

This clip is from *Eye of Vichy* (*L'oeil de Vichy*)—by Claude Chabrol and narrated by Brian Cox (in the English version)—a documentary compiling historical newsreels from Nazi-Germany and Vichy-France.

The film depicts, among other things, how the Vichy government collaborated with Hitler during the war.

In this scene, Vichy animators use Hollywood cartoon characters (like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck) to send a message to French citizens:

*Are the Allies helping or harming you?*

This clip is part of a larger documentary about life in Vichy France. These are the types of images and information which Nazi propaganda-makers created for Vichy-France citizens to see and hear.

The documentary gives us an irreplaceable view of what living in Vichy France must have been like. Although the historic footage may have been mostly forgotten, before the documentary's compilers found and used it, the footage brings to life a time never experienced by many of its current viewers.

Keep in mind that these images and pieces of historical footage were not just created by Nazis. They were also created by French people who were Nazi-collaborators.

The Vichy government, in France, was a puppet government headed by France's most-famous hero of the First World War (Field Marshall Petain). People in that government, working with their Nazi overlords, wanted to turn the tide of public opinion—and public emotion—against the Allies and in favor of the Nazis.

Using their view of the world (and events), propaganda producers create a kind of alternative reality. They transform people who are trying to help the French into the enemy and people who were harming the French into benefactors.

This type of manipulation is what propaganda is all about.

In the “Eye of Vichy,” we see historical footage and images which incorporate different (and typical) approaches to political propaganda:

- Sweet Propaganda—these are the words and the scenes which make everyone “feel good” when we see and hear them. Mostly this is the “stuff” which makes us proud of our own countries and of our own culture. It helps us to believe we are “on top” of things.
- Horror/Hate Propaganda—these are the words and the scenes which cause people to get upset, to become angry and to become afraid. Mostly this is the “stuff” which causes us to get scared and to despise what we see. Nazis were particularly adept at this, alternating scenes of rats with scenes of Jewish people.
- Warrior/Event Propaganda—these are the words and the scenes which cause people to rise-up against an issue, or a stance or an event. It's propaganda which purports to be news but is actually an effort to convince watchers and hearers to support a position they may not otherwise support. Of the various types of propaganda, this approach is the most insidious (and, often, the most effective).

Nazi newsreels, during World War II, frequently used this warrior/event approach in reporting “the news.” When it is especially effective, this kind of propaganda not only distorts the news (and events), it causes people to believe the distortions are true (and real).

What type of political propaganda does this clip display?

Credits:

Clip from *Eye of Vichy* (*L'oeil de Vichy*), released in 1993, online courtesy Archives.org.

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Vichy-France-Propaganda-Cartoon>