



Walking the Forest with Chico Mendes: Struggle for Justice in the Amazon

Gomercindo Rodrigues

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A close associate of Chico Mendes, Gomercindo Rodrigues witnessed the struggle between Brazil's rubber tappers and local ranchers—a struggle that led to the murder of Mendes. Rodrigues's memoir of his years with Mendes has never before been translated into English from the Portuguese. Now, *Walking the Forest with Chico Mendes* makes this important work available to new audiences, capturing the events and trends that shaped the lives of both men and the fragile system of public security and justice within which they lived and worked.

In a rare primary account of the celebrated labor organizer, Rodrigues chronicles Mendes's innovative proposals as the Amazon faced wholesale deforestation. As a labor unionist and an environmentalist, Mendes believed that rain forests could be preserved without ruining the lives of workers, and that destroying forests to make way for cattle pastures threatened humanity in the long run. *Walking the Forest with Chico Mendes* also brings to light the unexplained and uninvestigated events surrounding Mendes's murder.

Although many historians have written about the plantation systems of nineteenth-century Brazil, few eyewitnesses have captured the rich rural history of the twentieth century with such an intricate knowledge of history and folklore as Rodrigues.

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