

Rocket Race (Continued)

6. How long will it take us to catch up?

If we work hard, we should be where the Russians are now in about 18 months. But, of course, the Russians are not going to stand still during these 18 months, so the job of catching up will take at least twice as long.

7. How much were the Russians helped by German scientists?

Very little in the past and not at all during the last three years. At the end of World War II, the German research and planning staff surrendered to General Patton's Third Army. They are now in this country and, with the exception of a very few who returned to West Germany (mostly to retire), they are all U. S. citizens. The Russians captured a number of production men who were made to tell everything they knew but were not permitted to do any actual work. These men were sent home about three years ago.

The statement that the Russians captured important German rocket scientists is due, in part, to a mistranslation. They did capture several topnotch Austrian jet experts, and, immediately after the war, many people still thought that jets and rockets were the same thing.

8. Did we suffer from inter-service rivalry?

Even though this has been stated officially, I don't think so. The different services do need different missiles. For example: the Army's Jupiter rocket shows every promise of being a fine 1,500-mile missile. But it stands more than 80 feet tall. The Navy also needs a 1,500-mile rocket but obviously cannot handle something that tall on shipboard. Hence they have their own Polaris rocket, which is to have the same range but will be short and squat.

9. If not service rivalry, what did hold us back?

It was not lack of money either. The main reason was lack of direction and

lack of understanding of future needs in high quarters. This was compounded by over-organization and over-secrecy—enough over-secrecy to hide mistakes at times.

10. Authorities say we lost five years in research. How?

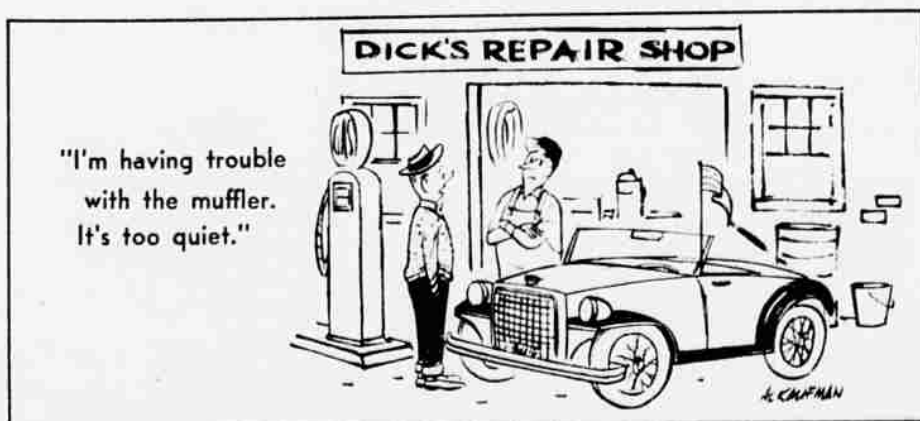
At the end of World War II, the Germans were as far ahead in rocket development as the U. S. was in atomic-energy work. But for about five years, we used the German scientists mainly as teachers and instructors instead of assigning them to new research projects. These five years may therefore be called a study period. We did not advance in that time, but we did produce a much broader basis for our own work. It will take another five years to learn if this was a mistake.



Dr. Wernher Von Braun, head of Army missile research, shows V-2 satellite-launching model.

The Russians may have wanted to go ahead on new projects immediately, but from all indications they also needed such a study period. Though they obviously did start earlier than we, they also had to let more time go by.

In short, we are behind now. We must face this fact. Only by facing it will we find the determination to change the situation and forge ahead.



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