

**Say We Are Nations: Documents of Politics and Protest in Indigenous America since 1887.** By Daniel M. Cobb. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 316 pages. \$32.50 paper; \$19.95 electronic.

Daniel M. Cobb's *Say We Are Nations: Documents of Politics and Protest in Indigenous America since 1887* is a much-needed book in the fields of Native American and indigenous studies, social movements, American studies, and American history—in fact, in all fields that address United States politics through the centuries. Cobb skillfully selects previously unpublished or obscure indigenous political statements from various periods between 1887 and 2015. Early voices ring throughout this history, punctuating the present. After a year of Standing Rock protests and the earlier Idle No More movement, this book is timely. At its core, it demonstrates the longevity of Native and indigenous protest against the atrocities committed by the settler state. In the introduction, Cobb visits the notion of reflexivity in the context of history and concludes that although colonial history began the practice of “understand[ing] the consequence of its being ‘conditioned by the age’ of its authors” (1), it failed to follow through past the nineteenth century. Cobb sets out to do just this, and achieves it to great success. For instance, he cleverly integrates Frederick Jackson Turner’s (in) famous speech outlining the frontier thesis into a (re)writing of an historic timeline, one that bases itself on federal policy more than that which drives Natives’ own political positions.

For each section of the book, Cobb provides a brief yet thorough national and international history of the time period being covered. In the first section, “Contesting Citizenship, 1887–1924,” he raises the questions of belonging, asking not only how Native people are to configure to the state, but also engaging larger questions of how the politics of the time reflected a “citizenship of sameness [that] had little room for cultural pluralism” and linking it to imperial politics of the time. Rather than treating indigenous politics as a separate entity, Cobb emphasizes its relationship to larger questions of belonging, race, and politics, as he does throughout the book. The refusal to acquiesce to the state continues with the next time period, “Reclaiming a Future, 1934–1954.” Each piece is accompanied by a brief, one-paragraph (and thus very teachable) introduction explaining what comes before and after in history. The sampling also collects important documents that raise protests and depict the commitment and strength of Native and indigenous people who respected and loved their peoples, nations, and human and non-human beings. By including time-period introductions, introductions to each piece, and questions to consider at the end of each section, Cobb provides the necessary tools to think through the documents and to teach them in the classroom.

In the later chapters, indigenous women’s voices enter the conversation to address colonial violence against land and bodies. Here I wish that the author had incorporated earlier voices, such as those of Laura Cornelius Kellog, Ella Deloria, and women who went to Washington to protest the violence against their lands, nations, and bodies. Nonetheless, Cobb achieves the goal of curating and presenting First Peoples’ voices as a continuum throughout history, not as historic artifact. These voices are

deeply engaged beyond their individual nations' territorial jurisdictions. I found this strategy compelling and a useful method for breaking the trap too often set—that is, that Native history, Native studies, and Native peoples' concerns are too narrow, that we do not matter in the global schema. The voices in these first-person documents knew all too well how American colonialism and American empire tied together into a snarled network of capitalistic dispossession.

Rather than narrowly defining Native politics in a national realm or “merely” focusing on American Indians, this collection and the introductions to the different time periods beautifully sets Native voices where they belong—in the global political arena and as a relevant treatise against the continued injustices that materialized during the rise of the United States as a superpower. Attention to these foundational violences is key to understanding politics today. Emphasizing Native voices across these time periods encourages retrospection and consideration of the possibilities that might have arisen from listening to Native voices in the first place. For instance, the second section contains a piece, “If We Have Land, We Have Everything,” written in 1934 by Diné delegates refusing the Indian Reorganization Act and offering solutions to livestock reduction in the Diné Nation. Given in the context of wage-earning jobs versus livestock husbandry, these words still ring true today: “For the white people, the good old dollar is where they get their sustenance of life” (72). With respect to economic development, this struggle continues in the Diné Nation, and indeed throughout Native communities. By deftly linking the political documents across and within sections, Cobb encourages us to ponder these political moments.

This is a curation of original documents situated in a period of time that could use much more study and full-length monographs. *Say We Are Nations* will help fill out other key texts, such as Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Allen Warrior's *Like a Hurricane: The Indian Movement from Alcatraz to Wounded Knee* and Troy Johnson's *Red Power and Self-Determination: The American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island* and *Red Power: The Native American Civil Rights Movement*. From the start, the book's very title makes a demand: “Say we are Nations.” The documents enclosed within its pages track our long record—not of asking colonial nations to recognize us, but of demanding it; of the immense effort it took and takes to carve out paths that move beyond a “politics of recognition”; and of the deep commitment and strength of the leaders in our communities. We continue to build upon these demands, and with these narratives, Cobb rightfully leaves them to speak for themselves. This book exemplifies what a carefully edited volume and collection can do—change the way we see not only our interlocking histories, but where we are going in both our intellectual and activist paths.

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