

**Prose Non-Fiction  
Illustrated**

**Études et essais  
illustrés**





**YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU:**  
Selling the Great War to Canadians

CHAPTER TWO

I have seen sights in the blood-soaked trenches of Flanders that I will never forget. If the people at home could see the real horrors of the battle, they'd be worried to death.  
—Canadian soldier

IN THE RETROSPECTIVE GLOW OF NOSTALGIA the summer of 1914 is remembered as a blissful time of innocence and peace. The weather in the last weeks before World War I began was sunny and warm. While the well-to-do vacationed at the lake or seashore, the working class enjoyed time at park and playground. Charles Gordon was typical. The prominent Presbyterian congregator and popular novelist under the pen name Ralph Connor was camping with his family at Lake of the Woods near Kenora, Ontario. "It was glorious weather," he later recalled. "With not comes and hours, with our swimming and tennis, with our campfires and singings our life was full of rest and happy peace. It was a good world. On Thursday, July 30th, our boat returning with supplies from the little town brought back a newspaper with red headlines flashed on its front page. Austria had declared war on Serbia." Even the prime minister, Robert Borden, was enjoying a brief holiday. He was swimming and golfing in the sunshine at their cottage in the Muskoka Lakes district of Ontario

when he was called back to Ottawa on July 31 by the developing crisis in Europe. A time of blissful innocence abruptly interrupted by unspookable horror: that is how we remember the onset of the Great War.

And even then, the horror of what was to come was defused by a naive euphoria, a festive sense that a fabulous storybook adventure was getting under way. When Canada joined the fight on August 4, young men hurried to enlist, worried that "it would all be over by Christmas," and they would have missed it. "The country went mad," recalled Bert Kermington, a telephone company employee in Montreal who joined the rush to the recruiting office. "People were singing on the streets and inside. Everybody wanted to be a hero, everybody wanted to go to war." In Toronto, the downtown streets were filled with a cheering throng. "It was the voice of Toronto," reported the *Huronian* newspaper, "carried away with patriotic enthusiasm at the thought that British, longing for peace, had determined to give the bully

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Title | Titre *Selling Canada: Three Propaganda Campaigns That Shaped the Nation*

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*Roberto Dosil*

Author | Auteur *Daniel Francis*

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*Stanton Atkins & Dosil*

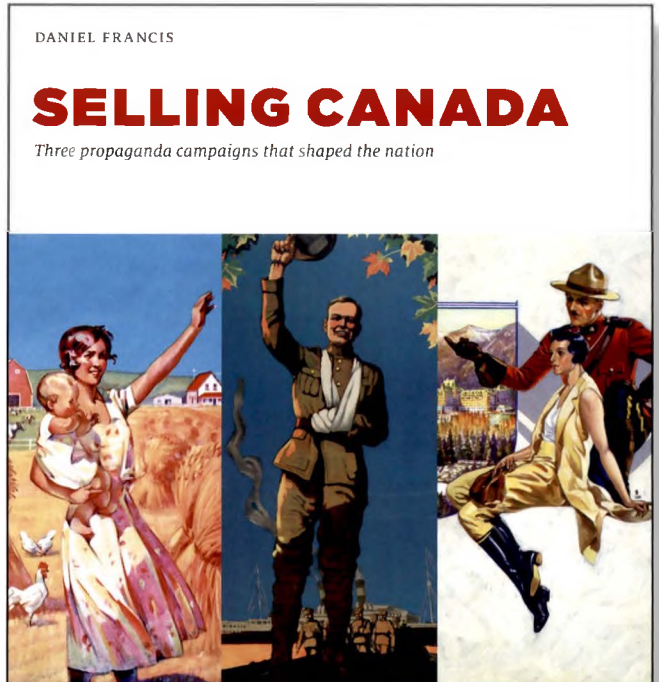
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DANIEL FRANCIS

**SELLING CANADA**

*Three propaganda campaigns that shaped the nation*

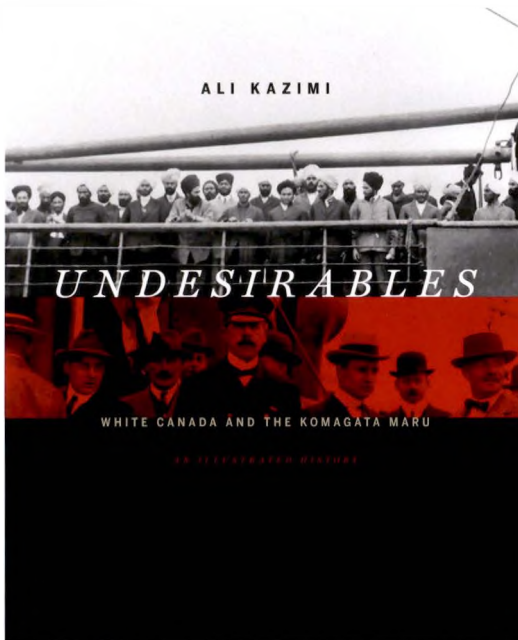


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THE KOMAGATA MARU  
AT THE GATES OF CANADA

THE NEWS OF the brutal decision by Chief Justice Hunter reached hundreds of would-be immigrants crowded in Asian ports. In March 1914, one group met with Gurdit Singh in the Hong Kong godowns. A compact man in his mid-fifties, Singh was the antithesis of the rough Sikh farmer from the villages of Punjab. A keen sartorial sense kept him looking sharp. His greying beard, untrimmed in the orthodox Sikh style, added a dash of worldly wisdom. Although his roots lay in the village of Sarhali, near Amritsar, Gurdit Singh had been part of the early wave of migrants from Punjab. A quietly devout Sikh, he visited gurdwaras whenever he reached. Settled in the Malay States for the previous few decades, he had amassed wealth and prestige as a government contractor whose dealings took him all over Southeast Asia. Government contracts required a knowledge of English, and cutting deals with local businessmen, suppliers and workers meant learning Malay — Gurdit was fluent. Success in business also required a solid knowledge of the colonial system. Gurdit Singh had learned the importance of British jurisprudence, and he was known to be a litigious man.

In the spring of 1914, Gurdit was at a personal and professional crossroads, haunted by a feeling that he wanted to contribute to the welfare of his compatriots. In his subtle pitch to potential passengers to Canada, he wrote:



Title | Titre *Undesirables: White Canada and the Komagata Maru*

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Author | Auteur *Ali Kazimi*

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Photographers | Photographie *Various | Plusieurs*

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Age	Era	Period	Epoch	Years Ago	Sample Life-Forms
Age of Mammals	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Holocene	10,000	humans
			Pleistocene	1,600,000	mastodons
			Pliocene	5,000,000	monkeys, lemings
			Miocene	24,000,000	rabbits, hares
			Oligocene	34,000,000	titanothereas
			Eocene	55,000,000	early horses
Age of Reptiles	Mesozoic	Triassic	Permian	260,000,000	Amphibians
			Carboniferous	360,000,000	Reptiles
Age of Amphibians	Paleozoic	Devonian	Carboniferous	360,000,000	Amphibians
			Permian	260,000,000	Reptiles
Age of Fishes	Precambrian	Cambrian	Ordovician	440,000,000	Amphibians, Fishes
			Silurian	440,000,000	Amphibians, Fishes
			Devonian	360,000,000	Amphibians, Fishes
			Permian	260,000,000	Amphibians, Fishes

From page: Enchanted Rock, near Austin, Texas, was formed as a massive spreading of molten rock during the Permian Era. The granite eventually solidified and now lies exposed by the action of wind and water.

floor where they were buried under thick layers of sediments. Today these fossil rich deposits—now compressed into solid sandstone and shale—are but a few feet thick. In some places, however, beneath the white fields of the rolling plains and in lower depths in other parts of the region, but in other places—like the Judith and Little Rocky mountains and the northern Black Hills—they have been pushed up on the surface of the earth. When the Cambrian sea finally withdrew and dry land emerged again the forces of erosion immediately began to tear away at the newly formed rocks. But soon, geologically speaking—after a break of little more than 20 million years—the water rose and slowly spread over the land. This time, even the transcontinental island chain was bathed in the warm, clear seas. Now primitive snails munching on algae and were themselves preyed upon by giant squid-like nautilus shells up to a couple of yards in length. Hundreds of new species of shelled animals evolved, including crinoids or “sea lilies” (divinity



Title | Titre *Prairie: a Natural History*

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*Naomi MacDougall*

Author | Auteur *Candace Savage*

Publisher | Maison d'édition  
*Greystone Books*

Illustrator | Illustration  
*Joan A. Williams*

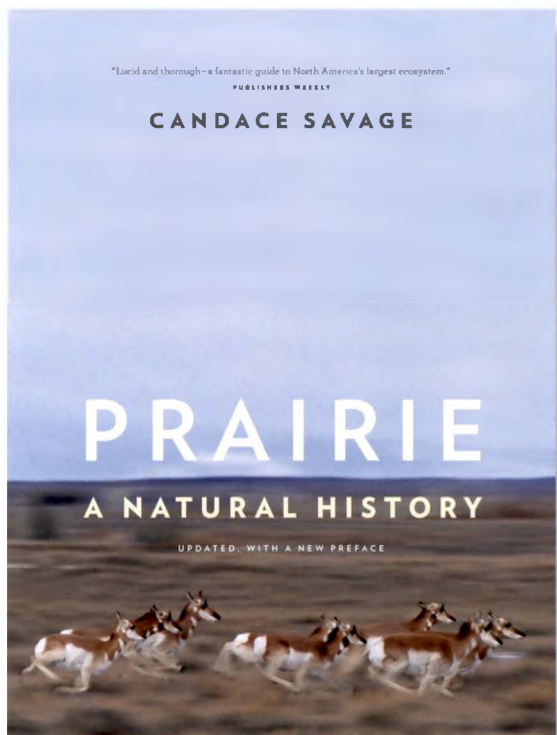
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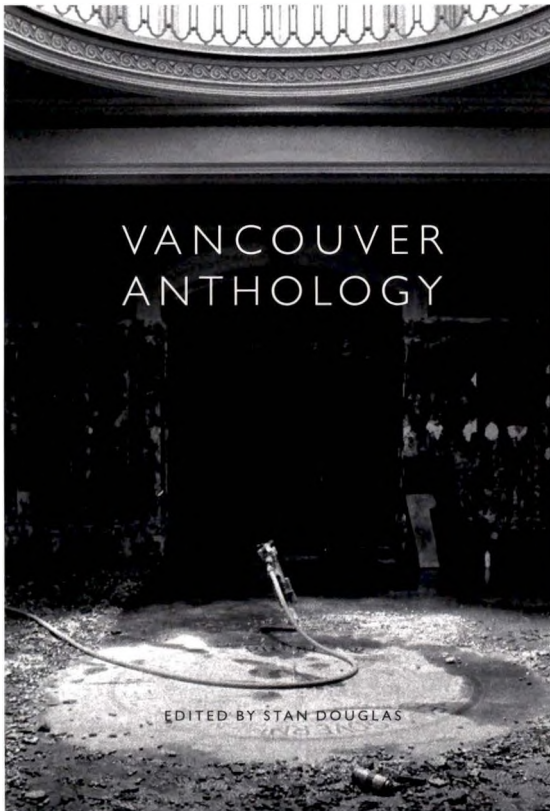
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and the familial owners of the poles has always been the deciding factor in any village decision. Two years later, the newly elected chief councillor, Percy Williams, approached Solomon Wilson, a chief from the village of Chahal, for permission to remove a pole from the site, but the village chief replied, "I want to see it stay right here and gohuk into the ground where it belongs." The pole remains standing today, accessible to the Haida people, and to those who visit the site with the permission of the Skidegate Band Council. Percy Williams was on the council that gave permission for the removal of the poles at Nanaimo, but Solomon Wilson's comments profoundly affected him, leaving him with mixed feelings about the salvage expedition. On the one hand, he believed in the value of the collection, but that was true through the accessibility of our culture within the museum institution; but on the other hand the reality is that the salvaging of our people's culture and heritage must also be viewed within the context of the colonial, scientific study of the other, the dominant culture's assumption that it is not only their obligation but their right to assume the responsibility of caring for (and promoting the nation of) a dying culture, that within a museum setting, the poles of the Haida nation are transformed into artifacts, frozen in time, becoming part of a homogeneous collection of Indian artifacts, and that having been stored inside a government institution five hundred miles away from Haida Gwaii does little to educate people about contemporary Haida culture—whereas the pole in Chahal remains for our children."<sup>14</sup>

As discussed, native people's need for a saviour has been firmly entrenched and naturalized in Canadian history through various processes. The notion that Reid is not just the rewriter of Northwest Coast art, but that he has, in Doris Shadob's words, "opened up for the native people a channel to the respect for their heritage and themselves that they were in danger of losing,"<sup>15</sup> implies that he was also responsible for the spiritual rebirth of nations of people. Shadob's remark is vaguely reminiscent of *Interpretation of a Report of Congress on Native Indian Affairs*, sponsored by the B.C. Indian Arts and Welfare Society, 1948—a society founded, said the then president, Mrs. A. J. Tullis, "to help the Indians help themselves."<sup>16</sup> In this report, Miss Shadob's Thomson comments on native children's interest in her portraiture of native people from communities all across Canada: "All the children need is the guidance from others to set this spirit, the art before them, to create pride, to kindle self-respect, and to present a whole new creative experience to art in the studio ready waiting for someone to apply the touch."<sup>17</sup> In the same report, Miss C. Johnson of the Department



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*Derek Barnett*

Editor | Éditeur *Stan Douglas*

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