

THE SABOTEUR: THE ARISTOCRAT WHO BECAME FRANCE'S MOST DARING ANTI-NAZI COMMANDO

(PAUL KIX)

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This is the story of a man—Robert de La Rouchefoucauld, scion of one of the oldest noble families in France, who lived from 1923 to 2012. He led a life in full; the focus of this book is his three years fighting against the Germans in France, as a *résistant*. It is a tale of bravery and derring-do, and it is gripping. But even more, it is terribly sad, because reading about this past makes us realize how masculinity and duty as exemplified by La Rouchefoucauld are no longer celebrated, but rather denigrated, to the detriment of all of us.

La Rouchefoucauld, who was barely sixteen when the Germans invaded, living in a luxurious chateau among his extended, wealthy, and prominent family, ground his teeth for two years and then joined the Resistance. Making his way to London, through Spain, to see Charles de Gaulle, he joined the British Special Operations Executive, in a branch that coordinated closely with de Gaulle. Parachuting back into France, he engaged in various sabotage operations and was captured, betrayed by his countrymen. Held and tortured for four months, he was sentenced to death, but escaped on the way to the firing squad. Returning to fighting, he was captured again, and escaped again, this time by faking a seizure, killing the guard who came to help, and walking out of the prison complex in the guard's uniform. He ended his service fighting as a French commando in reducing the Royan pocket, where the last Germans in France were holed up in what was left of the Atlantic Wall, performing feats such as hanging upside down from a camouflage net and cutting the throat of a strongpoint's sentry.

Then he retired back to private life, having been awarded various military honors, among them the *Légion d'Honneur* and the *Croix de Guerre*. He remained obscure, for like so many men of that time, he was not a self-promoter (no more so than my wife's grandfather, who as an Australian soldier fought the Japanese in jungle warfare in New Guinea, a more terrible war than that in Europe, and would not talk about it). In 1996, however, he came to public notice, as a defense witness for Maurice Papon, accused of deporting Jews to their deaths while serving

as a police functionary in Bordeaux, in Vichy France. La Rouchefoucauld seems like an odd choice for a defense witness, but he swore that Jews he fought with had told him that they had escaped, to be able to fight at all, because Papon had warned them of coming deportations. Since the Papon trial was an excuse for collective French self-flagellation over their conduct during the war, La Rouchefoucauld was (literally) spat upon, and retired to obscurity again. While La Rouchefoucauld wrote a short autobiography before he died, the author of *The Saboteur*, Paul Kix, also relied heavily on interviews with La Rouchefoucauld's children and others who had teased out parts of his story over the years, as well as archival material, compiling what is, as I say, a gripping story, well worth reading.

Beyond simply entertaining ourselves, what can we learn from this book? Not much new about Nazis, or the French, or the French Resistance. Those topics have much to teach us, but not much new to teach us. Rather, what I want to focus on here is how La Rouchefoucauld's public life demonstrated his commitment to masculine virtue and to aristocratic obligation. In La Rouchefoucauld's time, and in every society in every time before our own late modern time, men were expected to be men. A man who refused to live up to the requirements of masculinity disgraced and isolated himself. (Not to mention he was expected to grow up to be a man quickly—La Rouchefoucauld was killing men when he was nineteen, and to take a less violent example, Orson Welles was twenty-five when he wrote, directed, and starred in *Citizen Kane*.) And, closely tied to the requirement to be a man, the ruling class was expected to contribute in proportion to the fact that it ruled. We can learn, most of all, by simply observing how far away then seems from now, and realizing what changes need to be made today.

At the broadest level, what used to be, and should be, expected of men is modeling proper masculine behavior. Doing that makes society work. If men stop acting like men should, it throws sand in the gears of society. So what are these masculine virtues? They are a set of positive virtues, required behaviors, towards which men as men are aligned by nature and which need to be encouraged and polished, and negative virtues, behaviors to avoid, attractive as those might be to any given individual man.

The positive virtues are those La Rouchefoucauld exemplified: physical bravery ranging towards aggression; self-reliance; protection at any cost of his family, friends, and others deserving of protection; the handling and use of physical things; the creation of order, tight control of emotion; provision for his family; and bold, quick action. They are not the feminine virtues: nurture; kindness; grace; empathy for people and creatures; the creation and formation of life; counsel before action; cooperation; and passing wisdom down through the generations. Together, in different measure for different people, across the whole range of humanity, all these virtues form a coherent human whole, a functioning society, to which each person contributes what he or she does best. But when these virtues are denied, confused, ignored or blurred, chaos and evil result. As I tell my three boys (my girls listen, hear, and learn, such that they may choose rightly themselves, though they are also given their own lessons), a man's job, boiled down to its essence, is "to be the first to fight and the last to flee." More simply, I also lecture the boys every day, "Don't be a pansy." It is old school around our house. Or, as the worm turns, is it new school around our house?

The positive masculine virtues overlap heavily with something laughed at today, chivalry. Of course, chivalry was a system of mutual obligations and support among men and women. It was in part a natural system, and in part the enforced semi-artificial superstructure of a highly developed and successful culture. You have to remove the knights-and-armor overlay through which we tend to think of chivalry, but to a man of the 1940s, chivalry was an understandable, coherent, accepted ideal. This was especially true among the aristocracy, which has always refined the transmission of the high masculine virtues to a greater extent than other segments of society.

And what are the negative masculine virtues, the behaviors to avoid? Really, they are twofold. First, avoiding the extremes of the positive virtues, which, when taken to the lengths of caricature, become damaging. This is a problem today among those men striving to recover the masculine virtues, since self-teaching outside a reinforcing system of transmission is a poor substitute for the old method where everyone, from parents to teachers to shopkeepers, by increments taught a boy or a young man how to behave properly. Second, avoiding giving in to his baser instincts, which for all men are not far below the surface. If,

when given the chance, you act like a degenerate rock star, you have failed the test.

Few would disagree that all these masculine virtues are today held in contempt by our elites, those who have the power to form and guide our culture and society. It is not just contempt, though—our elites actively demand that men not only not act like men, but demand they act like women, in order to be praised and held up as role models. Examples of such feminization abound. My wife has been complaining for some time about the “pussyfication” of men that she sees everywhere. (She is not complaining about me—I am, let me assure you, so, so very, masculine. Also note, by the way, the term “pussy” here has nothing to do with Donald Trump’s vulgarisms; Webster’s tells me it means a “weak, cowardly, or effeminate man.”) You just have to look around you. The male models at Target flounce from their posters, wearing gauzy scarves and smiling soft smiles. Obama’s propaganda team thinks that simpering Pajama Boy resonates with men. The *New York Times* writes article after article about how men are eagerly choosing to portray themselves as, and to act, feminine. Schoolteachers strive to repress any boisterousness from boys, demanding they reeducate themselves to present as sugar, spice, and everything nice. (Much of this is actual child abuse, with strong overtones of totalitarianism, farthest advanced and best seen for what it is in Sweden.) And that’s before you even get to the ideologists, the grim, hatchet-faced women with cropped hair and the fattish, mincing men with soft hands, who howl at us about imaginary “toxic masculinity” and demand we believe that at their option, men can choose to be women, and women men, or something in between, on alternate Tuesdays.

You may respond that this is an exaggeration, that masculinity survives just fine in strongholds outside the grasp of the cultural elite. Maybe, though there is little evidence of that in national public life. I certainly know many men who reject these dictates of the elite—but they are besieged, and they know it, that masculine virtues are most definitely not permitted to be celebrated, or even acknowledged, in any professional or corporate environment. Perhaps new beachheads are being formed, as I discuss below. Possibly proud old-style masculinity survives in certain small areas of the military, and among the deplorables who do not read the *New York Times*. But in the military, what small area is left is under

brutal siege, like the Royan pocket, by pinched-looking women who risibly claim the title "General." And as to the broader culture, our rulers know that over time the deplorables will comply due to indoctrination or punishment, or they can be safely ignored, left to commit suicide or descend into opiate addiction in desperation at their lot.

So the question then is, why are we subjected to this torrent of malevolent stupidity, unknown in human history before our time? The prime reason is because the foundation of the malign ideology of the modern Left, the Apollyon of the age, is that reality is malleable, and most of all, that human nature is a construct, which we can mold as we will, to achieve the perfect world. The Left knows that if anyone is allowed to believe that men and women are different, then it also will be believed that reality exists, humans are what humans are, and we must all struggle forward together to build an imperfect world. These beliefs cannot be permitted, so the propaganda and conformity machine must be deployed to enforce compliance. The Emperor does too have clothes, peasant!

There is a secondary, related reason that the masculinity of La Rouchefoucauld's time has been driven from public life. Choosing to act as a virtuous man is hard. It requires conditioning from parents and from society, as well as tough personal choice and discipline. In the society the Left has built today, emancipation of every person, man and woman, from the burden of unchosen obligation is the greatest sacrament of all. Even leaving aside the constant indoctrination, masculinity, which at its core is a set of non-negotiable duties, is neither recognized nor rewarded when unfettered freedom is the only goal. Instead, what is celebrated is a man's freedom to be a coward, to live in his parents' basement, to abandon his wife and children, to bawl at minor setbacks, and to be vacillating and indecisive. Those vices, those failures to be a man, are what is rewarded and never punished, and since they are easy and pleasurable ways to live, part of a man's baser instincts, in a world of emancipation they tend to replace the old virtues without even the need for indoctrination from above.

What is the long-term effect of this coerced denial of reality as regards men and women? I'm not sure. Certainly, something not based in reality cannot last, but it can cause fatal damage to any given society before it burns itself out. And like all high culture, developed masculine virtue

is partially an artificial structure bolted onto society; you do not find it in primitive societies, although you always find its building blocks. Without maintenance, it can't grow, and it is hard to recover. There is some evidence that men are struggling to recover masculine virtues, even though the only prominent public person today, left or right, who will speak the truth about masculinity, over and over, is Jordan Peterson. The response to his message suggests a groundswell to recover a proper place for the masculine virtues. But it is extremely difficult to recover a complex cultural artifact that has been destroyed, even if based firmly in nature, and much more so when it is under constant attack. My guess is that absent some extreme challenge to our society that demands the masculine virtues be placed front and center, some disastrous event, this decay of masculinity is permanent and feeding on itself, such that we will end up like Sweden, South Korea, or Japan in this regard—a dying society, but one where manufacturers of cosmetics for men do a booming business, until there are no more boys to whom to sell makeup.

In the very short term, paradoxically, I think some of this benefits conservatives politically, though that is a modest benefit, akin to rearranging the proverbial deck chairs. Still, hatred of masculinity, combined with ugly ideological farces such as the transparent lies rolled out about Brett Kavanaugh, seem to me to risk turning the Democratic Party into a party confined to some combination of rigid Left ideologues, not-very-bright liberal women, and feminized men. That offers pretty narrow appeal to the polity as a whole (probably part of why the leftist censorship/propaganda machine of the Lords of Tech has fired up its afterburners). The storied “white working class,” comprised largely of men who are still men and women who are not fooled by, or attracted by, hatred of men and masculinity, isn't coming back to the Democrats. Nor are Latino men, or African American men, or other men from cultures largely outside the gelatinous cultural elite that celebrate a man being a pansy, likely to respond positively to this increasingly rancid flavor of the Democratic Party.

Of course, to take advantage of this political opportunity, the Republicans would have to offer a strong alternative, a firm stand in reality, and you'd be hard pressed to find a Republican politician, all conditioned to not give offense to the mouthpieces of the cultural elite, and all deathly afraid of the mob, who will even say a woman is a

woman and a man is a man. This suggests that a new party, with a strong overlay of Jordan Peterson, has a real potential future, and perhaps that will form in front of our eyes. One can hope.

I increasingly suspect that much of this idiocy only exists because our society is so wealthy. You can paper over a lot of unreality with money, especially when you can steal money from others who produce value to live your fantasy life. As a man, you can get a job as a Gender Studies professor, contradicting reality twenty-four hours a day, being paid enormous sums (and getting a free education, with money thieved from actual value producers). And you will not, unfortunately, be slapped across the face and told to go get a real job, that you, as a man, are a disgrace to masculinity, not fit to be allowed in public or to seek the attentions of a woman (if that's what you like, which you probably don't). This is a new thing, made possible by wealth. I'm not sure what to do about this. I like wealth, and what it can enable a society to do. But if every society that is rich chooses to be stupid, then wealth doesn't have all that much to recommend it in the long run, not to mention that with this approach wealth will, through stupidity, inevitably evaporate.

We have not really covered the other virtue exemplified by La Rochefoucauld, aristocratic duty. Even more was required of La Rochefoucauld than masculine virtue, because he was an aristocrat. He knew that, he acknowledged that, and his whole society acknowledged that. The old rule, that from those who have much, much shall be required, was still in full and unquestioned effect. A system that recognizes an aristocracy, whose members are acknowledged to be leaders to whom some degree of deference is owed, is the only system that make sense. Every society has an aristocracy, even America today, because hierarchies are both natural and inevitable, as Jordan Peterson, again, is fond of reminding us. The default is the "mass man" of José Ortega y Gasset; the cream that rises to the top is those who seek excellence, demanding it from themselves, and as a class, it is from them that excellence is demanded. The opposite is Ortega's "barbarism," "the absence of standards to which appeal can be made," where a man's "ideas are in effect nothing more than appetites in words." The problem is that our aristocracy, our ruling class, is not actually elite, in the formal meaning of that term. It merely rules. It is a conglomeration of Ortega's mass men. It is hopelessly awful and corrupt, parasitical and vice-ridden,

lacking in either merit or accomplishment, deriving its power and its pay from controlling and bloating the government, pushing policies that destroy the common good, and it should be thrown out with the trash. As with masculinity, *The Saboteur* brings this second difference between now and then into sharp relief.

So there you go. I wanted to cry after reading this book, but I restrained myself, because I am a man. Now I will go and think what can be done.