

Manifestos

A public declaration of political, religious, philosophical, artistic or literary principles.

“The time of the manifesto is the present (and immediate future); the ‘now’ time (Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit*) of decision. The manifesto has no interest in the past except as part of the problem to be solved. The manifesto, as Derrida reminds us in *Specters of Marx*, typically tells us that ‘the time is out of joint,’ that it is ‘high time’ we set things right, then proposes a course of action or a change of heart in order to move on to better times in the future. Derrida also notes that the paradigm of the modern manifesto is to be found in the ancient (biblical) forms of prophecy, on the one hand, and the gospel (*evangelion*), on the other. The former, of course, promises punishment for those who, bound by the Covenant, violate its terms; it tends towards the revolutionary. The modern political manifesto may combine the two modes, mixing fire and brimstone and love and light in equal measure. The artistic manifesto – think of those of the Futurists and Surrealists – combines threat and promise in a simulacrum of revelation. The scientific manifesto – think of Bacon, Galileo, Darwin – is a different breed; cool, calm and collected, because the scientific manifestor, having a certain knowledge in hand, knows that time is on his or her side; like Galileo censored, s/he can afford to wait: ‘*Eppure, si muove.*’ “

Hayden White
Manifestos for History

Fama Fraternitatis (1614)
Founding Document of the Rosicrucian’s

Common Sense (1776)
Most Incendiary & Popular Pamphlet of Revolutionary Era

Declaration of Independence (1776)
Founding Document of America

“What do we mean by the Revolution? The war? That was no part of the Revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The Revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington. The records of thirteen legislatures, the pamphlets, newspapers in all colonies, ought to be consulted during that period to ascertain the steps by which the public opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the authority of Parliament over the colonies.”

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson
1815

Communist Manifesto (1848)

Key Document of Communism
Symbolism
Ghost in “specter” haunting Europe

Futurist Manifesto (1909)
Launched Art Movement of Futurism

Surrealist Manifesto (1924)
Key Document of Surrealism

Port Huron Statement (1962)
Founding Document of the SDS

Milestones (1964)
Founding Document of Modern Islamic Radicalism
Symbolism
Space – Below, buried
Movement – Signposts along the way

Society of Spectacle (1967)
Key Document of French Situationalists

Rules for Radicals (1971)
Handbook for Community Organizing

Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace (1996)
Applicability of government on the Internet

Cluetrain Manifesto (1999)
Impact of Internet on Markets & Consumers

The Coming Insurrection (2009)
Call to Arms in France and Europe

In a general way, one can say that totalitarian political systems are “hot” allowing for little participation while democratic systems are “cool” allowing greater participation.