Chapter 15

Russia and Europe

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In *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, Jim Prideaux justifies his English patriotism to his schoolboys by drawing:

> a globe. To the west, America … full of greedy fools fouling up their inheritance. To the east, China-Russia, he drew no distinction … a damn long march to nowhere. In the middle … [1]

In the middle, as he has intimate reasons to be aware, sits not just England but a distinction-ravaged European continent. Half-Czech Jim is one of many le Carré characters of trans-European heritage who must negotiate, with pain, its political divisions and revisions. The passionate anti-Brexit stance of le Carré's last novel, *Agent Running in the Field*,[2] is underlined by its British narrator's Parisian birth as the 'polyglot poster child' of a Scottish father and a White Russian mother with 'a good dollop of German blood' (13, 1). One way to supply some of the detail omitted by Prideaux is to write onto a map of Europe each country's importance in le Carré's fiction. This yields the following.

Some countries are all but empty: Spain, most of Scandinavia, most of the Balkans, what are now the Baltic states. Some have cameo roles as bolt-holes for characters from elsewhere. Perhaps surprisingly for a Francophone, French-monikered author, France is among them, appearing as a refuge for White Russians (*SP*, *ARF*) and Emma (*OG*), whilst hosting one of Dima's bids to negotiate his safety (*OKT*) and Guillam's would-be retirement (*LS*). Portugal is Barley's bolt-hole (*RH*), Romania is Florence and Ed's (*ARF*), whilst Greece is a queasy recuperation zone (*LDG*, *PS*). Some countries feature by generating expats, most prolifically Poland, with Leiser in *The Looking Glass War*, the Dwarf in *The*

Honourable Schoolboy, Landau in *The Russia House*, Mirsky in *Single & Single*, and Avon in *Silverview*. Yet three small, adjacent South-central countries overspill their borders with summaries of their significance. Switzerland is for the pseudo-autobiographical Magnus Pym (*PS*), as for le Carré, the location of his early education in literature and espionage, whilst after the Cold War it services gangsters (*SS*, *OKT*). Austria (for Pym as for le Carré) is the location of national service work debriefing frontier crossers into the British sector, and is later a gangster base (*SS*) and a money laundromat (*MWM*). Czechoslovakia generates many of the frontier crossers of *A Perfect Spy*, and commands the German Axel (then Pym himself) as a spy. Prideaux of *Tinker Tailor* is double-crossed and tortured there at a time when Pym, in his parallel novelistic universe, is still spying for them. Later the Czech Republic, like the alpine ones, houses gangsters such as the Georgian Arkady (*ARF*). However, these three highly valent countries are themselves dominated, culturally and narratively, by two much larger ones, which on my map overrun even their wide bounds with the density of their signification: Germany and Russia. The rest of this chapter concerns them.

Of the two, le Carré can be said to have chosen Germany. It was despite, and in part because of, the ambient Germanophobia of his youth that just four years after the end of the War he left his English school for Bern and immersion in 'the German muse'; 'my wholesale embrace of German literature at a time when for many people the word *German* was synonymous with unparalleled evil … gave me my own patch of eclectic territory' (*PT* 2, 4). His acquisition of German led to his early spying in Switzerland and Austria, his Oxford degree, and his subsequent deployment by MI6 to Germany. When he started writing, the German muse pervaded his fiction. Grimmelshausen's picaresque novel *Simplicissimus* takes a picaresque course from Smiley's Oxford-acquired copy, which he mislays in a London club, to Axel's gift to Pym in Switzerland, which accompanies him around the world as their code book (*TTSS*, *PS*). When the head of London's German station asks Ed why he wishes to

defect, he quotes Goethe's *Faust* (*ARF*). The quotation concerned gives an explicit answer to the question, but the fact of being able to quote it gives an implicit one. Accordingly, Germany is a major setting. The climaxes of *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, *The Looking Glass War* and *A Legacy of Spies*, large parts of *The Little Drummer Girl* and *Absolute Friends*, and nearly all of *A Small Town in Germany* and *A Most Wanted Man* take place there.

By contrast Russia (and the USSR which le Carré often also denoted by the name) seems to have been simply imposed on him by the Cold War and his early espionage. He held his distance politically, geographically and narratively, warned (and appalled, if also fascinated) by the British defectors to the Soviet Union unmasked early in his career. When he posed as a Communist at Oxford to spy for MI6, the Soviets soon gave up trying to recruit him (*PT* 151). Despite his linguistic facility, and his legion of Russophone characters, he made no attempt to learn Russian, and did not visit the country until 1987. His biographer claims that 'His previous attempts to obtain a visa to visit the Soviet Union had met with stony silence',[3] but his son Tim Cornwell counters that 'he turned down any official invitation from the Union of Soviet Writers while it publicly approved the imprisonment of its members' (it being remarkable that such invitations were made at all, given that nearly all his works were banned there).[4]

According with his craving for topographic and cultural accuracy, le Carré's Cold War novels are hardly set in Russia. In *Tinker Tailor* Smiley and Karla meet in India; in *Smiley's People* they meet in Germany. Some of the early novels acknowledge an exaggeration of Russian significance in an overheated Western imagination. Leamas gradually realises that 'Moscow Centre' is *not* 'in on this' (*SWCC* 77). Leiser's mission concerns Russian troops and missiles in East Germany of which he finds little sign (and when a Russian captain finally does appear, he does so prosaically drinking beer and looking

bored) (*LGW*). In *Small Town* the vanished embassy official Harting has *not* defected to the Soviets, though this is Turner's and the reader's working assumption for much of the novel. Le Carré set just one novel substantially in Russia following his two visits of 1987 (*RH*). After his sole return in 1993, Russia gradually reverted to its Cold War position of being manifested principally through its people abroad. Only *Our Game*'s climax is set in Ingushetia as accessed via Moscow; *Single & Single* sets a few early scenes in Russia; in *Our Kind of Traitor* Russia appears only in characters' recollections; in *Agent Running* there are barely any even of these. Russian literature remains tied to Russian characters, rather than roaming the world as German literature does.

The two countries' divergent positions in le Carré's life did not entail that he overlooked their close mutual engagements. Nat's mother's German-Russian ancestry acknowledges the centuries of German migration to Russia (*ARF*). The modern boundary between the Germanic and Slavic worlds is most thoroughly blurred in the DDR, whilst the Bundesrepublik politician Karfeld believes that Germany's future lies in such harmony with Russia as it had had for most of its history (*STG*). Axel's post-War identity-shift (as 'Sergeant Pavel') from German to Slav is seven decades later reversed as Anastasia/Valentina, the Georgian-Russian spy-runner, adopts sufficiently-convincing German-accented English to convince Ed that she *is* German (whilst her German-Russian diction reminds Nat of his mother) (*ARF*). Germany's cultural influence on Russia is acknowledged by the fact that a man of high standing among his Russian peers is christened by them 'Goethe' (the resultant fact that largely-uncultured Western spies become fixated on every word that comes from the pen of 'Goethe' may or may not be le Carré's personal joke) (*RH*). Valentina only once speaks German to her agent Sergei, but when she does, it is to recite Heine (*ARF*).

Within le Carré's lifetime, both these great continental powers ambiguously emerged out of violent dictatorships. He first saw Germany and its 'flattened cities' in the summer of 1949 'while the stench still lingered' in the concentration camps (*PT* 4). His disgust at the limits and then reversal of West German denazification is most clearly demonstrated in the Nazi war criminal Karfeld's leadership of a political party (*STG*). The ironies of le Carré's work for MI6 in early 1960s Bonn, ostensibly cultivating support for Britain's EEC entry whilst secretly surveilling neo-Nazi organisations, are reflected in *Small Town*'s riptides of overt and covert West German identity and politics. The novel's strenuous hermeneutics, as the reader follows Turner from source to source uncovering Harting going from source to source uncovering a Nazi, honours the political and logistical barriers to making such discoveries outside of fiction. Albeit le Carré later acknowledged that *Small Town* had exaggerated the Nazi threat (as he might also have admitted the implausibility of a former Nazi leading the Stasi in *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*), two decades later a Mossad agent complains about lingering German anti-Semitism (*LDG*).

After the Cold War, le Carré concentrated not so much on East Germany's tortuous post-Soviet evolution as on the united Germany's co-optation by the occupying Americans in its 'War on Terror'. *Absolute Friends*' and *A Most Wanted Man*'s critiques of both this War and this co-optation echo Karfeld's analysis: 'So the Allies set to work: the Germans must be taught how to behave. It was wrong to kill the Jews … kill the Communists [read 'Muslims'] instead … there is nothing you cannot do in the name of democracy' (*STG* 312). By contrast Annabelle presents Germany's collusion as continuous with its Nazi past: 'law not to protect life, but to abuse it. We did it to the Jews. In its current American form it licenses torture' (*MWM* 97). For his part Bachman acknowledges Germany's 'guilt-ridden support for the State of Israel' as a motivation for Muslims targeting Germany (*MWM* 63) (in attacks of a

kind witnessed not in this novel but in *The Little Drummer Girl*). Yet he also perceives a continuity of German anti-Semitism that makes the country a base for such terrorists.

More than *Small Town*, *A Most Wanted Man* leaves certain things ethically unclear. The reader's sympathy for Issa is invited on the basis that a lawyer's research and Issa's simplicity (akin to that of Dostoevsky's eponymous Idiot) suggest that he has no history of violence against Russians. Yet the pre-9/11, less violence-averse *Our Game* would have classified such violence not as terrorism but heroism – a perspective ambiguously represented in the later novel by Abdullah. Whether Bachman ought, with Annabel's and Brue's compelled support, to try to force Issa to become a German intelligence agent, is left open, even granting his assumption that this might avert both terrorism and Issa's deportation. Where the novel is clear, however, is in its support for Bachman over Bergdorf. These men, with their pointedly Germanic alliterative toponyms, who respectively represent the liberal and hardline, Europeanist and trans-Atlanticist, wings of German counter-terrorism, illustrate the split in the twenty-first-century German political soul with which le Carré was most concerned.

Russia is nowhere in le Carré's fiction represented with such political three-dimensionality as Germany. During the Cold War his anti-Communism kept him not only from defecting, but from representing the British intelligence services as out-classed by their Russian counterparts as he later said he thought they were ('the KGB outwitted and out-penetrated us at almost every turn' [*PT* 60]). Notwithstanding the farcical British intelligence failures satirised in *The Looking Glass War*, Karla's stature, and the morally Pyrrhic nature of Smiley's victories, many British successes are presented. That said, the moral comparability represented between British and Soviet espionage ends and means was sufficient to allow ex-KGB agents to quote his novels in self-exculpation.[5] Former KGB agent and SVR head, future Prime Minister Primakov, told le Carré in 1997 that he identified with Smiley. More

broadly, le Carré had a sense of the madness and waste of the Cold War *per se*. In 2007 he wrote to an American anti-imperial Quaker, whom he had befriended and spied on in Oxford, that he applauded his 'long, hard-fought campaign for sanity'; 'I'm almost ashamed I didn't fight it with you; but, of course, I secretly believe I did'.[6] Such a campaign is nowhere more evident than in one of his last novels of the Cold War, *The Russia House*.

As he wrote of the hosts of his two trips of 1987 on which it was based: 'I hope that my Soviet friends will find reflected in this fable … the hopes we shared for a saner and more companionable future' (*RH* x). The novel is exceptional among his works in its evincing of love (albeit condescending) for Russia, with its problems, paradoxes and 'huge heart'; hard-bitten British publishers cry at Pasternak's grave (148). This love is concretised in Barley's love for Katya and in Katya's exceptionality (particularly by this stage of le Carré's career) as not just a beautiful, but an admirable, female character. The fact that the novel meta-literarily concerns writers reflects le Carré's awareness of visiting a country where 'writers enjoy infinitely more esteem than we can imagine'.[7] Strikingly, the novel contains extended passages of everyday life. Even though their circumstances are overshadowed by those of the Cold War plot, they nonetheless vividly evoke such 'rituals of the normal world' as Katya getting up and hearing 'the Volkhovs' baby daughter cutting her first teeth' (137, 138). Quotidien life is blended with joy in the outing of Barley, Katya, her twins, and her holy-fool Uncle Matvey. As they proceed along merrily in a red Lada 'The friendly gold September sun hung ahead of them, making even the Moscow suburbs beautiful' (335). Katya points out cement factories and collective farms; '"Great!" said Barley. "Fascinating! What a day, though, wow!"' (336). At their destination 'They were alone in Paradise with the stream to dam, and a bank to picnic on, and space to play *lapta* with Sergey's stick and ball' (337). This is the untormented life for which all le Carré's novels yearn by presenting its inverse, but nowhere better than here do they actually depict it. When le Carré did his national service

the wartime Anglo-Russian friendship still lingered: 'At Christmas time the Russians gave us wooden buckets of caviar and we gave the Russians plum puddings' (*PS* 474). Here such friendship resumes. The scene's Russophilia is reflected in its characters' Anglophilia; Siege of Leningrad survivor Matvey declares that 'The English were always our friends' (334). Goethe too loves the English as 'the moral leaders of Europe' (104).

The novel (1989) does not assume the impending end of the Soviet Union, doubtless in part because Western intelligence services (who had vested interests in this not occurring, as we see in *Our Game*) were not predicting it. That, combined with the ostentatious surveillance that le Carré experienced during his visit, meant that the novel presents genuine uncertainty as to how the Cold War could end. Goethe fatally treads a middle line between the internal whistleblowing of the real Sakharov (whom le Carré met in 1987), and defection. The fact that he instead seeks Western publication of a book of blended fact and artistry meets its response in le Carré's novel concerning him. On the other hand, the fact that le Carré had no such informant (basing Goethe only lightly on his Cuban Missiles Crisis-era predecessor Oleg Penovsky) makes the validity of Goethe's thesis of the 'Soviet knight' 'dying inside his armour' to some degree uncertain not just to the novel's Western spy services but to le Carré himself (*RH* 20). Rather, he offers up Goethe's thesis as a hypothesis, the fictional responses to which hold up a mirror to conflicting Western instincts and priorities. Barley's flippant disavowals of his own broadsides against Western Cold War zealotry permit the reader to accept them with a sensation of voluntariness. Since le Carré was uncertain how to end the novel, he ended it with uncertainty. The narration suggests that Barley's confidence that Katya and her family will soon join him in Portugal is naïve if admirable. Yet the narrative arc had already bent abruptly towards hope. The Western 'shopping list' of intelligence questions for Goethe, treated by its authors as of world-shattering sensitivity, is handed by Barley to the Russians (just as Goethe hands his text to the

British) without any apparent consequences whatsoever; Barley is subsequently even offered an MI6 pension. This pacific, slightly bathetic, more-than-slightly heartening resolution of the Cold War thriller plot was in some ways shortly echoed by reality (retrospectively ironising the frenzied attempts of the security services to win that War, as represented by so much of le Carré's previous fiction). The fact that the novel's film adaptation was shot in Soviet Leningrad in same year that the novel was released in Russian (1990) must have intimated to le Carré that Barley would indeed soon be reunited with his Katya.

Le Carré described his next and last visit to Russia in consciously contrastive terms: 'I began to feel more like a disenchanted Communist than a victorious westerner surveying the people he had notionally helped to free.'[8] Tim Cranmer, visiting at a similar time, sees 'beacons of the true conquerors flashing out their gospel: "Buy us, eat us, drink us, wear us, drive us, smoke us, die of us! We are what you get instead of slavery!"' (*OG* 259). This contrast coloured the rest of his fiction about Russia, and dissuaded him (along with his subsequent dislike of Putin) from revisiting the country. It is, however, significant that on this visit he asked to meet mafiosi and ex-KGB agents 'and not too many writers, thank you.'[9] Thereafter Russia's artistic culture and political debate, not to mention its average citizen's everyday life, disappeared from his representation of the country. Katya's surname Orlova hardens into Orlov, surname of the gangster protagonists of *Single & Single*.

The fact that le Carré considered Dima, a gangster whom he interviewed in 1993, to have modelled himself on the fictional Kojak, may have encouraged him to complete the art-life feedback loop by creating not only *Our Kind of Traitor*'s Dima, but novels that embrace some of the conventions of crime thrillers. In *Single & Single* even the Bond films are exuberantly imitated, with the high-living (if pathetic) Tiger, exciting action sequences, heroic motorbike quest, secondary love plot, mountain-scraping flight in a cargo plane, and ending in a villain's lair with the swooping in of British forces. Russia after the Cold War

becomes presented as a *more* dangerous place to be. Whereas in 1987 le Carré had endured merely dozy KGB watchers, in 1993 he at times required a bodyguard. Tim Cranmer reflects that whereas on his previous, late Soviet era, visit to Moscow 'the worst I had faced was exposure, and an undignified retreat to London', he now fears for his life on 'enemy territory' (*OG* 259, 258). The difference is plot-dependent, but also indicative. It is articulated in Tim's apprehension when he first sees Russian soldiers in Ingushetia: 'They were enemy to me in a way they had never been before' (*OG* 294). His friend Larry Pettifer is the only English protagonist of le Carré's to be killed by Russian forces inside Russia. This sense of post-Communist Russia as a heightened threat (apparent also in the 1995 Bond film *GoldenEye*, despite the fact that it was the first Bond film that could be filmed there) is inflected by le Carré with three theses of continuity: between Russian crime and the Russian state; between Russia's past and its present; and between Russian and Western criminals and states.

It is 'axiomatic' (as *Single & Single*'s Alix Hoban would put it) that crime cannot be organised crime without the collusion of at least some elements of a government. *Single & Single* depicts the post-Soviet collapse of the Russian government into criminality; even *Our Kind of Traitor*'s vory (who are by definition distanced from the state) have vaguely-indicated official collaborators, whilst *Agent Running*'s criminal oligarch is straightforwardly Putin-aligned. Post-Soviet crime is presented as having Soviet origins; *Our Kind of Traitor*'s Dima becomes a vor around 1970 and simply internationalises when Communism ends. At this point the tsarist past resurfaces ostentatiously. Tim's Moscow hotel is lit by 'Tsarist chandeliers', whilst outside 'muffled beggar women' evoke tsarist-era poverty (*OG* 258). The Orlovs' Moscow villa contains Catherine the Great furniture; the expatriation of this furniture to their homes in Georgia and Turkey parodically reenacts the southward movements of Catherine's troops as led by two Orlov brothers (*SS*). Alongside this twisted tsarist revival, elements of the Soviet state are presented as ongoing. Zorin refers to his employer as 'the

KGB, or whatever they call us these days' (*OG*). Arkady (a complex character, but without contradiction by the novel) says that 'Thanks to Putin and his gang of unredeemed Stalinists, Russia was not going forward to a bright future, but backwards into her dark, delusional past' (*ARF* 167). As late as the late 2010s Russia is running something as Cold-War-reminiscent as a sleeper agent in Britain (*ARF*).

The most prominent thesis of historical continuity is that Russia oppresses its minority (especially its border) peoples just like the Tsars and the Soviets did. This thesis is voiced not only by the Ingush Magomed ('The world has not altered for us one centimetre in the last two hundred years') and the Ingush Checheyev, but the British Foreign Office official Dugdale (*OG* 277). The catastrophic effect of the 1990s expropriation of Russia's wealth on the mass of its people is nowhere dwelt upon (though *Single & Single*'s profiteering from exporting Russian blood is clearly intended to shock), but it is particularly not dwelt on in *Our Game*, in which £32 million of government money is stolen, with the novel's implied approval, to fund Ingush fighters. Chechens are also, if less prominently, presented as oppressed (it was they, not the neighbouring Ingush, who entered war with Russia just as le Carré was finishing the novel). In *A Most Wanted Man* Issa's Chechen mother's rape by a Russian colonel would have occurred during a period of peace in the early 1980s, but the first post-Soviet Russo-Chechen war, during which the novel was written and set, lends its bitterness to these circumstances. By contrast the (adoptive or ethnically) Georgian Orlov brothers (*SS*) and Anastasia (*ARF*) apparently experience no conflict between their Georgian identity and their work in or for Russia. It is *Agent Running*'s Arkady who deplores Russia's suppression of 'Chechnya's yearnings for independence, then of his own beloved Georgia's.' Yet the implied parallel between Georgians and Russia's minority Muslim groups is far from clean. Similarly le Carré's Abkhaz bodyguard in 1993 indicates diverse loyalties in lecturing on 'all matters relating to his people's struggle for liberation' (*PT* 128) and 'the plight of

Russia's Muslim minorities'.[10] The struggle of his own people was not against Russia but was rather waged, with Russian support, against Georgia (a conflict peripherally mentioned in *SS*). The distinct ethnic foci of *Our Game*, *Single & Single*, *A Most Wanted Man* and *Agent Running* prevent the complexities of intra-Caucasian tensions, insofar as these partially emerge between them, from emerging to the same extent in any one of them.

In *Our Game* Western governments are presented as complicit with Russian oppression of the Ingush by not intervening to oppose it. Yet the alternative seems to be a revival of the Victorian Great Game in the Caucasus, which Magomed and Tim explicitly invoke. Checheyev's defensive stress on the fact that there are 'no Islamic demons here … No fundamentalists, no crazies, no bomb-throwers' suggests le Carré's awareness of the growing involvement of foreign jihadists in the Caucasus; in 1994 bin Laden offered funding to *mujahideen* to fight in Chechnya (*OG* 291).[11] One charity which funded such involvement was the Benevolence International Foundation, a US-headquartered, al-Qaeda-affiliated Saudi organisation which had previously funded bin Laden in the Soviet-Afghan War. According to Burr and Collins, 'For years the [US] government had failed to investigate any linkage between questionable donations and Islamic charities'; only after 9/11 was the organisation designated terrorist.[12] Yossef Bodansky, former director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, explicitly attested US support for the Chechen rebels.[13] It is far from clear that such involvements represent the kind of external intervention for which *Our Game* calls, or what the alternatives to it would be. In *A Most Wanted Man* Abdullah is captured by the Americans precisely because he funds charities (including ones operative in Chechnya) which are 'five per cent bad' by virtue of their involvement in terrorism (268). *A Most Wanted Man*, more than *Our Game*, reflects the moral complexity of the Russo-Caucasian wars, but, like it, fails to register the existence of any possible Western support for the Caucasian side.

Single & Single, *Our Kind of Traitor* and *Agent Running* concentrate on the complicity in Russian crime of actual, former or as-good-as British government members. One officer of Single & Single is a former Foreign Office official. *Our Kind*'s crime network includes a Parliamentary Under-Secretary and an ex-Navy Westminster lobbyist. It is suggested that, to prevent exposure of their criminality, the British government itself is complicit in the murder of Dima and three Britons. The wider assertion is that the British government welcomes the influx of Russian criminal money, particularly given the liquidity crisis that pertained when it was written. In *Agent Running*, an MI6 operation to expose the crimes of the Park Lane oligarch is foiled by the intervention of his fund manager, a Treasury sub-committee member married to an MI6 chief. As Arkady puts it: 'you Brits … You welcome us if we're big enough crooks. You sell us half London' (183).

Thus le Carré returns to the parallel criticism of the British and Russian governments that is present in so much of his Cold War fiction. It was perhaps partly for this reason, and partly because of his remembered earliest Russian visits, that he largely refrained from representing pure Russian villainy. Dima, unlike his interviewed original, has endearing if coarse speech patterns and physical bulk, loves his family, and trusts the England of his imagination. In *Our Game* we see the grizzled SVR agent Zorin nursing his tiny dying lover with grief and pride. In *Single & Single* Evgeny Orlov is accorded some tragic stature, whilst his beloved wife dispatches the novel's only unambiguously, zestily loathsome villain Alix Hoban, who significantly has non-Russian names, and whose accent is a botch of Russian and American. *The Constant Gardener*'s Lara Emrich is a whistleblower, whilst *Agent Running*'s Valentina is talented and sincere in her SVR work, and still loved by the cynic Arkady whose criminal gains she refuses to share.

But there may have been a further reason for his restraint. Le Carré had some understanding that the West had botched its chance with Russia. In April 2001 he wrote: 'For

the blink of a star, back there in the early nineties, something wonderful might have happened: a Marshall Plan, a generous reconciliation of old enemies'.[14] His mention of a Marshall Plan points out the contrast; Russians after 1991 were far keener to unite with the West than were the defeated West Germans after 1945. Yeltsin and then Putin scoped the possibility of Russia joining NATO and the EU, and were rebuffed – the erstwhile Western anxiety about Russia (that it stood opposed to the West) having apparently been seamlessly replaced by the anxiety that it might become united with it.

Yet le Carré's attribution of the failure to support a Marshall Plan to Western states' subservience to multinational corporations overlooks the strategic interest which Western states (following post-World War I rather than post-World War II logic) perceived in keeping their former enemy weak, and the existential interest which his erstwhile employers (the security services) perceived in the revival of an old enmity. It also led him to castigate Western complicity with Russia more than Western antagonism of it, notwithstanding the military-industrial complex's obvious interests in the latter. This in turn made him slow to perceive the emergence of the new Cold War, even whilst he shared many of its Western prejudices. Ukraine's deepening divisions are, perhaps, acknowledged in the fact that *Agent Running*'s pro-Putin oligarch is Ukrainian. But, tellingly, this character is a fantasy villain: 'a shifty billionaire with his finger in the Russian pie' with a 'disgraceful lifestyle' for whom the admirable Florence reserves a 'special place' in her 'private inferno' (*ARF* 94); it is as though he is too infernal to depict in reality. The warmer, whitewashing welcome that London offered to criminal oligarchs opposed to Putin (with their additional motivation for living abroad) is nowhere mentioned. Had le Carré lived to see 2022, he might not have pointed out the parallels between NATO missiles in Ukraine and Soviet missiles in Cuba (or indeed the NATO missiles in Turkey that had provoked the latter), nor deplored the way in which a NATO led by the US he so distrusted had encouraged and tracked the Eastern

expansion of the EU he so loved. For all his 'long, hard-fought campaign for sanity', he did not perceive the madness of the new Cold War (with its Western habit of attributing to all negatively-presented developments a Russian connection) in the way that he had the old one (by creating plotlines in which the Soviets turn out not to be the enemy). Nor did he sidestep the prevailing geopolitical loathing of Russia in the way that he had, seventy years earlier, with Germany. And so today, again, we have a map of the world with 'To the West, America … To the east, China-Russia … In the middle…'

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[1] *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (London: Penguin, 2018), 13. All cited editions of John le Carré's works are published by Penguin, London: *A Most Wanted Man* (2018), *A Small Town in Germany* (2011), *Agent Running in the Field* (2020), *Our Game* (2015), *Single and Single* (2018), *The Perfect Spy* (2018), *The Pigeon Tunnel* (2016), *The Russia House* (2011), *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (2011).
[2] For le Carré's opposition to Brexit see Allan Hepburn, 'John le Carré and Brexit', *The World Orders Forum*, 25 August 2026, www.wgresearch.org/_files/ugd/bdf8dc_12f9838441774c31bd00397beb4e9477.pdf.
[3] Adam Sisman, *John le Carré: the Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 452.
[4] Tim Cornwell, ed., *A Private Spy: The Letters of John le Carré 1945-2020* (London, Penguin: 2022), 275.
[5] Andrei Soldatov, *'John le Carré and spying as seen by the KGB*' in Federico Varese (ed) *Tradecraft: Writers on John le Carré* (Oxford: Bodleian Library Publishing, 2025), 86-102.
[6] Sisman, *Biography*, 131.
[7] Cornwell, ed., *Letters*, 276.
[8] Sisman, *Biography*, 499.
[9] Ibid., p. 499.
[10] Sisman, *Biography*, p. 501.
[11] J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 177. The '9/11 Commission Report' (2004) also contains details of this involvement: www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-911REPORT/pdf/GPO-911REPORT.pdf.
[12] Burr and Collins, *Alms for Jihad*, 45-46, 265.
[13] Yossef Bodansky, *Chechen Jihad: Al Qaeda's Training Ground and the Next Wave of Terror* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 38, 138.
[14] Le Carré, John, 'In Place of Nations', *The Nation*, vol. 272, no. 14, 2001, pp. 11-13, 13.