

# AGPI GUIDED READING ACTIVITY

**5** Question: The author states that condemnation of antisemitism is not a political matter, it is an anti-discrimination matter. Do you agree? Explain.

**6** Question: Why might working with an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, anti-colonial framework inflame passion and possibly legitimize antisemitism within the school system?

**10** Question: Elie Wiesel said there is no such thing as an innocent bystander. What does this mean in the context of this article?

**1** Question: What is meant by there is no monopoly on discrimination?

**2** Question: Despite overt antisemitism, why might there have been deafening silence when it came to standing up for the Jewish population?

**3** Question: Some claim that antizionism is not antisemitism and vice versa. Given what is seen in paragraph 3, how might antizionism appear to be antisemitism?

**4** Question: Why might corporations, school boards and other institutions have remained silent given the rise in antisemitism in various communities and workplaces?

## We need some outrage over anti-Semitism in Canada: Condemnation of anti-Semitism is not a political matter. It is an anti-discrimination matter

There is no monopoly on discrimination. In the Jewish world, we have stood up throughout history for freedom and civil rights. Our people have proudly walked with every modern-day liberation movement, including participating and supporting Martin Luther King Jr. in the civil rights movement, the feminist movement and most recently the LGBTQ2 movement. We are proud leaders in the promotion of social welfare policies and legal and ethical rights. Upholding Jewish values, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in one instance, is fondly remembered for fighting against gender discrimination and became the first tenured female at Columbia Law School.

Despite our concern for others over the centuries however, it has not been matched for the Jewish community in the past couple of weeks. Shockingly, despite the overt anti-Semitism on the streets of North America and Europe, there has been a deafening silence. Jewish people have been assaulted in New York, Los Angeles and Toronto. In Toronto this past weekend, Palestinian protesters carried [Hamas](#) flags at their rally, while many held anti-Semitic signs and slogans. One read, "Good Job Israel, Hitler Would be Proud."

A brick shattered the window of a Kosher pizza parlour in Manhattan. Video captured a swarm of men attacking diners at a Sushi restaurant in Los Angeles, and synagogues are reporting vandalism in places like Arizona, Illinois and New York. As in Toronto, a brawl broke out in Times Square while the Diamond District was also attacked by a gang of pro-Palestinians. Drive-bys consisting of Pro-Palestinian groups have become commonplace in Jewish areas — racially tinged epithets being shouted at young Jewish children and adults alike.

Worse, over the past number of days, my phone has been ringing off the hook and messages have been pouring in from staff at corporations and school boards who have a growing sense of fear and discomfort in their institutions. They are shocked by the silence of their peers and colleagues whom they have worked with for years to promote equity for other groups within their institutions. But now, when anti-Semitism is at an all-time high, when they are being personally targeted on the street and their freedoms seem constrained, they wonder why there is silence. Why have their institutions not condemned anti-Semitism, period?

Condemnation of anti-Semitism is not a political matter. It is an anti-discrimination matter. One local school board completely convoluted the matter in a memo that tried to reassure its staff about the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Instead, it ostracized its Jewish staff and probably inflamed passions further by saying in reference to the conflict that it is "committed to working from [anti-racist](#), [anti-oppressive](#) and [anti-colonial](#) frameworks." Effectively, it politicized the institution and possibly legitimized anti-Semitism by falsely accusing Israel of being a racist, oppressive, colonial state. Naturally, this has put its employees and students on edge and pitted them against each other.

This is the time for leaders to step up and publicly defend their Jewish friends and neighbours. First and foremost, all public and private institutions must issue statements condemning anti-Semitism while providing guidelines for appropriate conduct and communication. Second, authorities, including law enforcement and the attorney general, must thoroughly investigate and if necessary, charge people who promote [hate speech](#) and are found to have committed hate crimes. The fact that some Jewish neighbourhoods are setting up their own security systems above and beyond our public law enforcement services may be indicative that public needs are not being entirely met. Finally, faith-based organizations and friends of the Jewish community must speak out against anti-Semitism and visibly extend a hand.

Article I of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) proclaims that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." We are all equal and must strive to advance human rights for all people. There is no shortage of pain and suffering on our small planet and unfortunately, we are seeing an upward [global trend](#) of inequality, racism and discrimination. Together, we must stand to uplift all who are suffering, including the Black and Asian communities and persecuted peoples like the Uyghurs, Tibetans and Rohingya.

And yes, in the coming days and weeks, we need to see some outrage against anti-Semitism. I am calling on my friends outside of the Jewish community to stand up and speak out.

**7** Question: What three steps does the author propose and what might you add as additional steps?

**8** Question: How is hate speech defined in Canada? How does this differ from freedom of speech?

**11** Key Terms (define and explain)

- Social Welfare
- Epithets
- Equity
- Ostracized
- Legitimized

**9** Question: The author speaks to an upward trend in inequality, racism, and discrimination. Review the hyperlink data from Canada and consider why this groups are the most targeted.