ROGER CASEMENT, ETHNOGRAPHY, AND THE PUTUMAYO

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ROGER CASEMENT was born in Dublin on September 1, 1864, and was executed on August 3, 1916, a month short of his fifty-second birthday.[1] A great portion of his life was spent outside Ireland, mostly in the British consular service. His life can be divided into three periods. The first twenty years, approximately, cover his early life and education in Ireland followed by a brief employment in Liverpool. During the second twenty years Casement's employment was in Africa, from his first visit in 1883 as purser of the ship *Bonny* to his departure in November, 1903, after the Congo investigations. He worked successively in the Congo with the African Association, sponsored by King Leopold and led by Stanley, and then with the Sanford Expedition; in the Oil Rivers Protectorate in Nigeria; and as British consul at Lourenco Marques and at St. Paul de Loanda, with a Boer War interlude. He did not return to employment in Africa after the 1903 Congo investigation. Of the final twelve years of Casement's life, he spent five, from 1906 to 1911, in South America, ending with his second visit to the Putumayo. From 1912 to 1916, Casement became increasingly involved in Irish affairs.[2]

During his life Casement made considerable contributions to the defense of indigenous peoples, notably through his two missions to investigate

1 Originally delivered as a lecture at the joint conference of the American Conference for Irish Studies and the Canadian Association for Irish Studies, Galway, July 6–10, 1992. The theme of the conference was "An Island Between Two Worlds; Ireland, Europe and America," presumably with the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus's voyage in mind. I chose the Putumayo focus to fit this theme and because Casement's work there followed the four hundredth anniversary, of which he was quite conscious.

2 Casement has been well served by his three most recent biographers. General details of his career can be found in: Brian Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), B. L. Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), Roger Sawyer, *Roger Casement: the Flawed Hero,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

the mistreatment of native peoples in the course of the rubber trade, first in the Congo Free State and later in the Putumayo River region of Peru. For the first of these he was made a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and for the latter Casement was knighted. His commitment was an ongoing one, however, perhaps best captured in the words, written as part of a plea for clemency, of his friend William Cadbury: "He gave the best twenty years of his life and his magnificent physical frame and constitution ungrudgingly to the service of the British government in the interests of the weaker and down-trodden races of the earth . . . "[3] Casement's own commitment is expressed in his despairing words written at the end of his Putumayo period: "I feel very badly in this matter of the Indians — It is so appalling and so hopeless."[4]

It seems logical to enquire into the anthropological ideas of a man who was, by inclination and reputation, very sympathetic to native peoples and who spent many years of his life in direct contact with indigenous peoples. In so doing, it is necessary to be aware of the anthropological context of the time, especially that in Great Britain. The methodological or fieldwork and theoretical revolutions associated with the names of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown were yet to come. The scope of the field of anthropology at the time may be illustrated by perusing the contents of A. C. Haddon's *History of Anthropology* (1910).[5] Haddon's volume is divided into two parts, the first on physical anthropology and the second on cultural anthropology. Included, and I am being deliberately selective, are brief discussions of: craniology, anthropometry, miscegenation, the influence of environment; comparative psychology, including ethnical and folk psychology; ethnology, including the contrasting contributions of travelers and missionaries, on the one hand, and systematizers, on the other; technology or material culture; linguistics; religion and folklore.

While a fairly substantial body of correspondence survives from Casement, he produced comparatively little published work. His ethnographic ideas are generally contained, therefore, in phrases, sentences or short passages in his correspondence or in his official reports. If we follow the order of Haddon's categories above, however, we do find Casement tak-

3 NLI Ms.8385, Letters to William Cadbury, F.1 p. 5, Personal Statement of Cadbury after the death of Casement, 1916. The present essay draws heavily on the Casement collection of manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland. I would like to thank the staff of the Library for their constant help during the course of the research.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

5 Alfred Cort Haddon, *History of Anthropology* (London: Watts and Co., 1910).

ing body measurements from the Putumayo; reflecting on the bad effects, in his judgment, of miscegenation in South America; reflecting on the influence of the forest environment on the Putumayo Indians; describing these same Indians in such predominantly psychologistic terms as "prevailing docility of man," "innocent, friendly, child-like human beings" etc.; observing a range of social institutions: family, marriage, funerals, inheritance, land-tenure, trade and markets, leadership; collecting and donating to the National Museum in Dublin artifacts both from the Congo and the Putumayo; collecting word lists; commenting on such religious beliefs and practices as witchcraft or human sacrifice; and, finally, making observations on dance, song, and proverbs.[6] It is noteworthy, however, that the beginning and end of Casement's public service are marked by publications with more systematic ethnographic content. During the course of his employment in the Niger Coast Protectorate from 1892 to 1895, Casement wrote a number of detailed letters of report to his superior, Sir Claude MacDonald, two of which were published as part of MacDonald's official report to the Foreign Office.[7] The letters describe land journeys made or attempted by Casement in the course of his duties and contain considerable description of ethnographic character on the Ibo and Ibibio communities he visited. And, in 1912, after his Putumayo investigations, Casement's ethnographic essay "The Putumayo Indians," was published in the *Contemporary Review.*[8]

During his career in Africa, Casement was acquainted with or knew well the following folklorists or ethnologists: Mary Kingsley, R. A. Dennett, Sir Harry Johnston, and the Rev. John Weeks. While, to date, I have only been able to find incidental references to them, with the exception of Harry Johnston, in the Casement papers, I do not think it fanciful to conclude that Casement talked ethnology with them.[9] And,

6 I hope to expand on this dimension of Casement's work in a future publication.

7 British Parliamentary Papers, 1895, *Report on the Administration of the Niger Coast Protectorate, August 1891 to 1894.* Cd.7596, vol. LXXI.

8 R. Casement, "The Putumayo Indians," *Contemporary Review,* 102 (1912), 317–28.

9 Casement's close friend Herbert Ward later wrote: "In company with Roger Casement on one occasion I camped in a wood, and in the evening while sitting in front of our camp fire, we discussed that great work of Schweinfurth, 'The Heart of Africa,' a book that we had both recently read." Herbert Ward, *A Voice from the Congo* (London: Heinemann, 1910), p. 131. The work referred to is Georg Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa: Three Years Travels and Adventures in the Unexplored Regions of Central Africa from 1868* to *1871.* 2 vols. (London, 1873).

when Casement was condemned to die, one of the petitions for reprieve — that organized by his friend, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle — was signed by Sir James Frazer, by the well-known folklorists Edward Clodd and Alice B. Gomme, and by the physical anthropologist G. Boyd Dawkins.[10] Casement possessed certain qualities which made for a good ethnographer. The closest he comes to outlining a field methodology is a remarkable passage in a letter to the American journalist, Poultney Bigelow, whom he had met in Africa:

> There are two ways of the seeing the interior of the Congo State — either blindfolded or looking for the facts affecting the social condition of the natives underlying the veneer of European officialdom which had imposed itself upon them. I chose to look for the facts. I said: he who goes to a foreign country to see the people of it and form a just conclusion of their mode of life does not confine his investigations to museums, picture galleries and public buildings, or to the barracks and reviews of soldiers or State conducted enterprises: he goes also into the villages of the people, he speaks with the peasant and the shopkeeper and enters sometimes the dwellings of the very poor: he watches the growth of crops and how the fields are tilled and seeks from the country producer to understand how his agricultural industry rewards him. He does not confine himself, for all the information he desires, to the statistics published in official bulletins — or seek for the main springs of national economy in the routine statistics of Government offices. If he wants to see how a people lives and how they are affected by the laws they must obey and the taxes they must pay he goes, if he goes for truth, to the homes of the people themselves.
>
> This is what I have, *very inadequately*, been striving to do on the Upper Congo during the last few months.... [11]

Casement's methods are most clearly in evidence during his Putumayo investigation, where we see him carefully observing, measuring, drawing sketch maps, cross-checking facts and testing the accuracy of the statements of earlier observers. "I have taken the Store Inventory as well as possible ... I stood at the door and looked in ... but my searching eye and Sherlock Holmes soul did the rest."[12] And he was constantly writing, writing, writing. "If only I could write shorthand," he complains, "I never felt the need as now." He comments on the importance of writing things

10 W. Montgomery Hyde, *Famous Trials 9*: Roger Casement (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 188–9.

11 NLI Ms.13080, Letters to and copies of letters from R.C., 1/ii (13/12/03).

12 NLI Ms. 1622, Putumayo Diary (Sept.–Dec. 1910), p. 91.

down at the time, and his diaries are full of references to writing late at night and in the early morning.[13]

Casement's perceptions of native peoples in Africa and Latin America can be better understood, I think, when one understands the lens through which he was looking. I have become convinced that what are known as the "Three Cs" — Civilization, Commerce, and Christianity — were fundamental components of Casement's world view, remaining so to the end of his life, even if his usage of the terms reflects both his own ambivalences and the contradictions he noted between the ideals enshrined in the terms and observed reality.

Civilization, or its variants, is a term which appears very frequently in Casement's writings. It has an evolutionary connotation, being contrasted regularly with *savage(ry), barbarism,* and *wild.* The evolutionary assumptions are indicated by such phrases of his as: a "stage of human progress," "higher in the human scale," and the failure of the rubber company to introduce "civilisation to replace savagery." The closest Casement comes to giving detailed content to the term is in his *Contemporary Review* article, where he argues that "while the Indian is spoken of as a savage, and, if we view his material surroundings, rightly thus termed, his mind is not that of a savage."[14] Casement elaborates on what he means by the deficiencies of their material surroundings, speaking of their nakedness, lack of possessions, of metals, stone, "food or materials," domestic animals, and knowledge of the heavenly bodies.[15] Civilized outsiders would help begin the process of transformation, introducing missing elements. One such element, not mentioned in the preceding list, was work. "Regular work, the great need of the region, the one thing that would have reclaimed the wild Indian tribes from their irregular or fitful life has been certainly lost sight of."[16] A final element in Casement's conception of civilization, is what might be called enlightened administration: the Union Jack, seen on his return to Iquitos from the Putumayo, "stands for fair dealing and some chivalry of mind and deed to weaker men."[17] He speaks of the appeal to an "enlightened and humane understanding,"[18] and of the Indian

13 *Ibid.,* p. 182.

14 *Contemporary Review,* 326.

15 *Ibid.,* p. 325.

16 NLI Ms.1622, p. 361.

17 *Ibid.,* p. 372.

18 NLI Ms.13086 (3), Miscellaneous items re. Congo, Congo Reform Association, Morel etc., "The Congo Question," draft article by Casement, circa 1905.

"race" of the Putumayo "adapting itself to a wholly gentle civilisation imposed rather by precept and advice than by force of arms and conquest."[19]

Casement saw a second of the "Three Cs," commerce, as closely related to civilization. Writing after his Congo investigation, he urges that "the natives of the Congo must be made free men . . . free to trade with whomsoever they will . . . ," and he advocated an administration based on "free and healthy trade" — responsible to parliamentary control and effective publicity — "to a national conscience and a national mind."[20] Again, he stresses the need

> to declare . . . that the native of the Congo has the right to sell the rubber and copal, which he alone can collect in his forests, to the European merchant: to trade in it with the white man as the native of southern Nigeria trades with the white man in oil and kernels, and as the natives of every other part of tropical Africa trade with the white man in the natural produce of their soil. This, moreover, is the position taken up in the British Note to the Powers of 1903.[21]

The guiding influence of Europeans would again be necessary. Of the three listed, Casement's preferred option for the production of exportable produce from the Congo was to treat

> the industry as a native industry, with European assistance of an advisory and technical character: an industry carried out by the natives on land of their own and in their own right — as the ground-nut industry in the Senegal and the Gambia, the Cocoa industry in the Gold Coast, and the Cotton industry in Lagos, Northern Nigeria etc.[22]

With regard to the third of the "Three Cs," Casement saw Christian missions playing an important role at least in the defense of indigenous peoples. In 1912, in his *Contemporary Review* article, looking back at the historical experience of the area, Casement suggested that "the Jesuits might have saved all the Indian tribes of the lower and middle Amazon had it not been for the greedy savagery of the Portuguese 'colonists.'"[23] Else-

19 NLI Ms.1622, p. 221.

20 NLI Ms.13086 (3), "The Congo Question."

21 NLI Ms.13086 (4), Memorandum on "Forced Labour in the Congo," Casement to Sir E. Grey, 13/4/08. The context of this recommendation was the dramatic decline in *native* trading on the Congo during the Leopoldian regime.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Contemporary Review,* 328.

where, Casement suggested that it had been the influence of an Augustinian mission which saved the Yaguas Indians from disappearing or from merging with the wider population.[24] After his Putumayo investigation, he worked hard in England to raise funds to establish a Catholic mission in the area. Frustrated by interdenominational sensitivities, he wrote:

> I have lived so much abroad — and so much among savages — that I fear I have come to regard white men as a whole as Christians as a whole — and not sufficiently to realize the distinctions that exist at home and separate them into separate schools of thought. In what I felt to be an appeal to a common pity and a common compassion that animates all kindly civilised men I was, I fear, underrating the influences that separate Christian Churches and perhaps revealing myself as something of a heathen.[25]

If bringing civilization, commerce, and Christianity to backward peoples was an ideal for Casement, he became keenly aware of the gap between the ideal and reality on the ground. His misgivings concerning religion were, perhaps, the least and were mainly related to sectarianism at home, including Ireland. When the Putumayo Mission Appeal was having indifferent success owing to interchurch tensions, he wrote "I think there is mighty little Christianity in any of the Churches" and he suggested to Morel that "a good dose of severe heathenism would be good for mankind."[26] Casement became more cynical about the cant associated with civilization and commerce. And here he linked the experiences of the native peoples of Africa and the Amazon with the experience of Ireland. In his very first letter to Alice Stopford Green, after his Congo investigation, he stated:

> I think it must have been my insight into human suffering and into the ways of the spoiler and the ruffian who takes 'civilisation' for his watchword when his object is the appropriation of the land and labour of others for his personal profit which the tale of English occupation in Ireland so continually illustrates that gave me the deep interest I felt in the lot of the Congo natives. Every argument by which King Leopold and his aiders seek to justify the merciless oppression of the central African today was stereotyped in the 'laws' and measures of the past in this country. We had it all, 'even to moral and material regeneration.'[27]

24 NLI Ms.1622, p. 366.
25 Reid, p. 140–1.
26 Inglis, p. 212.
27 NLI Ms.1604, Alice Stopford Green Papers, 24/4/04.

The term "civilization" regularly appears in inverted commas as in the above instance. The irony of his phrase "truly a civilising company" applied to the Peruvian Amazon Company reflects Casement's view that the "savage" was in reality more civilized than the "civilized" and the "civilized" guilty of all manner of barbarism. Waking at 2:30 A.M. on a night of glorious moonlight in the Putumayo, he thinks of the Indians and writes: "The forest, with its wild creatures, is happier far than the centres of 'civilisation' these Peruvian and Colombian miscreants have created and floated into a great London Company."[28] Moreover, Casement recognized that native American civilizations had been destroyed with the introduction of European culture, and he regretted, despite his evolutionary views, some aspects of the acculturative process: "What a pity that all these people desire to shake off their Indian birthright and pretend to be part of the race of their oppressors, of the people who . . . have left nothing to Peru but their vices."[29]

On commerce, too, Casement wryly commented that "Finance takes little account of the methods whereby its golden counters are produced."[30] He had observed the decline in the Upper Congo between 1887 — when the area "teemed with human life" including throngs of canoes, many on trading voyages — and 1903, when he observes "All this is over."[31] Similarly in the Putumayo, in response to the comment "It is commercial" made by Gielgud, a member of the Peruvian Amazon Company Commission, Casement writes: "I could see no element of commerce in the whole structure."[32]

While Casement retained his commitment to the ideals of the "Three Cs," his reading of the historical experiences of the peoples of Ireland, Africa, and Latin America made him sharply aware of the reality of what Thomas Packenham calls the "Fourth C" — Conquest.[33] Casement was struck by the continuity in the process of colonization in Latin America. "People . . . write as if the excesses of Pizarro and Cortez ended 300 years ago.

28 NLI Ms.1622, p. 329.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 404.

30 NLI Ms.13080 (3/i). Casement to H. W. Nevinson, n.d. [1911].

31 NLI Ms.13080 (6/i), 18/7/03. Casement to H. Farnall (F.O.)

32 Peter Singleton Gates and Maurice Girodias, *The Black Diaries* (Paris: The Olympia Press, 1959), p. 253.

33 Thomas Packenham, *The Scramble for Africa, 1876–1912* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), p. xvii.

The principles (if piracy may be said to act on principles) of Pizarro govern a great part of South America today and rule the relations of 'blancos' to 'infieles'.... "[34] He believed that the tragedy of the South American Indian was "the greatest in the world today, and certainly it has been the greatest wrong for well nigh the last 400 years."[35] And later he asserts that "Iberian civilisation is not Latin civilisation — and the coming of the Spaniards and Portuguese to South America with the resultant destruction of all the Inca, Aztec, Mayan and other civilizations has been an unmitigated loss to the world."[36] Casement attributes lack of development on the Amazon to "400 years of Spaniards at its source, 300 years of Portuguese at its mouth ... first hell, then, a desert."[37] He cites evidence to show that the colonization of the Upper Amazon, including the Putumayo region, had begun about a hundred years earlier, with slave raids from Portuguese Brazilian territory lower down the river. This, in turn, was a precursor to the first white settlements or "colonies" in the Putumayo itself in the 1890s, followed by the rubber boom and wholesale destruction of the Indians. The representatives of the Peruvian Amazon Company are in the direct line from Pizarro, for they are "conquistadores," whose aim is to conquer the Indians, and they are "pirates," "bandits," and the station buildings remind Casement of pirate ships. Increasingly, Casement realized that the experience of the Indian in the Putumayo region was not unique. Writing to the journalist H. W. Nevinson, he says:

> Title deeds on the Amazon are drawn up in blood. If the Congo rubber was red rubber, Amazon rubber is Crimson rubber. The reign of hell on the Putumayo has its parallels ... elsewhere in many parts of the vast wilderness of waters and forests which comprises the greater part of the territories of the so-called republics of Bolivia, Peru, and of Columbia — with a great part of Brazil included too.
>
> The history of slavery, you might say, remains to be written. Mankind is only beginning to realize that it did not perish on the plains of Gettysburg — a viler slavery, more atrocious far, rules today vast areas of South and Central America — and the peep given behind the scenes by this glimpse at the tragedy of the Putumayo will entitle civilised men to ask themselves whether their work is indeed done as they had supposed.[38]

34 NLI Ms.8358, 26/5/11. Casement to W. Cadbury.
35 NLI Ms.1622, p. 220–1.
36 NLI Ms.8358, 6/6/11. Casement to W. Cadbury.
37 NLI Ms.1622, p. 351–2.
38 NLI Ms.13080 (3/i). Casement to H. W. Nevinson.

Commenting more broadly, Casement writes: "Between Leopoldism on the Congo, Diazism in Mexico — and what I know of the Amazon rubber trade — there are more human beings held today in hopeless slavery, accompanied by the most inhuman cruelty, than at the height of the overseas slave trade."[39] He went on to comment on the role in this "hopeless slavery" of European capitalists in Africa and of United States capitalists in Central and South America.[40]

Casement's experience in Latin America — first in Brazil and then, in an intense, short, phase in Peru — produced in him a deeply negative attitude to Iberian colonialism. One can identify three sources of this attitude. One is the oppression of native peoples during the four hundred years of conquest. "The systematic enslavement of workers" in the Putumayo, Casement wrote, is "merely the wider application of an existing and time-honoured practice that has prevailed among the Iberian colonists of Africa — and of South and Central America — from their first landing among a primitive people."[41] And "The curse of this Continent has been its Latinization."[42] A second source of Casement's anti-Iberianism was his judgment that Latin American states were weak and very corrupt. Official corruption was widespread, he believed. Writing to Tyrrell in the Foreign Office, he put Brazilian corruption down to State vs. Federal competition.[43] In Peru, the "governing classes are too few, too weak, too corrupt to raise or enlighten the Indian mass."[44] "If only a good race instead of an evil and corrupt people has first come from Europe with the message of change to these long hidden, gentle people."[45]

The third source of Casement's antipathy to Iberianism was his inability to identify, from the moment of his first arrival in Brazil, with the mainstream, racially mixed, population and culture: "The people — those who in Africa would be indeed 'the natives' — are here represented in varying degrees of imported blood mixed with aboriginal stock, big canoe-

39 NLI Ms.10464, Apr. 1911. Casement to Alice Stopford Green.

40 Casement was deeply moved by a book he read early in 1911 on the near extermination of Yaqui and Mayan Indians in Mexico. It clearly colored his view of United States business and political interests. John Kenneth Turner, *Barbarous Mexico* (London: Cassel and Co., 1911).

41 NLI Ms.8358, 26/5/11. Casement to W. Cadbury.

42 NLI Ms.1622, p. 352.

43 NLI Ms.13080 (5), 5/3/08. Casement to Sir W. Tyrrell (F.O.).

44 NLI Ms.1622, p. 372.

45 *Ibid., p.* 407.

men, wood-cutters, rubber-gatherers, or others more idle still."[46] He contrasts Brazil with Africa: "In Africa one lived a natural existence — here in Brazil all is artificial — an overdressed, absurd existence." Again and again Casement railed at the artificiality of Brazilian life, often with an explicit contrast to Africa: " . . . back in this ghastly sham city," he writes, on returning to Santos after a trip, "with its pretentious claptrap imitation life of Europeans by a horde of savages dressed to look like Parisians!"[47] His negative views on miscegenation did not help. "They are a cross of Indian-Portuguese-Negro and the resultant type is a degenerate human being. Here in Sao Paulo there is a great deal of Indian — Guarany Indian — blood, and the 'highest families' are proud of it — but it produces a dull, apathetic, morose and ferocious individual, who is not a pleasing companion."[48]

> The native African is a decent, friendly, courteous soul — the Indian, too, I dare say, is a hardy savage *chez lui* — but the 'Brazilian' is the most arrogant, insolent and pig-headed brute in the world I should think. They are all robbers, human vultures — and their public service simply a form of organised blackmail.[49]

Casement judged Peru similarly: "The lower class Peruvian half-caste is a cur; the higher class are good like Tizon or the Prefect; while the lowest class, the Indians and cholos, are fine fellows."[50] Such views, I suspect, owe something not merely to popular biases of the period but also to anthropological debates on the effects of miscegenation.

It follows from Casement's reading of the Latin American situation that he saw little hope for the protection of Amerindian rights coming from local governments. He was also negative towards the United States. In his Putumayo diary Casement writes: "The much bigger question remains — the future of the South American Indians and Native people generally. That awaits the challenging of the Monroe Doctrine. . . . Europe, the Mother of nations, must overflow and here is the field of overflow — waiting the stream of fertilising life."[51] Similar words were

46 NLI Ms.13087 (i), Putumayo Correspondence, etc. Draft article by Casement, 1907–8 (47).

47 NLI Ms.13074, Letters to Gertrude Bannister, 2/8/09.

48 *Ibid.*, 27/12/[06].

49 NLI Ms.13080(4), 4/3/08. Casement to Lord Dufferin (F.O.).

50 NLI Ms.1622, p. 131.

51 *Ibid.*, 407–8.

penned to William Cadbury: "I think the Monroe Doctrine is at the root of these horrors on the Amazon — it excludes Europe (the mother of Western civilisation with 500,000,000 white people as against the USA with less than 80 million whites) — from her proper correcting and educating place in the whole of South America." Europe's role is " ... to overflow and civilise," but "all effective European influence is shut out by the Monroe Doctrine — or its modern interpretation."[52]

But what did Casement mean by "*European*"? He had for quite some time rejected *British* imperialism. In 1905 he wrote to his cousin Gertrude Bannister: "This d–nable conception of Joe Chamberlain — Imperialism — plus the cynical disregard of all things fair and true of Balfourism shall not destroy our ideals. These things shall not take root in Irish hearts."[53] And in the following year he complained: "I can't stand Anglo-Saxons or Imperialists."[54] The context was the emergence in Britain of a more robust imperialism, particularly in relation to Africa, which appalled Casement:

> I think the Natal business an abominable cowardly butchery — and deliberately provoked too. They wanted the natives to 'rebel' in order to have a little 'healthy blood-letting' — followed later by ample confiscation of native land and compensation for the poor panic-struck "Loyalists." God's wrath upon all "Loyalists" — the brand is always the same.[55]

Because Casement rejects both the British and Iberian versions of European civilization, there is a certain logic in his turning to Germany, which in 1911 represented in his eyes all that was best in European civilization: "Northern Europe — especially Teutonic Europe — might redress the wrong ... Germany in Brazil, the Teuton on the Amazon — would work more amazing things than the English in India."[56] He had in 1909 expressed this view to Gertrude Bannister in some detail.

> The country is a paradise — and the People await the great descending birch rod of some strong handed Power to teach them to be men and women. Were it not for that abominable Monroe Doctrine the rod would long since

52 Ms.8358, 6/6/11.

53 Ms.13074, 15/3/05. Casement to Gertrude Bannister.

54 *Ibid.*, 14/7/06.

55 *Ibid.* Casement was referring to the bloody suppression of a Zulu uprising. For details, see Packenham, pp. 648–9.

56 Ms.8358, 6/6/11. Casement to W. Cadbury.

have been applied by Germany and Italy — but England, for her own ends now, backs up the United States in support of that absurd doctrine. South America needs European immigration and European Government too — but because the USA want to keep it as a Sub-Continent under their tutelage until they are ready (200 or 300 years hence) to overflow into it and swamp these Brazilian hordes dressed to look like Parisians, so the whole world must be kept back from realising its rights over this vast unoccupied, misused earthly Paradise. Someday Europe will challenge this pretence of the USA and put it to the arbitrament of battle, and I sincerely hope Germany will win and erect a great German State with honest laws and institutions here under the Southern Cross.[57]

Such support for a German colonialism now seems sadly naive in one who recognized and reacted strongly to all examples of exploitative colonialism. It also gives a certain ironic validity to Joseph Conrad's much quoted description of Casement:

> He is a Protestant Irishman, pious too. But so was Pizarro. For the rest I can assure you that he is a limpid personality. There is a touch of conquistador in him too; for I have seen him start off into an unspeakable wilderness swinging a crookhandled stick for all weapon, with two bulldogs, Paddy (white) and Biddy (brindle) at his heels and a Loanda boy carrying a bundle for all company. A few months afterwards it so happened that I saw him come out again, a little leaner, a little browner, with his stick, dogs, and Loanda boy, and quietly serene as though he had been for a stroll in the park.

Profoundly convinced of European superiority, Casement nevertheless had a strong interest in indigenous cultures, was deeply sympathetic to the rights of indigenous peoples and campaigned ceaseless for them. There is, then, I think, more validity in a second comparison Conrad makes: "I have always thought some part of Las Casas' soul had found refuge in his indomitable body."[58]

— *Coláiste Phádraig, Má Nuad*

57 Ms.13074, 1/9/09.

58 Quoted in Reid, *The Lives of Roger Casement*, p. 14.