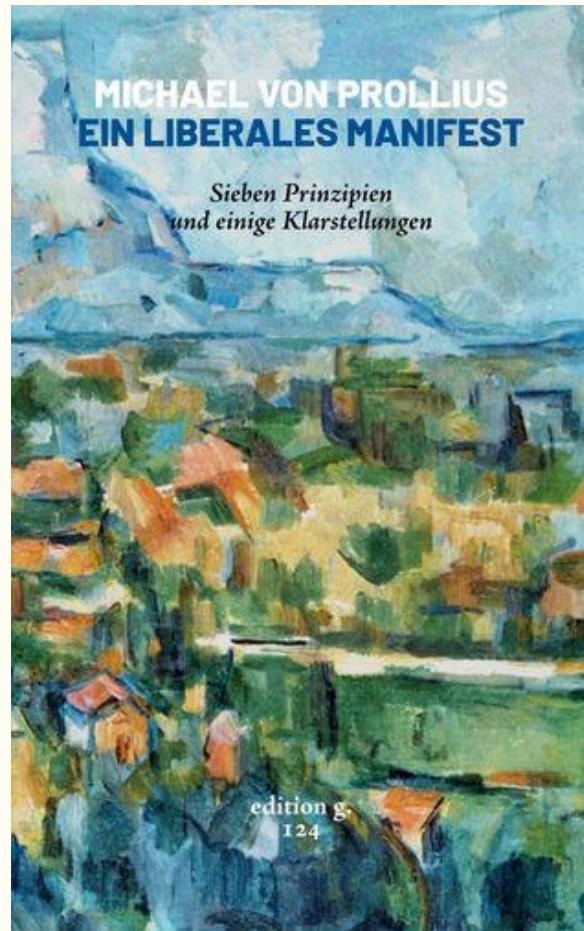


MvP Book Abstract #14

Comprehensive Summaries of German Research & Publications for International Readers

A Liberal Manifest

Seven Principles and Clarifying Distinctions



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One-Sentence Summary

A Liberal Manifest articulates seven foundational principles of classical liberalism in a clear and confident voice, combining theoretical depth with accessibility while drawing necessary distinctions against pseudo-liberal, anarchist, and conservative appropriations.

About This Book

Publication Details:

- **Author:** Michael von Prollius
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- **Format:** 136 pages

Genesis and Methodology:

The book emerged from a striking absence. While conservative and libertarian manifestos had long articulated their respective worldviews in concise and accessible form, classical liberalism lacked a comparable statement of principles. This absence was not merely editorial but symptomatic: liberal ideas were increasingly fragmented, diluted, or absorbed into neighboring ideologies without clear self-definition.

A Liberal Manifest was written to fill this gap. Its ambition is neither encyclopedic nor polemical. Instead, it seeks to state core liberal principles with confidence and clarity, in a tone that is self-assured, fluent, and readable—without sacrificing theoretical rigor. The book deliberately avoids academic heaviness while remaining firmly grounded in the intellectual traditions of classical liberalism, constitutional political economy, and institutional theory.

Methodologically, the manifesto proceeds by articulation and clarification. Seven principles structure the argument, not as dogmas, but as orientation points. Alongside them, a series of clarifying distinctions serves to protect liberalism from conceptual dilution and ideological appropriation. These clarifications are not conceived as exclusions, but as acts of intellectual hygiene—necessary to preserve the coherence of a tradition that depends on limits, distinctions, and restraint.

Author's Note:

This book was written out of the conviction that liberalism needs not only analysis, but voice. The intention was to formulate principles that are theoretically sound yet speak with ease and confidence to readers beyond academic circles. The clarifications included are meant not as acts of exclusion, but as safeguards against the erosion of liberal meaning.

Book Abstract No.14

A Liberal Manifest

Seven Principles and Clarifying Distinctions

A Liberal Manifest is written against a widespread confusion about what liberalism actually means. Today, almost everyone claims to be liberal—open-minded, tolerant, progressive—while the substance of liberal thought is increasingly diluted or replaced by moral posturing, technocratic intervention, or expansive state ambitions. This manifesto seeks to restore clarity.

It starts from a simple but demanding premise: a good life and a good society rest on a small number of fundamental principles. These principles are neither fashionable nor negotiable. They have emerged from historical experience with power, coercion, and human fallibility, and they define the core of a consistent classical liberalism. Where these principles are ignored or selectively applied, freedom erodes—often in the name of freedom itself.

The seven principles presented here do not offer a blueprint for an ideal society. They provide orientation. They distinguish genuine liberalism from pseudo-liberalism, from moralized politics, and from doctrines that mistake good intentions for workable order. Liberalism, as understood in this manifesto, is not a lifestyle or a vague attitude, but a demanding order of freedom—grounded in responsibility, property, law, privacy, spontaneous order, and a strictly limited state.

The Seven Principles

At the center of *A Liberal Manifest* stand seven principles that define the core of a consistent classical liberalism. They are not abstract ideals, but orientation points derived from historical experience, institutional insight, and a sober view of human behavior. Together, they describe the conditions under which a free and humane society can emerge and endure.

1. Every Individual Human Being Is the Measure of All Things

The manifesto begins from the individual. Liberalism views society from the perspective of acting persons, not collectives. Each human being possesses dignity, agency, and responsibility that cannot be derived from group membership or subordinated to abstract entities. Political and social arrangements are therefore judged by how they serve individual lives, not by how well individuals serve collective goals.

2. Freedom Is the Oxygen of Life

Freedom is not an optional value but the precondition of personal development, prosperity, and happiness. Without freedom, creativity withers, responsibility erodes, and

social progress stalls. The protection of individual liberty—especially against the state—occupies a central place in the liberal order articulated in this manifesto.

3. Property Is the Foundation of Our Actions

Private property enables independence, self-determination, and long-term planning. It secures a protected sphere of action and forms the indispensable basis of a functioning market economy. Property and freedom are inseparable: without secure ownership and disposal rights, liberty remains fragile and largely theoretical.

4. The Law of Freedom Governs All

The rule of law binds everyone—especially those in power. Law, understood as general and abstract rules, replaces arbitrariness with predictability and personal dominance with institutional restraint. For liberals, law is not an instrument of social engineering but a framework that protects freedom equally for all.

5. Privacy Is Lived Freedom

Privacy constitutes the inner sphere of freedom, where individuals can develop, reflect, and act without constant observation or interference. Private property and privacy are two sides of the same coin. Without legal protection of private spaces, freedom loses its depth and becomes merely formal.

6. Spontaneous Order Makes Us Great

Complex social orders arise not from centralized design, but from countless uncoordinated interactions. Markets, conventions, and institutions evolve through discovery processes that no planner could replace. Liberalism trusts the “many invisible hands” of social cooperation more than the “strong fists” of centralized control.

7. The Minimal State Is the Maximum

The state possesses a monopoly on legitimate force and therefore represents both a permanent danger to freedom and its necessary guardian. A minimal state concentrates on securing peace, freedom, and the rule of law, while resisting expansion into ever new areas of life. Its legitimacy lies in restraint, not ambition.

Taken together, these seven principles form a coherent framework. None can be isolated or absolutized without undermining the others. The manifesto emphasizes that liberalism fails when freedom is detached from law, property from responsibility, or individual dignity from institutional limits.

Clarifications: Drawing Lines to Preserve Liberal Meaning

The clarifications in *A Liberal Manifest* serve a precise purpose: to protect liberalism from conceptual erosion. Liberal ideas lose their substance when boundaries are blurred, when terms are stretched to accommodate incompatible positions, or when political convenience replaces principled judgment. Clarity therefore requires distinction.

Liberal or Not Liberal

The manifesto begins its clarifications with a fundamental question: what qualifies as liberal—and what does not? This is not a semantic exercise, but a matter of substance. When nearly everyone claims to be liberal, the term risks becoming empty. The book rejects the widespread habit of combining liberal language with demands for an all-responsible state. Policies that expand state power in the name of tolerance, fairness, or progress are not rendered liberal by their intentions.

Liberalism is not defined by attitudes or self-descriptions, but by consistent adherence to principles. Where these principles are abandoned, liberalism dissolves into its opposite.

Reducing Domination

A recurring theme in the clarifications is the reduction of domination. Liberalism does not deny the existence of power; it seeks to contain and civilize it. Every form of rule is suspect, not because rulers are morally deficient, but because power tends to expand. The task of liberal politics is therefore not to replace one ruling group with another, but to limit rule itself through law, institutional restraint, and decentralization.

Security as a Core State Task

The manifesto insists that security belongs to the essential functions of the state. A liberal order cannot exist without protection against violence, coercion, and arbitrary interference. This position explicitly rejects both the idea of an all-providing state and the notion that security can be fully privatized without undermining the rule of law.

Security is understood as a precondition of freedom, not as an excuse for its suspension. A state that fails to provide basic security forfeits its legitimacy; a state that uses security to justify unlimited intervention exceeds its mandate.

Inequality

The book addresses inequality with deliberate sobriety. Inequality as such is not a problem for liberalism; enforced equality is. Differences in income, status, and outcomes emerge naturally in free societies and reflect diversity of talents, preferences, and choices. Attempts to eliminate inequality through political redistribution tend to undermine incentives, responsibility, and ultimately freedom itself.

What matters from a liberal perspective is not equality of outcomes, but equality before the law.

Conceptual Clarifications

Several clarifications are devoted to terminology. Liberalism depends on precise language. When concepts such as freedom, justice, or solidarity are redefined to justify coercion, political discourse becomes manipulative. The manifesto therefore insists on linguistic discipline as a precondition of honest debate.

Concepts are tools, not ornaments. If they are bent to fit political goals, they cease to guide action and instead obscure reality.

Critique of the Critique of the Minimal State

The book responds directly to common objections against the minimal state. Critics often argue that a limited state is unrealistic, socially insensitive, or incapable of addressing modern challenges. The manifesto counters that the alternative—an ever-expanding state—creates systemic dependency, political clientelism, and a concentration of power incompatible with freedom.

The minimal state is not a utopia. It is a framework designed to prevent worse outcomes.

Lifestyle Liberalism

A final clarification targets what the book calls “lifestyle liberalism.” This form of liberalism reduces freedom to personal expression and cultural signaling while remaining indifferent to institutional realities. It celebrates openness and tolerance, yet supports expansive regulation and moralized politics.

Such a posture, the manifesto argues, is internally inconsistent. Liberalism cannot survive as a lifestyle choice divorced from its institutional foundations.

Einordnung

The clarifications do not add a second doctrine to the manifesto. They function as a protective frame. By drawing lines and insisting on distinctions, *A Liberal Manifest* defends liberalism against dilution, opportunism, and moral inflation. Clarity, in this sense, is not rigidity—it is a condition of intellectual honesty.

Tone, Accessibility, and Confidence

The manifesto consciously adopts a fluent and confident tone. It is written to be read, not deciphered. This stylistic choice reflects the conviction that liberal ideas lose influence when they retreat into technical language or defensive posture. Clarity and confidence are treated as intellectual virtues.

The Cover as Visual Orientation

The choice of Paul Cézanne’s *Mont Sainte-Victoire* as cover image reinforces the book’s underlying message. The painting evokes decentralization, rootedness, and organic order. Its impressionist technique suggests emergence rather than construction, intuition rather than blueprint. In this sense, the cover functions as a visual metaphor for liberal order: structured without rigidity, coherent without central design.

Conclusion: Manifesto as Orientation

A Liberal Manifest does not claim to settle debates or to provide final answers. Its purpose is more modest and more demanding: to offer orientation. By articulating principles and drawing boundaries, it invites readers to think clearly about what liberalism is—and what it is not. In doing so, the book seeks to restore confidence in a

tradition that thrives on restraint, responsibility, and institutional realism. It is a manifesto not of protest, but of composure.

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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.

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