The Eggs Speak Up

"There set out, slowly, for a Different World,
At four, on winter mornings, different legs . . .
You can't break eggs without making an omelette
— That's what they tell the eggs."
— Randall Jarrell, "A War"

Since the defeat of Nazi Germany, the word “totalitarianism” has been more and more identified with Communism, and the fight against it has become increasingly popular. This popularity is suspect because it occurs in a country where no danger of totalitarian movements exists, and for which the totalitarian threat is almost exclusively an issue, the gravest issue, of foreign politics. Popularity is even more suspect at a moment when the public authorities—the State Department, on one hand; the FBI, on the other—have become fully aware of all its external and internal implications. This, certainly, could not and should not absolve intellectuals from trying to understand ever better and deeper the nature of totalitarian government and the causes of totalitarian movements. Yet the fact that the public authorities are aware seems to make denunciations born of sheer fighting spirit, and the concomitant unqualified and often inarticulate praise of “democracy,” rather superfluous. It is strange to watch how a whole generation of people who once had tried to break their heads in rebellion

The manuscript of this unpublished essay, probably delivered as an address, is marked “Circa 1950.” From internal evidence it would appear that it was not written before 1951.
against the most solid and unyielding walls of society now spends its energies in the violent opening of open doors; and, not content like other citizens quietly to support their government, fight for more power for the powers-that-be as though these powers were threatened by a domestic conspiracy, which, however, stubbornly fails to materialize.

The one excellent reason for this strange behavior is the insight that, independent of totalitarian movements in any given country, totalitarianism as such constitutes the central political issue of our time. And it is unfortunately true that this country, which in many respects looks like a happy island to a world in turmoil, would spiritually be even more isolated without this "anti-totalitarianism"—even though the insistence of our fighters on the unqualified happiness of the happy island does not exactly form the best of all possible bridges. The point is that to state that totalitarianism is the central political issue of our time makes sense only if one also admits that all other evils of the century show a tendency eventually to crystallize into that one supreme and radical evil we call totalitarian government. All these other evils, to be sure, are lesser evils if compared with totalitarianism: be they tyrannies and dictatorships, or misery and shameless exploitation of man by man, or the imperialist type of oppression of foreign peoples, or the bureaucratization and corruption of democratic governments. Yet this statement is meaningless, because this may well be true of all evils in our entire history. The trouble begins whenever one comes to the conclusion that no other "lesser" evil is worth fighting. Some anti-totalitarians have already started even to praise certain "lesser evils" because the not-so-far-away time when these evils ruled in a world still ignorant of the worst of all evils looks like the good old days by comparison. Yet all historical and political evidence clearly points to the more-than-intimate connection between the lesser and the greater evil. If homelessness, rootlessness, and the disintegration of political bodies and social classes do not directly produce totalitarianism, they at least produce almost all of the elements that eventually go into its formation. Even old-fashioned dictators and tyrants have become more dangerous since totalitarian dictators have shown them new and unexpected techniques for seizing and retaining power. The natural conclusion from true insight into a century so fraught with danger of the greatest evil should be a radical negation of the whole concept of the lesser evil in politics, because far from protecting us against the greater ones, the lesser evils have invariably led us into them. The greatest danger of
recognizing totalitarianism as the curse of the century would be an obsession with it to the extent of becoming blind to the numerous small and not so small evils with which the road to hell is paved.

One of the minor reasons why this natural conclusion is so rarely drawn is that it comes into conflict with an even more natural attitude: the tendency to escape from reality and the real discomforts of political struggles. It is more pleasant, less boring, and even more flattering to oneself, if one lives in this century, to be an enemy of Stalin in Moscow than a foe of Joseph McCarthy in Washington. One of the major reasons arises from the role played by the ex-Communists who have recently joined the fight against totalitarianism and transformed it, sometimes for excellent political and sometimes for not less weighty biographical reasons, into a fight against Stalin. The reasons these people have achieved such prominence in our common fight again seem to be excellent. Who would know better the methods and aims of the enemy than those who have just escaped from the enemy's camp? (True, when we were still fighting totalitarianism in the form of Nazism, we hardly looked for ex-Nazis to lead us; but then, there weren't any, and it is difficult to imagine now how we would have received them if there had been. Rauschning was a different case; he had been a Nazi by mistake, and Otto Strasser was never quite trusted.*) This knowledge, however, becomes daily less the monopoly of the initiated few; the technical means of totalitarian organization may be complicated and difficult to grasp, but they are certainly no mystery. And, moreover, what is not so sure is that these ex-Communists know our own methods and our own aims.

There exists another, a much better, though perhaps less plausible, reason for welcoming former members of totalitarian movements back into the political and cultural life of the non-totalitarian world, but—and this indeed illuminates the present situation—this reason is almost never advanced, least of all by the concerned parties themselves. These people, after all, have proved by the very decision which they today consider their worst mistake that they might be more closely connected

*Hermann Rauschning, political ally and confidant of Hitler before breaking with him in the early thirties, wrote *The Revolution of Nihilism* (New York, 1939) and *The Voice of Destruction* (New York, 1940), among other works. Otto Strasser, an early follower of Hitler, was expelled from the Nazi party in 1930. (His brother Gregor was executed in 1934 in connection with the so-called Röhm plot.) —Ed.
with and more deeply touched by the central predicaments of this century than the normally happy philistines around them. Those very things which, as we now know, led to pure and unmitigated catastrophe, once appealed to them in much the same way they still appeal, not only to misguided masses, but to a great many intellectuals all over the world. This would of course apply only to a certain type of Communist, to the "revolutionaries," rather than to the "apparatchiks," and it would then also be true for certain types of former Nazis, if it is valid at all. Coming back or having escaped from the totalitarian world (for our purposes it would make little difference if this world were represented by a government in power or a movement fighting for power) seems to give these ex-revolutionaries an indisputable advantage over all those who have never left the smug and comfortable four walls of established institutions, never questioned the values of a world whose institutions almost everywhere are being undermined from within. The advantage would be real, however, only if they turned their backs in full and continued knowledge of the "cause" in which they once believed, including knowledge of the pre-totalitarian conditions which eventually led to the rise of totalitarianism as well as of totalitarian ideology itself. The advantage would be entirely illusory if, for whatever reasons, they had forgotten in the meantime why they once had been able to summon up the courage to leave the spiritual comforts of respectable liberalism or conservatism or even socialism to rebel against social and political conditions which were both hidden and represented by these typically nineteenth-century ideologies.

The chief trouble is, of course, that only for a few has this ever been a matter of conscious courage. Among the numerous recent defections from the Communist parties, there are many for whom the movement was little more than one powerful organization among others in which careers were still open. There are all the little boastful self-confessed Soviet spies or GPU agents who have "turned professional informers," as Joseph Alsop "in plain blunt language" recently put it in Commonweal. The old game has become a little too dangerous; they are looking for new masters and are very disappointed when the democratic world refuses to believe in their past importance and help them into new prominence. This trouble should never have become a trouble at all, and the inevitable rise of a popular infatuation with the "I also was a Communist" line, as with anything new, is less its cause than the amazing lack of discrimination in large parts of the politically most interested audience.
The highly respectable former Communists are those who as party members had done everything in their power to steer clear of the spy apparatus within the party, and who had nothing but contempt for those who had made it their business to inform on the many "deviations" from the party line with which good people caught in a bad cause tried to put their consciences to rest. Much of the present confusion could have been avoided if only a few of these respectable former Communists had resisted the temptation of an ill-inspired solidarity and had protested against being thrown into the same pot with the less reputable characters who, for altogether different reasons, left the movement at the same time.

II

Yet more than lack of prudence and need for comradeship accounts for the present unhappy situation. These ex-Communists, no matter what their past careers in the party and no matter when they decided to break with it, all find themselves in the same predicament today: They have to explain to their new non-totalitarian friends why they did not break earlier than they did. And since their consciences are troubled exactly by this particular point, they tend to become very bitter about any of their former colleagues who happened to stick it out a little longer. This intolerance becomes especially irritating when directed toward people who were never members of the party but, for one reason or another, and sometimes for excellent ones, had shown some sympathy for what they still thought might be the "great new experiment in Soviet Russia," even when these ex-Communists had already raised their first warning cries. Among these sympathizers are comparatively few who could be called fellow-travelers in any strict sense of the word. Far from being involved in any kind of "conspiracy," they were more or less articulately aware of the general critical political situation on an international level and, consequently, of the positive, objective possibilities of the October Revolution. Yet they were not sufficiently informed and up to date about the intricate developments in the Soviet Union, and about the even more complicated history of the Communist parties.

What the ex-Communists hardly ever mention today and what, nevertheless, probably troubles their consciences more than anything else is that there was something fundamentally wrong with the party from the
beginning. This “wrong” was most strongly denounced, not by the normal, non-Communist world, but by the early protests and warnings of Rosa Luxemburg against the suppression of inner-party democracy. It is worth noting and remembering that one did not need the standards of “normal” society—standards which a revolutionary party naturally cannot accept indiscriminately—in order to detect and judge quite early the first germs, not of totalitarianism, but of tyranny; one needed only to look at the revolutionary past of the party itself. Things went from bad to worse right after Lenin’s death, until they became downright intolerable for any freedom-loving individual, even before Stalin liquidated the right- and left-wing deviations in 1930. These things were known only to party members or very close fellow-travelers, hardly ever to outsiders. In a largely moral, but not only moral, sense one might say that it is still the ghost of Rosa Luxemburg who haunts the consciences of the ex-Communists of the older generation.

However that may be, it is certain that, from roughly 1930 on, the question of membership in the Communist party could no longer be debated on political or revolutionary grounds alone. It became a question involving the moral integrity and the private life of each individual. With all the wisdom of hindsight, it is easy to pinpoint this particular moment today; but in all justice to those concerned, one must admit that it was not so easy to judge the situation then. Manners and morals within all groups and factions of the Communist parties, those which were in opposition to Stalin no less than those which supported him, had deteriorated since Rosa Luxemburg’s early warnings to a point where all kinds of personal treachery had become commonplace. Stalin, moreover, introduced his new party line without fanfare, and although in practice they were of tremendous consequence, his changes were deceptively small in words and in terms of theory—in precisely those terms, that is, in which these people, because of the scholastic deformation of all party theory, could alone think and orient themselves.

Again with the wisdom of hindsight, it is easy today to formulate what Stalin actually did: He changed the old political and especially revolutionary belief expressed popularly in the proverb “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs” into a veritable dogma: “You can’t break eggs without making an omelette.” This, as a matter of fact, is the practical consequence of Stalin’s only original contribution to socialist theory. Reinterpreting Marxist doctrine, he proclaimed that the "socialist
state” first must grow stronger and stronger and stronger, until it sud-
denly, in some distant future, “withers away”—just as if the breaking
and breaking and breaking of eggs were suddenly and automatically to
produce the desired omelette.

It would be naive to assume that well-trained and informed Com-
munists in Western countries had not been aware of the existence of
concentration camps and of a singularly “simplified” procedure of justice
in the Soviet Union even before 1930. But it would be unjust and
unjustified to conclude that they were not bothered by this state of affairs.
It was as easy then as it is today to console oneself for concrete instances
of breaches of faith and outrages against justice with some historical and
wise-sounding generalities, such as that “revolutions always tend to de-
vour their own children.” As Marxists, moreover, and convinced ad-
herents of the theory of class struggle, they never doubted the validity
of the concept of “objective guilt.” This alone sufficed to make them
swallow an indefinite number of very unpleasant and morally aggravating
occurrences which involved “subjectively” innocent victims.*

In all predicaments they had salved their consciences with the sincere
and firm belief that a socialist and classless society—and this still sig-
nified for them some realization of justice on earth—can be built only
with the greatest sacrifices in human lives. This belief appeared self-
evident because it actually was only a more emphatic application of
general historical theories, shared in a popular or learned form by every-
body, according to which world history, insofar as it aspires to greatness,
has always demanded and received great sacrifices. No matter how gran-
diose this greatness might appear to those who were drunk with History,
it practical application coincided uncannily with the pseudo-wisdom of
popular proverbs in all Western languages, such as “From planing come
shavings”† and “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs.”
Nor is this coincidence a mere accident of vulgarization; the “wisdom”

*Merely belonging to a “dying” class made one “objectively” guilty, without having
“subjectively” committed any crime whatsoever. —Ed.

†Here and later in this essay Arendt wrote “from chipping come chips,” which lacks
resonance in English. She most likely had in mind the German proverb “Wo gehobelt
wird, da fallen Späne,” which refers to a carpenter’s plane and the shavings resulting
from its use. —Ed.
of truly popular proverbs is usually the crystallized result of a long line of authentic philosophical or theological thought.

Against this background of generally shared beliefs about the nature of History and of popularly accepted standards for political activity, the intellectual difficulties of an early moral resistance to totalitarian practices can best be seen. The great personal shock resulted when it became clear to the members of Communist parties and especially to the members of the Bolshevik party in Russia that from now on the “breaking of eggs” had ceased to be an impersonal affair in which History was supposed to do all the breaking. On the contrary, those who had proclaimed themselves the protagonists of History were ordered to do it themselves. Yet great as this shock proved to be for many of them, the experience itself, though frequently analyzed and thought of in terms of personal tragedy, did not penetrate the ideological walls of Marxist doctrine and was therefore hardly ever met on its own moral or political terms. Those among the Marxist-history makers who felt an insurmountable aversion to their new role suspected themselves of moral cowardice and an indecent desire to keep their hands clean and their personalities intact. Trusted party members—who up to this time had owed their reputations to their single-minded devotion (beyond all private concerns) to the “cause,” and who in a case of conflicting loyalties would always have thought it a matter of course to care more for the establishment of socialism than for loyalty to their friends or love of their families—were curiously helpless and lacking in arguments when Stalin or, as they thought, History entrusted them with the breaking of eggs by ordering that one “must prove loyalty by delivering a close comrade into [the OGPU’s] clutches.” A few years later, during the great purges, “there was only one passport across [the] frontier [that separated the old Bolshevik party from the new]. You had to present Stalin and his OGPU with the required quota of victims.”* How could those who had always believed that “from planing come shavings” refuse to help in the planing? The result was, and was meant to be, that from now on every party member had to look upon everybody he knew, including himself, as a potential shaving.

It seems only natural, though this does not make things easier today, that under such circumstances the moment when a person decided to

*W. G. Krivitsky, In Stalin's Secret Services, New York, 1939, xii, 39.
get out and to stop "breaking eggs" was almost entirely arbitrary. Seen from the inside—though this is difficult to grasp for us on the outside—it did not make much difference whether someone quit because he could not stand the amount of disloyalty and bad faith demanded during the Moscow Trials, when he was asked to sacrifice members of the Old Guard who had been the friends of his manhood or the heroes of his youth (was the consent of the Old Guard to its own sacrifice not obvious enough?), or whether he left the party because of the Hitler-Stalin pact, when he was asked either to make his peace with his worst enemies and the murderers of many of his best comrades or, if a Jew, to regard his whole people as eggs broken for the greater glory of the socialist omelette. It did not make such a tremendous difference because in either case he already had such a long career of egg-breaking behind him that only a great human effort could save him from becoming a broken man.

In this, as in many other respects, it is unfortunately true that totalitarian politicians are only the most extreme and consistentappers of generally shared, deep-rooted modern political prejudices. The vulgarity and wickedness of these prejudices have been made emphatic beyond endurance, but they arose out of other, more respectable traditions and have acquired new pertinence since our confrontation with the problems of mass-men and mass-society. The ex-Communists had, and still have, to explain the circumstances surrounding their former membership in and eventual break with the party to a world which, at least intellectually, contains many of the very elements which the totalitarians have driven to their logical and bloody consequences. It is doubtless wiser not to insist on the moral side of the question, even though moral motives account for the overwhelming majority of recent defections from the Communist parties. Instead of complaining about breaking eggs, a complaint which could be easily dismissed as sheer sentimentality, the ex-Communists have complained about the omelette, and then launched on endless discussions and "scientific" quibbles about whether or not socialism was being built in Soviet Russia. They have not, at least not consciously and articulately, lost their faith in History and its bloody and grandiose demands upon mankind, but have told the world only that there is no omelette and little likelihood that an omelette will ever develop from so many broken eggs. More recently, the tone has
changed and the complaint has been transformed into the stern warning that the omelette has turned out to be a witch’s brew.

III

The more or less opportunistic reluctance to come to terms with a genuine moral-political shock plus the tendency to present a tragedy in pseudo-scientific terminology have resulted in some serious consequences. Striking among them is the peculiar barrenness and flatness of the relevant literature with respect to both moral passion and philosophical consideration. The triteness of the human response is surprising, especially when the authors are otherwise sophisticated and articulate people. Even Margarete Buber’s recent report on the Soviet and Nazi concentration camps,* which is in every other respect outstanding in this whole genre of literature, has practically nothing of greater general significance to remark than “Will we ever be so close to human beings again as we were in Ravensbrück?” The point is that opportunism, the understandable fear to utter any thought that another might judge to be “sentimental” or “emotional,” sometimes appears like a screen which hides . . . nothing. The situation seems to be summed up in drastic simplicity in a story which Silone once told and with which he meant to describe the culminating experience of a whole generation: “One of these revolutionaries—whom wars, revolutions and fascism have broken to such an extent that I am surprised they are not already dead or in an insane asylum—recently came to see me and, with a fervor and an intensity which would be fitting for an important discovery, said to me: ‘One always should act towards others as one wants them to act towards himself.’ ”† At this point, I think one may begin to understand the true predicament underlying all difficulties and all irritations. If those who

†The source for this story has not been found, and it may simply have been told to Arendt, who knew Ignazio Silone. In any case, it comports well with remarks Silone made in “An Interview with Ignazio Silone,” Partisan Review, Fall 1939. Silone was the antifascist Italian author of Bread and Wine, Fontamara, and School for Dictators, among other works. —Ed.
escaped from the totalitarian hell have brought back nothing from their experience but the very truisms, moral or otherwise, from which they escaped twenty or thirty years ago—escaped for the very good reason that they had found them no longer sufficient either to explain the world we live in or to offer a guide for action within it—then we may, morally speaking, indeed be caught between pious banalities which have lost their meaning and in which nobody believes any longer and the vulgar banality of homo homini lupus,* which as a guide for human action is also utterly meaningless even though quite a number of people do believe in it as they have always believed in it.

What is frightening, in other words, in the ex-Communists' return to the "normal" world is their easy and unconsidered acceptance of its normalcy in its most banal aspects. It is as though they tell us every day that we have no other choice but that between the totalitarian hell and philistinism. This is made emphatically clear by the peculiar "fervor" on which Silone rightly insists in telling his story, the enthusiasm with which the banalities of philistinism are offered to us. Fighting for the values of philistinism is new indeed, and one can hardly be surprised that it is warmly welcomed. This does not mean that these ex-totalitarians who have discovered their love of respectability are philistines themselves. Their very fervor indicates only too clearly that they are really idealistic extremists who, having lost their "ideal," are on the lookout for substitutes and so carry their extremism into Catholicism, liberalism, conservatism, and whatnot.

Annoying as this fervor may be, it certainly is not dangerous. It becomes dangerous only if applied to existing political institutions or bodies politic, verbally transforming them into a "cause" whose realization, by definition, lies in the future. In the style of extreme idealists, such a "cause" has to be treated as an end which justifies a great many otherwise disreputable means. Such solidly established, firmly rooted political bodies as, for instance, the Republic of the United States need for their continued existence the spirit and the vigilance of their citizenry, but deeds of an idealistic nature are required and useful only in times of "clear and present danger"; at all other times they are only too likely to spoil the manners and customs of democracy. Democratic society as a living reality is threatened at the very moment that democracy

*"Man is a wolf to his fellow man." —Ed.
becomes a "cause," because then actions are likely to be judged and opinions evaluated in terms of ultimate ends and not on their inherent merits. The democratic way of life can be threatened only by people who see everything as a means to an end, i.e., in some necessary chain of motives and consequences, and who are prone to judge actions "objectively," independent of the conscious motives of the doer, or to deduce certain consequences from opinions of which the holder is unaware. In the simplicity of everyday life one rule reigns supreme: Each good action, even for a "bad cause," adds some real goodness to the world; each bad action even for the most beautiful of all ideals makes our common world a little worse. Extreme seriousness can become a real threat to the ease which so primarily characterizes all free societies, in which utterances, as long as they remain in the realm of mere opinion, do not even aim at truth; nor, of course, is social talk very likely ever to produce it. All grace and all good faith in social gatherings are lost if analysis of ulterior motives or the search for possible sinister consequences is permitted to terrorize the free, and therefore sometimes playful and even irresponsible, minds of free men.

IV

It would be good if one could let the matter rest here, and it would be possible if the picture we used for argument's sake of a more or less intact democratic society, to which the ex-Communists have returned in a spirit of conversion, were actually true. This, unfortunately, is not the case. This is still the same world against whose complacency, injustice, and hypocrisy these same men once raised a radical protest, and the tragedy is that everybody today seems to understand this protest better than they do. It is the same world—and not some landscape on the moon—where the elements which eventually crystallized, and have never ceased to crystallize, into totalitarianism are to be found. Their rediscovery of the good old clichés of liberalism, conservativism, and so forth is not only bad because of misplaced fanaticism, and not only harmful because of inherent meaninglessness for the necessary fight against totalitarianism on an intellectual level. It also stands in the way of every serious attempt to form new concepts in political philosophy as well as new solutions to our political predicaments, because it artificially
endows with a semblance of life all that, for better or worse, is dead.

Liberalism, the only ideology that ever tried to articulate and interpret the genuinely sound elements of free societies, has demonstrated its inability to resist totalitarianism so often that its failure may already be counted among the historical facts of our century. Wherever free bodies politic and free societies still exist and function, reasonably free from immediate danger—and where do they function except in the United States and possibly Great Britain?—they owe their existence to the customs, habits, and institutions formed in a great past and cultivated through a great tradition. Yet whenever people of good will and sometimes of great intelligence have tried to stem the tide of totalitarianism with them, the great past and the great tradition have remained singularly silent and uninspiring.

It is one thing to love the past and to revere the dead; it is another to pretend that the past is alive in the sense that it is in our power to return to it, that all we have to do is to listen to the voices of the dead. But there is a threatening silence of all good things in our political and social life, even of those many good things which are very much alive. It is easy, at least in times of such comparative normalcy as the last five years in this country, to overshout this silence and to act as though everything were for the best in this best of all worlds. Or, to put it more correctly, it is much harder not to lose one's head in our century during the periods of quiet and seeming normalcy than to keep one's head during the panic of the catastrophes. The recent revivals of conservatism, often affirmed or proclaimed by converted ex-radicals or ex-Communists, are such attempts to overshout the threatening silence that reveals itself the very moment we look to the past for advice in our present situation. These neo-conservatives pretend not to be bothered about this silence because conservatism itself has always maintained the superiority of silent customs and inarticulate traditions in political life over programs, ideas, and formulae. Whether or not this superiority exists is of theoretical interest only; the historical truth of the matter is that conservatism, one ideology of the nineteenth century among others, came into existence only when (during and especially after the French Revolution) traditions and customs began to crumble away and Western mankind actually was confronted with the necessity of change. It is evident that a conscious effort to return to some ideologically defined
paradise in some arbitrarily selected past would involve the same elements of man-made change as any other revolution. As an ideology, conservativism, like liberalism, has had ample time and opportunity to reveal its inability to withstand the superior dynamism of totalitarian ideologies, and this even before Hitler demonstrated very specifically and concretely that all ideologies could equally well be used and abused for the purposes of a totalitarian amalgamation.

To return to our specific example: proverbs like “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs” owe their general common-sense appeal to the fact that they represent, albeit in a vulgar form, some quintessence of Western philosophical thought. Their wisdom, like their imagery, stems from Western mankind’s experience of fabrication: You can’t make a table without killing a tree. Their wisdom becomes very dubious even when applied in general to the interaction between man and nature; it can result, and has often enough, in the misrepresentation of all naturally given things as mere material for the human artifice—as though trees were nothing but potential wood, material for tables. The element of destruction inherent in all purely technical activity becomes pre-eminent, however, as soon as its imagery and its line of thinking is applied to political activity, action, or historical events, or any other interaction between man and man. Its current application to politics, by no means a monopoly of totalitarian thinking, indicates a profound crisis in applying our usual standards of right and wrong. Totalitarianism, in this as in most other respects, only draws the final, most unfettered consequences from certain heritages that have become predicaments. There are excellent reasons why this is so, why the only movements that discovered new devices for the organization of the homeless and rootless masses of our times should also be the ones which insisted without compromise on the technical and destructive elements in our political thought. Unfortunately, and this is perhaps even more serious, there are very good reasons why all arguments which fall back on this tradition of human handiwork, and use its images, exert so strong an appeal in the non-totalitarian world as well. The moment man defines himself no longer as creatura Dei, he will find it very difficult not to think of himself, consciously or unconsciously, as homo faber.

There is indeed only one principle which announces, with the same uncompromising clarity as the principle that “you can’t make an omelette
without breaking eggs,” the diametrically opposite maxim for political action. It was expressed almost incidentally in a lonely phrase of one of the loneliest men of the last generation, Georges Clemenceau, when he suddenly exclaimed during his fight in the Dreyfus Affair: “L’Affaire d’un seul est l’affaire de tous” (“The concern of one is the concern of all”).