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dealing with counter-espionage and counter-terrorism. The reorganization was painful because the RCMP, until 1984 combining regular police work with counter-intelligence, resented the diminution of its mandate when the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) was created as a separate agency. It was controversial because the powers given to CSIS appeared to many to threaten the rights of Canadian citizens by giving sweeping powers of investigation to the new agency.

A book which promises to tell the story behind the first six years of CSIS, therefore, is in principle a welcome contribution to a subject which goes to the heart of democratic government. Unfortunately, the actual story told by *Official Secrets* offers only brief glimpses of mainly trivial issues in the life of CSIS. Balancing the temptation to obtain a corporate hotel rate against the probability of running into all the other agencies taking advantage of hotel discounts should no doubt occupy somebody's time, but this and similar issues, such as where to park CSIS vehicles in Toronto, is unlikely to rivet the attention of either the John Le Carré fan or the reader concerned about the abuse of governmental powers.

To recognize the dilemma faced by the author, a book which focusses on CSIS' conduct of operations is certain to run straight into

for Tory caucus members to Taiwan and South Korea, only to be rewarded for his generosity with an abrupt refusal to extend his visa. A national security risk, or a risk of public scandal to the Tory hierarchy? Once CSIS invokes national security there is little or no scope for outsiders to challenge the evidence.

Cleroux attempts to base his book on a series of such exposés. The limits of his knowledge and evidence, however, suggest that short of the emergence of a bona fide deep throat in CSIS, we would be better served by analyses which do not depend on exposés. In particular, the institutional watchdog of CSIS, the Security and Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC), has signalled many issues which are only fleetingly dealt with in this book.

One of the most fundamental is the representativeness of CSIS. Would it be so easy for CSIS to blunder into special investigations of "native activism" if Canada's native communities were fairly represented in the ranks of CSIS. Would the bizarre preoccupations of the secret service with sexual behaviour continue if its members more accurately represented the accepted range of Canadian values and behaviour? And as security threats to Canada change, is CSIS sufficiently flexible in attitudes

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■ Chico Mendes did not want to die. He always said "living people achieve things – corpses, nothing." Sadly, his death proved him wrong. The murder of Chico Mendes focussed even more world attention on the Amazon rain forest and the need to protect it. World attention and powerful allies were not enough to protect Mendes from a bandit's bullet – but they did help him accomplish some of his goals, posthumously. In a powerful book that combines excellent science reporting with good storytelling, author Andrew Revkin tells us that Mendes wasn't always comfortable in the role that environmentalists cast for him, that of the Amazon's chief ecologist. Reeling under the pressure of frequent death threats, Mendes once protested that he was not trying to save the Amazon because they were the "lungs of the world," but "because there are thousands of people living here who depend on the forest – and their lives are in danger every day."

Revkin, senior editor of *Discovery* magazine, writes of the confluence of world events that brought a single man to international attention – a man who didn't start out to change the world, but did. Mendes was a *nordestino* – his grandfather moved the family from northeastern Brazil to the Amazon in 1925 to harvest rubber, hoping, like thousands of others, to better his life. Within a few decades a

s of culture evolved among the
h rubber tappers, and with it, a
is fierce loyalty to the trees and the
ecosystems they support.

Mendes received an unconventional education when in 1956 he met a Marxist who was hiding out in the Amazon to avoid persecution from Brazil's rightist rulers. Mendes went on to organize the rubber tappers for better pay, and later, fought hard to protect them and their trees from outlaw ranchers who were razing the forest at an alarming rate. Brazil's jungles began to resemble the wild west, and the ranchers might have won had it not been for the powerful allies Mendes made outside the country. They helped him convince the world that the interests of the rubber tappers, and its indigenous forest dwellers, coincide with the interests of people everywhere.

Like Mendes, Revkin fell in love with the Amazon – a wonderland where twenty percent of all bird species in the world hang out, where a single tree harbours 1,500 species of insects, and where fish actually swim among the treetops during the rainy season. These are good reasons for saving the Amazon rain forest, but there's much more. A view of the Earth from the space-shuttle *Discovery* in 1988 confirmed what scientists feared most, that the demise of the Amazon trees presaged the world's demise.

Revkin warns us that Brazil doesn't want the Amazon to become a "green Persian Gulf," protected as though a resource of the US and Europe. Instead, he suggests, international efforts must be directed towards helping Brazil's poor achieve a better standard of living, without sacrificing the Amazon in the process. That's the cause Mendes died for. – *Marie Wadden*

Ms. Wadden is a writer and broadcaster based in St. John's, Newfoundland. Her book on the Innu of Labrador will be published in 1991 by Douglas & McIntyre. □

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