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978-0-521-89760-0 - The Red Rockets' Glare: Spaceflight and the Soviet Imagination, 1857-1957

Asif A. Siddiqi

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The Red Rockets' Glare

Spaceflight and the Soviet Imagination, 1857-1957

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 coproduced 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.

Asif A. Siddiqi is an assistant professor of history at Fordham University. He specializes in the social and cultural history of modern Russia and the history of science and technology. His work has been supported by the American Historical Association, the Smithsonian Institution, the Social Science Research Council, the National Science Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. His book, *Challenge to Apollo: The Soviet Union and the Space Race, 1945-1974* (2000), received a number of awards, including a citation by the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the best books written on space exploration. He received his doctorate from Carnegie Mellon University and currently lives in New York.

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521897600

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First published 2010

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Siddiqi, Asif A., 1966–

The red rockets' glare : spaceflight and the Soviet imagination, 1857–1957 / Asif A. Siddiqi.

p. cm. – (Cambridge centennial of flight)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-89760-0 (hardback)

1. Astronautics – Soviet Union – History. 2. Science and state – Soviet Union – History. I. Title.

TL789.8.S65S489 2010

629.40947'09041 – dc22 2009033925

ISBN 978-0-521-89760-0 Hardback

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Acknowledgments

The research and writing for this book were made possible by the generous support of the following: the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's Guggenheim Short-Term Grant (2000), the National Science Foundation's Dissertation Improvement Grant (Award 1120239; 2001–2003), the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's A. Verville Fellowship (2002–2003), the Social Science Research Council's International Dissertation Research Fellowship (2002–2003), the American Historical Association's Fellowship in Aerospace History (2003–2004), and the Fordham Faculty Research Grant (2005–2006). In addition, I must thank the American Academy of Arts and Sciences for their generous support during my stay there in 2004–2005 as a visiting scholar.

Versions of three chapters were published in earlier forms and are credited to the following journals. Chapter 3 was published in an earlier version in *Osiris* 23 (2008): 260–288 under the title “Imagining the Cosmos: Utopians, Mystics, and the Popular Culture of Spaceflight in Revolutionary Russia” (© 2008 by the History of Science Society). Chapter 5 was published in an earlier version in *Technology and Culture* 44 (2003): 470–501 under the title “The Rockets’ Red Glare: Technology, Conflict, and Terror in the Soviet Union” (© 2003 by the Society for the History of Technology). Chapter 6 was published in an earlier version in *Europe-Asia Studies* 56 no. 8 (2004): 1131–1156 under the title “Russians in Germany: Founding the Post-war Missile Programme” (© 2004 University of Glasgow).

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to David Hounshell. At every step of this project, David guided my writing, helping me shape the big questions while keeping a critical eye on the crucial details. Also at Carnegie Mellon, Wendy Goldman constantly challenged me to rethink Soviet history, to see it through new eyes. I benefited from her enormous knowledge as well as her boundless enthusiasm and encouragement. As scholars, I can think of no worthier role models than David and Wendy. I must also thank Jonathan Harris, who helped me eliminate inconsistencies in my writing and grounded me solidly in the institutional politics of postwar Soviet history.

Scott Sandage profoundly influenced my view on the relationship between history and language. I am still discovering the many things I learned under his tutelage. Others at Carnegie Mellon who provided invaluable guidance

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Acknowledgments

include Joe Trotter, Steve Schlossman, Ed Constant, and Naum Kats, as well as Gail Dickey, Natalie Taylor, and Dee Clydesdale. My peers in graduate school made this voyage more fun, both intellectually and otherwise, than I could have ever imagined. A special heartfelt thanks to Becky Kluchin, my fellow traveler in Pittsburgh, and also to Steve Burnett, Glen Asner, Jim Longhurst, Carl Zimring, and Jeff Suzik. I learned an incalculable amount from Carnegie Mellon's Cold War Science and Technology Studies Program, founded by David Hounshell and coordinated by Andy McIntyre.

At Fordham University, special thanks to my colleagues Ed Cahill, Nick Paul, Thierry Rigogne, Ebru Turan, David Myers, Mike Latham, Silvana Patriarca, Nancy Curtin, and Doron Ben-Atar. Also at Fordham, I want to thank Barbara Costa, April Acosta, and especially Esther Liberman-Cuenca for their help. I also acknowledge the support of fellow visiting scholars at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Hsuan Hsu, Chris Klemek, and Lisa Szeffel, and James Carroll who directed the Visiting Scholars program at the Academy.

Roger Launius and Mike Neufeld at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum provided indispensable help throughout this project. Without Roger's mentorship and guidance, I might never have come back to graduate school. Mike very kindly read the entire manuscript and provided useful comments.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Matthias Uhl, who helped me locate vast numbers of documents from Russian archives. In addition, conversations with the following scholars over many years (as well as a familiarity with their thought-provoking work) helped guide both my research and writing: Igor' Afanas'ev, James Andrews, Bill Barry, Irina Bystrova, Jonathan Coopersmith, Dwayne Day, Slava Gerovitch, Michael Gordin, Peter Gorin, Loren Graham, Michael Hagemeister, James Harford, Bart Hendrickx, Sergei Khrushchev, John Krige, Christian Lardier, John Logsdon, Vadim Lukashevich, Jonathan McDowell, Timofei Prygichev, Sonja Schmid, Frank Winter, and Ivan Zavidonov. A number of people helped with images. They include Cathy Lewis, Ron Miller, and Steven Zaloga.

At Cambridge University Press, a very special thanks to Von Hardesty, John Anderson, Frank Smith, and Eric Crahan for their generous support for this project. For their expert help with logistics, production, copyediting, and layout I should note the contributions of Marielle Poss, Emily Spangler, Jason Przybylski, Peter Katsirubas, and Susan Zinninger.

In Russia, I would like to acknowledge the staff members at the Russian State Archive of the Economy (S. I. Degtev and A. Nazarov), the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (N. M. Sukhoruchkina), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (N. I. Abdulaeva), the Russian State Military Archive, and the Russian State Archive of Scientific-Technical Documentation. Working in Russia was a memorable experience owing to the many

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wonderful people I met there. I'd like to thank the friendly staff (particularly Irina Karapetiants) at the Russian State University of the Humanities (RGGU) for their generous help in setting up a temporary home in Moscow. Very special thanks to Dmitry Payson and Aleksei Kilichenko, both of whom helped with negotiating life in Moscow. Finally, a special note of gratitude to Soviet space program veterans and historians who agreed to sit for interviews or helped me in many untold ways. They include veterans B. E. Chertok, O. V. Gurko, N. S. Koroleva, V. A. Poliachenko, V. L. Ponomareva, S. N. Samburov, V. P. Savinykh, and the late V. S. Syromiatnikov. In the United States, I must acknowledge the Clark University Archives (Mott Linn), the National Security Archive at George Washington University, the Archives Division at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, and the NASA History Office Archives (Steve Garber, Nadine Andreassen, and Jane Odom).

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the whole Pittsburgh crew, all of whom have, it seems, moved on: Karen Barth, Jill Hochman, Heather Raphael, Kathy Robertson, and Tim Smith. Thanks to my friends in New York: Natalja Czarnecki, Joey Falcone, Sherri Islam, Mafruza Khan, Elizabeth Kosakowska, Shoma Lahiry, Sherry Lin, Amira Mittermaier, Raya Shums, and Sanjive Vaidya. Thanks as always to Mandar Jayawant in Ulan Bator. A special thanks to my childhood mentor, the late Fazlul Haque, who, I hope, would have been proud of me. Thanks to Godspeed You! Black Emperor for the soundtrack. Thank you and so much more to my best friend Karen Bell for guiding me to a career in academia.

Family members have been infinitely patient, inspiring, and generous. Thanks to Uncle, Auntie, Sarat, and Suzi for humoring me through all this, especially to Uncle whose enthusiastic spirit was so contagious and, I hope, lives on in these pages. Thanks to Rochona, Mohona, and David for their hospitality in both Philadelphia and New York. My father and my mother have been the best role models – this book is a small step in emulating their lofty standards of scholarship and intellectual rigor. Finally, this book is only partly mine, because, without Anoo, it would not exist. Through this entire process, from conception to birth, she has been a firm presence, helping to coax it into being. It is to her and to Sahil that I dedicate this. May a little part of him always dream of utopias.