



# Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967

*Michael Schoenhals*

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Since the end of the Cold War, the operations of secret police informers have come under the media spotlight, and it is now common knowledge that vast internal networks of spies in the Soviet Union and East Germany were directed by the Communist Party. By contrast, very little historical information has been available on the covert operations of the security services in Mao Zedong's China. However, as Michael Schoenhals reveals in this intriguing and sometimes sinister account, public security was a top priority for the founders of the People's Republic, and agents were recruited from all levels of society to provide intelligence and ferret out "counter-revolutionaries." On the basis of hitherto classified archival records, the book tells the story of a vast surveillance and control apparatus through a detailed examination of the cultivation and recruitment of agents, their training, and their operational activities across a twenty year period from 1949 to 1967. These revelations add an entirely new dimension to modern China's troubled social and political history. Although the story may be safely set in the past, the development of human sources to sustain an oppressive domestic order is nothing if not eerily relevant to students of the present.

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