

2003

Jack Rakove: Europe's Floundering Fathers Study Guide

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Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven Alan, "Jack Rakove: Europe's Floundering Fathers Study Guide" (2003). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 91.
http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/91

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JACK RAKOVE: EUROPE'S FLOUNDERING FATHERS

Foreign Policy, September 1, 2003

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2003/09/01/europes_floundering_fathers

STUDY GUIDE, 2003

Steven Alan Samson

Study Questions

1. How does Rakove interpret the remarks of former French president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing comparing his role as president of the Convention on the Future of Europe with the roles played by Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson at the time of the American Constitutional Convention? In comparison with the earlier convention, what makes the current European project "ambiguous and arguably deficient?" (28-30)
2. How does the EU constitutional treaty compare with the Articles of Confederation? With the Constitution of 1787? (30-31)
3. **We the Peoples** Identify five negative aspects of the proposed constitution. What is meant by "competences?" (31-32)
4. **That Was Then, This Is Europe** What advantages did the American states when they sought to devise a federal constitution? Identify some of the national, political realities that may limit cooperation? How did the framers of the American Constitution overcome similar obstacles? What advantages flowed from the ratification process? How does this example contrast with the European deliberations? (32-34)
5. **Treaty or Constitution?** Identify some obstacles to the elitist political vision of the Eurofederalists? Where may strong resistance be expected? What could not be foreseen about the American presidency? (34-36)
6. **A Trans-Atlantic Mixed Blessing** What American constitutional doctrine is likely to be well understood? What circumstances favored this outcome in America? Are they likely to be repeated in Europe? (36-38)

Review

Benjamin Franklin
Constitution of 1787
Competences
obstacles to the political vision of the Eurofederalists
judicial review

Thomas Jefferson
negative aspects of the constitution
comparison of Philadelphia and Brussels conventions

Articles of Confederation
separation of powers