

# The Soviet 'Moon'

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

THE LAUNCHING of the man-made satellite by the USSR is, by common agreement, an event of stupendous scientific importance, marking a new era of scientific accomplishment. It is also a splendid demonstration of the superiority, technically and otherwise, of the Socialist system over that of capitalism. Progressive forces all over the world are hailing the magnificent event, and it is indeed a glorious accomplishment to add to the many others that will go to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the USSR.

It took science and technique of the very highest order to make and throw this new moon into its orbit far above the earth. That the Soviet Union should have the superb technical competence required for this unparalleled feat is hardly more to be marveled at than the extreme speed with which that country acquired this ability. The writer remembers very vividly the primitive and ruined state of the Russian economy in 1921, at the close of the civil war. It seems almost incredible that it has been able to make such gigantic progress in such a short time as to enable it to achieve this present great accomplishment.

Production in 1921 stood at about 10 percent of that of 1914. The British, French, German, American and Belgian engineers who operated the Czarist industries, had fled the country, and many of the conservative Russian experts had gone on a permanent strike. The country, blockaded by the imperialist powers, including the U. S., could neither import nor make even the key parts necessary to keep the old industries operating.

I saw, in factories, whole rows of machines standing idle, for want of small parts that could not be had. For example, as fast as the wire cables in the mines wore out, the mines would close down, unable to replace them and spreading industrial paralysis in all directions. And so it was

throughout industry and agriculture starved to death.

BUT WITH matchless courage and resolution, the Soviet people, with their great Communist Party led first by Lenin and then by Stalin set about rebuilding the primitive Soviet economy from the ground up. Their success has never been equalled in history. New plants were built, new engineers were educated, new armies of skilled workers were trained and a splendid body of scientists was developed—until now, the USSR, with its magnificent scientific and industrial setup, is able to lead the world in such a revolutionary enterprise as the sensational launching of the new moon. We may rest assured, too, that it will not be long before, realizing the dream of every modern boy, "space ships" manned by human beings, will be speeding through the outer regions.

All this great moon accomplishment sounds like the achievement of the "impossible" and, in fact, the whole life of the USSR has been the doing of just that. The seizing and holding of political power in the first place by the workers was declared "impossible" by the enemies of Socialism. So was the winning of the great Civil War of 1918-21, with its thousand or more Valley Forges.

The anti-Sovietees were positive also that the rebuilding of shattered Russian industry and agriculture could not possibly be done; nor, later, could the Russians operate the great new industries they were building. The successive five-year plans, which were spectacularly successful, were sneered at as mere propaganda stunts. And the Red Army, which Hitler was supposed to lick in six weeks, did the main job in wiping out the monstrous military machine of fascism.

The Soviet Union made an impossible swift recovery from the gigantic damage done its economy by World War II. This was soon followed by the "impossible" breaking of the atom-bomb monopoly, the halting of

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the warlike drive of American imperialism for world conquest, the achievement of the first intercontinental ballistic missile, and now comes the launching of the new moon. All of which constitutes a chain of accomplishments such as have never been achieved by any other nation, grace to the Socialist system of the USSR.

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ALL THIS, of course, is only a beginning. The Soviet Union is still a very young country. Only 40 years old, it is developing with unparalleled speed. Although it has already established Socialism, it is still building the economic base and educating the great armies of scientists, engineers and skilled workers who will soon carry the country on to

the realization of still more astonishing "impossibilities" than it has yet done.

Triumphing over all the capitalist enemies and the croakers and knockers in the labor movement, the USSR, courageously correcting its mistakes as it goes along, (together with that other great doer of "impossibilities," People's China) and other Socialist countries, is now travelling ever faster along the road to the eventual realization of the greatest social system of well-being, democracy and mass happiness that the world ever seen or that man has ever dreamed of. The earth satellite is the harbinger of still greater things to come; achievements which, for their realization, had to await the coming of Socialism upon the world scene.