

The Spectator
56 Doughty Street
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I am very grateful to Graham Lord for his kind review of my modest "Karla".
You might be interested to hear that I consider John Le Carre to be my
"spiritual father", as it was his wonderful "Perfect Spy" which inspired me in 1990 to
write my first anti-KGB novel. I learnt from Le Carre that honesty and humour are the
things secret services abhor most to describe them (here as well in the US and the
UK). They like to be depicted only as "perfect heroes". I'm gratified that, thanks to
this stand, I'm still criticized by the KGB diehards as a "traitor".

Colonel Mikhail Lyubimov
Astrakhansky pereulok 5 flat 80.
129090 Moscow

8.12.1999

UK next year and let you know beforehand. Sasha is concentrated on business and tired of being an anchorman, he sends his best regards. Prematurely we all wish you and Jane a good Christmas & happy New Year.

to
11.11 2000

10.03.2001

Dear David,

I hope you are doing well and continue to be workaholic. I got the "Gardener" and try to write a review or may be something more baroque to your Great Anniversary in autumn. I understood from your letter that the "Tailor" is filmed and sent to Berlinale. If so, how to get the video? I read extracts about you by Roberts in "Foreign Literature". He may be a nice man, but the writing is bad. I was laughing when he mentioned "creative persons" in PEN-club instead of 10000 idiots in the Union of Soviet Writers. There are Bitov, Kaledin and a few more in PEN, but the majority are political swindlers, who have nothing to do with literature. A few questions.

1. There is a Petersburg publishing house "Amphora" which makes beautiful books of "intellectual writers". They are interested in your books. Whom to approach?
2. They have a serial "From the library of Borhes" and want a serial of spy thrillers "From the library of Le Carre". Your reaction?
3. May I use your reference to me as "mischievous novelist" etc. on the cover of my new book about the English "Promenades with Cheshire Cat"?

Hope to be in London in May or June. My E-mail is mlyubimov@hotmail.com What is yours?

You are marvelous, dear Thomas Hardy's heir!

After I read "Cakes and Ale" by, excuse me, Maugham I started to hate intellectuals, personified by Hardy whose wife ran away with an illiterate boatsman. Was he a man or a writer? Besides Dorset is a place where I made a trap for Col. Lawrence when he was riding (writing?) a bike. Your observations of our meeting with your Lord are wonderful, it's a pity I cannot insert them in the book, too late.

You are scolding the Edukaytion and morons, but not Mr. Child. I remember when I was in London they asked for 10 days to publish books and I had to request Your Majesty to pick them up. By the way you are authorised to do it, in my last letter too. Don't try to shun responsibility, Lord Rochester, poor colonial colonel cannot fly to India to make a phone inquiry!

In a typical bolshevik style you are laughing at Csar connections. But our relative great duchess Catherina Dolgorukova was a mistress of Alexander the Second and had 4 children from him. He fucked her many times a day like a true Liberator of serfs, she had a key to a special room in Winter palace, then he put her with the children above the bedroom of Czarina who was very ill. In 40 days after the death of Czarina (Orthodox Church tradition) he secretly married her. Read their letters in French, they are more passionate than anything. In a few months he was killed by a bomb and she had to flee to Nice taking with her his torn out finger as a souvenir (Sir Walter Raleigh's wife lady Trockmorton kept the whole head of the late, vivat!). Of course I visited her tomb in Caucade, Nice. Crazy? Yes!!! It looks that in June I'll stay a few weeks in Spain and be sure this time we'll attack you in your castle for a day. Tell me about you timetable in summer.

Vale

Col. Blimp

----- Original Message ----- **From:** CROBB1946@aol.com **To:** mlyubimov@hotmail.com **Sent:** Friday, May 04, 2001 10:19 PM **Subject:** Mr Child's Bibliomania

Comrade Lybimov,

Fraternal greetings!

Your worry about Mr. Child and his books is unfounded. I'm sure the book is waiting for you, as ordered. It is difficult for me to email or call, as they need to hear from you. But they can send it where you will, or keep it for pick-up. You could send someone with a letter of authorisation to pick it up on your behalf - if you called beforehand. How complicated you old commissars make everything!

Still here in Los Angeles. the writing strike has been averted. Phew! The idea of manning the barricades in my Gucci loafers was just too, too awful, darling!

This frantic search of yours for aristocratic forbears is quite amusing. Perhaps you will discover you are related to the Tzar, and will start a new revolution. I am sure you would make quite a benign old tyrant, and would have a sinecure or two in your court for the occasional Englishman. Some sort of well paid literary post would do - as long as I don't have to read anything modern - with access to dim but well built secretaries. (No feminists! No rocket scientists!)

My ancestors would be most upset to be called lumpen proletariat, although I realise this might help with New Labour. (They are trying to exterminate all Toffs. this means, as far as I can determine, anyone with a blazer who doesn't have a Cockney accent. More Cambodian than Soviet in its fundamental approach.) Anyway, my people are from Dorset and are more of the Thomas Hardy yeoman stock. I was summered with ancient Great Aunty out of the Victorian mould in Weymouth. (My father played golf in the West Country - every day for forty years - and my mother went to the theatre in London and had affairs with failed actors.)

Dear David,
Thank you for your kind fax. I understand how tired you are of all interviews. But comrade Stalin taught us that there were no fortresses which couldn't be taken by Bolsheviks, so I'll make 1-2 articles instead. I'll be much obliged if you gave command to e-mail me some of your recent public speeches or interviews or give me their sites in Inter net.
«Gardener» is not an easy reading. Artistically you are at your best, but the thrill gives way to a very serious social message. Here you are much more with the trend which appeared in your books soon after the end of Cold War: fight against organized crime etc. I think many fools accuse you of communism, leftism or antiglobalism (who knows may be in 20 years you'll get into British prison like Bertrand Russell), but no serious writers (even Nabokov or Joyce) could forget eternal social problems. I think you plunged into them because in your younger days you were too much anticommunist and paid less attention to the values they demagogically defended. I hope after your memoirs you would not run away from your Yasnaya Polyana to seek Truth in Vatican or in the forest a la Henry Torough.
Your book was very much close to my heart because in Russia all pharmaceutical machinations are seen by an unarmed eye: media especially TV advertize medicines to cure brains, erection, pollution(ecological) etc. Fortunately the bulk of Russians simply cannot afford them, I myself prefer the recipe of soldier Shweik: all diseases are to be cured by kliester(how is it in English? A beautiful rubber thing with water one puts into...).
The other day I read in our free press that a London businessman who in his 53 was a virgin (!) took some medicine for some little stomach disease and became the greatest fucker in London, spent all money on whores and got bankrupt. So he sued the firm for overdose of something and won \$5mln in court. I think such stories are planted by your Bees (a propos the most fashionable restaurant in Moscow is Beehouse, and the bees are fantastic there).
In the first days of September my «Walks with Cheshire Cat» are to be presented at Moscow Book Fair. After this I should become a bulwark of English-Russian, but it will never happen as all of them are suspicious idiots (I nearly fainted on reading declassified CIA documents on first years of perestroika, which they considered a disinformation show. The KGB read all this through Ames etc, but thought it was planted information as Yankees are perfidious!)

It's time to stop. Sincerely Michael

23.07.2001

Dear David,

Nice to hear from you. Boris is not too bad, but worse than when you saw him last. Youri retired into a nice job of Executive Director of Renaissance Capital Bank (tel. 095-725-52-69), sometimes we perform together over radio & TV like Punch & Judy. A new chief instead of him is Boris Labusov (095-245-33-68). I take part in many idiotic documentaries, write articles and often travel as correspondent of a tourist journal (its expense account is much better than at the KGB). My "Promenades with Cheshire Cat" (in Russian) is to be in May, its about the bloody English a la Mikes and better than Bill Bryson. Haven't you any publisher who may get interested? You are welcome to Moscow which changed enormously to better. My web is <http://welcome.to/Lyubimov>, my home E-mail: mlyubimov@hotmail.com

Sincerely, Misha

9.03.2001

11.03 2001

I hope you are doing well and continue to be workaholic. I got the "Gardener" and try to write a review or may be something more baroque to your Great Anniversary in autumn. I understood from your letter that the "Tailor" is filmed and sent to Berlinale. If so, how to get the video? I read extracts about you by Roberts in "Foreign Literature". He may be a nice man, but the writing is bad. I was laughing when he mentioned "creative persons" in PEN-club instead of 10000 idiots in the Union of Soviet Writers. There are Bitov, Kaledin and a few more in PEN, but the majority are political swindlers, who have nothing to do with literature. A few questions.

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The other day I had a great pleasure (and a piece of pie) to participate in the film about you. Thanks for the recommendation, I don't think I spoilt the picture (the other people read nothing of you and I had to give some of them urgently the video of "Tinker"). It's a pity you don't come to Moscow—it drastically changed and it's not only the exterior. Plenty of clubs where poets & writers recite the works, the walls are decorated with interesting painting, the cuisine is better than in Brussels, and the sommelliers who studied in Paris solemnly decant Chateau Petrus and like in the Ritz discuss with you the best wine brands. Yes, beggars in the streets (mainly in Moscow), yes, 40% live in poverty, yes, prostitutes stay along motorways. But the theaters are again full of people, it's not easy to reserve a place to a plane abroad, the book market is big and many interesting works appeared, which will hardly be translated as they are not connected with political scandals. Of course it's a prejudiced view, but freedom gave new dimensions of living to Russians. Even the former head of PGU (your fan) Shebarshin wrote a novel about loneliness and old age, of course, against a rather bleak background of his intelligence work (I'm sending my review, perhaps you like to get it translated). If you remember, in 1995 I published a secret "Andropov plan" of perestroika, which provided the ultimate coming to power of chekists and caused a political scandal. Now as a good augur I have to reveal the details of the last stage: how I and Gestapo chief Henrich Muller prepared Putin as a president. This year I had my first novel republished, next March my "Walks with Cheshire Cat in search of English Soul" will appear, hope, illustrated with English graphics. The genre? A combination of research, essays & memoirs. I hope to get from you the new novel (please send it to my present address!). When and where shall we have a lunch, which I buy for you at last? November 28-30 I may be in Zurich giving a lecture on security (ha-ha!) near St. Moritz to some Swiss gnomes, I'm told you are hiding there. The second part of January we'll be in Rome. Hope to be in the