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Sir Roger Casement's

# HEART of DARKNESS

THE 1911 DOCUMENTS

ANGUS MITCHELL



SIR ROGER CASEMENT'S  
HEART OF DARKNESS  
THE  
1911 DOCUMENTS

INTRODUCTION, COMMENTARY  
AND FOOTNOTES  
ANGUS MITCHELL



IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

2003

*for*  
Alice Stopford Green  
1847–1929

HISTORIAN AND HUMANITARIAN

‘Life is more beautiful than death – and the world we live in  
and should work for more lovely than all the plains of heaven.  
There can be no heaven if we don’t find it and make it here and  
I won’t barter this sphere of duty for a hundred spheres and  
praying wheels elsewhere.’

ROGER CASEMENT TO ALICE STOPFORD GREEN

13 JULY 1911

## INTRODUCTION

EVER SINCE HIS TRIAL AND EXECUTION in the summer of 1916 a controversy has raged over the historical reputation of Roger Casement. During two decades' service as a British consular officer, Casement gained a name as a highly capable and trustworthy imperial servant. His investigation of atrocities in the Congo and the Amazon and the publication of his official reports gave him notoriety and empowerment not generally associated with the position of Consul.<sup>1</sup> At the moment of his knighthood in 1911, Casement was considered among his influential coterie of colleagues to be one of the most dedicated and self-sacrificing men of the day. His sway reached into the inner circles of British imperial government. He had allies in the Vatican, in the US State Department, amongst many leading literary figures, newspaper editors, churchmen, academics, intellectuals, politicians and peers of the realm. His exposure of corrupt imperial systems and brutal commercial regimes gave important momentum to the radical discussion of his time.

From the moment of his resignation from the Foreign Office in August 1913 Casement involved himself in the deepening political crisis in Ireland. Following the founding of the Irish Volunteers in Dublin in November 1913, by the scholar-revolutionary, Eoin MacNeill, Casement emerged as the voice of advanced Irish nationalism. In early 1914 he published a stream of pseudonymous articles attacking the British Empire which had both promoted and honoured him. On the outbreak of war in August 1914 Casement found himself in America as the guest of the Irish-American leaders of Clan-na-Gael, John Devoy and Joe McGarrity. In October he left for Germany on a diplomatic mission that succeeded in elevating the issue of Irish independence on to the international agenda. His intentions for an insurrection in the early months of 1915 did not materialise and as his months in Germany dragged on he gradually lost his influence over the leadership of the Irish Volunteers. Clearly Casement's actions ran against the grain of what was

<sup>1</sup> Casement's official reports on colonial administration and atrocities include *Africa No. 1 (1895) Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, August 1891–1895* [Cd – 7596]; *Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, 1894–5* [Cd. 7916]; *Africa No. 1 (1904) Correspondence and Report from His Majesty's Consul at Boma respecting the Administration of the Independent State of the Congo* [Cd – 1933]; *Africa No. 7 (1904) Further Correspondence Respecting the Administration of the Independent State of the Congo* [Cd.2097]; *Miscellaneous No. 8 (1912) Correspondence respecting the treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians employed in the collection of Rubber in the Putumayo District* [Cd. 6266].

expected of a man of his class and background. He was targeted as a 'renegade' and 'traitor' and the British intelligence services began to collect evidence on Casement's revolutionary activities and to plot his overthrow.

In early 1916, on learning that an Irish insurrection would go ahead with or without the German help he had sought to engage, Casement left Germany aboard a submarine hoping that he would be able to either stop the rebellion or die fighting with the other rebels. On the eve of the Easter Rising he was captured near the beach at Banna Strand, spirited away to London, interrogated during three days by the intelligence chiefs, Basil Thomson and Reginald Hall and then confined in the Tower of London to await his fate. In the weeks before his trial, the first rumours began to circulate that Casement was not as 'morally worthy' as many of his supporters had supposed. Following his sentencing to death for high treason, newspaper articles claimed that 'a diary' had been found. Photographed extracts from the 'diary' were shown to newspaper reporters and circulated among influential figures in Britain, Ireland and the USA. At a Cabinet meeting on 18 July it was decided that the 'diary' should be used to undermine the pleas for clemency. The whispering campaign in the press worked and Casement's support quickly evaporated. On 3 August 1916 Casement was hanged.

A battle then raged as to the 'authenticity' of the diaries. Many of Casement's friends and relatives considered the 'diary' was forged or had been mistaken as Casement's transcription of the confession of a ruthless Anglo-Bolivian taskmaster, Armando Normand. For several decades the British Government refused to admit to the 'existence or non-existence' of the diary. In 1959, following the publication of three of the four alleged diaries in Paris, outside the domain of the British government, manuscript versions of the diaries were released into the public domain at the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane.<sup>2</sup> Access was given to historians and researchers who had obtained written permission from the Home Secretary. The *Black Diaries*, as they were now popularly called, became central to the biographical interpretation of Casement. Not until March 1994 were the diaries unconditionally released into the public domain in the new Public Record Office beside the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London. In subsequent years thousands of further documents relevant to Casement were declassified and Casement and his legacy was finally deemed to be history.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 'Alleged Casement Diaries' was the title adopted by the Department of the Taoiseach in 1922, when Michael Collins opened a file on the matter. The charged term 'Black Diaries' came into usage during the 1950s. The disputed documents are held in the Public Record Office in HO 161[1-5]. HO 161/1 is described as an 'Army Note Book 153, containing notes and sketches relating to Casement's service in Congo.' It contains no obvious sexual references and is therefore irrelevant to that side of the debate. The four diaries containing sexually explicit entries and imaginings include: HO 161/2: 'a private diary for 1903' [Letts's Pocket Diary]; HO 161/3: 'a private diary for 1910' [1910 Dollard's Diary]; HO 161/4: 'a private diary for 1911' [Letts's Desk Diary - 1911]; HO 161/5 - '1910-1911 Ledger containing accounts of expenditure and notes.'

<sup>3</sup> Recent PRO releases of Casement files include: Home office (HO 144) and Police Commission (PCom) - October 1995; Security Service Personal Files (KV2/6-10) - 27 January 1999; Metropolitan Police Files (MEPo) - 2 June 2001.

The alleged diaries themselves coincide directly with the periods of Casement's humanitarian investigations, when his activities were most secretive and most accountable to the Foreign Office. The earliest diary deals with his voyage into the Congo in 1903. The other three diaries deal with his exploits in South America and the period of his investigation in the upper Amazon during 1910 and 1911. The year with most detailed coverage by the *Black Diaries* is 1911, which is covered by the *Letts's Desk Diary* and the *Ledger*. This volume is composed of all other documentation surviving for 1911 and the first three weeks of 1912, when Casement returned to England after his second Amazon voyage. It has been compiled and arranged to allow historians to make a more informed contextual scrutiny of the two contested diaries for 1911. It also allows for a clearer insight and understanding into the complexities of Casement's life during those months when his public reputation throughout the British empire reached a height with his knighthood.

On 31 December 1910 Roger Casement arrived back in Europe after five months of journeying to and from South America. The 'special mission' entrusted to him the previous July by the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, was to investigate reports of atrocities in the disputed frontier region of the north west Amazon bordering Peru, Colombia, Brazil and Ecuador. Casement's extensive journal kept during his journey into the Putumayo region and other documentation written at various stages during that voyage were published as *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (1997).<sup>4</sup> This daily record graphically captured the brutal climate of the rubber kingdom presided over by the rubber baron, Julio César Arana, and his close-knit circle of blood relatives and friends who held sway throughout the forest. Travelling between the rubber stations in the company of the English Commissioners, Casement quickly pieced together the criminal state of affairs that had developed over two decades of nefarious activity and had led to the systematic destruction of tribal culture and the near annihilation of the voiceless indigene. Using the evidence of his own eyes, the oral testimonies of the Barbadian overseers (British subjects), examination of Company records and confessions by some of the Company employees, Casement unmasked the horror of not just the Company but

<sup>4</sup> Angus Mitchell (ed.), *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement* (London & Dublin, 1997) can be understood to contain the 'unofficial' and private thoughts of Casement, noted down during the course of his investigation. A bulk of this journal, containing uninterrupted entries from 23 September to 6 December 1910, is held in NLI MS 13,087 (25). Casement sent this 'Putumayo' section of his journal to the Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry, Charles Roberts, on 27 January 1913; see RH MS Brit. Emp. S22 G344 where he states: 'Remember it is less a diary than a reflection – a series of daily and weekly reflections. As a diary it must be read in conjunction with the evidence of the Barbados men, which ran concurrently with most of it. Also I have two notebooks in which are other portions of the diary and sometimes letters are to go in when I have left blanks.' One of the two typescript copies made of this diary has survived in NLI MS 1622/3. An index referring to the other copy has also survived amongst the Rhodes House papers. Unfortunately the two notebooks referred to in the Roberts letter are not to be found.

also the system which had allowed it to operate. In November 1910 he left the Putumayo region accompanied by most of the Barbadian overseers, liberating them from their purgatory, and helped find them new employment in Brazil. He left the other Commissioners behind to continue their investigations in other districts. After a few days in Iquitos questioning the authorities, he began the arduous journey back to England armed with highly disturbing evidence. On the voyage home his surviving writings suggest that something fundamental had changed inside Casement as he began to connect the horrors he had heard with over four centuries of exploitation that began with the first contact of Europeans in America.<sup>5</sup>

*Sir Roger Casement's Heart of Darkness: The 1911 Documents* serves as a companion volume to *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*. It contains a chronological ordering of surviving documents and material directly relevant to Casement's consular work and his more private activities during 1911 and the first three weeks of 1912. Besides his official reports, the volume contains full transcripts of memoranda, official and private letters sent and received, newspaper articles, minutes of meetings, parliamentary questions, fragmentary diary entries, ciphers and other relevant information surviving in archives in Ireland and England. Although the majority of the documents are concerned with his human rights investigation in the Amazon, a number cast light on other aspects of Casement's life. They reveal his influence over E.D. Morel and the Congo Reform Association, his powerful diplomatic alliances within both the Foreign Office and in the US State Department, and his early efforts to establish a protective mission in the Amazon. They are instructive, too, of his ability to get his message heard and of his handling of both politicians and the press in support of his humanitarian campaigns. Other correspondence shows his intensifying commitment to Irish nationalist causes in a year that saw crucial changes in Anglo-Irish relations.

After returning from Paris to his rooms at 110 Philbeach Gardens in Earl's Court, London on 4 January 1911, Casement, tired, feverish and with his eyesight impaired, began to compile his official reports. His conclusions were based on his own experiences and on the evidence he had gathered from his interrogation of witnesses, victims and perpetrators of atrocities. His first report, delivered on 31 January, looked broadly at the geographical situation of the Putumayo and went on to discuss questions of labour and slavery: how the subjugation of the tribes originated, who was responsible and how the system was maintained by methods of torture and debt peonage. His analysis is punctuated with clear ethnographical and anthropological observations on the tribes themselves and their habits and traditions.

His second report, delivered on St Patrick's Day, analysed the historical roots and modern systems that generated wide-scale slavery across the Amazon. While

<sup>5</sup> See Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man – A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago, 1987), also Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism – An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, 2001).

developing a number of themes introduced in his earlier report, Casement identified the white man's civilizing process as well as the uncontrolled commercial greed, arising from the industrial world's demand for wild rubber, as the chief culprits leading to the extermination of tribal life. His analysis in this instance was historical. He linked the destruction of South American indigenous culture to earlier traditions of slavery and oppression introduced with the first colonizing ventures of the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors in the sixteenth century.

Both reports were subsequently included in the document that is generally referred to as the Putumayo *Blue Book*, but is officially titled *Correspondence Regarding the Treatment of British Colonial Subjects and Native Indians Employed in the Collection of Rubber in the Putumayo District* (Cd. 6266, 1912). In addition to Casement's reports the volume contains the diplomatic correspondence and thirty lengthy statements of the Barbadian employees of the company written down by Casement during his investigation. The exact context of those interrogations was made clear in *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*. Since they were directly relevant to his 1910 voyage they have not been included in this volume.<sup>6</sup>

The majority of documents in this volume appertain directly to Casement's diplomatic efforts to bring about a cessation of the cruelty and injustice of the Peruvian Amazon Company and to expose the atrocities committed on a wider scale throughout the rubber-yielding districts of the Amazon basin. They offer a fascinating insight into the mandarin diligence of British imperial diplomacy as well as Casement's sway within the corridors of Whitehall. It is noteworthy that several of his Foreign Office colleagues, who co-operated with him closely in his efforts to improve the lot of the Putumayo Indians, were among his most despised enemies after the outbreak of war in 1914. During 1911 and 1912 his working relationship with the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and the British Ambassador in Washington, James Bryce, reached a height of understanding and co-operation. Both fully supported Casement's humanitarian campaign in the Amazon. In January 1912 Bryce encouraged Casement to travel directly from the Amazon to Washington and arranged for him to meet with the US President William Taft. Other important diplomatic colleagues, who feature in later chapters of the Casement saga, were involved in the Putumayo crusade: Sir William Tyrrell, Louis Mallet, Lord Dufferin, Gerald Spicer, Sir William Haggard, Alfred Mitchell-Innes and Ernest Hambloch.

Casement's skill at gathering information and intelligence is revealed by the surviving letters of various Commissioners and Consuls who kept in close communication with him after his departure from Iquitos. His correspondents

<sup>6</sup> The original manuscript transcriptions of those interviews were typed out at the start of 1911. Those statements can be read by referring directly to the *Blue Book* or to the surviving manuscript versions held in NLI MS 13,087 (27/i-vi) and typescript versions held in NLI MS 13,087 (27/vii-viii). As oral testimonies they are of great value to oral historians and might too be useful to those engaged in subaltern studies.



included the four Peruvian Amazon Company Commissioners: Louis Barnes, Walter Fox, Seymour Bell and H.L. Gielgud. The report eventually submitted to the Company by the Commissioners in May 1911 confirmed a number of Casement's conclusions and relevant excerpts have been included. He kept in close contact too with Britain's Honorary Consul in Iquitos, David Cazes, and the British Consul in Lima, Lucien Jerome, and he often received information from them before the Foreign Office became aware of what was happening.

Other surviving correspondence illustrates other aspects of his investigation. Letters written by Father Frederick Smith SJ from the Catholic Church in Barbados contain important details about Casement's plan to bring two Putumayo Indians to England in the hope of deepening public awareness of the 'innocent' and often 'child-like' nature of the forest people. On his voyage back to England in December 1910, Casement left the two lads in Barbados in the care of Father Smith. At the end of June, Casement collected them from Southampton and for the rest of the summer they remained in his care until they all returned to Iquitos together.

At the start of April 1911, with his official reports delivered, Casement travelled to Liverpool, the cradle of the Congo Reform Association, to raise support for the Morel Testimonial. In 1904, E.D. Morel and Casement had founded the Congo Reform Association in Liverpool and it soon established itself as a focus for the most radical discussion on both Africa and ethical questions of European empire-building in the years before the First World War. The testimonial was organised with the help of the historian and humanitarian, Alice Stopford Green, and the novelist, Arthur Conan Doyle. Their intention was to raise money from a public appeal to provide Morel with independent financial means to carry on his humanitarian work in Africa and expand his reforming efforts into other areas where slavery prevailed. Since 1904, Morel had been constantly bothered by financial difficulties. In an effort to raise funds and the profile of the testimonial, Casement met with a number of important churchmen and businessmen. Despite high hopes, much work and the wide distribution of a circular asking for funds, the appeal was met more often with indifference than contributions. The ultimate success of the venture depended on large donations from the Quaker and philanthropist, William Cadbury, and the Liverpool shipping magnate, John Holt.

On 1 June Casement attended his first meeting of the Peruvian Amazon Company to advise them informally on a way forward. Over the summer he attended other board meetings and did his best to find a way to refinance the Company so that the rights of the Indians would be protected and the Company restructured along more humane lines. A number of different memos by him have survived describing those meetings.

June also saw preparations for the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. In the middle of the month, the news came through that Casement had received the honour of a knighthood for his humanitarian work. His letter of

acceptance to Sir Edward Grey would have important repercussions at his trial for treason in 1916. The correspondence surrounding his knighthood is important towards understanding the increasing complexities surrounding Casement's own sense of loyalty. His allegiances were divided between an imperial system which had empowered him to make his human rights investigations and honoured him for that work versus his increasing sympathies with advanced Irish nationalist causes and his doubts about imperial systems and the conduct of British foreign policy.

Towards the end of July, news reached London that the Peruvian Commission of Inquiry led by Dr Rómulo Paredes had returned to Iquitos and Paredes had issued over two hundred arrest warrants against the perpetrators of the atrocities. As a result any hope of restructuring the Company disintegrated. Instead Casement made plans to return to Peru and three weeks later he sailed from Southampton with the two Indian boys, bound once more for the Amazon.

Documents written by Casement during this five-month voyage are relatively scarce. Of the correspondence to have survived the most important are the letters addressed to Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office and to Minister William O'Reilly in Petrópolis, the diplomatic capital of Brazil. It is clear that there was more behind Casement's return voyage up the Amazon than has so far been suggested. His primary intention was to return to the Putumayo to see the process of justice at work in Iquitos in the wake of the Paredes investigation. He sought to prepare the ground for the arrival of the new Consul, George B. Michell, to replace the Honorary Consul, David Cazes. Further to his brief he was to revise the cipher books on the Amazon and report on the activities of other rubber companies accused of committing atrocities against the tribal people in pursuit of rubber quotas.

Besides the official documentation held in Foreign Office files, the most important documents to survive that throw light on Casement's 1911 voyage are fragmentary diary entries and notes relevant to November and early December. The physical nature of these documents conforms to the journal and fragmentary diary entries written by Casement during his 1910 voyage. They are written on double-sided foolscap in both pen and pencil.

Another apposite source is the memoir of Dr. H.S. Dickey told in his amusing autobiography *The Misadventures of a Tropical Medico*.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Dickey met up with Casement in Barbados and accompanied him for most of the journey from Barbados to Iquitos. He would subsequently become an important source of information for Casement as his investigation continued during 1912 and some of his letters are held among the antislavery papers. Dickey's more specific statement of his recollections about the voyage and Casement's character, written in 1938, has

<sup>7</sup> H.S. Dickey, *The Misadventures of a Tropical Medico* (London, 1929). For a fuller discussion of Dickey see Appendix I.

been included as Appendix I. Although both his memoir and statement were written many years after the events they describe, Dickey's reminiscences are still significant and allow for another type of discussion and analysis of the reliability of memoirs as historical evidence.

The most important document relevant to Casement's 1911 Amazon voyage is his translation and précis of the *Paredes Report* containing the conclusions from the investigation made by Dr Rómulo Paredes; this confirmed most of Casement's own findings and dispelled any accusations of exaggeration or misrepresentation of the evidence. Casement had a number of meetings with Dr Paredes when he was in Iquitos and copied out large sections of his report in longhand which were subsequently printed up by the Foreign Office as a Confidential Document. In Appendix II other aspects of the *Paredes Report* are discussed, including some reasons why this is probably the document thought to be the 'Normand Diary', a non-existent document long associated with the argument of the 'forgery theorists'. Of the various versions of the *Paredes Report* printed by the Foreign Office, the translation and précis copied down by Casement *in situ* in the Amazon is the one reproduced.

On 7 December Casement left Iquitos with the pro-Arana press accusing him (with some justification) of being an 'English spy' and he began the long down-river journey back to England. At that point he seems to have entertained a number of different options as to what to do next. One possibility was to make another journey from Manaus to inspect work on the Madeira-Mamoré railway, which was nearing completion. On reaching Pará he decided to travel to the United States and visit the British Ambassador, James Bryce, who had made an important diplomatic voyage through several South American republics in 1910. On arriving in Washington, Bryce introduced Casement to important figures in the State Department and his private meeting with President William Howard Taft led to a firmer commitment by the US to Casement's humanitarian crusade. On 13 January 1912, Casement boarded the *RMS Oceanic* at New York and a week later arrived in Plymouth, England.

There the documents in this volume end, but Casement's involvement with the Putumayo would continue for another year and a half. Throughout 1912 he continued to exert pressure on the Foreign Office to bring about change and devoted much effort to setting up the Putumayo Mission Fund and sending a mission of five Irish Franciscans to help protect the diminishing tribal world. After further delays, the Putumayo *Blue Book* containing his reports was published in July 1912. The stories of horror outraged the British public and reverberated to the heart of the civilized world. The Liberal Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, was driven to action and in consultation with the Attorney General, Sir Rufus Isaacs, and the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, the government decided to set up a Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry (PSCI) under the chairmanship of Charles

Roberts MP.<sup>8</sup> Its brief was to inquire into the level of responsibility of the British directors of the Peruvian Amazon Company and to ascertain how far they might be implicated in the crimes against humanity committed by Arana. The Select Committee sat from November 1912 until the spring of 1913. Through an exhaustive cross-examination of the main individuals involved in the Putumayo atrocities, the inquiry exposed much of the financial malpractice, deception and a catalogue of crimes that had contributed to the emergence of such a disgraceful system of injustice and horror. Casement passed on a vast corpus of evidence gathered during two and half years of his own investigation. Some correspondence relevant to 1911, including the memoranda describing the board meetings, has survived among the appendices of evidence printed for the Inquiry.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of 1912, exhausted and unwell, Casement travelled to convalesce in the Canary Islands. From there he journeyed to South Africa for the last time to visit his brother Tom in the Drakensberg mountains of the Orange Free State. Writing frequently to Charles Roberts throughout this time with advice on the conduct of the Inquiry, Casement brought his own direct involvement with the Putumayo atrocities to a close. Soon after his return to England, he handed in his notice to the Foreign Office and on 1 August 1913 retired on a pension after almost twenty years of exceptional Consular service.

The subsequent issue of the *Report and Special Report from the Select Committee on Putumayo, together with the proceedings of the Committee, minutes of evidence and appendices*<sup>10</sup> (London, 1913) placed in the public domain evidence of one of the most closely investigated crimes against humanity ever undertaken on the American continent. The diplomatic involvement of the US State Department was made public with the publishing of *House of Representatives Document No. 1366 – Slavery in Peru – Message from the President of the United States transmitting report of the Secretary of State, with Accompanying Papers, concerning the alleged existence of Slavery in Peru* (Washington 1913), which included excerpts from Casement's reports. The publication of both these documents was a definite official endorsement of Casement's credibility as a humanitarian and his trustworthy status as a responsible investigator of crimes against humanity. Publication of the various official reports and statements during 1912–1913, coupled with the adverse international publicity

<sup>8</sup> The Peruvian Amazon Company was represented by John Astbury KC, the Prime Minister's son, Raymond Asquith, and the future Lord Chancellor, Douglas McGarel Hogg (later Lord Hailsham). Others involved in the cross-examination included William Joynson-Hicks, Alexander Thynne, John Gordon Swift MacNeill KC (South Donegal), Douglas Hall, Willoughby Dickinson, William Young, Hubert Carr-Gomm (Southwark); James Hastings Duncan (Yorkshire, West Riding, Otley Division); Sir Thomas Esmonde (Wexford North); Frederick Jowett (Bradford West); Joseph King (Somerset North); Ian Malcolm (Croydon); Henry FitzHerbert Wright (Hereford, Leominster); Sir Clement Hill (Shrewsbury); Arnold Ward (West Herts).

<sup>9</sup> The majority of the evidence, correspondence and press material relevant to the Inquiry is held among the Anti-Slavery papers at Rhodes House in Oxford. See MS Brit. Emp. S22.

<sup>10</sup> House of Commons Sessional Papers Vol. 14.

exposing the atrocities, contributed towards the collapse of the extractive rubber industry in the Amazon and the increasing dominance of the plantation rubber economies of Asia.

Although largely forgotten by the end of the twentieth century, the Putumayo atrocities awakened a powerful discussion on international ethics before the First World War. Its deliberation in the House of Commons on a number of occasions during 1911 galvanised some of the most radical figures of the day including the future Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, the radical liberal, Josiah Wedgwood and other parliamentarians such as Joseph King and the Irish nationalist, Stephen Gwynn. It helped fuel the radical discussion on ideas of 'empire' and the 'colonial' and accentuated increasing concerns with moral aspects of commerce and the conduct of foreign policy. Further correspondence surviving from 1911 reveals Casement's influence in the liberal press. Letters to two of the most powerful newspaper editors and journalists of the age have survived: the legendary editor of *The Economist* F.W. Hirst, and A.G. Gardiner, editor of the Cadbury-owned newspaper *The Daily News*. An important exchange between Casement and H.W. Nevinson shows Casement's skill in persuading powerful journalists to take up his cause.

On 9 July 1914 the Earl of Lytton, who had succeeded Charles Roberts as Secretary of the Putumayo Sub-Committee, introduced a Bill into the House of Lords consolidating and amending the law with regard to slavery in foreign countries. The Amended Slavery Bill contained an important provision dealing with company liability. Under the new Bill any director of a British company found to own or deal in slaves would not be able to plead ignorance in defence of the acts of his agents if it was his business to know of them and if he would have known of them but for his "wilful negligence". The net effect of the bill made slave-owning an offence for a British subject anywhere in the world.

Besides the material relevant to his investigation in South America, another theme that comes into focus from the 1911 documents is Casement's strong links to Irish cultural nationalism. His letters to Alice Stopford Green and his support in 1911 for the publication of her popular history *Irish Nationality* comprise the most complete set of letters to have survived on this theme. Certainly Casement's experiences in Africa and South America helped shape his views on the historical struggle between England and Ireland. Casement's more 'advanced' interest in such organizations as Fianna na hÉireann can be gleaned from his correspondence with the republican rebel, Bulmer Hobson. Elsewhere there are references to figures such as Tom Clarke, Denis McCullough and Joseph Robinson, all important figures involved in the discourse on colonial resistance and the move towards armed rebellion in 1916. The only surviving letter from the teacher, scholar and revolutionary, Patrick Pearse, to Casement discusses the attendance of the younger Putumayo Indian boy at St. Enda's School in Dublin. Other interesting letters have

survived to and from O'Neill of Clanaboy, the clan chief whose ancestors had fled to Portugal in the eighteenth century, and several luminaries involved in the Irish language movement and the Gaelic revival, such as the artisan Evelyn Gleeson, founder of the Dún Emer Guild, and the Belfast antiquarian F.J. Bigger.

1911 was a crucial year in Anglo-Irish relations. On 11 April the Home Rule Bill was introduced into the House of Commons and political positions became more accentuated with the constitutional crisis that developed around the passing of the Parliament Act, curtailing the powers of the House of Lords. Although Casement had expressed strong views about Ireland in poetry from his youth and in print from 1904, when he first made contact with the Gaelic League, it was in 1911 that he began to attack without restraint English interference in Ireland. The most revealing document in this respect is the essay he drafted in the summer of 1911, *The Keeper of the Seas*. In 1914 this would form part of the collection of essays, *The Crime against Europe – A Possible Outcome of the War of 1914*, where Casement argued for Irish neutrality in the event of war between Britain and Germany. In *The Keeper of the Seas* he is uninhibited in lambasting the conduct of British 'secret diplomacy' and expresses his doubts, in no uncertain terms, about the imperial solution and aspects of the historical conflict between Ireland and England. Following the Agadir crisis in the summer of 1911, it became clear to some political insiders in England that a war between Britain and Germany was inevitable.

Much of what has been written about Casement's private life since his execution has failed to make use of his more personal correspondence with close members of his family and friends. These letters are a window into his soul and display his sense of humour, his more radical opinions on Irish history, his concerns about the worsening situation in Ireland, his views on politics and sympathy with revolutionary causes and campaigns against international slavery and injustice. In this respect the most important surviving letters from 1911 are those to his cousin Gertrude Bannister. His letters to the Quaker William Cadbury and the secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, Travers Buxton, are indicative of his innate sincerity and goodness, his hatred of hypocrisy and his deep sense of self-sacrifice and love for humanity.

Other sources referring to Casement's activities during 1911 have also been included. The diaries of H.W. Nevinson held in the Bodleian Library briefly detail meetings between Nevinson and Casement. Sir William Rothenstein's biography *Men and Memories* has a reference to the Morel testimonial. Alice Milligan's personal memoir of Casement published in *The Catholic Bulletin* has a slightly muddled reminiscence of Casement's presence at a meeting of the Gaelic League in Belfast. The *Minute Book of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society* has an important reference to the attendance of Casement at a meeting at the Society's offices in Vauxhall Bridge Road.

Although Casement's papers are scattered across archives throughout the world,

papers relevant to 1911 are concentrated mainly in the National Library of Ireland [NLI] and the Public Record Office [PRO]. The National Library of Ireland contains the largest number of Casement Papers relevant to 1911. The *Casement Papers 1889–1945 – Special List A15* describes the papers deposited by Gertrude Bannister in the Library in the 1930s although they did not apparently become available until the early 1950s, when some other papers were included, apparently left with Casement's other executor, his solicitor George Gavan Duffy.<sup>11</sup> A more comprehensive listing of Casement material can be found in the *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization* – in particular the *First Supplement*, containing the most complete listing of Casement papers currently available.

Outside Ireland, the Public Record Office is the other principal repository of documents contained in this volume. The main official correspondence, containing the bulk of Casement manuscript material relevant to his Putumayo investigation in 1911, is held in the FO series.<sup>12</sup> This includes letters, reports, memoranda and newspaper articles sent by Casement directly to the Foreign Office as well as his important correspondence with the Minister in Brazil and the legation in Rio from April 1911 to December 1912.<sup>13</sup> The Foreign Office Correspondence Registers also contain references to correspondence some of which has not been located.

The Casement–E.D. Morel and Casement–A.G. Gardiner letters are held in the British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES) at the London School of Economics. E.D. Morel's considerable archive of papers contains the bulk of correspondence concerning the Congo Reform Association.<sup>14</sup> By 1911 Morel and Casement referred to each other affectionately as 'Bulldog' and 'Tiger'. Morel's handwriting quite frequently verges on illegibility.

The letters between Casement and Travers Buxton of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society are held at Rhodes House, Oxford (RH). Despite the lack of letters surviving between Casement and John Harris, the correspondence between Casement and Travers Buxton is possibly the most complete correspondence of any to have survived for 1911 and shows Casement to have been a vigorous correspondent.<sup>15</sup> Casement's letters to John Holt are held among the

<sup>11</sup> The majority of Casement's papers relevant to his consular career in South America are held in NLI MS 13,087.

<sup>12</sup> PRO FO 371/1200-1207 contains the bulk of material relevant to 1911. Further relevant correspondence can be found in FO 177/355 and 177/356. The latter includes a copy of Casement's 'Precis of Hardenburg's Evidence', written during 1910 but referred to often in his correspondence of 1911. FO 177/361 contains many of the official dispatches sent by the Peruvian government to Lima showing efforts to capture the Putumayo criminals. FO 177/362 includes David Cazes' correspondence with Lima during 1911.

<sup>13</sup> PRO FO 126/361.

<sup>14</sup> The collection of Casement letters to Morel is held in BLPES F8/16-F8/25 and F5/3. There are two undated letters from Casement to Morel that cannot be placed accurately within the 1911 documentary narrative although they have been given provisional dates for 1911 by the archivist.

<sup>15</sup> The main body of Anti-Slavery Papers relevant to the Putumayo are held in Brit. Emp. S22 G 322 to G 347; G821-824 and J 28-30; most of those papers were formerly in the possession of the Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry.

John Holt Papers also at Rhodes House.

The letters of Evelyn Gleeson are deposited at the Manuscripts Department of Trinity College Dublin (TCD). A few letters and memoranda regarding Casement's attendance at the board meetings of the Peruvian Amazon Company were submitted and subsequently printed as evidence for the Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry (PSCI) in the winter of 1912 but the originals do not appear to have survived – a printed copy of the memoranda of evidence can be located among the antislavery papers at Rhodes House.

On several occasions, two (sometimes three) drafts of the same letter or memo have survived. In these cases the final version is given and, where appropriate, important changes have been described in the footnotes. Otherwise specific document references of the copies are provided. Casement had the efficient habit, acquired during his consular service, of writing the day and sometimes the time he received a letter or report. Wherever documents have been annotated they have been placed in the chronology with respect to when he received them and not by the date of the missive. On the relatively few letters where Casement has not written the day he received them, they have been placed with respect to when they were written.

There is a significant amount of financial information relevant to 1910 and 1911 that has also not been included. Analysis of accounts might provide a further approach to the problem of authenticity, in terms of surviving documentation.<sup>16</sup> A number of specific receipts, submitted as part of his expense accounts, have survived among the Foreign Office papers and have been reproduced in full or cited in references where appropriate.

It was originally intended that this volume would include the alleged diary material for 1911: the *Letts's Desk Diary* and the accounts book or *Ledger*. The former document is the most sexually explicit diary of all, and to date has not been published *in extenso*. A few excerpts appeared as an appendix in the Penguin edition of H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Trial of Roger Casement* (London, 1964). A faulty and incomplete version of the *Ledger* was published as an appendix to the Olympia Press limited edition of *The Black Diaries* (Paris, 1959), but it did not appear in the editions published by Grove Press or Sidgwick & Jackson later that year.<sup>17</sup> A

<sup>16</sup> The Casement Papers at NLI MS 15,138 contain a jumble of account slips, vouchers, cheque stubs and detailed information on Casement's personal finances in 1911 which could provide useful points of comparison to the *Ledger* [PRO HO 161/5].

<sup>17</sup> The first edition of the *Black Diaries* was published outside the jurisdiction of the Crown; see Peter Singleton-Gates and Maurice Girodias, *The Black Diaries – An account of Roger Casement's life and times with a collection of his public writings* (Paris, 1959). The 1911 *Ledger* was published as an Appendix in this edition but was not included in the London edition published by Sidgwick and Jackson or the American edition published by Grove Press. The diary material published in this work was widely considered to be faulty and based on the typescripts produced by Special Branch and not on the manuscript originals held in the Public Record Office. In 1997 Casement's most recent biographer, Roger Sawyer, edited a corrected version of the 1910 Dollard's Diary beside an abridged version of the Amazon Journal entitled *Roger Casement's Diaries 1910: The Black and the White* (London, 1997).



decision not to include these documents was eventually taken. The reasoning was as follows: besides making the volume unmanageably long, it would have once again concentrated the argument excessively on the diaries controversy. One intention of this volume is to allow a knowledgeable contextualising of the two contested diaries for 1911 so that a more balanced and less opinionated assessment of their authenticity might eventually be made using scientific methods of history. Another intention is to facilitate a more informed understanding of Casement's humanitarian achievement in South America and his position within the radical discussion on human rights and British diplomatic history in those shadowy years before the outbreak of World War in 1914.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See *Documents Relative to the Sinn Féin Movement, 1921* [Cd. 1108] that begins with reference to Casement's propaganda writings and his open attacks against the British empire and press.