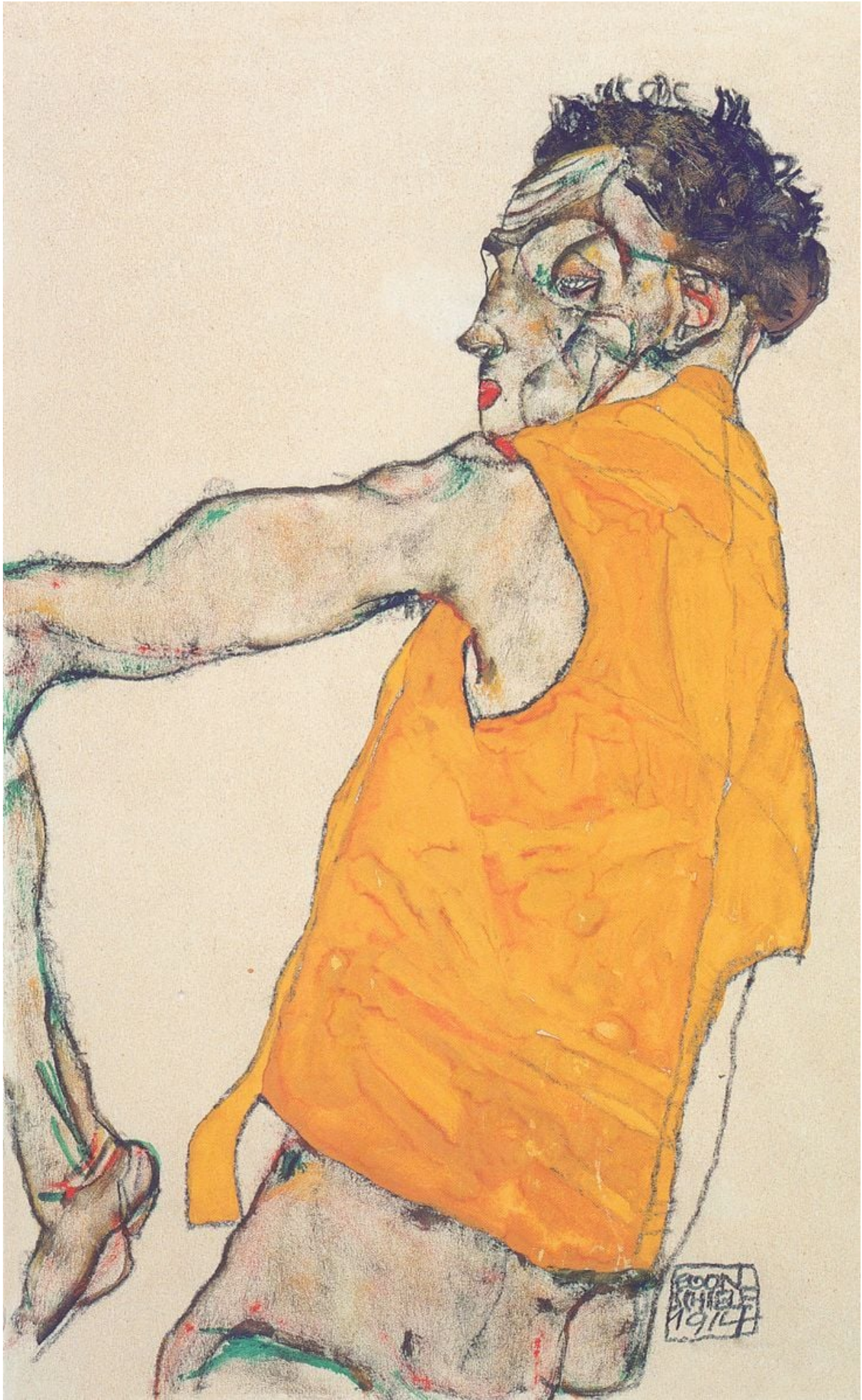


# The Truth About France's Yellow Vests

by [Erik Svane](#) (January 2019)



The more laws and restrictions there are,  
The poorer people become  
The more rules and regulations,  
The more thieves and robbers.

–Lao Tzu

**Not a single media report** I have read or seen about the Yellow Vest demonstrations in Paris and across France has not been slanted by Fake News. The problem is that crucial information has been omitted.

It is not wrong to say that the demonstrations were caused by the government's decision to raise gas prices. But that view seems to pit two more or less equal sides against each other—people (responsible government officials) seeing the necessities of taxes in life versus carefree people (common citizens) unconcerned with the sacrifices that life entails and who go overboard with their protests.

What is missing from most all of the coverage of this crisis in France is that this is just one of several draconian measures dating back half a year, i.e., the recent tax hike that sparked the wave of protests was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back.

For the past four to five months, the nation's drivers and motorcycle riders have been growing increasingly irate at *les sangsues* (bloodsuckers) in the French government who seem to do little else, road-security-wise, but double down on bringing more and more gratuitous oppression upon their necks

and saddling them with more and more unwarranted fines and costs.

In fact, the imposition of ever harsher rules has been going on for the past decade and a half or so—whether the government was on the right or on the left—and that is why the choice of garb, *les gilets jaunes* (the yellow jackets), by the demonstrators is particularly ironic.

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The 2008 law (under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy) that requires the presence of high-visibility vests (*gilets de haute visibilité*) aka security vests (*gilets de sécurité*) in every vehicle—hardly an unreasonable rule, for sure, as similar ones exist throughout the continent—was just another example of the myriad of evermore-onerous directives for car and motorcycle owners over the past 15 years, and so the government, in effect, provided the 2018 rebels with their “uniforms.”

Since Emmanuel Macron became president in May, 2017, the extent to which his government has doubled down on repressive road safety measures defies belief.

- If there was anything that that the state could decide to decentralize in France, it had to concern parking tickets, with *la Mission Interministérielle à la Décentralisation du Stationnement* (la MIDS) handing the issue to the country's town halls on January 1, 2018, giving them full freedom to set the amounts of the

finer. They promptly proceeded to do so, in some instances *doubling* or even *tripling* them. In [The War on Cars](#) by The Car Coach's Lauren Fix concerned . . . the United States:

. . . cars are more than just another way to get from point A to point B. They allow us to go wherever we want; whenever we want; with whomever we want. Think about it: with trains, planes, and buses, the routes are planned and the schedule is timed. Only cars allow you to be spontaneous. When you get behind the wheel, you are in control. (You are free.)

The very reason people love cars—personal freedom—is also why regulators can't stand them. Government—at all levels—craves control. And when it comes to your car, they want you off the road. So do the environmentalists with whom they have made common cause.

. . . [America's car culture is] not dying of old age . . . there's been a concerted push by government bureaucrats and environmentalists to transform car ownership from a source of pride to a source of guilt.

Take this dynamic outside the Land of the Free, and you can see the war on cars (or, if you prefer to be more general, the war on freedom) factored by two or three. But even in the Old World, there comes a point when the people say *Enough!*

Indeed, in the New York Post, Anne-Elisabeth Moutet has a choice word for the Yellow Vests: [tear gassed](#). I have

been drenched with the water cannon. I have seen, barely a meter on my right, a fellow Gilet Jaune slammed forward on his face, hit in the back of the head with a cobblestone aimed at the riot policemen facing him.

On December 10, Emmanuel Macron went on television and held a speech where he appeared contrite, and spelled out a number of initiatives, including taking the tax hike off the table (that is now being challenged by a handful of NGOs, including Greenpeace).

If the yellow vest revolt continues it is for the simple reason that the French people are not in need of more “brilliant” initiatives and more laws.

They need, and they want, the *repeal* of the previous “brilliant” initiatives and laws.

- Repeal of the 80 km/h “slowness” limit.
- Repeal of the parking fine travesty.
- Repeal of the vehicle security overhaul.
- A repeal, or at least a thorough trimming, of the radar-industrial complex.

In this matter, as [No Pasarán](#) for the past 14 years and worked in the movie business (behind and in front of the camera). He is writing a graphic novel biography of Abraham Lincoln.

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