

LUKANKA(*)

by Rudolph C. Rýser

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“Development,” “self-directed development,” “community trauma,” and “sustainability” are all a part of the lexicon of development literature. The Fourth World tackles the issue from the inside out.

Since the founding of the United Nations there have been five “development decades.” Each of these periods served as a global goal-setting agenda intended to transform LDCs (Less Developed Countries) into progressively improved economies, governing systems and social systems. Despite prodigious efforts, each of these planned periods of development has failed. Planners, administrators, political leaders and workers have through various international and domestic development agencies undertaken to apply their skills and best thinking to raise the standard of living of peoples who have long suffered from too little food, too little comfort, too little quality of life and health. Yet expenditures of such great effort and wealth donated by various states governments have failed to achieve the goals set for each decade. Indeed, the level of world poverty is, in many respects, greater now than it was fifty years ago.

While the United Nations Development Decades have clearly failed (2 billion and more impoverished worldwide) is it the case that those who seek the improvement of life for so many millions of people are inept, lacking in skill or both? Why have the efforts of so many been unable to transform the world?

Perhaps the problem is less in the people and even the institutions than in the conceptual framework. Maybe “development” is the wrong focus. Maybe the idea that human beings can and should dominate the natural environment, progressively change the life condition of people through “programs and aid” and promote modernity is erroneous.

The authors of essays in this issue of the Fourth World Journal offer alternative ways of thinking about the wealth and life quality of peoples in the world. While “development” is assumed by most who use the term to be an “ultimate good” maybe there is a difference between “introduced development,” or “imposed development” and “self-directed development.” Maybe the problem with all the failures is that someone on the outside presumes to have all the answers for inside-nation needs. Maybe “sustained development” and externally introduced development produce serious problems and failures because human

culture doesn't respond well to imposed solutions, but works much better when human societies adapt and absorb outside ideas, technologies and ways of life according to the dictates of inside-cultural pace instead of outside ideas for success.

Dr. Leslie Korn directly approaches this point of view as one who lived most of her life in the Fourth World in Mexico with clarity and thoroughness. She examines in **"Community Trauma and Development"** the traumatic affects of externally imposed development on Fourth World societies and discusses the implications of community trauma that she sees resulting from development in Fourth World nations throughout the world. Dr. Korn's insights point the way to a fundamentally different and necessary analysis of the meaning and affects of development in the Fourth world.

Dennis Easter, in **"Post Colonial Ghost Dance"** approaches the problems of development from the perspective of a Fourth World philosophy looking at indigenous medicine, biopiracy and biotechnology. Springing from the Oglalla LaKota Ghost Dance Mr. Easter considers the sacred knowledge system inherent in the dance as a way of evaluating and commenting on introduced ideas.

Damien Short, addresses the nexus at which meet the needs and aspiration of peoples living in mature Fourth World cultures and the imposing aethos of externally imposed changes in his essay **"Reconciliation, Assimilation and the Indigenous Peoples of Australia."** How to mediate the competing demands of Fourth World peoples and those of the international state is considered within the framework of reconciliation.

Dr. Andry Onsman, opens his insightful discussion on **"Law and Identity"** with an examination of the current indigenous identity literature and policy discussions internationally and domestically. He brings his discussion home with a personal yet widely significant discussion of the indigenous identity of the Friesian people who have for 50,000 years resided in northwestern Europe. Perhaps one of the more important aspects of development discussions has to do with "who defines who are the original peoples, and who are the immigrants?" Is it the case that the "immigrants" are most likely to impose "development" on the original peoples than the other way around?

Ali, M. Emran and **Toshiyuki Tsuchiya** peel the onion to its very middle as they discuss the land rights controversy surrounding the fourteen and more Fourth World Nations in the Chittagong Hill Tracts Region of Bangladesh. The territory of the Chakma, Tripura, Pankho, Khumi and ten other nations became the focus of a World Bank sponsored "transmigration program" which devolved into a genocidal war carried out by the Bengali government in Dhaka killing hundreds of thousands from 1975 until the early 1990s. The "best land" for agriculture and development was and is under the feet of the Fourth World nations of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This Editor spent the better portion of ten years seeking an end to that despicable war that was conducted in the name of "development." Emran and Tsuchiya's much needed historical analysis in **"Land Rights of the Indigenous People of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh"** commands our attention.

Brandon Yoder sheds a bright light on the exploits of big corporations and their efforts to impose development for their benefit and the disfiguring of the earth and destruction of Fourth World peoples in "**Indigenous People and Oil Production In Ecuador's Oriente.**" The spearhead of global development is filled with oil and the demands of "developed countries" for oil. The Fourth World nations of Ecuador's Oriente have not made demands for oil development. Yet corporate greed in business and in state combine to threaten the lives and way of life of whole nations with impunity.

Danielle Elford offers an insightful and stimulating discussion of an utterly different analysis of "development." Offered from the Fourth World perspective, Elford makes a major contribution to the discussion of the importance of self-determination in economic, environmental and social change. Writing in "**Conservation by Self-Determination in Central America**" Ms. Elford applies considerable scholarship to argue a fundamentally different approach to social, economic and political change.

Navaya ole Ndaskoi provides an "inside-out" analysis of how externally imposed conceptions of Fourth World life can be used to mislead and alter the practical cultural requirements of a society. In "**Maasai Wildlife Conservation and Human Need**" Mr. Ndaskoi explodes distortions applied from the outside on Maasai in Kenya and Tanzania. His insights are especially appropriate for our discussion of alternatives to "development."

I regard the discussion of "development" and alternative analysis and approaches to human need an essential part of the global controversy about "globalization" and its affects on the original peoples of the world. Despite appearances and claims to the contrary there is nothing permanent or inevitable about globalization. The authors in this issue of the Fourth World Journal demonstrate that alternatives do exist and carry weight from their own strength.

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(*) *Lukanka* is a Miskito word from Yapti Tasba meaning "ideas," "thoughts," "thinking."