

ESSAYS IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. By R. F. V. HEUSTON. Second Edition, Second Impression (Gt. Britain: Stevens & Sons Ltd., 1969. xi + 204 pp. incl. index 18s.).

This book was written as a supplement to the standard textbooks on constitutional law. While it does not seek to replace the standard texts, it seeks to explain the ideas, the historical and political background behind the development of English constitutional law. As such, it dwells at some length upon the personalities, and their ideas, as they shaped the direction of the law.

While the basic object is admirably achieved in a most readable style, there are certain areas where the cursory treatment of vital contemporary issues, leaves one somewhat disappointed.

The essays, therein contained, were written presumably around 1964 (date of publication). Yet only cursory reference is made to the 'Ban the Bomb' demonstrations of 1962. Thus, in the Chapter on Civil Disorder (except for the segment on martial law), there are several short expositions of the civil and criminal sanctions available. With respect, this is most unsatisfactory, as it assumes the absence of any merit at all in all civil disorders and extra-legal dissent.

An attempt should be made to examine the causes and nature of extra-legal dissent. Only then can rational and just responses by the lawmakers to the problems posed, be forthcoming. It is here that legal writers have to reveal the Law's inherent capacity to anticipate change and to be moulded accordingly. Unless this is attempted, the lack of understanding of the workings of the legal system, could result in violent upheavals where mob rule supplants the rule of law. A clear perspective of the legal process and extra legal dissent, by the lawmakers, law enforcement agencies and the dissentient citizenry is essential if this is to be avoided. Parallel occurrences to the 'trial of the Chicago Seven' I, and the obnoxious course of that trial can be avoided by a perpetually evolving legal system, and not one that refuses to respond to change and screams 'Law and Order!' instead.

This book succeeds in explaining the historical perspective of English constitutional law, within a mere compass of 201 pages. However, an adequate balance could have been produced, by a brief venture into possible future trends.

Altogether, a valuable complement to the basic texts for the law student, and interesting and informative reading for the informed citizen. It also provides refreshing literature for the practitioner and others.