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# One-upmanship in Soviet-US spy game

THE COMMUNIST WORLD: BY VICTOR ZORZA

The release by the Central Intelligence Agency of the reports it received during 1961-2 from one of its most successful Russian spies, Oleg Penkovsky, who was sentenced to death in 1963, is an event unprecedented in the history of espionage.

"The Penkovsky Papers," when they are published in book form a month from now, will be found to reveal much of the inner workings of Soviet intelligence, which employed him in a high post. They will show how much he was able to report to the West of Russia's military and political plans, and of the thoughts and actions of his friends and acquaintances in some of the most influential posts in Moscow.

Why has the CIA, which only has a half share, so to speak, in the Penkovsky papers—he was working jointly for the British and the Americans—agreed to release them for publication? The answer is probably to be found in the context of the papers themselves, and of the time when they are being published.

Whether the papers have been doctored by the CIA or not it is impossible to say, though it is indisputable that they have been cut. What remains provides so much evidence of the rivalry and hatred between the various parts of the Soviet intelligence organisation, of the "moral degradation," as Penkovsky describes it, of high personages in the intelligence, military, and political community, that if true it can hardly fail to affect their standing and careers in the Soviet Union. To that extent, therefore, the Penkovsky papers are a straightforward piece of psychological warfare.

Many of the people he names have already been demoted, some publicly and some quietly, as a result of the investigations made by the Russians themselves after Penkovsky's arrest. Some, however, are still in positions of influence, and others have been slowly climbing back.

The more immediate reason, however, is to be sought in the publication later this week of a book by Gordon Lonsdale, the Russian spy. Last year, Lonsdale, after serving three of the 25 years to which he was sentenced, was exchanged for the British business man Greville Wynne, imprisoned by the Russians as Penkovsky's contact. Lonsdale's book is a psychological warfare operation in the reverse direction. It is designed to satisfy the curiosity of the Western public about the Russian spy's adventures from his own mouth and, in the process, to cause what dissension it can between Western nations. There is also a good deal of propaganda, sometimes skilful and sometimes crude, for Soviet policies.



Oleg Penkovsky in his colonel's uniform  
**Warning**

The publication of the Penkovsky papers would appear to be a direct reply to the Soviet initiative, and a warning that the West is prepared to play the game—only much more devastatingly than the Russians. At least some of those concerned in this aspect of East-West warfare would seem anxious to get their blow in before Lonsdale does. Clearly no one outside a small circle of British and American intelligence experts could vouch

"in the line of duty."

It is not possible in a comparatively brief article like this to do more than scratch the surface of the mine of information contained in the Penkovsky Papers. On the diplomatic side, perhaps the most important service rendered by Penkovsky was to warn the West of the exact nature of Soviet intentions during the Berlin crisis of 1961, so that it was possible to take in

good time the measures necessary to compel a Russian climb-down.

In repeated messages, Penkovsky kept telling the political leadership of the West that Khrushchev's bark was worse than his bite, that Russia did not have the military force, especially in intercontinental, ballistic missiles, to back up his threats, and that Khrushchev made use of every opportunity to blackmail the West by the appearance of greater strength.

However, in his messages on the Berlin crisis, Penkovsky made it clear that the Kremlin meant to go ahead with the signing of the peace treaty with East Germany, even if it led to hostilities, and he described the nature of these hostilities as envisaged in Moscow.

The unquiet summer of 1961 progressed towards the German climax, with the suspension of Soviet arms cuts, increased military expenditure, and military movements disguised as training manoeuvres but designed to bring the troops and weapons into Germany by D-day, he reported that the final decision would be made by the Soviet leaders at the time of the party congress in October, after consultation with their allies who would be attending the congress as fraternal delegates. However, while Khrushchev seemed determined, many others were against the Berlin "adventure," and especially Mikoyan. Marshal Varentsov, the Commander-in-Chief of tactical missile forces, who was to be demoted later for his close connections with the spy, told Penkovsky: "We are taking a risk, a big risk."

The plan was to sign the peace treaty with East Germany, and to tell the West that henceforth it must deal with the East Germans on the question of access to West Berlin. East German troops would man the first line of defence, and it would be up to the Western forces to fight their way through. The East German forces, poorly equipped and trained, and with questionable morale, would cave in, where upon the Western forces would find themselves facing the "second echelon" of well-armed Soviet forces.

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The Ministry of Defence pass which Penkovsky used to gain access to the classified library. He sent a photograph of it to the West before his arrest.

### *Soviet plan*

The Soviet plan was designed "to win without a fight, but to be ready to fight if it comes to that." The Soviet General Staff had planned a number of moves to feel out Western intentions. One tank brigade was to stand by for an attack. If it was knocked out, another brigade was to be sent in, and then the second echelon, brought to readiness on the borders of the Soviet Union, and in Poland, and Czechoslovakia, was to be brought into action.

Some of the details are much like what was suspected publicly at the time. But, with this precise knowledge of Soviet intentions, the US was able to display to the Soviet Union both by diplomatic means and by the disposition of its forces in Europe, its determination to fight if need be.

The alarms and excursions of that summer may be forgotten now, but it was a close thing. The headlines, even in the "Guardian," spoke of "The Brink of War" over Berlin (quoting Mr Khrushchev), or proclaimed, over a story from Washington: "Russians made to see German crisis could mean war." Mr Macmillan who cannot have been reading Penkovsky's reports, at first announced at an impromptu press conference while playing golf at Gleneagles that the Berlin crisis was "got up by the press," but soon he, too, changed his tune. And in October, at the party congress, Mr Khrushchev himself announced that there was no longer any hurry about the German peace treaty—and suddenly all was sweetness and light again. My guess is that the West was able to stare the Russians down because it knew, from Penkovsky, what was in Mr Khrushchev's mind.

No doubt this, as many other Penkovsky reports, would have been accepted only after confirmation from other intelligence sources. But his papers leave little doubt that he had access to some of the most detailed and most desirable secrets in the annals of espionage. It can be said with no exaggeration that when they are presented in full the book, which is being rushed through the press by Doubleday in the United States and by Collins in Britain, will make publishing history.

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