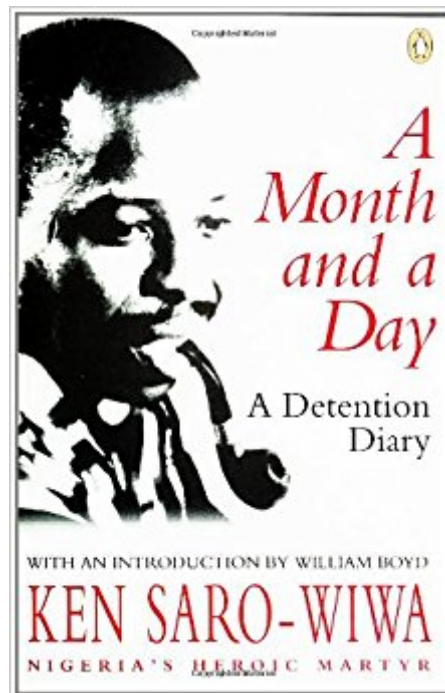




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A Month And A Day: A Detention Diary



Synopsis

This is the extraordinary and moving account of Ken Saro-Wiwa's period of detention in 1993, and is also a personal history of the man who gave voice to the campaign for basic human and political rights for the Ogoni people. It was fear of his success that made Saro-Wiwa the target of the despotic Nigerian military regime. Arrested on 21 June 1993, ostensibly for his part in election-day disturbances, he describes in harrowing detail the conditions under which he was held. He writes of his involvement with the Ogoni cause and his instrumental role in the setting up of the movement for the survival of the Ogoni people. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

A Month and A Day is a very interesting autobiography by author Ken Saro-Wiwa. The story takes place in Nigeria where Wiwa lead a campaign for the basic human rights for Ogoni people. In this autobiography Wiwa wrote about his time spent in a detention after he was wrongfully imprisoned. I liked this autobiography by Ken Saro-Wiwa because he did not just write about his life; he told the detailed story, about his experiences and emotions while in prison. Wiwa also wrote about the role he played in helping the Ogoni people, which I think is very important to know in order to fully understand his story as well as his life and his mission. I think the book needed more background knowledge about the Ogoni people and the political problems they faced. Overall I think A Month and A Day was a very good book that told a very important story.

great

Ken Saro-Wiwa, a member himself of the Ogoni community he dedicated his life to defending, was a Nigerian activist, author, college professor, successful tv writer / producer. Additionally, he held various Nigerian government positions at one time or another, such as Commissioner of the Land / Transport / Education Departments. He turned to writing professionally in the 1980s. Regarding his activism, Saro-Wiwa was outspoken critic of the Nigerian military (at least of those in charge of it anyway). He also protested the foreign oil companies, primarily Shell, whose search for oil across Ogoni lands ended up ruining the lush landscape that once was -- waterways polluted, acid rain polluted crops, oil spills not being cleaned up. Saro-Wiwa states that since 1958, when the first oil companies started drilling on Ogoni lands, an estimated 30 BILLION dollars in oil has been pulled from the ground, yet Ogoni people were given NOTHING in return. At the time of Saro-Wiwa writing this, much of the area was still without electricity or modern plumbing. The Ogoni people were given no representation in Nigerian government, little to no job opportunities or government assistance, no educational opportunities or health coverage, and even Shell was declining to hire locals! The Ogoni people were suffering food and land shortages because the oil companies were snatching it all up for oil drilling, so the community struggled to find ways to keep their families fed. Desperate for help, the Ogoni people attempted to get outside assistance. The response? Greenpeace flat out told them no, basically saying that what they needed didn't fall under Greenpeace's wheelhouse... and Amnesty International said they could only help if someone was in prison or citizens were being massacred. Wiwa served as president of the organization MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People). When four men were killed during a political rally Saro-Wiwa was known to be against, he along with eight others were charged with the crime. Though there was a mountain of evidence proclaiming his innocence, he was still sentenced to death and hanged in 1995. Saro-Wiwa mentions in his foreword, dated July 1994 (he would be executed the following November), that he had completed the manuscript for this book shortly before being arrested the final time (he later points out in the diary's pages that between 1993-94, he was arrested a total of four times in three months). He had someone sneak the manuscript into him while he was imprisoned, working feverishly to complete the final edit. In these pages you read what his activism work entailed and why he believed he was being targeted. Describing the arrest he opens his story with, he mentions that it didn't take him long to suspect that something fishy was going on, but he feared that if he attempted an escape his actions might bring down more unnecessary violence onto the Ogoni people, what it might mean for the people who relied on his protection... so for their safety, he chose to go along with it all and allow himself to be placed in prison. I have to put my hat

in with the other reviews I've read that say the strength in this book lies in the message / topic, not so much in the writing style itself. While I feel like I learned a lot about this time period and at times definitely felt incensed over what the Ogoni people were put through, Saro-Wiwa's writing itself left something to be desired. Admittedly, he was under some hardcore duress, so I don't want to rate him too harshly... yet I'm not going to pad my rating simply due to circumstance. I'm sticking with my honest opinion here -- his story is an important one but the writing itself is just okay. The early pages of the diary read like a police incident report more than anything, but I will say as the story goes on, I noticed the tone got a little more relaxed and I started to get a bit better sense of Saro-Wiwa as an individual and the passion for his work began to shine through a bit better.

Ken wrote this book in such an engaging fashion that I have to confess that amidst the horrors described in it, I thoroughly enjoyed the book. Be it his sarcastic wit, his detailed descriptions of people and surroundings, or purely his mastery of the craft of story-telling, his blend being a marriage of west African storytelling and a mastery of the English language. I was a young student in Southeastern Nigeria when Ken was murdered. All I knew about him at the time was that he was the author and producer of a show I greatly enjoyed, "Basi & Co" in my preteens, and that he was advocating for the rights of the Ogoni. I was greatly educated by the book both about Ken's extensive history of public service in Nigeria (although he doesn't fit the typical construct) and more importantly about how Nigeria might move forward out of it's current pitiful condition. Thank you sir and may our generation see the realities you died for.

This is a classic text that chronicles the degrading and dehumanizing process of intimidation of by a dictatorial regime embedded in repressive antics and deviously blood-thirsty. This book comes from the lived experience of Ken Saro-Wiwa, Nigeria's foremost environmentalist and literary writer. He, it was who led his Ogoni people to challenge the environmental degradation of their environment by the Anglo-Dutch Shell corporation through gas flaring, oil spillage and soil degeneration, and the exploiting gimmicks of a militarized centralist and thievery regime. In this work Saro-Wiwa, chronicles his role, in the evolution of the history of the struggles for relevance and records the methods of organization and mobilization of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) into a vibrant, virulently vocal and highly feared movement. This work derived from the author's contact with the evil of human authority, hence it is a direct a product of his experiences with the malevolent human-evil-forces that were unlynched against him and the struggle. The expereinces reminisced here is just one of his many in the series of unwarranted detentions in the

hand of the evil regimes of Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha in unkempt cells of the Nigerian security apparatus in different cities of Nigeria. On another occasion- the detention from which he smuggled this book out to be printed- he would not come out alive. He would be "judicially murdered" by the junta whose guns were brought by the sweat of humble and victimized tax-payers like Ken- representative of repressed Nigerians- and from the money derived from oil that springs from underneath his Niger-Delta homeland-including his Ogoni group. Ken did not leave out the Nigerian Police and their inhumanity- dogs who devour the flesh of other dogs- in fact they act like "vulture." A loaded term in Ogoni parlance! This work goes to show the plight of minorities within such colonial contraptions as the Nigerian nation state, under the dominating rule of a northern hegemony and a limited military clique in collaboration with their favor and fund-questing (fat-bellied) civilian cronies. This goes to further prove the fact that colonialism subjugated many ethnic groups under a contraption that was never dialogued nor radically sanctioned. Is it any surprise that Somali, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Sierra Leone have gone on ruptured by the thunders of machine guns! In this vein the book brings to the fore the problem of such political hypocrisy as such as the overtly caricatured Federalism which is practiced by the Nigerian government. In a way Ken Saro-Wiwa, credenced the fact that all ethnic nationalities must radically be allowed to shape their destiny and control their resources. Further, this book reveals the filthy environmental practices of the multinationals who without regards to safety measures and ecological ethics endanger the lives of people in the orgy for profit-making. Profit-making predominates in the psyche of the multinationals in deterrence for the sanctity of the human life! Double business and ethical standards-one for Africa another for the West- in fact Ken calls this "environmental racism." This book is a resplendent classic, and it is essentially valuable for all those who want to educate themselves on one of the most forceful and feared Social, ethnic and environmental movements that has arisen in post-colonial Africa today. In fact, the book goes to show the courageous fights of minorities and social movements towards advocating and ensuring changes. Ken Saro-Wiwa its author was crudely exterminated with eight others on a farce of a trial- a militarized set-up tribunal of the despised tyrant of Sani Abacha in 1995. Saro-Wiwa is dead but remains a living-dead, an ancestor of a sort for the many social movements that revolves around emphasizing rural development and sound environmental norms and sanctity for the community where companies are located that are emerging in Nigeria today, and it would not be an overstatement to add Africa. His ideas and views radiates and takes on flesh in this little book. Buy one today, read and digest it and realize what a portent book it is, and know why the author was most feared by a modern day dictator, who feared men and women of ideas than he feared the men and women who hold the guns! Happy reading!

Bon voyage!

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