

## **Examining Antisemitism Through the Ages**

### **Making Connections**

**by Kenra Mroz**

This is a series of two lessons which, although each can stand alone as a single class exercise/activity, shall ultimately work best if they are taught as a sequence. The overall purpose is to examine different (and, at the same time, similar) Jewish responses to antisemitic incidents which occurred during different periods of time.

The first lesson examines antisemitic sentiments and actions during the Holocaust, using the text: "Terezin" (by Hanu/ Hachenburg). The final lesson examines present-day antisemitic sentiments and actions as reported in an article written by Sheri Shela, for the Canadian Jewish News. There are several discussion points to address within each separate lesson; however, it is strongly recommended that connections be made between texts.

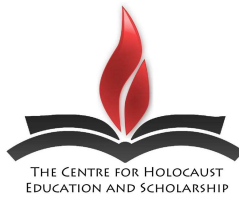
Two additional texts, "Basic Time Line Ancient World" and "Christian Attitudes and Legislation Concerning Jews: Late Antiquity and Middle Ages", have also been provided. Although these texts are not specifically associated with any of the discussion questions that have been prepared for "Terezin" or the article, "Toronto Public School Responds to antisemitic Incident", it is highly recommended that educators familiarize themselves with the information that these texts contain and take some time to discuss it with their classes in association with the prepared lesson plans.

### Basic Time Line: Ancient World

- 586 B.C.E. Babylonia Conquers the Kingdom of Judah, destroy Jerusalem and the First Temple; the Babylonian exile – Most Jews in Babylonia; some in Egypt
- 538 B.C.E. Persia defeats Babylonia. Decree of Cyrus, King of Persia, allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple; Persian rule
- [c. 420s – 400 Jews serve as soldiers in Persian garrison in Elephantine (Yeb), Egypt. Correspondence with Temple in Jerusalem. Attack on shrine at Elephantine by Egyptians.]
- 332 B.C.E. Alexander the Great conquers the region, including Judah (Grk. Judea); spread of Greek language, culture, settlements, cities, populations. Hellenization. Contact between Greeks and native “ , including Jews.
- Late 4<sup>th</sup> C. Wars between Alexander’s (d. 323) successors.  
c. 300 B.C.E. Ptolemy dynasty rules Egypt [and Judea (till 198)]  
Seleucid dynasty rules Syria/Mesopotamia (takes Judea in 198). During 3<sup>rd</sup> C. B.C.E., the Torah is translated into Greek. Rise and spread of philo-Jewish and anti-Jewish ideas, especially in Egypt, but throughout the Hellenistic world.
- 167 B.C.E. Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV desecrates Temple in Jerusalem; forbids practice of Jewish religion. Conflict between Hellenizers and observant Jews. Martyrdom and Revolt.
- 164 B.C.E. Temple rededicated by Judah the Maccabee and his followers. Hanukah.
- 160s- 142 B.C.E. Judah’s brothers, Jonathan (d. 142) and Simon gain Power in Judea. Seleucid rule declines. Simon – high priest and head of state – independent Judea under his and successors’ rule from 142- 38 B.C.E. – the Hasmonean dynasty

Time Line: Jews in the Ancient World (Continued)

- 60s – 31 B.C.E. Roman Expansion in Mediterranean; conquest of Asia Minor (Turkey) and Syria – end of Seleucid Dynasty. Rome changing from Republic to Dictatorship to Empire. Roman Empire founded in 27 B.C.E. by Octavian, i.e., Augustus Caesar. Rome conquers Egypt in 31 B.C.E. – end of Ptolemies (last is Queen Cleopatra IV) Egypt & Syria Roman provinces – large Jewish population
- 63 B.C.E. Roman army under Pompey enters Judea.
- 62-38 B.C.E. Civil unrest in Judea; End of Hasmonean dynasty. Herod takes Jerusalem in 37 B.C.E. with Roman aid and Army.
- 37- 4 B.C.E. Herod the Great rules Judea
- 4 B.C.E. – 6 C.E. Herod's son: Archelaus rules Judea; Herod II—Gallilee; Phillip – Golan
- 6 C.E. – 41 C.E. Archelaus deposed; direct Roman rule in Judea by prefect
- 38 C.E. Pogrom against Jews of Alexandria (cooperation of Roman governor and Greek population); Jews appeal to Emperor
- 41- 44 C.E. Agrippa I, Herod the Great's grandson, rules entire country.
- 44- 66 C.E. Direct Roman rule by procurator; deteriorating situation; Jewish revolt against Rome
- 66-70 C.E. Great Revolt; Attacks on Jews in Alexandria  
Defeat of Galilee in 67 C.E.  
Jerusalem and Temple destroyed in 70 C.E.; Fiscus iudaicus
- 73 or 74 C.E. Masada – final rebel stronghold taken by Romans
- 115-117 C.E. Diaspora Uprisings in Egypt, Cyrene, Cyprus\ Roman victory
- 132-135 C.E. Revolt led by Bar Kokhba in Judea\Roman victory; Hadrianic Decrees and persecutions
- 63 B.C.E.



**Christian Attitudes and Legislation concerning Jews:  
Late Antiquity and Middle Ages**

*Rivka Duker Fishman*

**Legislation of Christian/Roman Emperors ( and others)**

**I. Separation**

**Laws of the Council of Elvira Spain (300)**

No intermarriage; no Jewish blessing of crops  
No eating with Jews; no cohabitation

**Council of Nicea (325)**

No celebrating Easter according to the date of  
Passover

**Law of Emperor Constantius (339)**

No intermarriage      **Law of Constantine (315)**  
No conversion to Judaism

**II. Degradation**

**Law of Constantius (339)**

No owning or circumcising Christian slaves  
Removal of Christian slaves from Jewish owners

**Law of Theodosius II (439)**

No holding of public office (civil service)  
No building new synagogues – only repair of  
existing ones

**Laws of Theodosius II (415)**

Demotion and restriction of Nasi's Authority  
429 – Abolition of office of Nasi

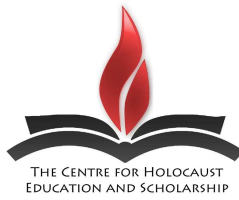
**Law of Justinian (531)**

No testifying in court against Orthodox Christians

**III. Regulation and Intervention**

Justinian: synagogue service in 553

**IV. Protection: persons, property, no forced conversion**



## TEREZIN

That bit of filth in dirty walls,  
And all around barbed wire,  
And 30,000 souls who sleep  
Who once will wake  
And once will see  
Their own blood spilled.

I was once a little child,  
Three years ago,  
That child who longed for other worlds.  
But now I am no more a child  
For I have learned to hate.  
I am a grown-up person now,  
I have known fear.

Bloody words and a dead day then,  
That's something different than bogeymen!

But anyway, I still believe I only sleep today,  
That I'll wake up, a child again, and start to laugh and play.  
I'll go back to childhood sweet like a briar rose,  
Like a bell that wakes us from a dream,  
Like a mother with an ailing child  
Loves him with aching woman's love.  
How tragic, then, is youth that lives  
With enemies, with gallows ropes,  
How tragic, then, for children on your lap  
To say: this for the good, that for the bad.

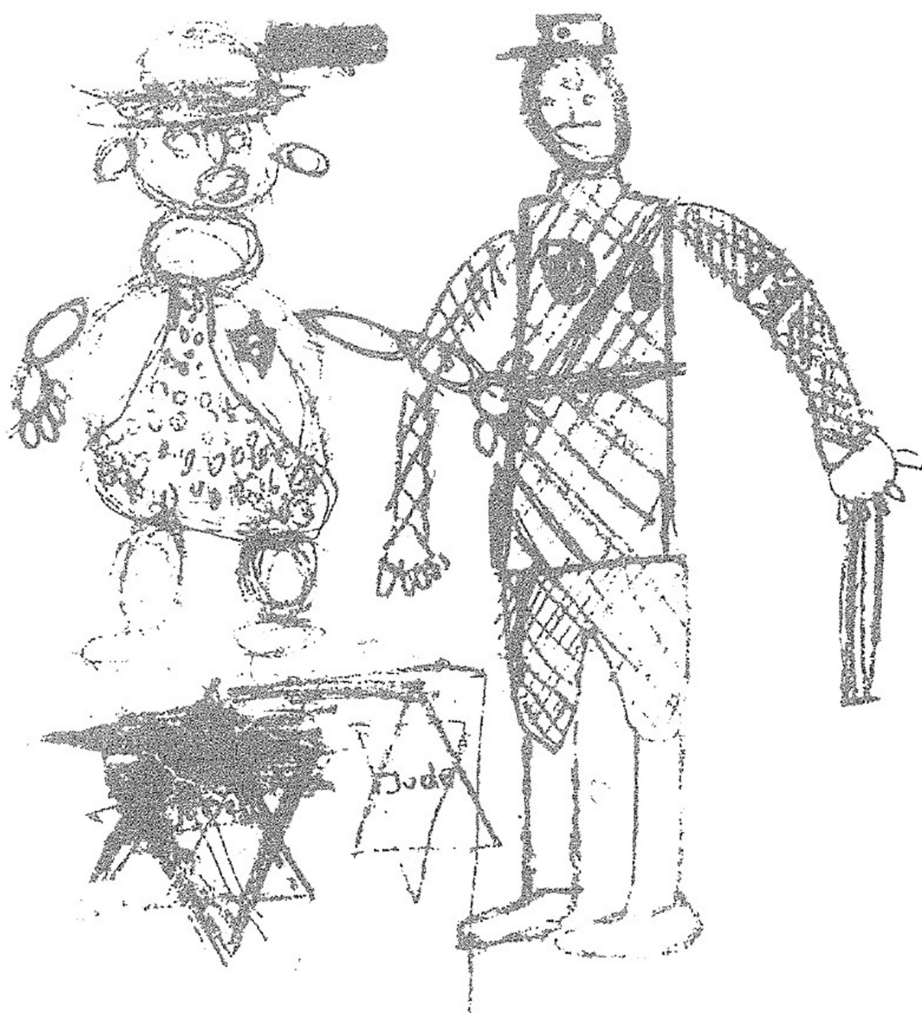
Somewhere, far away out there, childhood sweetly sleeps,  
Along that path among the trees,  
There o'er that house  
That was once my pride and joy.  
There my mother gave me birth into this world  
So I could weep . . .

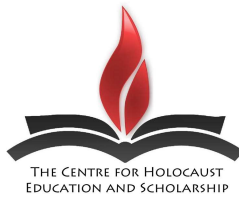
In the flame of candles by my bed, I sleep  
And once perhaps I'll understand  
That I was such a little thing,  
As little as this song.

These 30,000 souls who sleep  
Among the trees will wake,  
Open an eye  
And because they see  
A lot

They'll fall asleep again . . .

*Hanuš Hachenburg*  
*IX. 1944*





### **Discussion Questions for “Terezin”**

1. How does the author, Hanuš Hachenburg, capture the setting for his reader in the first stanza? What emotions are being expressed and how?
2. Like Rothenburg, Hachenburg also provides characterization details for himself. Please list three different traits that Hachenburg ascribes to himself with a supporting example for each one.
3. What do you think is meant by the lines: “Bloody words and a dead day then, / That’s something different than bogeymen!”
4. According to Hachenburg, what does it mean to be “grown-up”? Please expand upon this idea using examples from your own observation and / or experience.
5. Both “Terezin” and “A Jewish Lament, 1942” contain elements of hope. How does Hachenburg develop a feeling of hope in his composition?
6. How do you understand the last six lines of “Terezin”?
7. How did you find yourself reacting as you read “Terezin”? Please describe some of the thoughts and emotions that you experienced (at least two) at different parts of the composition – and explain why.

## Toronto public school responds to anti-Semitic incident

[cjnews.com/news/canada/toronto-public-school-responds-to-anti-semitic-incident](https://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/toronto-public-school-responds-to-anti-semitic-incident)

April 19, 2018



A Jewish student club flyer that was defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti. (Robert Walker/Facebook)

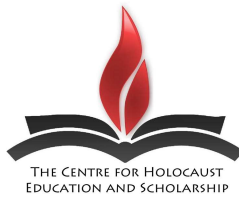
Northern Secondary School, a public high school in midtown Toronto, is being applauded by a Jewish advocacy group for the way it has responded to an anti-Semitic incident.

Robert Walker, national director of Hasbara Fellowships Canada, said he was invited to the school on April 18, to speak to a Jewish student club run by Northern students who are also members of NCSY, an Orthodox youth group.

"We were discussing anti-Semitism on campus and one of the students mentioned that anti-Semitism is everywhere and that there was even anti-Semitic graffiti on one of the flyers at the school," Walker said.

A hand-drawn flyer inviting Jewish and non-Jewish students alike to enjoy free pizza on Wednesdays during lunch was defaced with swastikas, as well as the phrases, "F-k the Rothschilds," "Heil Hitler" and "Gas 'em all."





9/10/2019

Toronto public school responds to anti-Semitic incident

"I asked what had been done about it and the student told me that it was still up. I had them take it down and we reported it soon after to the administration," Walker said.

***READ: THE POWER OF WORDS AND THE NEED TO STOP ANTI-SEMITISM***

"Within three hours of being informed about this, the principal was there all night going through security footage, contacted the police and were in touch with the school board."

Walker said he hasn't yet been informed about whether the security cameras caught the incident on tape.

Gillian Gibbons, the school's principal, told Walker that in her view, this constitutes a hate crime.

Gibbons sent a letter to parents and students addressing the incident and promising to take action.

"This is completely unacceptable and upsetting for all of us at Northern. It is not reflective of who we are and what we stand for as a school and as a community," Gibbons wrote.

Who we are as a school will be measured by how we collectively respond to this situation.  
— Gillian Gibbons

"Northern is a place that promotes and celebrates diversity, inclusion and respect for all in creating a caring and safe learning environment."

Gibbons said that school staff would be addressing the incident with students and encouraged anyone with information to come forward.

"This also speaks to the need for us as a school to continue to educate our students in human rights education, so that we can learn from our past, in order to better our future as an inclusive society," she said.

"Who we are as a school will be measured by how we collectively respond to this situation and not by this single despicable action."

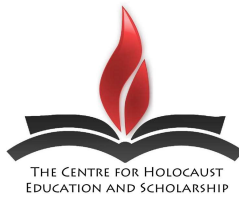
Walker said he was pleased that the school administration acted so quickly and decisively.

"Obviously, one incident, while extremely troubling, doesn't represent the student body there, or the school. There is no evidence to suggest that this is systemic and the response of the school has been exactly what we want to see. If only we saw this from universities," Walker said.

"This is exactly what we would want to see."

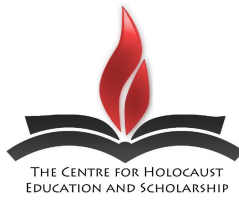
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### **Discussion Questions for “Toronto Public School Responds to Anti-Semitic Incident”**

1. Describe your reaction to the picture of the defaced poster that is included in this article. Explain why you reacted in this way.
2. What is your understanding, in general, of the Northern Secondary Student’s comment that “Anti-Semitism is everywhere”?
3. What is a “hate crime” and how does this incident display elements of a hate crime?
4. The school responded quickly and appropriately once staff members became aware of this incident; however, it took some time before the concern was brought forward. Why do you think that this was so and what do you think can be done to ensure faster recognition of discriminatory actions at our schools and in our communities?
5. “Who we are as a school will be measured by how we *collectively* respond to this situation. Why is it integral to emphasize a collective approach?
6. The last major paragraph in this article contains a comment by Robert Walker wherein he states: “If only we saw this [call to action] in universities.” What is your understanding of this statement?



### **Text Source Credits**

The text, “Basic Time Line Ancient World” was generously provided by Dr. Rivka Duker-Fishman, Rothberg International School, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

The text, “Christian Attitudes and Legislation Concerning Jews: Late Antiquity and Middle Ages” was generously provided by Dr. Rivka Duker-Fishman, Rothberg International School, Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

The poem, “A Jewish Lament, 1242” (by the Meir of Rothenburg) was generously provided by The International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem Source Book (International School for Educators program).

The poem, “Terezin” (by Hanuš Hachenburg) was photocopied from . . . *I never saw another butterfly . . . Children’s Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942-1944*, Compilation Copyright, 1993, by Schocken Books Inc. New York.

Illustration credit – The illustration: “Nazi Threatening Jew” that accompanies “Terezin” was drawn by Jiri Beutler who, like Hanuš Hachenburg, was forced to stay at Terezin.

The article “Toronto Public School Responds to Anti-Semitic Incident” (by Sheri Shefa) appeared in *The Canadian Jewish News* on April 19, 2018.