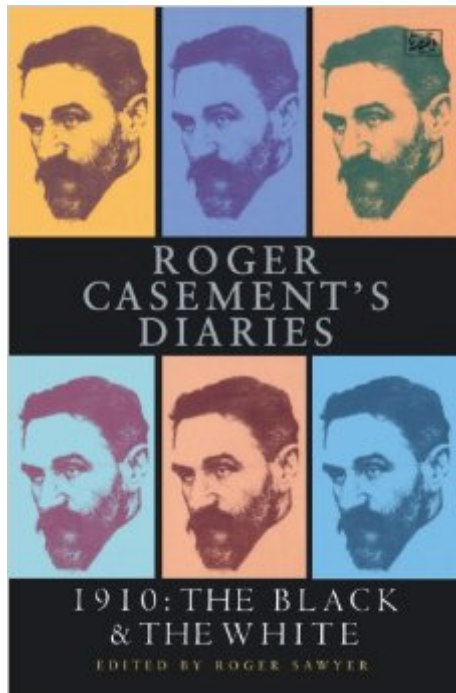


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Roger Casement's Diaries -- 1910: The Black & The White



Synopsis

Born in Ireland in 1864 Roger Casement acted as British Consul in various parts of Africa (1895-1904) and Brazil(1906-11) where he denounced atrocities among Congolese and Putumayo rubber workers. Knighted in 1911, he returned to Ireland, where as an ardent nationalist he attempted to enlist German help for the cause. He was hanged for high treason in London in 1916. A compulsive diary writer, his so-called "'Black' Diaries" were finally released into the public domain in 1994. At the time of his trial, these diaries - detailing his promiscuous homosexual activities in Brazil - were used to condemn him and, subsequently, to poison his reputation. Published here for the first time - as are his more public 'White' Diaries of the same year - they not only offer the reader the opportunity to judge their authenticity - still a matter of heated debate - but they also take us deep into the mind of the bravest, most selfless and practical humanitarian of the Edwardian age.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Casement was one of the great humanist heroes of his or anyone's time. Joseph Conrad traveled with him up the Congo as he denounced and unraveled King Leopold's slavery operations for rubber and ivory, necessities for the industrial revolution and the mansions that inhabited every bourgeois household. Far less well known are his Irish times, where he set out to denounce what he called the "British Congo" on the Putumayo in the upper Congo. These diaries include his formal analytics, but also the story of his secret gay life in Ireland. Long taken as forgeries to indict him for charges of treason and moral turpitude in his pro Irish anti colonial ventures against Britain, modern gay life (and the Victorian pornography of his time) suggest that the encounters he had were perhaps more par for

the course than the Peers pretended. Casement was great looking, sensible and sensitive and deeply committed to social justice. WG Sebald who writes about him in, I think "The rings of saturn" argues that his politics were in fact informed by his sense of deep isolation even in the face of his highly privileged life. Other biographies also see him as less disturbed by his sexuality than the political dynamics of Colonial states. These diaries I think provide the best insight into both dimensions of his personality: his continuing out rage at the corruption and cruelty he witnesses, and his general passion. He also provides a pretty good social history in his rather detailed notes about the actual travels. There have been a few recent Biographies about him (Vargas Llosa's El Sueno del Celto, and "The Devil and Mr casement", but he has plenty to say for himself, and was a good writer.

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