



BIODIVERSITY WARS

**COEXISTENCE OR BIOCULTURAL
COLLAPSE IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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INTRODUCTION





The different peoples who are descendants from ancient human populations are variously referred to as “native” autochthonous, aboriginal, or primitive, and now more commonly, they are described as “indigenous peoples,” “first nations peoples” or “fourth world peoples.” I prefer “Fourth World Peoples” [1]. Fourth World nations adopted the “Fourth World” as the appropriate political and cultural designation. In virtually all instances, these nations are “peoples.” This designation is critical since the conventional wisdom holds that all peoples have “rights” to decide their cultural and political future, and they have the right to exist. Each distinct people possess collective rights. Fourth World peoples have cousins who make up the remainder of the world’s populations. Consequently, one comes to understand that Fourth World nations constitute the bedrock from which all human societies have emerged even as Fourth World peoples persist as separate and distinct nations.

The popular and official state government use of the word “indigenous” as a way of characterizing Fourth World peoples creates a misleading understanding of the position the 1.9 billion Fourth World people occupy in the scheme of relations between peoples generally. The term “indigenous” has currency in the state-based international political and legal system—predicated on characterizing a population WITHIN the sovereign control of a state. Recognizing the firm embrace states’ government wrap around Fourth World nations is to understand that the use of the term “indigenous” for most states simply affirms

their sovereign control over the social, economic, political, and cultural development of peoples. While nations must not be denigrated for their use of the term “indigenous” it should be recognized that the state-embrace is a claimed sovereignty over peoples who have not necessarily consented to remain under state rule. In a written exchange with Cedric Ryngaert, Professor of Public International Law at Utrecht University in The Netherlands, I inquired about his understanding of the role of state-based laws in the mitigation of genocides committed against Fourth World peoples. He wrote: “While IL (sic) gives rights to indigenous peoples, indeed, these have to be realized by states as the duty-bearers. This realization happens under international supervision. I do not deny that not all states discharge their obligations adequately and that international supervision could be improved....” [2] Professor Ryngaert states the conventional wisdom among state-based legal theorists and practitioners that to have the political designation “indigenous” is to leave peoples under the rule of state institutions whether they wish this to be the case or not. States repeatedly employ their claims of sovereignty—absolute rule—inside their claimed boundaries serving as a political, legal, and strategic device to block efforts by Fourth World peoples to exercise their political and legal autonomy—their self-determination.

Still, indigenous peoples are frequently referred to as “tribal minorities” or “ethnic minorities”. Neither characterization accurately describes Fourth World peoples or indigenous peoples. The UN Human Rights Council defines a “minority” as:

“A group numerically smaller than the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being citizens of the State—possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics differing from those of others of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion and language.”

The absence of including territory and resources is quite glaring. This stands out as a characteristic common to Fourth World peoples and not to minorities as defined. As Bernard Nietchmann noted in his 1985 paper, “The Fourth World, Nations without a State” applying the term “minority” to Fourth World peoples instead muddles efforts to understand these nations:

“While these may very well be necessary, even critical, to preserve and protect, the significant geographical and material base for the survival of a people is conspicuously absent, nothing is said about land and resources. This is not only typical; it is symptomatic of common terminology, perspectives, and policies that attempt to negate the root cause of state-nation conflicts. A people, rather than a minority, is a concept widely recognized and accepted to include rights to territory, self-determination, and sovereignty. One of the ironies in the current status of international legislation on rights is that individuals have more rights than does a “people” in a nation unless that particular “people” establishes a state.” [3]

Using the expression “Fourth World” in ordinary discourse, some readers may rely on their early social studies courses or political science studies and consider the phrase merely part of the United Nations “development model.” In this model, the United Nations designates polities according to their social, economic, and political development as “First World,” “Second World,” and “Third World.” Fourth World has been used to designate what the UN now refers to as “Less Developed Countries” such as Somalia, Afghanistan, and South Sudan. When I, however, use “Fourth World” in the context of the world’s original nations and their descendants, I am applying the expression as a political and cultural designation. It refers to the more than 5000 non-state nations and not the 203 or so state-recognized international states not rooted in the cosmology of ancient peoples. What I am emphasizing here is the characterization of peoples that independently assert their sovereignty—their power to rule themselves outside the framework of state legal and political boundaries. While many nations use the term “indigenous” as a characteristic of their political identity, they do so in no small measure due to the requirements or conditions created by the state legal and political system.

For more than fifty years, I have worked for and with Fourth World peoples. I have worked with many of their governments across the Americas, Africa, Pacific Region, Asia, and Europe who often asked the question of “developed” populations: “If they destroy all of our food and take our land, how will we live?” Many different Fourth World peoples observe that fruits, herbs, fish, deer,

elk, other animals, plants, and sources of traditional food were and are now becoming harder to harvest. Men, women, and their children have been forced to forgo their traditional foods and medicines and instead shifted to commercial foods and medicines. The result has been a noticeable increase in wasting caused by malnutrition, increased incidents of diabetes type 2, heart disease, arthritis, smaller infant birthweights, and shorter lives. Fourth World peoples experience this trend in the Americas and also in virtually every other country in the world for generations. The trend has occurred at different rates of acceleration on every continent. Many Fourth World nations depend on traditional foods and medicines for up to 80% of their diet and health, while many nations continue to depend 100% on their traditional foods and medicines. Physical destruction, contamination, nutritional, and medicinal changes due to climate changes leave many nations facing dramatic dietary change in their vital traditional foods and medicines and no option for the continuing existence of affected Fourth World societies. Indeed, such changes are rapidly occurring in cultivated foods on which corporate societies (state-centered) depend, resulting in significant nutrition trauma affecting not only Fourth World peoples but themselves.[4]

Fourth World nations regularly express concerns, frustrations, and demands declaring their rights to continued access to wild-harvested plants and animals as sources of medicines and nutrition for the benefit of their people. They give rhetorical power to the claim that biological diversity is essential for sustaining life on the planet. Yet, despite public declarations and appeals to prevent con-

tamination, damage, or destruction of biologically diverse medicinal sources of wild plants and animals, plants and wildlife continue to be destroyed.

The title of this book, **Biodiversity Wars**, is reflective of what amounts to a sustained war of attrition between Fourth World Nations and Empires, Kingdoms, and States (and the subdivisions of states: corporations, organized religion, organized criminal syndicates). The corporate entities carry out their predatory conduct against indigenous peoples and perpetuate wars [5] against Fourth World nations and their life-sustaining eco-systems. In the chapters that follow, I trace the challenges to the intimate relationship between Fourth World Nations and the lands on which they depend for life. I describe the often-intense drive by corporate societies (empires, kingdoms, and states) to confiscate Fourth World peoples' lands, waters, plants, and animals and their wealth in support of unrestrained development and the drive to amass wealth and power. I detail how modern corporate societies mostly engage in suicidal destruction of the world's Fourth World peoples and with them the eco-systems on which they and the whole world depends for life and sustenance. Climate scientists and political officials in multilateral organizations warn of biodiversity collapse, and global ambient temperatures increase yearly due to corporate society dependence on fossil resources, timber, minerals, production of toxic pollutants, and their overuse of water. The failure of corporate societies to restrain their development and overconsumption of Earth's life support systems has triggered a cascading climatic breakdown.

I discuss the attacks on Fourth World peoples where cor-

porate societies are destroying the only two factors that ensure life on the planet: the diverse cultures of Fourth World Peoples and the diversity of eco-systems. Corporate societies and the organizations they have created contribute to the breakdown of Earth's life-supporting systems. They do this by way of oil pipelines and resource exploitation, nuclear detonations and waste repositories, colonization and other forms of genocide, forced assimilation, the elevation of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and destruction of traditional foods and medicines by building roads and cities in Fourth World territories.

In this book, I describe the damaging actions of corporate states on diverse life-supporting eco-systems and Fourth World peoples. But it isn't all grim. I propose concrete solutions that nations and states can achieve in the next few years when clear-minded Fourth World and corporate state thinkers and leaders step forward to establish new mechanisms that bolster cooperation and coexistence based on "self-interest." That is, when it is apparent that all lose from a lack of constructive collaboration, then it becomes essential to work toward coexistence. The elimination of self-destructive development that threatens the existence of Fourth World nations and the peoples of corporate states can only come about with deliberate action by the Fourth World nations. They can no longer remain victims but must become part of the solution through self-directed local, regional, and international initiatives to create new rules of conduct for relations between nations and states on the planet.

Here is a summary of **Biodiversity Wars**:

In the first Chapter I start with the basics: The universally proclaimed right of “peoples” to exist and exercise their rights to self-determination and the failure of the corporate state to mature and respect all human beings. The states’ political, economic, and security conduct in the 21st century is immature and predatory 370 years after the rules for the modern state were first established under the umbrella of the Roman Catholic Church. This historical reality is important to understand. The crux of Biodiversity Wars and thus the threat to living beings on the planet is the contention between Fourth World peoples and their claim to exist and their exercise self-determination. The other feature concerns corporate states and their claim to absolute authority and universal jurisdiction inside their claimed boundaries. This theme is stated in various ways throughout the book as we examine the different forms of contention and the possibility of establishing a more mature and balanced framework on the ground, regionally, and internationally.

In Chapter 2, I discuss international relations as formed by the corporate states and compare these concepts with inter-national relationships as conceived by Fourth World nations. This discussion critically offers an understanding that demonstrates different perspectives arising from the fairly limited experience of corporate states and the more expansive experiences of Fourth World nations.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 examine the influence colonization by kingdoms and states has had on trapping Fourth World

nations inside various states. Comparison is made to the partial decolonization of colonized peoples remote from the colonizing government and, consequently, the limitations states have imposed (usually by force) on the exercise of the “right of self-determination.” Despite the imposed restrictions, I assert that Fourth World nations must undertake self-directed initiatives to change their political status despite state attempts to control them.

Biodiversity Wars take many forms, and in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 I examine what I have previously called cold, warm, and hot wars that directly affect the existence of Fourth World peoples and the diversity of Earth’s life support systems. Prominent among the examples I give are corporate state tolerated and induced genocides, environmental destruction through development, nuclear tests and wastes, production and distribution of toxins, industrial and hazardous waste, and the widespread practice of war and forced population displacements.

Fourth World nations have not been idle politically but have taken initiatives (as suggested in Chapter 5) to create new regional and international political dynamics by asserting different forms of political status. In Chapters 10 and 11, I provide examples of political initiatives by Fourth World nations to incorporate themselves into existing states, negotiate agreements to associate with internationally recognized states, and to take steps to achieve political independence. I propose several forms of political status that must become part of the lexicon of international affairs to effectuate political change that can lead to constructive coexistence between corporate states and Fourth

World nations.

In Chapters 12, 13 and 14, we review the emerging Fourth World nations' political and diplomatic initiatives to create an environment of collaboration and coexistence even as most corporate states resist and obstruct such efforts. What is important to understand in these chapters is that Fourth World nations are becoming proactive in pursuit of their ultimate cultural and political goals. Nations seek a *healthy and balanced living environment on Earth, permanent existence of indigenous peoples, and the freedom without external interference to evolve economically, socially, politically, and culturally to achieve their aspirations.*

Finally, since events move at an ever-accelerating pace in no small measure due to global communications, I offer an Epilogue to capture some information and facts that became apparent while this book was in process. I offer some speculation on prospects for the future and what we can do to bring about the cooperation and coexistence that surely, we prefer to biodiversity collapse.

At its root, plants, animals on the land, in the air and in the seas—diverse environments—are critical to life on the planet. Fourth World peoples are part of that formulation—they too are vital to life on the planet.

From the Fourth World nations' perspective, traditional plant-based and animal-based foods and medicines are essential to the health and diet of 1.9 billion[6] people. Such a diet has long been recognized as essential to healthful lives. Many traditional foods and medicines have, as I noted earlier, become contaminated by unrestricted develop-

ment and pollutions or that are destroyed by construction, road developments, and development of cities and towns. These conditions have forced many Fourth World nations to become dependent on commercially produced cultivated plants and livestock obtained from nearby towns and villages that advantage the cash economy resulting in families depending on “transitional diets.” The shift to commercial and cultivated foods and medicines has radically altered the nutritional and health profile of many Fourth World peoples around the world. Researchers and scholars have widely documented that Fourth World peoples forced into dependence on commercially produced diets experience dangerous levels of chronic diseases.

Consequently, many peoples experience shorter lifespans as their diverse eco-systems have been contaminated or destroyed. Separating Fourth World peoples from their traditional food and medicine sources produces significant changes in the diversity of ecologies resulting in sharp changes in biodiversity. Early deaths among Fourth World peoples show that the changes in plant and animal food sources result in the decline in biocultural diversity [7]—loss of cultural diversity among Fourth World peoples. In this volume, I tell the story of how Fourth World peoples are a significant key to preventing global biodiversity collapse projected by scientists and political officials who watch the effects of Climate Change and human development across the world.

According to the International Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of 6000 species of cultivated food, fewer than 200 significantly contribute to the world’s food mass

population supply. Still, only nine cultivated plants provide 66 percent of the total world cultivated crops. Virtually all of these plants are under threat due to development-generated carbon gases in the atmosphere, pollutants, and the breakdown of soils. Commercially raised livestock production is reliant on 40 animal species, with just a few of those providing the majority of meat, milk, and eggs. The FAO reports that of the 7,745 breeds of livestock raised in individual countries, more than a quarter are at risk of extinction.

The world's naturally grown foods and medicines and commercially cultivated and raised food-base are at serious threat of breakdown due to human-generated damage to the waters, air, and soils resulting from what is called sustainable development—uncontrolled economic and development growth. Similarly, about 25% of all 4,000 wild food species on which mainly indigenous peoples rely are at risk of extinction. A third of fish stocks are being overfished, resulting in more than half of these stocks have reached their limit to ensure sustainability. Virtually all food sources cultivated or wild are at risk of collapse, and in some regions of the world the extent of extinction is greater.

Eco-systems that produce soil organisms, natural enemies of pest, and pollinators essential to agriculture are rapidly disappearing. Indigenous peoples are daily aware of these increasing deficits.

Indigenous peoples report that wild food and medicines sources are in even greater danger of disappearing or col-

lapse than is understood by the FAO or state-run research agencies. Fourth World peoples have for more than fifty years seeing the decline of wild food species. State economies have extracted petroleum, engaged in deforestation to increase agriculture, and diverted waterways as well as permitted poisonous seepage from farms and industry contaminating water to the detriment of biological diversity. Unrestrained state-based development directly cause decline and destruction of forests, rangelands, mangroves, seagrass meadows, high deserts, oceans, deserts, coral reefs, and wetlands.. The policies of business and states intended to promote continued and unrestrained growth using these resources for commercial gain.

A growing number of people increasingly understand all of this dire story, but what is not well understood is that indigenous peoples have for more than 70 years recognized the declines and have been sounding the alarms. These alarms have not been taken into consideration by states' governments, corporations, and general populations and biodiversity collapse appears to be imminent before the end of the 21st century.

What can we do to put controls on this rapid decline in human cultural diversity and ecological diversity that threatens the continued survival of human beings? Some argue that "technology" will solve the problems by replacing the lost foods (commercial and wild) with artificially or genetically manufactured plants and animals. Others simply deny any problem exists and that persons who should survive even if there is a problem, will escape and the others won't count. Still, others argue that "sustainable

development practices” will be implemented—so-called biodiversity-friendly practices. What we do know is that Devine intervention will not prevent the collapse of ecosystems and cultural diversity. These are problems and threats to life caused by human beings and must be solved by human beings.

Apart from the “oxymoronic” nature of the expression “sustainable development,” it is already quite evident that demands for Earth’s resources far and away exceed the Earth’s capacity to replenish. The problem is that plants and animals, soil, air, and water have all been commodified as if they are economic resources solely meant for human consumption and financial profit—no matter how greedy the demand. Indeed, such thinking excludes human beings as part of the world’s eco-systems—a central point of this volume. Humans can balance their needs against the capacity of the Earth to regenerate life-supporting foods and medicines just as do other beings. But if human beings—in particular, the corporate state—persist in their efforts to dominate, control, and excessively consume life-supporting foods and medicines the consequences will be disastrous for future human generations.

This situation demands a different perspective that can ensure the restoration of plant and animal foods and medicines necessary for all life to exist. The central reality needs to be understood that ecological diversity—biological diversity—is wholly dependent on cultural diversity—the different adaptations humans have successfully achieved in their environments. Human restraint and the practice of reciprocity between human beings and the Earth on which

humans must depend for life must become the alternative to unrestrained growth. The essential practitioners of reciprocal relations between human need and Earth's capacity to restore itself are the world's many human cultures exemplified by indigenous peoples. In other words, the 1.9 billion Fourth World peoples that practice thousands of cultures—that evolve out of the dynamic relationship between human beings, the land, and the cosmos—must take their place in the human family as the essential sources of knowledge and practice that ensures the continuity of life on this planet. They must engage as full participants to identify and implement solutions to the global problem on the same plane as states' governments in the international arena.

But, all of this is easier said than done. Yes, there is a global disaster happening that demands a quick remedy—apparently changes must be made by 2032. There is a solution that only requires restraint and collaboration. Still, the main thrust of restrained development must be to stop the ongoing cold, warm, and hot wars between Fourth World peoples and states. It is possible to survive the four challenges of states' claims to sovereignty, business claims to perpetual growth, organized religions' claims to high authority, and the perpetual avarice of organized crime. These four challenges are directly responsible for wars all around the world seeking to claim commercial access to plants and animals while forcing the removal and often overt killing of Fourth World communities.

I hope that **Biodiversity Wars** will stimulate a proactive effort by Fourth World nations and States—mature thinkers

and political leaders everywhere—to step up and directly engage. Their motive must be to block further destruction of Fourth World peoples and the life-supporting plants and animals on which we all must depend. Popular demonstrations are helpful but actively creating a new regional and international framework for establishing new rules of conduct and enforcement measures to assure compliance by all is now essential. Fourth World nations have a responsibility that they must now carry out as the older and more mature peoples of the world. The state-based international legal system must now be subordinated to the collective needs of humanity. And, leaders of corporate states must now set aside their short-term goals of wealth and power to engage Fourth World nations to negotiate a path forward.

NOTES:

[1] The Hopi conceived of human existence in “world-ages” where human beings have existed in three previous ages and are now nearing the end of the “Fourth Age.” At one time, the Hopi lived among the Yucatec peoples who speak the Mayan language, and they migrated north and finally settled on mesas in what is now the southwest part of the United States. The First World Age was destroyed by fire, from volcanic eruptions caused by a comet striking the Earth. The Great Ice Age destroyed the Second World Age. A great deluge destroyed the Third World Age all over the Earth. The Hopi attribute these changes to human transgressions—failures to respect the balance of natural life. After the first three Ages came the Fourth World Age--the Age in which we now live. Secwepemc leader

Grand Chief George Manuel (1921-1989) traveled in the late 1960s and early 1970s to find unified support among the various native peoples in Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific Region. After meeting with so many different peoples, he learned that they shared a common understanding of the “four directions” as the basic framework of their cultures and knowledge systems, and he learned that they shared a common understanding of the world Ages. They recognize the present Age as the Fourth World. He wrote a book entitled “Fourth World, an Indian Reality” (1974, Toronto: Collier-Macmillan, Canada) wherein he characterized all native peoples in the world as Fourth World peoples. The Hopi take the view that the Fourth World Age is coming to an end due to human transgressions ignoring the necessity of balance and their growing dependence on synthetic devices of living--and they, the Hopi and other peoples await the coming of the Fifth World Age.

[2] Personal communications Rudolph Ryser with Professor Cedric Ryngaert, 16 November 2019.

[3] Nietschmann, B. (1985) “The Fourth World – Nations without a State.” Center for World Indigenous Studies.

[4] Dr. Leslie E. Korn has authored several books on nutrition trauma and its deleterious effects on whole populations reliant on commercially grown and processed foods and medicines.

[5] Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), a noted Prussian general provided the aphorism: “War is the continuation

of politics by other means.” A contemporary definition of war is offered in the 2005 Law of War Handbook of the US Defense Department: “War is defined as “contention between at least two ... states ... wherein armed force is employed ... with the intent to overwhelm. I am using the “cold, warm and hot war” framework to distinguish between actions taken persistently disrupt a Fourth World community through development project interventions in a territory to extract raw materials, clear forested areas for roads, cities and installation, burning forests for agriculture and oil pipelines (for example) on a sustained basis with the result of political contention and demonstration protests; and actual violent confrontations involving police actions and low intensity violence initiated by two or more sides (warm war); and finally high intensity violence involving military forces organized intent on overwhelming the opponent (hot war). These distinctions are important to remember since cold war actions often evolve into warm and then hot war conflicts.

[6] This figure is the conclusion of an intensive study by the Center for World Indigenous Studies covering Fourth World peoples in all 203 of the world’s states (sovereign and not-sovereign). This figure is at variance with the United Nation’s figure of 370 million estimated in 72 - 90 UN member states. The UN population figure is restated by the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labor Organization and academics even though the number used reflects only population figures developed for state-recognized indigenous populations. The number used by state institutions tends to limit the significance of Fourth World peoples and to deny the existence of 80% of the world’s

Fourth World peoples. A simple demonstration of this tendency can be evident when noting that India “recognizes” 107 million “tribals” but does not give official recognition to the Tamil that has a population of more than 86 million and Nagas with 25 million people. The UN simply takes the number given by the state and ignores the remainder. Both the Tamil and the Nagas aspire to separation from India as distinct nations. The United States Government’s Bureau of Indian Affairs “recognizes” 1.9 million American Indians as recognized for receiving services and 80,000 Alaskan Natives. The agency does not accept 2.3 million additional American Indians or 400,000 Hawaiian Natives or 1 million Mayans and Purépeche, all residents inside the United States. In other words, the US reports that there are 1.9 million American Indians, and the remaining numbers are not part of the official enumeration of state-recognized indigenous peoples. For most states, it is merely a political inconvenience to provide accurate population figures—lest more territorial and political claims against state

[7]. “Biocultural” is a term that characterizes the relationship between human biology and human culture; and the diversity of human life—biological, cultural, relationships between peoples, languages, political systems, and human relationships to the land and to the cosmos. The United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations concluded its studies asserting that Fourth World peoples can areas the most diverse of human societies.