

Activists and Academia Forum – CWEH
Newsletter for University of Sussex – July 2016
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The Centre for World Environmental History (CWEH) in the University of Sussex formed the Activists and Academia Forum – CWEH in May 2013. The forum is working on contested resource extraction, effects on indigenous people and in defence of the Rights of Nature. We discussed neo-liberalism in academia in the UK and environmental art activism. The work was supported by the British Academy, the Centre for World Environmental History, the Holly Hill Trust and Foil Vedanta.

Case studies include:

- 1) Iron ore mining in the Saranda Forest, Jharkhand, India
- 2) Copper mining in Zambia, Bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri Hills in Odisha, India

Contested Realities - Adivasis in the Anthropocene - A meeting on Adivasis and mining, with a special session on the Saranda forest and a launch of Gladson's book *Mission Saranda* at University of Sussex and SOAS, took place in November 2015.

Adivasi Samelan - or: Adivasi Conference - a public meeting of over 3000 people, was held just outside Manoharpur town, to one side of Saranda Forest in Jharkhand, India on the 10th March 2016. The gathering, aiming at consolidating the movement to save the unique Saranda, the last Sal forest in south-east Asia, was organised by Adivasi Samanvay Samity (Adivasi Coordination Committee), which is leading the Save Saranda campaign. Felix Padel and Gladson Dungdung were keynote speakers.

In May 2016 Gladson Dungdung was offloaded by Air India from Delhi-London Flight on his way to speak in the CWEH forum, University of Sussex. Gladson sent this message when he was forced to leave the plane (9 May 2016):

"This morning, I was offloaded by the AirIndia from Delhi-London Flight AI 115, I was going to attend. Thereafter, I had attended couple of international conferences in Denmark and London in 2014 and 2015 subsequently but there was no issue at all. Therefore, I am sure that this is a clear impact of my book "Mission Saranda: A War for Natural Resources in India". Defaulters of millions of INR like Mr. Vijay Malaya cant be offloaded but activists like me are bound to be offloaded. However, my

fight for the Adivasis' ownership rights over the Natural resources, Adivasi identity, Human Rights, Ecology and against unjust development processes will continue till they take away my right to life forever. Jai Adivasi!"

The incident became a major headline in Indian media and was raised in parliament there by Jairam Ramesh former environment and forest minister. The CWEH is planning to host Gladson next year.

The next research international event on the Saranda this year will be a presentation in KTH Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm Sweden, in October 2016.

2) Copper mining in Zambia, Bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri Hills in Odisha, India

Members of the network raised national debate in Zambia about Vedanta's KCM copper operation there, by a UK-based company.

Foil Vedanta launched their report at the CWEH forum in March 2014 -

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=copper-colonialism-in-zambia.pdf&site=253> (accessed 07/07/2016).

In July 2014 a House of Commons meeting in London on this subject had important impact on public debate - <http://www.foilvedanta.org/news/mps-hear-evidence-for-de-listing-vedanta-and-other-uk-listed-mining-companies/> (accessed 07/07/2016). John McDonnell MP, who hosted the talk, said: "We cannot stand by and allow London to be used as the financial base for companies that degrade our planet, exploit their workers and abuse the human rights of extremely vulnerable communities. We need to devise a comprehensive strategy to address this exploitation, on our doorstep. "

In May 2016 Mr. Justice Coulson published his judgment on the jurisdiction hearing between 1,826 Zambian villagers and Vedanta KCM, granting villagers' a hearing in the UK for their demand of compensation for personal injury and loss of livelihood due to gross pollution of the Kafue river in the Copper Belt by KCM in 2006. The information and public pressure of Foil Vedanta, supported by CWEH, has had part in this achievement.

3) Yasuni Park Initiative and oil extraction in Ecuador

Professor Carlos Larrea was behind the Yasuni ITT Initiative of the Ecuadorian government not to extract oil in the Yasuni Park in Amazonian Ecuador – 1 million hectares (or: 2.5 million acres) - between 2007-2013. Larrea presented the Yasuni case at the Activists and Academia Forum –

