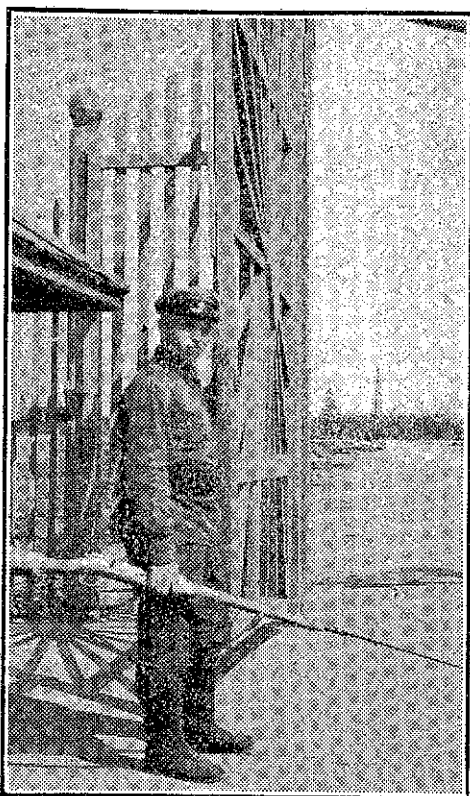




RADIO—

Vocal Whip Lash Making Russia Conscious of the Great God Sovietism

Russia, in common with Germany, Austria and Hungary, has sentries on duty outside her chief broadcasting stations. On the left is a guard beside the huge entrance gates of the 500 kilowatt Comintern station in Moscow.

The tremendous experiment that is modern Russia depends largely for its success on the strength of its broadcasting stations—hence the huge transmitting masts that dot the countryside. Russia has fully realised the value of radio for propaganda purposes, and in this article, specially written for the "Radio Record," Cecil W. Lusty sets down his impressions of wireless in the United States of Soviet Russia.

THE scene is the Pool of London, that romantic, dirty reach between London and Tower Bridges in which oddly-assorted little ships of all flags become brothers under the skin. Unusual interest seems to be attached to the departure of a 4000-ton vessel, called the Jan Rudzutak. The quayside is lined with animated men and women. Some are in complete cloth of red, and nearly all wear red ribbons or rosettes. A newspaper vendor offers publications that would spell imprisonment in New Zealand. A policeman strolls nonchalantly through the crowd.

A woman perched precariously on the base of a crane screams, "Red Front, Red Front," in rather hysterical fashion. A crazy concertina grinds out the "Internationale." The tune is spiritedly taken up on ship and shore and startles even the phlegmatic wheeling seagulls. The Jan Rudzutak noses her way down the Thames; Tower Bridge unconcernedly lifts its massive arms; and another shipload of cosmopolitans—from North and South America, Europe and the Empire—is bound for Russia.

Through the Kiel Canal, where the "comrades" on board stage a concert of revolutionary songs in several languages for the benefit of the Nazi dock workers, and through the ice-strewn Baltic to the winding estuary of the Neva. From Leningrad the Red Arrow express rushes us through timber and pastoral country, in which modern buildings and old-world cottages lie incongruously cheek by jowl, to the city of two cities.

For here we see a modern, severely classical railway station making a striking contrast to the old ornate, rather fantastic station; porphyry-tinted Lenin mausoleum as neighbour to drab fifteenth-century Kremlin fortifications; Russians, in fur caps, loose blouses, and traditional boots, rubbing shoulders with others in customary European dress. Such is Moscow, pride of the Russians, capital of the U.S.S.R.

Within the U.S.S.R. frontiers, embracing an area equal to one-sixth of the world, is a total population of more than 160,000,000, comprising over 180 ethnic groups speaking in all about 150 tongues and dialects. What part does broadcast-

ing play in the daily life, national and individual, of this great conglomeration of states? How do the programmes broadcast cater for the many groups of violently contrasting temperaments, tastes and customs?

And how are these vast distances—presenting in their variety of terrain and geographical features considerable technical wireless prob-

lems—annihilated in order to ensure some degree of universally reliable reception? Let me describe how Russia, by a spider's web of over 60 stations proper and thousands of "little fellows," by broadcasting in 54 tongues and by "collective" listening, already caters for 12,000,000 listeners, and how she will, I believe, eventually accomplish her Herculean task.

Soviet broadcasting is paradoxical. To a greater extent than in Germany, Austria and Italy, political tenets are married to the ether. Thus broadcasting must achieve more than dissemination; it must by a taskmaster-like vocal whip lash those millions into expressed worship of the Great God Sovietism. Russian radio never sleeps. Day and night Marxism, Leninism and "technical propaganda" relative to the "plans" are hammered into city workers, Middle Asia Republic toilers and peasants in Siberian wilds.

Yet the artistic standard of the programmes is high. This artistic quality is attained by the advantage—peculiar of course, to Russia—of non-competition with theatres and "boards," by treating broadcasting as a highly-specialised art, and by co-operation of listeners. The famous operas of the Bolshoi and other Moscow theatres are broadcast. State broadcasting schools exist, and conferences of listeners are regularly convened.

Special departments are provided at Soviet technical and musical colleges for instructing potential radio artists, and the personnel of broadcasting choirs, orchestras and announcers are selected by both written and practical examination. District radio correspondents forward local criticisms and programme suggestions to the broadcasting committees.

Individual correspondence is further invited, and in Moscow I was shown 30,000 letters received from near and far-flung parts within three months. Massed listeners may also order definite types of transmissions.

The regional stations broadcast in the languages of the people served. Thus the all-Ukrainian committee presents 80 per cent. of its transmissions in the Ukrainian tongue, and the remaining 20 per cent. in Russian, German, Hebrew and Czechoslovak; the White (Continued on page 48.)