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An Enemy of the People (1937)

An Enemy of the People is a German drama film from 1937 directed by Hans Steinhoff . The main roles are occupied by Heinrich George , Franziska Kinz , Herbert Hübner and Carsta Löck . The script is based on Henrik Ibsen's socially critical drama of the same name (original title: *En Folkefiende*).

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Plot

Dr. med. Hans Stockmann is a doctor with his own practice in a small town. When his ambitious brother becomes mayor of the spa town of Trimburg, he only reluctantly accepts his call to act as a spa doctor there. The doctor really dislikes the sanitary facilities there and demands that they be renovated. The water, which is presented to the guests of the seaside resort as medicinal water, turns out to be heavily contaminated when checked, which is largely due to the waste water from the tannery that the town's richest man runs. However, thanks to the healing spring, Trimburg has become a wealthy health resort. Not only the key decision-makers,

Movie

title	An enemy of the people
Country of production	<u>Germany</u>
original language	<u>German</u>
Publishing year	<u>1937</u>
length	101 minutes
Age rating	<u>FSK 6</u>
	<u>Rod</u>
Direction	<u>Hans Steinhoff</u>
script	<u>Erich Ebermayer</u> <u>Hans Steinhoff</u>
production	<u>Otto Lehmann</u> <u>Hans von Wolzogen</u>
Music	<u>Clemens Schmalstich</u> <u>Werner Bochmann</u>
camera	<u>Karl Puth</u> <u>Bruno Mondl</u>
cut	<u>Gertrud Hinz</u>
	occupation

- Heinrich George : Dr. Hans Stockmann, doctor
- Franziska Kinz : Johanna Stockmann
- Herbert Hübner : Mayor, Dr. Stockmann's brother
- Carsta Löck : Petra, teacher
- Hans Richter : Walter Stockmann
- Eberhard Bartke : Frederik Stockmann
- Albert Florath : Worse, Dr. Stockmann's father-in-law
- Fritz Genschow : Holster, ship captain
- Heinz von Cleve : Hofstetten, editor of the "Trimburger Nachrichten"
- Walter Werner : Dr. Kettler, Medical Council

but also Stockmann's brother opposes the doctor. They see Trimborg's spa status at risk and with it the source of money that has caused their account to swell. The hostility to which the spa doctor is suddenly exposed increasingly escalates.

However, in a public lecture in which Stockmann reveals the facts and denounces the inaction of those responsible, it turns out that a large majority does not want to know anything about it and turns against him, even declaring him an enemy of the people. Resigned, Stockmann decides to return with his family to his former place of work in the small town when the responsible minister, who has learned of the incidents, intervenes and takes Stockmann's side. As a result, the “enemy of the people” that was seen in him is completely rehabilitated. Suddenly the majority of the town is behind him, showing how fickle the individual is. Stockmann's reform proposals are implemented.

Production notes

The production company was FDF Fabrikation deutscher Films GmbH (Berlin). Hans von Wolzogen and Otto Lehmann were in charge of production and Wolfgang Schubert was in charge of recording. Filming took place in July/August 1937 in Glücksburg and the Flensburg Fjord. The film buildings were designed by Hermann Warm and Carl Haacker. Terra Filmkunst GmbH (Berlin) took over the initial distribution of the film.

- Claire Reigbert : Ms. Kettler
- Ernst Fritz Fürbringer : master builder
- Karl Etlinger : pharmacist
- Ernst Rotmund : Hotelier
- Erich Dunskus : master butcher
- Eduard Wenck : master baker
- Bruno Harprecht : Knittel, school director
- Bernard Minetti : Minister
- Günther Hadank : Wenger, employee of the minister
- Eduard Borntträger , Werner Pledath : Professors at the school
- Helmuth Bautzmann , Adolf Fischer : workers
- Heinz Berghaus , Werner Bernhardt , Walter Brückner : Citizens of Trimborg
- Ulla Ronge : Miss Büttner, teacher
- Gerhard Dammann , Klaus Pohl , Carl Zickner : participants at the meeting Dr. Stockmanns
- Michael von Newlinski : rebel
- Siegfried Lange : Heckler
- Olga Limburg : patient of Dr. Stockman
- Aribert Grimmer : Administrator
- Käthe Kamossa : factory employee
- Bruno Ziener : Weber, office manager
- Hans Hermann Schaufuß : Dornbach
- Hubert von Meyerinck : Fink
- Georg H. Schnell : Prof. Köster, Ministerial Director at the Health Department
- Also: Willy Brüdjam , Willi Höpp , Alexander Köckert , Philipp Manning

An Enemy of the People was subjected to an FSK test by the censors on March 15, 1983 under the number 53761 and released for ages six and up. ^[1]

For more film adaptations see → *An Enemy of the People* – Film Adaptations

Difference from the literary original

Henrik Ibsen's socially critical drama dates from 1882 and was written by the author in response to criticism of two other of his plays. In contrast to the original, Ebermayer and Steinhoff have moved the material to the time when the Weimar Republic ended and the National Socialist German Workers' Party came to power under Adolf Hitler. The content of the naturalistic play as well as the film is the conflict that a spa doctor gets into when the notables of the small spa town defend their

hypocritical and corrupt actions and instead defame the spa doctor as an enemy of the people. In the original, the play takes place in a coastal town in southern Norway. The doctor's first name is Thomas and not Hans, as in the film. His wife's name is Kathrine (Käte) and not Johanna. His daughter's name is Petra, like in the film, and she is a teacher. In the play, his sons are named Eilif (13 years old) and Morten (10 years old) and not Walter and Frederik like in the film. In Ibsen's play, in which Thomas Stockmann temporarily considers emigrating to America and does not want to go back to his former place of work, as in the film, he decides, against all odds, to stay right now in order to free his sons with the help of his daughter to educate noble men and to give these lessons to other children so that free thinkers can grow up. Stockmann and his family agree that they will not bow to the ruling class of society. For him it is clear that *the strongest man in the world is the one who stands alone* . He will stay in the spa town and fight for truth and freedom. In the film, however, everything turns in Stockmann's favor through the intervention of the responsible minister when the state has transformed from the Weimar Republic under the new leadership into a National Socialist one .

Film start

The film opened in Germany on October 26, 1937. The Berlin premiere was on November 15, 1937 in the Capitol.

- Title Austria: *An Enemy of the People* , long title *An Enemy of the People - A Doctor's Secret*
- Title France: *Un ennemi du peuple*
- Title Poland: *Wróg ludu*
- Worldwide title (English): *An Enemy of the People*

The film has also been released on DVD. ^[2]

Criticism

At filmportal.de you can read: “ Nazi film that ideologically ‘bends’ Ibsen’s template.” ^[3]

Berlinien.de found that the film was “dramatic, sad and tragic” at the same time. ^[4]

Karlheinz Wendtland spoke of a “falsification of the play written by Henrik Ibsen in 1882” insofar as “director Steinhoff relocates the material to the time of the Weimar Republic and only allows the state to intervene after the Nazi seizure of power”. Wendtland went on to say that although the film had been “banned by the Allies,” it had received “release from the FSK.” A measure that seems “fundamentally justified,” but “leaves certain reservations about the film.” ^[5]

See also

- [List of German feature films premiered in the German Reich during the Nazi era](#)

Web links

- *An Enemy of the People* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0029738/>) at IMDb
- *An enemy of the people* (<https://www.filmportal.de/7cc55776ae4647cb961167624639e74d>) at filmportal.de

- *An enemy of the people* (subtitle: *The Secret of a Doctor*) (<http://www.rarefilmsandmore.com/Media/Thumbs/0002/0002413-ein-volksfeind-1937-with-switchable-and-hard-encoded-english-subtitle-s-.jpg>) Illustrierte Film-Kurier No. 1816
- *An Enemy of the People* (<http://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/6poAAOSwrhBZCNdt/s-l1600.jpg>) Berliner Film-Kurier No. 2712, cover photo Heinrich George

Individual evidence

1. *An enemy of the people* (<http://www.murnau-stiftung.de/movie/955>) at [murnau-stiftung.de](http://www.murnau-stiftung.de)
2. *An Enemy of the People* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20151126043746/http://www.marktplaza.be/film/dvd-films/Ein-Volksfeind-1937-DVD-23506699.html>) (Memento of the original (<https://redirecter.toolforge.org/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.marktplaza.be%2Ffilm%2Fdvd-films%2FEin-Volksfeind-1937-DVD-23506699.html>) from November 26, 2015 in *the Internet Archive*) **Info**: The archive link was used automatically and has not yet been checked. Please check the original and archive link according to the instructions and then remove this notice. DVD (<https://web.archive.org/web/20151126043746/http://www.marktplaza.be/film/dvd-films/Ein-Volksfeind-1937-DVD-23506699.html>) (<https://redirecter.toolforge.org/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.marktplaza.be%2Ffilm%2Fdvd-films%2FEin-Volksfeind-1937-DVD-23506699.html>)
3. *An enemy of the people* (http://www.filmportal.de/film/ein-volksfeind_7cc55776ae4647cb961167624639e74d) at [filmportal.de](http://www.filmportal.de)
4. *An Enemy of the People* (1937) (https://web.archive.org/web/20151126050403/http://www.berlinien.de/kino/film_ein_volksfeind_1937.html) (Memento of the original (https://redirecter.toolforge.org/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.berlinien.de%2Fkino%2Ffilm_ein_volksfeind_1937.html) from November 26, 2015 in the *Internet Archive*) **Info**: The archive link was inserted automatically and has not yet been checked. Please check the original and archive link according to the instructions and then remove this notice. at [berlinien.de](http://www.berlinien.de), accessed on November 24, 2015. (https://redirecter.toolforge.org/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.berlinien.de%2Fkino%2Ffilm_ein_volksfeind_1937.html)
5. Karlheinz Wendtland: *Beloved Kintopp. All German feature films from 1929–1945 with numerous artist biographies* from 1937 and 1938, Verlag Medium Film Karlheinz Wendtland, Berlin, second revised edition, Film 94/1937, p. 95, ISBN 3-926945-02-8

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