

LIGHTLY**Government secrets**

By Guernsey Le Pelley

SPY has become a household word. At the rate spies are being nabbed, one out of every seven Americans must be selling government secrets.

On a recent bus ride I made it a point to study my fellow passengers. I was horrified to discover that practically all of them looked like spies. I suppose you can't tell a spy by his looks. If spies looked like spies they would get caught sooner, instead of running around loose for 20 years.

I decided that the sinister, foreign-looking types around me, with thick eyebrows, were all probably innocent. Either that or various nations hire them to flood the streets as decoys. No, the real spy would turn out to be the sweet, bespectacled, white haired lady with the enormous knitting bag.

And the spies are all such nice family types. It makes me wonder about organizations such as the PTA and AARP. When a mild-mannered man approached me on the street and asked where the US Coast Guard station was, I didn't want to tell him. What would a mild-mannered man with rimless glasses, who looked like a vacuum cleaner salesman, want with the location of the Coast Guard? When he explained he owned a power boat and wanted to join the Coast Guard Auxiliary I realized I was being too cautious.

One thing that worried me was a remark made by President Reagan early in December. He emphatically said that the United States "will not hesitate to root out and prosecute the spies of any nation." Any nation? Now that gave me a creepy feeling. It sounded as if hitherto we have been allowing *some* nations to spy on us as a gesture of goodwill. Or maybe the US feels it is in bad taste to nab friendly-nation-type-spies. At any rate, friendly nations seem to have an easier time of it.

Back in the days of Mata Hari nobody fooled around. If a person got caught spying he got shot; after all, he was clearly in the business of shooting *you*. Shooting spies is now considered to be in very bad taste.

Today, spying has become more a case for the social worker than the FBI or the Federal Courts. If a person feels he has been mistreated by society this seems to present some justification for selling classified documents to the enemy for large sums of money. Or at least for enough to buy a new car.