

# BUYING MAHOGANY IS CRIMINAL

Buying a mahogany wood product? You could be abetting murder.

The majority of Latin American mahogany exported from Brazil and Bolivia originates **ILLEGALLY** from indigenous peoples' and conservation areas. **Your purchase of mahogany drives this criminal activity** and tells the loggers that the U.S. public will buy mahogany no matter the cost to the tropical forest ecosystem or its peoples. Not only does your demand for mahogany encourage the loggers, but in the worst cases it abets murder. **In many cases, loggers have killed Indians who threatened their operations.** The Korubo, Flecheiros, Tikuna, Awá-guajá, Zoró, Mura-Praha, Guaporé and Uru Eu Wau have all had people die at the hand of the loggers.

**The demand for mahogany and other tropical wood drives forest destruction and illegal intrusions on indigenous people's land.** In Brazil these lands are protected under the Constitution which says: "The lands traditionally occupied by the Indians are set aside for their permanent possession, leaving to them the exclusive use of the riches from the soil, the rivers and the lakes existing in them." **This law is broken by greedy loggers who justify the invasion of indigenous lands by the high price paid for mahogany.**

Because of rampant illegal logging, encroachment on indigenous land and conservation areas, **Greenpeace calls for a moratorium on mahogany logging and trade, including imports to the U.S.**



**GREENPEACE**



## ENDANGERED

Genuine mahoganies are trees of the genus *Swietenia*, and are native to the American tropics. Mahogany imports are now almost entirely in "big-leaf" mahogany, *Swietenia macrophylla*; other species have already been heavily depleted. Most mahogany now comes from the Amazon—Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, and Central America—Honduras, Belize, Guatemala and Costa Rica.

Mahogany extraction, like logging in general, causes extreme degradation to the tropical forest. **For every one mahogany tree cut at least 25 other trees are damaged.** The continued mining of the best mahogany trees over many years has resulted in a scarcity of mahogany in commercially available areas, so loggers now invade protected areas. Mahogany trees are sporadically dispersed throughout the forest, making it necessary for loggers to create a maze of roads. In the Brazilian state of Para this road network amounts to 4500 miles. Logging roads allow farmers, ranchers and land speculators to gain access to previously inaccessible forest which is then cleared for food crops and cattle ranching.

**The ecological damage caused by current logging methods prohibits mahogany from naturally regen-**

**erating.** Attempts to reforest mahogany trees are usually unsuccessful, as the young trees are attacked by a shoot borer, thus making it more critical to protect the remaining trees.

## FOREST DEVASTATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Brazilian environmentalists have stated that timber exploitation in general, and particularly the selective logging of mahogany represents the first step in the destructive occupation of the Amazon region.

Over eighty Brazilian environmental and indigenous peoples' organizations have called for a moratorium on the logging of mahogany and other woods in the Amazon region in order to conduct an assessment of the current damage. They are trying to stop illegal timber exploitation in ecologically protected areas, indigenous territories and extractive reserves.

In Bolivia, indigenous people's land and national parks are being invaded for mahogany, in particular, the Chimanes forest in the Beni region. According to a New York Times article, the pressure to cut the Bolivian forest comes from "the almost limitless demand for the wood in the United

States..."And in Central America, the situation is the same. The Guatemalan Maya Biosphere Reserve in the Peten region is continually invaded by loggers who cut the mahogany and cedar trees and haul them into neighboring countries often with the help of local authorities.

## THE U.S. MAHOGANY CONNECTION

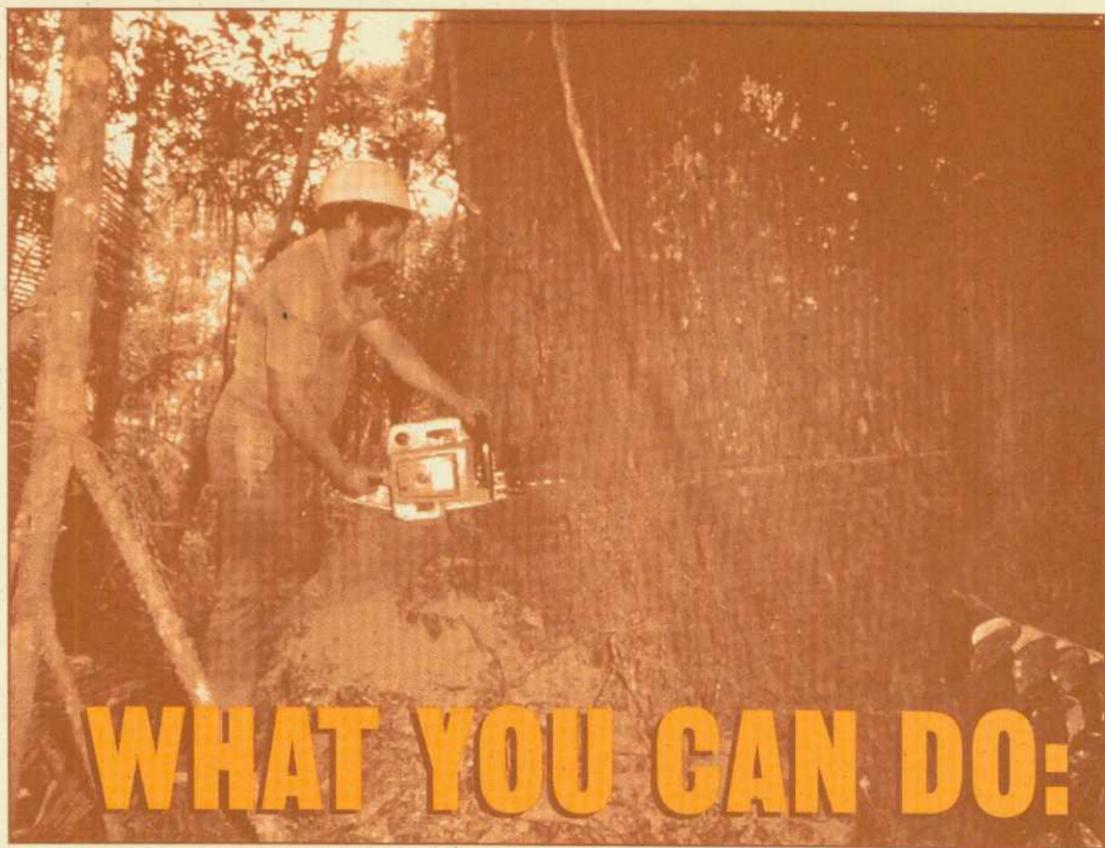
**The United States is the single largest mahogany**

**importer, followed by the United Kingdom.** From 1990 - 1992, the annual average U.S. mahogany import volume was 108,000 cubic meters representing, a little more than half of the world market. (Lee Jimerson, U.S. Mahogany Market) This amount is equivalent to 28 football fields stacked one yard high. Most of the U.S. imports are from Brazil and Bolivia, with lesser amounts from Peru and Guatemala.

**Mahogany is generally used for furniture, coffins,**

paneling, trim, windows, doors, picture frames and boat fittings. The International Hardwood Products Association (IHPA) which represents most of the U.S. tropical hardwood importers and sellers has taken no steps to curtail the import of illegally logged mahogany or other woods. Even when presented with information that U.S. companies such as Robinson Lumber import from some of the most notorious Brazilian logging companies they simply say it is the sole responsibility of the Brazilian authorities. The IHPA's complicity in this matter is typical of most companies who don't want to be accountable for the devastation that their product causes to the environment or to local peoples.

**Next time you admire the prestigious deep red luster of mahogany, think about the blood that has been shed by indigenous cultures trying to stop the loggers.** One of the only ways U.S. citizens can help protect the tropical forests and cultures who depend on these forests is by stopping our demand for tropical woods originating from ecological and culturally devastating logging.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO:

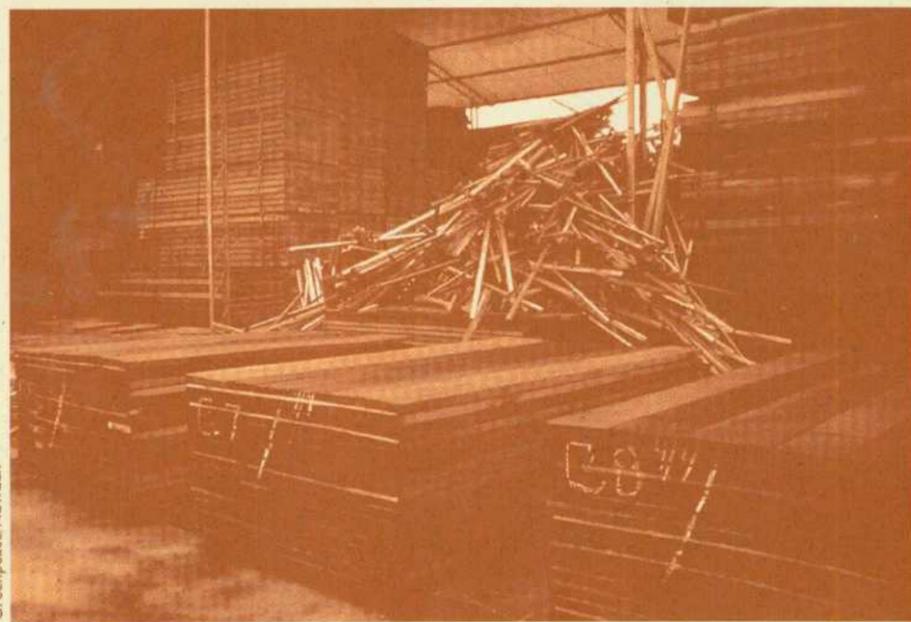
### ▶ DO NOT BUY MAHOGANY PRODUCTS

▶ **WRITE TO YOUR CONGRESSIONAL** representative asking them to pressure the Fish and Wildlife Service to propose that Latin American mahogany be listed in Appendix II of the 1994 Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and to introduce legislation that only allows the import of mahogany and other tropical woods from ecologically and socially sustainable operations.

Address: Rep. \_\_\_\_\_  
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

▶ **HELP US EDUCATE** architects, interior designers, woodworkers and furniture manufacturers in your area about mahogany and the demise of tropical forests. For more information, write: Greenpeace Tropical Forest Campaign, 139 Townsend Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

▶ **JOIN GREENPEACE.** For more information, contact:  
Greenpeace, 1436 U Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009  
Phone: (202) 462-1177, Fax: (202) 462-4507



# AN ESCALATING INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN

## NOVEMBER 1992

► In Brasilia, Greenpeace Brazil denounces the ecological and social damage caused by mahogany loggers in the southern Amazon and joins over 80 environmental and human rights organizations in presenting the manifesto, "Predatory Logging: A Threat to the Future of the Amazon."

► The manifesto calls for: an end to the building of illegal roads into primary forests; an end to logging for mahogany in protected areas (including Indian and ecological reserves); government help for native people to find alternative incomes; an end to the destructive logging of

mahogany which threatens the existence of the species, and for a suspension of all logging until the activities of the companies have been brought under control.

► Greenpeace Brazil, supported by the rural workers and the rubber tappers unions, chained themselves to machinery at the Maginco mahogany sawmill in the state of Para in Brazil. Maginco is one of the largest mahogany trading companies in the region. The action is widely covered by the media, alerting millions of people.

## DECEMBER 1992

► Due to pressure from environmentalists in the UK, B&Q, England's largest home

improvement store, suspends sales of mahogany products starting from April 1993.

## JANUARY 1993

► AIMEX, the Brazilian association of timber exporters, announced that they would expel members that continue to log or buy timber in Indian lands: NO ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN YET.

► With proof supplied by Greenpeace and a law suit filed by the Nucleus of Indigenous Rights, Brazilian Judge Selene Maria de Almeida issued a preliminary injunction ordering three logging companies (Maginco, Perachi, and Impar) to stop illegally logging in three indigenous reserves. The companies appealed against the injunction.

## JULY 1993

► A representative of the British Timber Trade Federation traveled to Brazil to convince both the Brazilian Environmental Agency (IBAMA) and the Indian Agency (FUNAI) to legalize mahogany sources that were from indigenous lands.

## AUGUST 1993

► Brazilian Federal Judge



Greenpeace/Morgan

Maria Divina Vitoria convicts a logger for illegally extracting mahogany from indigenous reserves in the state of Mato Grosso. The logger is also ordered to pay all the costs of implementing an environmental recovery plan for the area and damages incurred by the Hahaintesu Indians.

## SEPTEMBER 1993

► IBAMA confiscates 5,400 logs extracted from indigenous areas by Ferreira Madeiras e Desmatamento and C&C logging companies. IBAMA fines the companies and suspends C&C's export license. C&C attempts to get the export license back by claiming to

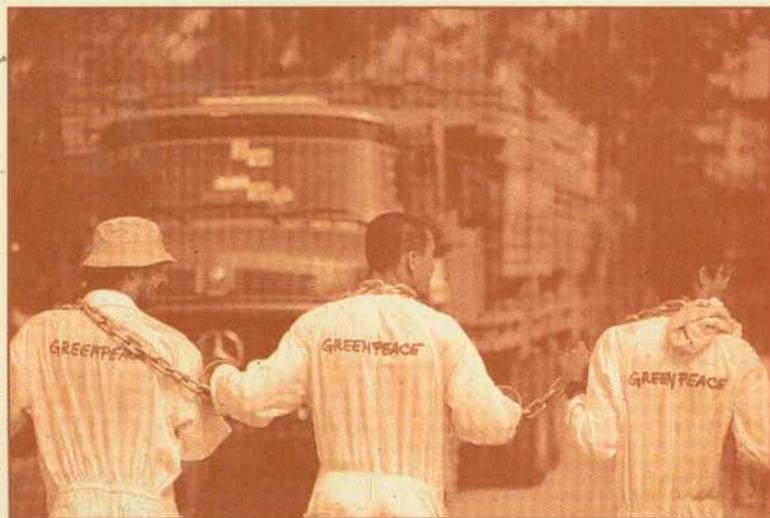
another judge that they need to fulfill orders by Dan K. Moore and Thompson Mahogany, two U.S. wood importers. Greenpeace and IBAMA present proof of C&C's illegal logging to the judge and the judge doesn't give back C&C's license.

## OCTOBER 1993

► Greenpeace Brazil occupied a shopping mall in Sao Paulo to protest the increased domestic use of mahogany.

## FEBRUARY 1994

► The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers proposing mahogany to Appendix II of the 1994 Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).



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