

Rodolfo Stavenhagen

Winner of the Kalman Silvert Award for 2016

Born in Germany in 1932, Rodolfo Stavenhagen emigrated in 1936 with his family and arrived in Mexico in 1940, later becoming a Mexican citizen. In 1951 he received a bachelor's degree at the University of Chicago. He graduated from the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) in Mexico City in 1958.

He obtained a PhD in sociology at the University of Paris in 1965 with a dissertation that was later published as *Social Classes in Agrarian Societies* (in English, Spanish, French, Italian, Swedish and Arabic).

Stavenhagen began his teaching career at the Department of Sociology and Political Science of the National University of Mexico (UNAM). In 1964 he joined El Colegio de México (Colmex) as a research professor and is now professor emeritus there. At Colmex he organized the Center for Sociological Studies. Over the years he has lectured at a number of other universities in different countries.

In the international social science field, he has been active in the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), the United Nations University (Tokyo), and the United Nations University for Peace (Costa Rica). He was also a member of the board of the Social Science Research Council (USA) and of the SSRC's Joint Committee on Latin American Studies, as well as vice president of the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS).

His relations with the international community led him into public service in multilateral organizations on several occasions. In 1962–1964 he moved to Rio de Janeiro as general secretary of a UNESCO-sponsored Latin American

Center for Research in the Social Sciences. Later he became senior researcher at the International Institute for Labor Studies at the ILO (1969–1972) in Geneva, in charge of teaching and research on social and labor policies in Africa and Latin America. In 1979 he was appointed assistant director general of UNESCO in charge of social sciences and their applications, a position from which he resigned in 1982.

His main research interests include agrarian problems, social development, ethnic relations, popular cultures, indigenous peoples, and human rights. In Mexico in the 1960s, he codirected for the Inter-American Development Bank a research team on agrarian structure and agricultural development. In the 1970s he coordinated an international research project on human rights, development, and ethnic conflicts for the United Nations University.

Stavenhagen has always tried to link his research to practical concerns. While a student of anthropology in the 1950s, he worked for several years at the National Indigenist Institute and a regional development agency in southeastern Mexico in the field of applied anthropology (such as organizing new villages for displaced Indian communities in the Papaloapan area). In the 1970s he participated in the preparation of new social science textbooks for Mexico's federal nationwide elementary school system.

His interest in educational and cultural policies among indigenous peoples led him to organize a new department for popular cultures in the Mexican federal ministry of public education (1977–1979). In 1996 he was a member of a commission to follow up the peace accords between the federal government and the Zapatista movement



in Chiapas (which were boycotted by the administration).

At the international level Stavenhagen was for a time the Mexican government's delegate at the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations, and he served as chairman/rapporteur of the group of experts that drafted the first version of Convention 169 on indigenous peoples of the International Labor Organization, ILO (1986).

His interest in international social science led him to participate in nongovernmental organizations such as the International Rural Sociology Association; the World Futures Studies Federation; as board member of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka; board member of the Society for Applied Anthropology (USA); the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (Switzerland); chairman of International Alert (London); council member of the Minority Rights Group (London); and board member of the International Movement Against all Forms of Discrimination and Racism (Japan).

Since 1984 Stavenhagen has served as vice president of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (Costa Rica), where he promoted the area of the rights of indigenous peoples. In the field of human rights, he took the initiative of organizing the Mexican Academy of Human Rights in 1983, the first association of its kind in the country. He was also a board member for ten years of the public ombudsman office, Mexico's National Commission for Human Rights (1990–2000). Occasionally he is consulted as an expert in cases involving the rights of indigenous peoples at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In 1993 he became chairman of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (an

intergovernmental agency), and he was also an active member of UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century.

In 2001, at the proposal of the Latin American Group of member states, Stavenhagen was appointed the first Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations. During the seven years of his mandate he reported regularly on the situation of indigenous peoples and made recommendations to governments and the UN system. Besides academic publications and public reports, Stavenhagen has also written for newspapers and general interest journals in Mexico and abroad.

His work on agrarian issues, ethnic conflicts, indigenous peoples, and human rights contributed to public debates on these issues mainly but not only in Mexico and Latin America. In 1997 he was awarded the National Prize of Science and Arts by the government of Mexico. He has received several honorary doctorates internationally, and one of his most rewarding experiences was being named an honorary elder of the Ogiek forest tribe in Kenya.

Principal Publications

English

Editor, *Agrarian Problems and Peasant Movements in Latin America* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1970)

Social Classes in Agrarian Societies, translated by Judy Adler Hellman (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1975)

Between Underdevelopment and Revolution: A Latin American Perspective (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1980)

The Ethnic Question: Conflicts, Development, and Human Rights (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 1990)

Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation-State (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1996)

Racism and Public Policy, coedited with Yusuf Bangura (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Making the Declaration Work: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, coedited with Claire Charters (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2009)

The Emergence of Indigenous Peoples (New York: Springer, 2012)

Peasants, Culture and Indigenous Peoples (New York: Springer, 2012)

Pioneer on Indigenous Rights (New York: Springer, 2012)

Español

Las clases sociales en las sociedades agrarias (México: Siglo XXI, 1969)

Sociología y subdesarrollo (México: Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1971)

Estructura agraria y desarrollo agrícola en México, coordinado con Sergio Reyes Osorio (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973)

Testimonios (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1976)

Problemas étnicos y campesinos (México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1979)

Derecho indígena y derechos humanos en América Latina (México: El Colegio de México; Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 1988)

Entre la ley y la costumbre: El derecho consuetudinario indígena en América Latina, coordinado con Diego Iturralde (México: Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, 1990)

Conflictos étnicos y estado nacional (México: Siglo XXI, 2000)

Derechos humanos de los pueblos indígenas (México: Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos, 2000)

La cuestión étnica (México: El Colegio de México, 2001)

Los pueblos indígenas y sus derechos: Los informes a la ONU (México: UNESCO, 2007)

El desafío de la Declaración: Historia y futuro de la Declaración de la ONU sobre pueblos indígenas, coordinado con Claire Charter (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 2010)

Los pueblos originarios: El debate necesario (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2010)

Tijuana 58: Las condiciones socioeconómicas de la población trabajadora de Tijuana (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2014; first published as a dissertation in 1958) ■