



Book Review

Brotherhood to Nationhood

By Peter McFarlane (*)

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by Jay Taber

I just finished reading *Brotherhood to Nationhood* by Peter McFarlane, the biography of the legendary First Nations leader and world indigenous organizer, the late Grand Chief George Manuel from British Columbia. As the principal strategist and spokesman for the self-determination of Canadian Indians from the 1950s to the 1980s, it's hard to overstate the key role he played in changing the relationship between Ottawa and the hundreds of Indian bands, as well as the public understanding of aboriginal rights worldwide.

Suffice to say that the voice the Maori, the Saami, the Bushmen, and the Basques now have in

bodies like the UN, are in no small part due to his efforts. The fact that he gave his life to this cause is well known; the fact that he was willing to die to preserve the Indian way of life perhaps less so.

Few likely recall that in the early 1970s, extermination of indigenous societies in North America was still the agenda of all three federal governments—Mexico, Canada and the United States of America, forcing Mohawk, Lakota, and later Maya warriors to literally take up arms in defense. As the premier leader of the liberation struggle in Canada, Manuel had to take into account the possibility of going underground should the Canadian government escalate its violence toward the First Nations movement.

Accordingly, Manuel assumed his responsibilities, as a War Chief preparing for that eventuality should his diplomatic efforts fail--duties that prompted him to consult with both the African National Congress and the Irish Republican Army. To his relief, the pressure he was able to bring to bear against Canadian apartheid, through European states, organizations, and institutions, was sufficient to forestall armed conflict.

And maybe that's his greatest legacy: the recognition and willingness of Euro-Canadians to respect and coexist with the First Nations as they continue to negotiate their relationships into the future--a future that was purchased by more than just rhetoric and public relations. Anyone who thinks that the powerful can be made to cooperate, through reason alone, should read this book.

Biographical Note

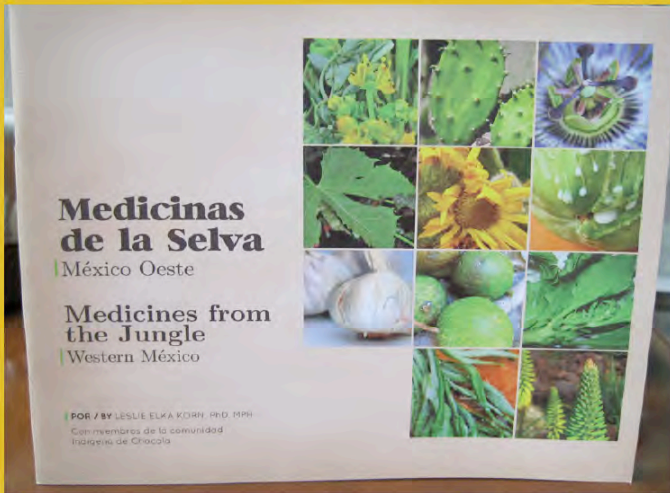
Jay Taber is an Associate Scholar at the Center for World Indigenous Studies, a correspondent to Fourth

World Eye, and a contributing editor of Fourth World Journal. Since 1994, he has served as the administrative director of Public Good Project, a volunteer network of researchers, analysts and activists engaged in defending democracy. As a consultant, he has assisted ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples seeking justice in such bodies as the European Court of Human Rights and the United Nations.

(*) Peter McFarlane is a writer, translator and journalist living in Montreal.

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Antonia Lavender
*Directora de Comercialización, Oficina de Convenciones
y Visitantes de Puerto Vallarta, A.C.*

Leslie Korn shares her experience and the heritage and culture of the indigenous community of Chacala in her book, *Medicines of the Jungle*. The original edition of the book, published in Spring 2001 has been edited and redesigned with new photos, recipes and insights from Dr. Korn. The book is the result of a community project to preserve traditional healing practices with community healers, elders, and young people in a comunidad in western México.

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