



## The Assassination Bureau (1969)

That dry, wry humor that flavors such British films as *Kind Hearts and Coronets* is again apparent to a degree in *The Assassination Bureau*. In less skillful hands, its premise of a 1906 international homicide organisation might have been dime-a-dozen stuff. Fused with the capable talents of Michael Relph and Basil Dearden, the picture emerges as a somewhat unusual and clever comedy peppered with thrilling action scenes.

PRODUCTION: Paramount. Director Basil Dearden; Producer Michael Relph, Basil Dearden; Writer Michael Relph, Wolf Mankiewicz; Camera Geoffrey Unsworth Editor Teddy Darvas; Music Ron Grainer Art Michael Relph

Cast: Oliver Reed, Diana Rigg, Telly Savalas, Curt Jurgens, Philippe Noiret, Warren Mitchell

A determined young femme reporter (Diana Rigg) decides that a strange outbreak of highly professional, apparently motiveless killings, must be the work of a single organization. She discovers shady businessman Ivan Dragomiloff (Oliver Reed) is in charge of a wide-reaching organization which, for a price, assassinates those who "need killing." As a challenge, Sonya offers to pay Ivan a huge sum if he'll instruct his minions to assassinate him; Ivan agrees, hoping that it will put a little kick in his work.



Producers have made handsome use of both extraordinarily fine interiors and interesting exteriors in London, Paris, Zurich, Vienna and Venice, which give added zest to yarn's unfoldment. Plotline, based on an idea from Jack London and Robert Fish's book is escapist fare throughout. The entire cast play their respective roles broadly and each gives a good account of himself. Curt Jurgens as a German general, also a Bureau member, and Annabella Incontrera, as the wife of the Italian member of the Bureau, are outstanding.





The source material for the movie, *The Assassination Bureau, Ltd* is a thriller novel, begun by Jack London and finished after his death. The plot follows Ivan Dragomiloff, who, in a twist of fate, finds himself pitted against the secret assassination agency he founded. The novel was based on a story idea London purchased from author Sinclair Lewis in early 1910. London wrote 20,000 words of the novel before he gave it up later that same year, saying he could not find a logical way to conclude it. He died in 1916, leaving the book unfinished. In 1963, mystery writer Robert L. Fish completed the novel based on the unfinished manuscript with additional notes by London and an ending outline done by London's widow Charmian shortly before her death in 1955.