

# Chico mendes

Life



The life of Chico Mendes. Born: December 15, 1944 Xapuri, Brazil Died: December 22, 1988 (aged 44) Xapuri, Brazil " At first I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realise I am fighting for humanity. " Chico was many things, he was a steward to this earth, a unionist, an environmental activist , a father, a husband and the list carries on. This story starts with Chico being a rubber tapper.

Following his father, he was " a seringueiro", a rubber tapper. He farmed a small clearing, but relied on the sale of rubber from several hundred native rubber trees in the rain forest itself to provide income for him and hisfamily. Chico inherited the land and the trees from his father who had begun tapping them in the 1930s. Two long v-shaped cuts made with care in the bark of each rubber tree would produce one or two cups of the rubber. Chico also collect other natural forest products, such as fruits and Brazil nuts, although this didn't make much of a difference to his income. There was approximately 100, 000 other rubber tappers living throughout the rain forest, and this is what they do as well. It is sustainable harvest which does not destroythe forest.

When Chico was a young boy, him and his father would go rubber tapping together because it was one of the very few job available. At that day and age, the rubber tappers were conned out of theirmoneyby the people who bought the rubber. Becaue of the littleeducationthey all recieved, they couldn't do basic things, like reading or writing. The man that bought the rubber would lie about how much rubber he was given and the price the rubber was worth. This was changed when Chico met a man called Wilson,

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Wilson came to the rainforest because he was told you could get rich from rubber tapping and told Chico that if he taught him how to tap rubber than in return, Wilson would educate Chico about things like, reading, writing and maths. A union was later formed by Wilson. Because of this union it helped the people get a better a education aswell as protecting their rights.

On the first speach Wilson gave, he told everyone about how if everyone sticks together, than they are stronger than if they are apart. Wilson demonstrated this by using sticks, he snapped the one that was seperated, easily but not the bundle of many sticks. Land speculators and large cattle ranching buisnesses are more interested in the short-term profit than the lively hood of all the rubber tappers so they wanted to cut and burn the rubber trees down so they could build a road and ranches, this of course was so the rich, could become richer. The didn't care for the poor. When the union found out about the plans they fought back and organised protests and speaches, the leaders of the operations didn't appreciate this and sent Wilson (who was the leader of the union at that time) a goats head, this was a death promise. Wilson and his union didn't back down though, this was the cause of Wilson's death, he was shot in the head. The leaders of the companies thought this would scare the union, it did.

The leaders of the companies thought that this would scare the union so much that Chico would back down, but instead he did the opposite, Chico lead the union from then on. Chico Mendes and the Union fought to end this destruction of the tropical rain forest. The made many political inroads, gaining influence with the public. His main enemy was Darli Alves da Silva, a cattle rancher who had begun acquiring forest land in Acre. Darli vowed that <https://assignbuster.com/chico-mendes/>

Mendes would not live out 1988. In one protest, a man thought Chico was going to be killed by a man with a chain saw, so the man stupidly stepped in front of the chainsaw and later the man had to have his arm amputated. This made the class laugh.

In many of the protest Chico told the members of the union to sit down and not fight back, because if they fought back, their enemies would say it was "self defence" when they harmed the innocent union members. The man that was buying the forest for ranches, ambushed the union and shot a boy dead, putting 9 bullets in his body. Chico later ran for governor, his wife did not approve and she begged Chico not to draw attention to himself. Chico didn't get enough votes to become governor and his opponent was giving away free chainsaws which made Chico lose some votes from his once loyal friends. When Chico was already a father to one child, his daughter. His wife once again became pregnant to two boys, sadly only one of his sons survived, the other passed away. When Chico went to Miami, he became more well known, which showed people about how the companies wanted to exploit the rainforest.

Because Chico was becoming a threat to the companies plans, people came to negotiate what was going to happen," For a negotiation, there needs to be a give, and a take. " Explained one of the men. " Fine, give us back our land, and take away the chainsaws. " Replied Chico as he laughed at his own joke. The men, after a lot of negotiating decided that the land would be reserved for the rubber tappers and each generation off them. When the negotiation was over, Darli and his family were chased off the land. Darli, obviously he

was angry about this and supposedly sent Chico a death threat, once again, it came in the form of a goat's head.

Chico, his wife, and two policemen assigned to guard him were playing cards at his home on December 22, 1988. Chico stepped outside for a moment and was killed by a shotgun blast to the chest from a waiting assassin. The local police claimed no clues or suspects in the case, but local and international protests forced the Brazilian government to enter the investigation. Evidence led them to the ranch of Darli da Silva. In the summer of 1989 indictments for murder were handed down to Darli da Silva, his son Darci Pereira da Silva, and Jerdeir Pereira, one of da Silva's ranch hands. Testimony indicated that Darli ordered the murder and that Darci supervised as Jerdeir carried out the plot. There is evidence that other prominent ranchers may have been involved in the plot, and they are currently under investigation.