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SPY IN BLACK (Alexander Korda-Columbia, 1939) Directed by Michael Powell; with Conrad Veidt, Valerie Hobson, June Duprez, Marius Goring. *ca.* 75 mins.

One of a number of films made on the threshold of WW 2, which seemed to say that if war came, there was no reason why it couldn't be conducted along the gentlemanly lines of certain aspects of the previous war. Of course, this largely depended on one's opponent turning out to be like Conrad Veidt! SPY IN BLACK is one of the best of the earlier Powell thrillers, casting visual echoes from NOSFERATU, using a fine (early) score by Miklos Rosza, and mixing studio work with well-chosen locations in the manner of so many later Powell films. It's literate, exciting, extremely well crafted -- and in the early days of the war was rather comforting as well.

— Wm. K. Emerson