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Introduction by Qiang Zhai

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Introduction by Qiang Zhai, Auburn University at Montgomery

Austin Jersild's extensively-researched and highly-revealing volume represents a major contribution to the study of the Sino-Soviet alliance. Unlike much of the existing scholarship that tends to focus on strategic calculations, political maneuvers, and personal rivalries at the highest level of authority in Beijing and Moscow, Jersild's book instead concentrates on the 'everyday life' of China's encounters with fraternal countries. The author adopts a bottom-up approach by recounting the daily experiences and frustrations of Soviet and Eastern European advisers in China, bringing to life the intimate nature of socialist intra-bloc interactions. His engaging narrative is interspersed with vivid accounts of everyday exchanges between Chinese officials and workers on the one hand and Eastern Bloc advisers and visitors on the other. Episodes such as the dispute between Chinese engineers and Soviet advisers in the Shenyang Cable Factory and the detention of drunken Russian sailors at a northeastern Chinese seaport accord the reader a rare opportunity to observe the functioning of the Sino-Soviet relationship at the societal level. By incorporating the role of Poles, Czechoslovaks, East Germans, and Hungarians in bloc exchanges with China, Jersild broadens and complicates the very concept of 'Sino-Soviet' relations. He succeeds in illuminating how the practical dimensions of China's interactions with the bloc fit into general patterns and paradigms of collaboration and integration within the entire bloc. The result is a study that is both comparative and transnational in its analysis and interpretations.

Thomas Maddux has assembled a panel of three prominent scholars to comment on Jersild's book. All of them applaud Jersild's efforts to conduct multi-archival research and to broaden the study of the Sino-Soviet alliance by highlighting bloc exchanges and interactions at the ground level. Douglas Stiffler provides the most positive review of Jersild's study, calling it "a distinguished contribution" and "the best single-monograph overview to date of the Sino-Soviet relationship of the 1950s." Noting that "Chinese scholars' work on the Soviet advisers in China is sometimes suffused with an aura of nostalgia for the 1950s and a lost era of international solidarity," Stiffler regards Jersild's findings on the frictions and contradictions in the adviser program "a useful corrective that will make us all think more deeply about the plusses and minuses of the Soviet-bloc effort in China." Peter Vamos considers Jersild's book "a welcome contribution to the study of Sino-Soviet bloc relations." Dandan Zhu points out that "the transnational perspective of study and a certain comparative cultural and psychological analysis are the key elements in Jersild's work that opens up new ground."

Both Stiffler and Vamos take issue with Jersild's decision to use Mao's two trips to the Soviet Union (the first in 1949-50 and the second in 1957) to frame his analysis of the development of Sino-Soviet relations. Regretting that Jersild fails to provide a detailed discussion of those trips themselves, Stiffler argues that interweaving high politics with the operational relationships would have been more useful to the general reader. Vamos wonders whether Mao's two visits represented real landmarks in the evolution of the Sino-Soviet relationship because they did not coincide with major shifts in the alliance.

Stiffler finds Jersild's description of Soviet advisers' arrogant conduct in China to Russian imperial traditions simplistic. Stiffler asserts that when Soviet advisers went to China, they carried with them not just the intellectual baggage of the imperial Russian tradition of state service in the borderlands but also the formative experiences and memories of having survived the 'Great Patriotic War,' participated in the reconstruction of the devastated Soviet Union after the war, and spent a good portion of their lives living in the period of 'High Stalinism.' In other words, both the legacy of the imperial era and the symbolism of the revolutionary period were at play when Soviet advisers interacted with their Chinese comrades.

Vamos criticizes Jersild for overrating the influence of East Europeans on Sino-Soviet relations. Vamos contends that "the East European participation gave some color to Sino-Soviet relations, but it definitely did not have a significant impact on Sino-Soviet relations." He has reservations about Jersild's practice of referring to the European socialist states as "Central Europeans." Vamos argues that Eastern Europe or East Central Europe is a better phrase to describe the region, its countries, and peoples. In Vamos's view, "Eastern Europe is a geopolitical term which has been widely used in Europe as well as in the United States," whereas the phrase "Central Europe...identifies the region primarily in cultural (and partly religious) terms, although a single Central European identity has never existed."

Jersild's path-breaking work offers a treasure trove for reflection on the history of the international Communist movement. His provocative interpretations will continue to spark discussion about the rise and fall of the Sino-Soviet alliance.

Participants:

Austin Jersild is Associate Professor of History at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and Chair of the Department of History. He has a Ph.D. in History from the University of California, Davis. He is the author of *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), and *The Sino-Soviet Alliance: An International History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Qiang Zhai is professor of history at Auburn University at Montgomery. He received his doctoral degree from Ohio University. He is the author of *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000). He continues to work on China's foreign relations in the Cold War.

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451-472 "China's Diplomatic and Political Involvement in the 1956 Hungarian Crisis,"
Journal of Asian Politics and History fall, no.1. (2012): 81-106.

Douglas A. Stiffler is Associate Professor of History at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. He earned his Ph.D. in Modern Chinese History in 2002 from the University of California, San Diego, with a dissertation entitled "Building Socialism at Chinese People's University: Chinese Cadres and Soviet Experts in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1957." He is the co-editor, with Shen Zhihua, of *Cuiruo de lianmeng: lengzhan yu zhongsu guanxi (Fragile Alliance: The Cold War and Sino-Soviet Relations)* (Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2011).

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Review by Douglas A. Stiffler, Juniata College, Pennsylvania

Austin Jersild's new book on the Sino-Soviet alliance represents a significant advance in our understanding of relations at the 'ground level' between Chinese and their Soviet-bloc comrades in the 1950s and 1960s. The opening of archives in former Soviet bloc countries has made possible such studies, and Jersild has effectively mined rich veins of material from Czech, East German, Russian, and Chinese sources. The best work over the past decade or so has been done by scholars able to use East European as well as Chinese and Russian sources. Jersild's work is a distinguished contribution to this impressive new body of scholarship.¹

Some 20,000 Soviet and East European advisers in China sent back to their home countries extensive reports on their activities in China. As is well-known, especially from the work of Shen Zhihua, Soviet experts (*Sulian zhuanjia*) served in China in a great variety of fields in late 1940s and 1950s China, with their main efforts focused on the building of heavy industry, transport infrastructure, military modernization, city planning, and education.² On both sides, the propaganda of the era hailed the "eternal (or unbreakable) friendship" of the two peoples, and contrasted the selflessness of the Soviet advisers – in propaganda posters of the era often pictured proffering their factory blueprints to grateful Chinese comrades – with the selfishness, decadence, and backwardness of the capitalist West.

There was a 'dark side' to this Soviet and East European effort, though, and Jersild has provided examples in abundance of all that could and did go wrong in the adviser program and, by extension, in Sino-Soviet bloc relations, generally: Soviet great-power chauvinism (69), Soviet demands for inflated payments for training Chinese in the Soviet Union (36), bureaucratic obstacles and non-responsiveness to Chinese requests (50-51), Soviet advisers eating and drinking to excess (41, 43), rowdy Soviet sailors assaulting Chinese civilians in port cities (44-45), and even the ill-fated affair of a Czech engineer and a Chinese accountant (97-102). The Chinese, for their part, were eager to milk the Soviets for all they were worth in terms of technical expertise and aid, were quick to suspect the motives of Soviet bloc advisers, and hijacked the Sino-Soviet Friendship society for their own ends. While Jersild never makes the comparison, it is striking how much the whole relationship between China and the Soviet bloc resembled a marriage gone bad, followed by a bitter divorce.³ Given that Chinese scholars' work on the Soviet advisers in China is sometimes suffused with an aura of nostalgia for the 1950s and a lost era of international

¹ John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1949-1956* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Lorenz M. Luthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

² Shen Zhihua, *Sulian zhuanjia zai Zhongguo (1948-1960)* (Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 2009).

³ I am indebted here to Elizabeth McGuire's notion of the Sino-Soviet relationship as a "romance." McGuire's book manuscript is entitled "The Sino-Soviet Romance: How Chinese Communists Fell in Love with the Russian Revolution."

solidarity, Jersild's work is a useful corrective that will make us all think more deeply about the plusses and minuses of the Soviet-bloc effort in China.

Taken as a whole, Jersild's book gives the best single-monograph overview to date of the Sino-Soviet relationship of the 1950s. Looking at the relationship from the ground level – through the eyes of the people tasked with working with the comrades from the 'brother countries' -- rather than from the commanding heights of the leaders, allows for a much more immediate sense of the political atmosphere of the time. Oddly, though, Jersild uses the framing devices of Party Chairman Mao Zedong's two visits to Moscow, in 1949-50, and again in November 1957, to divide the book into two parts, but has little to say about these visits themselves. That is too bad, as the book might have been more useful to the general reader if high politics could have been interwoven with the operational or ground-level relationships. Nonetheless, for one already familiar with the Soviet bloc in these years, and the Sino-Soviet relationship in particular, Jersild's work adds new depth and fresh insights to our knowledge of the period.

The early 1950s are frequently referred to in the West as a 'honeymoon' period, though Jersild, emphasizing difficulties, avoids that term. The two sides barely knew each other and came to the relationship with differing goals and expectations. He argues that "the motives and practices of both sides in this complicated relationship were frequently suspect." (57) The Soviets, according to Jersild, approached their *komandirovka* (work-related travel) much as they would have approached travel to less-developed border regions of the Soviet Union (28-33). Case studies of the Shenyang Cable Factory and the Changchun Automobile Factory show the Chinese demanding and feeling entitled to a whole raft of Soviet blueprints, technology, and technical expertise which the Chinese hoped to use to copy Soviet factories lock, stock, and barrel (46-55). The 'honeymoon' actually seems a good term here: the two sides came into the relationship with unrealistic expectations. The Soviet advisers were not the miracle-workers that the Chinese seemed to have expected, and China was not a land well-suited to rapid industrialization, as the Soviet advisers may have hoped.

A key theme here is the frustration both sides felt with each other. For the Soviets, other than raw materials, China as a large underdeveloped agricultural country had little to offer the Soviet Union in its economic competition with the West. So while some advantages could be gained (access to pre-1949 Western technology, sometimes), in general the Soviets were disappointed. The Chinese were often disappointed with that the Soviets had on offer. There were numerous bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining information, little or no flexibility – and the Chinese were aware that the technology of the Central Europeans was more advanced. (pp. 64-65) Both sides were, in a sense, forced to confront their own limitations (in an almost palpably painful way).

By 1956-57, the Chinese felt more confident as they watched their Soviet mentors stumble from crisis to crisis – from Party Chairman Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 Secret Speech to the unrest and uprisings in Poland and Hungary. The Chinese reaffirmed Soviet leadership in late 1957, and showed "great humility and concern for the overall health and strength of the bloc" (130). Another way to look at this, however, is that the Chinese arrogated to

themselves the right to determine who should be leader and to evaluate the policies of that leader. A new era began in 1958, as Mao launched the Great Leap Forward and became more assertive on the world stage. Jersild effectively shows that Mao's bid for leadership in the Socialist world was fundamentally misguided. The Central Europeans, in particular, walking a fine line between their Soviet bosses and the West, had no reason at all to embrace the radical new Chinese experiments at home or abroad (155).

Jersild does a very good job of showing the radical turn the Chinese took in the late 1950s. He argues that the Chinese saw the Soviets as betraying the revolution by cozying up to American imperialism, and that the Chinese increasingly emphasized their own leadership of the "intermediate zone" and the Third World as a whole, and perhaps even the entire socialist bloc (161, 175). The author confirms that Chinese behaved provocatively towards Soviet advisors in this period, leading to the withdrawal of the Soviet advisors. (161-163). The Chinese embassy in Moscow reported hopefully about supposed pro-Chinese attitudes among the Soviet people, but were misreading Soviet society (167-171). The ouster of Khrushchev caused hopes on both sides for repair of the relationship, but neither was willing to compromise its positions one iota. (171-174.) Jersild uses a series of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents from 1964 to show Mao's resentment and "toying with" the occasional Soviet delegation that came through Beijing (171). In Jersild's apt portrayal, the Chinese essentially went from being eager students of rather arrogant Soviet advisers to being arrogant and chauvinistic themselves, with the Soviets on the defensive from 1958 on.

One surprising thing here is the extent to which exchange continued in the realm of socialist tourism and some technical areas, even after the withdrawal of most of the Soviet advisers in 1960. Chinese-Soviet exchanges continued in the early 1960s, when both sides were suspicious of and even hostile to one other. Chinese travelling as 'tourists' in the Soviet Union were reported to have used the trips to proselytize among Soviet citizens. (198-199) Jersild further argues that the Chinese "subverted" the Sino-Soviet Friendship Society, but since the organization was Chinese from the beginning, it is hard to see how this could have been the case(205-7). Another of Jersild's intriguing arguments is that the Sino-Soviet relationship was characterized by metaphors of family, and friendship, and a language of debt, and gift-giving – a language that itself was constraining and problematic, ultimately (183-184). Perhaps, then, it was the very language of friendship and family that in some measure led ultimately to the deep sense of betrayal that both sides felt after 1958. The Chinese felt that the Soviets, by their focus on consumer living standards and their rapprochement with the West, were betraying socialism. The Soviets felt that the Chinese were ungrateful, untrustworthy, and even treacherous.

Jersild's argument is not ultimately centered on the language the two sides used to describe their relationship, and the resultant gap between rhetoric and reality. Instead, his main argument is that historical legacies *on all sides* led to flawed policies, frustration, and disillusion as each side sought to play roles that had, in fact, been played before in history. That is, the Soviet advisers were the inheritors of a legacy of Russian imperial expansion and were akin to Russian imperial officials sent out to the borderlands, often in 'the East,' to spread 'Western civilization.' The Central European advisers shared this orientation, but

saw themselves as superior to the Russians in technical matters and closer than the Russians to the mainstream of Western civilization. The Chinese, for their part, acted like the self-strengtheners of the late Qing, trying to adopt Western technology while trying to retain a Chinese 'essence,' or at least try to keep out what is sometimes called Western 'spiritual pollution' i.e. moral depravity.

Jersild's argument here is plausible. There can be no doubt that the imperial experiences of all the peoples involved shaped their perceptions to some degree, but a lot transpired from the collapse of their empires and through the period of their revolutionary regimes. The type of adviser whom the Soviets sent to the Chinese had survived the Second World War (the 'Great Patriotic War'), was engaged in rebuilding the devastated Soviet Union after the war, and had spent a good portion of his or her life living in a period scholars often call 'High Stalinism.'⁴ While this was to some degree a conservative reaction to earlier revolutionary radicalism, and as such hearkened back to the imperial Russian period, it gained much of its impetus from victory in the Great Patriotic War and its stories and symbolism from the revolutionary period and revolutionary movements. The Soviet advisers in China were inheritors of all of this, not just the imperial Russian tradition of state service in the borderlands.

Jersild's portrayal of the Chinese side in the exchange is also a bit too simplistic. The Chinese by the 1950s were well past the t'i/yong formulation (that is – Western learning, Chinese essence) and, at least initially, ready to embrace 'Western' learning, mediated through the Soviet bloc, whole hog and with few reservations. One has only to read Liu Shaoqi's statements in his visit to Moscow in July 1949 to see the vast range of learning from the Soviet Union the Chinese hoped to undertake in the coming years.⁵ Perhaps a better way to look at this, as some scholars have noted, is to see 'learning from abroad' as cyclical, that is, a period of intense effort – even 'mechanical copying,' followed by a sort of retrenchment or reaction emphasizing a more critical approach and more attention to native traditions.⁶

Scholars writing about the Sino-Soviet relationship are divided over the fundamental reasons for the troubled relationship and split: the main schools of thought traditionally were those that emphasized either the Leader's personality and ambitions (Stalin, Mao, Khrushchev), ideological conflict over the 'correct' interpretations of Marxism-Leninism, or the great-power ambitions of Soviet Russia and Communist China. The last of these schools

⁴ Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957* (M.E. Sharpe, 1988). On the nature of mature Stalinism, see the works of Sheila Fitzpatrick: *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford University Press, 1999) and *Stalinism: New Directions* (Routledge, 2000).

⁵ Dieter Heinzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China 1945-1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance* (M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 174-230.

⁶ Suzanne Pepper, *Radicalism and Educational Reform in 20th-century China: the Search for an Ideal Developmental Model* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

emphasized the imperial heritage, Stalin as a twentieth-century Tsar and Mao as a Chinese Communist emperor. According to this school, nothing essential had changed in the competition amongst empires. Jersild does not go this far, but it is striking that his argument is a cultural version of the 'great-power ambitions' school. With his attention to ground-level interactions and cultural attitudes, Jersild is much more convincing, but one cannot escape the suspicion that the revolutionary and wartime experiences of the two societies in the early twentieth century were at least as important as the imperial heritages.

In sum, Jersild's excellent work shows the problems of the Sino-Soviet bloc (not just Soviet) relationship, something that few scholars have been able to achieve. From the files of the former Soviet bloc countries, he has provided plentiful examples of the problems and frustrations of the huge 1950s-60s effort at forging ties with China. His work has brought to light previously unexplored aspects of these complex relationships, and will inspire debate for years to come about the fundamental reasons these relationships were so fraught, difficult, and ultimately ill-fated.

This is a book about the years of Sino-Soviet bloc cooperation starting from the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 to the spectacular deterioration of relations during the mid-1960s. The focus of the author's interest is not diplomatic history, but the everyday practice of cooperation, especially the activities of Soviet advisers and specialists in China. Jersild goes beyond Sino-Soviet relations and broadens the scope of his study by including the European side of the Soviet alliance system as well. His sources are from Moscow, Beijing, Berlin and Prague, but he also reviews documents on Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia. He makes use of documents prepared by the practitioners of relations, including advisers, specialists and diplomats. By focusing on lower-level exchanges, Jersild highlights the "emerging tensions and frustrations that made cooperation unlikely over the longer term, and explains basic impediments to the "friendship" beyond changing strategic calculations, ideological disputes, or personality conflicts between [Soviet leader Nikita] Khrushchev and [Chinese Chairman] Mao [Zedong]" (16-17).

Illustrating his story with several vivid examples, Jersild describes the development, operation and ultimate failure of the Soviet advisory system in China. The practice of 'komandirovka,' or temporary assignments of political advisers and technical specialists to the 'fraternal' states, was propagated by the Soviets as part of their 'selfless' internationalist assistance to their allies. For the Chinese, however, the Soviet presence recalled memories from the 'century of humiliation' when the foreign presence was the result of unequal treaties between China and the major imperialist powers. Accordingly, Jersild studies his subject as a form of expression of internationalism and also as an episode of cooperation taking place under unequal condition between China and a foreign power.

In fact, a comparison of Soviet economic penetration in China and in Eastern Europe could have further broadened the picture and strengthened Jersild's argument about Soviet imperialism. In Hungary, for example, where, according to Hungarian historian László Borhi, total Soviet domination was first achieved in the economic sphere, "the Soviet Union used drastic and very rapid economic penetration during its occupation of Hungary to destroy the economic pillars of Hungarian independence and, consequently, to further Hungary's subjugation." Borhi concludes that "at least in the beginning of the Cold War, the Hungarian economy was rigged to serve the needs of the Soviet economy."¹

The book consists of two parts that complement each other yet can be characterized in many respects by opposing processes. In Part 1, Jersild deals with the establishment and operation of the Soviet advisory system in China during the period when the declared Chinese intention was to "learn from the Soviet Union." Part 2 continues with the years of more explicit articulation of Chinese sovereign political ambitions, which, in turn, led to the

¹ László G. Borhi, "The Merchants of the Kremlin: The Economic Roots of Soviet Expansion in Hungary", Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, *Cold War International History Project*, 2006, Working Paper No. 28, 6-7.

Sino-Soviet split. Since the author considers Mao's two visits to Moscow (December 1949–February 1950 and November 1957) as the beginnings of two significantly different phases of relations, the two trips frame the organization of the book.

I have two reservations regarding this method. First, Jersild barely makes mention of Mao's two Moscow trips. But taking into consideration my second reservation, that neither of the two visits constituted a turning point in the history of Sino-Soviet relations, it is no wonder that the author does not find it necessary to dwell into the details or address the significance of the trips. Although the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance was signed during Mao's visit in Moscow in February 14, 1950, the visit did not boost bilateral ties or strengthen mutual trust between the two supreme leaders. Mao announced his policy of 'leaning to one side' in June 1949, and the first group of 220 Soviet specialists arrived in China in August, that is, before the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). After the visit, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin remained suspicious of Mao and Mao resented the way he had been treated by Stalin. Similarly, Mao's second visit to Moscow and his participation at the meeting of the representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties in November 1957, where the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman played a vital role at the preparatory stage and during the conference, did not signify the beginning of open confrontation between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the CCP either. According to Shen Zihua and Xia Yafeng, "the Sino-Soviet alliance reached its peak at the end of 1957, with the conference as a prime example of Sino-Soviet collaboration."² It was the subsequent difference in the Soviet and Chinese interpretations of the declaration adopted at the meeting, which, in turn, was part of Mao's challenge of the CPSU's leadership role in the Socialist bloc, that added to the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations.

In Part 1 of the book, Mao's first Moscow visit is not mentioned at all. It starts with a chapter on "Proletarian Internationalism in Practice," which "explores the messy and contested business of adviser pay and behavior, Soviet ministerial practices, disputes over contracts, and related matters in China" (27). Chapter 2 turns to 'Central Europe' (I will return to the problem of using this phrase later in this review) and explores the problems within the Soviet bloc arising from the technological and economic advantage of the European Soviet satellites over the Soviet Union.

Chapter 3 addresses the complications stemming from the application of the traditional Chinese theory of 'ti-yong' (体用 – 'essence' and 'usefulness') to the PRC's relations with the Soviet bloc. According to this theory, the Chinese should only learn those elements of foreign cultures that are useful for China's modernization, but should not let the 'essence' of Chinese culture be contaminated by foreign ideas. This rather eclectic chapter highlights four aspects of this dilemma, reflected in the seemingly loose relationship between its title ("Interpreting the Red Poppy"), subtitle ("Practical Learning, Spiritual Pollution"), and motto ("Czechoslovakia and East Germany are both countries with a high level of industrial

² Zihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "Hidden Currents during the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 11, Number 4, Fall 2009, 74-117.

mechanization”). The first section deals with Sino-Czechoslovak and Sino-German Democratic Republic (GDR) economic and political relations. Jersild argues that “the Chinese felt they had found a perfect ally in Czechoslovakia, economically advanced yet politically safe” (84), and the GDR was an important point of reference for the Beijing leadership in its struggle for reunification. This is followed by two sections on controversies within the cultural domain, which arose as a result of “contrasting Soviet and Chinese notions of European culture and its historic relationship to imperialism” (88). The next section involves a love affair between a married Czechoslovak engineer and a Chinese accountant who had two children and a husband. The affair led to a diplomatic imbroglio as the deceived husband submitted a formal complaint to the Czechoslovak embassy in Beijing. But Jersild’s claim that “the Havlíček case threatened to damage Chinese relations with the rest of the socialist bloc” (101) seems to be a bit exaggerated. In late 1957, both sides were interested in solving the matter quietly. When the basic Chinese attitude toward technological cooperation with the Soviet bloc was positive, and that was the case at the time of Mao’s second visit to Moscow, Chinese officials would rather blame themselves and the deceiving woman than the foreign specialist to avoid a major disruption in matters considered to be ‘useful’ to the modernization of Chinese industry. Finally, in the last section, Jersild uses a Czechoslovak army cultural group’s 1952 tour of China as an example to make a general observation about the “ethical lapses that were routine in the Soviet Union and throughout the bloc” (104).

In contrast to Part 1, which is dominated by the economic, cultural and even personal aspects of relations, Part 2 deals with issues more directly political in nature. Chapter 4 discusses Chinese reactions to the political developments in the Soviet Union and throughout the bloc in 1956, and the growing Chinese influence in Eastern Europe after the Polish and Hungarian events of that year. (This is the chapter where Mao’s 1957 visit to Moscow is mentioned for the first time, on page 126.) Jersild tells the story of how Mao attempted “to situate himself as the chief and most useful interpreter of Stalin and his era” (112) after the 1956 Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the de-Stalinization campaign that followed, and how Chinese cadres by the end of the year felt confirmed about “the legitimacy of their views and the importance of their own ‘experience’” (113).

The year 1956 played a crucial role in China’s relations with the Soviet bloc in general and with the Soviet Union in particular. The first serious differences between Beijing and Moscow started to surface after Khrushchev’s secret speech at the Twentieth CPSU congress in late February. Also, China played a significant role in the consolidation of the Kádár government’s position in Hungary after November 4. The traditional Soviet superiority also suffered a blow when the Soviet leadership turned to the Chinese for help in stabilizing the situation in Hungary. However, in my opinion the real turning point in the Chinese attitude toward Sino-Soviet relations was Stalin’s death in March 1953. In Frank Dikötter’s words, “Stalin’s death was Mao’s liberation.”³ The emerging leadership vacuum in the international communist movement, and the PRC’s capacity for revolutionizing the

³ Frank Dikötter: *The Tragedy of Liberation*. (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013). 227.

worldwide process of decolonization “greatly enhanced Mao’s belief in that Beijing was the only qualified candidate for the top leadership role in the world revolution.”⁴ In 1949, the Chinese revolution was labeled as ‘new democratic’ by the CCP. This new concept had been introduced by Mao in the early 1940s, and was used to define the Chinese road of development until 1953. As the Hungarian political scientist Barna Tálás argues, in this Chinese concept “it is not difficult to recognize the intention of demarcation from the Soviet road and the Stalinist model of socialist revolution and socialist construction; in a sense, it may also be conceived as a refutation of the latter as a model of general validity.”⁵ Not long after Stalin’s death, Mao revised and discarded this concept and started to speak about ‘socialist construction.’ He wished to reach communism ahead of the Soviet Union, with the final aim to achieve centrality for China and to accomplish his dream of becoming the supreme leader of the international communist movement. The developments in 1956 in Moscow, Poznań, or Budapest, despite their obvious importance for Eastern Europe as well as for China, served only as major milestones on China’s imagined road to centrality and leadership.

Chapter 5, entitled “The Socialist Bloc Comes to Its Senses,” reviews the Soviet and Eastern European responses to the Great Leap Forward. Again, Jersild discusses a broad range of controversies resulting from differing Soviet and Chinese views concerning the speed and method of the transition to communism. He starts with an overview of the socialist states’ pursuit of an independent posture, focusing on Yugoslavia and the Chinese fears of Soviet allegations that Mao could become an Asian Tito. Two sections then address the consequences of the Great Leap Forward for industrial collaboration, including the changing Soviet attitude toward the transfer of nuclear technology to China. The last section is about the growing tension between Chinese cultural radicalism and Soviet bloc attempts to popularize European high culture traditions in the early 1960s.

In chapter 6, the author sets his sights on the consequences of the Chinese views of Soviet ‘revisionism.’ In this chapter, he first outlines the development of the theoretical framework of Chinese ambitions to become the leader of the international communist movement. This is followed by a section of two pages about the emerging rivalry between the PRC and the GDR in the ‘third world’ countries of Asia and Africa in the early 1960s. Then we return to 1960, and the withdrawal of Soviet advisers and specialists from China. The next section concerns the Chinese realization that they could not win over the closest allies of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent intensification of Beijing’s policy of differentiation toward the Soviet bloc. Jersild claims that “by the end of the decade bloc officials would refer to this Chinese tactic as one of ‘differentiation’” (165). To my knowledge, bloc diplomats and foreign policy officials realized the Chinese tactics of

⁴ Chen Jian, “Bridging Revolution and Decolonization: The “Bandung Discourse” in China’s Early Cold War Experience,” in *The Chinese Historical Review*, Volume 15, Number 2 (Fall 2008), 231.

⁵ Barna Tálás, *Economic Reforms and Political Reform Attempts in China, 1979-1989*. (Berlin-Heidelberg: Springer, 1991) 16.

differentiation as early as in 1960. The first Hungarian report on Chinese ‘differentiation’ is dated 14 February 1961.⁶

Quoting from Chinese embassy reports, Jersild illustrates the Chinese efforts to distinguish between the ‘good’ Soviet people who were supportive of China and the ‘bad’ leadership which embarked on the road of ‘revisionism.’ His conclusion is that the Chinese hope to attract the Soviet and East European citizens to China’s side were the product of “continuing Chinese confusion and misunderstanding about the evolution of the Soviet political system” (176). Let me note that there is a methodological problem with the study of Embassy reports which describe the atmosphere in society. Influencing the social mood in the host country by propagating the Chinese political line was one of the main tasks of the PRC’s foreign missions. Therefore their reports should be studied with caution, as the reporters may have distorted reality to please their bosses by exaggerating the scale of opposition to the local leadership and the support for China.

The last chapter is an excellent case study of the Chinese “ability to transform and remake foreign institutions to serve Chinese needs and concerns” (177). The original Soviet idea behind organizing friendship societies was to promote the Russian language and culture and to popularize the Soviet experience of socialist construction. By the early 1960s, however, the Chinese turned the organization into a platform to propagate the Chinese official line in issues that featured in Sino-Soviet controversies. The chapter examines the circumstances of the establishment of Sino-Soviet Friendship Society as a countrywide organization in 1949 and the failure of the journal *SuZhong Youhao* (*Soviet-Chinese Friendship*), a journal published in the Soviet Union in Russian and translated into Chinese for distribution in China. From its first publication in 1957, the journal served as a propaganda vehicle for the Soviet leadership. But when Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated to new lows after the ‘ideological’ debate went public and the Soviet specialists were withdrawn, it was shut down in September 1960.

When the Chinese were hostile toward the Soviet Union and its allies, they seized any opportunity to escalate tensions. Under such circumstances, friendship society exchanges, including mutual visits, were increasingly viewed by the Chinese as opportunities to confront the Soviets and propagate their own views concerning the disputed questions. In the early 1960s, communication between the two sides gradually diminished and by the middle of the decade ceased to exist.

Jersild does not connect the end of his story to a certain historical event. Instead, he highlights several aspects of the conflicts inherent in Sino-Soviet relations. After all, he argues, the fundamental contradiction that defined the outcome of Sino-Soviet alliance lay in the irreconcilable differences between Soviet imperialism and China’s struggle for sovereignty and the eventual restoration of traditional centrality and leadership.

⁶ Hungarian Ambassador Ferenc Martin’s letter to Foreign Minister Endre Sík. Beijing, 14 February 1961. Hungarian National Archives (HNA) M-KS-288/32/14/1961.

The author uses the formula ‘advisers and diplomats’ throughout the text, where the word ‘advisers’ refers to all foreign political or military advisers, experts, and technical specialists working in China. At some places he distinguishes between “advisers, experts, managers, and party officials” (31), but elsewhere uses the phrases “highly trained Soviet specialists” and “visiting advisers” interchangeably (54).

The explanation of the difference between political advisers (顾问 *guwen* in Chinese) and experts/specialists (专家 *zhuanjia*) as well as a comparison of the Soviet advisory experience in China to that in Europe would have contributed to the goal of writing the ‘international history’ of the Sino-Soviet alliance. To my knowledge, only the Soviet Union sent political advisers to China who worked primarily at the highest levels of administration and made proposals of theoretical significance. The other Soviet bloc countries delegated only specialists: engineers, technicians, mechanics, teachers and instructors to factories, machine stations, research institutions, and schools. They were directly involved in the daily work of transferring their expertise and experience to China.

In my opinion, Jersild attributes too much influence on Sino-Soviet relations to the European Soviet satellites. He claims that the Czechoslovaks, East Germans, Poles, and Hungarians “were central to the evolution of the Sino-Soviet relationship” because “the Chinese and the Central Europeans had the confidence and the ability to maintain fairly autonomous relations through the 1950s and even the early 1960s” (220). In my view, the East European participation gave some color to Sino-Soviet relations, but it definitely did not have a significant impact on Sino-Soviet relations. Although the Chinese and the East Europeans “communicated frankly with each other” (220) during the period of fraternal friendship, East-European relations with China were based on the unquestionable reality that the Socialist bloc had but one center and that was Moscow. When the Chinese opposed the Soviets openly, and Mao wanted to prove their own superiority and ideological purity, the closest European allies of the Soviet Union could not do anything but line up behind Moscow’s leadership. As József Marjai, a former Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary put it, they had to realize that it was the Soviet Union that stationed military forces in their countries and not vice versa.⁷

Also, the role played by East European experts in China was minor compared to the Soviet Union. According to Chinese statistics, between 1949 and the end of 1958, China received 11,527 experts from the Soviet bloc. 89 percent of them, or 10,260 persons came from the Soviet Union, and the remaining 11 percent from the rest of the socialist camp. Moreover, the number of Soviet military advisers and specialists also totaled over 10,000 persons. According to Shen Zihua, the total number of those advisers and experts who returned to the Soviet Union after the withdrawal of all Soviet advisers and specialists is around 1400.⁸

⁷ Reviewer’s interview with József Marjai, Budapest, April 28, 2009.

⁸ Shen Zihua, *Sulian zhuanjia zai Zhongguo (1948-1960)* [Soviet Specialists in China] (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guangbo chubanshe, 2003), 407-409.

Czechoslovak and East-German technological superiority in certain fields notwithstanding, the role of the East-European Soviet satellites is significantly smaller than the Soviet Union's presence and influence.

Jersild refers to the European socialist states as 'Central Europeans.' In my opinion, the phrase Eastern Europe or East Central Europe would have been a better choice to denote the region, its countries, and peoples. Eastern Europe is a geopolitical term which has been widely used in Europe as well as in the United States. In Russian publications the region is called Eastern Europe (Vostochnaya Evropa) and in Chinese publications Eastern Europe (东欧 DongOu) or Central and Eastern Europe (中东欧 ZhongDongOu). During the Cold War, Eastern Europe as a political construct included all of the European socialist states outside the Soviet Union: the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania. To call the region Central Europe has its roots in interwar political literature and has been debated ever since. The phrase identifies the region primarily in cultural (and partly religious) terms, although a single Central European identity has never existed. Also, as many Soviet politicians, advisers, and experts were not ethnic Russians, it would have been more fortunate to identify Soviet citizens as 'Soviets' instead of 'Russians,' all the more so as the author writes about 'Czechoslovaks.'

There are some orthographical mistakes, especially in the case of Hungarian names, that could have been avoided with more philological accuracy. Ezhef Sall is József Száll, who was not Hungarian Ambassador, but *Chargé d'affaires* in December 1956 (119, 121). Similarly, Borna Tálás is Barna Tálás (98), István Shubik is István Subik (121), László Vatsi is László Váczi (121), Nevai László is László Névai (128), and Ferenc Fabian is Ferenc Fábíán (165). The Polish ambassador's family name was not Kiryliuk but Kiryluk (122), and the correct spelling of the North Korean Ambassador's name is not Li En Kho, but Ri Yeong-ho or Yi Yong-ho (122). Most of these errors originate from the fact that the author found these Hungarian, Polish, and Korean names in Czechoslovak or Soviet documents, and endorsed the wrong spelling of his sources. Other minor inaccuracies include: the Lüshan Plenum in 1959 took place at Lushan (136), Hu Jibang was not a man but a woman (114), and the Soviet "foreign affairs official Anastas Gromyko" (60) was Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko (correctly mentioned in the Index as Andrei.) Furthermore, more careful editing could have prevented hyphenation or spelling mistakes such as Yang Hansh-eng (190, correctly Yang Han-sheng) or gongzhanzhuyi (192, correctly gongchanzhuyi).

Nevertheless, this book is a welcome contribution to the study of Sino-Soviet bloc relations. Jersild carried out meticulous archival research and has published a book based on some valuable material on the everyday practices of Sino-Soviet bloc cooperation.

Review by Dandan Zhu, Associate Professor, China Foreign Affairs University
Translated for H-Diplo by Steven Levine, University of Montana

“The Soviet Union, the Soviet Bloc, and China: Studying the Sino-Soviet Alliance from a New Perspective”

Following the end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the disappearance of the Soviet bloc, the archives of what were then the major socialist countries, including all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and even China, have gradually been declassified. On this multi-archival foundation, scholars have conducted rather extensive and careful studies regarding intra-socialist bloc relations, Chinese-Soviet relations, and other questions and have published many results. How to impart new meaning to the ‘old’ topic of the Chinese-Soviet alliance, which everyone is interested in, is a question that must be continuously explored in the history of international relations. In his book Austin Jersild clearly shows that if one simply employs the concept of ‘Chinese-Soviet relations’ it is impossible to accurately reflect the pluralism and complexity of the “Great Friendship” inside the socialist bloc.¹ In Jersild’s view, in studying the history of socialist bloc relations, one must transcend the framework of state and inter-state relations and study the internal history of the bloc from the perspective of the socialist camp and the countries of the Soviet-Eastern bloc, from different levels and angles, and from the connections and mutual influences among the principal actors.² Just like the saying, “the mountain looks different depending on one’s vantage point,”³ the transnational perspective of study and a certain comparative cultural and psychological analysis are the key elements in Jersild’s work that opens up new ground.⁴

¹ The Sino-Soviet alliance, presumably a product of a mutually shared relationship to that tradition, saw its numerous claims about novelty and the future shaped by tensions and trends familiar to histories of the region. That region was enormous of course, demanding an international history that includes attention even to the role of Central Europeans. The very term ‘Sino-Soviet relations,’ referring to an important field in international relations history, inadequately describes the dimensions and complexities of the “Great Friendship.” See 208.

² For example, as Jersild writes, “International history should be more than a reminder of the dangers of the study of foreign policy as yet another exercise in ‘nation-centered’ exceptionalism, or an argument about the close connection between domestic and foreign policy.....The usefulness of the study of international history, however, is its promise of complicating the very history of topics and issues that we thought were well understood” (20); International history enhances our understanding of domestic topics too often studied in isolation. In the study of Russian and Eastern European history, current work on transnational influences, institutions, and experiences is simultaneously the revival and rethinking of what was once called Soviet foreign policy” (21).

³ Translator’s note: This is a free translation from the Chinese.

⁴ For example, “The bloc itself was a transnational community that complicated the making of the foreign policy of any particular state, and even proclaimed the end of traditional forms of ‘foreign policy’...Significant policies and innovations traditionally understood to make up the history of the Soviet Union and Soviet foreign policy cannot be studied without attention to the broader dimensions of a socialist bloc which importantly included China” (21).

Chinese Communist Party Leader Mao Zedong's two trips to the Soviet Union are the main thread of *The Sino-Soviet Alliance*, which emphasizes study of the elements of trans-regional and transnational politics, and cultural and psychological differences within the Sino-Soviet alliance from its formation to its collapse. By comparing and analyzing archival materials regarding the experiences of specialists and diplomats sent by the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc socialist countries to China from cultural and psychological perspectives, the author presents the reader with an examination of the problems inside the bloc, which transcended the Europe-Asia divide, from beginning to end.⁵ Using concrete case studies of the aid sent to China by the Soviet Union and the Soviet East bloc, the book reveals the socialist bloc's pecking order in which the Soviet Union (the Soviet communists) were on top, as well as the bloc's Eurocentric political cultural prejudices. The special operating mechanism and the atmosphere within the bloc meant that from the very inception of the Sino-Soviet alliance, relations between the Soviet Union and China and between the Soviet bloc countries and China were marked by many kinds of inequality. Even though Soviet and Soviet bloc aid to China was devised and carried out under the slogans and goals of "communism" and "internationalism," in practice, both the Soviet and Soviet bloc specialists and diplomats were unable to completely escape the influence of the notion of European cultural superiority and were likewise unable to truly understand and respect "backward" China.⁶

With regard to the Chinese side, during the early period after the founding of the People's Republic of China, no matter how the Chinese communists emphasized independence and self-initiative and strove for equality, they had to resolve the questions of state- and nation-building. According to past studies, Chinese communist central authorities expended a lot of effort in coordinating China's domestic line and policies with the Soviets. Among the key goals was that of gradually dispelling Soviet party leader Joseph Stalin's doubts regarding the Chinese Communists, expeditiously acquiring Soviet experience in socialist construction from the very beginning, and achieving the status and position in the international communist movement that China deserved. The background to the ideas and decisions expressed in the policies of 'leaning to one side' that Chinese Communist leaders proclaimed on their own initiative, of swiftly following in the footsteps of the Soviet Union, and the general line of transition to socialism which Mao Zedong proposed less than three years after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), was the desire to strengthen support for the ideals and concept of world revolution. It is worth noting that although the top Chinese Communist leaders actively sought to close ranks with the Soviet Union both before and after the founding of the PRC, and secure support and assistance from Moscow as soon as possible, at the same time they showed great interest in the

⁵ See three chapters of part 1, describing the socialist bloc's advisory relationship to China, with attention to its tensions, contradictions, and transnational character. As the author notes, "the tensions and calculations evident even in the 'honeymoon' of the relationship offer insight into the limitations of 'proletarian internationalism'" (21).

⁶ For author's summary and evaluation of the *Komandirovka* system and of the kul'turnost' culture, see 209 and 211.

developmental experience of the East European and Southeast European people's democracies. To a certain degree this reflected the Chinese Communists' wish not to be controlled by a great power and to choose for themselves which models to emulate. Moreover, the emphasis Chinese Communist leaders placed upon the political line and other work of the East European people's democracies also embodied a notion of simple equality. Even though the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was a large party and the Soviet Union had already entered the socialist stage, the path upon which the other countries had entered and the experience they had accumulated were also worthy of serious attention.

To a significant degree the source of the Communist leaders' demand for equality derived from their beliefs and aspirations for the future. Regrettably, the subsequent establishment and development of the Soviet bloc was much more complicated and tortuous than the Chinese Communists had envisioned. Mutual assistance among all the parties and all the countries and cooperative efforts between East and West to expand the revolution did not take place. Stalin carefully drew a line of division between Europe and the Far East. In terms of politics and responsibility for revolution, he placed New China outside of the Soviet bloc. He arranged for Mao Zedong to take responsibility for work in the East and in the colonial and semi-colonial world. At least two consequences flowed from this action. First, in the eyes of Mao Zedong and other Chinese Communist leaders, Stalin's division of labor demonstrated the Soviet Union's inadequate appreciation of the importance of the Chinese revolution as well as its great-power chauvinist attitude of unequal treatment vis-a-vis the Chinese Communist Party. This foreshadowed developments in the second half of the 1950s when Chinese Communist leaders responded vigorously to the Soviet Communist leaders' campaign of 'de-Stalinization,' revised their policies toward the Soviet Union and the Soviet bloc, mobilized society to oppose great-power chauvinism, and laid stress on independence and self-reliance.

Second, throughout the first part of the 1950s (1949-1954), high-level political contacts between the Chinese Communists and the Communist parties of the Soviet bloc were obviously limited. Because of this, relations between China and Soviet bloc countries were likewise very limited. This meant that China's socialist development model was limited to a single source, namely, Soviet experience and the Stalinist model. At the same time, this meant that China was unable to make earlier contact with the European world via the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. By the same token, the Central and Eastern European countries also had very limited understanding of China. This situation impacted historical reality; on the one hand, under the leadership of the Chinese Communists, New China pursued independence and self-initiative and opposed great-power domination; on the other hand, within this narrow international field of vision, following the Soviet path of development, it pledged to contribute to the world revolution. It was very difficult to avoid a contradiction between these two special values which were subsequently embodied in the formulation of policy.⁷ The author does not discuss the period surrounding the

⁷ For the author's discussion of the Chinese eagerness for Soviet aid, and industrial and technological achievements across the Socialist world, see 24-215; for the reviewer's research on the CCP leadership's intentions and plans to learn political patterns and economic plans from the Central Eastern European

establishment of the Sino-Soviet alliance, the relations among China, the Soviet Union and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (or, better, the relations among the Chinese Communists, the communist parties of Central and Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Communists) and their mutual influence, but this period of history is extremely important in understanding Sino-Soviet alliance relations in the latter 1950s and 1960s, and the development and evolution of the situation within the socialist bloc.

How did the Sino-Soviet alliance fall apart in the latter part of the 1950s? What were the major elements? Regarding this question most studies focus on discussing Sino-Soviet relations or Chinese and Soviet foreign policies; however, there are some fresh studies that adopt a three-sided approach, putting together Soviet, Chinese, and the Soviet bloc countries to present a comprehensive comparative analysis. Jersild emphasizes the latter in studying the disintegration of the Sino-Soviet alliance. One cannot restrict oneself to Sino-Soviet relations or a single country's domestic politics and foreign policy. The question of the Sino-Soviet alliance is trans-regional and transnational, therefore one must use a multi-dimensional angle of vision and comprehensive analytic method to understand and explicate it, one that transcends bilateral relations or the analysis of an individual country's foreign policy and write 'An International History.' Using 'Russian imperialism,' 'Chinese ambition,' and 'Central European pragmatism' as the key terms, and focusing on the period starting from the mid- and late-1950s, post-1957 in particular, the book under review expounds and analyzes how these three concepts gradually gave rise to splits in positions and ideals regarding macro-level development strategy, security requirements, and other areas from the three angles of vision of the Soviet Union, China, and the Soviet bloc countries, and how, given the inability to achieve compromise solutions to these differences, the antagonistic sentiments (for example, frustration and betrayal) of the Soviet Union, the Soviet-bloc countries, and China gradually deepened, finally eventuating in the severance of relations.

In fact, the establishment and maintenance of any inter-state alliance or regional alliance involves questions of how to resolve trans-regional and transnational political cultural and psychological differences; why were the historical Sino-Soviet alliance relations fragile (compared, for example, to other transnational and trans-regional alliances of the same period)? In past studies, scholars generally stressed such elements as the struggle for power at the level of decision-makers, clashing interpretations of ideology, differences in national interest, and the personal characteristics of leaders. They placed particular emphasis on Mao Zedong's decisive role in Chinese domestic politics and foreign policy and, therefore, his influence on Sino-Soviet relations. In *The Sino-Soviet Alliance*, Jersild touches upon the presentation and analysis of these elements to one degree or another, but he stresses that in the study of the Sino-Soviet alliance one should not restrict oneself to the psychology of the decision-makers and to high-level politics, but one must provide critical analysis proceeding from the specific features of the alliance and the objective issues

countries, see Dandan Zhu, "Geming lixiang yu shehuizhuyi guojia guanxi 'xin yuanze' [The Revolutionary Ideals and the 'New Principles' in dealing with Socialist Countries' Relations]" *Waijiao pinlun* [Foreign Policy Review] issue 3, 2013, 36, 34-50.

arising from the actual functioning of the alliance. With regard to history, political economy, society, and culture there existed enormous differences between the members of the Sino-Soviet alliance. To make it work, an extremely complicated administrative mechanism and abundant basic-level cooperative experience were required. Yet against the backdrop of the Cold War, with regard to both systematic administrative mechanism and experience in transnational cooperation, the Soviet-led socialist camp did not possess the requisite conditions for sustaining this kind of alliance relations over the long term. By the same token, when studying the Chinese elements of the Sino-Soviet alliance relations, we cannot expound the historical logic of China's foreign policy only from the viewpoint of the policymakers while neglecting to summarize and sum up the historical limits of China's handling of this kind of alliance relations.⁸

Finally, Jersild expresses a historian's great concern for the facts. After concluding his analysis of the historical elements involved in the disintegration of the Sino-Soviet alliance, he shifts his gaze to the present, a half-century later. The socialist camp and the Soviet-East European bloc no longer exist; the Soviet-style Eastern European countries no longer exist, but the Central and Eastern European countries are still there; the great majority of them are now members of the EU, enjoy the new international status of NATO membership, and have entered the international trade system. They make full use of their own superior natural resources to pursue development. After following a tortuous path for several decades, China finally revised its development strategy, and from the mid-1980s on began to jettison Cold-War thinking, gradually abandoning the world revolution and the ideal of internationalism, and developing its economy in a realistic fashion. As for Russia, it has long since ceased being the 'Elder Brother' of the Socialist camp, but the problems left over from the Cold War and the problems of its imperial history still clearly perplex this Eurasian great power (226). The author's realistic concerns establish a solid foundation for the angle of vision and methods by which he studies history. With regard to our own lives, critically thinking about the past is actually how to influence the present (How the past continues to shape the present)⁹ and past experience and the lessons learned can help us create a better future. This, I think, is the only true value of studying history. As for the scholar of history, conscientiously and explicitly following an existing mode of thought and constructing a simple world divided between good and evil is not what is important; what is important, rather, is to comb carefully through the past to help people achieve a better understanding of the real, complex, ever-changing world in which it is difficult to distinguish between good and evil. In this kind of international history, the core concern should be to pay close attention to the facts, the subject of study should be plural, and the method of study should be interdisciplinary comprehensive analysis. To develop this kind of study is no simple matter, but Jersild has given us a good start.

⁸ See the author's explanation of the focus of his study of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 225.

⁹ Translator's note: This appears in English in the original Chinese text.

Author's Response by Austin Jersild, Old Dominion University

I was trying to do justice to several threads of inquiry in *The Sino-Soviet Alliance*. As the archives opened up in the early 1990s and wonderful new opportunities emerged to study long-inaccessible materials, I remained impressed by the tendency of scholars of foreign policy and international relations to confine themselves to the sources traditionally used by diplomatic historians, in this case the somewhat limited Politburo and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) memoranda. The early work of the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), for example, was path-breaking yet methodologically conservative. Such an approach was entirely appropriate, however, as the restrictions of the Cold War era left scholars ignorant not just of the contents of high-level discussions but even in many cases of the existence of the meetings themselves.

The field of the history of the Cold War and international relations continues to evolve, and the opportunities for research remain fascinating and rich. I was initially denied access to the MFA archive in Moscow in 2004, and instead spent many months with different archival materials in an effort to approach the topic of the Sino-Soviet alliance from other vantage points. The adviser reports that were central to my study came largely from enormous industrial and economic ministries that covered not just the entire Soviet Union but had liaison units dedicated to all the countries of the socialist bloc. Such reports intersected with and led me to other materials from institutions that had a presence in the wider bloc, such as the Friendship Society, the International Department of the Central Committee, the State Administration of Economic Ties, and so on. When I returned to Moscow in 2008-09, I was fortunate to work extensively in the MFA archive. My work illustrates the broader context to the traditional episodes of high politics, such as Chairman Mao's two trips to the Soviet Union in December-January 1949-50 and November 1957, that are now well explored by other historians of Sino-Soviet relations.¹ First, Mao arrived as a supplicant, desperately in need of bloc aid to facilitate the reconstruction of China, while subsequently he arrived as an important ally who considered his party crucial to the maintenance of bloc cohesion in the wake of the multiple traumas of 1956. I do not argue, as Peter Vamos suggests, that the November 1957 Conference "signif[ied] the beginning of open confrontation" between the two sides. The Chinese position was complex, however: the Chinese did not want to weaken Soviet authority in the global Cold War, and they were horrified by the extent of the rebellion in Hungary, but they were also in a sustained conversation with the East Central Europeans (the preferred term of Vamos) about problems such as Soviet 'great power hegemony' and even traditional Russian 'imperialism.' Chinese support for Soviet leadership of the bloc was

¹ Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "Hidden Currents during the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4 (Fall 2009), 74-117. For the translation of documents, with commentary, on the first trip, see Odd Arne Westad, "Fighting for Friendship: Mao, Stalin, and the Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950," *CWIHPB*, nos. 8-9 (Winter 1996-97), 224-36; Sergey Radchenko and David Wolff, "To the Summit via Proxy-Summits: New Evidence from Soviet and Chinese Archives on Mao's Long March to Moscow, 1949," *CWIHPB*, no. 16 (Fall 2007—Winter 2008), 105-82. The numerous digital initiatives of CWIHP are available at: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/program/cold-war-international-history-project>.

significant but “conditional,” dependent on a series of concerns that eventually contributed to the deterioration of the relationship a few years later.²

Different kinds of sources that ostensibly speak to very different matters turn out to contribute to our knowledge of important moments in the history of international relations and diplomacy. My focus on lower-level exchange contributes to our understanding of both the nature of the desperation in 1950 and the nature of China’s emerging pride and sense of importance over what they offered to the bloc by 1956-57. To go further, I find the alliance, the period of collaboration and its tensions, and the split (the marriage gone bad, to borrow a phrase from Douglas Stiffler) incomprehensible without studying the broader insights provided by numerous characters who were distant from the commanding heights of both Soviet and Chinese politics. Soviet advisers often insulted the Chinese and were utterly insensitive to Chinese concerns on this score (“the influence of the notion of European cultural superiority,” notes Dandan Zhu); their Chinese colleagues for their part “fel[t] entitled,” as Stiffler puts it, to blueprints and technological information in order to accelerate the process of Chinese economic and industrial development.

The adviser reports from industrial ministries also allow insight into the nature and functioning of the socialist bloc as a whole. Some scholars now associate these practices, experiences, and forms of transnational exchange with what they call the ‘Second World,’ distinct from both the ‘First’ and the ‘Third.’³ The Sino-Soviet relationship is difficult to divorce from the history of the broader socialist bloc. The Chinese Communist Party was now exposed to this world and part of it, and the fit was not entirely comfortable. Think of the contrast between the Czechoslovak pavilion at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair, with its explicit claims about the virtues and possibilities of consumerism under Socialism and the importance and promise of “commerce between the east and the west,” and Mao’s complaints that same year to Soviet Ambassador Pavel Iudin.⁴ Many Chinese workers, Mao warned, remained determined to obtain the “so-called ‘five good things,’” which referred to consumer goods such as bicycles, watches, sewing machines, radios, and fountain pens.⁵ The

² Austin Jersild, *The Sino-Soviet Alliance: An International History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 109-131.

³ See Michael David-Fox, “The Implications of Transnationalism,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 12, no. 4 (Fall 2011), 885-904; Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker, *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Elidor Mëhilli, “Socialist Encounters: Albania and the Transnational Eastern Bloc in the 1950s,” in Patryk Babiracki and Kenyon Zimmer, eds., *Cold War Crossings: International Travel and Exchange across the Soviet Bloc, 1940s-1960s* (College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press, 2014), 107-133; Elidor Mëhilli, “The Socialist Design: Urban Dilemmas in Postwar Europe and the Soviet Union,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Summer 2012), 635-65.

⁴ *La Tchécoslovaquie a Bruxelles*, vol. 58, no. 5, Národní archiv (National Archive, Prague) ČSOK, Folder La Tchécoslovaquie, 9, cover.

⁵ “Zapis’ besedy,” P. Iudin and Mao Zedong, March 15, 1958, Arkhiv vneshnei politiki rossiiskoi federatsii (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, Moscow) f. 0100, op. 51, p. 432, d. 6, l. 88-94.

East Central European societies were integral to the broader evolution of the Soviet Union and the Bloc as a whole, but Mao and his supporters were eager not to see the socialist world move in that direction. The adviser reports allow insight into moments of interaction between these very different societies, all incongruously part of an alliance that stretched from Berlin to Hanoi. Vamos is correct to point to the comparatively small number of East Central European advisers in China at this time, but overlooks the broader point about the role of the region in the evolution of the Bloc. The East Central Europeans were technologically advanced, the Chinese quickly became aware of this sophistication, and they were determined to use the alliance with the Soviet Union to facilitate their access to that world. Very different historical experiences, developmental strategies, and relationships to the West shaped these different regions, but I might, as both Stiffler and Vamos helpfully point out, pursue greater methodological rigor in my effort to connect the past with the present.

And finally, studying the Sino-Soviet relationship in this way allows insight into the global international history of the 1960s and 1970s. What becomes the Sino-Soviet rivalry in the Third World in the 1960s was first evident during the internal disputes within the Bloc. When the Chinese reached out to West Africans in the early 1960s, for example, they complained constantly about the arrogance and chauvinism of Soviet advisers, and Bloc plans and projects that they claimed were inappropriate for local conditions in places like Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America.⁶ Before the Sino-Soviet split and continuing through the early 1960s, the alliance and what was left of it featured rigorous debate about the nature of agrarian societies, the stages of socialist development, and the differences between East and West. The East Central Europeans were highly invested in the outcome of these debates, and preferred to look to the West, toward greater exchange with and borrowing from the United States and Europe, rather than to the East and the promotion of agrarian revolution in the undeveloped world.

I am grateful for the attention to my work from all of the reviewers, as well as the translation work of Steven Levine, and I trust the conversation will continue.

On consumerism in the socialist bloc, see Paulina Bren and Mary Neuberger, eds., *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁶ 3 December 1963, "Duer zongtong yu Ke dashi tan jinhe yu fanxiu wenti," Ke Hua, Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaobu danganguan (Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, Beijing) 108-00905-02, 97.