Constitutionalising Anarchy

Anarchism is often assumed to stand outside constitutionalism, yet it forms a significant, if overlooked tradition of constitutional thought. Addressing global constitutional crises and the impasses of state-centred politics, this book brings anarchism into productive dialogue with constitutional, political and international theory. At its core is a reconstruction of anarchist social theory grounded in an ontology of anarchy shaped by European social science and republican concerns with dividing and balancing power. These ideas were reinterpreted by major anarchist thinkers – from Proudhon to Lucy Parsons, and from Tolstoy to Kōtoku Shūsui – who advanced decentralised, federalist alternatives to imperial and hierarchical orders. Combining intellectual history with co-produced research alongside anarchist groups, *Constitutionalising Anarchy* shows how constitutional practices developed within militant labour unions, protest movements and co-operatives across the twentieth century. It reconsiders anarchy, constitutionalism and the possibilities of political organisation. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Ruth Kinna is a political theorist and historian of ideas at Loughborough University. Her books include *The Government of No One* (2019) and *Kropotkin: Reviewing the Classical Anarchist Tradition* (2016). She is the co-founder of the Political Studies Association's (PSA) Anarchist Studies Network and the co-editor of the journal *Anarchist Studies*.

Alex Prichard is an International Relations theorist at the University of Exeter. His books include *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction* (2022) and *Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (2013). He is the co-founder of the PSA Anarchist Studies Network and the co-editor of the Contemporary Anarchist Studies' monograph series.

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Constitutionalising Anarchy is easily one of the most thought-provoking and groundbreaking works on anarchist theory published this century. Kinna and Prichard masterfully bridge the gap between powerful examples of anarchy in action and intellectual histories of societal norms-making to challenge dominant statist paradigms. This is an urgent appeal for activists to further conceptualise their organisational structures and political theorists to take seriously the anti-state tradition of collective decision-making from below.

Mark Bray
Assistant Teaching Professor, Rutgers
University-New Brunswick

Kinna and Prichard show how anarchism, grounding and shaping an emancipatory politics, can offer an appealing and viable alternative to modern conceptions of politics as rooted in state sovereignty. Combining insights from a range of disciplines and attending to both historical and contemporary examples, they argue provocatively that, far from disregarding or attacking social order, anarchism embodies a conception of our common life that enables constitutional order to emerge from the bottom up.

Gary Chartier
Distinguished Professor of Law
and Business Ethics, La Sierra University

Combining academic rigor with deep inside knowledge of its subject, this book is a major landmark in anarchist thought. Bridging anarchism's fundamentals with contemporary theory and practices, the authors shed new light on the often-overlooked constitutional dimension of anarchism. This opens exciting directions for an anarchism deeply rooted in everyday life.

Tomás Ibáñez
Professor of Social Psychology, Autonomous
University of Barcelona, Spain

Kinna and Prichard not only make a convincing, counterintuitive case that anarchism is compatible with constitutionalism, they demonstrate that constitutional anarchy is the only institutional form appropriate for our contemporary world, where power relations have radically changed on the local, national and global levels. Constitutionalising Anarchy is an instant 'must read' in contemporary democratic theory.

John P. McCormick
Professor of Political Science,
University of Chicago

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This bold and original book is a springboard for reimagining constitutional politics without the state. Moving nimbly between political theory, history and rich empirical case studies, it uncovers a hidden tradition of anarchist constitutionalising and shows how anarchy can organise, rather than destroy, social order. Accessible yet rigorous, it offers activists and scholars a powerful new language for thinking about domination, democracy and global justice, and makes a compelling case that the future of constitutionalism lies in federated, bottom-up experiments in freedom and creativity.

Patricia Owens
Professor of International Relations,
University of Oxford

Kinna and Prichard deftly uncover a neglected body of anarchist political theory and practice extending from Kropotkin and Proudhon in the nineteenth century to radical twenty-first-century movements such as Occupy and the Industrial Workers of the World. They untether anarchy from its connotations as constitutionalism's nemesis. Their timely and masterful book brings anarchist thought back to the fore of public debate opening possibilities to think constitutionalism and anarchism beyond the state. A must read for all those interested in radical new alternatives.

Manjeet Ramgotra
Senior Lecturer in Political Theory, SOAS
University of London

Professors Kinna and Prichard have co-created an outstanding intellectual history and contemporary political theory and practice of participatory democratic constitutional anarchy at the local, federal, and global levels. They also argue for its superiority to state-based sovereign constitutionalism.

James Tully
Emeritus Professor, University of Victoria, Canada

This book offers a thoroughly innovative take on constitutionalism. By unearthing the origins and inherently constructive aspect of 'an-archy', Kinna and Prichard present a most welcome novel take on anarchy as a normative organising principle in late modern times. Conceived in this way, anarchy enables us to grasp the full range of 'constituent power beyond the state' in appreciation of 'post-colonial, liberal and socialist critics of domination and arbitrary power'. As such the book makes fascinating reading, a must-read, especially for students of International Relations but also for Political Scientists more generally.

Antje Wiener
Chair of Political Science, especially Global
Governance and Professor of Law, University of Hamburg
and By-Fellow, Hughes Hall, University of Cambridge

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