



The Canadian Führer: The Life of Adrien Arcand

Jean-Francois Nadeau

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The Canadian Fuhrer is the story the emergence of prominent fascist leader Adrien Arcand and a dark chapter in Canada's past.

During the 1930s, when the misery of hunger, unemployment and the threat of war shadowed life for many, Canadians were drawn to a wide range of new political ideas. Communism, socialism, and the social credit movement all attracted supporters. Fascist ideas and Europe's fascist leaders also appealed to some. Even Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King reacted positively to Adolf Hitler when he first met him. Out of these circumstances emerged a Canadian fascist party led by a Montreal journalist, Adrien Arcand who became a significant part of the political scene through most of the 1930s.

Arcand adopted Nazi symbols and eagerly voiced anti-Semitic views. He organized large successful rallies of his right-wing supporters under the sign of the swastika and enjoyed the support of a substantial and committed group of Canadians. Once Canada declared war on Germany and Italy, however, Arcand was imprisoned for his political views. Yet after the war he resumed his activities as leader of the far-right National Unity Party, and forged ties to Quebec's provincial government of Maurice Duplessis during the 1950s and 1960s. Although Canadian historians have paid little attention to Arcand, he played an important role in the country's political life for many years.

This fascinating biography sheds light on a man and an era that have been hidden in the shadows for too long.

"In exploring the forgotten life of Adrien Arcand, Jean-François Nadeau has written the first real historical work on Canada's best-known fascist." *Le Devoir*

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