

Klatt: Occupy movement may be most vapid of all

Heinz Klatt

November 24, 2011

KLATT

In 2010, the 93-year-old former member of the French Resistance Stéphane Hessel published a little booklet in France, *Indignez-vous!*, that quickly became a bestseller and has sold more than a million copies. Apart from eulogizing the Palestinians of Gaza for their patriotism and their many other virtues, as is part of the daily diet in many leftist corners nowadays, its message is we should all become indignant about something, anything:

“When you become outraged ... you become militant, strong and engaged.”

Anger, fury, indignation become the political platform. Can any program be any more vacuous?

I could not help but think of Hessel’s anthology of platitudes and trite banalities when, on these pages, I read professor Bernie Hammond praise the eloquence of the Occupy movement ([“Don’t shrug off the power of the Occupy movement,” Nov. 17](#)).

As far as I am concerned, I do not remember encountering a political movement as inarticulate and vapid as the one that now stains and soils our central city parks. One of the protesters, quite representatively for his group, eloquently summarized his economic analysis: “The whole f***** capitalist system has to go,” including, I suppose, his own laptop, iPod and digital camera, as well as our tax and financial system that allows him to camp while others work to pay his extended outdoor vacations.

Apart from judging ‘eloquent’ what I consider utterly inarticulate, my esteemed colleague informs us ‘1 per cent of Americans ... accounted for an incredible 65 per cent of total income growth between 2002-07 ... and that 3.8 percent of Canadian households controlled \$1.78 trillion, or 67 per cent, of financial wealth.’

Not being an economist myself, I have only a vague understanding of what all these numbers mean. However, it appears to me the failure to mention the vilified 1 per cent pays 38 per cent of all income taxes and the bottom 50 per cent pay no more than 3 per cent of taxes collected, the omission of these numbers makes reprehensible propaganda of the ‘analysis’ of my colleague. I am afraid this form of political, leftist activism is representative of the thinking in the social justice and peace studies that professor Hammond co-ordinates.

He deplores the fact London’s Mayor Joe Fontana has been the first mayor in Canada to clean out our local Occupy encampment, and he wishes for and predicts the mayor’s political demise. He argues further the occupiers will simply go somewhere else.

I, for my part, am considering for the first time to vote for our current mayor for upholding our laws and respecting the wishes of the 99 per cent of the city population. If, however, I fault our mayor for something it is the fact he did not charge the Occupiers for the cleaning costs and he did not evict them earlier. Nobody should be allowed

to violate our laws, neither the Tamils in Toronto, nor the aboriginals in Caledonia and elsewhere, nor the current protesters across the country, for whatever cause. Vancouver, apparently, has already paid more than \$560,000 to cover the municipal costs of the occupiers.

Where should the eloquent Occupiers go after being evicted from public places?

I suggest their supporters and academic propagandists from the peace studies program provide them with their home addresses and offer them their front lawns. Since Occupiers and their advocates are ideological brothers, they will certainly and peacefully come to an agreement as to whether they bring their Porta Potties or fertilize the flower beds; whether they collect their used condoms and needles themselves in the morning or let the home owners do it; and whether they allow barbecues or build their own makeshift kitchens.

People versed in peace studies should, as well, come easily to an understanding as to who pays for the new landscaping necessary after the eloquent Occupiers have finally decamped.

Lastly, and perhaps surprisingly for the reader, I share the wrath of the leftist, lawless and clueless Occupiers – who pay no taxes, nevertheless feel entitled to every social, educational and medical service – about the outrageous bonuses that are thrown after the bankers and similar folks after having done enormous damage to our economy.

Heinz Klatt is a professor emeritus of psychology at King's University College at The University of Western Ontario.

Illustration by Jennifer Wilson, Western News