

They Called Me A Renegade

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Truth About A Secret Chapter in U-Boat Savagery

*"I made a point of visiting Scotland Yard,
saying: 'Here I am—if you have anything
against me I am perfectly willing to meet any
charges. . . .' They simply laughed at the idea."*

During the war that great patriot (and afterwards convict) [\[Horatio\] Bottomley](#) came out with a double-page attack on me for my activities on behalf of Germany.

He described me as a renegade, blackguard, mountaineer, black magician, degenerate, and a lot more besides.

I was highly amused, because Bottomley, like so many others, had failed to read between the lines, and was not aware of that which is on record, that, whilst I was apparently on the side of Germany, I was actually working for Britain.

It is a fact that I feel myself to be an integral part of this England, and an extreme loyalist. And by loyalty I do not mean mere admiration or approval, for I shall never hesitate to criticize.

But, as an Englishman, I do not care whether my country is right or wrong. There is something more in me than philosophy, and when the war broke out, my one idea was whether I could in any way, with all my heart and brain, serve Britain.

REJECTED AT WHITEHALL

From August to October, 1914, I tried every means to get the Government to use me—without success.

From a sick-bed in Paris, where I was down with phlebitis and useless for the trenches, I wrote an article strongly advocating conscription. I then declared that this was not a mere Continental quarrel, but life and death for Britain.

Immediately I was better I came to England and saw an old friend, the Hon. A.B., brother of the Earl of C——.

“What about me?” I said. “I am an expert in cipher, I read and write French as well as I write English, and have a fair acquaintance with a dozen other languages.”

He smiled, “You have a reputation for having committed every crime murder, barratry, and arson downwards. I am afraid there is nothing you could do.”

So I went to New York, determined to make use of my opportunities for spiking the guns of the Germans in any way possible.

I had not been there long when I obtained an introduction to one named George Sylvester Viereck, who was handling the German propaganda in the States.

But the master-mind of German propaganda, was Professor Hugo Munsterberg, whom I promptly preceded to butter by the simple process of persistently telling him how right he was.

I became violently pro-German. I read the “The Fatherland,” their organ of propaganda, and found that their case was presented with a subtle scholarship and logic, in strange contrast to the violent and stupid efforts of our own propagandists.

CUT OFF FROM EVERYONE

It did not take me long to discover that this statesmanlike sobriety was, in the peculiar temper of the American people at that time, highly dangerous to British interests, and it was that which decided me on the

course of action, which aroused the ire of Bottomley, one of the greatest humbugs who ever lived.

It meant the sacrifice of funds, friends, and honour for the time being. It was a loathsome job, full of humiliations and privations.

I cut myself off from everything and everybody that meant everything to me and had to associate with people whose very appearance revolted me.

But I met with success. I knew that the only way I could combat the influence of German propaganda in the States was to identify myself with it in every way, and by making it abhorrent to any sane being, gradually get the minds of the American public to react against its insidious appeal.

I used to write articles for "The Fatherland." I worked upon the mind of Viereck to such an extent that from relatively reasonable attacks on England he went to the most stupid extravagances, with the result that he published the most futile rubbish from my pen.

For example, after the crime of the Lusitania, I sat down and wrote an article proving that the vessel was a man-of-war.

I dug up all the old atrocities of King Leopold of Belgium.

I hung hales of the statue of Hindenburg, and—got well in with the chiefs of the German gang.

Thus I was able to obtain possession of secrets which were of the greatest value, which I passed on to the right quarter.

With success I became more ambitious and wrote a fancy portrait of the Kaiser—referred to by our own Press at that time as "Bloody Bill"—depicting him as Parsifal.

Poor old Christian Endeavour Wilhelm, with his megalomania and his theatrical bunch of uniforms like a picture-star, portrayed as 'King Arthur come again.'

It was crude. Yet I was able to impose it upon a publication in England, and a poor little bookseller who

was agent for the paper got three months in prison for his temerity.

My greatest grief was that people over here took me seriously and could not see the tongue in my cheek.

They could not realize that I was simply trying to wreck the German propaganda by making it ridiculous.

My real scheme, however, was to so ingratiate myself with the other side that I should obtain their full confidence, and so be able to betray their plans to England.

To this end I determined on a bold escapade. I wrote a Declaration of Independence and applied it to Ireland.

then I invited a young lady violinist, who had some Irish blood in her, together with about four other persons whom I got on the verge of *delirium tremens*," and we set out in a motor boat before dawn on July 3 for that hideous statue which the Americans fondly suppose to be Liberty enlightening the world.

There I solemnly read my Declaration of Independence, and with a great cinematic gesture flung an old envelope into the bay, announcing that it was my British passport. It was nothing of the kind.

Then we hoisted the Irish flag, the violinist playing the "Wearing of the Green," and the crews of the interned German ships cheered us to the echo all the way up the Hudson.

The New York Times gave us three columns, and other papers followed suit at great length.

In England the greatest consternation prevailed. My friend, the Hon. A.B., when he read the reports published over here, wrote to me about it, asking what it all meant.

I knew that he would not talk, and I wrote back explaining my purpose. Yet he could not authorize me to do anything without appealing to his superiors.

By this time, if I had been able to obtain the right sort of assistance, I could have obtained the most important information from the Germans.

All the same I was able to supply valuable reports from time to time.

So I played a lone hand. I gradually got the Germans to believe that arrogance and violence were sound policy, that bad faith was the cleverest diplomacy.

I advocated the "Unrestricted Submarine Campaign." At this time Von Bernstorff was in command, and I managed to sway him to my views when he found that congratulations were being showered upon me by his friends.

He withdrew his objections to that insane brutality and savagery, and thus I accomplished the one thing which I had set out to do when once I realized the danger of German propaganda.

Von Bernstorff was not a psychologist, I was. I knew full well that this outrageous violation of all human law would be the last straw and compel America to throw off the burden of her neutrality.

It did. America came into the war. Von Bernstorff had failed to gauge the minds of the people there. He failed to see that America had lent fabulous sums to the Allies, and that if Germany won would get nothing.

In contrast to my own country, the Americans were not slow to take advantage of my help.

The Department of Justice got busy. They sized up friend Viereck very thoroughly, and realizing that the intellectual is a thousand times more dangerous than the clod who simply blows up bridges that do not matter, they helped me to the fullest possible extent.

They were even grateful—to my astonishment—and my services are contained in the records there to this day.

The one thing which struck me were the reports which appeared in British newspapers accusing me of living on the fat of the land by taking German gold.

I may say that I had so neglected my own affairs that it was some time after the war had ceased before I was able to straighten things out and obtain sufficient money to get back to England.

As may have been gathered, I care nothing for public opinion, and therefore let the various attacks upon myself pass without notice.

But I put it on record now that, although I have been scourged and spat upon, my heart leaps high at the knowledge that every beat of it bears witness to a blind love of my country. England is flesh of my torn flesh, bone of my aching bone, and I am content.

I have dodged starvation and suffered every humiliation during this time. I have been scorned by those who were my friends, but it was enough for me that I had been loyal to England.

And while I am on this subject let me just mention one other point. Some years ago savage attacks were made upon my character in various papers. The most sensational stories were told about me, and it was even stated that I dare not return to this country for fear of arrest.

I took no notice of them, because I was quite used to it and do not care what people say about me.

Eventually, however, I came to England and made a point of visiting Scotland Yard at once, saying: "Her I am—if you have anything against me, I am perfectly willing to meet any charges."

They simply laughed at the idea. So far as that were concerned they had nothing against me. As I knew, and I have remained ever since in this country, without hurt or hindrance.