

Roger Casement: Imperialist, Rebel, Revolutionary

Séamas Ó Síocháin

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Séamas Ó Sìocháin has written what is the most voluminous biography of Casement and a significant contribution to an understanding of his life.' Frank Callinan, The Irish Times Roger Casement is among the most written about and mythologized figures in Irish history, yet has never, until now, been accorded such an impartial, full-scale documentary biography. Séamas Ó Sìocháin gives us an enthralling book equal to the expansive life of its subject. In its meticulous scholarship it supersedes all previous work in the field. Drawing upon an astonishing trove of official and personal sources, Ó Sìocháin shows how what began as an ordinary career in the British consular service became a singular crusade across three continents, against exploitation, cruelty and injustice. Casement served in the Niger, Mozambique, Angola and most momentously in the Congo, where he witnessed the appalling crimes of the Belgian colonial system and became a leading figure in the humanitarian campaign, eventually successful, to force King Leopold II to surrender his personal control of the colony. Casement later applied the same eye for injustice to the depressingly similar exploitation of natives of the Putumayo, in the upper reaches of the Amazon, where, as in the Congo, outsiders' hunger for rubber created misery for native peoples. His growing interest and involvement in Irish nationalism, culminating in his attempts to aid the 1916 Rising and execution for treason, is compellingly narrated. Ó Sìocháin analysis, which closely examines the debate around Casement's controversial diaries, is also a model of clarity and attention to detail. This definitive biography, accompanied by additional maps and numerous photographs, many of them rare and unseen, is an enduring monument to one of Ireland's most enigmatic patriots of the past century.



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