

## The Secret Scientist

Death has finally declassified the role and identity of academician Sergei P. Korolev, the man who provided the scientific and technical leadership of the vast Soviet rocket program. The extraordinary pomp of his state funeral in Red Square contrasted sharply with the almost complete anonymity imposed upon him while he was alive.

The need for security was the nominal excuse for hiding Korolev's identity, but this seems only a pretext. In retrospect it is now evident that enough clues were publicly available so that Western intelligence agencies must have known his name and role years ago. More likely he was deliberately kept out of the limelight so that he could be denied getting public credit for the many successes of the Soviet space program.

Nikita Khrushchev utilized each Soviet space feat as a means of enhancing his own image, and his successors have done the same. None of these politicians wanted to share the spotlight with a non-political technician who did not even join the Communist party until 1953.

Korolev's rockets were powerful enough to send men into orbit and to put cameras into position to photograph the back side of the moon. But they were too weak to break the chains of secrecy that denied him, while he lived, the world applause he deserved.