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sweeping France and the world:

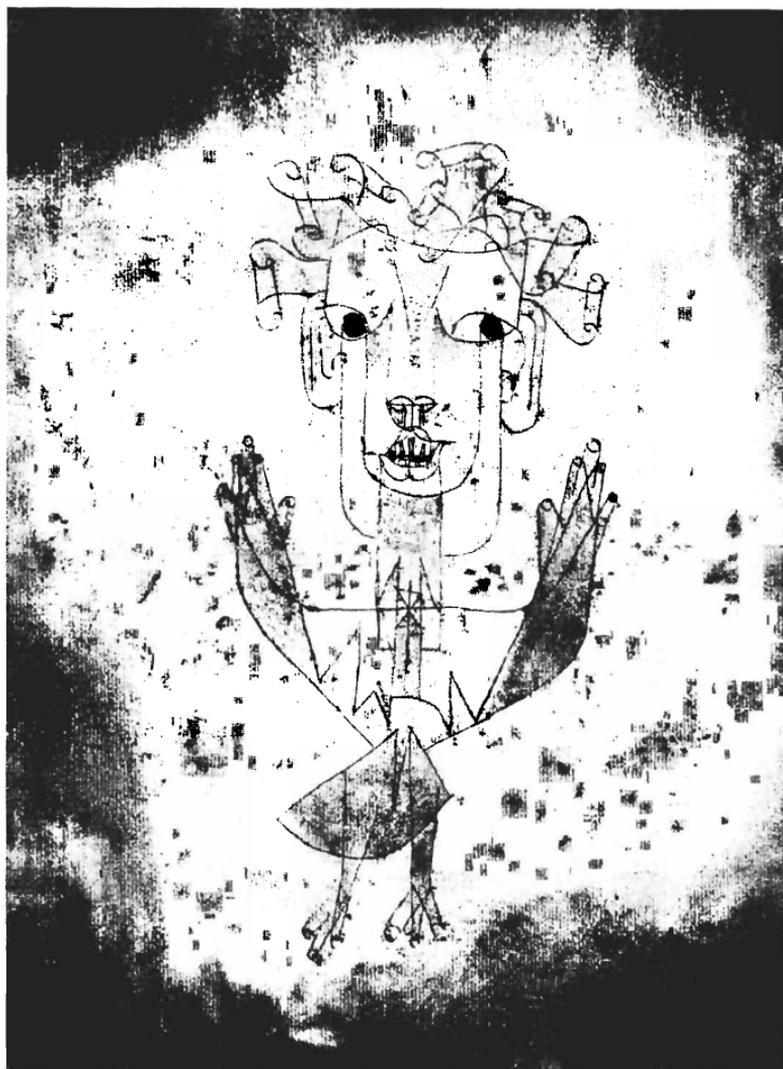
INDIGNEZ-VOUS!



T**i****M****E** *for*
U**T****R****a****g****E**!

STÉPHANE HESSEL

FOREWORD BY CHARLES GLASS



Paul Klee, *Angelus Novus*, 1920, aquarelle, 31, 8 x 24, 2 cm, musée d'Israël, Jérusalem.

Stéphane Hessel, dans son texte, renvoie à cette œuvre de Klee et au commentaire qu'en a laissé le philosophe allemand Walter Benjamin dans ses *Thèses sur la philosophie de l'histoire*, écrites en 1940, sous le choc du pacte germano-soviétique. Walter Benjamin en fut le premier propriétaire. Il voyait dans cette œuvre un ange repoussant « cette tempête que nous appelons le progrès ».



VÉRONIQUE BIANCHI/INDIGÈNE ÉDITIONS

Ninety-three years. I'm nearing the last stage. The end cannot be far off. How lucky I am to be able to draw on the foundation of my political life: the Resistance and the National Council of the Resistance's program from sixty-six years ago. It is thanks to Jean Moulin that all the elements of occupied France—all the movements, the parties, the unions—came together within the framework of the National Council to proclaim their allegiance to Fighting France and to the only leader it recognized, Gen. Charles de Gaulle. I was in London, where I had joined de Gaulle in March 1941, when I learned that the council had put the finishing touches on its program and adopted it on March 15, 1944: a collection of principles and values for Free France that still provides the foundation of our country's modern democracy.

We need these principles and values more than ever today. It is up to us, to all of us together, to ensure that our society remains one to be proud of: not this society of undocumented workers and deportations, of being suspicious of immigrants; not this society where our retirement and the other gains of social security are being called into question; not this society where the media are in the hands of the rich. These are all things that we would refuse to countenance if we were the true heirs of the National Council of the Resistance.

After 1945, after that horrific tragedy, the forces in the National Council of the Resistance achieved an ambitious res-

urrection for France. Let us remember that this was when the social safety net that the Resistance called for was created: "A comprehensive social security plan, to guarantee all citizens a means of livelihood in every case where they are unable to get it by working"; and "retirement that allows older workers to end their lives with dignity." Sources of energy—electricity, gas, coal—were nationalized, along with the large banks, in accordance again with what the program advocated: "returning to the nation the major means of production that have been monopolized, the fruits of common labor, the sources of energy, mineral riches, insurance companies, and big banks"; and "establishing a true economic and social democracy, which entails removing large-scale economic and financial feudalism from the management of the economy." The general interest had to be given precedence over particular special interests, and a fair division of the wealth created by the world of labor over the power of money. The Resistance proposed "a rational organization of the economy to guarantee that individual interests be subordinated to the public interest, one free of a dictatorship of established professionals in the image of the fascist state." The Provisional Government of the French Republic (1944–46) assumed the task of realizing this ideal.

Genuine democracy needs a free press. The Resistance knew this, and it demanded "the freedom and honor of the press and its independence from the state and the forces of money and foreign influence." Again, these goals were carried forward, thanks to the press laws enacted after 1944. But they are at risk today.

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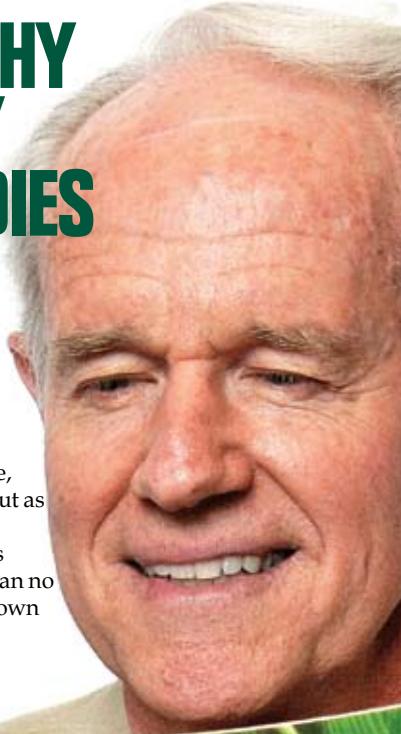
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Mike Farrell is a longstanding Nation reader.

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The Resistance called for "the practical opportunity for every French child to have access to the most advanced education," without discrimination—but the reforms proposed in 2008 run counter to this plan. Young teachers have refused to implement these reforms up to now, and I support their actions. They have seen their salaries reduced in retaliation. They got angry, they "disobeyed," they decided that these reforms diverged too far from the ideal of education in a democratic republic, were too deeply beholden to a society of money and failed to develop the creative and critical spirit sufficiently.

All of these social rights at the core of the program of the Resistance are today under attack.

Outrage Inspires Resistance

They have the nerve to tell us that the state can no longer cover the costs of these social programs. Yet how can the money needed to continue and extend these achievements be lacking today, when the creation of wealth has grown so enormously since the Liberation, a time when Europe lay in ruins? It can only be because the power of money, which the Resistance fought against so hard, has never been as great and selfish and shameless as it is now, with its servants in the very highest circles of government. The banks, now privatized, seem to care primarily about their dividends, and about the enormous salaries of their executives, not about the general good. The gap between richest and poorest has never been so large, competition and the circulation of capital never so encouraged.

The motivation that underlay the Resistance was outrage. We, the veterans of the Resistance movements and fighting forces of Free France, call on the younger generations to revive and carry forward the tradition of the Resistance and its ideas. We say to you: take over, keep going, get angry! Those in positions of political responsibility, economic power and intellectual authority, in fact our whole society, must not give up or let ourselves be overwhelmed by the current international dictatorship of the financial markets, which is such a threat to peace and democracy.

I want you, each and every one of you, to have a reason to be outraged. This is precious. When something outrages you, as Nazism did me, that is when you become a militant, strong and engaged. You join the movement of history, and the great current of history continues to flow only thanks to each and every one of us. History's direction is toward more justice and more freedom—though not the unbridled freedom of the fox in a henhouse. The rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 are indeed universal. When you encounter someone who lacks those rights, have sympathy and help him or her to achieve them.

Two Views of History

When I try to understand what caused fascism, the reasons we were overtaken by it and by Vichy, it seems to me that the rich, in their selfishness, feared a Bolshevik revolution. They let that fear control them. Yet all we need, now as then, is an active minority to stand up: that will be enough. We will be the yeast that makes the bread rise. Clearly, the experience of a very old man like me, born in 1917, differs from that of the young people

of today. I often ask teachers to let me speak to their students. I say to the students: you don't have the same obvious reasons to get involved as we did. For us, resistance meant not accepting the German occupation, not accepting defeat. It was relatively simple. So was what came next: decolonization and the Algerian War. Algeria had to gain its independence. That was obvious. As for Stalin, we all cheered the Red Army's victory over the Nazis in 1943. Yet, when we learned about the Stalinist mass trials of 1936–38, it became necessary and obvious to oppose this unbearable totalitarianism as well. It was necessary, even if communism was a counterbalance to American capitalism. My long life has given me a steady succession of reasons for outrage.

These reasons came less from emotion than from a will to be engaged and get involved. As a young student in at the *École Normale Supérieure*, I was influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre, an older schoolmate of mine. *Nausea* and *The Wall*, rather than *Being and Nothingness*, were important in the formation of my thought. Sartre taught us to tell ourselves, "You as an individual are responsible." It was a kind of anarchist message. Mankind's responsibility cannot be left to some outside power or to a god. On the contrary, people must commit themselves in terms of their personal, individual human responsibility. When I started at the *École Normale Supérieure* on rue d'Ulm in Paris, in 1939, it was as a devoted follower of the philosopher Hegel. I attended the seminars of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. His class investigated concrete experience and the body's relationships with sense, with sense as meaning rather than as the five senses. However, my natural optimism, which wanted everything desirable to be possible, led me back to Hegel. Hegelianism interprets the long history of humanity as having meaning: that of mankind's liberty advancing step by step. History is made by successive shocks, of confronting and overcoming successive challenges. Societies progress, and in the end, having attained complete liberty, may achieve a democratic state in some ideal form.

There is, of course, a conception of history that sees the progress of liberty, competition and the race for "more and more" as a destructive whirlwind. That is how a friend of my father described history. This was the man who shared with my father the task of translating Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* into German. I am speaking of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin. He drew a pessimistic message from a painting by a Swiss painter, Paul Klee, called *Angelus Novus*, which shows an angel opening its arms as if to push back or ward off a storm that Benjamin equates with progress. For Benjamin, who committed suicide in September 1940 to escape the Nazis, history is an unstoppable progression from one catastrophe to the next.

Indifference: The Worst Attitude

It is true that the reasons for outrage today may seem less clear or the world more complicated. Who runs things? Who decides? It is not always easy to distinguish the answers from among all the forces that rule us. It is no longer a question of a small elite whose schemes we can clearly comprehend. This is a vast world, and we see its interdependence. We are interconnected in ways we never were before, but some things in

this world are unacceptable. To see this, you have only to open your eyes. I tell the young: just look, and you'll find something. The worst possible outlook is indifference that says, "I can't do anything about it; I'll just get by." Behaving like that deprives you of one of the essentials of being human: the capacity and the freedom to feel outraged. That freedom is indispensable, as is the political involvement that goes with it.

We can identify two great new challenges:

(1) The immense gap between the very poor and the very rich, which never ceases to expand. This is an innovation of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The very poor in the world today earn barely \$2 a day. We cannot let this gap grow even wider. This alone should arouse our commitment.

(2) Human rights and the state of the planet. After Liberation, I had the opportunity to be involved with drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, at the Chaillot Palace in Paris. It was in my capacity as the chief of staff for Henri Laugier, assistant secretary general of the UN and secretary of the Commission on Human Rights, that I, with many others, was chosen to participate in drawing up this declaration. I will never forget the role played by Eleanor Roosevelt and by René Cassin, commissioner for justice and education in the Free French government in exile in London and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968, in formulating the declaration. Nor can I forget Pierre Mendès France, a member of the UN Economic and Social Council, to whom we submitted our text before it went to the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee of the General Assembly. This committee included the fifty-four member states of the UN at that time, and I was its secretary. It is to René Cassin that we owe the term "universal" rights, and not "international," as proposed by our Anglo-American friends. For the real issue at the end of the Second World War was to free ourselves from the threats that totalitarianism held over mankind's head, and to do so, the member states of the UN had to commit to respecting universal rights. That is how to forestall the argument for full sovereignty that a state likes to make when it is carrying out crimes against humanity on its soil. That was the case with Hitler, who as master in his own house believed he was allowed to commit genocide. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights owes a lot to the universal revulsion against Nazism, Fascism, totalitarianism—but also, thanks to our presence, to the spirit of the Resistance. I felt that we had to move fast so as not to succumb to the hypocrisy of victors promoting allegiance to values that no one intended to enforce faithfully.

I cannot resist the impulse here to quote Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to a nationality"; and Article 22: "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality." Even if this declaration has only advisory, rather than legal, force, it has nonetheless played a powerful role since 1948. We have seen colonized peoples refer to it in their struggles for

independence. It fortified their spirits in the fight for liberty.

I am happy to see that NGOs and social movements such as the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and Aid to Citizens, the International Federation for Human Rights and Amnesty International have multiplied and become increasingly active in recent decades. It is clear that in order to be effective today, one has to act in a network and be connected in other ways, taking advantage of modern means of communication.

To the young, I say: look around you, you will find things that make you justifiably angry—the treatment of immigrants, illegal aliens and Roma. You will see concrete situations that provoke you to act as a real citizen. Seek and you shall find!

Outrage Over Palestine

Today, my strongest feeling of indignation is over Palestine, both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The starting point of my outrage was the appeal launched by courageous Israelis to the Diaspora: you, our older siblings, come and see where our leaders are taking this country and how they are forgetting the fundamental human values of Judaism. I went to Gaza and the West Bank in 2002, then five more times until 2009. It is absolutely imperative to read Richard Goldstone's report of September 2009 on Gaza, in which this South African judge, himself Jewish, in fact a self-proclaimed Zionist, accuses the Israeli army of having committed "actions amounting to war crimes, possibly crimes against humanity" during its three-week "Operation Cast Lead." I went to Gaza in 2009 in order to see with my own eyes what the report described. My wife and I were allowed to enter, thanks to our diplomatic passports, but the people accompanying us were not authorized to cross from Israel into the Gaza Strip or the West Bank. We also visited the Palestinian refugee camps established after 1948 by the UN Relief and Works Agency, where more than 3 million Palestinians—the descendants over the past forty years of the 750,000 driven from their homes by Israel, first in 1948–49, then in 1967—await a return that is no longer possible.

As for Gaza, it is an open-air prison for a million and a half Palestinians. In this prison they must organize to survive. Even more than the physical destruction from Operation Cast Lead, such as the destroyed Red Cross hospital, it is the behavior of the Gazans—their patriotism, their love of the ocean and the beach, their constant preoccupation with the well-being of their countless laughing children—that haunts our memories. We were struck by their ingenious way of facing all the shortages imposed on them. We saw them make bricks, since they lacked cement to rebuild the thousands of houses destroyed by the tanks. It was confirmed to us that there were 1,400 people killed on the Palestinian side—including women, children and the elderly—in the course of Operation Cast Lead, compared with only fifty Israeli wounded. I share the South African judge's conclusions. For Jews themselves to perpetrate war crimes is intolerable. Unfortunately, history gives few examples of people who learn the lessons of their own history.

I am well aware that Hamas, which won the last legislative elections, was unable to avoid the launching of rockets into Israeli villages in response to the situation of isolation and

blockade in which the Gazans find themselves. Of course I think that terrorism is unacceptable, but we must recognize that when a country is occupied by infinitely superior military means, the popular reaction cannot be only nonviolent.

Did it serve Hamas's interests to launch rockets into the town of Sderot? No. It did not serve their cause, but the gesture can be understood as coming from the exasperation of the Gazans. In this notion of "exasperation," we have to understand violence as a regrettable consequence of an unacceptable situation. Terrorism, we might say, is a form of exasperation. And exasperation here is a negative term. What is needed is not exasperation but hope. Exasperation is the denial of hope. It is understandable; I would almost say it is natural. Nonetheless, it is not acceptable, because it does not allow people to achieve the results that hope can achieve.

Nonviolence: The Path We Must Learn to Follow

I am convinced that the future belongs to nonviolence, to the reconciliation of different cultures. It is along this path that humanity will clear its next hurdle. And here, too, I agree with Sartre: we cannot excuse the terrorists who throw the bombs, but we can understand them. In "The Situation of the Writer in 1947," Sartre wrote, "I recognize that violence, manifested in any form, is a failure. But it is an inevitable failure because we live in a world of violence; even though it is true that recourse to violence to fight violence risks perpetuating it, it is also true that this is the only way to make violence stop." To which I would add that nonviolence is a surer way to make it stop. One must not support terrorists, as Sartre did in the name of this principle during the Algerian War, or at the time of the attack on the Israeli athletes committed at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972. It doesn't work, and Sartre himself, at the end of his life, ended by questioning the meaning of terrorism and doubting its justification. To say that "violence doesn't work" is much more important than to know whether or not to condemn those who have recourse to it. In this notion of "working," of effectiveness, lies a nonviolent hope. If such a thing as violent hope exists, it is in the poetry of Guillaume Apollinaire ("How slow life is/And how violent hope is"), not in the political realm. In March 1980, three weeks before his death, Sartre admitted, "We must try to explain why the world of today, which is horrible, is only one moment in a long historical development, that hope has always been one of the dominant forces of revolutions and insurrections, and how I still feel that hope is my conception of the future."

We must realize that violence turns its back on hope. We have to choose hope over violence—choose the hope of nonviolence. That is the path we must learn to follow. The oppressors no less than the oppressed have to negotiate to remove the oppression: that is what will eliminate terrorist violence. That is why we cannot let too much hate accumulate.

The message of a Nelson Mandela, a Martin Luther King Jr., is just as relevant in a world that has moved beyond victorious totalitarianism and the cold war confrontation of ideologies. Their message is one of hope and faith in modern societies' ability to move beyond conflict with mutual understanding and a vigilant patience. To reach that point, societies must be based

on rights whose violation prompts outrage—no matter who has violated them. There can be no compromising on these rights.

Toward a Peaceful Insurrection

I have noticed—and I am not the only one—the Israeli government’s reaction to the citizens of [the West Bank village of] Bil’in, who protest the wall each Friday by simply marching to it, without throwing rocks or using force. The Israeli authorities have described these marches as “nonviolent terrorism.” Not bad... One would have to be Israeli to describe nonviolence as terrorism, and above all one would have to be embarrassed by how effective it is in gaining the support and understanding of every enemy of oppression in the world.

The Western obsession with productivity has brought the world to a crisis that we can escape only with a radical break from the headlong rush for “more, always more” in the financial realm as well as in science and technology. It is high time that concerns for ethics, justice and sustainability prevail. For we are threatened by the most serious dangers, which have the power to bring the human experiment to an end by making the planet uninhabitable.

Still, it remains the case that there has been important progress since 1948: decolonization, the end of apartheid, the destruction of the Soviet empire, the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first ten years of the twenty-first century, in contrast, were a period of retreat, explicable in part by the American presidency of George W. Bush, September 11 and the disastrous conclusions that the United States drew from it, such as the invasion of Iraq. We have had an economic crisis, but we have not initiated a new politics for economic development. Similarly, the Copenhagen Climate Conference of December 2009 did not result in genuine political action to save the planet. We are at a threshold between the horrors of the first decade of the century and the possibilities of the decades to follow. Yet we must

keep up hope—we must always hope. The previous decade, the 1990s, brought great progress: UN conferences like the one in Rio on the environment in 1992 and in Beijing on women in 1995. In September 2000, the 191 UN member states adopted the declaration on the eight Millennium Development Goals, initiated by Secretary General Kofi Annan, in which they agreed to cut worldwide extreme poverty in half by 2015. My deep regret is that neither President Obama nor the European Union has come forward with what should have been their contribution to a constructive phase based on fundamental values.

How should I conclude? By recalling again that on the sixtieth anniversary of the Program of the National Council of the Resistance, we veterans of the Resistance movements and the fighting forces of Free France from 1940 to 1945 (Lucie Aubrac, Raymond Aubrac, Henri Bartoli, Daniel Cordier, Philippe Dechartre, Georges Guingouin, Maurice Kriegel-Valrimont, Lise London, Georges Séguy, Germaine Tillion, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Maurice Voutey and myself) addressed an Appeal to the young generation on March 8, 2004, in which we said, “Nazism was defeated, thanks to the sacrifices of our brothers and sisters of the Resistance and of the United Nations against fascist barbarity. But this menace has not completely disappeared, and our outrage at injustice remains intact to this day.”

No, this menace has not completely disappeared. In addition, we continue to call for “a true peaceful uprising against the means of mass communication that offers nothing but mass consumption as a prospect for our youth, contempt for the least powerful in society and for culture, general amnesia and the outrageous competition of all against all.”

To you who will create the twenty-first century, we say, from the bottom of our hearts,

TO CREATE IS TO RESIST.
TO RESIST IS TO CREATE. ■

TIME FOR OUTRAGE!

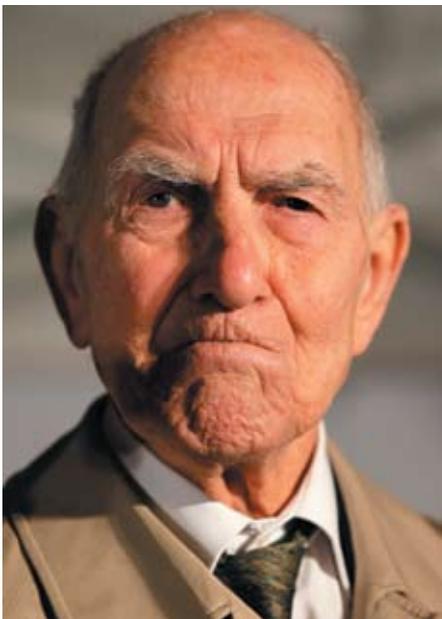
by CHARLES GLASS

On the American publication of Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-vous!*

Toward the end of 2010, a small book by a 93-year-old man unexpectedly reached the summit of the best-seller list in France. *Indignez-vous!* by Stéphane Hessel sold more than 600,000 copies between October and the end of December, propelling it above Prix Goncourt-winner Michel Houellebecq's novel *La carte et le territoire* by several hundred thousand copies. Hessel had written other books. His publishers, the independent Indigène Editions in Montpellier, far from Paris, had produced other volumes. But none had reached the public in such numbers. The book both reflected and anticipated the spirit of student demonstrations in France and Britain, as it did the wave of revolt now challenging dictatorships in the Middle East.

Hessel's life would make a novel, although his story is too hopeful to be told by nihilist Houellebecq. His father, Franz Hessel, was a German Jewish writer who emigrated to France with his family in 1924, when Stéphane was 7. Franz's friend Henri-Pierre Roché used him and his wife, Prussian beauty Helen Grund, as models for Jules and Kate in his 1953 novel *Jules et Jim*. This was the enchanting tale of a woman who loved and was loved by two men that was translated to the screen in 1962 by François Truffaut. Franz Hessel wrote novels in German and French. His admiration for France and French literature led him to produce, with the great German Jewish literary critic Walter Benjamin, the first German translation of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Stéphane grew up in a literary milieu that the German invasion of France shattered in 1940. After studying at the University of Paris's prestigious École Normale Supérieure, he served in the French Army during the Battle of France and, like more than a million other French soldiers, became a prisoner of war. Following his escape from a POW camp, he joined Gen. Charles de Gaulle and his small band of Free French *résistants*. Hessel's was a rare act of patriotism when most of the French professed loyalty to Vichy leader Marshal Philippe Pétain and his policy of collaboration with Germany. The attitude of the majority of Hessel's military colleagues found expression in the decision of a French court-martial that sentenced de Gaulle in absentia to death for treason. Hessel belonged to a tiny minority that was outraged enough to oppose Pétain's New Order, which replaced "liberty, equality and fraternity" with "work, family and nation."

While Stéphane was working with de Gaulle in London, Franz Hessel died in France. Stéphane parachuted into occupied France in advance of the Allied invasion of 1944 to organize Resistance networks. The Gestapo captured him and subjected



Stéphane Hessel speaks during a rally in Paris, January 18.

him to the *baignoire*, a form of torture that would later be called waterboarding. He was transported to Buchenwald and Dora concentration camps, avoiding the gallows only by switching identities with an inmate who had died. While being transferred to Bergen-Belsen, he escaped.

Hessel became a diplomat after the war and was involved, along with Eleanor Roosevelt, in drafting the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Awards and honors followed, the most recent of which are the Council of Europe's North-South Prize in 2004, the rank of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor in 2006 and the 2008 UNESCO/Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights. Throughout his postwar life as a diplomat and writer, Hessel has retained the sense of indignation that drove him during the war. This book is a testa-

ment to his belief in the universality of rights, as his defense of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and of illegal immigrants in France attests. The popularity of this slim but powerful volume answered the public's need for a voice to articulate popular resentment of ruling-class ruthlessness, police brutality, stark income disparities, banking and political corruption, and victimization of the poor and immigrants. Hessel had arrived in France when many of the French were decrying Jewish immigration as the "threat from the East" (about which Joseph Roth wrote movingly at the time in essays later collected and published in the book *The Wandering Jews*). Of course, the real threat from the East was the Nazism that many on the French right admired as an antidote to what they perceived as the indiscipline of French society. Their intellectual heirs—echoing the earlier distaste for foreigners and for the ostensible fecklessness of the working class—hold positions of power in France today.

Hessel writes in this book, "How lucky I am to be able to draw on the foundation of my political life: the Resistance and the National Council of the Resistance's program from sixty-six years ago." That program, declared on March 15, 1944, set out the wartime and, significantly, postwar goals of the Resistance. Defeating the Nazis and their French collaborators was only a stage, the combined Resistance declared, on the way to "a true economic and social democracy." Hessel rejects the claims that the state can no longer cover the costs of such a program. It managed to provide that support immediately after the Liberation, "when Europe lay in ruins." How could it not afford to do the same after it became rich? Similarly, in Britain the state paid for free universal education, including higher education, free universal medical care and other benefits that improved

CHARLES PLATIAU/REUTERS

the health and well-being of the country's children immeasurably after a war that left the nation bankrupt. Now, after half a century of prosperity and the accumulation of fabulous fortunes, the government says it can no longer pay for the social rights for which an earlier generation fought and for which it voted overwhelmingly in 1945. The British coalition government's cuts in social benefits, its dramatic increase in the cost of university education and its transformation of the National Health Service into blocks of private trusts come in tandem with its absolution of the tax obligations of major corporations like Vodafone and its public subsidies to private banks. Outrage and indignation are not inappropriate responses.

Our politicians, guided by corporations and banks that rob the taxpayer when their business models fail, have revoked rights for which the anti-Fascists struggled. To erode these gains in France, Britain and the other countries that fought against the Nazis and Imperial Japan is to reject the gift of the wartime generation's legacy. The countries that opposed the Germany-Italy-Japan Axis called themselves "the united nations" before they established the organization of that name. Franklin Roosevelt enunciated the Four Freedoms for which the American people were struggling: freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear. Roosevelt's ideals found their way into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people....

The conscience of Stéphane Hessel was outraged, as it had been during the war, whenever the postwar world betrayed the Resistance program and the Universal Declaration. In France he found himself in the minority, as he had when he joined de Gaulle, who demanded the right of Algerians to govern themselves. More recently, he has called on Israel to grant Palestinians the right for which French men and women fought in 1944, for which Algerians struggled in the 1950s and '60s and which Israelis claim for themselves: the right to self-determination and, thus, self-government and independence. To support those who seek this end, he has endorsed the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement to sever economic collaboration with Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, all of which depend on the removal of indigenous inhabitants and are illegal under international law.

In France today, Hessel calls on the young, many of whom have already marched through the streets with their inchoate fury at President Nicolas Sarkozy's "reforms." They resent the balance Sarkozy is achieving between benefiting the banks while depriving the unemployed, the old, students, immigrants and the poor. Hessel's call for a renewal of the spirit of the Resistance, albeit a pacific one, resonates in French traditions that immigrants embrace. It will do the same for youth in Britain

and the United States, whom Hessel calls upon to remember their history and to defend its highest achievements.

Students at the École Normale invited Hessel to address them in Paris in January. Popular with young people throughout France, Hessel was likely to attract a full house. Then the authorities stepped in. Monique Canto-Sperber, the school's director, withdrew the invitation and refused to allow Hessel to give an address. She objected to his insistence that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights applied as much to Palestinians as to the French. An ultra-Zionist French website, Des Infos, praised Canto-Sperber's decision: "There are men and women in this country of intellectual courage. Mme. Monique Canto-Sperber, director of the École Normale Supérieure, is an example. She has on the afternoon of 12 January 2011 canceled a scandalous conference-debate."

This may be the first time, in an ostensibly free country, that praise has been applied to the "courage" of canceling a debate. Such courage was not confined to the censorious director of the school. The Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France lauded those who favored suppressing Hessel's right to speak. They included Minister of Higher Education Valérie Pécresse, self-styled philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy, Alain Finkielkraut, Claude Cohen-Tanoudji and Arielle Schwab. The administrations at other colleges succumbed to the pressure and refused to allow Hessel to speak on their campuses.

Victory for free speech? In the bizarre world of what passes for philosophical discussion in modern France, to prevent someone from speaking could be nothing else. Canto-Sperber wrote in her book *Moral Disquiet and Human Life*, "Freedom of thought is the first precondition of any thought process." Her students are free to think any thought presented to them by the lecturers she approves. What more freedom does their thought require? The reaction has been swift. Thousands of people have signed petitions demanding that Hessel be permitted to speak, and thousands more are reading this book.

In London, on the seventieth anniversary of de Gaulle's "Appeal of 18 June" urging the French people to resist, Hessel said, "I was 23 in 1940, so needless to say that those five years really had a huge impact on me. This is a war that I experienced in many ways: as a simple soldier in 1939 and 1940 before the French Army's defeat, as a trainee in the Royal Air Force, as a Free French fighter working in the secret services in London, as a Resistance fighter in France, as a prisoner at the hands of the Gestapo and then as an inmate in two concentration camps.... Of this long and arduous adventure, something clearly emerged: the need to give a sense to my life by defending the values that the Nazis had scorned—which led me to become a diplomat immediately after the war and to join the United Nations, where I contributed to writing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Hessel's polemic echoes de Gaulle's words of June 1940: "Must hope disappear? Is defeat final? No!"

The old Resistance fighter is battling those who would deny him his well-earned platform. Having taken on the Nazis, survived two concentration camps and kept his mind and spirit intact for ninety-three years, he should easily defeat Sarkozy's *fonctionnaires* and their apologists. The question before us is, Will we stand up to demand our own right to be heard? ■

STÉPHANE HESSEL, Resistance fighter and concentration camp survivor, tells the young of today that their lives and liberties are worth fighting for. Remembering the ideals for which he risked his life, while never forgetting the evils against which he struggled, the now ninety-three-year-old writer and diplomat calls on all of us to take back the rights that have slowly slipped away since the Second World War ended. As sales of this masterful polemic approach a million in France, it is published here for the first time in English.

The book urges the French, and everyone else, to recapture the war-time spirit of resistance to the Nazis by rejecting the 'insolent, selfish' power of money and markets and by defending the social 'values of modern democracy.'

Independent, London

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National Post, Canada

Like a song you hum or a film you recommend to friends, *Indignez-vous!* crystallizes the spirit of the time. To buy it is a militant act, a gesture towards community and participation in collective emotion.

Libération, Paris



Stéphane Hessel, born in Germany in 1917, moved to France with his Jewish writer father and mother in 1924. He fought in the French army in 1940 and escaped from a POW camp to join de Gaulle's Free French in London. On returning to France, he was captured, tortured and sent to concentration camps. He helped to draft the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose ideals he defends to this day.



CHARLES GLASS BOOKS
an imprint of
QUARTET BOOKS

ISBN 978-0-7043-7222-1



9 780704 372221



NON-FICTION

£4.25

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Cover illustration by John Springs

Cover design by Jonathan Pelham

Author photo by La Voix de l'Enfant