

# Reflections on Disobedience

by [Samuel Hux](#) (January 2021)



**According to Erich Fromm, reflecting** on Hebrew and Greek myths in 1963, “*human history began with an act of disobedience, and it is not unlikely that it will be terminated by an act of obedience.*” I am habitually disinclined to thrill to rebellion as a virtue in itself. I hated *Rebel Without a Cause* to the extent that I avoided all movies starring James Dean, advertised by Hollywood as disobedient to all bourgeois norms, even his death at 24 soon after a speeding ticket seeming symbolic of his life and a part of his myth. So the best I could respond to Fromm’s declaration was a tepid *perhaps*. But it’s a certainty that if everyone had obeyed orders Jean Edward Smith’s *The Liberation of Paris* (2019) would be a sadder book, with the subtitle “How Eisenhower, De Gaulle, and Von Choltitz Saved the City of Light” somewhat altered, since the word *Saved* would be not quite appropriate with the architectural face of Paris itself significantly altered. This is not a review of Smith’s book, although it certainly deserves one.

It only now seems a foregone conclusion that Charles De Gaulle would rebel against the wishes of Marshall Philippe Pétain. After all, De Gaulle was only a brigadier at the time he departed Vichy France for London, and Pétain, respecting De Gaulle’s service in World War I, had been greatly responsible for salvaging his career in the ‘20s when De Gaulle had run afoul of the common lot of generals: Pétain made sure that “the most intelligent officer in the French army” (Pétain was surely right) became professor at the Ecole de Guerre, a significant step toward what De Gaulle surely thought his destiny.

I don’t think it would have been expected that General

Dwight Eisenhower, only a colonel in 1941, would have the *cojones* constantly to defy Franklin Delano Roosevelt's insistence that De Gaulle should be ignored and certainly not supported in his wishes and claim to be de facto leader of a liberated France. Ike, exercising vastly better military and political judgment, knew that FDR was simply and radically wrong, and did not give an inch while cleverly and slyly appearing to.

Even today, having given up admiring the late FDR to a worshipful degree, I find it hard to admit how wrong he was. The single recollection of any of my birthdays involves a photo of a black Chief Petty Officer (Gordon Jackson his name was) weeping while playing an accordion on April 12, 1945. That's the longest and only lasting association I have with my birth-date, not the beginning of the Civil War with Fort Sumter fired upon (and certainly not the suicide of Marilyn Monroe). I recall a magazine cover (*Life?*) from 1940, which I saw years later, of a man identified by the caption "The Man Who Voted for Willkie," I remember thinking half facetiously, "Oh come on, there must have been more than one." Heroic though he was in many ways, FDR was shameful and his actions shameless when he yielded, as he often did, to his blinkered and antisemitic state department. (Call a spade a spade—or as Harry Truman edited, "a goddamned shovel.") As when he turned the ship *St. Louis* full of escaping Jews away from American controlled ports. Or, as when—we're getting close to the point—he agreed with the state department judgment that we should trust Vichy to change its habits.

It is embarrassing to remember the liberal opinion of Eisenhower when he became president. Ike the sometimes lovable but essentially bumbling intellectual lightweight better at golf than at English. I can't find the version I recall of the Gettysburg Address as it would have been written had Abe been culturally illiterate like Ike. Even these many decades later I doubt that many think of Eisenhower as particularly

intellectual. One cure for that would be to read Smith's many quotations of Eisenhower's prose. Ike's mental agility is especially on display in a Top Secret report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on his strategy and tactics for the campaign in France; pages 117-120 are themselves worth the price of the book.

We all know what Eisenhower and De Gaulle looked like, just as we are familiar with the historically popularized visage of Roosevelt with his cigarette holder in his mouth. Any actor playing them will always have a physical challenge he hopes his acting skill will overcome or neutralize. But German General Dietrich von Choltitz? That's no physical challenge for an actor at all. If you saw René Clément's 1966 *Is Paris Burning?* you may remember Gert Froeber. If you've seen more recently, 2014, Volker Schlöndorff's *Diplomacy*, Niels Arestrup's face may come to memory. And those two actors don't look that much alike. If you recall neither you'll have to bring to mind your private image of what a Prussian officer should look like, or find the photo in Professor Smith's book where Choltitz looks more or less like your private image of what a Prussian officer should look like.

But no matter, for chances are you have a starker memory of Orson Welles in *Is Paris Burning?* and/or André Dusollier in *Diplomacy* as Swedish consul Raoul Nordling. That's certainly the case in the latter film, which is, in fact, all about Nordling's attempt to sway von Choltitz away from Hitler's order to set Paris aflame. And that plot-line—von Choltitz having to be convinced to do the right thing and resist Hitler's order—is the most popular view of the von Choltitz story. But Jean Edward Smith sees things significantly differently.

When Generals Karl-Heinrich von Stulpnagel and Hans von Boineburg-Lengsfeld were removed from their posts of general occupation commander in France and specific occupation commander in Paris for being implicated in the July 20 plot in

1944, von Choltitz was awarded the Paris position by Hitler. The reason he was chosen was his reputation as—in the words of one of Hitler’s military aides—one who “never questioned an order no matter how harsh it was.” (Here I must allude to an ambiguous story about von Choltitz’s enthusiastic obedience to orders. When German generals under British lock and key at war’s end were clandestinely overheard by British intelligence, von Choltitz was “heard” to say that one order he obeyed rigorously was the killing of Jews. But I put *heard* in quotation marks because, evidently, the British listeners were not quite sure the particular voice making that claim-confession in the German language chatter was actually von Choltitz. Nonetheless, the maybe-maybe-not ambiguity remains unresolved. Given von Choltitz’s behavior in Paris doubt about the voice seems to me legitimate.)

In any case, Hitler ordered an interview with von Choltitz before his move to Paris. According to von Choltitz he was eager to meet Hitler and to serve, but was shocked by Hitler’s demeanor and language. As Hitler ranted, “I witnessed the terrible eruption of a hateful mind . . . I saw in front of me someone who had lost his mind.” Interview over and von Choltitz shattered and depressed, he leaves Hitler’s East Prussian headquarters privately debating a general’s responsibilities given an insane *Fuehrer*.

Make of this what you will—von Choltitz’s reconstruction of his thoughts trustworthy or a retroactive fictionalizing?—what we *do* know is that as military commander in Paris he subtly failed to carry out his orders—which were constantly re-iterated—while consistently misrepresenting to Hitler what he was doing, and that his disobedience could not be blatant because, given Hitler’s post-July 20 *Sippenhalf* (“imprisoned families”) Law, he knew that the cost of open rebellion would be paid by his wife back in Germany. However you precisely cut all of this, Professor Smith’s view of von Choltitz is the test *not* of a man having to be convinced to do

the right thing, *but doing it because already convinced*. Whether Smith is right or not in every detail (and I sense his is not a majority view) I think von Choltitz's memory is worthy of celebration.

And now I bid Professor Jean Edward Smith adieu, sorry I could not ask him a lot of questions, including (least important) whether he should be called, English style, "Gene," or, French style, "Zhonh." But, alas, he died September 1, 2019.

I am fast approaching the major point of this essay. To get there I am afraid I now must outline—or insist upon—my "credentials" of a particular sort, since I am about to speak kindly of some figures in *feldgrau* uniform beyond von Choltitz. My contempt for German National Socialism is unlimited. I have visited the subject in essay after essay, about a dozen in all, in memoir or cultural analysis. For several years back in the late '70s and early '80s I wrote regularly for the Jewish magazine *Moment* when it was edited by the late Leonard Fein of Brown University, who fondly called me his *shabbes goy* (referring to the Gentile who performs certain tasks pious Jews are not supposed to do on holy days), since I often wrote on subjects of interest to Jews best handled by a Gentile who could ostensibly be more "objective," or at least could appear to have no special pleading to do. To this I might add a more personal note. Whenever I think of the Nazi regime—I mean *every time* I think of it—I am not only aware, but I suffer the awareness, that could the Nazis have reached her in her infancy they would have murdered the child who became the woman I fell in love with.

I remember in graduate school a friend joking about writing a dissertation on William Wordsworth's humor. The topic, he said, given the Romantic poet's great reputation, would have to be deemed worthy, and/but, thank the lord, would have to be mercifully short. Not a joke, but a curt dismissal, I heard many years later when I mentioned to a colleague that

the German-Canadian scholar Peter Hoffmann was revising his *History of the German Resistance 1933-1945*: “Book?” said my colleague, “Surely you mean essay.” In fact, the third edition of the *History*, 1996, was 872 pages!

The dismissal, of course, relies on the general ahistorical perception that German resistance to Hitler was a historically minor affair: how could the most educated and culturally sophisticated population in Europe have allowed the Nazi horror to go on for so long? Which is not in itself an improper question, although it runs counter to the well-spread knowledge of people who were not sleepwalking of how successfully repressive German society was after 1933. I speak here of popular perceptions; what serious historians, like Hoffmann, know is not what merely-adequately educated people know. In historical fact, when there is a history of extensive failure after failure I suppose it is natural for one to assume that the efforts failed through lack of sufficient energy. Which is another way of saying that we tend to ignore or downplay the historical phenomenon of radically bad luck . . .

Let the luck of Georg Elser suggest a persistent pattern. Elser, a Munich proletarian, planned his assassination attempt for a year before placing a bomb in the beer hall where Hitler was to make a speech *at a certain time*. Elser’s bomb near the podium blew the place up, but Hitler had left merely a few minutes before he was expected to. This was in November 1939. Hitler was sure the rest of his dictatorship not to arrange *predictable* public appearances. And not only public appearances: military “photo ops,” as we would call them today, as well. There was, for instance, the plan of Wehrmacht officers Axel von dem Bussche and Ewald von Kleist—but let Hoffmann tell you that story and others. I should add that other studies supplement Peter Hoffmann’s monumental book. I’ll make special mention of Randall Hansen’s *Disobeying Hitler* (2014), which comes in at a “mere” 470

pages. So “brief” because, note its subtitle “*The German Resistance After Valkyrie*,” it tells the story of disobedience during significantly less than a year, from July 1944 until the war’s end.

Of course the most famous act of resistance was the July 20 attempt, under the code name *Valkyrie*, led and planned primarily by General Henning von Tresckow and Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, and enacted with bomb by Stauffenberg himself. I doubt that anyone likely to read this essay does not know the outlines of the July plot and its tragic failure: Stauffenberg placing the bomb (in briefcase) near Hitler in the conference room at the Prussian headquarters (Wolfsschanze) and leaving immediately for Berlin to see to success of coup, someone stumbling over and moving briefcase just far enough away that Hitler was not killed, the slow unraveling of the coup back in Berlin when Hitler’s survival was announced, Stauffenberg’s execution that night after the coup’s failure, the consequent executions of hundreds, etc. “Famous” even if one has never read the history (or read Paul West’s novel *The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg*) because the scene at Wolfsschanze at least has appeared in several movies over the years, and the broad story was told/shown in the 2008 film *Valkyrie* (details trustworthy according to Hoffmann) with Kenneth Branagh as von Tresckow and Tom Cruise as von Stauffenberg. In the case of Cruise/Stauffenberg, by the way, there is no physical challenge for the actor: Cruise, Scientological fool though he may be, bears a striking resemblance to the extraordinarily handsome Stauffenberg, who looked like a movie star you could say. I have to mention that one doesn’t have to rely on the novel or film: Peter Hoffmann, god bless him, published the third edition in 2008 of his 424 paged *Stauffenberg: A Family History, 1905-1944*. I wish a few specific people had read it!

I include among those specific few one critic of the movie (which I liked by the way, although that’s irrelevant).



I prefer not to give his name any publicity. As Oscar Levant once said about someone he found particularly abhorrent, "I'm going to memorize his name and throw my head away." This fool doubted that Stauffenberg was really a hero. Why? Because "like many aristocratic Wehrmacht officers, Stauffenberg was initially enthusiastic about Nazism" and turned against Hitler "extremely late in the game." The Count may have initially accepted the Nazis, but to say he was enthusiastic only reveals this critic (like so many people) has not reflected on the extreme difficulty of effecting opportunities, which I, educated by the likes of Hoffmann and Hansen, have tried above to indicate.

The best that can be said about this critic's supposed-to-be-gutsy cogitations is that he does not implicate Stauffenberg in his generalization that the reason most conspirators "ultimately failed was their own reluctance to be killed in the process." But the best here is not very much; it only reveals (1) the critic's own brave comfort in his own cozy safety and (2) his ignorance. Several officers (Hoffmann again my source) who failed in assassination attempts failed, again because of Hitler's unpredictability, in what were planned as voluntary suicide missions!

And there is more to be said on these issues. While it is true that Stauffenberg and others may have *as professional soldiers* served the German cause, which is hard to distinguish from Hitler's cause, and had resisted or disobeyed only when history judges it to be somewhat "too late," it is equally true, as Hoffmann elegantly and eloquently and philosophically cogently observes, "*it would be unhistorical to demand that an individual should always have been what he ultimately became*" (italics mine)! To ignore that truth is to be morally ungenerous to the extreme, or to the safe extreme I would say. Or don't take Hoffmann's word for it, or mine. Just ponder instead the Christian concept of *redemption*. Does one wish to dismiss that?

In any case, months before the practical opportunity at Wolfsschanze became possible, and after von Stauffenberg had lost his left eye, right hand, and two fingers on the other, in battle in Tunisia, he confided to another officer in 1942, "There is only one solution. *It is to kill him.*" And so he tried. Hero? Bloody well of course!

But problems in my *glorification* (call a spade a spade again) of von Stauffenberg remain. For even if I wish to elevate him, as some others do, to the highest level of all the disobedient among the Germans, I have to admit the moral complexity of that choice. For I am saying that the untold many of silent and unknown Germans who must have existed during the Nazi period who never felt allegiance to Hitler and suffered private anxiety, are one thing, and this other—Colonel Claus Maria Schenk, Count von Stauffenberg—who served in uniform quite willingly, was no democrat longing for the Weimar days, and was brave in battle against Hitler's enemies, was quite another thing. In other words, I have to ask the question of how a man who achieved the stature that he did could have as long as he did serve in important *Wehrmacht* positions before entering anti-Hitler *Valhalla*. And I have to do that while aware, as I always am, what the fate of the Jewish woman I love could have been in different circumstances.

One fact, however and thank God, that eases my burden is that while some conspirators in uniform or out turned on Hitler only when or primarily because they saw that he was not simply *losing* the war but was an absolute hindrance to their *winning* it, Stauffenberg was not one of them. While he was not pleased by the prospect of a Communist victory over Germany—what Prussian, or Bavarian aristocrat, as he was, was? And while it is only fantasy to imagine von Stauffenberg that rarity, a pre-Holocaust philo-semitic Teuton, the moral tipping point for him was, Hofmann makes adequately clear, the torture of the Jews. There is sufficient evidence of that in

*Stauffenberg: A Family History*, not just a morally pleasing hoped-for conclusion. Nonetheless, before his tragically failed heroic action, how could he have . . . ?

No sociologist, I merely assume there was no radical difference between Prussian and Bavarian military aristocracy, Protestant vs. Catholic aside. But it seems to me that the Bavarian *Graf* von Stauffenberg was both the very image of the traditional type and the radical exception. He knew from his youth on that he wanted more than anything else to serve the Fatherland, and wrote an essay at 18 proclaiming "The truly aristocratic view—for us the primary consideration demands public service of us, whatever our specific occupation." And he knew from an early age what occupation that would likely be, "dreaming" of being a soldier. On the other hand, he tentatively and briefly considered architecture, or music, being adept at the cello, learned languages including Russian, read Homer in Greek, and wrote poetry that was accomplished enough that the Master himself invited him to join the aesthetically elite Stefan George Circle. A very cultivated young man! None of this is easy to imagine as "normal" for a Prussian or Bavarian professional army officer. Yet the young Count von Stauffenberg fully adapted to that ethos.

And a part of that ethos, one might say the essential part, was that the military serves *das Vaterland* or *Heimat*, definitely not a political party (this violated completely by Hitler of course) and that politics is a vulgar, if necessary, occupation beneath the dignity of the military. Of course, the military was essentially a conservative institution, but a-politically conservative if you'll take my meaning, a disposition, not an ideology. And that was Stauffenberg's conservatism all his adult life, until . . . Well, until he necessarily became "political" as a member of the conspiracy necessarily thinking about what would replace the Nazi regime after the assassination: something vaguely conservative that probably would not have satisfied the Allies but with full

rights to and co-operation from labor unions.

Still, how could he adjust to you know what? I think I need a digression of sorts, if digression is what it properly is. I have thought about the following more times than I can fix on. For most of human history "the most powerful people in the world" have been a sorry and sordid lot. If I recall the time that I arrived at any degree of awareness of the broad world, which was (guess what!) around 1944 or '45 or so, FDR was here in the States, Winston Churchill in Britain, Philippe Pétain in France, Benito Mussolini in Italy, Tojo in Japan, Adolf Hitler in Germany, and Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. The sorry and sordid win 5 to 2! Have things radically changed? I doubt it. It is almost normal that rulers will be horrible. To say that power corrupts doesn't really give one a handle on things, and probably isn't really true: we've been lucky with the first two above, and with Washington and Lincoln and so on. Nonetheless, the score is so often something like 5-2 still. What is one to do? Sometimes it seems the thing to do is "tend your own garden," the world is just to be accepted as the way things are. You just have to get on with things as best you can. But whatever von Stauffenberg *had* done that's not what he *could* do. So, again, how could he adjust to you know what?

Maybe *adjust* is not the right word. It must have been possible—it clearly *was* possible—to *ignore* much, focused on one's duties, especially when duty was such an aristocratic imperative. And one form of *ignoring* I imagine was the hopeful assumption that certain "excesses" surely had to be temporary. If that's foolish, yes, *foolish* is the right word. And there were "distractions" encouraging one to rally to the Fatherland: such as punishments for World War I deemed excessive—like the just (I think) Treaty of Versailles—which the Germans, probably of all or most stripes, thought unjust; actions judged to be offensive and aggressive, such as the demilitarization of the Rhineland, which Hitler reversed in

1936 to universal-Teutonic praise, a great popular victory; *und so weiter*. And I suppose, indeed I must suppose (without subscribing to that absolutely absurd cliché that “to understand is to forgive”—I wonder who invented that vulgarization of thought?). . . I suppose that whatever the moral objections one had to the regime there was the possibility (probability?) of thinking “If so many people can approve so enthusiastically. . .

As well as these weaknesses, there was/is a phenomenon the liberal mind (but not the conservative) has a hard time grasping or coping with. That is, the fact that adjusting or ignoring or putting objections on temporary hold was aided by the perception that the Fatherland was endangered by the very real spectre of Bolshevism. Conservatively disposed people are just not stupid enough to think that Communism is only “liberalism in a hurry” and not the execrable horror that it is.

A relatively quick education in what it was like to be both a committed enemy of Adolf Hitler and a Wehrmacht officer committed to the war against the Soviet Union can be had by reading the 183 pages of text in the memoir of Philipp Freiherr von Boeselager, *Valkyrie: The Story of the Plot to Kill Hitler, By Its Last Member*. The *Freiherr* ( a form of Baron) was a close associate of Henning von Tresckow and a significant member of the conspiracy who was honored by the French in 2003 as an officer of *Légion d'honneur* for his resistance and as a representative of those resisters who did not survive, as von Boeselager did by the sheerest luck. He was also wounded five times on the Russian front and received the Iron Cross First Class. The memoir makes it perfectly clear that von Boeselager feels no discrepancy between his dual roles, so clear that he does not consciously argue the case. And I defy anyone to read this fascinating book and feel comfortably superior to the author. A brief digression (if, once again, that's the appropriate word) follows.

Even these many years later it is apparently difficult for many people to realize how morally compromised one of the Allies was—and not simply because the Soviet Union was for two years sharing the fruits of Hitler's invasion of Poland. When Joseph Stalin switched sides because Hitler, whom he admired so much, betrayed him in 1941, he became *our* ally "Uncle Joe"—because "the enemy of our enemy is our friend." But our friend was still not the moral superior of our enemy. We properly thrilled to the Russian defense and the Russian victories. But Stalin's known policy toward our defeated ally Poland was vile. Germans knew what we did not: that in March-May of 1940 the NKVD (the moral equivalent of the SS and the *Einsatzgruppen* of mass murder) executed in the region of the Katyn forest 22,000 Polish intelligentsia and army officers, largely (in Stalin's intention) to insure that Poland would belong to the Soviets after the Germans were driven out. There could be no secret to men like von Boeselager what their immediate enemy was capable of. It would be insane of "us" to think that the German *Soldaten* on the Russian front should have thought of the Soviet Union as the good ally of the good side.

In any case . . . by the time 1939, '40, '41 rolled or ground around it is no great surprise that a professional soldier of aristocratic bias and experience would be caught up in the delusion that he was "defending the Fatherland," since one good defense is an offense, and might even—military pro, I remind us—be proud of the Wehrmacht's truly extraordinary prowess.

I hope the reader senses and appreciates the effort I am making to be "fair."

But be all this as it may, by 1942 at the latest the complicated Colonel von Stauffenberg is a complicatedly tragic and admirable man, not to be "however-ed" and harrumphed about. None of us, I remind myself and invite others to do the same, have been through what he went through or have passed

the tests he had to pass. I remind all again of Hoffmann's reminder: "it would be unhistorical to demand that an individual should always have been what he ultimately became."

I cannot help but add a couple more items. Claus von Stauffenberg had two slightly older brothers, the twins Alexander and Berthold. The latter, a legal scholar and naval officer, was a principal party to the July Plot who was executed in a most brutal fashion: strangled several times to the point of death, revived each time and strangled again until the final, all this filmed for and enjoyed by Hitler. Alexander, a classical historian, survived Dachau to which he'd been committed because he was a Stauffenberg, but was saddened by his military brothers' protection of him by keeping their plans and actions a secret.

The three brothers' mother, the lovely Countess Caroline von Stauffenberg, was a close friend and confidant of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. An instance of their correspondence is an extraordinarily moving moment in the history of intimacy (an odd phrase, that). The Countess wrote Rilke in 1919, when her sons were 12 to 14 years of age, sharing her fear for her offspring in such troubling times in Germany, with the war just over and revolution threatening, and sent a photo of the three. Rilke wrote back, "I understand the sorrow you mentioned in your letter when you spoke 'as the mother of three sons.' At the same time I discern in the amiable group the overwhelming happiness with which you are blessed, having three beautiful and gifted boys, each of whom will develop in his own way in the years to come." The Countess, by the way, lived long enough to mourn the deaths of Claus and Berthold, whose actions she approved.

I said above that none of us have been through what, and passed the tests that, von Stauffenberg had. And that includes the midgets occupying Washington, D.C. If one is looking for examples in D.C. of portraits in the failure of courage there are plenty to choose from. What is the danger

that American politicians, Democrat or Republican, fear? It is certainly not incarceration. It is certainly not death. When I was growing up and when I was a student, I admired politicians who could be counted on *not* to be counted on, if you'll take my meaning—even those whose positions I generally did not admire, for instance Strom Thurmond, popularly known as “Senator No!” When I was a student I admired (and years later reviewed a biography of) the “Little Flower” Fiorello LaGuardia,” who was mayor of New York City soon after I was *out of* diapers and a cussedly independent congressman before that, and beginning long before I was *in* them “Fighting Bob” La Follette of Wisconsin. Plenty now of the opposite sort. I have said. But I will be almost casually brief.

The ability to admit that one was wrong entails bravery just as much as risky action does, and perhaps more so when an admission and apology may offend one's boss. One of Obama's false campaign claims before the 2012 election was that Al Qaeda was no longer a significant problem, which became one excuse for the inadequate protection afforded American diplomats and civil servants at Benghazi in Libya, where Ambassador Christopher Stevens and others died after the administration was slow to command military action because, after all, a quick and resolute (and quite feasible!) military mission would have been a tacit admission of the *predictable* danger. Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, was, President aside, the only Democrat with sufficient *gravitas* (although unearned) to apologize for the lie and the failure in some fashion. Instead, when grilled on the matter she callously answered “What does it matter now?”—effectively dismissing any responsibility on her and Obama's part, and in cowardly fashion added insult to injury by charging that critics of her and his actions were taking political advantage of a tragedy that moved her so much. To this day, Democrats still mischaracterize the “Benghazi Affair” in similar fashion.



Nebraska GOP Senator Ben Sasse's story makes a now-more-conventional portrait. Ex-history professor, ex-college president, Sasse famously was a prominent critic of his party's leader in the White House for three years, claiming to be a principled conservative who merely caucused with the Republicans. Until, that is, the president surprisingly and cunningly endorsed Sasse for the 2020 campaign, thereby removing the threat of a primary challenge—after which Sasse became a silently loyal sycophant. But when it was apparent that Trump's re-election was in trouble Sasse became again an ostensibly brave critic of the president. Sasse was once a history scholar? He is also the author of *The Vanishing American Adult*. Autobiography?

Both Hillary Clinton and Ben Sasse suffer from self-inflicted moral cowardice, both endangered by partisan disapproval and its consequences, none of which are terminal. Neither is as worthy a human being as Colonel Claus Schenk, Count von Stauffenberg was, who would have been their moral superior even had he never put a bomb in his briefcase. Furthermore, I offer them as moral inferiors to a lesser man than von Stauffenberg, General Dietrich von Choltitz, who'd been an obedient Nazi less than a month before his acts of disobedience. And that's a hell of a thing to have to say.

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