

# Remembrance of a Miracle at the United Nations: Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President of the SixtyThird UN General Assembly, 2008-2009

"We seem to have reached the end of the road travelled thus far, and if we continue along this way, we could arrive at the same destiny which has already befallen the dinosaurs." Father Miguel d'Escoto

By [Carla Stea](#)

Global Research, February 03, 2024

Theme: [United Nations](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*On Monday February 5 2024, we commemorate Padre Miguel d'Escoto, a powerful voice, whose Legacy will live forever.*

In 2020, the Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN) established the Miguel d'Escoto Brockman Centre of Development Studies (CEDMEB).

*The following article by Carla Stea, Global Research's Correspondent at United Nations Headquarters in New York recounts her meeting with Padre Miguel upon his accession to the presidency of the UN General Assembly in September 2009. The following article was first published in May 2010.*

*Padre Miguel understood the evolution of the UN System as well as the hegemonic role exerted by Washington.*

*With foresight, Padre Miguel examined the future of the UN system and put forth concrete proposals to sustain the Spirit of the UN system, based on solidarity and internationalism. May his Legacy Live Forever.*

*Today, the UN system is in the process of being privatized in the context of a bilateral agreement between the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the United Nations (UN).*

*The UN judicial system including the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and The International Criminal Court (ICC) are also affected. In recent developments:*

*"no legal obstruction or hindrance were formulated by the World Court with a view to curbing the tide of atrocities against Palestinians including an Israeli project to engineer starvation throughout the Gaza Strip....What is at stake is the criminalization of the international judicial process.*

*No cease-fire was envisaged. The ICJ has granted Israel a de facto "green light" to continue and "escalate the genocide".*

*Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research, February 3, 2024*

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"If we continue along this way we could arrive at the same destiny that has already befallen the dinosaurs." UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann (2008-9)

*One fine afternoon in the Spring of 2008, near the UN Security Council, I encountered a gentle, unpretentious man who was so friendly that we began a conversation, and I asked him what had brought him to the United Nations.*

*He said he had been elected President of the next UN General Assembly, for 2008-2009, and I asked his name. He said his name was Miguel d'Escoto. This seemed too good to be true, so I probed further: "Are you the former Foreign Minister of Nicaragua, Miguel d'Escoto?" "Yes," he replied, and I told him this was a miracle, and he had arrived just in time to save the United Nations!"*

At his first press conference, President Miguel d'Escoto said firmly:

*"I do not represent the G7, or the G20, or the P5, I represent the G192, all the member states belonging to the United Nations. All 192 are equally important, and their concerns will be equally addressed."*

UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto never wavered in his commitment to global economic and social justice, and the imperative need for a transformation of the global economic architecture to prevent perpetuation of the current grotesque injustices.

President D'Escoto was a priest, and the finest representative of the Liberation Theology which affirmed the profoundest commitment of Christianity, equal social and economic justice for all. The Vatican was not amused. Many of the G7, G20 and P5 were not amused, indeed they were terrified that President D'Escoto threatened the current global economic architecture which spawned obscene riches for the very few while multitudes starved.

Many of us loved Miguel d'Escoto - he was amazingly courageous, brilliantly consistent, and indefatigable in his struggle to create a more humanitarian world, free of the crimes of capitalism, responsive to the most profound and basic needs of humanity, and of "Mother Earth," as he described the desecrated environment being plundered by multinational corporate power.

President D'Escoto's address at the "Opening Session of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development" was a fierce call for justice, and is astonishingly relevant for today's global crisis - a pandemic which the global economic structure is disgracefully ill-equipped to handle and heal. The United States, which spends \$1 trillion dollars on Nuclear Weapons is revealing its criminal ineptitude and failure to invest in a health care system that meets the needs of all its citizens.



Physicians condemn to death people they deem unable to benefit sufficiently from the sparse availability of ventilators, and other life-saving medical equipment, and medical staff calling for protective equipment to enable them to safely treat infected patients are fired for exposing the disastrous condition of the United States' health care system, a system owned by corporations whose sole concern is profits. The vastly increasing homeless and destitute who sought refuge on New York subways have been dragged out of their abysmal and degraded shelter there, and abandoned to inevitable death in the gutters. The elderly are condemned to death in crowded nursing homes lacking space to shield them from deadly contamination.

President Miguel d'Escoto's words must be remembered and heeded at this very moment, as the world heads toward an economic crisis resembling the Great Depression of the 1930's, and is ignorant of any means of "salvation," to use the word Father d'Escoto would have chosen. As he stated on 24 June, 2009:

"It is neither humane nor responsible to build a Noah's Ark only to save the existing economic system, leaving the vast majority of humanity to their fate and to suffer the negative effects of a system imposed by an irresponsible but powerful minority. We must take decisions that affect us all collectively to the greatest extent possible, including the broad community of life and our common home, Mother Earth."First of all, we must overcome an oppressive past and forge a hopeful future. It must be acknowledged that the current economic and financial crisis is the end result of an egoistical and irresponsible way of living, producing, consuming and establishing relationships among ourselves and with nature that involved systematic aggression against Earth and its ecosystems and a profound social imbalance, an analytical expression that masked a perverse global social injustice. In my opinion, we have reached the final frontier.

"Therefore, controls and corrections of the existing model, while undoubtedly necessary, are insufficient in the medium and long term. Their inherent ability to address the global crisis has proven to be weak. Stopping at controls and corrections of the model would demonstrate a cruel lack of social sensitivity, imagination and commitment to the establishment of a just and lasting peace. Egotism and greed cannot be corrected. They must be replaced by solidarity, which obviously implies radical change. If what we really want is a stable and lasting peace, it must be absolutely clear that we must go beyond controls and

corrections of the existing model to create something that strives towards a new paradigm of social coexistence.”

“The oriental expression of care is compassion, which is so needed these days when much of humanity and the Earth itself are being battered and crucified in a sea of sufferings. In a market society which is driven more by competition than cooperation, there is a cruel lack of compassion towards all suffering beings in society and in nature.

“With these words, our discussions at this very important Conference on the world financial and economic crisis have begun. In providing a context for these issues, I wish to emphasize that we will have to set aside all selfish attitudes if we are to take advantage of the opportunities that the current crisis offers. Such attitudes only seek to preserve a system which seems to benefit a minority and clearly has disastrous consequences for the vast majority of the inhabitants of the planet. We must arm ourselves with SOLIDARITY and COOPERATION in order to make a qualitative leap forward toward a future of peace and well-being.”

These words were the leitmotif of the tenure of Miguel d’Escoto’s Presidency of the United Nations Sixty Third General Assembly, 2008-2009.

He established a Commission of Experts, headed by Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz, which designed the blueprint for transformation of the global economic architecture into a structure prioritizing fulfillment of humanitarian needs and concerns, instead of increasing gargantuan profits for the 1%. The recommendations and the warnings of the resultant report were ignored and ridiculed by some affluent member states, though the report was welcomed by the majority of the UN General Assembly.



However, as a result of its unceremonious dismissal by the most powerful UN member states, the years 2010 -2020 saw, in blatant and antagonistic disregard of the recommendations of the Report, the imposition, instead, of austerity measures throughout Western Europe and the United States and elsewhere.

These austerity measures resulted in massive social instability, and riots throughout Spain, Greece, France, Italy, and in December, 2010, the Financial Times reported students in London rioting over the increase in their school tuition, and, indeed, approaching the chauffeured limousine of Prince Charles and his wife, shouting: “Off with their heads!” In 2018 the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty, Philip Alston reported that as a result of austerity measures in the United Kingdom, 20% of its entire population now lives below the poverty line.

In the ensuing years income inequality both within and between nations increased

exponentially, and today, in the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the garish failure of the current global economic architecture to effectively address this crisis is incontestably exposed.

The words of United Nations General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann are imperatives today.

The world is enduring the catastrophe that President d'Escoto warned against, and he provided a model which would have enabled us to avoid the cataclysm toward which we are hurtling, and, indeed, it is not clear that the possibility of avoiding disaster still exists.

Miguel d'Escoto Brockman never lost hope, and never abandoned the struggle to create the humanitarian economic architecture that our planet's survival requires - indeed demands. We can only hope redemption is still possible.

The resurrection of UN General Assembly President Miguel d'Escoto's "Report of the Commission of Experts" is mandatory. His words are even more compelling today. In his Foreword to the Report, President Miguel d'Escoto stated:

"The essential insight of the report is that our multiple crises are not the result of a failure or failures of the system. Rather, the system itself - its organization and principles, and its distorted and flawed institutional mechanisms—is the CAUSE of many of these failures....The idea that the United Nations should provide the forum for such engagement appears to be even more polarizing. Throughout the preparatory process for the June Conference, a studious silence was observed in most Northern countries, except for the large number of articles and stories circulated citing unnamed officials and diplomats who decried the very idea of such a UN process as 'a joke' and 'a farce.'

The assertion that the UN lacks competency found frequent expression, most notably in the explanation of vote presented by the U.S. delegate following the adoption of the Outcome;

'Our strong view is that the UN does not have the expertise or mandate to serve as a suitable forum or provide direction for meaningful dialogue on a number of issues addressed in the document, such as reserve systems, the international financial institutions, and the international financial architecture.'"

To which Miguel d'Escoto replied:

"The United Nations General Assembly, as the world's only legally constituted and globally inclusive intergovernmental body with a clear mandate on economic affairs, has a special and unique role to play in our global deliberations....Here alone does the voice of the Global South ring with equal clarity, and here too is where considerations of equity and justice are therefore more likely to be raised....the UN General Assembly is arguably the most important and necessary, if not by any means exclusive, forum for deliberation of the global system reform..... For the better part of the last year, I have recited the mantra of the world social forum: 'A better world is possible.' Mahatma Gandhi once remarked, 'First they ignore you, then they make fun of you, then they fight you, then you win.'"

We can only hope and struggle so that the late Father Miguel d'Escoto's vision of a world of justice wins, and that the human species does not, as he warned, share the destiny that has already befallen the dinosaurs.

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*The National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN) has launched The Centre for Development Studies named after Padre Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann (CEDMEB). This important endeavour was supported by the UNAN, the Family of Padre Miguel d'Escoto and the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)*

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