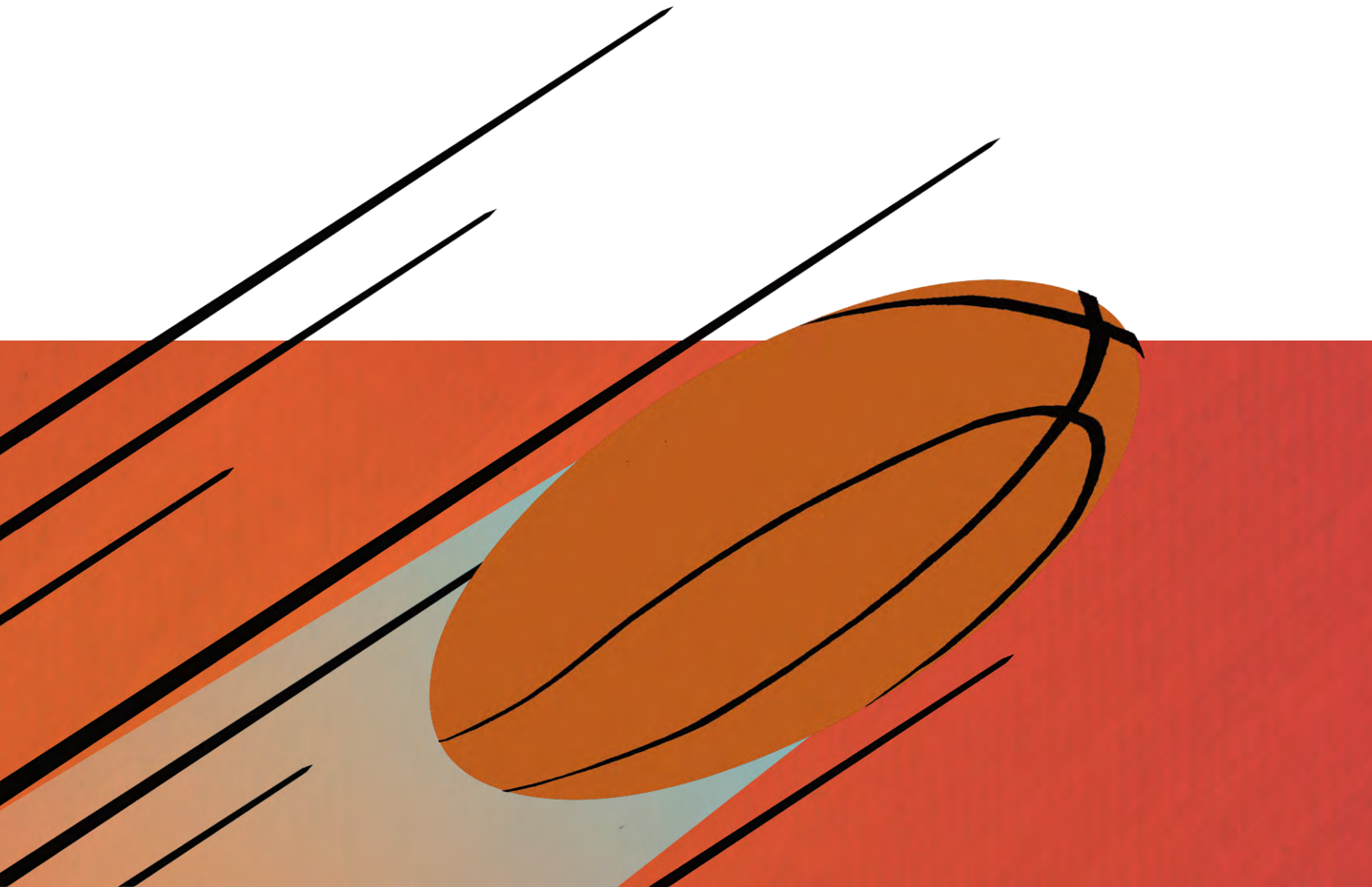


THE BASKETBALL GAME

Film & Graphic Novel



“Education holds the key to fostering the spirit of tolerance. The true way of living is found in being compassionate, learning from each other’s differences, accepting the individuality of those around us and creating a harmonious co-existence.”

– Jack Kowarsky, Vancouver Holocaust survivor

Source: Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre – www.vhec.org



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Contributors: Hart Snider, Galit Mastai, Benje Bondar, Anna-Mae Wiesenthal, The National Film Board of Canada and Firefly Books
Pedagogical Consultant: Dr. Christine Paget

ABOUT THE BASKETBALL GAME FILM AND GRAPHIC NOVEL

Back in Alberta in the summer of 1983, representatives of a small town named Eckville met with the nearby Jewish community in Edmonton after the antisemitic conspiracy theory-fuelled lessons of Eckville's social studies teacher and mayor, Jim Keegstra, became national news. Keegstra's students, who'd been taught so much hatred, were invited to a get-together at a Jewish summer camp, away from the press and onlookers. Here, they could have a picnic, play sports and meet Jewish kids for the first time. Filmmaker/author Hart Snider was a scared nine-year-old that summer who'd never been away at camp before, and he ended up playing in a basketball game he's never forgotten.

Told from Hart's perspective, *The Basketball Game* film and accompanying book fuse animation, illustration, documentary and personal memoir to create a poignant, humorous tale of hope and tolerance in the face of fear and stereotypes.

RECOMMENDED AGE LEVEL

The Basketball Game film and book are suitable for learners ages 12 and up. Mature themes and imagery are explored with depictions of antisemitism.

RECOMMENDED SUBJECT AREAS

This film and book can be integrated into curriculum in the following subject areas at the primary and secondary levels:

- English/Language Arts
- History
- Canadian Studies
- Social Sciences and Humanities
- Media Studies
- Film Studies
- World Issues
- World Religions
- Genocide Studies



USING THE BASKETBALL GAME IN CLASS

1) Collective Viewing: Educators can engage students in collective viewing of the film, available on the NFB website (nfb.ca/film/basketball_game), then facilitate group discussion and learning experiences together.

For collective viewing, educators will require the following audiovisual equipment:

- Laptop or computer
- Speakers
- Digital projector
- Screen or blank surface for viewing
- Access to the Internet

2) Individual Reading: Educators can design assignments in which students read the book individually or read excerpts from the book, provided digitally or as a handout.

- Laptop or computer
- Tablet
- Access to the Internet
- For purchasing a class set of the book, contact Firefly Books (service@fireflybooks.com)

PRE-VIEWING THE FILM AND PRE-READING THE BOOK

It is always important to preview a film or book before bringing it into the classroom. While previewing *The Basketball Game*, make a list of discussion questions that may be pertinent to your students and that encourage reflection, or use the ones provided in this guide. Keep track of words, terms, concepts and scenes that may need context. This guide provides definitions of some of the key terms in the glossary on page 18. Both the film and the book contain depictions of swastikas, skinheads and the Ku Klux Klan, as well as portrayals of antisemitic tropes. These are powerful images that may be considered offensive. It's also important to note that the film and book discuss antisemitic conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial. We recommend informing your students that this content is part of the film and book before you share it with them.

Safe Spaces for Dialogue and Discussion

Centring Students

The learning and discussion activities in NFB educational resources depend on positive relationships between students and educators, as well as a learning climate that promotes positive peer interactions based on respect. Teachers should be aware of how students feel about the issues explored in this study guide before they begin. Gain a sense of the students' knowledge of the key topics covered in the film and book, listed below. Teachers should also ascertain beforehand which students may have had personal experiences related to the issues being dealt with. In approaching these topics, teachers should pay attention to student responses and use them to inform their approach and pace.

General Note on the Emotional Impact of the Film

Some NFB productions may evoke strong emotions due to viewers' individual experiences with stress, anxiety or other mental-health conditions. This can be difficult to admit and discuss. However, these topics and feelings can be acknowledged and worked through if we remember to be respectful of each other's experiences and intentional in how we enter and leave learning spaces like this. Teachers should ensure that adequate preparation time is allotted to plan for these conversations. If students feel the need to speak with someone after watching a production, they can reach out to teachers or school counsellors. It is important to provide opportunities for students to talk through and unpack their feelings.

Warning

Some NFB films were produced in a context that no longer meets today's standards and may contain words or situations that are considered offensive. The NFB tries to add contextual vignettes for these types of productions whenever possible, but we recommend that teachers always view the films before showing them to their students. We also recommend that you inform students at least one week prior to a screening that contains sensitive content. Give students the option of not participating in the screening and provide them with an alternative activity — in the library or elsewhere — that meets institutional standards.

Source: "General Note on the Emotional Impact of the Film" and "Centring Students" were written by Natasha Henry, in collaboration with the NFB Education team, for the *Exploring Black Communities in Canada through Film* guide, produced by NFB Education and available to CAMPUS members.

Keep in mind that while all of the historical events referenced in the film are accurate and serve as an important lesson/teaching point, the story is told from the author and director's point of view, personal experiences and memories of that time.

Some terms for pre-viewing/reading discussion:

PREJUDICE: Dislike of or unfair treatment toward a person or a group of people because of their race, religion, gender, identity or appearance. This attitude is often irrational or ill-informed.

ANTISEMITISM: Hostility toward or discrimination against Jewish people based on their religious, ethnic, racial or cultural identity.

THE HOLOCAUST: The systematic, state-sponsored genocide of more than six million European Jews as well as members of other persecuted groups by Nazi Germany and its allies during World War II.

HOLOCAUST DENIAL: An antisemitic conspiracy theory that asserts that the Holocaust did not happen or was greatly exaggerated.

MAP OF ALBERTA, CANADA

ALBERTA

SASKATCHEWAN

BRITISH COLUMBIA

USA

EDMONTON

ECKVILLE

RED DEER

PINE LAKE

CALGARY

The story was written and drawn in Vancouver, British Columbia, on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples: Skwx̱ wú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓íl̓wətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) and xwm̓əθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF EDMONTON'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

“There is a vibrant and colourful slice of Jewish life here on the Prairies, in one of the most northern Jewish outposts in the world.”

– Debby Shoctor

The majority of Alberta’s approximately 20,000 Jews live in urban centres, specifically Edmonton and Calgary. This wasn’t always the case. Alberta’s first Jewish settlers arrived in the 1880s, coinciding with the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway into Western Canada.

It was around the same time that Sir Alexander Galt, Canada’s high commissioner in London, convinced John A. Macdonald that Russian Jewish refugees could help settle and colonize Western Canada as farmers. Many Eastern European Jews were fleeing their countries after a series of vicious attacks, or pogroms. For more information on the pogroms of the 19th century, visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum online:

encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/pogroms

Edmonton’s Jewish population would eventually grow to about 5,000 people, and more and more community resources were created: synagogues, Jewish day schools, newspapers, a community centre, etc. Today, members of the community are participating in all aspects of civic life. By 2004, Edmonton had its first Jewish mayor, Steven Mandel, and on July 28, 2021, Zach Hyman, a Jewish professional hockey player, signed a seven-year contract to play for the NHL’s Edmonton Oilers.

Sources:

Debby Shoctor, “Article: A Brief History of the Edmonton Jewish Community,” *Jewish Archives and Historical Society of Edmonton and Northern Alberta*, jahsena.ca/a-brief-history. Accessed 02/2023

Harry M. Sanders, “Jews of Alberta,” *Alberta Online Encyclopedia*, wayback.archive-it.org/2217/20101208190746/http://www.abheritage.ca/albertans/articles/jews.html Heritage Community Foundation. Accessed 02/2023

“Alberta, Canada,” Jewish Virtual Library, jewishvirtuallibrary.org/alberta Accessed 02/2023

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ANTISEMITISM IN ALBERTA

Antisemitism was the reason why many Jewish people had immigrated to Canada, but it didn't stay behind in Europe. For example, in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Adara Goldberg (2016) states:

“Prejudice toward people of the Jewish faith was a socially acceptable part of mainstream Canadian society for many years.... During the Great Depression in Alberta, the governing Social Credit Party spread anti-Semitic beliefs through radio broadcasts and racist literature. Chief among these was *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. It was a fabricated text first published in Russia in 1905. It claimed to outline a plan for Jewish world domination.”

Source: Adara Goldberg, “Canada and the Holocaust,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, May 6, 2016, theCanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/holocaust. Accessed 02/2023

In the 1930s, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) were a powerful force in Edmonton, hosting gatherings attended by hundreds of people. The *Liberator*, a KKK-controlled newspaper, published hateful rhetoric and promoted prejudice.

Source: Wallis Snowdon, “A dark chapter: should Edmonton’s KKK history be acknowledged?,” CBC News, cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/a-dark-chapter-should-edmonton-s-kkk-history-be-acknowledged-1.3872961. Accessed 02/2023

Threatened by the rise of Nazism, hundreds of thousands of European Jews sought refuge abroad, including in Canada.

According to an article on the Canadian Council for Refugees website, “None is too many” was the response given by a high-level Canadian government official, when asked how many Jews should be accepted into the country, during the time of the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

This phrase described the immigration policies of the Canadian government, which closed its doors to Jewish refugees who were fleeing the Holocaust. During the Second World War, Canadian policies were antisemitic and Jewish refugees were treated differently than other European refugees.

Source: Canadian Council for Refugees, “Brief history of Canada’s responses to refugees,” ccrweb.ca/sites/ccrweb.ca/files/static-files/canadarefugeeshistory2.htm#:~:text=During%20the%2012%2Dyear%20period,%E2%80%9CNone%20is%20too%20many%E2%80%9D. Accessed 02/2023

On February 13, 1980, Edmonton’s Beth Shalom Synagogue was set on fire by an arsonist, and the resulting fire caused about \$1 million in damages. Six Torahs were destroyed in the fire, including one that was 150 years old. A crudely drawn swastika was found on the blackboard of a classroom inside.

Sources:

Robert Sibley and Duncan Thorne, “Rabbi fears swastika in fire will revive memories of horror,” *Edmonton Journal*, February 14, 1980.

Paul Jankowski, “An arsonist, who believed he was the anti-Christ when...,” UPI Archives, March 4, 1981, upi.com/Archives/1981/03/04/An-arsonist-who-believed-he-was-the-anti-Christ-when/6004352530000/. Accessed 02/2023

Additional Reading: Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933–1948*, University of Toronto Press, 1982.



"THE KEEGSTRA AFFAIR"

"Anti-Semitism shares things with other prejudices, but it also has things that distinguish it from other prejudices. One of these *distinctions* is that anti-Semitism can take the form of a conspiracy theory about how the world works. It blames society's problems on some sinister, string-pulling Jewish cabal behind the scenes. This conspiracy theory is infinitely malleable. Whatever the problems you perceive in the world, you can blame them on the same invisible culprit."

– Yair Rosenberg

Source: Isabel Fattal, "Why Conspiracy Theorists Always Land on Jews," *The Atlantic*, October 13, 2022, theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2022/10/why-conspiracy-theorists-always-land-on-the-jews/671730. Accessed 02/2023

Back in the early 1980s, James "Jim" Keegstra was teaching grade 9 and 12 social studies in Eckville, Alberta, a farming community of about 900 people. He'd been a teacher there for 14 years and had also served as the town's mayor since 1974.

In an online article on *The Canadian Encyclopedia's* website, John Boyko states: "In December 1981, a school district superintendent responded to multiple complaints from parents and a school board trustee. They discovered that, for more than a decade, Keegstra had been teaching students that the Holocaust — in which Nazi Germany murdered six million European Jews — was a hoax. He had also referred to Jewish people using ugly, disparaging terms and claimed that Jews were trying to take over the world through internationally organized plots. Keegstra was warned to stop teaching his racist, antisemitic views and obviously false conspiracy theories, but he refused. On December 7, 1982, Keegstra's 14-year teaching career ended with his dismissal."

Source: John Boyko, "Keegstra Case," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 7, 2006, thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/keegstra-case. Accessed 02/2023

His firing led to the national media turning its attention on the small town, and stories about it dominated the news across Canada, eventually becoming known as "The Keegstra Affair." In May 1983, a CBC documentary called *Lessons in Hate*, which was shot in Eckville after Keegstra's firing, was watched by over one million viewers. There was a lot of national interest in his former students, who'd been taught so many lies.

In 1984, Keegstra was charged with unlawfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group, in violation of the Canadian Criminal Code. He was accused of teaching his students antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

Twenty-three of Keegstra's former students testified. The Crown prosecutors argued that his ex-students' notes and essays proved that Keegstra was inciting hate. Keegstra never denied that he taught antisemitic material. His lawyer instead argued that the anti-hate law is a violation of Keegstra's right to free speech. Since the anti-hate law stated that no accused could be found guilty if they could prove that their statements of hatred were true, Keegstra testified for 26 days as his lawyer tried to prove his client's antisemitic conspiracy theories in court. He was convicted after a 70-day trial; at the time, it was the longest jury trial in Alberta's history.

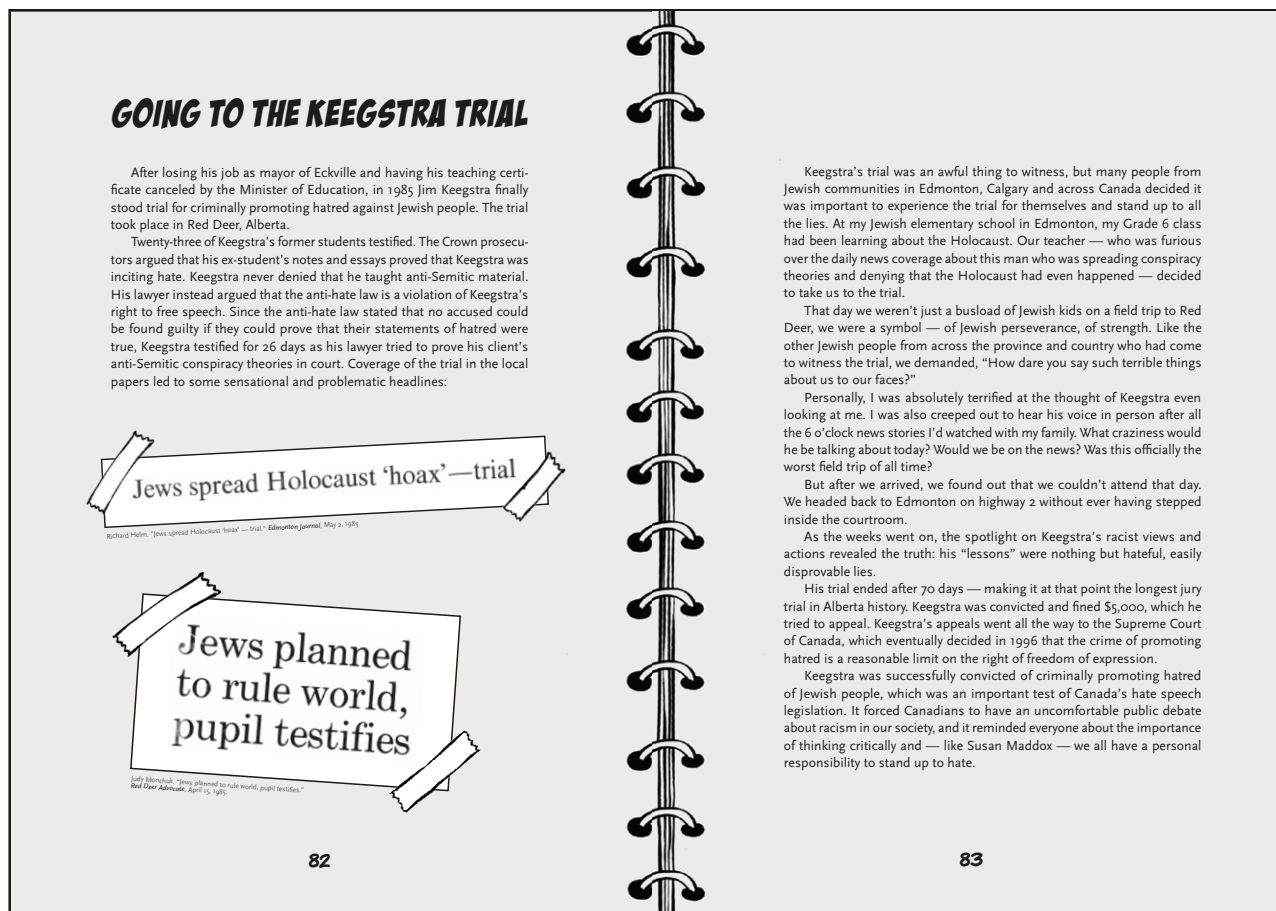
But the conviction was overturned three years later after Keegstra's lawyer appealed that the anti-hate law was unconstitutional and infringed on Keegstra's freedom of expression.

The court case continued back and forth with appeals and convictions for 15 years. In 1996, a landmark decision was made. The Supreme Court upheld the conviction, noting that the Canadian Criminal Code's Hate Speech law did infringe on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but that infringement was justified.

Additional Reading: The Canadian Anti-Racism Network, stopracism.ca/content/james-keegstra. Accessed 02/2023

Learning Resources

“Going to the Keegstra Trial,” a personal essay by Hart Snider, excerpt from *The Basketball Game* (pages 82–83). The text version of this can be found on page 25 of this educational guide.



Pages 82–83 of the graphic novel

EXPLORING ANTISEMITISM IN A MODERN CONTEXT IN CANADA

Racism, conspiracy theories and antisemitism are spread every day on social media and other platforms. The hate that Keegstra taught in his classroom can be found in the form of memes, videos and forums in today's digital landscape. In 2021, Statistics Canada reported that Jews as a religious group were most frequently targeted by hate crimes. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs stated that about 380,000 Jews live in Canada, about one percent of the population, yet they were victims of 14 percent of all hate crimes in the country.

Source: Lila Sarick, "Statistics Canada is reporting that Jews remained the religious group most frequently targeted by hate crimes in 2021," *Canadian Jewish News*, August 2, 2022, thecejn.ca/news/canada/statscan-2021. Accessed 02/2023

The Government of Canada has acknowledged the ongoing need for vigilance on this matter and has committed to working on several levels to combat antisemitism in Canada. On October 13, 2021, at the Malmö International Forum, the Government of Canada promised the following:

"We are reminded every day that antisemitism is still very much alive. Its new and resurgent forms require constant vigilance and action. Canada remains unwavering in its commitment to challenge antisemitism wherever and whenever it occurs and to build more just and inclusive societies."

Source: *Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2021*, League for Human Rights, B'nai Brith Canada, 2022, bnaibrith.ca/antisemitic-incidents

On its website, the Government of Canada has also made pledges on Holocaust remembrance and combatting antisemitism to show its commitment to protecting the Jewish community:

"The Government of Canada unequivocally condemns the disturbing rise of antisemitism at home and abroad. Canada is committed to reinforcing efforts to advance Holocaust awareness, remembrance and research, and to combat antisemitism as key elements of the promotion and protection of human rights globally. We know that antisemitism is not a problem for the Jewish community to solve alone, it is a challenge for all of us, especially governments, to take on. The Government of Canada will always stand with the Jewish community to fight antisemitism and hatred in all its forms."

Source: Canada's Pledges on Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/canada-holocaust/canada-pledges.html

Following the National Summit on Antisemitism in July 2021, the Government of Canada committed to the following actions to work towards a more inclusive and safer environment for the Jewish Community:

- Engage with Jewish communities on the Government’s next anti-racism action plan, which will be launched when the 2019–2022 Anti-Racism Strategy comes to an end;
- Explore potential adjustments to the Security Infrastructure Program (SIP), Anti-Racism Action Program (ARAP), Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program (CSMARI) and other relevant/related programs to enhance effectiveness and to be more responsive to community needs. These programs will continue to dismantle white supremacist groups, monitor hate groups, and take action to combat hate everywhere, including online;
- Building on lessons learned to improve digital literacy and tackling misinformation;
- A renewed focus on dedicated resources to support the work within government to combat antisemitism and all forms of hate, including the work of Special Envoy Irwin Cotler;
- Take a whole-of-government approach by working with departments across the government to take further action on these priorities.

“Jewish communities across Canada are threatened and targeted in their neighbourhoods, in the streets, on campuses, and in their communities. We have seen torched synagogues, memorials defaced, institutions vandalized, and cemeteries desecrated. Historically, and still today, Jewish people remain one of the most targeted minorities with respect to hate crimes—globally and in Canada. This is further provoked by the incendiary antisemitic hate we see on social media platforms, which incentivize offline violence. This national summit is not to be a one-time conversation, but an ongoing commitment to the combatting of the scourge of antisemitism which affects us all.”

– The Honourable Irwin Cotler, Canada’s Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism

Source: News Release, Government of Canada website, canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2021/07/the-government-of-canada-concludes-national-summit-on-antisemitism.html

Additional Content

This video by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, titled “What Is Antisemitism?,” eloquently explains how antisemitism is on the rise in the United States:

youtube.com/watch?v=qdvTtKCCZGo

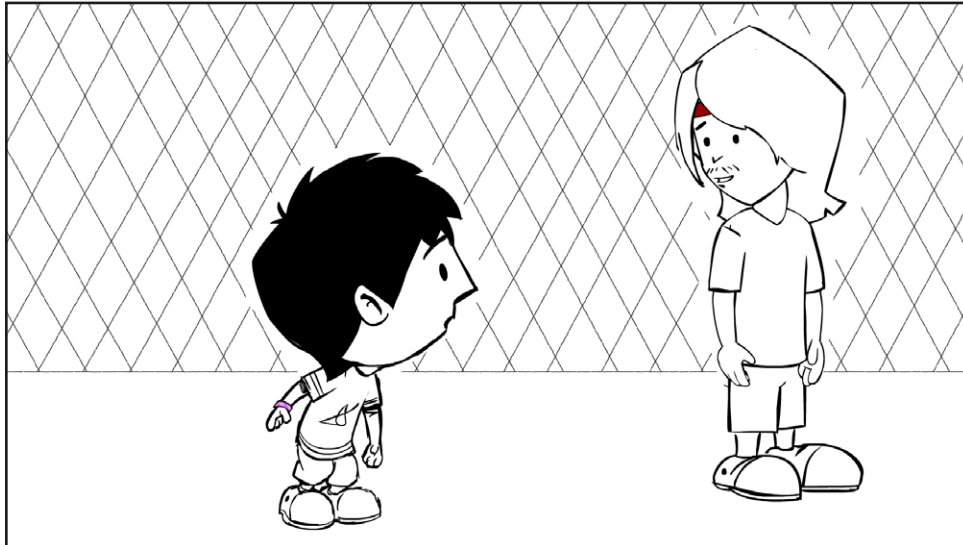
SPARKING DISCUSSION IN CLASS

1. What is this film/book about?
2. Why do you think this film/book was created?
3. Describe the feelings and thoughts of the campers when they find out that the Eckville students are coming to the Jewish camp to play basketball.
4. What are some similarities between how each group of kids feels about the other group? How do each of these perspectives contribute to racism?
5. Why does the author transform the characters during the basketball game? What is he trying to demonstrate by doing this? Does the author or the main character show any biases in these transformations? Does one team stand out more than the other? In what ways?



Additional Reading: "Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era," Anti-Defamation League, [antisemitism.adl.org](https://www.adl.org)

6. How different is the second half of the game? How differently are the characters interacting? What causes this sudden change?

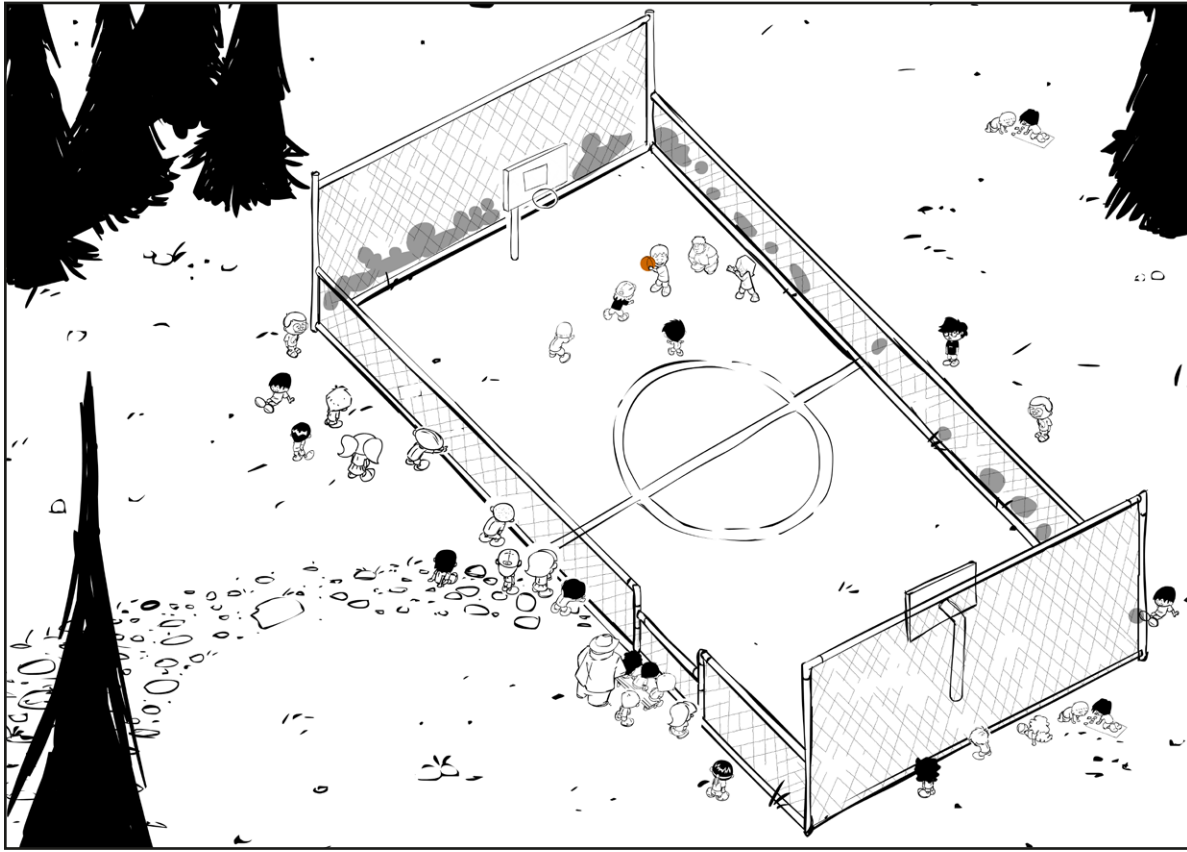


Page 75 of the graphic novel

7. What ultimately dissolves the tension between the two basketball players? What are some ways to ease or dissolve tension?



Page 74 of the graphic novel



Pages 78–79 of the graphic novel

8. What are some ways that kindness and empathy are depicted in the story?
9. Why do you believe the director chose to tell this story through animation and illustration?
10. Examine the role of colour in the film and the book. Why are some images in black and white and others not? Does this help advance the story? Why or why not?
11. How might this film have been different if it were told from the perspective of the visitors to the camp? Or the camp director?
12. What makes this a story about Holocaust denial? What do you know about Holocaust denial? Why do you think some people put so much effort into denying the Holocaust?
13. How does Holocaust denial impact the characters in this story? Discuss how you think it impacts the Jewish campers and the non-Jewish kids?
14. Why might telling stories like *The Basketball Game* be important in confronting antisemitism and discrimination? Was the story effective in conveying its message? Why?
15. Why is it important that we remember and talk about the Holocaust?

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH THE BASKETBALL GAME

Activity 1: Exploring Personal Memory

Oftentimes, we are likely to remember events if they trigger a strong emotional reaction. This could be a very effective concept to explore with students after watching the film or reading the book. Ask them to recall and describe one of their memories. Can they share their memories? Have students choose the medium best suited to retelling their story (screenplay, comic book, video, podcast, social media post).

Why did they choose the medium that they did? Who was included in their work? How might someone else involved in the memory remember it differently? Why does this memory stand out? Do the students believe they have reflected this memory accurately?

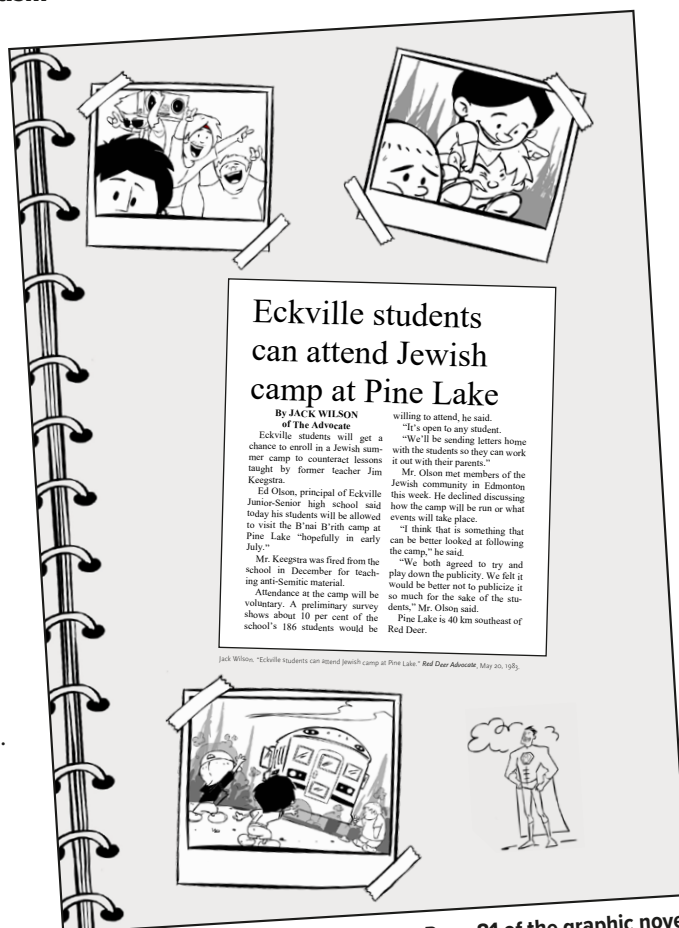
Activity 2: Responding to Antisemitism

“We’ve tried everything in our power to bring the situation into the open. No one is served by keeping it buried. I really want to know if there’s anything I can do to help the people of Eckville. I know they might say just to leave us alone, but we want to help.”

Source: Hillel Borditsky, Director of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, “No Jew would debate Keegstra,” *Red Deer Advocate*, May 17, 1983.

Edmonton’s Jewish community rallied to work with Eckville’s parents to create the “Day of Fun and Fellowship.”

Ask students why they think the community wanted to bring what was happening in Eckville out into the open.



Page 81 of the graphic novel

Edmonton isn't the only community to respond to antisemitic events. Here are some additional examples that students can look at and use to answer the discussion questions below:

1. In 1983, Vancouver's Jewish community invited Keegstra's former students to participate in the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's annual symposium on the Holocaust. Here is a CBC News Vancouver clip about the visit: [youtube.com/watch?v=TeybF_hmeXw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeybF_hmeXw)
Warning: Graphic images from Nazi concentration camp (at approx. 00:50)
2. In 2021 on Bowen Island, British Columbia, the Jewish community responded to antisemitic comments with an interesting driftwood sculpture... an uplifting story of community taking on antisemitism: thecjn.ca/podcasts/on-bowen-island-a-community-rallies-against-holocaust-denial-behind-a-giant-driftwood-menorah
3. "Not in Our Town" is an example of citizens of Billings, Montana, standing up to antisemitism: [youtube.com/watch?v=rDH4gKDw_fo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDH4gKDw_fo)

Ask students the following questions after viewing and listening to the materials:

- Can you see any similarities between the different communities' approaches?
- How can we effectively confront hate and antisemitism?
- Has there been an example of hate/discrimination in your community?
- Can you suggest a way to confront it using your knowledge from the discussion above?

Activity 3: Rewriting *The Basketball Game* in Another Form

In this creative-writing exercise, have students try to rewrite the story of *The Basketball Game* as a journal entry, letter home, camp newspaper article or social media post.

Activity 4: Letter Writing

In this creative-writing exercise, have students imagine they are the parent of one of the students in Keegstra's class. Have them write a letter to the school explaining how Keegstra's actions have affected their child and family. Students could also choose to be a parent of a Jewish child at Camp BB and write the letter from that perspective.

Activity 5: Writing a Review

Students can write a book or film review. Usually, a book or film review includes a short plot summary, an evaluation of the work (i.e., did it get its message across effectively? Why or why not?) and a recommendation for the audience to view/read it or not.

Activity 6: Creating a Book Cover

At the end of this guide you will find a version of *The Basketball Game*'s cover without a title. Have the students brainstorm their own title for the story and design it into a logo.



EXPLORING IMAGES AND LANGUAGE FROM THE FILM AND BOOK: A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANTISEMITISM: Hostility toward or discrimination against Jewish people based on their religious, ethnic, racial or cultural identity.

CONSPIRACY THEORY: A theory that certain events or circumstances are the result of a secret plot by powerful individuals or groups.

GENOCIDE: The deliberate and systematic destruction of a group of people because of their ethnicity, nationality, religion or race.

THE HOLOCAUST: The systematic, state-sponsored genocide of more than six million European Jews as well as members of other persecuted groups by Nazi Germany and its allies during World War II.

HOLOCAUST DENIAL: An antisemitic conspiracy theory that asserts that the Holocaust did not happen or was greatly exaggerated.

KU KLUX KLAN (KKK): An American post-Civil War society advocating white supremacy historically through violence and terrorism.

NAZI: A member of the German fascist political party controlling Germany from 1933 to 1945 under Adolf Hitler. Also, anyone who adopts the beliefs and policies of the Nazis.

PREJUDICE: Dislike of or unfair treatment toward a person or a group of people because of their race, religion, gender, identity or appearance. This attitude is often irrational or ill-informed.

RACIST: A person who is prejudiced against or antagonistic toward a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized. Also, someone who believes one race is inherently superior to another race.

SKINHEAD: Someone belonging to a youth gang whose members have close-shaven hair, are sometimes violent and often adopt white supremacist beliefs.

WHITE SUPREMACIST: A person who believes that white people are superior to all other races and should, therefore, dominate society.

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR BIOS AND PHOTOS



Hart Snider is a writer and filmmaker living in Vancouver, British Columbia. He loves hanging out with his family, editing documentaries, reading comics and graphic novels, cheering for the Edmonton Oilers and staying up late. His animated films *The Basketball Game* and *Shop Class* are streaming worldwide on [NFB.ca](https://nfb.ca) and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) app.

Sean Covernton was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, to pursue his dream of making cartoons for a living, which he happily does to this very day.



RELATED FILMS FROM NFB

Title	Production Year	Duration
MARTHA	2020	12:00
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL BY A.M. KLEIN	1965	10:14
BAGHDAD TWIST	2007	29:56
MY YIDDISH PAPI	2017	7:00
I WAS A CHILD OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS	2011	76:45
THE JEWS OF WINNIPEG	1973	27:20
MEMORANDUM	1965	58:17
THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK	1973	28:05
THE PROPHET – A PASSOVER CELEBRATION	1995	10:38
RAYMOND KLIBANSKY: FROM PHILOSOPHY TO LIFE	2002	50:58
A SLEEPING TREE DREAMS OF ITS ROOTS	1992	81:13

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David Bercuson and Douglas Wertheimer, *A Trust Betrayed: The Keegstra Affair*, Doubleday Canada, 1985

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“James Keegstra,” Canadian Anti-racism Network, stopracism.ca/content/james-keegstra

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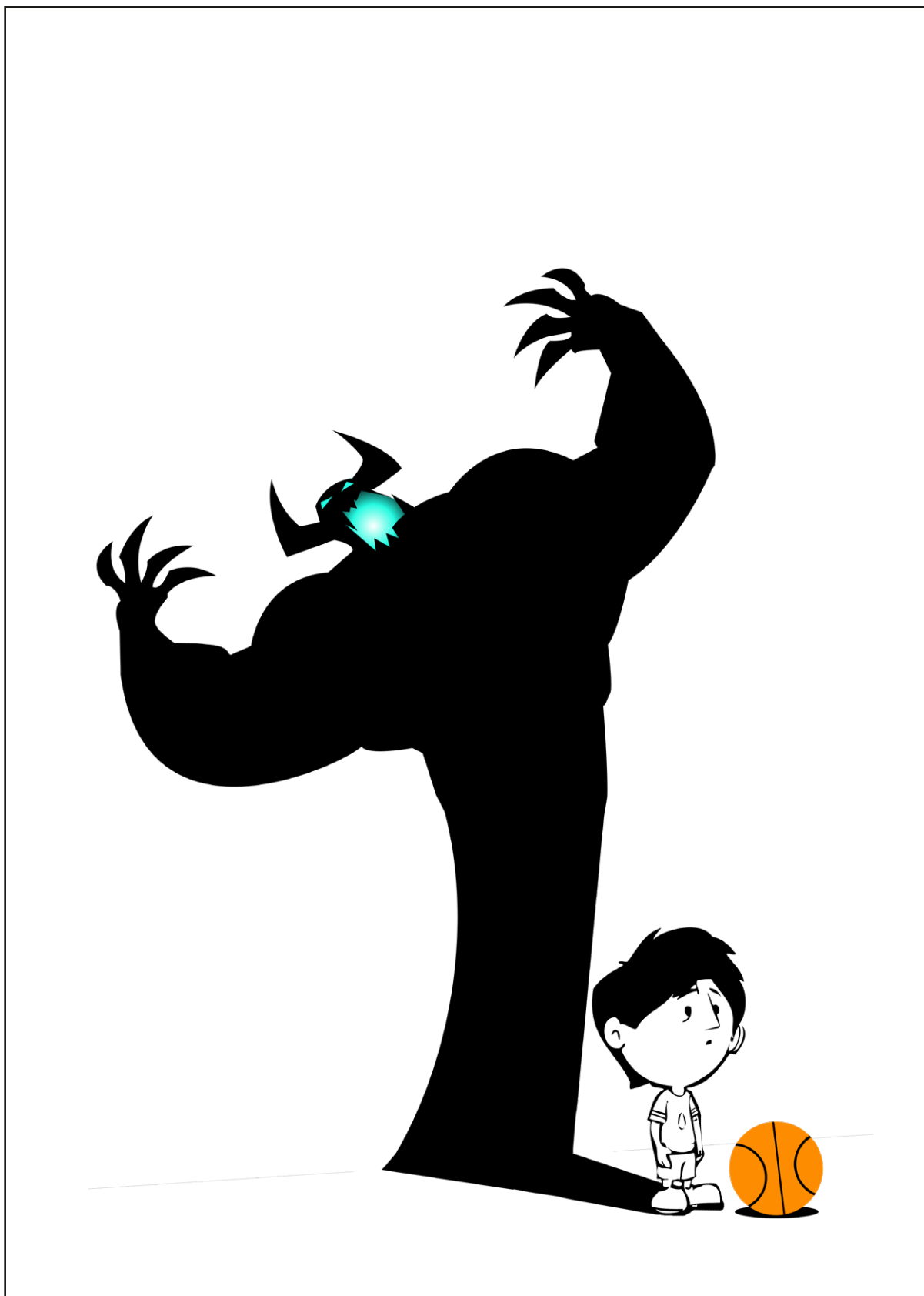
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BOOK COVER ACTIVITY SHEET



LEARNING RESOURCE

GOING TO THE KEEGSTRA TRIAL

After losing his job as mayor of Eckville and having his teaching certificate cancelled by the Minister of Education, in 1985 Jim Keegstra finally stood trial for criminally promoting hatred against Jewish people. The trial took place in Red Deer, Alberta.

Twenty-three of Keegstra's former students testified. The Crown prosecutors argued that his ex-students' notes and essays proved that Keegstra was inciting hate. Keegstra never denied that he taught anti-Semitic material. His lawyer instead argued that the anti-hate law is a violation of Keegstra's right to free speech. Since the anti-hate law stated that no accused could be found guilty if they could prove that their statements of hatred were true, Keegstra testified for 26 days as his lawyer tried to prove his client's anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in court. Coverage of the trial in the local papers led to some sensational and problematic headlines:

Keegstra's trial was an awful thing to witness, but many people from Jewish communities in Edmonton, Calgary and across Canada decided it was important to experience the trial for themselves and stand up to all the lies. At my Jewish elementary school in Edmonton, my Grade 6 class had been learning about the Holocaust. Our teacher — who was furious over the daily news coverage about this man who was spreading conspiracy theories and denying that the Holocaust had even happened — decided to take us to the trial.

That day we weren't just a busload of Jewish kids on a field trip to Red Deer, we were a symbol — of Jewish perseverance, of strength. Like the other Jewish people from across the province and country who had come to witness the trial, we demanded, "How dare you say such terrible things about us to our faces?"

Personally, I was absolutely terrified at the thought of Keegstra even looking at me. I was also creeped out to hear his voice in person after all the 6 o'clock news stories I'd watched with my family. What craziness would he be talking about today? Would we be on the news? Was this officially the worst field trip of all time?

But after we arrived, we found out that we couldn't attend that day. We headed back to Edmonton on highway 2 without ever having stepped inside the courtroom.

As the weeks went on, the spotlight on Keegstra's racist views and actions revealed the truth: his "lessons" were nothing but hateful, easily disprovable lies.

His trial ended after 70 days — making it at that point the longest jury trial in Alberta history. Keegstra was convicted and fined \$5,000, which he tried to appeal. Keegstra's appeals went all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, which eventually decided in 1996 that the crime of promoting hatred is a reasonable limit on the right of freedom of expression.

Keegstra was successfully convicted of criminally promoting hatred of Jewish people, which was an important test of Canada's hate speech legislation. It forced Canadians to have an uncomfortable public debate about racism in our society, and it reminded everyone about the importance of thinking critically and — like Susan Maddox — we all have a personal responsibility to stand up to hate.

Jews spread Holocaust 'hoax' — trial

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