

Old Russian Radio (Archivist's Note)

By Bart Lee, K6VK, CHRS Archivist

Russia is much in the news this year, for its murderous invasion of the Ukraine. Surprisingly, legacy radio in the ether as opposed to information via cyberspace seems to be playing a big role in the war. Whatever sophisticated telecommunications capability the Russian army may have had, it's not using it. Russia does have, however, a long history in radio, starting with Alexander Popov in the 1890s. The CHRS archives hold some early Russian radio ephemera.

SKW QRA Moscow, Waviliev USSR

RECEIVER:
Circuit Schnell
Aerial T-30x20
Cps and
Dx W.W.
Crd No 1306

TRANSMITTER:
Circuit Hartley
Input 15 w
Plate 400 v mA
Aer curr 05 A
QRH 260 40 m
Aerial Zeppelin

DX QSO W
TO RADIO W6AGS QRA San Francisco QRB

On	Gmt	clg	wkg	QSA	Tone	QRG	QSB	QRM	QRN	WX
16/II 1929	15:35	K2P2		o-v...2 2 R-4	RAC	-	-	-	-	-

Remarks Very and very please your call dear
Pse QSL via SKW, Moscow 73 es dx! 502
tks Op. W6AGS

CHRS QSL Archives

Russian amateur radio station 2CG via “SKW”^{*} sent this reception report in 1929 to California station W6AGS in San Francisco in 1929.

^{*} SKW seems to have been a national QSL bureau, as late as 1938; see generally Andrew Thomas, “The graphia [cards] of Soviet amateur radio ‘QSL’” https://www.academia.edu/45499550/The_graphia_of_Soviet_amateur_radio_QSL_acknowledgement_cards

A year prior, a Siberian registered short wave listening station also reported W6AGS[†] reception (in Esperanto no less):

SKW QRA B. Prusevitch USSR

Ad Radio *W6AGS* (via *W6AGS*) via *QSO, R-son, Recev. ye* { *Octob. 10 1928*
14.40 GMT -

Vokante (calling) *CQ* *QSO, R-son, Recev. ye* {
QRM - QRN 12

QRK R *4* QRH *38* mt. *QSB* *QRM -* QRN *12*
 QSS *-* QSSS *-* QRB *km.*

Recevido *0-Vol Schneel Dig 15-120 mt*
 Anteno: tipo *fili, long. 63* mt, alto *12* mt
 Remarki, DX *F, E, F, Y, O, S (All word)*

Transmielo *Primpovo Watt, Skemo DC*
Anod tenso Volt, Anten korento Amp., QRH mt
 Anteno: tipo *fili (wire), long. mt, alt. mt*
 Remarki, DX
 Pse QSL—karto. Kun Radiosaluto *B. Prusevitch*

LINGVO **IDO** (Esperanto) 1. Hans Höhle, Paul-Heyse-Straße 13, Leipzig N 24, Germania.
 INTERNACIONA (reformita) 2. U. S. S. R. Moskva, 9. Postbuxo 2103. Totrusa Asocio di
 Amiki dil Lingvo Internaciona „IDO“.

QSL N294 **CHRS QSL Archives**

In many European countries, a would-be radio amateur had first to get a short wave receiver working, get registered with the powers-that-be, and listen to radio communications, presumably on the ham bands: “Learn by Listening First.” By the late 1920s, short wave broadcasting in Europe had come about, so a good tunable receiver could be a threat to a bad regime. On the other hand: Radio Moscow began its worldwide broadcasting in 1927.

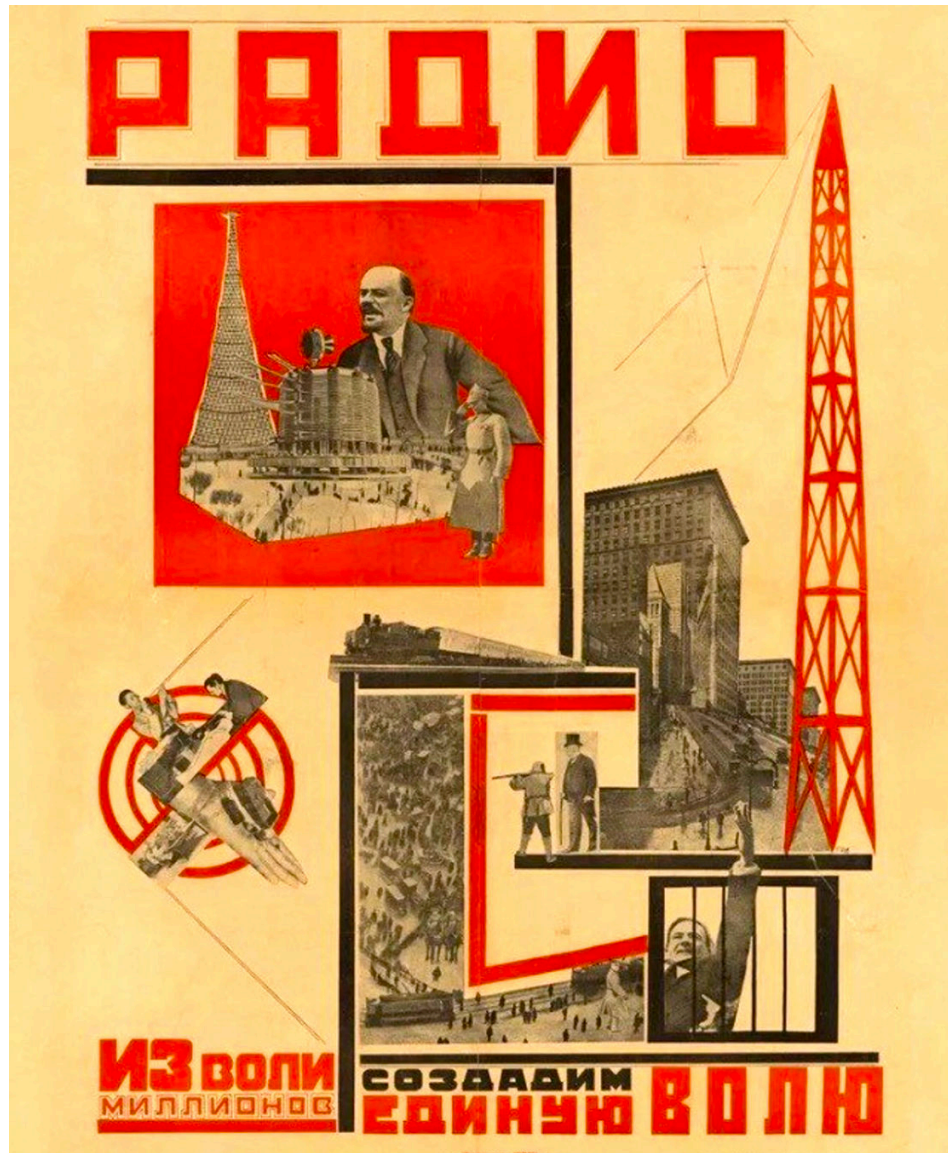
[†] Mervyn F. Callen in San Francisco held the license for W6AGS; CHRS has just inherited a large QSL card collection from his estate. He was an active member of the San Francisco Radio Club.

Broadcast domestic radio in Russia, as in many European countries, flourished in the 1920s. In Russia's case, the intent was to further the Bolshevik revolution, very bloody process.

A revolutionary poster from the early days of the Soviet Union in Russia follows. It proclaims: Radio is the Trumpet of the Revolution [!] Just as the British Broadcasting Corporation sought to unify Great Britain and its empire with radio, so too did the Soviets seek to use radio for their ideological purposes. Radio Moscow says it took to the short waves as early as 1927, only ten years after the Revolution. Domestically, the government used radiophone broadcasting as early as 1921 — and wireless telegraphy as early as 1917 to foment revolution. Radio was well suited to political management of various subject peoples throughout the vastness of the Soviet Union. As in America and the British Empire, radio in Russia gave the nation a compelling and addictive, albeit ethereal, voice. Stalin, Roosevelt, King George and Churchill (and Hitler) were all outstanding radio personalities. The poster is by Vladimir Krinsky, Exhibition Planned for the 1922 Soviet Congress, from the A.V. Shchushev Museum in Moscow, 1989.



A later Soviet radio poster proclaims: “**Radio Creates a Single Will**” (no doubt the will of Lenin, then Stalin, then the politburo).



(Image Etsy.com sourced)

For many decades, each central receiver sent out audio-only to satellite speakers — in a village, or apartment building, or factory or school. The speakers had a volume control. They could not tune. It seems the line-out voltage was 30 volts into the

speaker. Only in later decades did some of the speakers have any decent design, presumably for home use. These old speakers are available on Etsy.com from Eastern Europe (*circa 1950s* images below are Etsy.com sourced).



A politically-correct administrator made sure the listeners heard only the right broadcast. *“The more things change, the more they stay the same...”*

(30 V 22 de K6VK) ##