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BOOK REVIEW

Completing Humanity: The International Law of Decolonization, 1960–82

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This book kaleidoscopically charts the Third World's efforts to craft a post-colonial international law during the long 1970s. Building on scholarly writings of Third-World jurists and records of multilateral diplomatic negotiations, Özsu eloquently reconstructs the ideological scenery where North-South tensions unfolded. Notwithstanding the growing disciplinary interest in legal histories of decolonization, the lack of a compendious socio-historical analysis of interconnected Third-World legal projects has been conspicuous. Accordingly, Özsu focuses his analysis on five of the most contested legal concepts of Third-World legalism.

Chapter 1 traces how the concept of self-determination, oscillating between "statist nationalism and solidaristic internationalism" (p. 67), was reflected in the 1970 United Nations Friendly Relations Declaration. It argues that the principle's normative potential was limited by the Declaration's "safeguard clause", which supported postcolonial boundaries and legitimized "efforts to contain [secession]" (p. 62). Chapter 2 uncovers the legal debates regarding Article 53 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties on *jus cogens.* For Özsu, despite its potential for transforming the regime of treaty-making by emphasizing moral and social considerations, Article 53 was "inchoate and indeterminate" (p. 95), a compromise between First-World statism and Third-World solidarity. Chapter 3 recounts Third World's efforts to formalize resource sovereignty in three 1974 General Assembly resolutions on the New International Economic Order (NIEO). Amid the differing visions of capital-exporting and capital-importing states, the right to nationalization and the vague standard of "appropriate" compensation were affirmed by non-binding resolutions, leaving unsettled their normative status under customary international law.

Chapter 4 traces the "common heritage of mankind" concept in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), highlighting tensions between developing states supporting equitable sharing of ocean resources under the mandate of the International Seabed Authority and industrialized states favouring a private licensing system. While the concept appeared in the UNCLOS, the 1994 Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the UNCLOS "diluted many provisions on deep seabed mining" (p. 163). Chapter 5 explores the "international law of development" and the relationship between development and human rights in Brandt's "North-South Commission" reports, which tried to combine elements of the NIEO with neoliberal views on trade liberalization.

The rise of neoliberal policy-making and the Latin American debt crisis, however, marked the end of both this initiative and postwar decolonization.

For Özsu, this "history of [the] failure" of anti-colonial legalism due to its deficiencies and the broader shift of historical conditions confirms that "international law is far too closely wedded to colonialism" (p. 244). Beyond the cynicism of rise-and-fall narratives, nevertheless, heterodox projects do not hopelessly vanish but are reincarnated in new intellectual lineages, which explains how the recession of anti-colonial legalism was exchanged for a generational disenchantment producing new tropes of subaltern thinking. Adding to *Completing Humanity*'s refreshing account, the anti-colonial legalism's most enduring legacy perhaps dwelt less in the corners and corridors of diplomatic fora than in the broader disciplinary space where yesterday's heresies turned into today's lexicon and non-Western sensibilities began to be inscribed into a European-dominated professional field.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

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