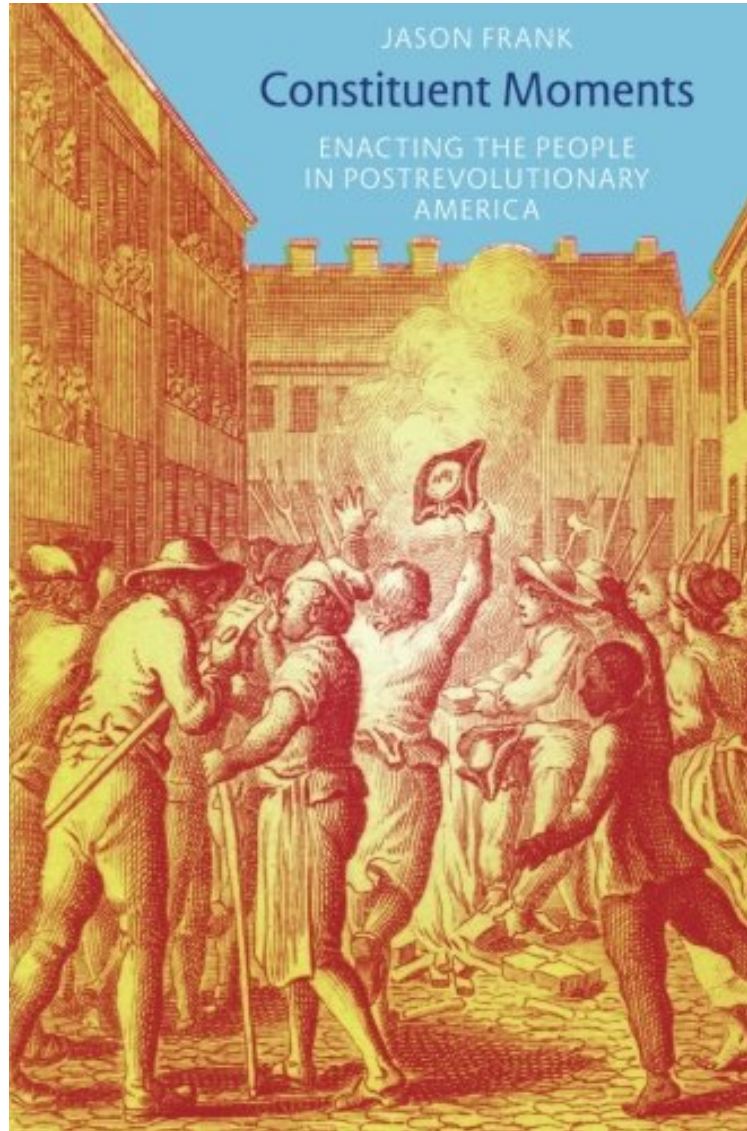


[Online library] Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America

# Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America

Jason Frank

audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



 Download

 Read Online

#1300796 in Books Duke University Press Books 2010-01-04 2010-01-04 Original language: English PDF # 1  
9.25 x .90 x 6.131, 1.15 #File Name: 0822346753360 pages | File size: 18.Mb

**Jason Frank : Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Postrevolutionary America:

Since the American Revolution, there has been broad cultural consensus that the people are the only legitimate ground of public authority in the United States. For just as long, there has been disagreement over who the people are and how they should be represented or institutionally embodied. In *Constituent Moments*, Jason Frank explores this dilemma of authorization: the grounding of democratic legitimacy in an elusive notion of the people. Frank argues that the people are not a coherent or sanctioned collective. Instead, the people exist as an effect of successful claims to speak on their behalf; the power to speak in their name can be vindicated only retrospectively. The people, and democratic politics more broadly, emerge from the dynamic tension between popular politics and representation. They spring from what Frank calls constituent moments, moments when claims to speak in the people's name are politically felicitous, even though those making such claims break from established rules and procedures for representing popular voice. Elaborating his theory of constituent moments, Frank focuses on specific historical instances when unauthorized individuals or associations seized the mantle of authority, and, by doing so, changed the inherited rules of authorization and produced new spaces and conditions for political representation. He looks at crowd actions such as parades, riots, and protests; the Democratic-Republican Societies of the 1790s; and the writings of Walt Whitman and Frederick Douglass. Frank demonstrates that the revolutionary establishment of the people is not a solitary event, but rather a series of micropolitical enactments, small dramas of self-authorization that take place in the informal contexts of crowd actions, political oratory, and literature as well as in the more formal settings of constitutional conventions and political associations.

*Constituent Moments* is the best book on the founding of the United States to have been written in several generations. Jason Frank goes beyond American political history, opening an old question from the *Leviathan*: The People: What? This question is at the heart of democratic sovereignty. Jason Frank's careful attention to canonical political theory and his attentive study of those who acted in the name of the people enables him to follow, as few could, in the footsteps of Thomas Hobbes. This is a genuinely brilliant book. Anne Norton, author of *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*