



## Sputnik: The Shock of the Century

*Paul Dickson*

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On October 4, 1957, as *Leave It to Beaver* premiered on American television, the Soviet Union launched the first man-made object into space-a 184-pound satellite carrying only a radio transmitter. While Sputnik I immediately shocked the world, its long-term impact was even greater, for it profoundly changed the shape of the twentieth century. Paul Dickson chronicles the dramatic events and developments leading up to and emanating from Sputnik's launch. Supported by groundbreaking original research and many recently declassified documents, *Sputnik* offers a fascinating profile of the early American and Soviet space programs and a strikingly revised picture of the politics and personalities-President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Wernher von Braun, and many others-behind the façade of America's fledgling efforts to get into space. Sputnik directly or indirectly influenced nearly every aspect of American life, from the demise of the suddenly superfluous tailfin and an immediate shift toward science in the classroom to the arms race that defined the Cold War, the competition to reach the moon, and the birth of the Internet.



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