FORUM: Mao, Khrushchev, and China's Split with the USSR

Perspectives on *The Sino-Soviet Split*

- **Commentaries by Priscilla Roberts, Steven I. Levine, Péter Vámos, Deborah Kaple, Jeremy Friedman, and Douglas A. Stiffler**
- **Reply by Lorenz Lüthi**

Editor's Note: This forum offers a range of perspectives on Lorenz Lüthi's book *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World,* which reassesses the sharp divide that emerged between the Soviet Union and China in the late 1950s and 1960s. Six scholars provide commentaries on the book, and Lüthi responds to the commentaries.

Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. xix + 375 pp. $65.00 hardcover; $27.95 paper.

Priscilla Roberts, University of Hong Kong

Lorenz Lüthi has written the most detailed account to date of the genesis, development, and entrenchment of the Sino-Soviet split. Based on exhaustive research in a dazzling array of archival and printed sources from the former Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe, Italy, the United States, Britain, and France, supplemented by reading of what appears to be every relevant secondary work ever published, the book is a tour de force simply as an exercise in assembling this complicated patchwork into a coherent and convincing narrative. This is not to say that the book, masterly though it is, can be considered the last word on the topic. In an illuminating "Essay on the Sources," Lüthi himself points out the serious limitations on what is currently accessible in former Soviet and Chinese archives, a situation perhaps even more pronounced in present-day Vietnam and numerous other Asian states. Fortu-

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nately, the archives of former Communist-bloc countries in Eastern Europe often contain copies of important documents from the Soviet Union. In an exercise in cooperative scholarship under the broad auspices of the Cold War International History Project and associated ventures, an appreciable number of particularly significant documents from Communist-bloc sources have been translated and made widely available over the past two decades. Even so, many of the most important documents remain off-limits, and the gates have swung shut indefinitely on some crucial collections in Russia that were open for research from mid-1992 until April 1993.[1]

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson anticipated that escalating tensions between China and the Soviet Union would eventually lead to a break between the two Communist great powers.[2] Carrying this "wedge" strategy even further, John Foster Dulles, Acheson's Republican successor, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower believed that a policy of forcing China into close association and proximity with the Soviet Union would eventually generate debilitating frictions between the two.[3] Yet one must question whether, as Acheson's stance seemed to imply, every alliance necessarily contains the seeds of its own destruction. The history of Anglo-American relations after Suez might serve as a case in point. In *Mao's China and the Cold War,* for example, Chen Jian recently argued that, far from being inevitable, the Sino-Soviet split did not serve the interests of either China or the Soviet Union. The split was immensely detrimental to both of them and to the world Communist movement in their rivalry with the West. Chen argued that Chinese foreign policymaking was driven by ideology, the perceived need to mobilize support for radical domestic policies, and a pervasive and deep-rooted sense that the country had long been a victim in interna-

1. For an explanation of how and why these collections were sealed, see Mark Kramer, "Archival Research in Moscow: Progress and Pitfalls," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin,* Issue No. 3 (Fall 1993), pp. 1, 18–39.

2. Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy 1949–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 16–17, 193–194; Warren I. Cohen, "Acheson, His Advisers, and China, 1949–1950," in Dorothy Borg and Waldo Heinrichs, eds., *Uncertain Years: Chinese-American Relations, 1947–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 49–50; Robert L. Beisner, *Dean Acheson: A Life in the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 175–176, 178, 197, 199–200; and Gordon Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948–1972* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 16–21, 50–59, 63.

3. Chang, *Friends and Enemies,* chs. 3–5; David Mayers, "Eisenhower and Communism: Later Findings," in Richard A. Melanson and David Mayers, eds., *Reevaluating Eisenhower: American Foreign Policy in the 1950s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 99–119; David Allan Mayers, *Cracking the Monolith: U.S. Policy against the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949–1955* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1986); and Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999), pp. 118–120, 125, 130–131.

tional affairs—concerns that, he argued, often trumped straightforward national security interests.[4]

Lüthi's work follows Chen in demonstrating that despite the optimistic hopes of U.S. officials, there was nothing preordained about the Sino-Soviet split. The primary focus of Lüthi's narrative is China and its policies—and rightly so, because whatever tensions and rivalries may sometimes have divided Soviet leaders from their Chinese counterparts, fundamentally the breach arose from and was hardened by decisions taken in Beijing. Lüthi provides a careful, insightful, and nuanced account of the evolution of the Sino-Soviet split. Despite earlier tensions between the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union both before and after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in October 1949, he believes that the split was rooted primarily in developments in the mid-1950s. Most significant among these was Mao Zedong's decision to implement economic policies derived from revolutionary, as opposed to subsequent bureaucratic, Stalinism, an approach that soon led to the disastrous Great Leap Forward, an ideological divergence from contemporaneous Soviet policies. Nikita Khrushchev's repudiation of Iosif Stalin in early 1956 intensified such divisions, as did disputes over the Soviet espousal of peaceful coexistence with the United States and over Chinese policies toward Taiwan and India. Ultimately, as Mao steered China toward what would become the Cultural Revolution, Chinese and Soviet rivalries over how best to handle the escalating conflict between North and South Vietnam and the growing U.S. involvement in South Vietnam from 1963 through 1966 set the seal on the alienation of the two great Communist antagonists, the full bitterness of which did not become apparent to the outside world until the 1969 border clashes.

What is striking is just how reluctant most Communists, the Chinese excepted, were to accept the reality of the breach and how many attempts the leaders of various Communist parties made to repair it. Lüthi's study convincingly demonstrates that within the international Communist camp scarcely any group except the Chinese Communist Party welcomed the Sino-Soviet split, and most deplored it. In the face of repeated provocations, when tensions arose with the Chinese, Soviet leaders rarely sought to push disputes to the point of an outright breach. Admittedly, in February 1960 Khrushchev, in a comment that quickly became notorious and that even some Soviet officials thought went too far, described Mao as "a pair of old galoshes." But such tactless remarks were by then almost a standard and recognized feature of Khrushchev's personal style in conducting politics. Mao was often no more

4. Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 9.

polite. Even though the Soviet Union occasionally responded harshly to Chinese behavior, most notably during assorted Communist party conferences and trade union gatherings in 1959–1962 and even though Khrushchev decided in 1960 to withdraw all Soviet experts from China, Soviet policy was largely reactive. From the late 1950s to the mid-1960s Soviet leaders made numerous conciliatory gestures toward China. In goodwill moves in 1961 and 1962, for example, the Soviet Union provided substantial food aid that helped China to weather the ravages of the Great Leap Forward. In March 1961 at least one Chinese official privately apologized to his Soviet counterpart for the Chinese "faults in the complications in Soviet-Chinese relations in 1960" (p. 201).[5] As late as March 1966, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev was willing to try to improve relations with China. Those Western officials who for many years remained skeptical about just how genuine or long-lasting the Sino-Soviet split might be had some justification for their incredulity.

Many other national Communist movements, fearing the detrimental impact of a continued Sino-Soviet breach on both their own countries' interests and those of the broader international Communist movement, sought to mediate between the two rivals. Works by Ilya Gaiduk, Zhai Qiang, and Mari Olsen have already given detailed accounts of several efforts by North Vietnamese officials in the first half of the 1960s to reconcile their two patrons. Although the rift between the Communist great powers did allow the North Vietnamese to play one off against the other and reap the benefits, the general view in Hanoi was that a warmer, more cooperative Sino-Soviet relationship would bring real advantages in the war against the United States by facilitating the efficient provision of Soviet military and economic aid to North Vietnam.[6] The North Vietnamese Communists were exceptional only in that, seeking both Chinese and Soviet assistance in their escalating campaign to destabilize South Vietnam, they tried to remain on good terms with both antagonists. Lüthi demonstrates that very few of the national Communist parties were willing to support the Chinese in their attacks on the USSR. Albania, which itself split with its Soviet patron in the early 1960s and badly needed Chinese economic aid, aligned itself with Mao, even though Albanian president Enver Hoxha considered some of Mao's positions insufficiently radical. Otherwise, among ruling Communist parties, only the North Koreans offered support for China. By 1962–1963, the vitriolic Chinese polemics that had

5. When quoting Lüthi's book, I will put page numbers in parentheses.

6. Zhai Qiang, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 86–88; Ilya V. Gaiduk, *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954–1963* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003); Ilya V. Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996); and Mari Olsen, *Soviet-Vietnam Relations and the Role of China, 1949–64* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

become an almost routine feature of party congresses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe could count on a vocal and hostile reception from most of the assembled delegates. By 1963, most Communist assemblies had become so inured to time-consuming and disruptive Chinese verbal assaults on Soviet principles and policies that these were effectively discounted and ignored in advance. Mao and his followers were treated almost as embarrassing relatives who could not be entirely excluded from family gatherings but were not to be taken seriously.

The major issue on which one might query Lüthi's excellent account is one of interpretation. According to Lüthi, differences over ideology were crucial to the Sino-Soviet split. He differs somewhat from Chen and Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov—all of whom, when analyzing the break between the two countries, stress Mao's ideological commitment to continuous revolution and his opposition to Soviet policies of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist world—by arguing that most of these disputes can be traced back to Mao Zedong's determination to implement radical policies in the economy and other spheres and to shore up his personal political position when these radical steps went disastrously awry.[7] Lüthi suggests that Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 denunciation of his predecessor, Stalin, threatened the revolutionary Stalinist economic policies that Mao espoused from the mid-1950s on, measures that were based on Stalin's brutal collectivization of the 1930s and that ultimately resulted in the disastrous Great Leap Forward. (Lüthi does, however, state on p. 107 that Mao did not begin reading economic works by Karl Marx and Stalin until October 1958, which suggests that he may have invoked the Stalin model ex post facto to support policies he was already intent on pursuing.) Lüthi places considerable emphasis on Mao's determined efforts to preserve and enhance his dominance of internal policymaking in China, no matter how great the cost to China's international position, but he does not take this aspect of his study quite far enough. Committed though Mao may have been to radical ideological tenets even when they resulted in devastating suffering for his own people, Lüthi's Mao is first and foremost a ruthless, unscrupulous political operator whose most enduring concern, to which all other principles and individuals could if necessary be sacrificed, was to safeguard and reinforce his own power.

Central to this story is the role of Mao Zedong himself, a figure who for 25 years bestrode the making of Chinese foreign policy like a colossus. By 1963 Mao was determined to provoke a full-scale breach with the Soviet Union, even though he sought to place the ostensible responsibility on

7. Chen, *Mao's China,* ch. 3; Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), ch. 7.

Khrushchev. Could this have been avoided? Lüthi argues that the personality cult that Mao encouraged identified him so closely with the Chinese Revolution that it was impossible for his colleagues to jettison him without calling into question the Chinese Communist cause itself. Maybe so. Yet China's other top Communist leaders, despite being loyal to Mao, nonetheless displayed a definite readiness to "seek truth from facts" and to moderate unsuccessful economic and political measures. Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Wang Jiaxiang, and other leading Chinese Communists all at various junctures sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union. They also made several efforts to rein in Mao's unchecked power. One need not subscribe to the full array of charges lodged against Mao in the recent biography by Jung Chang and Jon Holliday[8] to feel that responsibility for the Sino-Soviet split must in the end be traced not to ideology but to Mao's own megalomaniacal personality and his brutal, unscrupulous maneuverings to maintain himself in power. He succeeded in this quest, but at the price of at least twenty million deaths in the Great Leap Forward and the catastrophic suffering and chaos of the Cultural Revolution. Although Lüthi's analysis frequently implies the crucial role of Mao's megalomania, his emphasis on ideology dilutes the force of this argument.

Lüthi follows Chen Jian, Thomas J. Christensen, Yang Kuisong, and Li Xiangqian in foregrounding the manner in which Mao provoked external crises not just with the Soviet Union, but also over Korea, Taiwan, India, and Vietnam in an effort to justify and facilitate domestic measures and political arrangements that enhanced his own power and enabled him to dispose of potential rivals.[9] Lüthi provides detailed correlation of the close coordination between Chinese foreign policy crises, many of them episodes that contributed to the Sino-Soviet split, and Mao's simultaneous embrace of particular domestic initiatives or, at times, his efforts to discredit and bring down internal political opponents. Reading this account, the cynic might even suppose that amid all of Mao's twists and turns the foremost objective of his policies was invariably the protection of his own dominance of Chinese policymaking. Admittedly, the grandiloquent Mao also sought to win global recognition as the theorist of continuing revolution and people's war, the greatest Communist thinker of all time. Even so, many of his maneuvers, including the majority of

8. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005).

9. Chen, *Mao's China;* Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Yang Kuisong, "Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars," in Priscilla Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam, and the World Beyond Asia* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), pp. 72–73; and Li Xiangqian, "The Economic and Political Impact of the Vietnam War on China," in Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain,* pp. 173–189.

his foreign policy moves, were closely related to his relentless determination to retain control of his country's domestic policy apparatus and to buttress his own standing against all critics. Mao did not, for example, support the initial North Vietnamese decision in 1959 to resume armed struggle to regain the South. Only when assistance in this effort could be deployed as a lever in internal Chinese political disputes did Mao swing his country behind the Vietnamese campaign. For a quarter of a century, China's policies, domestic and external, were held hostage to the overwhelming and largely unchecked ambitions of an idiosyncratic and power-obsessed leader.

These tactics had their own dangers. Mao tended rather cynically to crank up international tensions in the belief that the dangers involved were relatively minor, but such posturing had the potential to backfire and create real threats. The Korean War was the last occasion on which Mao sought to bring on full-scale war, evidence, perhaps, that in practice he was far more cautious than his bellicose rhetoric suggested. Much of his overdone sound and fury resembled the exaggerated posturing of Chinese opera. But on the ground this did not necessarily translate into pragmatic crisis limitation. More than once, notably during the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1958–1959, Mao was forced to climb down, cutting back shelling to alternate days, a practice that continued for close to two decades. By his own actions, he often provoked the very crises he had warned against, bringing American and Soviet power unpleasantly close to China's borders in Taiwan, Korea, and Vietnam, and thereby jeopardizing China's security and curtailing his own freedom of action, at least in international affairs.

Even as Mao encouraged North Vietnam to destabilize the South in 1963 and early 1964, he failed to anticipate any major U.S. escalation there. The deepening U.S. commitments to South Vietnam after the Tonkin Gulf incident took him by surprise. Although China continued its aid to Vietnam, it also sought to open secret back channels to the U.S. government to ensure that the U.S. war against the North remained limited.[10] Mao also was dismayed that from 1964 on the Soviet Union provided extensive aid to North Vietnam, and he repeatedly though unsuccessfully sought to persuade the North to reject Soviet aid and rely solely on the PRC for assistance. Rivalry with China for influence over the world's Communist parties may have been one of the motives that in late 1964 persuaded the previously unenthusiastic Soviet Union to endorse North Vietnam's support for armed struggle in the South. If only grudgingly, Chinese officials were also forced to cooperate with

10. See esp. James G. Hershberg and Chen Jian, "Informing the Enemy: Sino-American 'Signaling' and the Vietnam War, 1965," in Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain,* pp. 193–257.

the Soviet Union in facilitating the transport of Soviet supplies to Vietnam, even as they dispatched Chinese support units to the North in order to prevent the commitment of Soviet military forces to the conflict. Even so, North Vietnamese leaders moved closer to the USSR, in part because Soviet officials were willing to accept North Vietnam's readiness to entertain overtures—admittedly often fruitless—regarding negotiations with the United States, whereas the Chinese gave the impression that they would be happy to fight to the last Vietnamese.

Although competition in Vietnam exacerbated the frictions between China and the Soviet Union, such tensions were not, Lüthi credibly argues, decisive in pushing the split to an outright breach. Far more significant was Mao's determination in 1965–1966 to launch a major movement, bypassing existing governmental structures within China, to get rid of his opponents, implement visionary radical policies, and render himself permanently supreme in the power structure. Lüthi traces this initiative to Mao's determination to "forestall his own removal. The final collapse of Sino-Soviet relations in the spring of 1966 was thus a function of Chinese domestic politics. Without the break in relations with the Soviet comrades, the Chairman would have been politically unable to launch the party purge that set off the Cultural Revolution." (p. 274). Mao's rhetoric therefore linked his internal political opponents, many though not all of whom had at some stage spent time in the USSR, to Soviet revisionism. Whether such charges were true was irrelevant.

Once the Cultural Revolution had taken hold, however, China's international position quickly fell victim to the excesses of Mao's domestic imperatives. Lüthi points out that no other Communist party supported the Cultural Revolution, a movement that perhaps caught the imagination of youthful Western leftists but that gravely compromised China's ability to wield any influence overseas. On numerous occasions, in capitalist, socialist, and neutralist states alike, Chinese diplomats abroad embarrassed and annoyed their hosts by conducting ostentatious public propaganda on behalf of Cultural Revolution principles. The Soviet and British embassies in Beijing were besieged by hordes of screaming Red Guards.

Such provocations and hubris could easily spiral out of control. In the case of the Soviet Union, the border clashes along the two countries' shared frontier, which were initiated by China in March 1969, provoked such a fierce Soviet response, including threats to attack China using nuclear or conventional weapons, that this became one of the major factors propelling a largely isolated China to reconfigure its international relations by seeking a rapprochement with the United States. As with most twists and turns in China's foreign policies in the quarter-century of Mao's tenure at the helm, this rever-

sal could not have occurred without his approval. But Mao had not genuinely abandoned his preference for extreme forms of Communism. In 1975 he told the visiting Pol Pot that China had by then become "a capitalist state without capitalists," but would "eventually return to the path of Marx and Lenin." Ominously, Mao advised the Cambodian leader, whose excesses in pursuit of the perfect Communist state would inflict even more ghastly suffering on his own country's populace than the abuses to which Mao had subjected China's people, that he "should not completely copy China's experience, and should think for [himself]."[11] 'The combination of Mao's espousal of radicalism on the domestic front and his quest for survival forced him in his final years to find the ideological flexibility to embrace the United States, once viewed as Communist China's most deadly antagonist, and to emulate Soviet policies of coexistence in the international sphere.

Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. xix + 375 pp. $65.00 hardcover; $27.95 paper.

Commentary by Steven I. Levine, The University of Montana

This meticulous study of the Sino-Soviet dispute is undoubtedly an important contribution to Cold War historiography, but it is less than the book it might have been. Displaying dazzling historical and linguistic virtuosity, Lorenz Lüthi has delved into numerous archives, memoirs, documentary collections, and newspapers from across the length and breadth of the former Communist world to provide an intimate portrait of the conflict that divided the Communist world and accelerated its eventual demise. Lüthi adds many nuances and behind-the-scenes details to what was heretofore known. His study largely confirms the broad outlines of the best contemporary analyses done in the early 1960s when the Sino-Soviet alliance was unraveling as well as the later account offered in Roderick MacFarquhar's epic trilogy, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution.*[12] Thus, Lüthi's study based on archival materials retroactively validates the methodologies of Kremlinology and Pekingology that Donald Zagoria employed nearly half a century ago in *The Sino-*

11. Roberts, ed., *Behind the Bamboo Curtain,* p. 528.

12. Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution,* Vol. 1: *Contradictions among the People, 1956–1957* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution,* Vol. 2: *The Great Leap Forward, 1958–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); and Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution,* Vol. 3: *The Coming of the Cataclysm, 1961–1966* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961.[13] However, informed speculation is not the same as archival proof, which is what Lüthi provides in abundance.

One of the several virtues of the book is that it circumscribes the origins of the Sino-Soviet conflict in time; namely, the decade following Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956. Another is that it discloses that neither Soviet nor Chinese leaders actually viewed the world through the lens of the so-called strategic triangle that American political scientists and international relations specialists were so fond of employing. I would take this a step further and say that such scholars, acting out American intellectual hegemonism in the social sciences, imposed their own strategic thinking onto Sino-Soviet relations without regard for the actual categories in which the Communists in Beijing and Moscow thought.

This brings us to Lüthi's central claim regarding the wellspring of the Sino-Soviet split, his assertion that disagreement over ideology rather than nationalism, national interest, domestic politics, personality clashes, or territorial disputes was the prime factor that generated the conflict. As a filial acolyte of Benjamin I. Schwartz (1917–1999), I cannot help but notice the omission of my mentor's name from Lüthi's literature review. An intellectual historian as well as an astute observer of Chinese politics, Schwartz took ideas seriously. His writings on the subject underlined the importance of ideology as a factor in the Sino-Soviet relationship and emphasized its continued salience even as clashes between warring adherents of Marxism-Leninism over its "true" interpretation eroded its power.

Lüthi's treatment of the role of ideology in the Sino-Soviet conflict is idiosyncratic and questionable. He provides a reasonable definition of ideology as "a set of beliefs and dogmas that both construct general outlines . . . of a future political order, and define specific methods . . . to achieve it" (p. 8). But he then attempts to distinguish between "genuine" and "instrumental" uses of ideology, the difference apparently hinging on his subjective judgment of the "sincerity" of the actor (p. 79). Any such judgment strikes me as inherently dubious. Ideology is not an abstract set of beliefs but by its very nature is oriented toward action. Whether the power-hungry Mao Zedong was employing ideology as a cudgel to attack his imagined domestic enemies or invoking ideology to battle Nikita Khrushchev and "revisionism," in both cases he was acting both instrumentally and out of a sincere if deranged belief that the dogmas of Marxism-Leninism and the Communist project itself were in jeopardy.

13. Donald Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).

Lüthi properly devotes considerable attention to Mao's obsessive struggle against both Soviet and domestic Chinese "revisionism" without, however, defining what this terrible "degenerative disease" of Communism actually might have been. (One looks in vain for any discussion or even mention of Vladimir Lenin's favorite bêtes noires, the great German socialists Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein, who revised Karl Marx's teachings in an attempt to make them accord with a changing reality.) To view Mao as a great Marxist philosopher, as some serious scholars were once inclined to do, is no longer tenable. (Stalin's brusque dismissal of Mao as a "caveman Marxist" was probably closer to the truth.) In any case, Mao never felt bound by any dogmas, including even his own. Throughout his career he played fast and loose with Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy and savaged those whom he condemned as scholastic Marxists. Yet, during the Sino-Soviet dispute, he posed as the guardian of orthodox Communist ideology. Mao in the role of *fidei defensor* was both ludicrous and hypocritical. Yet by not pointing this out and uncritically referring to "Soviet revisionism" as if this term is self-explanatory, Lüthi unwittingly lends credence to Mao's ideological claims. He also refers to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping as exemplars of "domestic revisionism" in China, whereas a neutral descriptor, appropriate to a scholarly work, would be that in economic policy terms they were moderates or pragmatists compared to Mao. Lüthi would have us believe—I confess that I do not—that "while Mao insisted on ideological correctness regardless of its political utility, Khrushchev was firm in his belief in the use of sheer power without principle" (p. 192). Such an assessment is unfair to Khrushchev and far too generous toward Mao. Both were power-maximizing politicians whose arsenals included ideology, brute force, manipulation, cults of personality, and deceit.

The larger question, raised long ago by scholars like Schwartz but ignored by Lüthi, is whether something in the very nature of Marxism-Leninism tended to preclude compromise on what were taken to be questions of principle such as the peaceful transition to socialism, peaceful coexistence with capitalism, anti-imperialism, and so forth. The obvious answer, but one that bears repeating nevertheless, is that the supposed scientific nature of the "truths" of Marxism-Leninism precluded compromise. Galileo and Nicolas Copernicus were either right or wrong; there was no in between. In philosophical terms, the clashing Marxist dialectic of thesis and antithesis producing a new synthesis is incompatible with the notion of reconciling different points of view.

This same point also applies to alliance politics in the Communist camp, the Sino-Soviet alliance in particular. In the concluding chapter, Lüthi suggests that the inequality of power between China and the Soviet Union and the different positions they occupied in the international system—the former

at best an aspiring regional power, the latter an actual world power—constituted a structural impediment to their long-term cooperation. As Lüthi indicates,the alliance at its inception was more important to Beijing than to Moscow. Yet, China's adherence to the socialist camp was qualitatively different from that of Hungary, Poland, East Germany (GDR), and the other East-Central European Communist states. Those countries had been conquered by the Red Army and dragooned into Iosif Stalin's empire. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) conquered China largely on its own, and China joined the Communist camp of its own will—that is, if one is willing to equate Mao's will with China's. China's potential weight in the world balance of power far exceeded that of all of Moscow's minor allies, and the prospects for a Chinese-style Communist revolution elsewhere in Asia seemed bright in 1950.

What augured badly for the Sino-Soviet alliance was not primarily the inequality of power between the Soviet Union and China. Few alliances are between equals. Rather, the ingrained Leninist practice of zero-sum politics grounded in antagonism, suspicion, cynicism, manipulation, and coercion easily trumped the rhetoric of proletarian internationalism and socialist solidarity. Neither the Soviet nor the Chinese Communists were experienced in the give-and-take of alliance politics in which the dominant partner, for the good of the alliance, sometimes accommodates its junior partner or partners rather than simply imposing its will. Khrushchev, to his credit, initially at least tried, whereas Mao understood only domination or subordination. Cooperation was at best a halfway house on the road to total control; parity among partners a chimera. Seeking to become the new Stalin, Mao repeatedly provoked the Soviet Union, overplayed his hand, and wound up virtually isolated within the Communist camp. The two men at the apex of power within their respective Communist parties were like two choleric chess players making one clumsy move after another and finally resorting to upending the board when their opponent made a move they could not match.

A telling incident in this connection was Mao's explosive rejection of the Soviet proposal in 1958 for a joint Sino-Soviet submarine fleet based in China along with the establishment of long-range radio transmission facilities on Hainan. Mao's reaction sooner manifested a knee-jerk xenophobia than a justifiable fear of Soviet domination. He apparently viewed China's military alliance with the Soviet Union as a one-way street in which Moscow was supposed to supply Beijing with modern military equipment, advisers, and technology, and Beijing did not incur any reciprocal obligations on common security objectives. Khrushchev acted similarly in precipitately withdrawing all Soviet advisers from China in July 1960. Lüthi's comment that "Soviet ac-

tions had given Beijing the *moral high ground* in the [ideological] debate" strains credulity unless one thinks of the moral high ground as akin to a tussock in a fetid swamp.

Lüthi correctly views China as the driving force in first opening and then widening the Sino-Soviet split to the point of irreconcilability. He ascribes this to Mao's post-Stalin radical turn from the bureaucratic Stalinism practiced in the Soviet Union in the postwar period to the revolutionary Stalinism that had prevailed in the 1930s and was later abandoned by Stalin himself. As Alexander Pantsov argues in his recent Russian-language biography of Mao, only after Stalin's death did Mao dare to become a full-fledged Stalinist.[14] Before and after 1949, Stalin had repeatedly cautioned the Chinese Communists to avoid the mistakes the Soviet Union had earlier committed. Mao paid lip service to this advice, but as soon as he came out from under Stalin's shadow, he not only repeated Soviet mistakes but far exceeded them in pursuing lunatic development objectives via cruelly exploitative and murderous means.

The personalization of politics in the Soviet Union and China via the cult of personality, a euphemism for personalistic dictatorship, meant that no institutional mechanisms, bureaucratic linkages, or societal connections were able to buffer the increasing animosity between Mao and Khrushchev. Communist interparty and interstate relations became the politics of whim, vanity, and the pursuit of arbitrary power no matter how cloaked these might have been in the discourse of Communism. Lüthi spends much more time analyzing Chinese domestic politics than he does Soviet politics. He focuses, inter alia, on how Mao's pursuit of his radical domestic agenda influenced the evolution of the Sino-Soviet split as well as Mao's foreign policy more generally. Mao's campaign to crush or intimidate his alleged intraparty opponents was rooted in his obsession with total power. His paranoid fantasy transmogrified men who had faithfully supported him for decades into enemies whom he tarred with the label of revisionists and capitalist roaders.

So central was Mao to the emergence and climax of the Sino-Soviet conflict that it might more accurately be called the Mao-Soviet split. Although we cannot know whether, in the absence of Mao, any of the other leaders of the CCP would have pushed so aggressively to bring Sino-Soviet relations to the point of collapse, this seems highly unlikely. In fact, just a few years after Mao's death, his successors initiated the measured process of Sino-Soviet rapprochement, which culminated in Mikhail Gorbachev's May 1989 summit meeting in Beijing with Deng Xiaoping. This process has been care-

14. Alexander Pantsov, *Mao Tszedun* (Moscow: Molodaiia Gvardiia, 2007).

fully analyzed in Elizabeth Wishnick's *Mending Fences,* a book that nicely complements Lüthi's volume.[15]

The Sino-Soviet dispute that provided intellectual fodder and employment for an older generation of analysts, including this reviewer, now belongs to the historians. The passage of more than 50 years since Mao humiliated Khrushchev in July 1958 by holding a summit meeting in his swimming pool in Zhongnanhai is time enough to ponder the larger meanings and implications of the Sino-Soviet split. Yet, Lüthi, immersed in the fascinating minutiae of the conflict, provides too little, if any, reflection on such questions as what role the Sino-Soviet split played in the demise of Communism in the USSR and East-Central Europe, its near-abandonment in Asia except as a system of authoritarian rule, and the devaluation of an ideology that once commanded legions of faithful around the world. How did the Cold War in the Communist world influence the Cold War more broadly? In this connection, too, an assessment of Mao Zedong should grapple with the fact that "objectively," as the Marxist-Leninists were fond of saying, the avatar of world revolution bore greater responsibility than anyone else for the disintegration of the ideology that he upheld and the triumph of the "imperialist" forces he sought to combat.

Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. xix + 375 pp. $65.00 hardcover; $27.95 paper.

Reviewed by Péter Vámos, Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

It is not a simple task to review a book that has a lot of merits but fails to draw the right conclusions. Lorenz M. Lüthi has written ten excellent chapters on the evolving drama of the Sino-Soviet split. The book is extremely well researched with clear argumentation underpinned by ample archival resources and references to secondary literature. Lüthi covers all the important Chinese and Soviet domestic and international events from the 1956–1966 period and analyzes their significance to Sino-Soviet relations. Having spent years going through Russian, Chinese, American, and East European archives, Lüthi is able to shed new light on nearly every episode of the Sino-Soviet split. The only point that can be formally criticized is the lack of a bibliography, for which an essay on the sources is substituted. Lüthi explains that this step was taken because of the lack of space, which is understandable and acceptable but

15. Elizabeth Wishnick, *Mending Fences: The Evolution of Moscow's China Policy from Brezhnev to Yeltsin* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

nonetheless inconvenient for the reader who is forced to check the references by logging onto the Internet and printing them out from the publisher's website, where the complete bibliography is available.

The book focuses on China and Mao Zedong, the dominant person in the worsening Sino-Soviet relationship. Lüthi deals with a comprehensive set of issues concerning China's domestic and foreign politics from the point of view of Mao's domestic and international struggle for leadership, which determined the process and outcome of Sino-Soviet debates. He investigates and identifies all major steps of the crystallization and radicalization of Mao's position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and his domestic opponents. Because the pace of the relationship's deterioration and its eventual collapse was controlled by China, it is acceptable that Lüthi devotes significantly less attention to Soviet domestic politics. Soviet internal power relations and foreign political developments, such as U.S.-Soviet rapprochement or Soviet alliance policies, are treated only in their relationship to China and in the mirror of China's responses to them. Greater analysis of the Soviet domestic situation might have helped in understanding Moscow's own motivations and actions.

The reason I did not praise the *book as it is* in the first two sentences of my review is that the conclusion is untenable. Lüthi identifies ideology as *the* ultimate cause for the split. I find this conclusion problematic because, in my reading, the book does not substantiate it. As Lüthi argues, the interplay of a multitude of factors contributed to and finally resulted in the Sino-Soviet split. These factors included internal developments, the Soviet-American rapprochement, failures in Chinese diplomacy, misperceptions resulting from lack of information, and communication problems. Mao instrumentalized ideology for certain "basic" reasons. In 1956–1957, for example, Mao's ideological radicalization and vehement argumentation against de-Stalinization resulted from his fear of losing absolute control over the leadership. Behind this fear was the reality of Chinese domestic economic problems deriving from his ignorance of economic and agricultural issues and the schematic use of the Soviet Stalinist model. Lüthi writes about the Chinese "ideologically distorted view of the world" (p. 348), but this was also the traditionally China-centered worldview, which simply did not fit into the Cold War logic of two superpowers at the head of opposing camps.

For Mao—who had an extraordinary talent in using propaganda for his own goals and had no other means, military or economic, in his possession to exert pressure on his opponents—ideological warfare seemed to be the only viable option to fight for the achievement of his ultimate goal: leadership for himself at home and leadership for China in the international arena. As Lüthi demonstrates, Mao showed no willingness to compromise, invented crises and enemies, and never hesitated to sacrifice lives to achieve a more favorable

negotiating position. The Sino-Soviet split was but one part of Mao's fight. Sino-Soviet ideological debates were nothing but a function of Mao's leadership struggle at home and in the world.

Ideology of course did play a crucial role in Sino-Soviet disputes. But we must distinguish, as Lüthi clearly does, between the *genuine belief in ideology* and *its manipulative use* to achieve one's specific aims. Lüthi is aware of the fact that ideology was only a tool for Mao, practically the only tool he had at his disposal against the Soviet Union and his domestic opponents. Mao's instrumental use of ideology in domestic and foreign politics contributed to the worsening of Sino-Soviet relations. However, it was not simply "Mao's ideological radicalization . . . and Khrushchev's de-Stalinization . . . that set a train of events into motion which eventually undermined the alliance" (p. 45). Mao's radical views and de-Stalinization did not originate from the void but had reasonable and traceable origins. The peculiarity of this book is that Lüthi identifies almost all major factors (including Chinese domestic economic problems and leadership struggles, sovereignty issues, the unequal nature of Sino-Soviet relations, and Mao's leadership aims) that contributed to Mao's ideological radicalization, but turns reasoning upside down and claims that changes in ideology were in and of themselves the *cause* of the split. He does not treat ideological radicalization as the result of underlying domestic and international causes.

Lüthi makes a clear distinction between ideology and the use of ideology as a political tool that can be manipulated for short-term political, or even personal, objectives. He does not evade the fundamental question of whether the Chinese used ideology as a genuine belief system or as an instrumental device, and his answer is that they did both. This answer is not satisfying. Lüthi writes that leaders in both China and the Soviet Union were genuinely Marxist-Leninist and that "there is no evidence that they were pure cynics who used ideological claims in a deceitful manner to achieve goals contrary to larger Marxist-Leninist postulates" (p. 347). As I see it, Mao and his fellow leaders in Beijing wanted to achieve their own goals *and* to harmonize them with those postulates. This in turn implies that ideology *was* an instrumental device for the Chinese, just as it was for the Soviet Union and the East-Central European Soviet satellites. The genuine belief in Marxism-Leninism does not preclude its use as a means to achieve domestic and international aims that are based on Chinese national interests and, in the case of Sino-Soviet relations, that are against the interests of the USSR.

If we take the establishment of the Sino-Soviet alliance as an example, we find that Stalin had his own strategic, national security, and economic considerations ("to exploit his allies economically," p. 39) behind his willingness to align himself with Mao. Lüthi writes that for Stalin the alliance was "a utilitar-

ian tool to obtain those concessions he had tried to extract from the Guomindang in 1945" (p. 31). Lüthi enumerates the advantages Stalin was seeking to gain through economic "cooperation": access to Chinese strategic materials, agricultural products, and hard currency. The concessions Stalin had tried to extract from the Guomindang and got instead from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) included the lease of Dalian and Lüshun, two harbors and naval bases on the Liaodong Peninsula; mining, oil, and railroad concessions in Manchuria and Xinjiang; and Chinese acceptance of the sovereignty of Outer Mongolia, the People's Republic of Mongolia. Strategic and economic considerations played a crucial role in the Chinese decision as well. Although for the PRC the concessions made to the Soviet Union resembled the unequal treaties signed between the Manchu Qing Empire and the British, French, and other imperialist powers, including Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century, the Sino-Soviet alliance served as a means to provide security at China's three potential points of conflict with the "American imperialists": the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Furthermore, as China had no major source of economic aid other than the Soviet Union, the alliance provided security as well as assistance for economic reconstruction. For Beijing, every aspect of the Sino-Soviet alliance, including party relations, military aid, and economic cooperation, was designed to serve the modernization goals of the newly established PRC and "to reestablish China as a world power" (p. 45). The Chinese resistance toward "Soviet attempts at greater military integration especially after the Warsaw Pact was founded in 1955" (p. 36) also proves this attitude. In sum, although the establishment of the Sino-Soviet alliance in 1949–1950 did not lack ideological motives, it was primarily motivated by practical political and economic considerations from both sides. The same is true for the temporary reconciliation in late 1960 and the renormalization of relations in the 1980s. Why would it have been otherwise in the case of the split?

Lüthi himself identifies the structural crisis between agriculture and industry in China (a crisis resulting from the Soviet economic development model the PRC embraced) as "the *seminal* issue that triggered the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the mid-1950s" (p. 41.). Economic debates divided the Chinese leadership as well, and different solutions for the economic problems were at the root of confrontations between Mao and his fellow leaders, including Peng Dehuai, Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Zhou Enlai, and others.

When discussing the ideological foundation of the disagreements, Lüthi singles out the 20th Congress of the CPSU, arguing that genuine disagreements over principles were later used as tools for Mao's manipulative actions. But in fact the manipulative nature of Mao's "principal disagreement" with

the Soviet Union existed from the moment he became the ultimate leader in the Chinese Communist Party. The origin of the split goes back to the difference between the two worldviews and to the clash between the two countries' similar aims but unequal positions.

Lüthi mentions the "unequal positions of the two alliance partners within the international system" only as an additional source of the split (p. 349). One can more plausibly argue that the unequal nature of the relationship was precisely what made Beijing uneasy about the Sino-Soviet alliance. Mao's aversion to being granted junior status constituted the real cause of differences and determined the methods and character of Sino-Soviet debates as well as the outcome. China, which was the center of the civilized world for centuries, was humiliated by the imperialist powers in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1949, Mao's slogan "The Chinese people have stood up!" underscored the idea that the "great, courageous and industrious" Chinese nation should get rid of foreign oppression. Inequality and the notion of inferiority contradicted and were simply irreconcilable with the traditional Chinese Weltanschauung based on centrality and cultural superiority. That is why Mao's aim in 1956–1957 was to "increase China's influence in the socialist world" (p. 65), why the PRC in late 1956 "wished for better foreign policy coordination, an improved exchange of information, and more personal contacts between Soviet and Chinese leaders" (p. 64), and why Mao insisted in 1964 that the PRC had never surrendered and would not surrender to Soviet "great-power chauvinism" (p. 289).

The unequal nature of the relationship manifested itself in differences in economic and military power, in strategic goals and international positions, and in regional and global commitments. As Lüthi points out, throughout the 1950s the two states had never been on a par with each other in terms of military power or global influence. Mao led a country that lagged far behind the Soviet Union in military technology as well as economic performance. This bitter reality hindered Mao's leadership ambitions ("megalomania" as Lüthi calls it) but did not prevent him from demanding a place at the top of the ranks—alongside or even ahead of, not behind, the USSR.

Explaining the unequal nature of the relationship, Lüthi writes that whereas for China the Sino-Soviet alliance was absolutely crucial, for the Soviet Union it was just another foreign policy asset, albeit an important one. As a result, when disagreements arose, Moscow failed to devote sufficient attention to the partnership, according to Lüthi (p. 12). But the evidence suggests that the CPSU Politburo did in fact believe it was extremely beneficial to have China as an ally. All Soviet leaders, from Stalin through Mikhail Gorbachev, hoped for cooperation with the PRC to strengthen the general struggle against imperialism. The problem was that Soviet officials conceived of

China's participation in the anti-imperialist front only on Moscow's own terms, which became increasingly unacceptable to Beijing. Under such circumstances, the Soviet authorities had to consider whether cooperation with China was politically expedient when measured against their other commitments. Later the Soviet Union had to consider whether the Chinese were willing to engage in contacts at all. If we take the issue of Soviet assistance to China during the period covered by Lüthi as an example, we see that the Soviet attitude was supportive even after the "ideological" debate flared into the public in 1960.

In the late 1940s, Mao needed a great deal of Soviet assistance to defeat the Guomindang and take power on the mainland. After the PRC was established, the Chinese Communists requested and received Soviet scientific and technological aid. In the early years of the PRC, without Soviet assistance Mao would not have been able to realize his plans to control the country, to restore national sovereignty, and ultimately to reestablish China as a central power in the region and the world. As a result, the Chinese leader called for unity with Moscow and asked for more Soviet advice and assistance. As Lüthi writes, "Beijing chose cooperation when it needed Moscow's support" (p. 198). The Soviet Union provided support on the basis of internationalism and friendship. By 1960, however, when the PRC had exhausted much of the military and economic aid the Soviet Union had offered, and Soviet support of the Chinese nuclear weapons program was coming to an end, and economic relations were breaking down, Mao concluded that the anti-imperialist alliance with the Soviet Union had run its course (p. 152). As Soviet economic, military, and technological aid became less significant for China's development, Mao's hands were less bound by Soviet expectations to obey the rules of cooperation devised by Moscow. Although Mao was still looking for possible cooperation with the USSR, especially on defense and military production, he kept challenging the boundaries of Soviet tolerance and injecting more and more issues into the dispute. Although Beijing adopted a more confrontational policy toward Moscow, the Soviet Union had not terminated its support of Chinese industry. Soviet specialists continued to arrive in China on short-term assignments even after Soviet advisers were withdrawn from the PRC in August 1960, and they stopped traveling to China only when the PRC unilaterally suspended all remaining supply contracts in October 1960. Similarly, not until 1960 did the Soviet Union terminate all nuclear weapons research collaboration in the PRC. Soviet military aid to China continued even longer. The Soviet Union transferred designs of the MIG-21 fighter plane as late as 1962. The USSR, despite suffering food shortages at home, offered grain and sugar on a loan basis to the Chinese until the summer of 1962. Moscow provided assistance until Soviet leaders concluded that vital

Soviet interests and other commitments were threatened by the support of the "unreliable" Chinese.

In the 1950s China was dependent on Soviet aid and therefore had less room for maneuver vis-à-vis its stronger ally. As a result, disagreements about international relations did not yet roil Sino-Soviet relations. By the 1960s, however, when Mao concluded that Soviet support no longer served his purposes, he did not hesitate to sacrifice it and decided openly to proclaim his country's central position in the Communist world, protraying China as the rightful leader of the socialist camp and the international Communist movement.

Lüthi mentions peaceful coexistence with imperialism in general and with the United States in particular as a basic element of the ideological foundation for Sino-Soviet disagreements. Détente with the United States clearly was more important for the Soviet Union than for China, but not only for ideological reasons. Strategic and economic considerations are equally important in explaining the differences between the Soviet and Chinese approaches to peaceful coexistence. According to Lüthi, Soviet leaders were interested in a rapprochement with the United States because "Cold War antagonism placed a burden on Soviet resources" (p. 47). For China, on the other hand, the United States constituted a security threat, including the threat of the prolonged separation of Taiwan from the mainland. For the CCP, the achievement of national sovereignty and territorial integrity were of foremost importance because these factors underlay the ruling party's legitimacy before the Chinese people and the international community. With U.S. military forces on Taiwan and deployed around China in the Asian-Pacific region, Mao did not yet even contemplate a rapprochement. The Soviet strategic goal of relaxing tensions with the West thus contradicted Mao's ambitions to regain sovereignty over U.S.-supported Taiwan. The worsening of Sino-American relations over Taiwan, a clearly strategic issue, sparked further Chinese unease about the new Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence. Khrushchev's "pursuit of two essentially contradictory strategic goals" (p. 76)—partnership with the increasingly unreliable, anti-imperialist Chinese and détente with the United States, China's main rival—and Mao's conclusion that the Soviet-American rapprochement had eroded the value of the Sino-Soviet alliance derived from the differences in the two countries' global positions.

The unequal positions of the two allies also caused them to have incongruent military outlooks. The general radicalization of Chinese politics in 1958 was as much the cause as the result of different strategic considerations. Soviet leaders did not care about making proposals that would hurt Chinese sensitivities over sovereignty. For the USSR, the PRC seemed to be a secure and subordinate partner, similar to those in Eastern Europe. But the PRC's re-

jection of the Soviet joint submarine proposal in 1958 was an obvious manifestation of independent strategic considerations. As Lüthi writes, "joint ventures of any kind did not fit China's emerging military doctrine. Mao opposed any outside control over Chinese submarines destined for the liberation of Taiwan" (p. 93). The international dimension of an independent Chinese military doctrine can be illustrated by the controversies over Vietnam. Mao used accusations against Moscow to prevent it "from what he feared was an attempt to wrest control over the Vietnam War from Beijing" (p. 339).

The Vietnam War could have provided an excellent opportunity to prove that the conflict of national interests (China's aim "to exclude Soviet influence"; p. 336) lay at the root of the Sino-Soviet conflict over Vietnam. Lüthi writes that "as the largest country in that zone, China presented itself as a natural leader" (p. 304), but he does not add that this natural leadership position stemmed from centuries-old tradition. Vietnam had been part of the Chinese sphere of interest and cultural influence for much of its history. The motivation behind Chinese actions was the fear that the Soviet Union would use the war for its own purposes and that Soviet involvement might provide Moscow with control over Hanoi's foreign policy. Had the Chinese cooperated with the Soviet Union, their hands would have been tied, and their own agenda could not have been realized independently, relatively free from external influence. China's traditional sphere of interest would have been subordinated to the will of a militarily stronger partner. Ideological disputes were thus only an excuse for China's refusal to cooperate.

The treatment of the links between Mao's domestic moves and his foreign policy is a particularly strong aspect of Lüthi's book. Lüthi describes the Sino-Soviet split as a logical chain of events that originated in Mao's willingness to risk a close Sino-Soviet military relationship in exchange for obtaining his domestic goals (p. 86). After 1956, Mao played a two-front (domestic and international) tactical game in which he gauged his tactical moves, disguised in ideological garb, to secure for himself the leading position at home and in the international Communist movement. This latter effort—that is, the power struggle between Beijing and Moscow—led by the mid-1960s to the Sino-Soviet split. Because Mao by 1962 believed that "a well-managed collapse of the partnership would be of much greater use than the renewal of the relationship with Moscow" (p. 244) and because ideological victory abroad served as a weapon for Mao to solve domestic political problems, Lüthi concludes that "any attempts by the Soviets, or by outsiders such as the Romanians, to seek an end to the ideological attacks were condemned to failure" (p. 300).

This story is not unknown in general terms, but by using newly available sources Lüthi adds important details to the picture. He makes thoughtful

linkages between Chinese foreign policy and domestic politics and vice versa. He exposes not only the domestic background but also the domestic purpose of Mao's international moves. What evolves is a picture of a constant domestic power struggle between Mao and his more moderate opponents in the top leadership and Mao's use of China's antagonism toward the Soviet Union to strenthen his hand in his domestic battles. Lüthi shows how Mao would seize on international crises—such as the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, the second Taiwan Strait crisis in 1958, and the acceleration of the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s—to push his domestic agenda. Lüthi's conclusion of chapter 7 is the key to his correct understanding of the Sino-Soviet split: "Mao instigated the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations precisely with domestic aims in mind" (p. 244).

The torrent of anti-Soviet propaganda in China was not the only element that served Mao's domestic objectives. One of Mao's tactics was to use external crises for domestic purposes as well. The second Taiwan Strait crisis is the best-known example of this connection. Lüthi also mentions that Mao exploited the second Sino-Indian border war to launch the Socialist Education Movement and that "the large rallies in support of revolutionary Cuba and against the defeatist Soviet Union . . . were undoubtedly Mao's attempts to instill revolutionary consciousness against revisionism in China's masses" (p. 228). In several cases, criticism of the Soviet Union and its East European allies was in fact aimed at Mao's domestic critics. For Mao, the confrontation with East-Central European parties at their congresses in 1962–1963 and the anti-Soviet polemics in 1963–1964 also served the domestic purpose of exerting pressure on his internal opponents "in order to secure the political supremacy he feared was being threatened" (p. 300).

Mao's constant ideological and political radicalization resulted from domestic issues, such as his denial of personal responsibility for the deadly famines in 1959–1961 (p. 159). The radicalization, in turn, had international repercussions, including Tibet and the Sino-Indian and Sino-Soviet disputes (p. 347). Mao's unwillingness to compromise in international affairs had an internal purpose as well: "[O]nce he had achieved international leadership, who would dare oppose him at home?" (p. 285).

Lüthi shows that shifts of tone in the Chinese press—in one instance stressing controversies, in another instance focusing on common features—stemmed from changes in the domestic balance of power. Mao's crucial role in the deterioration of relations is proven by the fact that in 1961–1962, when he was temporarily on the defensive at home, the other leaders realized that China's domestic needs required a decrease in foreign policy radicalism and used a much more conciliatory tone. But Mao's comeback in the summer of

1962 led to renewed ideological radicalism. Lüthi concludes that Mao's "slogan *fanxiu fangxiu* (oppose revisionism abroad, prevent revisionism at home) connected for the first time *explicitly* China's foreign and domestic policies. Mao thus employed his dissatisfaction with Khrushchev as a political and ideological tool to attack the reformers Liu and Deng" (p. 244, emphasis in original).

Lüthi argues that this setback for domestic reformers in 1962 proved to be a crucial turning point that culminated in the Cultural Revolution (p. 222). The most important Chinese domestic consequence of Khrushchev's removal in October 1964 was a purge of Mao's opponents. After the Soviet leader's fall, Mao rhetorically linked his domestic adversaries to Soviet revisionism. Lüthi writes that even "the final collapse of Sino-Soviet party relations in March 1966 was primarily a function of [Mao's] domestic politics" (p. 285). The increasingly confrontational Chinese behavior in external affairs was related to the rapid unfolding of the Cultural Revolution at home (p. 298).

Mao's most readily available and favorite weapons were words. He enjoyed fighting with slogans, the weapons he could handle best. He conducted psychological warfare against his domestic opponents as well as against the Soviet leadership and Khrushchev personally. At home, Mao used ideological arguments to protect his own position and to silence dissent within the CCP. In most cases, such as in 1959 in Lushan or in 1962 in Beidaihe, he framed his attacks against his opponents solely in rhetorical terms. Lüthi mentions that with a slight terminological modification, using Chinese revisionism instead of right opportunism, Mao was able to place any domestic critic under the category of revisionism (p. 222). Similarly, references to the restoration of capitalism were "simply a rhetorical weapon to discredit those who promoted ideas contrary to his own" (p. 211).

Lacking sufficient military and economic means, Mao—who by 1949 had emerged as a revolutionary theoretician in China and who later wanted to occupy the position of leading theoretician of the international Communist movement—could fight only with words against the Soviet Union. As Lüthi writes, the two countries differed significantly in the tools at their disposal to exert pressure on the other. Khrushchev was "firm in his belief in the use of sheer power," whereas Mao "insisted on ideological correctness" (p. 192). Propaganda was basically the only tool the Chinese had to fight against a country that, in Mao's opinion, did not deserve the leadership of the socialist camp and the international Communist movement. Mao's bitter power struggle, disguised in ideological garb, against Khrushchev began in 1957 as a "friendly boasting contest" (p. 76) about the speed of economic development. As Mao became aware that Khrushchev passed the peak of his power in 1960, he wanted to use every possible tool at his disposal to speed up his fall. Mao him-

self admitted in 1964 that "all the hyperbole . . . was just idle talk in order to make Khrushchev a little tense" (p. 277).

Given Mao's basic attitude toward the Soviet Union, he had been waiting for *any* opportunity to raise controversies and to increase tensions with Moscow. The experience of Soviet strong-arm tactics and Moscow's lack of sensitivity toward Beijing's concerns displeased all Chinese leaders and ultimately united the CCP Politburo, including Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. The Chinese leaders picked up on elements of Soviet argumentation and integrated them into their counterarguments and anti-Soviet propaganda. The withdrawal of Soviet specialists from China in the summer of 1960 and the rifts that had opened during the East European party congresses in 1962–1963 were equally exploited for renewed propaganda strikes against the Soviet Union. Even unrelated events in international affairs, such as the U-2 incident in 1960 and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, or conflicts initiated by China, such as the Sino-Indian border war in 1962, provided Mao with the political boost he needed. However, as Lüthi concludes, "had it not been for Mao's willingness to use them for his own needs, they would not have had such a disproportionately negative effect on Sino-Soviet relations" (p. 350).

Debates over economic development theory were only a part of the Chinese rhetorical arsenal. After the catastrophic outcome of the Great Leap Forward in 1959, when China could not refer to its economic success and claim that as a result of leap-like development it would attain Communism ahead of the Soviet Union, Mao no longer used arguments over the economy in his ongoing debate with Moscow. Instead, a shift occurred "in Mao's challenge to Khrushchev's leadership of the socialist camp from arguments over economic development theory and de-Stalinization . . . to debates over the correct course of world revolution, which quickly grew to be a central point in the Sino-Soviet disagreements until Mao's death in 1976" (p. 157).

Lorenz Lüthi has written an essential book that will be a future point of reference for students of this important period but will also be a subject of heated debates among scholars of the Cold War.

Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. xix + 375 pp. $65.00 hardcover; $27.95 paper.

Commentary by Deborah Kaple, Princeton University

Every now and then, a shockingly good book arrives on my desk. Lorenz Lüthi's book *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* is a re-

minder of the kind of splendid contribution one person can make. It helps if this person, like Lüthi, speaks and reads several languages, writes clearly, has the perseverance to do extensive archival work, and focuses closely on one story from start to finish.

Lüthi correctly begins his study with a look at the Sino-Soviet relationship starting in 1921. It is important for his larger story to remember that the initial years of cooperation made a deep impression on the Chinese. Very early on, Vladimir Lenin sent Communist International (Comintern) agents to China to help spark a socialist revolution. However, much of the Soviet Union's advice, such as urging the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to join the United Front with the Guomindang in the 1920s, led not only to the decimation of the fledgling CCP but was oriented toward advancing Soviet over Chinese aims. Mao Zedong never forgot these betrayals during the early decades of the Sino-Soviet relationship, and they set the tone for the important years of cooperation and eventual disintegration.

Lüthi argues that ideology played a critical role in the Sino-Soviet split. In particular, he found by examining a mountain of sources that the Chinese were more active than Soviet leaders in exploiting ideological conflict. Three points of contention stand out, he says: the disagreement in 1955 about the role of the Soviet model in China; the tension resulting from Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 de-Stalinization speech; and disagreements about how to deal with foreign imperialists, starting with the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence. Lüthi also argues that Mao was not only willing to manipulate foreign crises in order to mobilize the Chinese people but was also ready to mobilize domestic policies in order to influence international affairs.

The first point of contention arose when the Chinese began having serious ideological discussions about the model they had adopted. For years, scholars have written about the "Soviet model," its problems for China, its parameters, and its emphasis on heavy industry. But what was the actual model the Soviet Union exported to China? How was it defined? What did it include and not include? How relevant to Chinese conditions was this model, given China's level of development? What we do know, and what Lüthi recounts, is that despite the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance signed in February 1950, real Soviet aid that would help China recover and set it on its path to socialism did not begin until after Iosif Stalin died in March 1953. Premier Zhou Enlai went to Stalin's funeral in Moscow and then stayed to press the new Soviet leaders for economic assistance. China's first Five-Year Plan, ratified later that year, depended on the 141 new enterprises to be built by the Soviet Union and the 3,000 Soviet experts who were to be dispatched to China.

Here Lüthi's characterizations of "Revolutionary Stalinism" and "Bureau-

cratic Stalinism" become especially useful. "Revolutionary Stalinism" refers to the development model followed in the USSR in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the "shock" policies of brutal forced collectivization of agriculture and rapid industrialization. By 1933, when the second Five-Year Plan was adopted, the Soviet Union turned to a more balanced development plan, which Lüthi calls "Bureaucratic Stalinism." From then on, all aspects of Soviet life were run by a gigantic administrative system, with a multilevel, stratified wage schedule that in reality ran contrary to the Marxist-Leninist precepts so widely quoted. The Soviet Union exported the bureaucratic Stalinism model to China in the early 1950s, and the PRC followed it until 1955.

By the mid-1950s, the Chinese found that the bureaucratic Stalinist model, with its emphasis on developing heavy industry, had caused a structural crisis between agriculture and industry. The immediate problem the Chinese faced was that they had agreed to start paying back Soviet loans in 1956, and the repayment was to be in agricultural goods. But agricultural production was not growing as fast as necessary to feed the country and to pay off China's debts. These problems weighed heavily on the Chinese Communists, and they began to debate the model they had inherited.

As a result of these debates, Mso switched gears in 1955 and adopted the earlier model of revolutionary Stalinism, which called for forced, ultra-rapid collectivization of agriculture. This was Mao's "High Tide" policy, which failed to attain the results China needed. In the midst of this failure, Khrushchev shocked the Chinese (and the world) with his famous de-Stalinization speech. Mao rejected political and ideological de-Stalinization for China and instead used the opportunity to embark on the even more radical Great Leap Forward, which was an obvious throwback to the revolutionary Stalinist model.

The question of the model is crucial because, as Lüthi points out, the theoretical underpinnings of Marxism-Leninism were ambiguous about how a society was to become Communist. This ambiguity left room for discussion and proposals by the Chinese that leaders in Moscow neither anticipated nor appreciated. In concentrating on the importance of ideology, Lüthi urges us to see just how divisive these ideological discussions were and, in concrete terms, how Mao's solution to China's agricultural problems in 1958 caused the beginning of a genuine rift.

With the publication of *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World,* the promise of area studies is handily realized in yielding a book that gives us the fullest possible picture to date of the rancorous Sino-Soviet relationship. Lüthi shows himself to be not only a first-rate historian but also a person steeped in the backgrounds and languages of several countries that form an important part of the story. This book would be a great addition to a

course on Communism, ideology, Chinese history, or Soviet history, or a course covering Russia and China together. The bibliography (the complete version is available only on the Princeton University Press website) is a valuable resource for scholars because it catalogs material from archives in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Russia, and the United States, as well as published material from China. Lüthi's "Essay on the Sources" is a welcome introduction to the availability and reliability of existing sources for further work in this field.

Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. xix + 375 pp. $65.00 hardcover; $27.95 paper.

Commentary by Jeremy Friedman, Princeton University

At a conference in Shanghai in early 2009 a prominent Chinese scholar, Shen Zhihua, noted that even though Marxism-Leninism stipulated that capitalist alliances would inevitably break up because of conflicts over markets and other forms of economic competition, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—the bedrock capitalist alliance—has survived for six decades, whereas alliances between Communist states, supposedly based on much deeper bonds between peoples fighting for the liberation of mankind, in many cases proved to be short-lived and brittle, often collapsing not merely into estrangement but into outright hostility and sometimes violence. Even though the Warsaw Pact linking the Soviet Union and the East European countries endured for more than thirty years, the Sino-Soviet alliance, encompassing the two largest Communist powers, survived less than a decade and dissolved into bloody skirmishes. Was this an inevitable clash of titans with historically contradictory interests? Was it merely a clash of personalities? Or did something in the very architecture of Marxism-Leninism doom this alliance and, by extension, others as well?

Prior to the end of the Cold War, numerous scholars followed and analyzed the Sino-Soviet split in great detail. Over the past two decades, however, the topic has received less attention. This is perhaps partly the result of the continued difficulties gaining access to archival documents, the demands of the languages required, and the greater interest, especially in the West, in U.S.-Soviet crises in Europe and Cuba. In English, the primary books to appear in recent years include the collection edited by Odd Arne Westad, *Brothers in Arms;* Sergey Radchenko's recently published book *Two Suns in the Heavens;* and Lorenz Lüthi's new book *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the*

Communist World.[16] Tellingly, two of the most comprehensive books to come out since 1992 on Sino-Soviet relations have yet to be translated into English: Boris T. Kulik's *Sovietsko-Kitaiskii raskol* (The Sino-Soviet Schism) and Shen Zhihua's *Zhongsu Guanxi Shigang* (Historical Outline of Sino-Soviet Relations).[17] Kulik's book, written by an old Soviet veteran of the anti-China trenches, continues to press the lines of the old ideological struggle, whereas Shen's book takes a more realpolitik-centered view. Given the partial opening of the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive since 2004 and the increasing participation of Chinese scholars, both in China and abroad, in the historiographical conversation on the Cold War, one would anticipate that the next twenty years will see a steady growth of scholarship on Sino-Soviet relations and related topics—more scholarship than in the past twenty years.

The Sino-Soviet Split is an important step in the formation of an emerging multidimensional history of the Cold War. Lüthi has meticulously reconstructed the chronology of the early years of the split, in particular the period from Nikita Khrushchev's secret speech at the 20th Soviet Party Congress to the flaring of an open dispute at the Romanian Party Congress in 1960. Using a broad mix of recently published Chinese and Soviet memoirs, Soviet archival sources, published Chinese document collections, press coverage, and secondary sources, crucially supplemented at key points by information from various East European archives, Lüthi provides a narrative that integrates domestic Soviet and Chinese politics and economics with bilateral relations and the broader geopolitical context. Lüthi uses this well-documented, integrated narrative to buttress his evaluations of the various explanatory strategies that he distills from the existing corpus of literature on the subject.

In the introduction, Lüthi surveys the existing scholarly literature and identifies four main approaches to interpreting the split. The first and perhaps most common interpretation revolves around the notion of conflicting national interest, in particular that the Soviet Union and China, as large military powers sharing a long, disputed frontier would inevitably come to see one another as a security threat. The second and somewhat related view sees Sino-Soviet relations as a function of classic balancing in international relations in the U.S.-Soviet-Chinese triangle, with the two weaker sides always attempting to balance the stronger side. In this case, the break that occurred between

16. Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945–1963* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998); and Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962–1967* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009).

17. Boris T. Kulik, *Sovetsko-kitaiskii raskol: Prichiny i posledstviia* [The Sino-Soviet Split: Causes and Consequences] (Moscow: IDV RAN, 2000); and Shen Zhihua, *Zhongsu Guanxi Shigang, 1917–1991* (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2007).

the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s can be seen as a function of a supposed power shift between the United States and the Soviet Union that left the latter as the greater military power in the later 1960s and 1970s. The last two interpretations are the ones Lüthi primarily invokes when constructing his own thesis; namely, an emphasis on domestic political factors, specifically in China; and the key role of ideological disputes in the failure of the alliance.

However, the chief defect of each of these interpretations is that they were all cobbled together from published statements and polemics, occasional leaked documents, off-the-record conversations with Soviet-bloc diplomats and scholars, and a lot of educated guesswork. The increasing access to the archival record, which Lüthi employs, finally allows for these interpretations to be held against the light of evidence. As Lüthi argues, the first two interpretations, and especially the second, seem to have been largely the product of political science theorizing and bear scant resemblance to the concerns and strategies manifested in the Soviet and Chinese documents. Furthermore, Lüthi asserts that national interest, or at least the perception thereof, is a product of an ideologically-based worldview and therefore cannot be used on its own as an explanatory mechanism. Rather it is ideology that emerges triumphant as an overarching theme of contention, both substantively and instrumentally and in both domestic and international politics. Lüthi contends that ideological differences—first over the speed and nature of economic progress toward socialism and de-Stalinization, and later over international relations and the proper methods of confronting imperialism, directly in Europe and Asia as well as indirectly in the countries of the developing world—fueled the growing split. These differences preceded such matters as the border dispute, which would become the focus of so much Western scholarship in the 1970s. Lüthi maintains that the border issue was an effect of the split rather than a cause, an issue Mao created as a further wedge against the Soviet Union.

Lüthi's interpretation owes much to the work of Chen Jian, who has emphasized the impact of Chinese domestic politics on Chinese foreign policy. In particular, Chen has pointed to Mao's attempts to use foreign policy crises, such as the Korean War and the subsequent crises in the Taiwan Strait, as tools to mobilize the population on the eve of launching grand economic initiatives. For Lüthi, Chinese domestic politics comes into play even more prominently in terms of Mao's attempts to use the growing Sino-Soviet rift to defeat real or imagined domestic political rivals, in particular Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. Lüthi argues that after 1962 Mao actively promoted the split in order to reestablish his political dominance. The road to the final Sino-Soviet break was paved by China's descent into the domestic chaos of the Cultural Revolution.

Lüthi's interpretation relies heavily on the person of Mao Zedong and his

often idiosyncratic political beliefs and activities. Lüthi acknowledges this when he points out in his conclusion that the most interesting counterfactual in this story revolves around considering the possibility of Mao's death or removal from power at an earlier stage. This question cannot be fully answered, however, without a deeper understanding of what prompted Mao's particular ideological convictions and thus how widely such convictions were truly shared among the top Chinese leaders. What exactly prompted Mao's sudden "left turn" (p. 112) in 1957, and would another Chinese leader have tried to follow a similar path to socialism? What caused Mao to "realize" that the declared Soviet policy of "peaceful coexistence" would "subvert revolutionary action in capitalist states" (p. 156)? Can something about the nature of Chinese Communism, the trajectory of the Chinese Revolution, or Chinese history and China's place in the world offer some of the explanation for these seemingly individual and idiosyncratic ideological and political judgments? If so, how would that alter our understanding of Mao's place in the process of the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations?

These questions point to a much deeper issue that relates to the nature of ideology and its sources. For Lüthi, ideology is crucial to the story but often seems to be a contingent factor of history, dependent on the personalities and conjectures of political actors. This is not how Soviet and Chinese leaders themselves discussed their ideological differences. For them, ideological differences always had "objective" sources, be they in class origins or cultural and historical legacies. Although applying this model to the exclusion of others would be inadvisable, perhaps the idea that historical and contextual factors necessarily form ideological conviction, and would consequently have an effect on any leader in a similar situation, does have something to contribute to our understanding of the place of ideology in history. Ideology, for Lüthi, also seems to come in discrete parts. For example, he puts the initial weight of Sino-Soviet ideological differences on economic issues and de-Stalinization, but in the early 1960s the main emphasis shifts to questions of international relations and the struggle against imperialism. What is the link, if any, between economics and foreign policy in the context of Marxist-Leninist ideology? Did any kind of necessary connection exist between economics and foreign policy in the positions of either Moscow or Beijing? Interestingly, it appears from Lüthi's book that althought China in 1956–1966 endured wild swings between "revolutionary Stalinist" economic initiatives and more stable periods of less-radical economic growth, its foreign policy (or at least its rhetoric) seemed to follow a fairly steady trend toward ever more militant anti-imperialism. Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union the economy underwent only relatively minor changes during this period, but Soviet foreign policy seemed almost schizophrenically torn between the impulses of détente on the one

hand and revolutionary struggle on the other. Was this because of contingent, external factors, the relative political priorities of one or the other regime, or did it have some deeper basis in the nature of their respective revolutionary projects?

In foreign policy, Lüthi does not go far beyond examining the bilateral relationship and the more direct Soviet and Chinese confrontations with the United States. Perhaps this was necessary because of the scope of the book and the sources available. However, over the past few years, after the bulk of the research for this book was conducted, the most dramatic improvement in the source base has been the gradual opening of the Chinese Foreign Ministry archive. Materials from this new source base might change the picture of Chinese foreign policy presented in the book, which offers the date of 1962 for Mao's turn away from the socialist camp toward the Afro-Asian–Latin American bloc as the chief agent of the struggle against international imperialism (p. 347). For Lüthi, the causal sequence seems to flow from the more direct issues of bilateral relations, which led to a decrease in Chinese confidence in the Soviet Union's willingness to confront the West and toward a more Third World–oriented view. Some preliminary research in the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive, however, shows a much earlier Chinese preoccupation with the decolonizing world, particularly in Africa, and a quite different causal chain. Chinese unease about the seeming lack of Soviet revolutionary solidarity with Africa spawned doubts about Moscow's ultimate willingness to confront the West or to stand by China in such a confrontation. The deeper understanding of Chinese foreign policy in this period offered by the new source base promises to challenge many of our current understandings of the dynamics of Cold War international relations and could perhaps have repercussions for the understanding of Chinese domestic politics as well. The availability of documents written by political figures other than the top leaders and far from the center will deepen our understanding of the nature of the Chinese political bureaucratic structure.

Finally, though this is perhaps a question that touches on disciplines beyond history, the narrative and arguments provided by Lüthi, especially in the context of his emphasis on ideology as a primary explanatory factor in the sequence of events described, demand a further examination of what exactly is meant by belief in Marxism-Leninism. In the book, Lüthi avers that there is no reason for doubting the "true believer" status of the main protagonists, but he also argues that their actual understanding of Marxism-Leninism was uneven at best and that ideology was often employed instrumentally, particularly by Mao, against political enemies both internal and external. Given that the primary charge leveled by both the Soviet Union and the PRC against each other was heresy or even complete abandonment of Marxism-Leninism, the

topic of the Sino-Soviet dispute, perhaps more than any other, begs the question of what in fact constitutes Marxist-Leninist belief, what it entails, and how the nature of that belief changed over time. *The Sino-Soviet Split* provides a new platform for research that will continue to move beyond the narrative of Cold War–era superpower struggle toward a more complete picture of the intertwined processes of revolution, decolonization, and development that shaped the political world of the second half of the twentieth century.

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Commentary by Douglas A. Stiffler, Juniata College

Not a Monolith

To many Americans during the Cold War, the Sino-Soviet split made little sense. From the late 1940s on, observers in the United States generally believed that the main conflict in the world was between the capitalism and freedom of the West and the socialism and collectivism of the East. The Cold War, in this view, was the struggle between two ways of life, between two ways of seeing the world, between—ultimately—Good and Evil. It would have been helpful for the public understanding if the Communist bloc had obliged by being permanently monolithic.[18] But the Communist bloc did not remain monolithic for long. As a result, a considerable degree of confusion was introduced into the public discourse about the precise nature of the enemy. Some observers even worried, at least initially, that the Sino-Soviet bickering was merely a fiendishly clever smokescreen, a plot to lull the United States into complacency as Communists went about their real work of undermining the West.

Official Western appraisals of the Sino-Soviet alliance were more realistic, and even prescient. In 1949 a report adopted by the U.S. National Security Council (NSC) predicted that, given the differing natures of the two Communist giants, the Sino-Soviet alliance would likely prove difficult to maintain over the long term.[19] This report was prepared at a time when two Com-

18. On U.S. policymakers' conception of a "monolithic Communism," see Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of a Sino-American Confrontation* (Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 49.

19. NSC 34/2, "US Policy toward China," 28 February 1949, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign*

munist states, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, had fallen into a bitter dispute. The notion that the same kind of schism awaited the Soviet Union and China therefore did not seem to be mere wishful thinking. The secret predictions of foreign policy experts, however, could hardly quell public alarm in the West over the alliance of the two Communist giants.

Underlying these differing reactions to the Sino-Soviet alliance were two differing interpretations. The public discourse was guided by a belief that Communism was a powerful ideological threat. Many professional analysts, however, saw the ideological dispute as simply a surface manifestation. In their view, "real" security concerns, personality conflicts, and economic interests lay behind a smokescreen of shifting ideology. Although some academic analysts of the Sino-Soviet split such as Donald Zagoria emphasized "ideology" as a critical factor in bringing about the split, most did not.[20] This was especially the case in the last two decades of the Cold War, as Marxist-Leninist ideology finally became so bent-out-of-shape that it was almost unrecognizable.

In the post–Cold War-period, academic analysts like Chen Jian, Odd Arne Westad, and Lorenz Lüthi have largely eschewed the "realist" interpretations espoused by their academic predecessors. Using a wealth of new documentary evidence, they have argued that "ideology" was actually *the* key factor in the Sino-Soviet split.[21] Lüthi, in his new book *The Sino-Soviet Split,* is the latest analyst to follow this scholarly trend of restoring primacy to the ideological factor in the Cold War.

Explaining the Sino-Soviet Split

Why did the Soviet Union and China split? With a wealth of new sources, masterfully used by Lüthi in this admirable survey of the split, we are now

Relations of the United States, 1949, Vol. IX, pp. 491–495. On the State Department's "wedge strategy," Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War,* pp. 49–50, 114; and Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 16–17.

20. Of the early U.S. analysts of the Sino-Soviet conflict, only Zagoria, in his multifactoral analysis, considered ideology to be a key factor in its own right. See Donald Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956–61* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962); William Griffith, *Sino-Soviet Relations, 1964* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967); Alfred D. Low, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute: An Analysis of the Polemics* (London: Associated University Presses, 1976); David Floyd, *Mao against Khrushchev: A Short History of the Sino-Soviet Conflict* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1963); and John Gittings, *Survey of the Sino-Soviet Dispute: A Commentary and Extracts from the Recent Polemics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

21. Chinese domestic politics and Mao's ideological aspirations are at the center of Chen Jian's analysis of the Sino-Soviet split: "China's alliance policy toward the Soviet Union was always an integral part of Mao Zedong's grand continuous revolution plans designed to transform China's state, society, and in-

much closer to satisfactory answers to this question and others concerning the tumultuous Sino-Soviet relationship and its ultimate unraveling. Lüthi's mastery of the memoir and archival sources, from the archives of no fewer than six East-Central European countries, is extremely impressive. In terms of documentation, we still lack access to central Chinese Communist Party (CCP) archives and therefore must rely largely on memoirs—Wu Lengxi's is especially important (albeit often unreliable) in recounting the Chinese side—and summaries or transcripts of conversations from other archival sources. Lüthi was also able to find in the Jiangsu Provincial Archives some of the central Chinese directives related to the split.

When analyzing the causes and timing of the Sino-Soviet split, analysts have traditionally cited a number of factors, including national security interests, rivalry for leadership of the international Communist movement, the influence of domestic politics in China (and, to a lesser extent, in the Soviet Union) on foreign policy, personal animosity between Mao Zedong and Nikita Khrushchev, ideological disagreements, and territorial disputes, to name the most important reasons usually advanced. Since the first path-breaking analysis of the split by Donald Zagoria in 1961, many scholars have tended to proffer a multifactoral analysis. The Sino-Soviet split developed over many years, after all, through a variety of crises and disagreements with diverse origins. Scholars have found it difficult to identify a single factor in order to write a convincing "meta-narrative" of the Split.

Lüthi is unique in asserting that ideological disagreement was the key factor underlying *all* (or nearly all) aspects of the dispute. That is a radical claim, but it is one in accord with some recent tendencies in the scholarship—for example, Chen Jian, especially, in his *Mao's China and the Cold War,* asserts that Mao's international policies were frequently determined by his radicalism at home. That is, Mao needed tension and struggle abroad to support his "continuous revolution" at home.[22] Lüthi notes that his findings are in line with the arguments of some "New Cold War Historians" concerning the important role of ideology in the Cold War.

Lüthi clearly has dug deep into the Western literature on the split. But it is odd that he does not foreground the multifactoral arguments of the recent Chinese scholarship[23] or the recent analyses by ex-Soviet officials who were in-

ternational outlook." See Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 49.

22. Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War.*

23. Yang Kuisong, *Mao Zedong yu Mosike de enen yuanyuan* [Mao Zedong and Moscow: Amity and Enmity] (Hong Kong: Sanlian chubanshe, 2000); Niu Jun, "1962: The Eve of the Left Turn in China's Foreign Policy," CWIHP Working Paper No. 48, Cold War International History Project, Washington, DC, October 2005; and Shen Zhihua, *Zhong-Su tongmeng de jingji Beijing: 1948–1953*

volved in the polemics with China.[24] Lüthi focuses almost entirely on the Western political science/international relations literature.

When reviewing the literature on the split, Lüthi identifies four main lines of explanation: national interest; "strategic triangle" maneuverings; Chinese domestic leadership conflict; and ideology (p. 3). He rejects national or security interests as primary factors. On the other hand, Lüthi, like Chen Jian and others, holds Chinese domestic leadership conflict to have been very important in bringing about the split.

Lüthi contends that Mao's ideological radicalism—and thus ideology—was the basic cause of the Sino-Soviet split. He defines ideology broadly "as a set of beliefs and dogmas that both construct general outlines—rather than a detailed blueprint—of a future political order, and define specific methods—though no explicit pathways—to achieve it" (p. 8). That is, Mao and Khrushchev both subscribed to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, in which building a Communist society was the goal and the Communist Party's leadership the means to achieve that goal.

Lüthi concedes, however, that ideology can be genuinely held or can be manipulated for short-term political ends. In the latter guise, ideology is a tool for achieving other ends. He notes that it is often difficult to distinguish between ideological "claims in principle" and the manipulation of ideological claims for other purposes. (pp. 8–9). There's the rub!

Lüthi holds that *ideological conflict* can be seen in three key areas of Sino-Soviet disagreement: first, regarding the proper socioeconomic policies that would pave the way for the future achievement of Communism; second, regarding de-Stalinization; and third, regarding the proper policy for socialist countries to adopt in dealing with the West (p. 2).

Some scholars have asserted that the power struggle and personality conflict between Mao and Khrushchev were crucial, as were the territorial and border conflicts between the two states. Lüthi holds that these factors were secondary to ideological issues (p. 2). He writes, "personality conflicts contributed to but did not cause the Sino-Soviet Split (pp. 12–13). For those who might point to economic disagreements between Beijing and Moscow as a critical factor, Lüthi states, "Economic disagreements had deep ideological roots" (p. 11).

[The Economic Background of the Sino-Soviet Alliance: 1948–1953] (Hong Kong: Zhongwen daxue yatai yanjiusuo, 2000).

24. Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens,* p. 19; Oleg Borisov and Boris Koloskov, *Soviet-Chinese Relations, 1945–1970* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970); Oleg Rakhmanin, *K istorii otnoshenii RSFSR, SSSR, RF s Kitaem 1917–1997: Obzor osnovnykh sobytii, otsenki ekspertov* [On the History of Relations of Soviet Russia, the USSR, and the Russian Federation with China, 1917–1997: Review of Major Events and Expert Appraisals] (Moscow: IDV RAN, 1999); and Kulik, *Sovetsko-kitaiskii raskol.*

Lüthi is surely correct in placing blame for the split firmly on the shoulders of Mao Zedong. Making use of Wu Lengxi's memoir, which, despite its notable flaws, is the best available source on the Chinese side, Lüthi shows that Mao had decided on a split by late 1962, or early 1963 at the latest.[25] Mao needed and wanted a split, most of all for domestic political purposes. Attacks on "Soviet revisionism" were a club to use against those in the CCP leadership—Liu, Deng, Zhou—who were trying to pursue more moderate domestic economic policies (p. 244). Mao had been in domestic political eclipse since the failure of the Great Leap Forward. By late 1962, Mao was staging a comeback, and as so often was the case, his radical domestic policy agenda was linked to a similarly radical foreign relations agenda (pp. 219–245).

So, the split was of use to Mao at home. Going beyond this uncontroversial argument, however, Lüthi argues that, in essence, Mao was a radical ideologue who sincerely believed that socialism was destined to triumph over capitalism and that the countries of the "intermediate zone"—led by Mao and China—would ultimately be victorious in their struggle with imperialism. Lüthi argues that Mao, while often inclined to use ideology instrumentally at home, was often "sincere" and "genuine" in his ideological stance in foreign policy (pp. 9, 155, 192, 347).

Mao may have been a radical ideologue in many respects, but Lüthi's contention about this matter offers only an incomplete and misleading explanation of the dynamics of the Sino-Soviet split. The question is whether seeing the Sino-Soviet split as fundamentally arising out of Sino-Soviet *ideological* disagreements clarifies or obscures this complex phenomenon. Let us answer this question by briefly examining each of the main issues that Lüthi claims were ideological in nature: de-Stalinization, socioeconomic issues (the path to Communism), and the debate on "peaceful coexistence" with the West.

De-Stalinization

Both sides in the split have written, and we have long known, that the fundamental issues dividing the Soviet Union and China began with Khrushchev's secret speech at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet

25. Wu Lengxi's memoir emphasizes that Mao acted out of ideological motivations. Wu, as director of the New China News Agency and editor-in-chief of the *People's Daily,* was deeply involved in Sino-Soviet ideological polemics. Lüthi relies heavily on Wu's memoir to justify an ideological interpretation of the split. Wu Lengxi, *Shinian lunzhan, 1956–1966: Zhong-Su guanxi huiyilu* [The Ten-Year War of Words, 1956–1966: A Memoir of Sino-Soviet Relations], 2 Vols. (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1999).

Union (CPSU) in April 1956. Both the speech itself and the way it was given without prior consultation with allies offended the Chinese.[26] Lüthi portrays the issues raised as "ideological," but actually the issues do not neatly fall under this rubric. The issue of lack of timely notification of the Chinese comrades before the speech speaks to an issue of intra-bloc relations, and of *leadership*. Despite Soviet leaders' lip service to the principle of equality among Communist countries, they in fact saw leadership of the bloc as their due, and this proved a fundamental problem for Sino-Soviet relations. At base, this was not an *ideological* issue at all but a question of power: who leads and who follows.

De-Stalinization itself raised the thorny issues of evaluation of Iosif Stalin in the international socialist arena, and of personality cults in general. Who had the right to determine the historical verdict on Stalin? As Lüthi correctly observes, Chinese leaders took a major step toward an independent stance, and a subsequent disordering of the socialist bloc, when they published "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" and subsequent articles on this topic (p. 51) It is also well-known that Khrushchev's secret speech created problems for Mao's own personality cult, in place since 1945. As a result, Mao had to take steps to reverse the diminution of his power that resulted from the secret speech.

In sum, de-Stalinization was surely an ideological issue in the socialist bloc, but it was not *exclusively* an ideological issue. Issues of leadership in the socialist bloc, personality cults, and Communist party political practice domestically and internationally were all relevant.

The Correct Path to Communism

Lüthi is on the firmest ground when he views Mao's radical socioeconomic policies as ideologically motivated, although one could append a number of factors here, such as Mao's desire to regain the domestic policy initiative from the Soviet-oriented technocrats in the party. Nowhere was Mao more ideological than in his Great Leap Forward, inspired in part by the revolutionary Stalinism of 1929–1931. (Lüthi helpfully divides the Soviet experience or Soviet model into three experiences or models: the New Economic Plan, revolutionary Stalinism, and bureaucratic Stalinism, each of which would be used by the Chinese in their own way; pp. 19–23.) With one eye on the Soviet Union and the bureaucratic model, Mao sought to transform himself into a revolutionary thinker akin to Vladimir Lenin, Karl Marx, and Stalin by creating Commu-

26. Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens,* p. 10; and Floyd, *Mao against Khrushchev,* p. 37.

nism overnight through the medium of the people's communes. Soviet officials were not amused.

The adverse Soviet reaction resulted more from the implicit Chinese challenge that China would enter Communism first than from any real feeling of threat that the people's communes would be successful. Soviet leaders knew that Mao was heading down the wrong road because it was a road they had traversed themselves (p. 133). Lüthi sees the challenge as ideological, but one could just as well see it in the international context as being a challenge of leadership, of who was to take the leading role in the international Communist movement (pp. 83–84).

Policy toward the West: Peaceful Coexistence or Confrontation?

Lüthi notes that by the end of the 1950s de-Stalinization and debates about the path to Communism were no longer the main issues in contention. They were replaced by the third issue that Lüthi identifies as ideological: the proper attitude toward imperialism (p. 157). Khrushchev had first raised the issue of peaceful coexistence with the West in his secret speech. Lüthi shows that the Chinese at first went along with the idea (albeit with a notable lack of enthusiasm), but after they found that "peaceful coexistence" seemingly meant no progress with the United States on the Taiwan issue, they began voicing their opposition to the "peaceful coexistence" formula directly to Soviet leaders through intraparty channels (pp. 76–77).

Khrushchev's (often inconsistent) advocacy of "peaceful coexistence" undermined (or widened the cracks in) the Sino-Soviet relationship, as Lüthi shows, and led to the heated polemics of the mid-1960s. By late 1962, however, Mao found an anti-Soviet stance so domestically congenial that he probably welcomed it when Soviet leaders stuck to their formula, enabling him to attack them for it. Officials in Moscow, for their part, were unnerved by Mao's view of the nuclear bomb as a "paper tiger"—openly stated at the Moscow meeting in November 1957—and his view of a nuclear war as guaranteeing the victory of socialism. This and other worrisome Chinese statements and actions were enough to convince Soviet leaders, in 1958, to renege on their promise of the previous year to furnish a sample nuclear bomb to the Chinese (pp. 103–104).

A belligerent or accommodating attitude toward the imperialist West might well be regarded as an ideological issue. That was indeed how Mao, Khrushchev, and armies of pen-wielding polemicists in Moscow and Beijing saw the issue. But it is less clear that we, as scholars, need to view it the same way. Mao was making a bid for international leadership of the socialist camp and for Third World revolutionary allies. Domestically he was using militancy

toward the West to undermine the power of more moderate CCP leaders. The stage was being set for the Cultural Revolution. At issue, again, were leadership and power. For Mao, ideas—that is, ideology—were inextricably bound together with the quest for power both domestically and internationally.

Lüthi musters great detail to show the close link between Chinese international politics and domestic politics during the years of the split. His analysis of the reasons for the post–Great Leap famine and its impact on Chinese leadership politics is especially impressive (pp. 118–123, 158–160, 195–201). He is also very good on other Chinese socioeconomic issues. Lüthi's conclusion that the precipitate withdrawal of Soviet advisers in 1960 probably had minimal short-term economic impact on China is surely correct (pp. 158, 178). In one telling chapter, Lüthi shows Chen Yi telling the Soviet ambassador quite frankly in 1960 that China was reorienting its international trade toward the capitalist world (p. 180). In sum, Lüthi does an excellent job of showing the close connection between Chinese socioeconomic issues, Chinese politics, and China's international relations.

Lüthi's insistence in his introduction and conclusion that ideological divergences were the fundamental cause of the split is the least satisfactory part of the book. In fairness, though, I should note that in the rest of the book Lüthi usually does not offer an exclusively ideological explanation of the Sino-Soviet disagreements. When he analyzes particular issues and incidents, he often argues that ideology was used (usually by Mao) in an "instrumental" manner, indicating that Mao had other purposes in mind (e.g., pp. 79, 154, 192, 211, 301, 347). It is also striking how often Lüthi refers, in the body of the monograph, to the critical importance of extra-ideological factors, such as the deep personal loathing that Mao and Khrushchev felt for each other (e.g., pp. 74–75, 78, 94–95, 116, 146–150, 286, 349) and Mao's desire for independence in foreign policy–making (p. 104). This is, in fact, good, old-fashioned multifactoral analysis.

Mao as Radical Ideologue or Flexible Strategist?

This brings us to the nature of Mao himself. Most scholars would agree with Lüthi that Mao caused the split and that Soviet leaders were usually in a reactive stance; as Sergey Radchenko's new book further confirms.[27] Lüthi believes that Mao's ideology was "genuine"—that is, not "instrumental" or a tool or

27. Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heavens: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962–1967* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009).

secondary to something else—especially when Mao was thinking about the United States and Western capitalism more generally (p. 155). Lüthi claims that Mao was a "genuine" Communist who "sincerely" believed that the United States was going to lose the game in the long run and that the socialist world/Third World was going to win.

Lüthi is able to identify certain cases in which Mao, in particular, seemed to act out of genuine ideological motivations, notably when he launched the Great Leap Forward (p. 80). Most of the time, however, Mao's true motivations either were complex (i.e., multifactoral) or were transparently aimed at the enhancement of China's and his domestic and international power and prestige. It may, indeed, be futile to think of Mao's or any other political leader's actions in terms of pure, genuine, or even entirely "sincere" ideological motivations

As Lüthi himself acknowledges, there is no easy way to tell whether Mao in any given circumstance was using ideology "instrumentally" or out of genuine conviction (i.e., using ideology for its own sake). In fact, Lüthi's assertions about Mao are just that—assertions. We simply cannot know with any certainty what Mao "genuinely" believed at any given time, though we can advance suppositions based on the available evidence. While frequently acknowledging Mao's penchant for using ideology as a tool (Mao himself described ideology as a "useful tool"), Lüthi goes out on a limb, writing that there is no evidence that Mao and the Chinese leaders were "pure cynics who used ideological claims in a deceitful manner to achieve goals contrary to larger Marxist-Leninist postulates" (p. 347).

The construction of a supremely—and consistently—"ideological" Mao belies much recent Chinese scholarly opinion on the political nature of Mao. Many Chinese scholars, in particular, feel that Mao was a supremely flexible thinker, able to change his views 180 degrees overnight.[28] There is a culturalist argument, which I accept, that Mao was more Zhuge Liang or Sunzi (Sun Zu) than the idealized, doctrine-defending pope. That is, Mao was a master political tactician and strategist whose overriding goal was power: his own and his country's, in exactly that order (as John Lewis Gaddis would say). This is the Mao who betrayed his main Marxist-Leninist ally, the Soviet Union, and received the arch-anti-Communist Richard Nixon in his study in Beijing.

There is nothing pure in politics, neither pure ideologists, nor pure cynics. Our task is to disentangle motives and to infer causes as best we can. Lüthi's book nonetheless stands as a major step forward in our understanding

28. Zhang Baijia and Yang Kuisong recently expressed this view at the Cold War forum, Changchun, China, Summer 2006, and the "Transforming the Cold War" conference, Shanghai, December 2006, respectively. See also, Yang, *Mao Zedong yu Mosike.*

of the Sino-Soviet dispute. *The Sino-Soviet Split* will not be the final word because a major source of documentation (the CCP central archives) remains inaccessible, but Lüthi's impressive book will no doubt set the terms of the debate for at least the next decade.

Reply to the Commentaries

Lorenz Lüthi

I am grateful to Priscilla Roberts, Steven Levine, Péter Vámos, Deborah Kaple, Jeremy Friedman, and Douglas Stiffler for the efforts they took in reviewing my book in a comprehensive and critical manner. I also want to thank the *Journal of Cold War Studies* for organizing this roundtable. Given the range and details of the reviews, I fear I will not be able to respond adequately to some points raised.

The *Sino-Soviet Split* is primarily an investigation into the *reasons* and the *course* of the collapse of the greatest alliance in the Communist world during the 1956–1966 period. I contend that disagreements over economic development, de-Stalinization, and the correct method of dealing with the international class enemy stood at the center of the split. I further claim that Chinese domestic politics had an increasingly disproportionate influence on the collapse of the alliance. Although I maintain that ideology was a major factor in the split, my book is not primarily about the role of ideology. I consider a whole array of factors that were crucial for the disintegration of the alliance. One reviewer regrets that I did not offer any reflections on the influence of the Sino-Soviet split on the demise of Communism in the Soviet Union, on East Asian Communism, or on the Cold War. Although these topics are definitely outside the confines of my book, they are important and worthy to be examined in another book, or even several. Qiang Zhai, Jeremy Friedman, and other scholars, including me, are currently exploring these and related questions in various book projects.

When I wrote the book, I deliberately bypassed the earlier literature because I did not want older debates, many of which were theoretical and speculative, to spoil my view on the newly available evidence. My book confirms some of the earlier findings, something that happens in almost all historiographical debates. Nevertheless, the notion that my book merely "retroactively validates the methodologies of Kremlinology and Pekingology that Donald Zagoria employed nearly half a century ago" seems to me a mischaracterization not only of my own research but also of the work of the first chronicler of the Sino-Soviet split. Zagoria's book covers only half the time span of mine (1956–1961) and, more importantly, arrives at opposite conclusions. Whereas Zagoria argued in 1961 that ideology was a *cohesive* force that eventually would keep the alliance together despite all the then visible problems, I argue, with the advantage of hindsight, that ideology was a *divisive* force that split the alliance apart.

Both Péter Vámos and Douglas Stiffler read my book as an argument for the primary role of ideology in the split. According to their understanding, I

claim that ideology was "the ultimate cause" and "key factor underlying almost all aspects of the dispute." I fear that both have overread my interpretation (or that I was not clear enough in the first place). Throughout the book, I discuss other factors in addition to ideology. In my conclusion, for example, I write that there "is no doubt that personality issues contributed to the worsening of the Sino-Soviet alliance" (p. 349), although I do not believe that they alone would have caused the split (one need only remember Charles de Gaulle's difficult relationship with several U.S. presidents). In the same vein, I contend that the split, at least its bitter outcome, might not have taken place without Mao Zedong at the helm of Communist China (p. 351). Yet, I am not willing to go as far as Priscilla Roberts, who urges me to see Mao mainly as "a ruthless, unscrupulous political operator whose most enduring concern . . . was to safeguard and reinforce his power." For me, too much evidence from the early 1920s to the last years of Mao's life suggests that he was a Communist believer, even if his theoretical understanding was not very sophisticated, to say the least. I argue that during the period I cover in my book, Mao tended to become more manipulative (or "instrumental" as I call it in my book) while still remaining a Communist believer. I am still convinced that the roots of the Sino-Soviet conflict lay in ideological disagreements but that Mao increasingly used them, once they had occurred, for instrumental purposes.

When writing my book, I tried to establish a hierarchy of causes. I concluded that, in this descending sequence, ideology (broadly defined), domestic politics, and personality issues were crucial factors, and I relegated territorial issues, questions of national interest, and others to the background. Douglas Stiffler raises the interesting issue of political culture and its influence on Mao's behavior. During the ten years I worked on the project, I frequently tried to come to terms with this problem. To what degree was Chinese culture or the nature of the Chinese Communist political system a source of the split? In the end, I found it impossible to incorporate a clash-of-civilizations argument into my book. Although there is evidence of cultural misunderstanding and bias on both sides, it is difficult for me to see how these factors affected the strategic or tactical thinking of Mao or Khrushchev in specific cases.

Yet, in fairness to the original point Douglas Stiffler raised, he argued that Mao was closer to how Priscilla Roberts portrays him, as a Chinese "master political tactician and strategist" who, for the greater good of his own power and his country's might, betrayed his Marxist-Leninist ally and received the arch imperialist in his bedroom. Stiffler maintains that, in this regard, Mao was not different from other legendary leaders in Chinese history. Although the debate on the Sino-American rapprochement is outside the limits of my monograph, I agree with Stiffler that Mao was a political tactician in the early 1970s. But was he also a master strategist willing to abandon earlier convic-

tions like used-up pieces of clothing? In my view, most of the literature on Richard Nixon's 1972 visit misrepresents the Sino-American rapprochement as an ideological sell-out on Mao's part. In fact, it was no such thing. The ideological reversal happened only under his successor, Deng Xiaoping, in 1978–1979.

My definition of ideology has attracted the greatest attention and discussion among the reviewers, which probably reflects the fact that historians of the Cold War still have no good working definition for ideology. What is ideology? How does it work in the political sphere? In my book, I define ideology broadly as both a belief system (reflecting genuine convictions) and a political instrument (which can be used instrumentally). Péter Vámos's disagreement with my definition of "instrumental" seems to me a semantic not a substantive problem. I do not share his view that everybody—from Iosif Stalin to the lowly party cadre to Stalin's puppet rulers in East Europe—used ideology only to achieve the state's domestic and international goals, particularly because Marxism-Leninism, and not any other conceivable political ideology, formulated some of these goals in the first place (e.g., the construction of a socialist society, or proletarian internationalism). Ideology is always a *tool* for political action (or, in Steven Levine's words, "its very nature is oriented toward action"), but my distinction rests on its use resulting from a *genuine belief* in its postulates and its use as an *instrument* for goals that are not congruent with its postulates (manipulation).

In a related point, Péter Vámos asserts that ideology was "practically the only tool [Mao] had at his disposal against the Soviet Union and his domestic opponents." Implicitly, and later explicitly, Vámos claims that the realm of ideology was the only sphere in which the split could develop, thus making ideology a mere function of the split and not its cause, as I argue. Vámos's criticism, however, raises the question of why Mao needed to bolster his power vis-à-vis Moscow and his internal rivals. Unlike Walter Ulbricht in East Germany or Mátyás Rákosi in Hungary, Mao was the undisputed leader in China—in the eyes of his party, of his country, of the socialist camp, and even of Stalin. So, there must have been other reasons, which are, as I argue, related to Mao's political and ideological positions, as well as to his personality. Many of Mao's rivals, real or imagined, emerged as a result of his political mistakes—as, for example, the Great Leap Forward—which often happened as a consequence of his highly ideological thinking. Vámos's criticism thus raises the problem of the chicken and the egg: What was really first?

I am not convinced that, as Vámos believes, Mao sought leadership in the international arena in the early 1950s. At that time, Mao wanted to establish China as an independent and respected country and as a regional power at best—a goal Stalin in fact supported. By the mid-1950s, after Stalin's death,

Mao had begun seeking equality among the members in the socialist camp. His pursuit of international leadership did not start until the end of the 1950s, after disputes with the Soviet Union had emerged. Thus, Mao's international pretensions were the result, rather than the cause, of China's disputes with the Soviet Union.

Douglas Stiffler argues that my definition of ideology as a belief system and a political instrument is reflected in its dichotomous use abroad and at home. I do not believe I made such a clear case in the book, although in chapter 4 (covering 1959) I do argue that Mao behaved aggressively in foreign policy as a Communist believer while acting defensively at home as an ideological manipulator. Given the nature of the available evidence for the whole period, I repeatedly point out that it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the two (often I leave the judgment up to the reader). I also maintain that during the ten years covered by my book, Mao tended to become more manipulative in his use of ideology—both abroad and at home.

When discussing ideology, we should keep in mind the intellectual world in which Mao rose to political preeminence. Before 1949, for half of his adult life, and for almost his entire political career, he had lived in political exile, was pursued by political enemies, and fought for leadership in his party. Mao was not a man of letters, although he tried to give that impression starting in the mid-1930s. His political education was limited at best, based on a few translated and abridged texts of the Marxist-Leninist classics and some of Stalin's writings that had made their way to his various hideouts in the vast rural spaces of China and that he had repeatedly read. In 1949, Mao arrived in Beijing after a quarter century living in the wilderness—real and political. A man of many survival skills, he nevertheless held on to a rather small body of texts that he had read, internalized, and adapted to Chinese practice and that had turned out to be crucial for the intellectual, political, and military victory of the Chinese Communist cause. Thus, there is no good reason to believe that the man who became China's leader at the age of 56 suddenly underwent an intellectual revolution that would radically change his political and ideological views regarding China, Communism, or capitalism-imperialism.

This rather limited intellectual horizon provided the foundation for his conflicts with the Soviet Union. Steven Levine correctly raises the question whether "the very nature of Marxism-Leninism tend[ed] to preclude compromise on what were taken to be questions of principle" that was at the heart of the split. Although I did not mention Levine's mentor, Benjamin Schwartz (or, I should note, the names of many other distinguihed scholars who have written about this), I fully agree with his point. This is also what I write on pages 8–9 of the book but apparently in less elegant terms. The conflict among different interpretations of the Marxist-Leninist texts is particularly

obvious in the development of different Soviet economic models as early as the 1920s, which helped to spark Sino-Soviet disagreements in the mid-1950s in the first place. I am happy that Deborah Kaple singled out this issue, particularly because it helps to put the split into a larger historical context of ideological developments.

The only problem with Mao was that he made claims in principle without any great understanding of the theory behind them—in this sense he was not really that different from Khrushchev or Leonid Brezhnev. But the narrow-mindedness and pettiness of his invective are unique and are reminiscent of the animated discussions at the "regulars' table" in a tavern. No observer would doubt that the participants, impassioned and increasingly uninhibited by the consumption of more and more alcohol, were not serious about their claims in the heat of the debate, even if, with a view clear of liquor, what they said was obviously both plainly silly and irrelevant to the world at large.

This last point provides a good transition to some specific criticisms raised in some of the reviews. I do not believe that I "unwittingly" lend credence to Mao's claims of revisionism abroad and at home, as Steven Levine maintains. There is no need to point out the insincerity of Mao's numerous pronouncements: Directly quoting them makes the Great Helmsman look foolish enough. Furthermore, Levine may disagree with my characterization that "Soviet actions had given Beijing the *moral high ground* in the [ideological] debate," but Khrushchev's sudden withdrawal of the specialists was nonetheless politically foolish, illegal, and heavily disputed among Soviet leaders and within the Soviet bureaucracy. Providing the Chinese comrades with the feeling that they were wronged—and in the narrow technical sense, they were—was a major Soviet tactical mistake.

In his insightful review, Jeremy Friedman argues that recently opened document collections from the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archive point to Mao's interest in decolonization even before 1962. I have no doubt that Mao was interested in this topic even before the 1949 revolution. He saw Communist China as a model for many of the colonized nations. Also, I agree with Friedman that the Chinese archives will provide a lot of new evidence that will enable us to write the history of China's relations with the decolonizing world anew. Yet, intellectual interest in fellow colonized nations and political-economic commitment to them are two different issues. Even after Mao proclaimed his ideological dedication to the so-called intermediate zone in the late summer of 1962, and even in comparison to the Soviet Union, China's aid to the decolonizing world remained minuscule for most of the 1960s. Mao's concern with Africa in the 1950s, including his worry over a lack of Soviet commitment, was the consequence of his disagreements with Soviet peaceful coexistence, which became a major issue of dispute in late 1957.