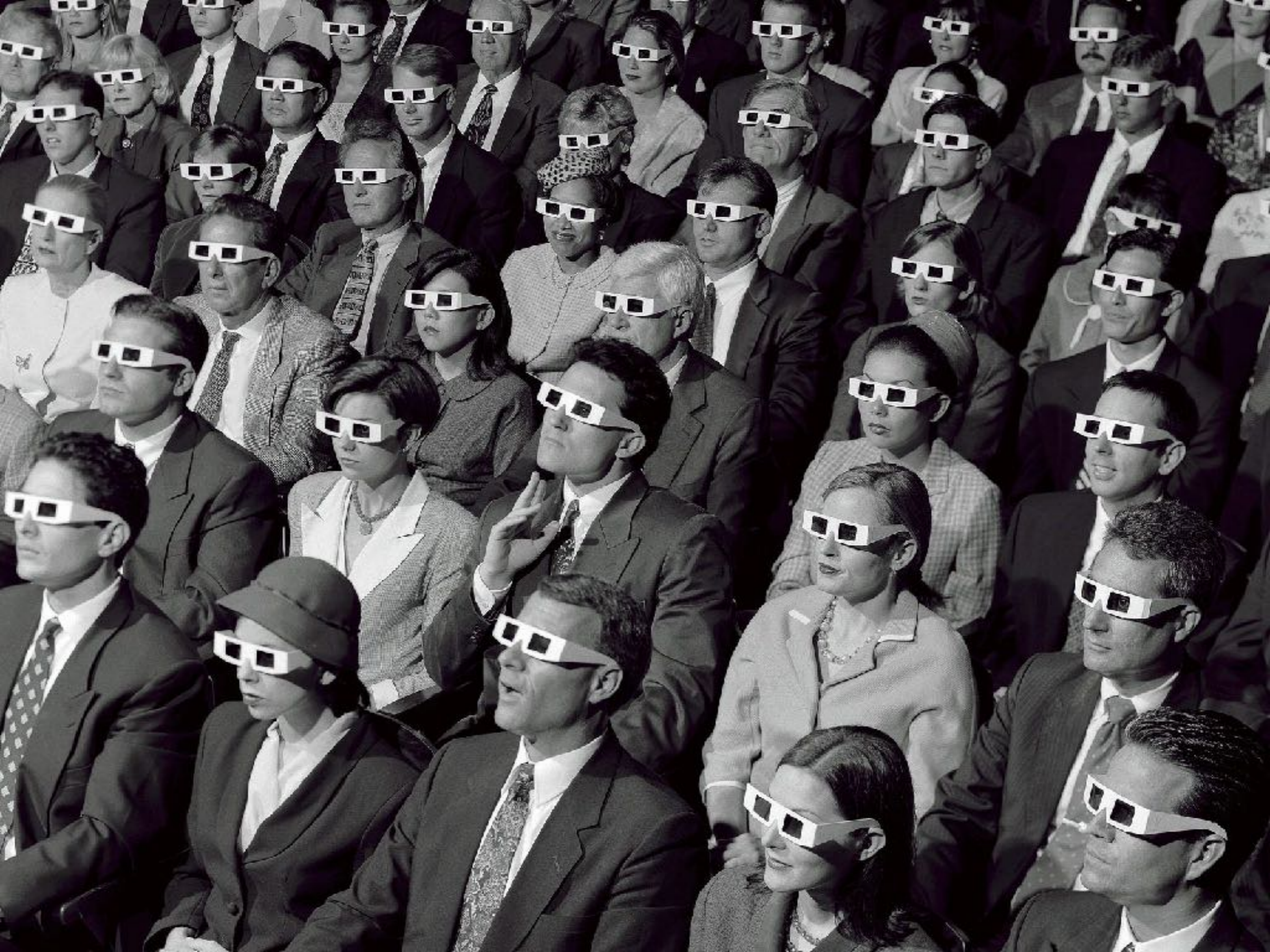
# how does propaganda work

---

- ▶ weapon in the arsenal of mass persuasion & information warfare
- ▶ replace education, but ... !
- ▶ danger when competing voices are silenced









- ▶ rhetoric is emotional persuasion
- ▶ form of reasoning
- ▶ pseudo arguments
- ▶ undergoing revival
- ▶ metaphor

## role of lies?

- ▶ importance of the myth
- ▶ a story with key values
- ▶ myth, nation, race and martyrdom
- ▶ symbol – first emotional value
- ▶ cheap form of propaganda
- ▶ do not underestimate symbols
- ▶ attractive to people with lesser capacity of abstract thought

# components of propaganda – symbolism

---

*Symbols are not universally decoded.*





# components of propaganda – symbolism

---



# components of propaganda – symbolism

---



- ▶ visual receptors
- ▶ emotional connections
- ▶ short clear message
- ▶ image is always stronger





# efficient propaganda

---

UNITED we are stronger,  
UNITED we will win





# efficient propaganda





# key foundations of propaganda

---

- ▶ emotions
- ▶ ideology
- ▶ values
- ▶ hyperbole





## part three:

---

manipulative techniques





# manipulative techniques

---

1. assertion
2. bandwagon
3. blaming
4. fabrication
5. false dilemma, lesser of two evils
6. labelling / name calling
7. fear appeal
8. card stacking
9. transfer
10. plain folk





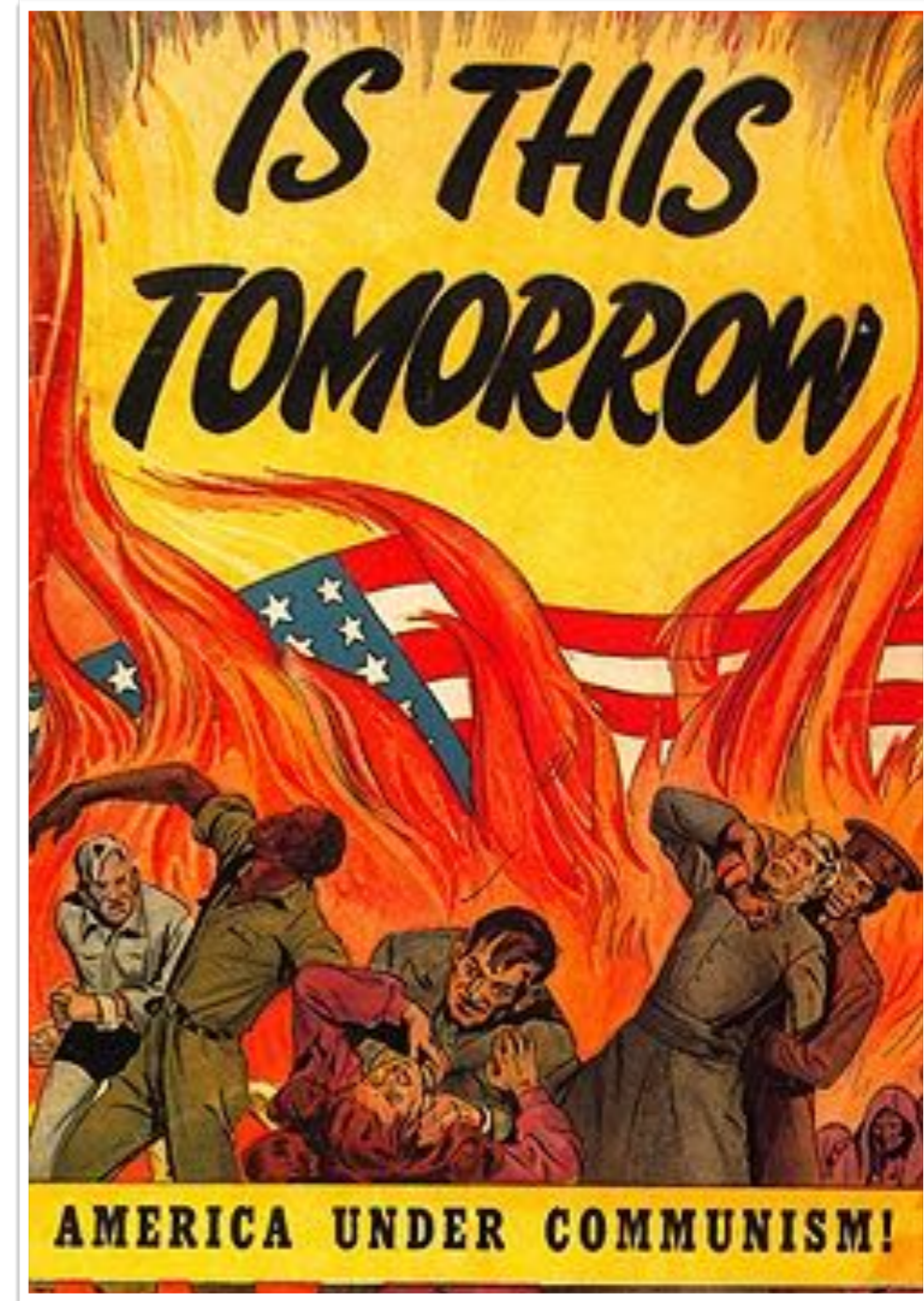
## 1. assertion

- ▶ simplest form of propaganda
- ▶ simply stating a debatable idea as a fact
- ▶ no explanation or justification

### ***examples:***

*The Middle East will never be at peace.*

*A record number of hurricanes have been caused by global warming this year.*



## 2. bandwagon

- ▶ people like to belong to a group
- ▶ especially to a successful & popular group

### **examples:**

*Five million members and growing!*

*Everybody's doing it!*





## 3. blaming

- ▶ people don't want to be responsible
- ▶ better to say someone else is cause

### **example:**

*Migrant crisis started when Merkel invited all illegal immigrants.*



## 4. fabrication

- ▶ fiction, fabrication
- ▶ lies people tend to believe
- ▶ mainstream media lie to you,  
we are telling truth

### **example:**

*There are weapons of mass  
destruction in Iraq.*





## 5. false dilemma / lesser of two evils

- ▶ black'n'white thinking, false dichotomy, false choice, etc.
- ▶ reducing a complex of argument
- ▶ only one point is appropriate
- ▶ a simple matter of either / or

### ***example:***

*You are either an ally or an enemy.*



## 6. labelling / name calling

- ▶ negative words to disparage an enemy
- ▶ used to replace of logical arguments
- ▶ appealing to emotions
- ▶ personal level

### **example:**

*Clearly, my opponent's bleeding-heart liberalism will not help to solve the current crisis.*



## 7. fear appeal

- ▶ attempts to create support for an idea
- ▶ prejudice
- ▶ disaster element

### **examples:**

*Those who do not participate will  
burn in hell.*

*Big brother is watching you!*





## 8. card stacking

- ▶ author's opinion
- ▶ problem especially in news
- ▶ unfair advantage to one point of view

### ***example:***

*Our program to solve the economic crisis is much more effective than the opponents' ones.*





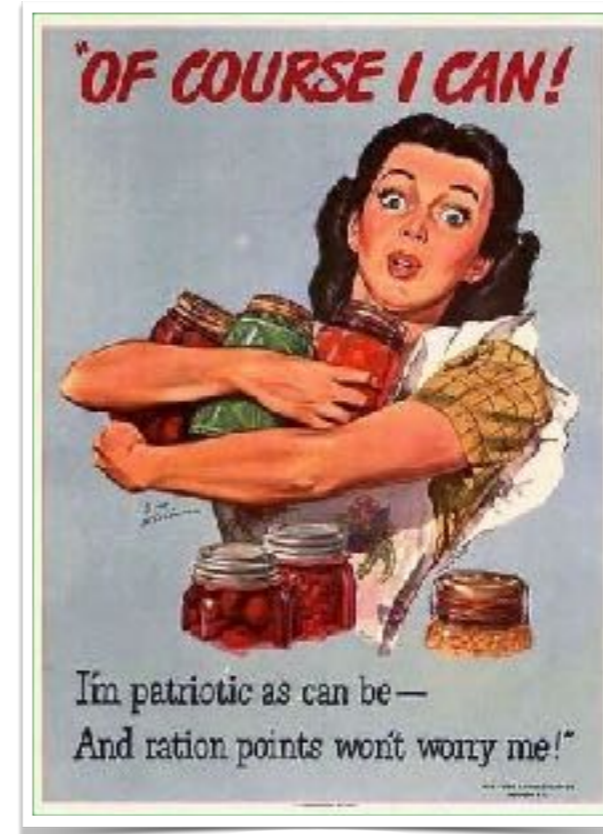
## 9. transfer

- ▶ association, false connection
- ▶ transfer of feeling and association

### **examples:**

*A candidate for office addresses allegations of wrongdoing in front of a house of worship while wearing a religious symbol on his lapel pin.*

*A dove signals peace.*



## 10. plain folk

- ▶ regular people's values  
(family, patriotism, etc.)
- ▶ insider view
- ▶ words such as *home, children, dinner table*







**Thank you.**

 [mgregor@fss.muni.cz](mailto:mgregor@fss.muni.cz)