Russia "wins" Space Race as Yuri Gagarin is first man in space
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RUSSIA HAILS “COLUMBUS OF SPACE”

World’s first astronaut home safely

A HERO’S WELCOME

Major Yuri Alexeyevitch Gagarin, the world’s first astronaut, was last night undergoing a rigorous medical examination to find out the effects on him of his journey yesterday in orbit round the world in the Soviet space ship Vostok.

“The Columbus of interplanetary space,” as Moscow Radio described him, is expected to reach Moscow tomorrow where a hero’s welcome is being prepared for him. Major Gagarin, aged 27, a member of the Red Air Force, is a married man with two young daughters.

Early yesterday morning his space ship, weighing more than four and a half tons without its last-stage rocket, went into orbit at 18,000 m.p.h., made rather more than one complete circuit of the earth, and landed safely at a prearranged area 108 minutes later. The Russian places where he left and landed were not disclosed.

Mr Khrushchev, according to Tass, told him by telephone:

“You have brought glory to our homeland. You have shown courage and heroism. You have made yourself immortal. ... I shall be glad to meet you in Moscow. I, together with you and all our people, will solemnly celebrate this great feat. The Major reported he was “well, with no injuries.”

Meanwhile in Moscow, to martial music broadcast by loud-speakers, crowds were filling the streets, some singing and chanting “To the cosmos” in a burst of enthusiasm that was said to have been the greatest seen in the capital for many years.