

The Invisible Man: H G Wells

Michael Coren

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For almost half a century H. G. Wells was an international phenomenon, the only writer of his time who could command an audience with both Roosevelt and Stalin.

His circle of friends included George Bernard Shaw, Rudyard Kipling, G. K. Chesterton, Somerset Maugham and, of course, the young Rebecca West, with whom he had a long-term affair — perhaps the most tempestuous and sparkling literary liaison of the century. Equally illustrious was his circle of enemies, including the indomitable Hilaire Belloc, who destroyed Wells in a vicious and public argument.

Unlike any previous biographer, Michael Coren shows that while many have considered Wells to be on the side of the angels, he was in fact invariably on the wrong side in the major political and literary debates of the age.

Drawing on eye-opening new material, The Invisible Man delves deep into the paradoxes that characterized Wells — the utopian visionary and staunch advocate of women's suffrage who was also a misogynistic womanizer; the epitome of liberal tolerance who was also a social engineer and thoroughgoing anti-Semite.

Wells has hitherto remained untouched by charges of anti-Semitism, but Coren reveals for the first time his disturbing views on 'the Jewish problem' (for instance, he called Jews 'termites in the civilized world'), views he defended vehemently even through the 1930s.

The avuncular author of Kipps and The Time Machine is depicted, shockingly, as one who advocated concentration camps, racial eugenics and the incarceration or execution of those who did not 'fit in'. The Invisible Man is one of those iconoclastic biographies that change our perception of their subjects for ever.

'An elegantly written biography' The Times

Journalist and writer Michael Coren is the author of the highly acclaimed Gilbert: The Man Who Was G. K. Chesterton and a biography of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.?

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