

Chico Mendes (Francisco Alves Mendes Filho)

Passion or Profession: Activist

Period: 1944–1988

Mendes was born into a family of rubber tappers, and he became one himself when he was old enough. However, a sharp drop in the price of rubber led many landowners to sell to the highest bidder—often cattle ranchers who would clear the land for grazing. Seeing that this practice harmed the environment as well as the rubber industry, Mendes organized tappers, environmentalists, and Amazonian Indians against the deforestation. He was shot and killed in 1988 by people who opposed his work.

