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# Linen from Ireland (1939)

**Linen from Ireland** is a 1939 German feature film with anti-Semitic undertones. Otto Tressler embodies a Bohemian textile manufacturer whose Jewish manager, played by Siegfried Breuer , wants to destroy domestic cloth production shortly after the turn of the century in the Austro-Hungarian Empire by importing cheaper linen from abroad, thereby exposing factory workers to unemployment. Other leading actors included Irene von Meyendorff , Rolf Wanka and Karl Skraup . The film is based on the stage play of the same name (1929) by Stefan von Kamare .

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## Storyline

Prague in 1909. The textile company Libussa AG wants to achieve a monopoly position in the Habsburg Empire and therefore buys up all companies in the country that are involved in the production of linen. Behind this maneuver is a certain Dr. Kuhn, the company's general secretary, which belongs to the venerable councilor of commerce Kettner. The Jewish ambitious Kuhn is concerned with expanding his position of power within the company and making himself indispensable to Kettner. The aged company president has no idea of Kuhn's true intentions. Linen producer Alois Hubermayer is also set to get his hands on it,

### Movie

original title Linen from Ireland

production German Empire

country

original language German

Publishing year 1939

length 93 minutes

Rod

directing Heinz Helbig

script Harold Brat

production Heinrich Hass

music Anton Profes

camera Hans Schneeberger

cut Margaret Steinborn

occupation

- Otto Tressler : Kommerzialrat Kettner, President of Libussa AG
- Irene von Meyendorff : Lilly, his daughter
- Rolf Wanka : Dr. Franz Goll, Ministerial Secretary
- Siegfried Breuer : Dr. Kuhn, Secretary General of the Libussa
- Karl Skraup : Alois Hubermayer
- Friedl Haerlin : wife of Gebhardt
- Oskar Sima : The minister
- George Alexander : Freiherr von Falsz-Pennwiel
- Hans Olden : by Kalinski
- Tibor of Halmay : Horvath of Arpad-Fálvâ
- Fritz Imhoff : Sigi Pollack, his uncle
- Maria Olszewska : wife of Kalinski

and Kuhn is planning to take over his company in Warnsdorf in Bohemia next. He also has no choice but to sell to the group, which is literally pushing his competitors to the wall. But Alois decides not to leave it at that and wants to fight back. Such an ignominious end to a 150-year-old family business breaks his heart. Alois is convinced that under Kuhn's management, Libussa will completely stop producing linen in the Reich à la longue in order to buy more cheaply abroad. The consequences would be devastating for Austria-Hungary's linen weavers. While elsewhere the linen producers will fill their pockets, the factory workers at home end up on the streets without wages and bread. that the Libussa, under Kuhn's management, will completely stop producing linen in the Reich à la longue in order to buy more cheaply abroad. The consequences would be devastating for Austria-Hungary's linen weavers. While elsewhere the linen producers will fill their pockets, the factory workers at home end up on the streets without wages and bread. that the Libussa, under Kuhn's management, will completely stop producing linen in the Reich à la longue in order to buy more cheaply abroad. The consequences would be devastating for Austria-Hungary's linen weavers. While elsewhere the linen producers will fill their pockets, the factory workers at home end up on the streets without wages and bread.

- Anny Kupfner : Wanda von Kalinski
- Ernest Arnold : Dr. Seligman
- Robert Valberg : Minister's aide-de-camp
- Otto Schmoele : Arnold Nagel
- Rudolf Carl : porter in the ministry
- Karl Kneidinger : Bieringer, accountant
- Oskar Wegrostek : Wenzel, linen weaver
- Ernst Nadherny : first linen weaver
- Wilhelm Sichra : second linen weaver
- Oskar Werner : Bellhop



Traditional linen weaving on the hand loom

Meanwhile, the Libussa, under Kuhn's leadership, submits an application to the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Commerce. dr Kuhn wants the Libussa to be able to import linen from Ireland duty-free in the future. The young Ministerial Secretary Dr. Franz Goll. In order to influence the straight-forward official with deceit and cunning, Kuhn ensures that Goll and Kettner's daughter Lilly get to know and love each other. With Lilly as his "trump card," the Secretary-General hopes that Dr. Goll not against the interests of Lilly's father Kettner and thus against the Libussa will decide. But Franz is honest and doesn't let himself be manipulated. He is considering, despite being pressured by his superior in Vienna to support Kuhn's submission not to issue a permit, since Goll certainly recognizes the catastrophic consequences for the Bohemian workforce. The respectable civil servant soon came under pressure from all sides: the ministry expected approval for the application, and old Kettner would inevitably welcome this, especially since he would hardly be able to marry Lilly Goll under the opposite circumstances. So Franz Goll sees only one possibility: he maintains his composure and submits his resignation.

Little does Lilly know that Goll has left the ministry and believes that Franz has submitted to her father's will when the Libussa petition is approved. The minister himself approved the application. Lilly Kettner is very disappointed by Franz's alleged lack of principles and turns her back on him. Alois Hubermayer has meanwhile managed to get through to Kommerzialrat Kettner and convince him that Dr. Kuhn only works in his own interest and harms the fatherland with his unscrupulous actions. When Kuhn believes he has reached his goal with all his string-pulling and intrigues, he asks his top boss for Lilly's hand. The old commercial councillor, who has since been informed of the

background by Lilly, dismisses his unscrupulous manager. At home in Warnsdorf, Alois Hubermayer is celebrated as a hero by his fellow citizens, and Kettner agrees to seek an amicable solution to the linen issue. Lilly learns that she has wronged her Franz and immediately drives to the train station to prevent him from leaving. The two seal their engagement with a kiss.

## Production

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*Linen from Ireland* was shot from May 3, 1939 in Vienna's Rosen Hugel studios and the Schonbrunn studios for an inexpensive 744,000 Reichsmarks and premiered on October 16, 1939 in the Berlin Capitol . By April 1941, the income was 1.283 million RM. This meant that *linen from Ireland* was a moderate box office success. <sup>[1]</sup>

Vienna's Styria Film producer Heinrich Haas also took over production management. Robert A. Dietrich and Artur Gunther designed the film sets, Alfred Kunz designed the costumes. Philipp von Zeska directed the dialogue.

17-year-old Oskar Werner can be seen here in one of his first short film appearances.

The film received the state film ratings of "state-political value" and "artistic value".

## Reception

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According to Erwin Leiser , *Linen from Ireland with Robert and Bertram* is one of the “most important anti-Jewish propaganda films” of the National Socialist era. <sup>[2]</sup>

Film historian Boguslaw Drewniak recalled that in this film the "conditions of the Habsburg monarchy ... were again pilloried" <sup>[3]</sup> and counted *linen from Ireland* among those films that "had been garnished with more or less anti-Semitic accents". <sup>[4]</sup>

This result fully corresponded to the Nazi film-political intention, because as the Film-Rundschau noted in its November 1, 1939 edition, the film was to have “in contrast to the original a serious undertone, an ideological problem and a political note”.

Film.at read: “In his screenplay, Harald Bratt had reworked Stefan von Kamare’s comedy into a Nazi propaganda play. The economic misery of a region is only and solely through the machinations of a Jewish antagonist - Dr. Kuhn – evoked.” <sup>[5]</sup>

## See also

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- List of German feature films premiered in the German Reich during the Nazi era

## Web Links

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- (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0031563/>)Linen from *Ireland* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0031563/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- *Linen from Ireland* (<https://www.filmportal.de/e99a42f206014f958bfa73ebdf9a5397>) at filmportal.de

# Itemizations

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1. Ulrich J. Klaus: Deutsche Tonfilme Volume 10, 1939. P. 118 f. (062.39), Berlin 1999
  2. Erwin Leiser: *"Germany, awake!" Propaganda in the film of the Third Reich* . Rowohlt, Reinbek near Hamburg 1968, p. 67.
  3. Boguslaw Drewniak: *The German Film 1938-1945* . A general overview. Düsseldorf 1987, p. 302
  4. cf. Drewniak, 1987, p. 316
  5. Linen from Ireland ([https://www.film.at/leinen\\_aus\\_irland](https://www.film.at/leinen_aus_irland)) on film.at
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