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INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Maurer School of Law
Bloomington

Introduction

The Earl Snyder Lecture in International Law September 10, 1997

DAVID P. FIDLER*

Through the generosity and vision of Earl Snyder, the Indiana University School of Law, Bloomington is able to make available to its students, faculty, and the wider university community important opportunities in the area of international law. These opportunities center around a creative link between this School of Law and Cambridge University. The Snyder Scholarship every year allows one of our students the coveted honor of conducting research in international law at the prestigious Lauterpacht Research Centre for International Law. The Snyder Lecture in International Law annually brings the Indiana University and Cambridge University communities together to exchange ideas about the exciting world of international law. In 1996, Professor Eli Lauterpacht gave the inaugural Snyder Lecture in International Law. In 1997, the School of Law was privileged to host Dr. Philip Allott of Trinity College, Cambridge, as the Snyder Lecturer.

Dr. Allott has become one of the more interesting voices in the discourse on the future of international relations and international law. His voice contains not only great learning but also intense compassion for the future of humanity. In 1990, Dr. Allott published *Eunomia: New Order for a New World*, in which he ambitiously proposed “a general theory of society and law which is potentially universal, that is to say, a theory capable of being the theory acted upon by all participants in international society.”¹ The willingness to ask and answer fundamental questions about international law and international relations appears in Allott’s Snyder Lecture, entitled *The True Function of Law in the International Community*, which begins with the statement that “[m]y topic is the future of humanity—no less—and the role of law in the future of humanity.”

Dr. Allott’s approach to his topic is to force us to rethink the concept of law and how this rethinking relates to the universal challenges law faces in

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1. PHILIP ALLOTT, *EUNOMIA: NEW ORDER FOR A NEW WORLD* xix (1990).

humanity's future. He sees not only a central role for law in humanity's future but also a special role for the United States—a powerful law-state—in creating “One Humanity Under Law.” Americans, Allott argues, have special responsibilities in this time of great change, in which we can see “the first signs of an emerging new human world, a new human self-conceiving and self-constituting.” An immediate task within these special responsibilities is to work “to imagine at last a new kind of post-tribal international law, which extends to the level of all humanity the wonder-working capacity of law, when law is properly understood.”

Whether Americans live up to these Allottian responsibilities remains to be seen; but, in the meantime, we and others from different countries can enjoy and ponder Dr. Allott's erudite compassion displayed in his analysis of the true function of law in the international community.