

Introduction

The phrase "unconscious traitors" requires some explanation. The essence of any crime is the intention of committing it. Consequently it would seem as though "unconscious traitor" was a contradiction in terms. But it expresses something for which I cannot find a phrase more suitable. It modifies indignation against individuals, while at the same time it emphasizes the enormity of policies, actions and statements for which they were only not responsible if they were sleep-walking at the time. Yet occasionally it has required more charity than I possess to make the extenuation of sleep-walking fit.

If I go up to a fellow-man and deliberately hit him on the head with a brick in such a manner as to cause death I am a murderer. If on the contrary I am laying bricks from a scaffolding and accidentally dislodge one which falls on a man's head and kills him, I am not a murderer, but—and the point lies here—the consequences to the victim are the same. In both cases he is dead.