



Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service

Frederic Wakeman

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The most feared man in China, Dai Li, was chief of Chiang Kai-shek's secret service during World War II. This sweeping biography of "China's Himmler," based on recently opened intelligence archives, traces Dai's rise from obscurity as a rural hooligan and Green Gang blood-brother to commander of the paramilitary units of the Blue Shirts and of the dreaded Military Statistics Bureau: the world's largest spy and counterespionage organization of its time.

In addition to exposing the inner workings of the secret police, whose death squads, kidnappings, torture, and omnipresent surveillance terrorized critics of the Nationalist regime, Dai Li's personal story opens a unique window on the clandestine history of China's Republican period. This study uncovers the origins of the Cold War in the interactions of Chinese and American special services operatives who cooperated with Dai Li in the resistance to the Japanese invasion in the 1930s and who laid the groundwork for an ongoing alliance against the Communists during the revolution that followed in the 1940s. Frederic Wakeman Jr. illustrates how the anti-Communist activities Dai Li led altered the balance of power within the Chinese Communist Party, setting the stage for Mao Zedong's rise to supremacy. He reveals a complex and remarkable personality that masked a dark presence in modern China—one that still pervades the secret services on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Wakeman masterfully illuminates a previously little-understood world as he discloses the details of Chinese secret service trade-craft. Anyone interested in the development of modern espionage will be intrigued by *Spymaster*, which spells out in detail the ways in which the Chinese used their own traditional methods, in addition to adapting foreign ways, to create a modern intelligence service.

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