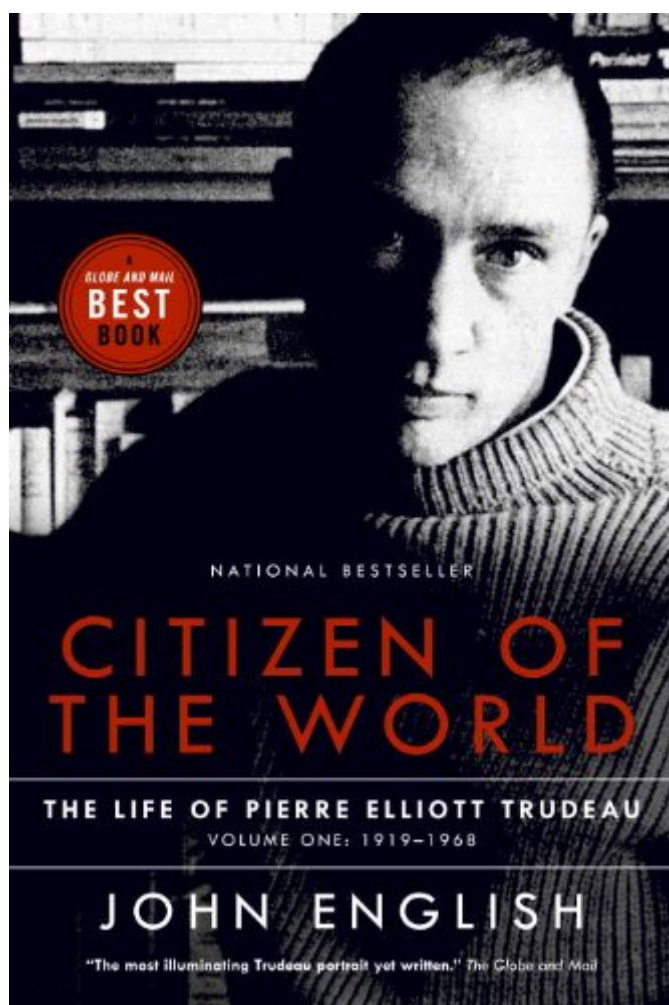


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Citizen Of The World: The Life Of Pierre Elliott Trudeau Volume One: 1919-1968



Synopsis

One of the most important, exciting biographies of our time: the definitive, major two-volume biography of Pierre Elliott Trudeau – written with unprecedented, complete access to Trudeau’s enormous cache of private letters and papers. Bestselling biographer John English gets behind the public record and existing glancing portraits of Trudeau to reveal the real man and the multiple influences that shaped his life, providing the full context lacking in all previous biographies to-date. As prime minister between 1968 and 1984, Trudeau, the brilliant, controversial figure, intrigued Canadians and attracted international attention as no other Canadian leader has ever done. Volume One takes us from his birth in 1919 to his election as leader in 1968. Born into a wealthy family in Montreal, Trudeau excelled at the best schools, graduating as a lawyer with conservative, nationalist and traditional Catholic views. But always conscious of his French-English heritage, desperate to know the outside world, and an adventurer to boot, he embarked on a pilgrimage of discovery – first to Harvard and the Sorbonne, then to the London School of Economics and, finally, on a trip through Europe, the Middle East, India and China. He was a changed man when he returned – socialist in his politics, sympathetic to labour, a friend to activists and writers in radical causes. Suddenly and surprisingly, he went to Ottawa for two mostly unhappy years as a public servant in the Privy Council Office. He frequently shocked his colleagues when, on the brink of a Quebec election, for example, he departed for New York or Europe on an extended tour. Yet in the 1950s and 60s, he wrote the most important articles outlining his political philosophy. And there were the remarkable relationships with friends, women and especially his mother (whom he lived with until he was middle-aged). He wrote to them always, exchanging ideas with the men, intimacies with the women, especially in these early years, and lively descriptions of his life. He even recorded his in-depth psychoanalysis in Paris. This personal side of Trudeau has never been revealed before – and it sheds light on the politician and statesman he became. Volume One ends with his entry into politics, his appointment as Minister of Justice, his meeting Margaret and his election as leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister of Canada. There, his genius and charisma, his ambition and intellectual prowess, his ruthlessness and emotional character and his deliberate shaping of himself for leadership played out on the national stage and, when Lester B. Pearson announced his retirement as prime minister in 1968, there was but one obvious man for the job: Pierre Trudeau. In 1938 Trudeau began a diary, which he continued for over two years. It is detailed, frank, and extraordinarily revealing. It is the only diary in Trudeau’s papers, apart from less personal travel diaries and an agenda for 1937 that contains some commentary. His diary expresses Trudeau’s own need to chronicle the moments of late adolescence as he tried to find his identity. It begins on

New Year's Day 1938 with the intriguing advice: "If you want to know my thoughts, read between the lines!" "from Citizen of the World" From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

A very detailed bio and a must read for all those interested in the transformation of Canadian politics and Quebec's role as a unique province.

This is the first volume of John English's biography of the life of Pierre Trudeau. It deals with the period up to when Trudeau was elected to lead the Liberal party in 1968 after the resignation of Prime Minister Pearson (it does not concern itself with the later Canadian election of 1968; this is in the second volume). Somewhat like the biography of Max and Monique Nemni it paints a portrait, for Trudeau's early formative years, of a nationalistic and fervent Catholic who was right-wing, bordering on the fascist. It also gives us a view of his rich and privileged life - a perpetual and traveling student. But Trudeau was always open to the wider world even though his road to it was long, taking him over thirty years to really embrace it. Up to that time Trudeau was so conservative

that he would ask Catholic priests for permission to read controversial books. He was cocooned in the insular world of Quebec and was hardly aware of the onset of World War II. He opposed conscription due mostly to the influence of Quebec Catholicism. In the U.S. he would have been considered an isolationist, except that Trudeau's isolationism lasted to the early 1950's. It is when he attended Harvard, then schools in Paris and London that he finally came to realize the extent of his Quebec parochialism. Mr. English depicts well how Trudeau became more and more like the title of his book - "Citizen of the World". One senses throughout - even though now and then we are aware of Trudeau's deficiencies (such as his infatuation with left-wing dictatorships - from Stalin to Castro), the esteem with which the author regards Trudeau. And one comes to admire throughout the pages of this book Trudeau's eloquence, fortitude and magnetism. This is certainly reflected throughout his many years as Prime Minister - that marked him as the most phenomenal of the modern era. In this book we are given a perspective of the individualism of Trudeau which made him such a formidable and erudite figure. Two of my favourite Trudeau quotes (from page 471 of my volume) - "the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation". This was said in 1967; can one imagine a U.S. presidential contender saying such today?! - "what may be sin to some is not law for all".

John English has written a detailed and fascinating biography of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, the most remarkable Canadian of the 20th century. English was granted access to Trudeau's huge personal archives and is thus able to produce a rich and detailed study of this fascinating man. English's account of Trudeau's evolution from a conservative Quebec nationalist to a very liberal Canadian federalist is the most important contribution of this impressive book. As an American who admires Trudeau, this book is a god-send!

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