

Fall 2014 History & Heritage -- #4

Civil Government --- (Tabletalk; daily studies, Sept. 24-30, 2014)

This social institution, far from being the work of the devil, was established by God as the image and instrument of his fearsome judgment? The Apostle Paul says as much in a remarkable passage in his *Letter to the Romans* (ch. 13), observing that “the powers that be” are divinely called to preserve society by restraining evil and safeguarding what is good. Thus, all men must conscientiously submit even to worldly authorities, like the Roman rulers of Paul’s day, for they “bear not the sword in vain.”

Feudal System --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 192-200)

This military arrangement—along with farms, boroughs, and churches—held together medieval European social life both on the continent and in the British Isles? The security system called for a regional matrix of personal loyalties and covenantal duties involving land and service among greater and lesser lords and their subjects. Thus Europe found a way, writes Russell Kirk, “to resist its Moslem enemies of Spain, Africa, and the Levant, and its Mongol enemies of the Russian steppes.”

King John --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 192-200)

This early 13th-century king of England, writes Russell Kirk, “was so grasping and evil a monarch that no later English king took [his name]”? He made himself odious by imprisoning arbitrarily for extortion’s sake (funding his wars) various barons, knights, and burgesses. Faced with rebellion and the threat of war with France, the beleaguered king came to terms with his barons in a 1215 charter or guarantee pledging royal restraint and good conduct (the so-called Magna Carta).

Magna Carta --- (Kirk; *Roots of American Order*, pp. 192-200)

This royal-baronial compact, signed at Runnymede in England (1215), proved an early milestone in the development of a national governing assembly? The ambitious and arbitrary King John, faced with mutiny among the barons, pledged himself to lawful conduct, while his feeble successor turned affairs over to a baronial Great Council. Thus the answerability of kings to the law could no longer be denied, nor could the implied power of the nobility to hold monarchs to account for illegal acts.

Immigration Act --- (T. Piatak; *Chronicles* blog, Sept. 25, 2014)

This 1924 federal statute, signed into law by President Coolidge, sought to restrict severely the number of foreigners entering the U.S.? By 1921, the foreign-born in America had reached an all-time high (surpassed only recently), due to waves of migrants from eastern and southern Europe arriving via Ellis Island, N.Y., (1880-1920). Coolidge, who said “America must be kept American,” concurred with Congress on the need to suspend new admissions and allow time for the assimilation of outsiders.