

rights, duties, privileges and immunities – have hitherto not received as much attention in the interdisciplinary space of legal geography. This also perhaps prompts the question of ‘where are the lawyers in legal geography?’, as there is much that the interdisciplinary project can benefit from if more lawyers engage with legal geography and engage in dialogue about producing particular accounts of legal geographies.

There is no doubt that *The Edge of Law* is a valuable contribution to this interdisciplinary space. Jeffrey’s work will be of great interest and relevance to those interested in the politics associated with the WCC or a sociological perspective of the productive effects of law on local communities through spatial and temporal lenses. I found many of the vignettes fascinating, which is a testament to the patient research and fieldwork of the author. The lessons enclosed in this book – lessons from the experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of different approaches to the study of justice – may be of great interest to those working in the field of transitional justice, not least the metaphor of entrances and exits, even if I think Chapter 7 slightly overstated the edge that is contained therein. Moreover, I marvelled at the weaving of so many different approaches in one book, even if it was at times a little too busy as an intellectual landscape for me. As someone pedagogically and professionally trained in legal writing and forever struggling to weave different themes, narratives and approaches through my writing for picking up at later junctures, it was certainly a lesson in how this could be achieved.

It should be said in closing that none of the discussion I take up in this review should be read as taking away from the valuable contribution by and hard work of Jeffrey. *The Edge of Law*, in addition to its valuable insights, became an invitation to think about where the law is in legal geography. As a result, I offer thoughts and reflections about *how one does* legal geography and the different knowledge paradigms, expertise and objects of study that disciplines inevitably discover when producing interdisciplinary work. My purpose has been to reflect about what these differences mean for the interdisciplinary spaces created by legal geography. It is an invitation to talk further and to find more of the law in legal geography.

Gail Lythgoe 

Associate Lecturer, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom

Email: [gcl4@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:gcl4@st-andrews.ac.uk)

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Christopher R. W. Dietrich. ***Oil Revolution: Anticolonial Elites, Sovereign Rights, and the Economic Culture of Decolonization***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 366. £27.99. ISBN: 9781316617892.

From growing demands to divest from non-renewable energy resources to social media-facilitated campaigns like #RhodesMustFall in South Africa, #IdleNoMore in Canada and #BlackLivesMatter in the United States, the call to ‘decolonize’ resounds widely and with increased urgency every passing day. Decades ago, in its original

incarnations, the term 'decolonization' referred above all to the national liberation movements that swept through Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Caribbean after World War II. During the height of this wave of decolonization, a range of different modes of imperial rule – from the fully annexed territory to the indirect protectorate regime – were cast aside with the creation of 'new states', formally sovereign but nearly always materially dependent upon leading capitalist countries (themselves often former colonial powers). International law's decolonization was widely believed to be essential to this process of systemic transformation. Reorienting much of the existing international legal doctrine and practice towards fundamental problems of economic development was thought by many to be indispensable to bearing out the promise of self-determination.

In *Oil Revolution*, Christopher Dietrich, a US diplomatic historian who specializes in the history of oil politics, examines a specific dimension of post-war decolonization: the attempt by lawyers and diplomats representing oil-producing countries to modify legal rules on the nationalization of foreign-held assets in order to secure greater control over the production and pricing of oil and other primary commodities. The ultimate goal of this project, which commenced shortly after the United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 and came into its own during the 1970s with the New International Economic Order (NIEO), was to fashion a 'new' international law, one that would furnish poorer and weaker states with a measure of economic sovereignty to bolster their fragile 'political independence'. Although much of its conceptual architecture was rooted in the political economy of development, reflecting both dependency theory and Keynesian ideas about counter-cyclical demand management,<sup>1</sup> the project unfolded in great part on the terrain of international law, being articulated in a spate of new theories, doctrines and proposals. For the project's advocates, no attempt to rectify inequalities in terms of trade between the industrialized, capital-exporting 'North' and the largely agrarian, capital-importing 'South' could succeed so long as resource-rich developing countries, particularly those belonging to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), did not win their struggle for resource sovereignty, including the controversial right to nationalize and provide compensation as they saw fit. Among other things, that struggle's success would go a long way towards demonstrating the power of producer associations and also fuel the push to conclude international commodity agreements for price-stabilization purposes. Even the direct application of coercive pressure, such as the oil embargoes that Arab producers imposed on the USA and other countries during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, was encased in long-standing legal arguments about the right to reduce production in order to regain control over prices. Jurists and diplomats representing oil-producing countries knew this all too well and worked out their moves accordingly. Their counterparts in advanced capitalist countries were equally alive to the implications,

<sup>1</sup> Common ground was not hard to find, particularly since John Maynard Keynes had expressed early support for production-restricting agreements and measures to buy buffer stocks. See, e.g., Keynes, 'The Control of Raw Materials by Governments', 39 *The Nation and Athenaeum* (1926) 267.

with many sharing Henry Kissinger's suspicions about 'the unholy alliance between OPEC and the Third World' (at 15).

Dietrich navigates this complex terrain elegantly and with admirable clarity of purpose. Drawing upon a wealth of archival material and diplomatic correspondence, he focuses on the work of a transnational elite of lawyers and diplomats committed to winning legal recognition for resource sovereignty. Iran, Iraq, Libya, Venezuela and a number of other oil-producing countries began to craft legal arguments about sovereign rights over natural resources after World War II. By the time the early 1970s rolled around, the UN General Assembly's important 1962 resource sovereignty declaration was already in the rear-view mirror, and Mohammad Mossadegh's expropriation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951, resulting in a coup orchestrated by the USA and United Kingdom two years later, had largely ceased to function as a reminder of the kind of political calamity that could befall nationalization. As Dietrich shows, this commitment to economic sovereignty found expression in the lives, writings, public addresses and bargaining tactics of international lawyers representing oil-rich developing countries. Algeria's Mohammed Bedjaoui, Iraq's Hasan Zakariya, Lebanon's Muhamad Mughraby, Libya's Mahmood Maghribi and Mexico's Jorge Castañeda belonged to a generation of well-connected, predominantly Western-trained specialists who cut their teeth in debates about development and natural resources during the 1950s and 1960s and came to spearhead much of the push for a NIEO in the 1970s. Shuttling between New York, London, Geneva, OPEC's headquarters in Vienna and their home capitals, this new generation of Third World international lawyers fought with each other, as well as with their counterparts in industrialized countries, to consolidate newly independent states while strengthening ties of economic cooperation. As Dietrich rightly stresses, the newly liberated state was to be endowed with stronger legal claims to the ownership, control and exploitation of the natural resources of its territory, but these sovereign rights were themselves to be anchored in a newly decolonized international law, one organized around principles of interdependence as much as independence (see, e.g., at 7–8, 17, 81, 153–155, 190, 195, 229).

Dietrich romanticizes neither the subject matter nor the protagonists of his story. He makes it clear that the battle over oil, and the broader NIEO endeavour that OPEC was supposed to bankroll, was concerned not with the desirability of capitalism as such but, rather, with how to renegotiate the international division of labour under a reformed capitalism, particularly after the effective demise of the Bretton Woods monetary order in 1971. Just as he tracks internal disagreements between 'gradualists' and those touting more 'insurrectionary' approaches to the oil revolution, Dietrich is forthright about 'the great contradiction of the sovereign rights program: the rise of decolonization might have been a clarion call for its economic equivalent, but it also resulted in a world that often pitted newly independent countries against one another on the basis of their divergent economic interests' (at 281). By

1978, four years after the UN General Assembly formalized the NIEO in a series of resolutions, Hans Singer, the development economist who worked out the 'unequal exchange' theory of international trade at roughly the same time as Raúl Prebisch, the eventual secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development, voiced a certain scepticism about OPEC. Singer was not certain 'whether the richer members of O.P.E.C. will conceive their rôle as being protagonists of the poorest countries, or whether they will simply be adopted as members of the rich man's club'. 'Politically', he noted, 'the support of the poorer countries, and the Group of 77 as a whole, is very important to the member-states of O.P.E.C., but their policies on prices, as well as on cycling their tremendous surpluses, seem more to fit into the pattern of joining the richer world'.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding OPEC's significant aid record during the 1970s and 1980s, which was partly the work of international economic lawyers like Ibrahim Shihata (the first director of the organization's special fund for development assistance), most large producers have now either joined, or continue to aspire towards, 'the rich man's club'. It barely needs mentioning that OPEC's victories, limited though they were on the legal plane, have also furthered the dependence upon non-renewable energy resources that has brought us to the brink of planetary destruction.

*Oil Revolution* should be required reading for anyone interested in the history and political economy of international law, particularly international investment law and what was once rather optimistically termed the 'international law of development'. Long before 'decolonization' became a slogan with seemingly unlimited application, it referred first and foremost to a specific development: the transformation of territories subject to foreign administration into 'sovereign independent states'. *Oil Revolution* traces the rapid rise and crushing fall of a vitally important vein of international legal activism, one whose failures and successes have contributed to creating the ever more exploitative and unequal world that we inhabit today. Decolonization is an ongoing, multi-vocal process, one that now manifests partly in efforts to restructure workplaces, households, campuses, city squares and other spaces, public and private alike. But, as Dietrich reminds us, its roots lie firmly in what was once known as the 'national question', the problem of how to achieve, reinforce and safeguard collective emancipation in the form of the 'free state'. However different the social circumstances and historical conjunctures, the experiences of those past struggles are well worth revisiting in the present era of new struggles.

Umut Özsu

*Associate Professor of Law and Legal Studies*

*Carleton University, Canada*

*Email: [Umut.Ozsu@carleton.ca](mailto:Umut.Ozsu@carleton.ca)*

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<sup>2</sup> Singer, 'The New International Economic Order: An Overview', 16 *Journal of Modern African Studies* (1978) 539, at 544.