When the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik in October 1957, the world took notice. This scientific feat enhanced the USSR's international prestige and promised a bright future for the socialist bloc, which lagged far behind the West in economic terms. But the Eastern bloc was not a united front, and the Sputnik gave rise to jealousies – nowhere more so than in China, where Mao Zedong tried to beat the Soviets in economic development. The launch of the Sputnik thus triggered an era of economic craze in the socialist bloc, intensifying the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China.