

Hessel, Stéphane. *Time For Outrage*. Translated by Marion Duvert. New York: Twelve, Hatchett Book Group, 2011.

Stephen Hessel (1917 -), a German Jew, was naturalized a French citizen and fought in World War II with de Gaulle's Free French Forces. He infiltrated France, was captured, and sent to Buchenwald for execution. By deception, Hessel avoided execution, and subsequently escaped. Hessel, after World War II, worked for the United Nations and participated in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Later in his career, Hessel was named French Ambassador to the United Nations. Hessel joined the Socialist Party in response to the French people electing Jacques Chirac president of France. Hessel repeatedly visited Gaza Strip in support of the Palestinian cause, which he characterizes as "dissident."

Time for Outrage. Ninety-three year old Hessel recalls his French Resistance fighting during World War II. When they prevailed, the Resistance created France's social security system, nationalized all energy, aimed to fairly redistribute wealth among the workers free from the overweening influence of corporate elites (who reincarnate fascism), freed the press, and ordered education of high quality for all. When young teachers were ordered to deviate from non-discriminatory teaching, some rebelled. They felt outrage. These cherished Resistance values are under assault in France.

Indignation Fuels Resistance. The economic elite have proclaimed that France can no longer fund the social support system of past decades. Yet, France remains rich. The facts of this matter are plain enough: economic elites have bought the government. They run things for profit, not for the common good. The World War II Resistance lived by its indignation at Nazism. So, Hessel delivers his message: Resist. Take over. Be agitated. Band together to resist the world financial markets. Find indignation within yourself. It will make you powerful and involved. The result will be greater liberties and more justice. Find someone downtrodden and help that person gain her human rights.

Two Visions of History. One may view history with optimism or pessimism. For the optimist, of which Hessel is one, if a minority will protest, that will leaven all of society. Sartre convinced him as a young man that the individual is responsible for these things. Hegel led Hessel to the conclusion that what is good should be possible in a series of actual historical crises. One can view history with pessimism. One philosopher who did so committed suicide to escape the Nazis. History was for him devolving from one misery to the next.

The Worst Attitude is Indifference. It can be hard to recognize the sorts of injustices in your own culture that might cause you to engage. But indifference must be rejected. Outrage is an essential human experience. Without it, things go awry. Look to economic inequities and to trampled human rights. Despite the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which declares women equal and rights to be human, not national, there remain populations lacking necessities and fascisms aplenty. Look at the treatment of immigrants and minorities. Find your indignation. Take civil action.

Palestine: My Own Outrage. The plight of Palestinians at the hands of the Jewish nation outrages Hessel. He has repeatedly traveled in Gaza and the West Bank and seen the destruction worked by the Israeli army. Palestinian terror expresses exasperation, and, though they have tried, Hamas cannot control it. One cannot expect non-violence from occupied peoples. Hessel is a Jew and defends the right of Jews to a homeland. But that homeland must be good and honest, or Israel must be confronted like any other wrong-doer.

Nonviolence: The Path We Must Learn To Follow. The good future will come from nonviolent expression of outrage. Nonviolence can reconcile cultures in conflict. Sartre supported terrorists. Hessel does not. Terrorism does not accomplish what it seeks. Violence abandons hope; nonviolence nurtures hope. Nonviolence brings opponents together and douses hatred. Look to Gandhi, King, and Mandela. Support human rights; defend them nonviolently.

For a Peaceful Insurrection. Western acquisitiveness and its lust for ever-increasing wealth must end. We need to step back, and insist upon justice and a sustainable future. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, we have been backsliding. Hessel blames the Bush administration and its response to the September 11, 2001, attacks. But there has been progress; hope perseveres. We need a peaceful revolution against the vacuous values of mass media, against consumption, against hatred of the weak, against hatred of culture and history, and most against dog-eat-dog competition. To resist in this manner creates a better future. All creating resists what came before.