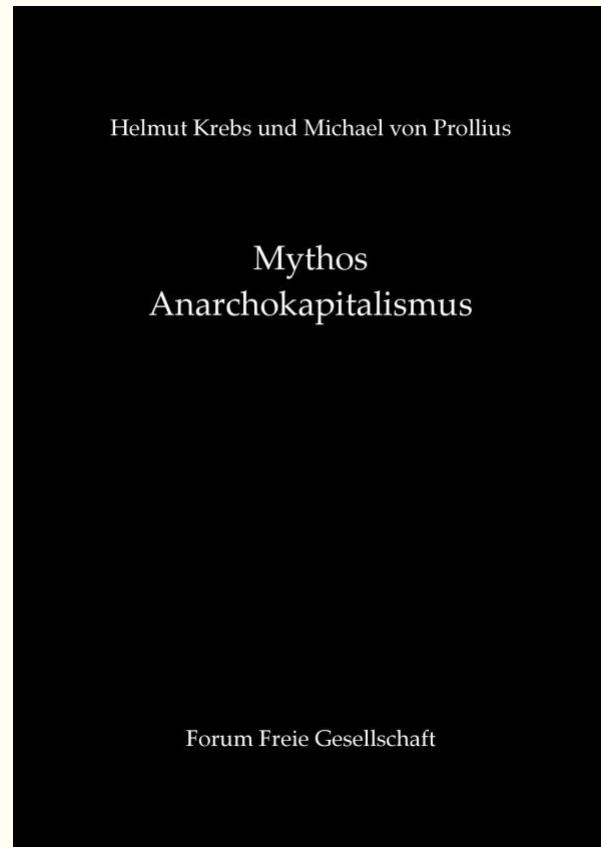


MvP Book Abstract #12

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# **Mythos Anarcho-Capitalism**

## **A Classical Liberal Critique of Radical Anti-Statism**



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## One-Sentence Summary

This book presents a comprehensive classical-liberal critique of anarcho-capitalist thought, arguing that radical anti-statism replaces institutional realism with moral abstraction and thereby undermines the very conditions required for a free and stable social order.

## About This Book

### Publication Details:

- **Author:** Helmut Krebs, Michael von Prollius
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- **Format:** 152 pages

### Genesis and Methodology:

*Mythos Anarcho-Capitalism* emerged from an intensifying internal debate within liberal thought during the early 2010s. In academic discussions, online forums, and policy-adjacent circles, anarcho-capitalist and radical libertarian positions increasingly presented themselves as the most consistent and intellectually superior continuation of the liberal tradition. Classical liberalism, by contrast, was often portrayed as compromised, timid, or insufficiently radical due to its acceptance of legal and political institutions.

The book was conceived as a direct response to this development. It adopts the form of a *Streitschrift*—a polemical but analytically grounded intervention—aimed at clarifying conceptual boundaries within liberalism. Many of its chapters are revised and expanded versions of essays, working papers, and debates originally published on *Forum Freie Gesellschaft*, where these issues were discussed in an often confrontational intellectual environment.

Methodologically, the book combines political philosophy, economic theory, and historical analysis. Its focus lies on institutions, law, violence, and the formation of political order. Rather than defending existing states or political arrangements, the authors examine whether radically anti-institutional models can sustain freedom in complex, large-scale societies. The polemical tone is deliberate: it serves to sharpen distinctions and to challenge theoretical simplifications that, in the authors' view, obscure historical experience and institutional constraints.

**Author's Note:**

This book was written as a polemical intervention in a specific phase of liberal debate, when radical anti-statist positions increasingly claimed to represent the only consistent form of liberal thought. From today's perspective, some of its sharpness reflects the urgency of that moment more than my current mode of argument. Yet the need to set a clear conceptual counterpoint—to defend institutional realism against moral abstraction—remains an essential part of the book's purpose.

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# Mythos Anarcho-Capitalism

### Liberalism and Its Core: Conceptual Foundations

The book opens with a fundamental question: does liberalism possess a coherent core, or is it merely a loose collection of attitudes united by a vague preference for freedom? This question is decisive for evaluating anarcho-capitalism's claim to be the most consistent form of liberal thought. If liberalism lacks a definable core, any radicalization could plausibly present itself as its logical culmination.

Against this view, the authors argue that classical liberalism is characterized by a distinct understanding of freedom as an institutional achievement rather than a purely moral condition. Freedom is inseparable from law, general rules, and stable expectations. The liberal tradition, from early modern political philosophy to twentieth-century constitutional economics, has therefore always been concerned with the problem of order: how to restrain power without dissolving society into arbitrariness or violence.

This emphasis distinguishes classical liberalism from anarcho-capitalist approaches that seek to derive social order from a small number of moral axioms, most prominently the non-aggression principle. While moral principles play an important role, the book argues that they cannot replace institutional analysis.

### Moral Absolutism versus Institutional Reality

A central line of critique addresses the moral architecture of anarcho-capitalism. By elevating individual self-ownership and non-aggression to absolute principles, anarcho-capitalist theories tend to treat institutions as optional or even illegitimate constraints. Law, political authority, and public enforcement are viewed primarily as sources of coercion rather than as enabling conditions of freedom.

The authors challenge this perspective by drawing a sharp distinction between moral desirability and institutional viability. Moral purity does not guarantee social stability. The question is not whether a society without public authority is morally attractive in theory, but whether it can reliably protect life, property, and peaceful cooperation under real-world conditions.

From this standpoint, anarcho-capitalism is criticized for conflating the absence of state authority with the absence of power. The book argues that power relations persist regardless of formal political structures and that the abolition of public institutions risks transferring power to private actors operating without transparent rules or effective constraints.

## **Law, Violence, and the Problem of Order**

A substantial portion of the analysis focuses on law and violence. Drawing on historical research into state formation, early modern violence markets, and private enforcement regimes, the authors examine whether competitive provision of security and law can substitute for public legal order.

The findings are skeptical. Historical cases of fragmented authority and privatized enforcement often resulted in unstable equilibria characterized by recurring violence, protection rackets, and domination by the strongest actors. Rather than eliminating coercion, such arrangements tended to obscure it.

The book emphasizes that law, in the classical liberal sense, is not merely a service that can be purchased on a market. It is a public framework of general and abstract rules that stabilizes expectations across society. Without such a framework, contractual freedom itself becomes precarious, as enforcement depends on power rather than on impartial adjudication.

## **Anarchism, Libertarianism, and the Limits of Radicalism**

The critique extends to contemporary libertarian and anarchist thinkers who advocate far-reaching privatization of law, security, and social norms. While acknowledging the shared skepticism toward concentrated power and paternalism, the authors argue that anarcho-capitalist theories systematically underestimate the complexity of large-scale societies.

Radical anti-statism, the book contends, often relies on small-group analogies that cannot be extrapolated to open, pluralistic societies with millions of participants. What may function within tight-knit communities or homogeneous groups does not scale without generating exclusion, segmentation, or conflict.

From a classical liberal perspective, political institutions are not ideal solutions but necessary compromises. Their legitimacy derives not from moral perfection but from their capacity to limit violence, arbitrariness, and domination more effectively than available alternatives.

## **Liberal Voices and Internal Boundaries**

The book situates its argument within a broader liberal tradition by engaging with a range of liberal thinkers. It examines where skepticism toward the state ends and where rejection of political order begins. In doing so, it highlights the internal boundaries of liberalism and rejects the notion that every anti-statist position automatically qualifies as liberal.

Classical liberalism, as presented here, is neither statist nor utopian. It accepts politics as a persistent feature of human coexistence and seeks to civilize it through legal constraints, decentralization, and institutional competition rather than to abolish it altogether.

## **Violence, Authority, and Human Nature**

In its final analytical sections, the book turns to the anthropological and sociological dimensions of violence. Drawing on modern violence research, it argues that violence is not merely a product of ideology or institutional failure but an enduring human capacity. This insight reinforces the liberal concern with institutions that channel, restrain, and neutralize violence rather than denying its existence.

From this perspective, anarcho-capitalism appears as a form of political romanticism. By assuming away the darker aspects of human behavior, it risks creating conditions under which violence re-emerges in less regulated and less accountable forms.

## **Conclusion: Liberalism as an Order of Freedom**

*Mythos Anarcho-Capitalism* concludes that the promise of a fully stateless, market-based order rests on theoretical simplifications that neglect historical experience and institutional necessity. Freedom, the book insists, is not preserved by the absence of authority but by its limitation and institutionalization.

The work positions classical liberalism as an order-based tradition concerned with durability, complexity, and social cooperation. Its critique of anarcho-capitalism is not a defense of existing political arrangements but a warning against replacing imperfect institutions with abstract ideals incapable of sustaining freedom in practice.

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## About the Author

Michael von Prollius is a German historian, economist, and author specializing in the intersection of ideas, institutions, and historical development. He holds degrees in history and economics and has conducted extensive research spanning ancient history, economic thought, political philosophy, and contemporary policy analysis.

Helmut Krebs is a German educator and self-taught philosopher with a longstanding engagement in classical liberal thought. He has translated major English-language works by Ludwig von Mises, including *Human Action* and *The Ultimate Foundation of Economic Science*. His publications include the German edition of *Theory and History* as well as two books published in the Edition Forum Freie Gesellschaft: *Classical Liberalism*, and the essay *Sclerosis: Guiding Principles and Ideologies of an Aging Society*.

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