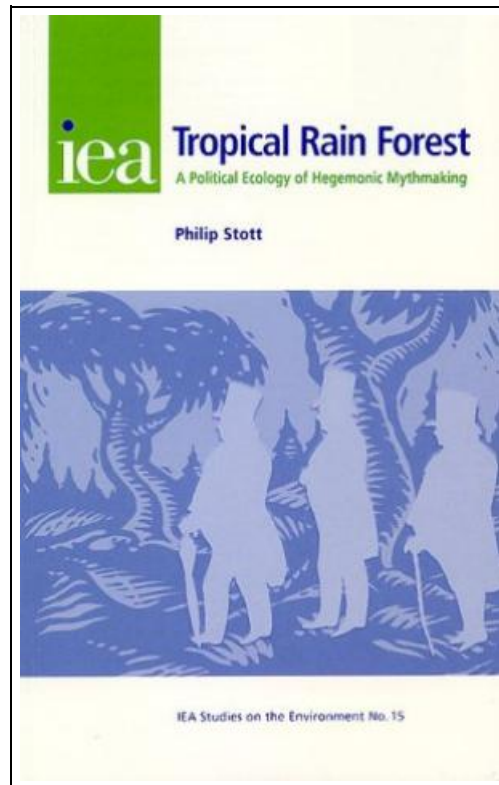


## The Tropical Rain Forest: A Political Ecology of Hegemonic Myth-Making



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Institute of Economic Affairs. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, The Tropical Rain Forest: A Political Ecology of Hegemonic Myth-Making, P. Stott, Our attachment to the tropical rain forest has grown over the past hundred years from a minority colonial pursuit to mainstream environmental obsession. The tropical rain forest has variously been assumed to be the world's most important repository of biological diversity and 'the lungs of the planet'. As Philip Stott shows in this magnificent monograph, neither claim has any basis in fact. The Northern environmentalist conception of the tropical rain forest is far removed from the ecological realities of the places it purports to denote. Most of the 'million year old forest' to which environmentalists sentimentally refer turns out to have existed for less than 20,000 years. During the last ice age the tropics were colder and drier than today and probably more closely resembled the savanna grasslands of East Africa. Most of the abundant plants and insects of the so-called tropical rain forest are equally novel, having co-evolved with the trees. Claims regarding the fragility of the ecosystems in tropical areas are similarly awry. Recent research suggests that a clear-cut area will return to forest with a similar level of biological diversity to the original within twenty years. Ironically, the mythical 'climax rain forest' would be a barren place: no new species would evolve because there would be no new environmental niches to be filled. The myth of the tropical rain forest suits the purposes of Northern environmentalists, who are able to justify demands for restrictions on the conversion of 'virgin forest' to other uses. Yet the history of the world has been one of evolutionary change. If we attempt to maintain stasis, we risk limiting our ability to adapt to change when it inevitably comes. Calls...



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