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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Spaceflight and the Soviet Imagination, 1857–1957

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