

# Get Carta

*'Torquil Dick-Erikson, the journalist who first alerted us to the iniquitous Corpus Juris criminal code has had a letter printed in the Daily Telegraph. We reproduce it below:*

GET CARTA

Sir,

Magna Carta is to be celebrated by David Cameron's administration, even if Allan Massie (Comment, June 16) says that it was not a "*revolutionary*" step in its time.

Yet it was the first, successful attempt to limit the state's power. Clause 29, to this day, deprives the state of power to order punishment of a citizen, which can be decided only by a jury of the defendant's peers. It inspired the American revolution. Nobody has mentioned that Magna Carta never crossed into continental Europe.

Continental criminal procedures are little known in Britain, even by the Government.

In 1215, Pope Innocent III was setting up the Inquisition, which, far from limiting the authorities' power over the individual, made it absolute. When he heard of Magna Carta, he wrote to the English clergy saying they had done something "*abominable and illicit*". In Europe, only England escaped the Inquisition. Centuries later, Napoleon's new laws adopted and adapted an inquisitorial method, redirecting it to the service of the state. Napoleon's codes underpin most continental legal systems today. Brussels aims to create a unified European criminal code. The embryo "*Corpus Juris*" proposal was unveiled in 1997, and was denounced in "*THE DAILY TELEGRAPH*". It would abolish trial by jury, HABEAS CORPUS, and other safeguards considered normal by the British, yet ignored by the European Convention.

The European arrest warrant is a stepping stone towards Corpus Juris: a European prosecutor will issue European warrants. Yet Mr Cameron intends to reconfirm the European Arrest Warrant. This will trash the foundation stone of our freedoms in Magna Carta.

So just what is Mr. Cameron meaning to celebrate?

TORQUIL DICK-ERIKSON

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