



Solid Copy

The International CWops Newsletter

March

2010

Issue No. 2

CWops Events

On-Air Monthly CWT

Next one: 10 March 2010

Start time:

1100Z Asia/VK/ZL region

1900Z Europe Region

0300Z (March 11) NA region

1-hour each region

Exchange name/number (members)

Exchange name/SPC (non-members)

CWops Birthday Party

To celebrate the beginning of this new CW club, we will hold a 9-day event. There is no set exchange, but members are encouraged to share membership numbers as they meet and greet each other.

The Birthday Party event will run from 0000z Saturday, March 6, 2010 through 2359z Sunday, March 14, 2010. Report the total number of contacts made.

CWops "neighborhood"

Look for CWops on 1.818, 3.528, 7.028, 10.118, 14.028, 18.078, 21.028, 24.908, 28.028

CWops Officers and Director

Officers

President: Pete Chamalian, [W1RM](#)

Vice President: Art Suberbielle, [KZ5D](#)

Secretary: Jim Talens, [N3JT](#)

Treasurer: Harry Wilson, [W1AAX](#)

Directors:

Bert Donn, [G3XSN](#)

Shin Onisawa, [JA1NUT](#)

Vidi La Grange, [ZS1EL](#)

Webmaster: John Miller, [K6MM](#)

Publisher: Rob Brownstein, [K6RB](#)



From the president...



CWops is nearly two months old and our membership has risen to 679! This is, in a word, fantastic!

We are no longer in the "charter member" period so any new members will be required to follow the process outlined on the Membership tab. If you know of a worthy potential member, please go to the members-only tab and click on the nomination form link to enter your nominee.

Don't forget to review the list of those already-nominated candidates. If you see someone on the list you would like to support, click on the link to send the secretary an email. Be sure you

enter the call of the nominee and why you think he/she would be a good CWops member. There are lots and lots of great CW ops out there.

The team has been working with Bert, W5ZR, on tracking software to make it easier to keep track of the members you've worked and your progress towards various awards that CWops will be offering. You'll find Bert's program in the Members Only section (on the bottom). You can download and put it to work right away.

I was only able to spend nine hours in the just-passed ARRL CW DX contest, but the time I did spend was incredible – it was great to work so many non-US members as well! I spent the early part multiplier hunting.

On Saturday afternoon about 19z I found a good spot on 40 and started to run – wow, what a run it was -- 145/hr and 260 Q's. On Sunday, I hit 15 at 11z for another 309 Q's and a 165 hour (I had the 10 QSO meter in N1MM Logger hitting 291!). Let's hope this is the start of some much better and greatly anticipated conditions!

But, CWops isn't just about contesting – it's about CW operating of all sorts, be it contesting, DXing, rag chewing, traffic handling, you name it. Being active on CW, helping others to improve their skills and speed is what it's all about.

There are lots more in the works – the potential for some gatherings among them – stay tuned for more information.

73 and see you on the air!

Pete, W1RM

From the VP/Activities Chairman...



Are you ready for a party? Now that the Club has moved through the Charter Membership phase, we're going to celebrate by having a CWops Birthday Party for nine days in March. Members should call CQ CWT whenever they can be

QRV. Any frequency is acceptable; however, you may pay particular attention to our PRIMARY frequencies + or – as QRM dictates: 1818, 3528, 7028, 10118, 14028, 18078, 21028, 24908, 28028.

We suggest you operate on or near these frequencies when searching for fellow club members. But remember to be considerate of others and move up or down as conditions indicate. When a Dxpedition is operating near one of these frequencies, just move to another place in the band ending in 8.

There is no set exchange for the CWops Birthday Party, but members are encouraged to share membership numbers as they meet and greet each other. The Birthday Party event will run from 0000z Saturday, March 6, 2010 through 2359z Sunday, March 14, 2010.

Report the total number of contacts made (count each station worked on a separate band as a new contact) on our reflector: cwops@yahoogroups.com .

Do not send in your logs. Just give us your totals. A listing of the scores will be posted on our Website, www.cwops.org .

This month our mini-CWT will be held on Wednesday, March 10 at 1100z and at 1900z, and Thursday, March 11 at 0300z (Wednesday night, US/VE). Jump in for a fast 60 minutes of fun with fellow members and non-members. Report your results on the 3830 Score site. See details on our CWops website.

And there's still more exciting news. Activity Team member, Bert, W5ZR has written some

software to help members keep track of QSOs with other members. It's free and easy to use. You can download a copy from our website in the Members Only section.

This software will make it very easy to keep track of your progress for our Club awards. You'll find complete details for each award on our web site.

There's an annual award called **ACC** – This award is the Annual CWops Competition award. Only one contact per member per calendar year can be counted for this award.

Another award is called **CCMA** –the Cumulative CWops Membership Award. This award recognizes the number of members contacted on each amateur band, beginning January 3, 2010 and continuing in perpetuity.

CWops WAS – is for Working All States with CWops members.

CWops DX – is for contacting DX countries, but only contacts with CWops members can be counted.

CWops WAE – is for contacts with all European Countries, but only contacts with CWops members can be counted.

We plan to have members post their progress on all of these on our Website. Certificates will be available that you can print from our Website when you reach certain levels. Details will follow.

73,

Art, KZ5D

From the Editor...



Last month I told you that your inputs to this newsletter were very welcome. In fact, the newsletter will be that much better if we all contribute.

To that end, this month we have two submissions from our CWops membership. One is a very interesting piece about the language of Morse Code. It was written by Carlo Consoli, IK0YGG, member 574; and Prof. Augusto Ancillotti, University of Perugia, Italy.

The second piece comes by way of Dimiter Petrov, LZ1AF, member 52. It's called *How CW Saved a Life*. I want to thank these members for their submissions and invite you all to consider sending something for future editions of Solid Copy. I know at least one member who has an extensive collection of "bugs." I'd love to publish some photos and read about really challenging restoration projects.

Some of us restore old tube-type transmitters and receivers (I used to), and have had to deal with CW keying envelope shaping challenges. What did you do? How did it work?

Has anyone made a concerted effort to really pull up his/her copying rate? What did you do? What tips do you have for the rest of us?

Rob, K6RB

Amateur telegraphy from a linguistic perspective

(an excerpt from a book by Carlo Consoli and Augusto Ancillotti)

Telegraphy was born as an encoding of natural language, to enable you to transmit messages on a transmission line (cable or radio), so that:

- the message is not ambiguous
- reception of the message is certifiable
- the message is as short as possible

Since the mid-nineteenth century the telegraph was employed to transmit messages on a dedicated wire connection, with almost absolute certainty that a message sent would be received. In the twentieth century, with the invention of radio, telegraphy has been used with great

success in broadcasts over the air (wireless telegraphy). The language used in telegraphy was extended to incorporate control signals (*procedural signs or prosigns*), designed to provide operators with a control protocol that let them monitor if the message sent was actually received.

Telegraphy and wireless telegraphy, therefore, had a mere procedural connotation. It is less than a language, being “just” a process of encoding, regulated by special procedures, to support sending and receiving signals.

At the end of the last century radiotelegraphy was gradually abandoned and, since 1998, all earth-bound maritime radio systems have been replaced by satellites which would provide better reliability and security of the link.

Telegraphy, however, is still in great vogue in the amateur radio community, because it offers a means of communication which achieves contacts over longer distances with less power than voice modes. Moreover, it requires much simpler and less expensive transmitting devices. The majority of amateur radio operators know CW: to get the license, until 2006, learning it was mandatory and a good 30-40% of ham radio operators still use it today.

From a linguistic perspective, this fact is important: as long as telegraphy was used for professional purposes it remained rigidly codified within defined structures, with no possibility of change. The telegraph operator had a professional obligation to strictly observe both the cadence of transmission (rhythm), and the procedures. The amateur, fortunately, is not forced to comply with strict rules and is virtually free to accommodate the use of this language at will.

Although CW was discontinued for all professional applications, the latest developments show, fortunately, very comforting news about "health status" of this language.

Not only is CW a language still used around the world, but it is showing a level of unexpected vitality: millions of radio amateurs use it, regardless of their geographical location. This

chapter is written in collaboration with Prof. Augusto Ancillotti, Professor of Linguistics at the University of Perugia, Italy and discusses in detail the linguistic aspects of CW, as it is used today. Here are, analyzed for the first time, the linguistic aspects of amateur radiotelegraphy.

A linguistic analysis of amateur telegraphy

This language has, from a linguistic perspective, very interesting properties:

- it is a kind of jargon, used by a homogeneous group of people (ham radio, in this case)
- has an evolving lexicon
- expresses, albeit in to a limited extent, emotions
- is an expression of cultural characteristics of the people using it
- it was spontaneously produced by a community of individuals spread evenly throughout the world and is a shared language
- its vocabulary is derived from various codes and languages (English, American Morse code and naval code)
- it has a syntactic structure, and no morphological structure
- it is procedural
- it is constantly changing, i.e., new terms are added to the lexicon, often having new meanings
- it shows signs of specialization with respect to sub-cultural domains.

Surely, amateur telegraphy is not able to express complex concepts; it is limited to convey information about a small number of subjects, while more varied contents can only be expressed by directly using a natural language encoded into Morse code. A complex sentence like *today I woke up with stomachache and I will not eat anything until this evening*, can only be expressed using a natural language. In that case, Morse code is used as a mere codification process.

Due to its lack of expressive potential, amateur radiotelegraphy, therefore, does not have the quality of language itself.

However, amateur telegraphy has two varieties: the first is tied to particular contexts of use and the latter is a means of communication within the small selected group of amateur radio operators who use a natural language outside of the group itself. Amateur radiotelegraphy, thus, is a code with which some of the communication needs are accomplished, while for others the use of a natural language is required.

Is amateur radiotelegraphy, as a language, reduced to a mere collection of slang expressions or jargon, then?

Jargon is a language based on conventional processing of words of a language or one or more dialects, with exotic or newly coined lexical items, used by those who belong to restricted groups in order to guarantee the identity of the group and not to be understood by people external to the group itself. From a linguistic perspective, typical jargons are the military jargon and student slang, which originally developed as a partial alternative language in barracks, schools and colleges. All these situations are such that communal life creates a special solidarity among members.

Such situations are typically characterized by lexemes whose use is limited to small groups of speakers, aimed at avoiding comprehension from members outside this group and establishing a high level of membership exclusivity.

Often it happens that some individuals keep using these slang terms even after they leave the group or lose their status as a member, thus disclosing these terms to the outside world. As a result, it becomes necessary to replace such terms with new words in the jargon. This makes every slang language evolving, albeit within a very limited range. The lexicon of a jargon, like the language of amateur telegraphy, consists of lexemes coming from various sources, in the case of amateur telegraphy, English, American Morse code and the naval Q code.

Thus, the jargon is the set of expressive tools that, among alternative terms and phrases, makes the dialogue of two members of the same social class or small group immediately recognizable. In fact, when two amateur radio operators meet, they can use phrases like "*Tonight I QSY with my XYL,*" to say, "*Tonight, my wife and I go out.*"

Amateur radiotelegraphy, however, does not provide a mere collection of alternative words or phrases, but also a structure of an alternative language, which is valid for people from different cultural and international backgrounds.

These jargons are not as expressive; this is a typical characteristic of the so-called *pidgin* languages.

A pidgin is the result of a simplification of one or more languages to get a primary communication tool between speakers of different languages. This is always a hybrid that is not recognized as being a mother tongue by any user, but can serve as a communication tool among groups from different nations.

Typical features of the pidgins are:

- Function of a "communication vehicle " to serve as a common linguistic tool among different communities.
- They result from regular contacts among different cultures, which need to communicate in absence of a common language.
- Simplified structure of Subject / Verb / Object with no complex or structured complements.
- Total reduction of syllabic tails, almost all terms are made solely by a base form or even monosyllabic.
- Past, plural and superlatives forms are very simplified.

Like jargons and pidgins, amateur telegraphy has local variations and / or individual uses. Like the pidgins, amateur telegraphy has a strong international connotation.

Amateur radiotelegraphy as a jargon, in fact, does not show the following characteristics

- It is not and is not intended as a sign of social identity, i.e., to highlight the fact of belonging to the group of amateur radio operators.
- It is not aimed to exclude other social groups from the communication.
- Is not made for exclusive use by a definite group.

Another interesting aspect of amateur telegraphy is that it is beginning to show signs of *linguistic specialization*. The various amateur communities, depending on the cultural context that characterizes them, have developed typical expressions. Such expressions come from a homogeneous cultural context using specific terms as signs or “markers”.

Thus, for example, among amateur radio operators are also ex-professionals who are distinguished by several features of their expressive style. For example, in Italy, all marine radio officers never use the character 'comma'. The comma was in fact used in the navy for insulting the correspondent and to report serious defects in his manipulation of the telegraph key. Again, a radio officer often uses the term *QSP* almost unused by amateur radio operators, with a meaning similar to the one originally used in the Navy, but adapted to the context of amateur radio.

In the Navy, ships were receiving long lists of messages from coastal stations, while waiting for their turn to receive, and had to be swift and effective in recording such messages because the coastal station had no time for repetition. Sometimes, though, reception conditions were so poor (for various reasons, frequency overcrowding, severe weather conditions, etc.) that an operator might lose part of the messages. This event was, unfortunately, far from rare and often other ships acted as a 'repeater' for the lost message. The radio operators officers were in fact very loyal to each other; if a ship had been unable to communicate with the coastal station, then the message (in Q code it is called QTC) was repeated by another vessel which had a better radio connection.

This mode of transmission was called, in Q code, *QSP*.

What is left of all this in amateur telegraphy?

A marine radio operator uses the term *QSP* in a meaning adapted to new needs: “Will you relay to...?”. For example, if a station wants IK0AAA to say to IK0BBB to change frequency, he would transmit: IK0AAA PSE QSP TO IK0BBB QSY.

This is a common feature in all forms of human communication and, therefore, also in jargons and pidgins.

Amateur telegraphy also shows signs of the so-called *areal variance*, i.e., it expresses the geographic area of origin by means of appropriate phrases and idioms. For example, several amateurs from the former Soviet countries, started using the term RIG, which means transceiver, to indicate the radiated power rather than the model of the transceiver itself. Thus, while the rest of the ham radio world say MY PWR IS 100W, some Russians say MY RIG IS 100W. Notice that this 'mistake' is used in a homogeneous cultural context (former Soviet countries) and serves as a real marker of this context. The most likely reason for this expression is the fact that in Russia building radio equipment is very popular, in such a case it would not make sense to talk about make and model of the transceiver, instead giving electrical and construction features.

There are several other examples relevant to the phenomenon of linguistic specialization in telegraphy and several others are produced continuously: amateur telegraphy language is therefore not stable but constantly changing. New terms or procedural elements are added from time to time and 'propagate' themselves in the air as ham radio operators decide to use them. When the use is widespread enough, the new terms or idioms become a permanent heritage to everyone.

A striking example is the need to communicate emotions. In naval telegraphy, obviously, a term devoted to communicate moods has not been defined, with telegraphy being a professional means specifically intended for technical

communication. Among amateurs, instead, this need is present and alive.

Over the years, the use of the term HI has become frequent to indicate a laugh. It is not just a sequence of two characters "H" and "I": it is a real new term with the function of specific sign. The "liberalization" of the amateur telegraphy language is even leading to produce 'phonetic' articulation phenomena.

In the Navy, messages were to be transmitted with perfect timing and spacing: all elements are encoded with specific rules. A dash is three dots long, the separation among dashes and dots is a dot long, and the words must be separated by a wider break of seven dots. All operators were required to comply with these rules, for the sake of clarity. Basically they were educated in schools to 'play' all the same.

In amateur radiotelegraphy, of course, there are no schools, so everyone learns the spacing and timing of transmission in a spontaneous way.

This freedom of manipulating a telegraph key produces very interesting phenomena: the laughter, HI, for example, is not transmitted accurately H (four dots), followed with the proper spacing by the I (two dots), it but is transmitted as four-dots, a light syncope, a dot, another syncope and a final dot. The resulting sound is incredibly similar to that of a real laugh. Once heard, it cannot be forgot.

This phenomenon is a real articulation of language, vehicle of a specific meaning: the telegraphic message is articulated in different ways to communicate different meanings for the same term.

The term HI means, in fact, also *high*, hence the need to send the two terms differently.

Another example of an articulation words is the way the procedural signal "end of the transmission" (**SK**) is often stretched beyond measure, and then followed by two quick dots. The sound is very distinctive and identifies a very experienced amateur radio operator, often a former Marine radio operator.

CW: the Esperanto of the Third Millennium?

Amateur radiotelegraphy has, therefore, a quality of language equal or very close to that of a pidgin, in fact:

- it is a veritable "interlanguage" that allows the world to communicate through a common language.

– It stems from one language and is codified and developed independently by regular contacts between different cultures. Spontaneous expressions as "HELLO" or "A BIEN TOT" are typically used even among people who originally did not use these phrases.

– It has a simplified Subject / Verb / Object structure, with no additional complex or structured clauses (eg. MY QTH IS ROME, or HR WX ES CLOUDY).

- Features a total reduction of syllabic tails; almost all terms are made solely by a base form or monosyllabs. Terms are in fact codes, abbreviations or prosigns QTH, HPE, CUAGN.

– Past forms, plural and superlatives are very simplified, borrowed from English (tail ending S for the plural, usage of MORE / MOST, use of only the auxiliary BE / HAVE - WAS / HAD).

Amateur radiotelegraphy is a pidgin, then. Pidgin languages (if they survive enough time) can evolve into a language called *creole*, provided that this process requires specific conditions.

The process of evolution from pidgin to creole is very complex and requires first the need for interchange between people of different languages. A pidgin is therefore used as a bilateral talk language, some sort of third language, among speakers of different languages.

Its usage is limited to the specific need of exchange between non-native speakers, learned by everyone as if it were a language itself consolidated by a *de facto* standard. The most widely used pidgin today is the neomelanesian, whose morphosyntactic structure is essentially invariant in the juxtaposition of words (mostly

English-based) and the lexicalization of grammatical functions primary as the plural, future, past, etc, for example *plentimàn* “men in quantity” is the plural of “man”.

Amateur radiotelegraphy is characterized by the need of communication among radio amateurs of different languages. However, this condition is not sufficient: surveys performed by sociolinguists have shown that a pidgin can be formed within a couple of generations. The same time span is required for a creole language.

A creole is a mixed language that stems from a set of initial languages, then permanently adopted inside a community, eventually becoming the mother tongue of the community, in which it identifies its ethnicity. Of course for this to happen, each individual in the cultural community is required to lose the usage of his mother tongue for his daily purposes.

This happens for many different reasons. For example, the circumstances that favored the formation of Caribbean Creole languages are due to the violent transplantation of slaves with varying languages, intentionally reshuffled and redistributed to the plantations of the islands and to the coasts of the Caribbean.

These areas were previously emptied of indigenous population by massacres and diseases. In each plantation the only language in use was the language of the white settlers. The slaves, even to communicate with each other, were forced to use the same foreigner talk that the owners were using with them, hastily learned and reproduced according to their vocal habits.

Within two or three generations this pidgin became the only language of the local community and was taught, learnt and used as a mother tongue, while at the same time enriched the expressive possibilities and "got complicated" to reach the complexity of a standard language. Thus, we have today French-based creole languages (Guyana, Trinidad, West Indies, Haiti, Louisiana), English-based ones (Guyana, Jamaica, Honduras, Virginia) and Portuguese-based (Curaçao). Many other creole languages were then absorbed by European

languages and eventually disappeared (Brazil, United States).

To allow amateur radiotelegraphy continuing in its growth process as a language, time must pass first, and, more importantly, people using it should lose the ability to use their own native language and be forced to use only the telegraphic language as a means of interchange.

It should be noticed that these conditions are already partially in place: a ham radio operator, in front of his equipment, is like transplanted to a "virtual" land where in fact he cannot use his mother tongue. Needless to say, at the end of a radio contact, each operator gets back home!

Telegraphy is not only a living language: as an elegant pastime of its connoisseurs, it is demonstrating that it can evolve into a language itself. Thus, while as an international language Esperanto has found adoption in a more or less stable community of around 120 countries worldwide - mainly between Europe and China - amateur telegraphy spread evenly around the planet and is constantly evolving.

Whether, and how, amateur telegraphy will evolve into a language itself, therefore, only time will tell. We are just amateurs but we play a decisive role: whenever we use CW we do not just keep it alive but we also keep helping its process of growth and evolution and we become active participants in a very interesting linguistic phenomenon that sheds a very comforting light on the state of health of this magnificent language.

How CW Saved a Life

By Dimiter Petrov, LZ1AF, CWops #52

Perhaps most of the old timers may remember the fascinating French feature film “Si tous les gars du monde...” - “If All People in the World...” inspired by Fernand Raoult, F9AA, then Supreme Court Judge; a movie hit that toured and greatly impressed the world in the mid-50s. Actually, it was not a real story but just an exciting scenario how Amateur Radio saved a ship’s crew taken fatally ill at sea.

It was the highlight of my ham radio career when I was involved in a real and even more fascinating, almost incredible life saving operation which was carried out exactly 50 years ago, in February 1960. I would like to share with the CWops Solid Copy readers the story firstly, because under the circumstances, without using CW the rescue operation would not have been possible, and secondly, to mark its 50th anniversary!

Regretfully, after 50 years now, I remember only prefixes and not call signs and names, because the authorities then confiscated the station log and never returned it. But more on this later.

So, here is what happened. I lived and studied in a high school in the town of Shumen, LZ2 (1946-1949), where I got interested in ham radio. The librarian of the municipal library Slavi Mirchev, a very well educated man, taught us - a small group of enthusiasts, the fundamentals of electricity and radio. And, years later, on February 20, 1960, when I was already resident in Sofia and was a licensed ham, he rang me up in the late evening to tell me that his much younger brother, 27, was dying of pulmonary tuberculosis in the Shumen main hospital. The doctors said he would die within two or three days, no more!

Incidentally, on the same day the library received the latest volume of the Soviet Union's Great Medical Encyclopedia in which Slavi read that a new almost magic medicine to cure TB, called Viomycin (or so, as far as I remember), had been invented in the West, already available in the UK, Switzerland, Germany and the USA.

Slavi rushed to the doctors with the big news but they said the state bureaucratic procedures to import it were too complicated and clumsy and would take months! So, Slavi desperately urged me to do what I could through amateur radio. No other means were possible.

My home station was damaged at the time - HT transformer breakdown (what else can be expected from a home-wound 1500V transformer?) and I went to the Central Radio

Club, LZ1KBA. Fortunately, the club was still open. Its 1kW transmitter was club-built, the antenna was a Windom. Propagation conditions were awful, all bands above 80 m being dead. I had no experience how I should be calling the world for help and started launching SOS de LZ1KBA.

Anyway, that worked out and hams from OK, HB9, DJ and UA4 came back, almost immediately. I had prepared a short text describing the medicine, the hospital address included. Each of the correspondents promised to get in touch with his National Red Cross, but I kept calling. At about midnight a station from OZ, Copenhagen, gave me a call. He said he was a medical doctor himself but didn't know about the Viomycin. Then he asked me to wait while he phoned the President of the Danish Medical Academy. Of course, he woke him up after midnight. The President said he was aware of the medicine but it was not available in Denmark!

My signals crossed the Atlantic and a K3, Tom, in Washington D.C. wanted to help. Reception at both ends was poor and the OZ MD ham acted as a relay station back and forth. Tom contacted the US Red Cross and they said Viomycin was available in the US Army hospitals in West Germany, but to obtain it the Bulgarian Red Cross had to apply to the US Army Commander. The three of us agreed that was a hopeless case, having in mind that Bulgaria was then a communist country.

Meanwhile, the club telephone rang several times - furious operators from the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, located about 100 m away, complained of severe RFI spoiling RTTY reception of a long speech of China's Chairman Mao Tse Tung. That club-built transmitter and especially the Windom antenna directly connected to the tank coil were causing quite a problem. Thus, I had to lower power and keep messages as short as possible. And, to top it all, at 2 am the ARRL DX CW Contest started. Can you imagine the mess and my efforts to get through?

In the interim, Spas, LZ1DW, an air-traffic controller at Sofia Airport, who had a day off, stayed with me throughout the night arranging by the telephone a passenger flight to take the medicine from where it would be appropriate.

Finally, a breakthrough! The DJ3 fellow who promised to do something, came back with the great news that the medicine had been found and paid by the Hamburger Abendblatt Newspaper. And, all that within several hours! After midnight! Unbelievable!

Sofia Airport said a Bulgarian liner was due to take off from Schoenefeld Airport in East Berlin at 8 am bound for Sofia and they would instruct its captain to take the medicine. This information was sent to the DJ3 ham.

It is incredible that the West German hams managed within a couple of hours to alert hams in West and East Berlin to stand by at the two sides of Check Point Charlie waiting for the drug!

The US Air Force HQ was asked by the German hams to provide an aircraft to fly the medicine to Berlin but they refused. Then the German police came to the rescue and a light police aircraft brought it to Berlin!

At Check Point Charlie the drug was handed over to the East German hams most likely without problems and they rushed to Schoenefeld Airport. However, a bit late! They missed the airline that had just taken off!

So, Spas arranged that the medicine be taken by the next Bulgarian airliner flying to Berlin a couple of hours later.

Then how to get the medicine to Shumen in northeastern Bulgaria? It is rather far away. I spoke with the Bulgarian Red Cross and they promised a light aircraft to fly it in. However, the weather in Germany worsened and although the medicine was already onboard, the liner was delayed for several hours due to fog. On its way to Sofia the airplane had a stopover at Prague Airport. And much to my astonishment, I had a phone call from Slavi in Shumen saying they

had just received a telegram from the amateur radio club at Prague Airport that the medicine was on its way to Sofia! The doctors could not believe their eyes and the dying young man even sat up from the hope he now had for the arrival of the medicine!

The liner was scheduled to land at Sofia Airport at 7 pm, when it was completely dark! The Bulgarian Red cross told me their light aircraft could not fly in the night; there was no airfield suitable for landing near Shumen; they could not take the risk of emergency night landing and cancelled the flight.

At that time I had no car, in fact, very few people had. Then the Central Radio Club chief LZ1PM asked the HQ of the Voluntary Organization for Aid to Defense in which Amateur Radio was incorporated, to provide a car. Can you believe it? They said they would check, first, with the State Security Service whether the dying young man was not a class enemy. And they refused a car, saying no car was available at the moment which wasn't true at all!

Anyway, a solution was found. Alex, LZ1SA, went to the Central Railroad station and negotiated that the trainmaster of the fast train setting out at 20.00 hours and passing through Shumen, would take the medicine and a telegram was sent to Slavi to wait for the train at 3 am.

Spas, LZ1DW and I were driven to the airport by a car with a learner to drive - a young girl and her instructor.

Needless to say how much we were excited and relieved to see the aircraft landing at last on the runway, the crew getting down, led by the captain, coming and holding a small box and some papers! Spas and I nearly jumped with joy! WE DID IT!! But it was early for joy!

As if hypnotized Spas and I stared at the small box with attached QSL cards of the hams involved and some customs papers and I reached out for it, but the Customs official said 'No! Do you have an import license?' 'Of course, we don't,' and I

explained the case in brief. Hmm, he showed some understanding and said: 'Ask the Customs Director for permission!'

'But, how and where at this time?' I asked.

'Here is his home phone number, go and phone him!'

I couldn't quite understand the logics of this action but I tried in vain from a public telephone. No reply. Coming back, I gave a wink at Spas, whispered to follow me now, threw my identity card on the desk, grabbed the precious box and ran away as fast as I could, saying over my shoulder - I'll come tomorrow! They did not chase me, fortunately! Good boys!

A mad dash to the railroad station, the instructor driving, and we caught the fast train! The medicine was delivered to Slavi at 3 am! The young man was saved and discharged a couple of weeks later! The magic medicine and the rescue CW operation worked out!

But this is not the end of the story!

The authorities were furious. The Ministry of Communications asked me to pay as international telegrams all transmitted messages (then we were asked to write down in the log all transmitted text and a summary of received text!).

Well, I wrote an article on the rescue operation for our amateur radio magazine, but it was banned by the security service. It's worth pointing out that I gave publicity to the operation in my weekly DX Program in English of then Radio Sofia and it was broadcast uncensored.

Lack of coordination? Hi! Anyway, I finally didn't pay anything, but the LZ amateurs were strictly forbidden to use ham radio for similar purposes because 'the world would think that the People's Government does not provide adequate medical care of the nation.'

Later on, another package of Viomycin was received from Switzerland and ...just

think...from the Soviet Union, paid by Komsomolskaya Pravda Newspaper, but both parcels were returned by the Customs due to the lack of import license.

It would be great if some of the participants in this life-saving operation are still around and possibly CWops members. If they could read this story and accept my gratitude, after half a century, for their efforts, ham spirit and dedication to a noble cause. I still do not know who they are; their QSL cards were never returned.

* * * * *