

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND POLITICS

Indigenous Nations and Modern States

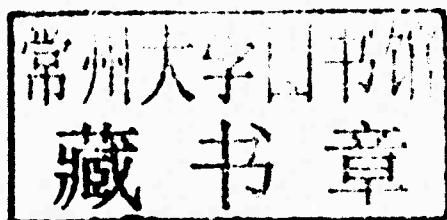
The Political Emergence of Nations
Challenging State Power

Rudolph C. R yser

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INDIGENOUS NATIONS AND MODERN STATES

Indigenous peoples throughout the world tenaciously defend their lands, cultures, and their lives with resilience and determination. They have done so generation after generation. These are peoples who make up bedrock nations throughout the world in whose territories the United Nations says 80 percent of the world's life sustaining biodiversity remains. Once thought of as remnants of a human past that would soon disappear in the fog of history, indigenous peoples—as we now refer to them—have in the last generation emerged as new political actors in global, regional, and local debates. As countries struggle with economic collapse, terrorism, and global warming indigenous peoples demand a place at the table to decide policy about energy, boundaries, traditional knowledge, climate change, intellectual property, land, environment, clean water, education, war, terrorism, health, and the role of democracy in society.

In this volume Rudolph C. Rýser describes how indigenous peoples transformed themselves from anthropological curiosities into politically influential voices in domestic and international deliberations affecting everyone on the planet. He reveals in documentary detail how, since the 1970s, indigenous peoples politically formed governing authorities over peoples, territories, and resources raising important questions and offering new solutions to profound challenges to human life.

Rudolph C. Rýser sits on the faculty of the School of Public Service Leadership at Capella University, and is an adjunct professor of History and Culture at the Union Institute and University. He is a 2011 Fulbright Scholar, Chair of the Center for World Indigenous Studies, and the Editor in Chief of the *Fourth World Journal*.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND POLITICS

Franke Wilmer, General Editor

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INDIGENOUS NATIONS AND MODERN STATES
Rudolph C. R yser

"Indigenous Nations and Modern States provides a refreshing, insightful, and needed reframing of the international system, contemporary ethnic conflict, and the politics of indigenous peoples. The text brings to the analytical forefront the underlying tensions between surviving nations and national identities and the states that were constructed on top of them. As Rýser clearly elucidates, contemporary nation-states have not assimilated or vanquished the continuing attachment to non-state national identities, and this analysis facilitates a needed "un-thinking" of the inevitability, stability, and predominance of the unitary nation-state."

—Erich Steinman, *Pitzer College*

"In *Indigenous Nations and Modern States*, Rýser brilliantly describes how states have appeared and disappeared during the history of mankind. As states come and go, the Nations and Peoples persist over time, and the book gives a detailed description of the situation for the world's many Nations and Peoples. In particular, the insight provided by Rýser into the relations between the American Indian nations and the early European settlers is eye-opening and differs greatly from the common 20th-century version of those events. The book is an important contribution to both the survival of the Nations and Peoples of the Fourth World and to making the world a better place."

—Göran Hansson, *Former Chairman of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization*

To my spouse Leslie Korn, three sons Christian, Jon and
Morgan and to my mother Ruth and father Ernest

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While many people have played a role in the development of this volume, I am responsible for the finished product. If there are errors, they are mine. I will correct them in due course.

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INTRODUCTION

The conduct of international relations is one of the oldest of social arts. It demands of individuals who will practice the disciplines of tact, discretion, poise, and finesse a special commitment and understanding of one's own culture and the cultures of other peoples. Other than holding a doctorate in international relations, my true foundation for this work is in my family heritage. I am a descendent of a long chain of Fourth World diplomats—a chain that extends to the 17th century when the monarchies of France and the United Kingdom first set out to claim trade routes and wealth in the Three Rivers region where the Algonquin, Abenaki, Five Nations Confederacy of Haudenosaunee and the Missasaqua nations had long lived. Important branches of my ancestors became cross-cultural diplomats mediating the often differing economic, social, cultural and political interests of the kingdoms, their business colonies and the interests of nations who at first believed the small numbers of merchants, fur traders, slaves, and indentured servants to be a benefit to them. My father's family of farmers follows a single strand to one location in Bergdorf, Switzerland extending well before the existence of the Swiss Confederation of the 13th century. My mother's family is rooted in North America, and the Orkadian Islands off the northern coast of Scotland. It is this family branch that contains more than 350 years of diplomatic history helping to define the relationship between nations in North America and the French and English and eventually Canada and the United States. This history begins with my 17th-century grandmother Isabell Montour.

Isabell Montour (1667–1752) had a French father from Cognac by the name of Pierre Couc and her mother was from Weskirini or Montagnais (Algonquin people). She is the first of the extraordinary diplomats in my family. She and her family were involved in fur trading during the early 1700s to Fort Mackinac and Detroit (then a trading post) and Albany (also a trading post). Her brother Louis Montour (the source of their last name remains a mystery) served as a trade interpreter and negotiator between the French and various Indian nations. When the French governor discovered that Louis Montour had been negotiating agreements beneficial to the English (in Albany) he directed that a gunman assassinate Louis. Like her brother Louis, Isabell was employed first by the