



The Red Rockets' Glare: Spaceflight and the Russian Imagination, 1857-1957 (Cambridge Centennial of Flight)

Asif A. Siddiqi

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The Red Rockets' Glare is the first academic study on the birth of the Soviet space program and one of the first social histories of Soviet science. Based on many years of archival research, the book situates the birth of cosmic enthusiasm within the social and cultural upheavals of Russian and Soviet history. Asif A. Siddiqi frames the origins of Sputnik by bridging imagination with engineering - seeing them not as dialectic, discrete, and sequential but as mutable, intertwined, and concurrent. Imagination and engineering not only fed each other but were also co-produced by key actors who maintained a delicate line between secret work on rockets (which interested the military) and public prognostications on the cosmos (which captivated the populace). Sputnik, he argues, was the outcome of both large-scale state imperatives to harness science and technology and populist phenomena that frequently owed little to the whims and needs of the state apparatus.

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