

equipment may already be installed, or (b) wear a face mask, and tell her you are kinky, or (c) have the moral wisdom to go to bed early — and alone.

10. Automobiles Anonymous. Officially, the letters K.G.B. stand for *Komitet Gosoodarstvenny Besopastovoy* — Committee for State Security. But to those who have had the displeasure of their company, the letters have more appropriately meant: *Keep Glancing Backward*. To improve mobility, the Komitet in its pursuit of harassment employs an armada of automobiles coordinated with the footslogging efforts of the gumshoe brigade. Look around, there may be a *Zim*, *Chaika*, *Volga*, or *Moskvich* in orbit nearby. If you are insulted because a mere *Moskvich* has been assigned to follow you instead of an impressive *Zim*, bear in mind that the Russkies just don't understand how sensitive we bourgeois capitalists are about our status symbols.

You may ask how can a Cadillac-style carriage like the *Zim*, sometimes manned with three or four agents, appear unobtrusive? It's a mystery. But so is the matter of the license plate numbers. In typical bureaucratic fashion, the K.G.B. furnishes most of its would-be-anonymous vehicles with plates surprisingly identifiable.

Which reminds us of a story:

A tall, gangling British visitor came out of a friend's apartment in Moscow one day looking for a taxi to take him to his hotel. Wise to the fact that many drivers of private cars will illicitly ferry people to their destination to

earn a few extra rubles, the Englishman, who spoke a fair Russian, approached two men in a grey *Moskvich* parked down the street. The smiling Russians, delighted at the thought of simplifying their tracking job, eagerly invited him into the auto.

The Briton peered inside the tiny car at the two gentlemen, his suspicions growing as to who they were. Nonchalantly he strode behind the vehicle and noted the familiar letters on the license plate. He calmed his feelings of contempt, asked himself, "Why not?" and climbed in.

When the *Moskvich* arrived outside the Hotel Metropole, he slowly extricated his long legs from the cramped back seat and politely offered a ruble for his fare. The Sputniki, knowing it was against the law to accept payment, magnanimously waved the money away. To the Englishman this was a great set-up, free chauffeur service!

He walked inside the hotel lobby and watched from behind the door as the *Moskvich* drove off. Executing an elaborate U-turn, the little car pulled up once again close to the hotel entrance and parked.

The Britisher casually strolled outside to the uneasily grinning K.G.B.-men. "You fellows really don't have to wait," he said. "Come back about seven. I won't be down until then. But do me a favor, will you? Bring along a bigger car. This one is awfully uncomfortable."

The visitor didn't show up at seven to find out whether the K.G.B. was waiting for him. ■ ■