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Review of *Not Without Our Consent: Lakota Resistance to Termination, 1950-59* By Edward Charles Valandra

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Not Without Our Consent: Lakota Resistance to Termination, 1950-59. By Edward Charles Valandra. Foreword by Vine Deloria Jr. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006. xxiii + 287 pp. Tables, notes, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.

In the vein of Vine Deloria Jr., the preeminent American Indian intellectual who in 1969 forced a raw consciousness about the tragic history and political status of Native peoples with *Custer Died for Our Sins*, Edward Valandra reminds us in *Not Without Our Consent* of the continuing importance of documenting twentieth-century American Indian history lest the Indian story be forgotten. Deloria, whose Lakota heritage and national leadership in Indian affairs significantly informed Valandra's work, contributed the foreword, setting the backdrop for one of the book's main themes, the federal government's "Indian Problem" in the 1950s and its imprudent plan to eliminate tribal benefits and protections and ultimately to terminate its political relationship with tribes through federal legislation commonly called Public Law 280. Valandra's own experience as a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council in the late 1980s spurred his investigation into South Dakota's response to the federal termination policy and its misguided, if not ill-motivated, application of it to the state's "Indian Question."

Not Without Our Consent is a compelling account of the political and legal events in South Dakota during the 1950s and 1960s aimed at unilaterally imposing state civil and criminal jurisdiction in Lakota country and ultimately dismantling tribal political-cultural structures. In fine detail, often using the strident language of "Euroamerican" colonialism, Valandra recounts the appalling pattern of South Dakota's hostile measures toward Lakota people during a time of demoralizing poverty on reservations and disparaging racial tensions between the white and Native populations. *Not Without Our Consent* also tells the more impressive story of the Lakota people's collective and steadfast resistance to such oppressive actions

during this perilous period and their successful but costly struggle for self-determination.

Valandra's aptly titled work illustrates how the state's ill-premised political strategies failed not just because of its stubborn refusal to deal with the all-important provision in the South Dakota Constitution disclaiming jurisdiction over Indian lands or of its fervent aversion to bearing any financial responsibility for assuming such jurisdiction. The state repeatedly fell short because it fundamentally failed to appreciate the strength of the Lakotas' sovereignty and their tenacious ties to their lands.

Valandra quite neatly juxtaposes the state's persistent attempts to preempt Lakota authority with its continual unwillingness to engage in any meaningful dialogue with the Lakotas despite several surprising but important judicial victories. Indeed, a rich subtext to *Not Without Our Consent* is the numerous legal disputes in state and federal courts, prompted in large part by the Lakotas' emerging political and economic activism. The tribe's bold battles against the state's assertion of jurisdiction over their lands are reminiscent of Chief Sitting Bull's courageous fight for survival. Although the great Lakota warrior lost his battle against the United States' imposing the reservation system one hundred years earlier (Valandra provides a useful chronology of Lakota history), modern Lakota warriors won significant victories in court, thereby vindicating Sitting Bull's fateful struggle for tribal sovereignty.

Not Without Our Consent provides an important substantive record and is a valuable contribution to both the historical and legal scholarship in the field of twentieth-century American Indian history. It also offers indispensable historical information for the policy-makers of all three sovereigns today, federal, tribal, and state. By dispelling the corrosive fallacies of the past, *Not Without Our Consent* goes far in laying the groundwork to establishing more mutually respectful relationships in the future.

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