

December 2012

Roger Scruton: A Political Philosophy Study Guide, 2006-2012

Steven A. Samson

Liberty University, ssamson@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs

 Part of the [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Samson, Steven A., "Roger Scruton: A Political Philosophy Study Guide, 2006-2012" (2012). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 409.

http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/gov_fac_pubs/409

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Helms School of Government at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu.

**ROGER SCRUTON: A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
STUDY GUIDE, 2006-2012
Steven Alan Samson**

CHAPTER ONE: CONSERVING NATIONS

Outline

- A. NATIONAL LOYALTY (1-5)
 - 1. Democracy Fails Without It
 - 2. European Turning Point
 - a. Territorial sovereignty
 - 1) Opportunity to recuperate it
 - 2) Threat to sovereignty
 - b. The Choice
 - 3. Attitude of Political Elites
 - 4. Case for the Nation State
 - a. Experiments with other forms
 - 1) Disasters
 - b. Wise Policy
 - c. Burke made the case
 - 5. Institutions of the European Experiment
 - a. Critique
 - 1) Negative Argument
 - 2) Focus on pathological realism of nation state
 - 3) Chesterton rebuttal
 - 6. Nationalism vs. Patriotism
 - a. Republican patriotism
 - 1) Attachment to what is ours by right
 - 2) Fatherland
 - 7. Territorial Loyalty
 - a. Denunciation of the nation makes no real argument
 - b. Mill's principle of cohesion
 - 8. Historical Loyalty
 - a. Case against the nation state has not properly been made
 - b. Brink of disastrous decisions
 - 9. Bottom Line: Earn Your Birthright
- B. CITIZENSHIP (5-8)
 - 1. Migrants
 - a. From areas of weak nationality
 - b. Search for citizenship
 - 2. Mutual Accountability
 - a. Role of the state
 - 1) Rights and Duties
 - b. Republican government
 - 3. Subjection
 - a. Subjects aspire to be citizens
 - 4. Benefits
 - 5. Marxist View is Backward
 - a. Rule of law secures property rights and contractual freedoms
 - b. Markets flourish as a precondition of prosperity
 - 6. Society of Citizens

- a. Trust can grow between strangers
 - 1) Australia vs. Kazakhstan
 - 7. Trust Broadcast
 - a. Every citizen becomes linked to every other
 - 8. Rarity of the Achievement
 - a. Social contract idea
 - 1) Why is resonates
 - b. Thought experiment
 - 1) Presupposition
- C. MEMBERSHIP AND NATIONALITY (8-11)
 - 1. Citizenship Presupposes Membership
 - a. First-person plural is the precondition at democratic politics
 - 2. Tribal Societies
 - a. Fiction of kinship
 - b. No impartial rule of law
 - c. Outsiders
 - 3. Racism as a Tribal Survival
 - a. Nazi example
 - 4. Creed Community
 - 5. Conflict Between Criteria of Membership
 - 6. Nation as a Contrast
 - a. Definition
 - b. How the three differ
 - c. Idea of a common territory
 - 7. Nation State
 - a. Successor to territorial monarchy
- D. NATIONS AND NATIONALISM (11-16)
 - 1. Origins of the Nation
 - a. Lord Acton
 - 2. Social Artifacts
 - a. Intentional vs. unintentional
 - b. Invisible hand
 - 3. Illustration of Acton's Thesis
 - 4. Legal and Institutional Framework is Presupposed
 - a. Russia's legal vacuum
 - b. Importance of territorial law
 - 5. Interlocking Loyalties
 - a. Contract favored over status
 - b. Imprints of distinct political form
 - 1) Church of England
 - 6. Not Merely a Conventional Arrangement
 - 7. Validation
 - a. Experience of belonging
 - b. Common language
 - c. English nation pre-dated modernity
 - 8. Nations Defined by Homeland
 - 9. Tolerance of Difference
 - a. Discipline of neighborliness
 - b. Clash of two forms of membership; national vs. religious
 - 10. National Loyalty vs. Nationalism
 - a. Abbé Sieyès
 - b. Idolatrous deification of the nation
 - 1) Intimidation and ethnic cleansing
- E. OUR CONSTITUENT NATIONS (16-17)
 - 1. Multiple National Loyalties
 - a. They may rest within each other

- b. English union with Scotland
 - 1) Each kept own law
 - 2. Heirs to a Common Law
 - a. National identity has withstood shocks and acts of aggression
- F. VIRTUES OF NATIONALITY (17-21)
 - 1. Reciprocal Obligations
 - a. Law-Abidingness becomes part of the scheme of things
 - b. Symbols of national loyalty: Neither militant nor ideological
 - 2. National Loyalty; Issues in and Is Assumed by Democratic Government
 - a. People bound by a national “we” accept the legitimacy of opposition
 - b. None of these good things is found in states founded on the “we” of tribal identity or the “we” of faith
 - 3. Virtues of the Nation State Are Revealed in Two Characteristics: Accountability and Civil Rights
 - 4. Question of Accountability
 - a. How accountability is brought into being
 - 1) Ability of mobilize citizens
 - 2) Citizen cooperation is required
 - b. National loyalty is the rock
 - 1) Recent experience in the Middle East, Russian Empire, and Africa
 - 2) Accountability to strangers is a rare gift
 - c. Expansion of jurisdiction, decline of accountability
 - 1) European Commission
 - 2) Corruption in UN, UNESCO, WHO, ILO: Nobody is empowered to guard these guardians
 - d. It is a natural byproduct of national sovereignty which is jeopardized by transnational governance
 - 5. Civil Rights
 - a. Universalism should be regarded skeptically
 - 1) Rights come into existence because they can be enforced, which requires rule of law, which requires a common obedience, including the enforcing entity
 - b. Societies of citizens enjoy political freedoms
 - 1) Rights require reciprocal duties
 - 2) They must be secured by procedures that must be rescued from the State
 - 3) *e.g., habeas corpus*
 - c. Rights become realities when embedded in the law of nation states
 - 1) Declarations of transnational committees: what Jeremy Bentham called “nonsense on stilts”
- G. PANGLOSSIAN UNIVERSALISM (21-23)
 - 1. Obligation of Critics: Show How the Virtues of the Nation State Can Be Achieved without It
 - 2. Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*
 - a. Signatories of the treaty were required to be republics
 - b. Federal union
 - c. Principal objection to transnational government: soulless despotism
 - 3. International Jurisdiction’s Sole Purpose: Secure Peace between Neighboring Jurisdictions
 - a. Background presupposition of the League of Nations was not fulfilled
 - b. Bombardment by laws from outside
 - c. Consequence: Despotism and anarchy
 - 4. Human Rights Utopianism
 - a. Problem of enforcement
 - b. Burden of transnational legislation

- H. OIKOPHOBIA: CULTURE OF REPUDIATION (23-25)
 - 1. Loyalty Ridiculed and Demonized by Media and Schools
 - a. Culture excised from the curriculum
 - b. Repudiation of the national idea
 - 2. Oikophobia Is Opposite to Xenophobia
 - a. Arrest development of intellectuals
 - 1) Cambridge spies [cf. Toledano's *Cry Havoc!*, pp. 73-74]
 - 3. Examples
 - a. Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault
 - b. Political correctness (PC)
 - 4. Assaults on the Constitution
 - a. Crisis of legitimacy
- I. THREATS TO THE NATION (25-29)
 - 1. Need for Honesty
 - a. Censorship prevails in the media and government circles
 - b. Transnational bureaucracies [cf. John Fonte's *Sovereignty or Submission*, Pierre Manent's *Democracy without Nations?*, and Jeremy Rabkin's *The Case for Sovereignty*]
 - c. An exception: The United States [Mark Steyn contends, however, that the American exceptionalism he depicted in *America Alone* is on the ropes in *After America*]
 - d. World Trade Organization (WTO) threatens everyone's sovereignty
 - 2. Migrants to the West
 - a. Risk-takers are becoming atypical
 - b. More typical are the subsidized asylum-seekers
 - c. Catastrophic effects on national loyalty
 - 3. Identity Theft
 - a. Non-negotiable demand for sanctuary threatens an identity forged from a shared sense of home [which raises the issue of assimilation]
 - b. Asylum crisis has opened up a gap between government and the people
 - 1) "The 'we' feeling seems no longer to have a voice among our rulers" when the Government acts on their behalf instead of ours
 - 4. UN Convention on Refugees and Asylum
 - a. The Convention's escape clause for dictators: opponents may now be exiled rather than killed
 - b. Delicate domestic arrangements are as a result thrown in disarray
 - 5. An Uneasy Silence Is Imposed by Self-Censorship and Intimidation
 - a. Effect of unwanted immigration, not only on national loyalty, but also on the idea of citizenship
 - b. Hypocrisy of those who claim the benefits of citizenship with no duty to the State
 - 1) cf. Max Frisch's *The Firebugs*
 - c. The root assumption of democratic politics is the idea that the citizen owes loyalty to a territory, a jurisdiction, and all who live within it
 - 1) This "idea has no place in the hearts and minds of many who now call themselves citizens of European states."
 - 6. World Trade Organization
 - a. its benefits
 - b. Its assault of national sovereignty
 - 7. Consequences
 - a. Multinational corporations (MNCs) use transnational institutions to "break down national jurisdictions and to cancel the loyalties upon which they depend."
 - 8. Accountability
 - a. A national parliament must strive to reconcile competing claims that come before it

- b. A transnational assembly has no such duty: its single purpose outweighs all else
 - c. The UN Convention proposed an answer to one problem only: “a problem whose scale and gravity have since immeasurably increased.”
 - d. The UN Assembly has no duty to reconcile its ruling to reality
- J. OVERCOMING THE THREATS (29-31)
- 1. Need to Return to Bilateral Agreements
 - a. These institutions’ lack of an effective military arm means the costs of defying them will be rapidly outweighed by the benefit
[NOTE: The exception here is the United States, for which treaties are enforceable parts of the Constitution; failure of the Bricker Amendment made the United States especially vulnerable to the mischief of transnational legislation. cf. John Fonte, *Sovereignty or Submission* and the [Global Governance vs. National Sovereignty Conference](#), at which I spoke].
 - 2. Issue of Free Trade
 - a. Reality: massive subsidies
 - b. Unnecessary restraint of trade
 - c. Free trade is neither possible nor desirable
 - 3. Internal Threats to Nationality
 - a. Immigration controls have collapsed; sovereignty must be restored
 - b. “Return control of the education system to parents and the oikophobes will no longer be in charge of it.”
 - c. Withdraw from the European Convention of Human Rights and historical allegiance can reaffirm the duties that are the enduring price of our rights
 - 4. The European Union Actually Depends on National Sovereignty
 - a. Yet it is bent on destroying the conditions of its existence
 - b. “By removing sovereignty from [national parliaments], we shall invite first the despotism and then the anarchy that Kant feared.”