

SPUTNIK THE SECOND:

How many more surprises have Russian scientists up their sleeves for the public - their own, and the rest of the world? Russian papers are still full of Sputnik the First - not to mention the papers of Eastern Europe, relieved perhaps that "satellite" now has a different meaning - then the news breaks: Sputnik the Second has been launched.

A multi-stage rocket, with a fuel more powerful than anything the West has in stock, puts its final stage into a round-the-world orbit. Two things are astonishing about Sputnik the Second; its weight - more than half a ton - and its live passenger - a dog! Our artist shows how this flying dog-human is probably arranged - radio, food and oxygen supplies, and Laika the most famous husky in the world (or strictly speaking, out of it). Laika's elliptical orbit varies from a hundred to a thousand miles above the earth's surface, where observatories listen eagerly for the coded radio signals which tell the space scientists how Laika is standing up to her lonely journey. These signals give information on the brain, respiration and pulse of the first living being to leave Earth for outer space.

Without knowing it, Laika is telling man whether, in the years to come, it will be safe for him to follow her. Meanwhile, he watches her progress with envious eyes, wondering to what adventures this little pioneer is blazing the trail. Britain's huge radio telescope at Jodrell Bank joins in the watch-keeping, and Russia has acknowledged the telescope's tremendous value by asking for its help. Meanwhile, a Cambridge observatory has already seen Sputnik the Second, and plans are afoot for building a new British observatory for satellite-tracking alone. The way things are going, it will be fully employed.