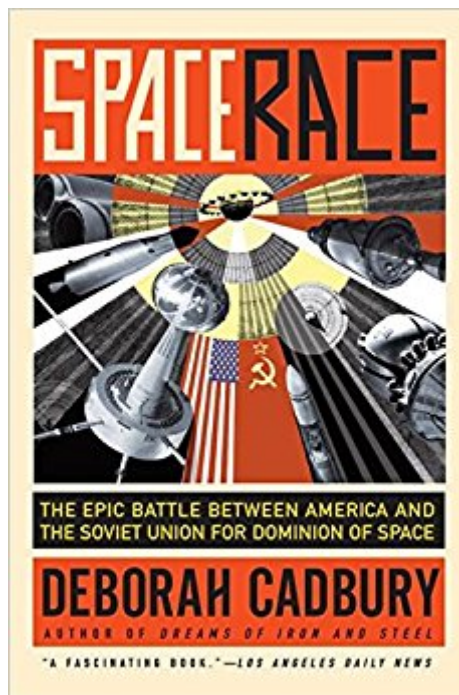


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# Space Race: The Epic Battle Between America And The Soviet Union For Dominion Of Space



## Synopsis

One of the most exhilarating true adventures in history, the race into space was marked by courage, duplicity, political paranoia, astonishing technological feats, and unbelievable triumphs in the face of overwhelming adversity. It is the story of an unparalleled rivalry between superpowers and of the two remarkable men at the center of the conflict. On the American side was Wernher von Braun, the camera-friendly former Nazi scientist, who was granted hero status and almost unlimited resources by a government panicked at the thought of the Cold War enemy taking the lead. The Soviet program was headed by Sergei Korolev, a former political prisoner whose identity was a closely guarded state secret. Korolev was expected to—and did—work miracles on a shoestring budget, his cooperation assured through intimidation and threats of possible disgrace or death. These rivals were opposite in every way, save for one: each was obsessed with the idea of launching a man to the Moon. Deborah Cadbury's extraordinary history combines action and suspense with a moving portrayal of the space race's human dimension. Using source materials never before available, she tells a riveting story of the espionage, ambition, ingenuity, and passion behind humankind's mind-bending voyage beyond the bounds of Earth.

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## Customer Reviews

Cadbury (*Dreams of Iron and Steel*) focuses on two men "obsessed by the same vision... locked in an unparalleled contest" to reach outer space: one is the cold, charismatic Wernher von Braun, but the soul of this finely honed, consistently compelling tale (the basis for a National Geographic

channel series to air in June) belongs to Sergei Korolev. Korolev survived Stalin's gulag to become the mythical chief designer of the Soviet space program for 20 years. Driven to beat the Americans, Korolev and his team of long-suffering scientists and technicians, working with inadequate funding, threw together spacecraft of dubious quality and launched them into space. While von Braun's reputation has suffered immeasurably from the release of secret files revealing his use of slave labor under the Nazis, Korolev, though unacknowledged in his lifetime, today remains a hero in Russia. In the end this is a cautionary tale, a story of what happens when the dreams of humankind are hijacked by the darker aspirations of politics: the space shuttle still flies and the ICBMs still wait in their silos, and we are left to wonder at what price we soar to the heavens. 8 pages of color and 8 pages of b&w photos not seen by PW. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** Cadbury traces the development of rockets and spaceflight from German experiments before World War II to the manned moon landings, telling the story in layperson's language (though with a fine glossary appended) and in the process providing powerful biographies of the two outstanding designers, Wernher von Braun and Sergei Korolev. Korolev began as a supervisor of the efforts of German technicians captured during and after the war but later achieved outstanding results with his own designs by launching Sputnik and the first manned orbital flights. Von Braun's history included winking at the use of slave labor but also a succession of breakthroughs that led to the historic day in July 1969 when Neil Armstrong stepped out on the moon. Both Soviet and U.S. programs were plagued with failures and outright disasters that Cadbury graphically though evenhandedly describes, and Korolev literally worked himself to death. The true monument to both designers is the last two generations of manned spaceflight. Appealing to everyone from the generation who listened in high school to the early launches to high-school students today who want a keen-sighted view of the spacefaring past, this outstanding volume is likely to be one of the standards on its subject for years to come. Roland Green Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Far from being a manual dealing with technical data, the author brings the main figures, Von Braun and Korolev to life, describing in great detail what sacrifices and obstacles each had to face, both domestically and politically, to attain heights in technology never attained in man's wildest dreams. It

does a very good job of not wandering off track chronologically, and even though we all know the climax of Armstrong walking on the moon, keeps the reader enthralled till the end. Shows the frailty and circumstances of these two prominent figures in history, of which they persevered. Even goes into the somewhat gray area of the German scientists' shady pasts and questions the morality associated with that. A great book, and an excellent read for the novice to study this fascinating era.

required reading for school

I came to maturity during the great space race to the Moon, and later worked on the Space Transportation System (AKA "Space Shuttle") program. I've also read quite a few books on the subject, and this is clearly one of the best.

Just great. Provides previously unknown information of this struggle. I haven't finished yet, but the real reason for the Soviet defeat is the rapid development of the Saturn V - i.e. the all-up launch of Nov. 9, 1967 and the landing of Armstrong - Aldrin July 21 1969, before the end of the decade. Had we past 1969, in 1970 the US would have cancelled the program and we would never have gone to the moon. That manned moon exploration feat also daunted Soviet influence in the world and 17 years after the last Apollo landing the Soviet Union was gone.

First I wanna say thank God for the library, because that is where I first got my hands on this book and I admire the organization the author has in retelling a part of history that should matter to any engineering enthusiast. It's filled with history, engineering, and politics; everything needed to satisfy a Space Race fan.

No drama.

This is a very well done description of the race to be the first to the moon that was such a major event of the Cold War 60s. The American side of this race has been told before, probably better, in Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff*, for example. But I learned a lot about the Russian program from this book, including just how close they were to success. The book is really two parallel biographies of the two men who led the rival programs, Wernher von Braun, the charismatic German who led the American space program after managing the V2 rocket program for Hitler; and Sergei Korolev, the former political prisoner who rose to become the chief designer of the Soviet rockets. Not to sound

unpatriotic, and I am glad we won this race, but it is hard not to prefer Korolev, who endured so much for his country, over von Braun, who is outed in this book as a Nazi war criminal. The book is strongest when it really is a race between the two superpowers. It drops off some near the end, when Korolev dies, and it is hard not to think the Soviet prospect of putting a man on the moon died with him.

I just finished this work by Deborah Cadbury. As pointed out by other reviewers, this work tracks the evolution and early development of the U.S. & Soviet space programs primarily through the stories of its' two prime movers; Von Braun and Korolov. I can't answer to the overall factual soundness here, but there are a ton of them worked into the narrative without slowing down the pace of the story. Yes, there were a few errors spotted. But this is an exciting tale. And yes, you could call the prose "florid," but the author chooses to make the presentation interesting and novel like--instead of dryly factual and academic. She tries to put the reader in the subject's shoes at various points to heighten the drama. The lives of these two men were full of drama, no doubt about that. There is probably some speculation involved as well, but the author did consult diaries and eyewitnesses' reports to provide some foundation for portrayed emotions. At 354 pages, not a quick read, but certainly quite interesting. Some photos are included along with political cartoons from the era. I found the beginning tales regarding the end of WWII in Europe and the odysseys of the rocket technicians very gripping. The cold war background is present here, but only for context and not for political statements or preaching. Also, the possible implications of Von Braun's actions as related to war crimes is explored without sensationalism. I don't think this is a kids book, either. Adult subjects are covered in detail. Late High School or College ok as a foundation for serious study elsewhere.

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