



Casablanca - Sequence 1

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Introduction

- ✱ First screened in November 1942
- ✱ Main players in the film are the Nazis, the Vichy government and the resistance.
- ✱ Vichy France: power sharing between the Nazis and the southern part of France led by Marshal Petain.
- ✱ Northern France was occupied by the Germans while Vichy France - a German client state - remained 'free' in the early years of the war.



America

- ✱ America had joined the war in December 1941. American isolationism was still an issue.
- ✱ America was a nation of immigrants who hoped to leave behind European troubles.
- ✱ 112,000 Americans had died in WWI, and at the outbreak of WWII, many Americans believed Europeans should leave Europeans to fight their own battles.



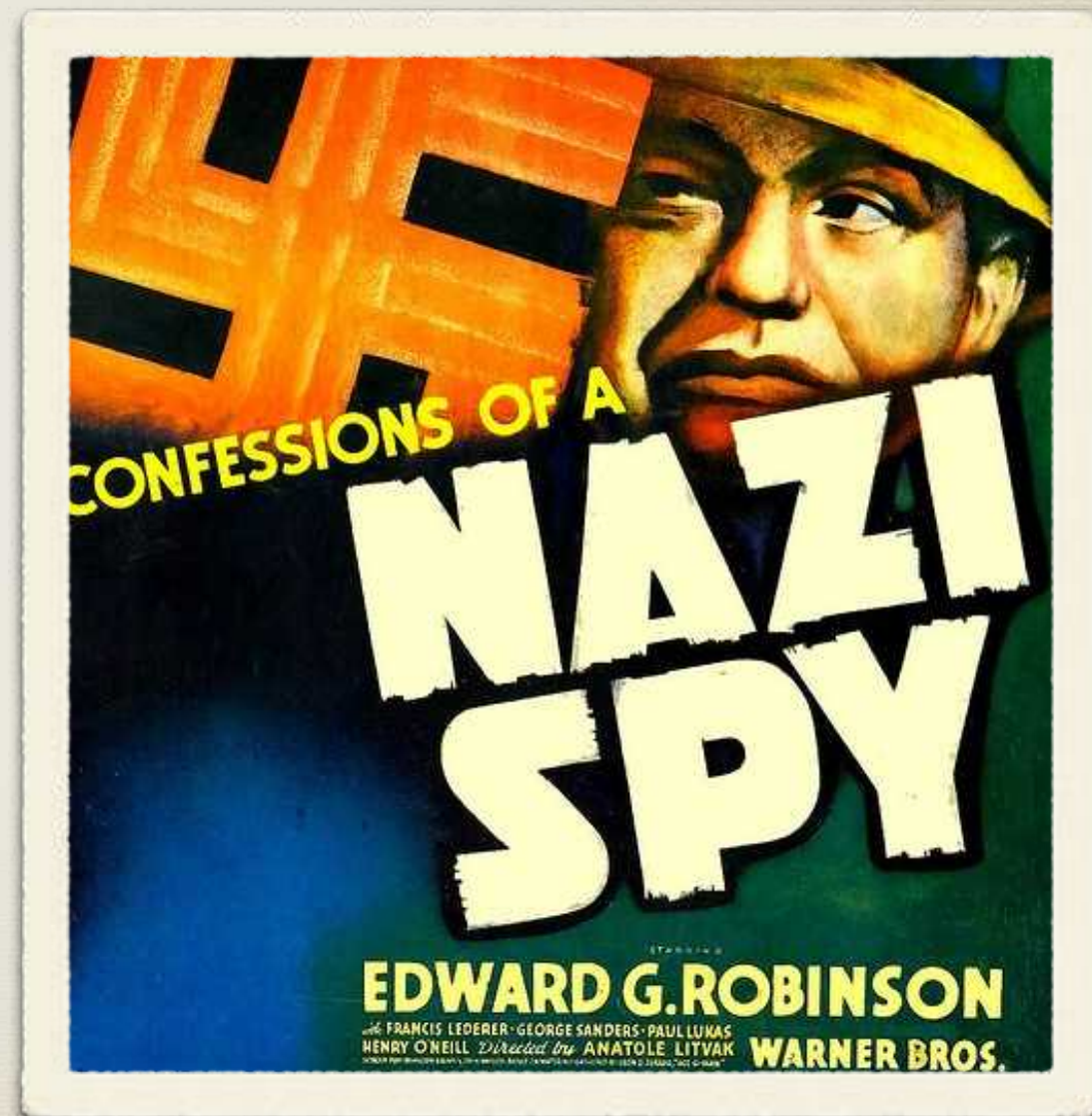
The Resistance

- ✱ French nationals and their supporters who fought the Nazi and Vichy regimes.
- ✱ In Casablanca, Victor Laszlo, a Czechoslovakian, is a member of the Resistance.



Hollywood

- ✱ America was officially neutral during the 1930s.
- ✱ Hollywood was more liberal.
- ✱ Refugees came to Hollywood to work; many were Jewish.
- ✱ Warner Bros. was more anti-Nazi than most. As the Nazis invaded countries, Warner Bros. pulled out of those countries.
- ✱ The Hollywood Production Code and Senator Nye - a leading isolationist - attacked a 1939 film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.



“Hitler and his government are unfairly represented in this story, in violation of the Code. To represent Hitler only as a screaming madman and a blood-thirsty persecutor and nothing else is manifestly unfair, considering his phenomenal public career, his unchallenged political and social achievement, and his position as head of the most important continental European power.”

—Production Code Review: Confessions of a Nazi Spy

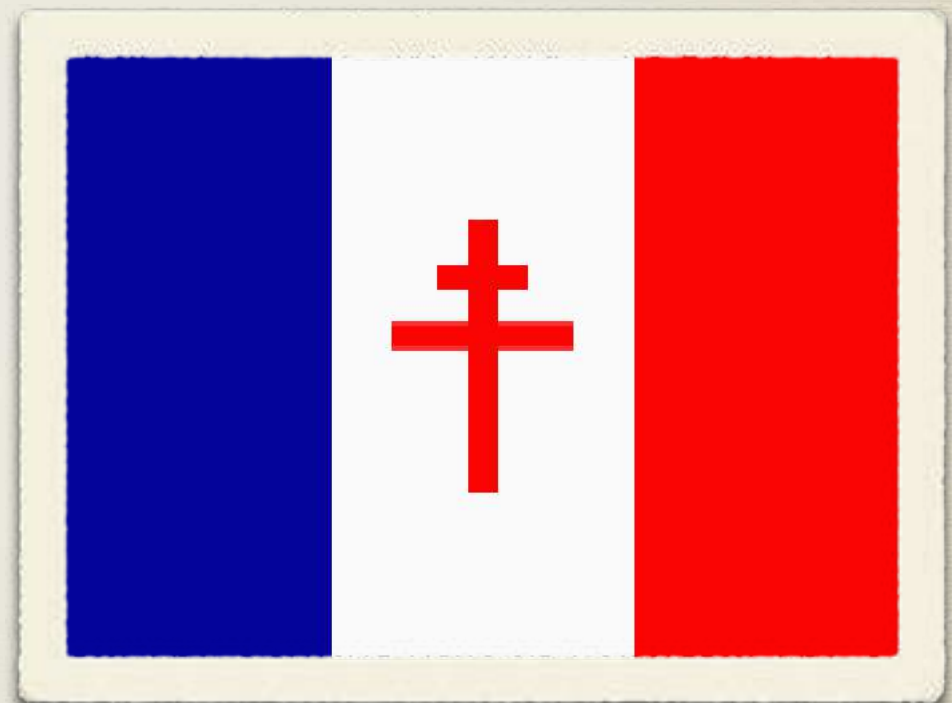
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- ✱ Title: The film was based on a play 'Everybody Goes to Ricks'; America and Allies landed in Africa in 1942; important conference held in Casablanca; people would recognise the name.
- ✱ Moroccan music **followed by** the Marseillaise: French rule in Morocco
- ✱ Map and music set the scene and the tone. In Casablanca, different people must live side by side, albeit uneasily. Conquest and occupation are suggested by the music and the map.
- ✱ Voice on the newsreel would be a type familiar to film-going audiences of the time.

- ✱ Setting: exotic bazaar
- ✱ Trivia: people are wearing Egyptian rather than Moroccan clothes!
- ✱ First mention of important 'letters of transit': they will be important in driving the narrative forward.
- ✱ Trivia: letters of transit never existed and even if they did, the Germans would be unlikely to honour a document signed by DeGaulle.
- ✱ Police treat people roughly: music reflects the atmosphere
- ✱ A man is shot: life is cheap in Casablanca

Resistance

- ✱ The mural shows General Petain
- ✱ Irony: 'I keep my promises as well as those of others'.
- ✱ Free France literature
- ✱ Cross of Lorraine: symbol of Free France
- ✱ Note the music: Marseillaise
- ✱ Cut to the words 'Liberty, equality, fraternity' on the arch



English Couple and Pickpocket

- ✱ Stereotypes
- ✱ First mention of Captain Renault's behaviour
- ✱ Pickpocket talks about the 'scum of Europe' while robbing the couple

Longing to escape

- ✱ The plane is entering rather than leaving Casablanca
- ✱ The people's faces show their longing to escape
- ✱ Note Annina (beautiful young woman) and her husband: they will play an important role later on in the film.
- ✱ Cut to Rick's cafe: linked to idea of freedom



Major Strasser

- ✱ Note Renault's words of greeting: 'unoccupied France'.
- ✱ The Italian wants Strasser's attention but is sidelined: comment on Italy's role in the war.
- ✱ Major implies the Germans will rule the world: they must get used to the climate everywhere.

