

Lukanka

Lukanka is a Miskito word for “thoughts”



RUDOLPH C. RYSER
Editor in Chief
Fourth World Journal



This issue of the Fourth World Journal has the quality of analysis, pronouncement, advocacy and process reflected in a compilation of documents and essays. A remarkable event took place in the national elections of the Republic of Bolivia in 2005. Juan Evo Morales Ayma, an Aymara born to subsistence farmers in Isallawi, Orinoca Canton with a population of little more than 6,500 people was elected President. He rose to the presidency as a leader of a rural laborers’ union and with the popular vote of 54% (the first time since 1978 that a candidate won with a majority) he assumed the presidency in January 2006. Ambassador Miguel d’Escoto Brockmann, then-President of the United Nations General Assembly named this anti-imperialist defender of indigenous peoples’ rights “World Hero of Mother Earth” at a United Nations Ceremony in November 2010 giving respect for Evo’s urging the UN General Assembly in April 2010 to recognize that day as International Mother Earth Day, or “Pachamama” as Mother Earth is said in Bolivia’s Aymara tongue.

President Morales’ Bolivia government sponsored a resolution approved by the United Nations Third Committee in 2010 to authorize the High Level Plenary Session of the United Nations that would be called the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples set for September 2014. It was thus that the 40-year period of “indigenous peoples’ ascendancy as a subject of international concern,” beginning in 1970, passed a new milestone. Not only had an indigenous person assumed supreme authority over an existing state when such a possibility was utterly unheard of in South America or anywhere else (indigenous Quechua and Aymara make up 55% of the population, 35% are mestizo, and 15% are of European extraction). President Morales’ rise to power electrified the world’s Fourth World peoples. His promotion of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples further excited peoples all over the world who sensed perhaps the time was coming that indigenous peoples (1.3 billion strong with national populations ranging from 125 people to 25 million) just might be sitting at the international negotiating table of humanity. The time seems right for nearly 20% of the world’s peoples participate in decisions that affect their lives as well as the lives of all other humanity.

For more than one thousand years peoples the world over have struggled to meet each other on common ground where negotiations in good faith might be concluded to achieve comity—justice and common human courtesy between nations no matter their size or wealth. If this is truly the future of human kind then it may be noted

that the spark that began the process truly began with the courage of an Aymara leader born to subsistence farmers in south central Bolivia.

To be sure, bestowing a noble name on a political leader and convening a meeting in September of 2014 will not in and of themselves change things. A new process has been initiated that replaces forty-years of study by the United Nations; and the conditioning of political leaders—state leaders and indigenous nation leaders alike. A vocabulary has been developing that permits indigenous leaders from different parts of the world to speak with each other in a way that advances their differing political agendas. Meanwhile the vocabulary being developed permits indigenous leaders and states' leader to find the best ways to trod new common ground.

In this issue of the Fourth World Journal we have compiled the most influential essays and documents that have developed shortly before the announcement of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in 2010 and since. The dynamics of states' government officials attempting to find language that accommodates the entrance of new international players, and the challenging results of efforts by indigenous peoples from all regions of the world to formulate themes and topics considered appropriate for initial discussions at the World Conference are presented in this issue.

It is our hope that merely seeing the raw versions of documents and ideas when read together will provide a strong sense of where the global dialogue is now focused in matters concerning the Fourth World. It is our hope that this issue of the Journal will remain in

your collection to remind you of the ideas and actions that started the 21st century phase of indigenous peoples moving toward the negotiating table as members of the human family.