

# Port Arthur (movie)

**Port Arthur** is a 1936 German and French language adventure film starring Adolf Wohlbrück . Director was the Hungarian Nikolaus Farkas , who became known as a cameraman .

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## Storyline

1904, at the time of the Russo-Japanese War . The mighty army of the Russian supreme commander in the Far East, General Kuropatkin , was defeated and Admiral Makarov's fleet destroyed. PortArthur, the port city on the Chinese coast, is under siege by the Japanese. The remaining Russian occupiers also include the officer Boris Ranewsky, commander of a torpedo boat, who and his people remained adamant. He and his men are to hold the fortress as long as possible. He is also in an extremely difficult situation privately: his wife Youki is Japanese, his brother-in-law Ivamoura a fanatical Japanese nationalist and officer who schemed from the start against his sister's marriage to the Russian shortly before hostilities broke out.

Meanwhile, Ivamoura, disguised as a Chinese coolie, tries to penetrate the Russian fortress with the help of Youki. He appeals to her patriotic duty as a Japanese woman when he requests her cooperation in his espionage activities. She should find out when the sad

Movie	
original title	PortArthur
production country	<u>Czechoslovakia</u> <u>France</u>
original language	<u>German</u>
Publishing year	<u>1936</u>
length	81 minutes
	<u>Rod</u>
directing	<u>Nikolaus Farkas</u> <u>Josef Gielen</u> (dialogue direction)
script	<u>Kurt Heuser</u> <u>Hans Klaehr</u>
production	Pierre O'Connell (general director) for Slavia-Film, Prague, and FCL Films, Paris
music	<u>Ottokar Jeremiah</u>
camera	<u>George Krause</u>
cut	<u>Roger by Norman</u>
occupation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <u>Adolf Wohlbrück</u> : Commander Boris Ranewsky</li><li>▪ <u>Karin Hardt</u> : Youki, his wife</li><li>▪ <u>René Deltgen</u> : Ivamoura, Youki's brother</li><li>▪ <u>Paul Hartmann</u> : Captain Wossidlov</li><li>▪ <u>Werner Pledath</u> : Captain Novitzki</li><li>▪ <u>Ferdinand Classen</u> : Li Hung, tea house owner</li><li>▪ <u>Hugo Werner-Kahle</u> : General Stoessel</li><li>▪ <u>Fritz Klippel</u> : Adjutant</li><li>▪ <u>Foun-Sen</u> : Servant Alma</li></ul>	

remnant of the once proud Russian fleet will attempt to break out of Port Arthur harbour. Out of loyalty to her husband, she refuses to comply with Ivamoura's request and brusquely rejects his request. When Boris returns after six weeks of service at the front, she urges him to tell her whether the Russians want to try to break out. Boris doesn't know anything, but is all the more astonished when he learns a little later from General Staff officer Captain Novitzki that a breakthrough attempt is actually being planned.

as well as in small roles Karl Meixner , Karl Morvilius , Erich Nadler , Theodor Rocholl , Wilhelm H. König , Hermann Mayer-Falkow , Hellmuth Passarge , Youngling Tschang , Georg Volker

Soon after, Boris receives a delicate and dangerous assignment from the head of Russian counterintelligence, Captain Vossidlov. A Japanese carrier pigeon was intercepted and learned that a Japanese spy ring was up to mischief in Port Arthur. Ranewsky should therefore comb through Port Arthur with his men for enemy spies. Before that, however, Wossidlow invites himself to tea at Ranewsky's in order to get to know his Japanese wife better and to get to know her better. Boris, who has a bad feeling, now urges Youki to tell him where she got the information about the upcoming fleet breakout. Finally she confesses the truth to him and names her brother, but just as clearly protests that she is not collaborating with him or the Japanese.

The Chinese owner of the tea house where Youki and her brother met is willing to cooperate with the Russians for a tidy fee. It is hoped to be able to lure Ivamoura or other Japanese agents there again in order to arrest them there in unison. While Boris makes the deal in the teahouse perfect, Vossidlow puts Youki under such pressure during a chat that she confesses that she never betrayed the Russians. In order to spare Boris Ranewsky the humiliation of marrying a Japanese spy, Vossidlov even tries to persuade her to commit suicide. Boris arrives at the last moment and makes it clear to Vossidlow that his suspicions are wrong. As she leaves the room, vowing to no longer have any relationship with her brother,

He hid there while fleeing from the Russians, whose raid completely shocked the city, and is now asking his sister for help. She rejects his request and, when he is not ready to go, directs him to her husband's study. There, Ivamoura takes advantage of the moment and copies important military documents from the fortress. When Youki wants to intervene, her brother threatens to shoot her husband immediately if she even utters a peep. Right next door, Vossidlow and Boris have met with the teahouse owner for a conspiratorial meeting about the Japanese spies, who are about to meet for a tryst. Ivamoura hears everything and is able to warn his people about the Russian trap at the last moment.

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The Russian plans are passed on to the Japanese besiegers and Ivamoura settles accounts with the tea house owner, who is playing a treacherous double game. Boris Ranewsky arrested his brother-in-law at his corpse. Ivamoura's plea for an honorable suicide and to spare Youki the shame of betrayal freezes Boris' blood. So did his wife lie and yet collaborate with the Japanese? He is stunned. Although he has to accept that this means handing his wife over to Russian jurisdiction, Boris obeys his soldierly oath and turns Ivamoura over to Russian counterintelligence. Fort II's plans copied from Ivamoura have resulted in Japanese cannon fire gradually wearing down the fortress defenders. The defeat of the remaining Russian garrison seems only a matter of hours.

Meanwhile, Captain Wossidlow insists on subjecting Youki and her brother to sharp interrogations again. Ivamoura has only one wish: He wants to take off his shabby camouflage clothes and be honorably shot in his Japanese officer's uniform. Youki, on the other hand, is to be court-martialled, her treason seems to have been proven. Boris has now also lost faith in his wife's sincerity. Since the remaining Russians are about to surrender, the executions are stopped and Youki is released from

prison. She then runs into town to look for her husband in Port Arthur and to be able to explain everything to him. Both find each other again on the torpedo boat. Boris fails in his attempt to break through the ring of Japan. But at least the regimental flags should not fall into Japanese hands, and so Captain Ranewsky gives the order to open all bulkheads and flood the ship. At the moment of their death, the Russian and his Japanese wife fall into each other's arms - exactly where they were once married: in the officers' mess.

## Production

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*Port Arthur*, based on a novel by Pierre Frondaie, was produced in the Prague Barrandov studios as a Czech-French co-production from mid-August 1936 until well into September. However, the film was not made in a Czech version, but only received a German and a French language version. The German version premiered on December 7, 1936 in Berlin 's Ufa-Palast am Zoo and also opened in Prague on January 22, 1937. The French version, which Wohlbrück billed as "Adolphe Wohlbruck", premiered in Paris on December 11, 1936 and was shown in Prague for the first time on January 15, 1937. In Austria (Vienna) the German film Christmas 1936 was released.

While only employees who were acceptable to the Nazi regime took part in the German version, filmmakers who had fled Hitler's Germany were also involved in the French version. Otto Heller appeared there as one of the two cameramen, and Arnold Lippschütz participated in the French screenplay. As with Adolf Wohlbrück's previous, international adventure film *The Courier of the Tsar*, Frenchman Pierre O'Connell was in charge of *Port Arthur* and German Walter Guse was in charge of production. The exiled Russian film architect Ivan Lochakoff, who was also involved in the *courier of the tsar* and Vladimir Meingard also designed the structures for *Port Arthur*.

Immediately after the end of the shooting, the main actor Wohlbrück, for whom *Port Arthur* was to be the last German-language film before his exile, left for the USA at the end of September 1936 to work again in the remake of his hugely popular success *Der Kurier des Zaren*, *The Soldier and the Lady* to play Michael Strogoff. <sup>[1]</sup>

## Reviews

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The contemporary, German-language reviews discussed the film with some pathos. Below is a small selection:

According to the Berlin premiere, the Neues Wiener Journal wrote on page 19 in its issue of December 8, 1936: "The grandiosely designed battle scenes are an effective background for the impressive acting achievements of Adolf Wohlbrück and Paul Hartmann, who still remember Karin Hardt as the little Japanese woman added." <sup>[2]</sup>

In the December 8, 1936 issue of the News World newspaper, page 10 said: "Love and espionage, relentless warfare and heroic sacrificial death give this film a noteworthy character, especially since the largely masterful portrayal of captivating the audience and the female Movie-goers often even know how to move to tears." <sup>[3]</sup>

In the January 1, 1937 issue of the Österreichische Film-Zeitung, page 7 of "Das sensationelle Filmdrama" *Port Arthur* was announced with some advertising hype: "A film full of excitement and passion. A film staged with special effort." <sup>[4]</sup>

The encyclopedia of international film judged more objectively after the war: *Not uninteresting war film - with the nationalistic pathos of the 1930s - about the battles between the Russians and Japanese in 1904/05 for the Port Arthur fortress, which falls to the better spying Japanese. [...] The handsomely acted film is full to the brim of glorious phrases about soldier's honor and the fulfillment of one's duty.* <sup>[5]</sup>

## Itemizations

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1. Kay less : *"In life more is taken from you than given..."*. *Encyclopedia of filmmakers who emigrated from Germany and Austria from 1933 to 1945. A general overview*. ACABUS Verlag, Hamburg 2011, ISBN 978-3-86282-049-8 , p. 662.
2. *"Port Arthur"*. (<https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?apm=0&aid=nwj&datum=19361208&seite=19>)In: *Neues Wiener Journal* , December 8, 1936, p. 19 (Online at ANNO ).
3. *"Port Arthur"*. (<https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?apm=0&aid=nwb&datum=19361208&seite=10>)In: *News-World-Blatt* , December 8, 1936, p. 10 (online at ANNO ).
4. *"Port Arthur"*. (<https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?apm=0&aid=fil&datum=19370101&seite=7>)In: *Österreichische Film-Zeitung* , January 1, 1937, p. 7 (online at ANNO ).
5. Klaus Brüne (ed.): *Encyclopedia of International Film*, Volume 6, p. 2979. Reinbek near Hamburg 1987.

## Web Links

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- *Port Arthur* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0028128/>) at the Movie Database
  - *Port Arthur* (<https://www.filmportal.de/a94d456a733a461fa71ca7737e60affe>) at filmportal.de
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Abgerufen von „[https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Port\\_Arthur\\_\(Film\)&oldid=221810059](https://de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Port_Arthur_(Film)&oldid=221810059)“

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