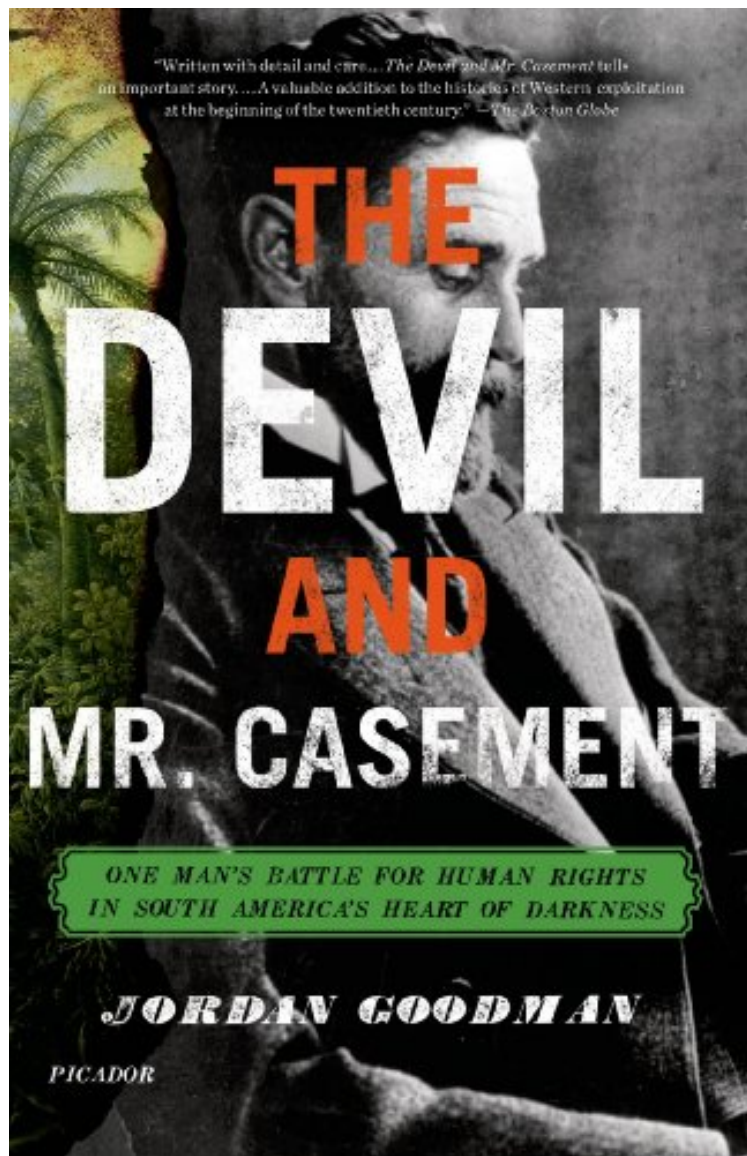


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## The Devil and Mr. Casement: One Man's Battle for Human Rights in South America's Heart of Darkness

Jordan Goodman

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**Jordan Goodman : The Devil and Mr. Casement: One Man's Battle for Human Rights in South America's Heart of Darkness** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Devil and Mr. Casement: One Man's Battle for Human Rights in South America's Heart of Darkness:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great service, sad bookBy Imapowerranger27No problems with the

seller. I got this book in less than a week from when I bought it. As for the book itself, it is a powerful, shocking, and at times, heartbreaking story but as a history major I still was glad that I read it. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The devil is alive and well By R. L. Huff Despite the complaint of another reviewer, this book is not about Sir Roger Casement. Its focus is on the exploitation of the resources and native people of the upper , the political intrigue that nurtured it, and the criminal business-as-usual mentality that sustained it. Because the charges involved British interests - unlike the Congo - there was comparatively little international hysteria in addressing the genocidal doings along the Putumayo. This particular crusade has been largely forgotten, remaining under the rug where it was swept by South American, US, and British diplomacy a century ago. This is instructive. This period bridges two eras: the colonial conquest - and extermination - of native peoples by European settlers and their governments; followed by the era of "totalitarian regimes". What we see is no break between the two, but continuity. These are not South American Nazis at work in this tale, but eminently respectable businessmen such as Sr. Arana and his British partners; ensconced in the financial and political world of the West, conducting the most gruesome slavery, unchallenged except by pesky mavericks like Casement. That he could be knighted by one hand, and executed by another for "treason," is indicative of the West's schizophrenia in facing up to its own moral accountability. A good accounting of an issue far from resolved at the so-called democratic "end of history." 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Excellent history of native exploitation By David Brown In 1909 the muckraking British journal TRUTH printed allegations that a British registered, but Peruvian controlled, rubber company was enslaving native workers in the Putumayo region of Peru. The demand and price of rubber was increasing with the rise of the automobile industry. Julio Cesar Arana (1864-1952) obtained a concession in the Peruvian in which to harvest the native rubber trees. Unfortunately this required significant labor to find the trees in the jungle, to tap the trees and to transport the rubber through the jungle to navigable rivers. The central allegation was that the overseers recruited by Arana had enslaved the natives to perform these services, essentially without compensation or even food, by means of violence, rape and murder. Arana had floated a British company on the London Stock Exchange to conduct these operations. Consequently the publication of the allegations put the both the British government and the British Directors of the company, all of whom claimed ignorance, in a sensitive position. A company commission was sent to Peru in 1910 to investigate. Attached to the commission was Roger Casement (1864-1916), a British diplomat, who had been central to the investigation of similar conditions in the Belgium Congo in 1904. The material in this book is quite fascinating. The author, Jordan Goodman, offers brief histories of Arana and the evolving rubber industry. However the bulk of the book is the history of how the allegations reached Britain, how the material came to be published and its political implications. The latter is interesting inasmuch as the Company was British, the operations were in Peru and the latter was recognized as being within the American sphere of influence (i.e. Monroe Doctrine). Casement's background, history and character is clearly explored and his trips to Peru form the centerpiece of the book. Despite Arana's efforts to "stage manage" the commission's visit Casement was able to find independent witnesses, mostly supervisors recruited from British Barbados, to prove the allegations. The ultimate publication of his report shocked Britain but unfortunately had little real world impact as the Americans prioritized a Peruvian border dispute, the British Directors claimed no knowledge, Arana side stepped personal knowledge and the British company was liquidated. The book ends with Casement's execution, for his Irish nationalist activities with the Germans in World War One, and Arana's death, at a great age, after suffering nothing more than poverty (largely due to the rise of plantation rubber and the loss of his lands to Columbia in a border dispute - not much of a penalty for someone responsible for the death of 30,000 or so natives). The writing and organization of the book is quite clear. However I have two reserves in terms of the content. The first is the Casement is very clear as the hero and the author benefits from his extensive diaries, reports etc. Unfortunately Arana, as the devil, is really just a shadow in terms of character. I don't blame the author; Arana's character remains a cipher without diaries, business documents or with no direct first hand witness accounts of his involvement. The second, which I do hold the author responsible for and for which I reduced my rating to four stars, was the lack of context with regards to natives in Peru at that time. The government of Peru had a limited and ineffective presence in the at this time. However we have no information on how the government or businessmen treated the natives. We know how the Peruvian Company treated the natives but we really have no information of how it compares to other in this region. Overall this is an excellent book and will appeal to readers interested in a wide range of related topics.

**THE STORY OF AN IMPERIAL TRAGEDY THAT SENT SHOCKWAVES AROUND THE WORLD** In September 1910, the activist Roger Casement arrived in the Amazon jungle on a mission for the British government: to investigate reports of widespread human-rights abuses in the forests along the Putumayo River. Accusations against the Peruvian rubber baron Julio Cesar Arana had been making their way back to London, and the rumors were on everybody's lips: Arana was enslaving, torturing, and murdering the local Indians. Arana's Peruvian Amazon Company, with its headquarters in London's financial heart, was responsible. Casement was outraged by what he uncovered: nearly 30,000 Indians had died to produce 4,000 tons of rubber. When Casement's 700-page report of the violence was published in London in 1912, it set off reverberations throughout the world. People were appalled that

murderous acts were being carried out under the cloak of British respectability. The Peruvian Amazon Company was forced into liquidation, and its board of directors was publicly shamed. From the Amazonian rain forests to the streets of London and Washington, D.C., Jordan Goodman recounts a tragedy whose exposure in 1912 drew back the curtain on exploitation and the wholesale abuse of human rights. Drawing on a wealth of original research, *The Devil and Mr. Casement* is a haunting story of modern capitalism with enormous contemporary political resonance.

From Publishers Weekly: Goodman (The Rattlesnake), an honorary research associate at London's Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine, chronicles the dangerous 1910s quest of British activist Roger Casement to publicize the human rights abuses against local Indians by brutal Peruvian rubber baron Julio Cesar Arana's Peruvian Company. British envoy Casement's 700-plus-page report on the mass violence and deaths of 30,000 natives to produce an international rubber surplus was published by the House of Commons, and Arana's empire was eventually dismantled, but not before economic and political pressures were used to threaten Casement and Britain's global colonial policy as well. The book is most fascinating when detailing Arana's bold skirmishes with Casement in the media and in the courts. Well researched and exquisitely told, Goodman's account of one brave man bringing down a cruel business empire is worthy of attention. 8 pages of bw illus. (Feb.) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist: The famous Irish patriot who was executed as a traitor in 1916 by the British government, Roger Casement had been a British diplomat whose last posting is the subject of this thoroughly researched study. Dispatched by the Foreign Office to Peru to investigate atrocities against Indian rubber workers, Casement was the obvious choice for such a mission, Goodman explains, because he exposed Belgium's colonial brutalities in the Congo. This time, Casement encountered an opponent of wily tenacity and bottomless chicanery. He was Julio Cesar Arana, whose employment practices were described and published in London based on the testimony of Walter Hardenburg, an American who in 1909 emerged from a hair-raising traverse of Arana's tropical rubber empire with stories of enslaved, tortured, and murdered Indians. While covering the governmental machinery moving in the background of Casement's inquiry, Goodman highlights the care and savvy with which Casement undertook his assignment. Goodman's research shows well here, and his pacing will hook readers interested in colonialism, human rights, or Casement himself. --Gilbert Taylor

Written with detail and care... The Devil and Mr. Casement tells an important story... A valuable addition to the histories of Western exploitation at the beginning of the twentieth century. --The Boston Globe

A fine and meticulous book... adds to Casement's reputation as a pioneer of the human rights movement's tactics, including the on-the-spot investigation, and the leveraging of public outrage to spur reform. --Greg Grandin, The New York Times Book Review

With vivid touches of imagination and humor, Goodman captures the drama and paradox of Casement's varied life. --The New Yorker

Goodman motors the pace and stokes suspense with cliff-hanger chapter endings and a dramatic courtroom trial... The Devil and Mr. Casement is delicately presented less as a tale of atrocities than as one of all-too-familiar corporate greed, diplomatic red tape, conflicting politics, and the shifting influence of the West in South America. --The Miami Herald

A fast-paced account of [a] groundbreaking effort to hold corporations accountable for their misdeeds, as well as a detailed portrait of Casement. --Mother Jones

Goodman's journalistic narrative is a reminder of the devastation that greed can cause and the good work that can be done by a few good men. --Shepherd Express (Milwaukee)