

Serving such a purpose can be a valuable and vital function, not only of independent journalism, but also of those who preach and those who are political servants of the state.

This subjection and submergence of the individual by the totalitarian planners and the architects of grandiose social and political structures emanates basically from a belief in and employment of the doctrine of historical determinism.

The more I see of the policies and processes of government, the more remarkable it seems to me that serious and intelligent men could ever have brought themselves to propound, or to accept, such a doctrine; that we are slaves of fate and playthings of destiny. Such a view is only comprehensible when the human intellect loses or surrenders touch with its spiritual bearings.

Such a surrender is, of course, the essence of all theories of determinism. It not only blurs but blots out the whole question. For precisely what gives significance to life and history and politics, is the possibility which men and nations always possess - though they by no means always use it - of acting creatively in their environment, rather than merely reacting to it. To some extent, of course, all men transmit to the future impulses determined by the conditioning of the past, or respond almost mechanically to impulses from outside. But men can do more than this. If they will, they can always, in some degree, transform the situation in which they find themselves. They can take creative action which, while tailor-made, as it were, to fit the environment, is in no sense merely a product of it.

The whole of our belief in the possibility of constructive action, whether by men or nations, is, of course, based on the assumption that man, and his mind, are more than merely products of heredity and environment; that he does have this possibility of contact with the realm of the spirit. Public opinion and political judgment, therefore, are bound to reflect among other things the level of a people's moral insight and spiritual statute. This is as true in international as in domestic affairs.

I have often heard it said, as I am sure you have, and particularly regarding foreign politics, that governments pursue their national interest irrespective of moral considerations. This verdict, I think, begs most of the real questions. Of course, governments pursue the national interest, as they conceive it. That is their duty. The real questions are, however, first, how accurately governments (or people) can discern what is the real national interest, and secondly, how wisely they act in trying to reach the goals which they set. But here moral, even more than political, insight is required to decide where your real interest lies, and how to achieve it.