

*Comparing Constitutions*. By S. E. FINER, VERNON BOGDANOR and BERNARD RUDDEN. [Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1995. x + 395 pp. ISBN 0-19-876345-X. No price given]

*Comparing Constitutions* gives a good comparative overview of the basic features of the British, American, German, French and Russian Constitutions. It contains a comparative chapter dealing with the major characteristics of constitutional law (e.g. amendments, federalism, governance, etc.) and a very good comparative chapter on the UK Constitution. Over two-thirds of the book is not analytical, but devoted simply to reproducing the full texts of the five constitutions it examines. The chapter on the UK Constitution is obviously of particular interest to the foreign reader, who will be pleased to find a concise, easy-to-read outline of the fundamental structures of UK constitutional law. Unfortunately, the book suffers from a drawback with regard to the German Basic Law: the version printed in the book does not include all the amendments made since December 1993. This is a pity because the amendments, particularly those made in October 1994, are numerous and apply to essential features of the German Constitution (e.g. allocation of legislative competences). However, the book is extremely useful to the English-speaking reader simply because it makes available to him or her translations of the texts of the constitutions. Finally, the Treaties establishing the European Community and the European Union as well as the European Convention on Human Rights are reproduced in the book. This may come as a surprise because the EU is not a single State so that these documents are not constitutions in the traditional sense. Yet the authors have included these documents in order to enable the reader to study in embryo the formation of a United States of Europe. This is a very progressive approach, as such a development is nowhere on the political agenda in Europe. In a nutshell, despite the drawbacks mentioned, the book is very useful when making a first comparative approach to the area of constitutional law. However, a second edition which includes the latest version of the German Basic Law would be a good idea.

SVEN RECKEWERTH

*Criminal Justice in Europe: A Comparative Study*. Edited by C. HARDING, P. FENNEL, N. JÖRG and B. SWART. [Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1995. xix + 404 pp. ISBN 0-19-825807-0. £45]

This interesting volume is the product of a long-standing co-operation between the Willem Pompe Institute for Criminal Law and Criminology at the University of Utrecht and the Law Schools of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth and Cardiff. Its aim is to compare various aspects of criminal justice in the Netherlands and England and Wales. In doing so the authors seek to study the convergence between civil law and common law jurisdictions and the growing Europeanisation of criminal justice in these two European countries.

The book starts with two chapters in which the basic contours of the two criminal justice systems are outlined, by Constantijn Kelk (the Netherlands) and Gavin S. Dingwall and Alan Davenport (the United Kingdom).

Whereas the Netherlands has an inquisitorial system of justice (as do most countries on the continent), England and Wales have an accusatorial system. Nevertheless, a comparison between the Dutch and English systems of criminal justice cannot be taken to represent a comparison between the inquisitorial and accusatorial systems in general. The differences within the families of both common law and continental law countries are too big to validate such an assumption.

The two countries differ not only in the general legal structure of their respective criminal justice systems but also in their policy towards crime. The Netherlands has a reputation for being mild and tolerant towards crime, which goes well beyond its borders. The criminal justice system of England and Wales takes a more robust stance towards crime. This difference becomes especially clear in the chapter on the drug problem, which is fittingly entitled