

After the collapse of Christianity, with its inherent belief in the afterlife, the visible space became the only possible place for humanity to live, in the future. The aspiration to learn the outer space replaced religion, instead of the belief in the otherworldly came the belief in progress. Achievements in space exploration were officially presented as part of the advance towards a communist society, as well as the triumph of science over religion and, in a way, desacralization of heaven.

With the evolution of astronautics, a new mythology of space was formed. It was based on the simplified theory of Konstantin Tsiolkovsky about space colonization. Soviet propaganda was responsible for the creation of mythological images in the state. The first symbols were Belka and Strelka, after them — Yuri Gagarin, the first human to journey in outer space, endowed with a lot of positive qualities and completely devoid of negative ones, which immediately made him a hero and an immortal symbol. All stages of the Soviet space industry were represented in literature, cinema, architecture, and even in the household items design.

The picture of reality of a Soviet man was built in many respects around the myth of space exploration. The created images allowed people to feel involved in what was happening and to be proud of the state. The myth was working for the Soviet ideology, but as the USSR collapsed, ideology changed. Reality began to transform, as well as its relation to the myth. The cosmic myth continues to exist, but does it now affect reality?

Collective memories of the first manned flight into space construct national identity and unite different age groups. Leadership in space gives a sense of national pride, which derives from the Soviet era and is still strong both among the eyewitnesses of that event and their descendants. Cosmic mythology became one of the bases of national and group identity.