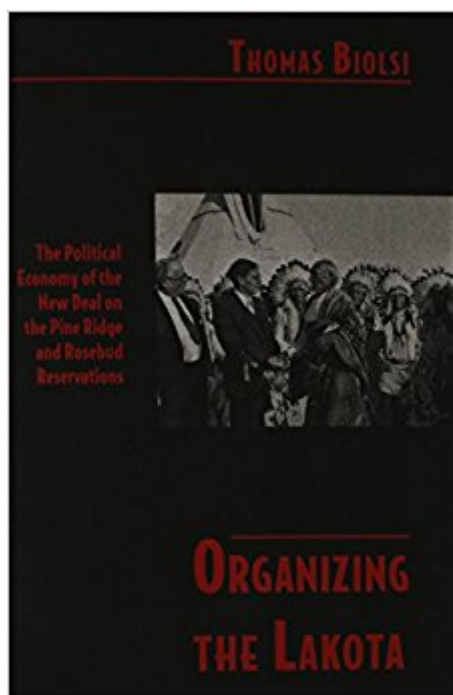


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Organizing The Lakota: The Political Economy Of The New Deal On The Pine Ridge And Rosebud Reservations



Synopsis

In 1933 the United States Office of Indian Affairs began a major reform of Indian policy, organizing tribal governments under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act and turning over the administration of reservations to these new bodies. Organizing the Lakota considers the implementation of this act among the Lakota (Western Sioux or Teton Dakota) from 1933 through 1945. Biolsi pays particular attention to the administrative means by which the OIA retained the power to design and implement tribal "self-government" as well as the power to control the flow of critical resources—rations, relief employment, credit—to the reservations. He also shows how this imbalance of power between the tribes and the federal bureaucracy influenced politics on the reservations, and argues that the crisis of authority faced by the Lakota tribal governments among their own would-be constituents—most dramatically demonstrated by the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation—is a direct result of their disempowerment by the United States.

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Customer Reviews

"Organizing the Lakota is an excellent piece of historical sociology. Biolsi provides a masterful account of how the U.S Government shaped Lakota politics." --American Journal of Sociology "It is a must read for anyone interested in tribal response to internal colonialism, federal efforts to implement the Indian Reorganization Act and simultaneously maintain a preeminent position with respect to tribal autonomy, and internal tribal politics." --Great Plains Research "A fascinating, perceptive, and provocative analysis."--American Historical Review "One of the strengths of this

carefully crafted book lies in its fine-grained detail and data-driven, well-supported reasoning. It revitalizes the enduring conundrum of federal-tribal relations with fresh insights gleaned from contemporary anthropology." --Plains Anthropologist "Anthropologist Thomas Biolsi has written a fascinating, perceptive, and provocative analysis of the impact of the Indian New Deal (1933-1945) on the political structure and processes of the Lakota tribes." --American Historical Review

In 1933 the United States Office of Indian Affairs began a major reform of Indian policy, organizing tribal governments under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act and turning over the administration of reservations to these new bodies. "Organizing the Lakota" considers the implementation of this act among the Lakota (Western Sioux or Teton Dakota) from 1933 through 1945. Biolsi pays particular attention to the administrative means by which the OIA retained the power to design and implement tribal "self-government" as well as the power to control the flow of critical resources--rations, relief employment, credit--to the reservations. He also shows how this imbalance of power between the tribes and the federal bureaucracy influenced politics on the reservations, and argues that the crisis of authority faced by the Lakota tribal governments among their own would-be constituents--most dramatically demonstrated by the 1973 Wounded Knee occupation--is a direct result of their disempowerment by the United States.

Although a great source of information, the way it is presented is abysmal. The author seems to require prior knowledge or understanding of politics and economics because the vocabulary and speech is hard to follow if one does not. Furthermore, the arguments could have been exponentially less "wordy." Adding a plethora of statistics and historical documents only leads the reader astray as the information becomes harder and harder to retain. If one really wants to know what this book is talking about, I recommend finding a literature review of it. There is no need to spend this many pages on this subject. Unless you are a Ph.D. student writing his or her dissertation over this specific subject, there are much easier (and better) reads elsewhere.

I was glad to find this edition available. It gives a different perspective on this chapter in American history. Our nation has treated the native Americans so poorly, especially the Lakota and the whole Pine Ridge situation. Having spent a week there not too long ago, one realizes how poorly we have treated these original Americans. This book adds to your understanding.

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