

The background of the slide is a composite image. On the left, there is a faded, grayscale photograph of a wooden watchtower or guard post, part of a concentration camp structure, with barbed wire visible in the foreground. On the right, there is a light gray silhouette map of Europe and North Africa, centered on the continent of Europe. The title text is overlaid on the left side of the map.

VOICES OF THE HOLOCAUST

Part One

A black and white photograph of a concentration camp. In the foreground, a barbed wire fence runs diagonally from the bottom right towards the center. To the left of the fence is a path or cleared area, and to the right is a dense field of tall grass or weeds. In the background, there are several wooden barracks or huts arranged in rows. A tall, thin structure, possibly a watchtower, is visible in the distance. The overall scene is desolate and somber.

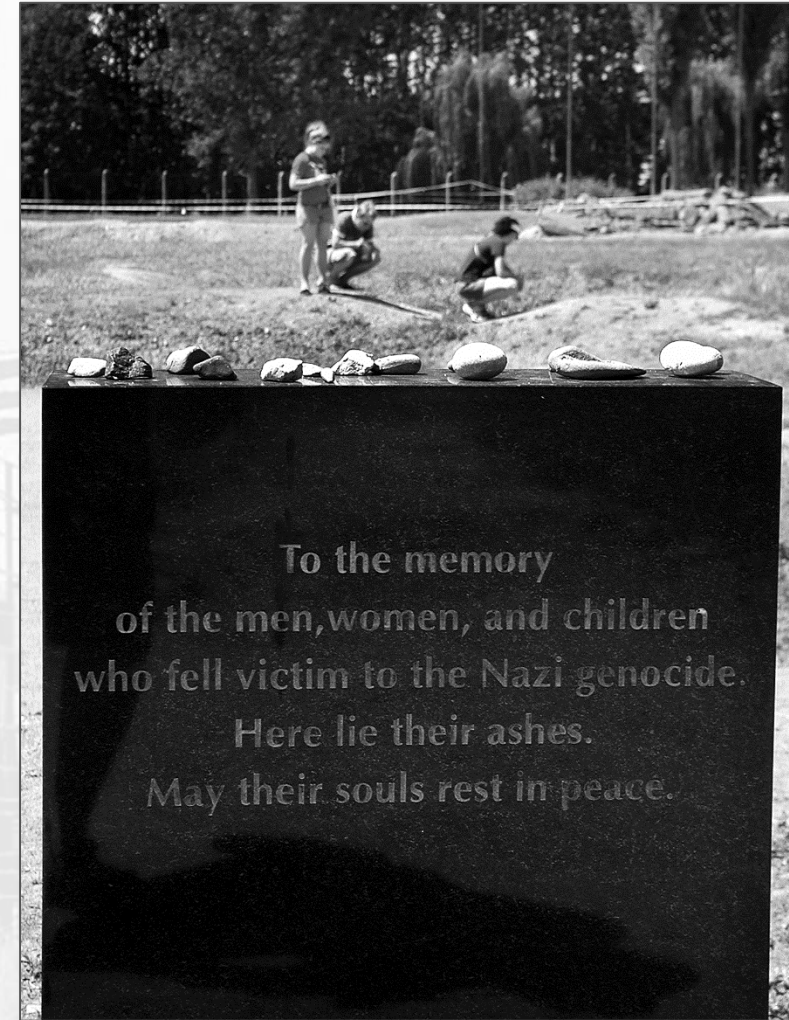
OVERVIEW OF THE SHOAH

THE DESTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN JEWS

World War II in Europe was a political, economic, and spiritual trauma for the Jews

Holocaust, Greek word meaning “burnt offering”

Shoah (שואה), Hebrew for the “catastrophe” or “calamity”



THE DESTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN JEWS

11 million European civilians died

6 million Jews murdered

80% of the European Jewish population was exterminated

The Jews endured “the most severe and unprecedented oppression and terror” in their history (Krysińska & Lester, 2006, p. 142)



NAZI ANTI-JEWISH POLICY

Nazi policies were not well defined until “after Kristallnacht” – the night of broken glass (9-10 November 1938)

Kristallnacht “can hardly be considered as a way-station to the Holocaust in terms of a planned policy” (p. 117)

After Kristallnacht, the Jews were “finally and totally evicted from German economic life” (p. 117)

It opened the way for the Nazis to develop the final solution to the Jewish question

NAZI IDEOLOGY AND POLICIES

Hitler introduced idea of “Racial anti-Semitism”

Friedländer (2009) terms it “redemptive anti-Semitism” (p. xi)

Nazi Germany becomes the redeeming agent, the “savior” of the world and from the Jew

Religious terminology co-opted, describing Hitler and the Nazi party as defenders of the world



NAZI IDEOLOGY AND POLICIES

Nazi worldview “wished to create a new order of the world based on races” (Tel Aviv University & Vashem, 2016)

The Nazis pursued world redemption

Establish “a much needed racial new order,” which “demanded a war against the Jews and their ultimate removal” (Tel Aviv University & Vashem, 2016)





NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

The Nazi ideologies and subsequent policies of Germany led to an anti-Christian movement

They denied “the brotherhood of man” and denied “the Fatherhood of God” (p. 142)

They “promoted a *volk* community that would be free of the influences of churches (p. 142)

Hitler, as the Führer, was the “secular authority” and the “messenger of God” and, as such, was “the interpreter of the scriptures” (p. 142)

NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

Mainstream German Protestantism advocated submission to “secular Christian authority” unless it contradicted “scriptural commandments” (p. 142)

The Reich Church emerged as the representative of the Protestant Church to the Nazi government

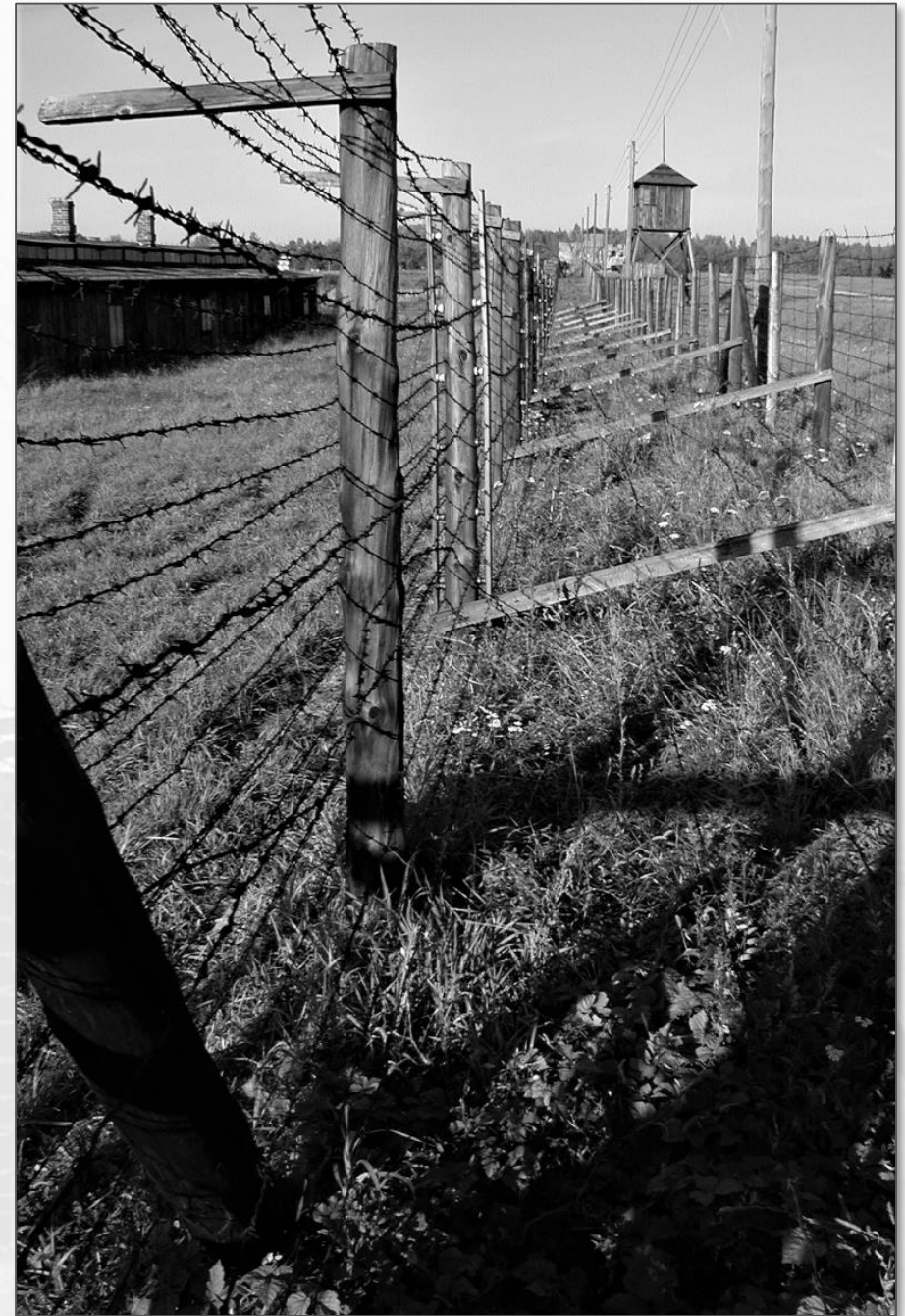
The Reich Church embraced Hitler’s “national revival”

It joined in “the fight against pacifism, socialism, Freemasonry and the Jews” (p. 142)

NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

Opponents of the Reich Church were persecuted and “by February 1934 some seventy pastors had been sent to concentration camps” (p. 142)

Martin Niemöller, led opposition; he was a “German nationalist, commander of a submarine in World War I and a national hero” (p. 142)



NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

Niemöller accepted the new status quo of Nazi Germany initially but later “he refused to recognize the right of secular authorities to determine matters of conscience for individuals and denied the state’s claims of supremacy over Christians” (pp. 142-143)

In 1934, a group of traditional pastors established the Confessing Church (Bekennende Kirche, BK)

NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

The Barmen Declaration committed itself to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as “the inviolable foundation of the German Evangelical Church” (p. 143)

The Barmen Declaration rejected the Nazi ideology of the Führer as a special ruler and it also rejected the idea that the State is able to order and control human life



NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

Several key Christian dissidents who courageously opposed the Reich:

1. Bishop Theophil Wurm opposed “mercy killing (euthanasia)” and spoke out against Jewish persecution (p. 143)
2. Ludwig Steil “defended the Jews and died in a Nazi camp” (p. 143)
3. Pastor Heinrich Grüber endured life in a concentration camp for assisting “both converted and non-converted Jews” (p. 143)

NAZI POLICIES AND CHRISTIAN DISSENT

“... Of the thousands of pastors and church leaders, who were imprisoned about 500 died”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer “was murdered in a Nazi prison as an anti-Nazi resistor” (p. 144)

Bonhoeffer like many of his contemporary pastors espoused the separation of Jews from German society along with other racial ideas regarding the Jews as “legitimate” (p. 144)

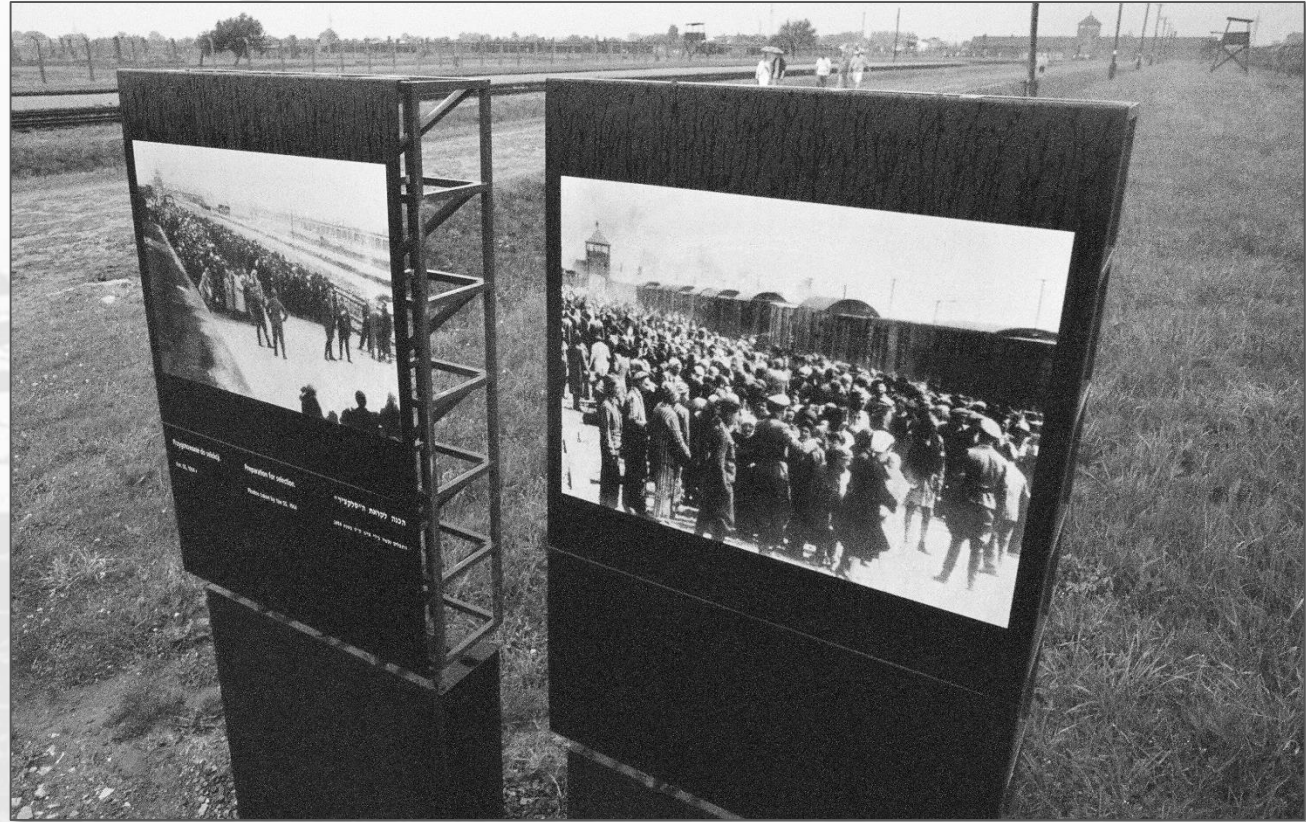
He reasoned that the central Nazi viewpoint regarding the Jewish question was “paganism” (p. 144)

MAJOR EVENTS OF THE SHOAH

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler became the Chancellor of Germany and began the radical transformation of Germany

His plan was simple:

1. Nullify the undesirables
2. Multiply the desirables
3. Liquidate the barriers



MAJOR EVENTS OF THE SHOAH

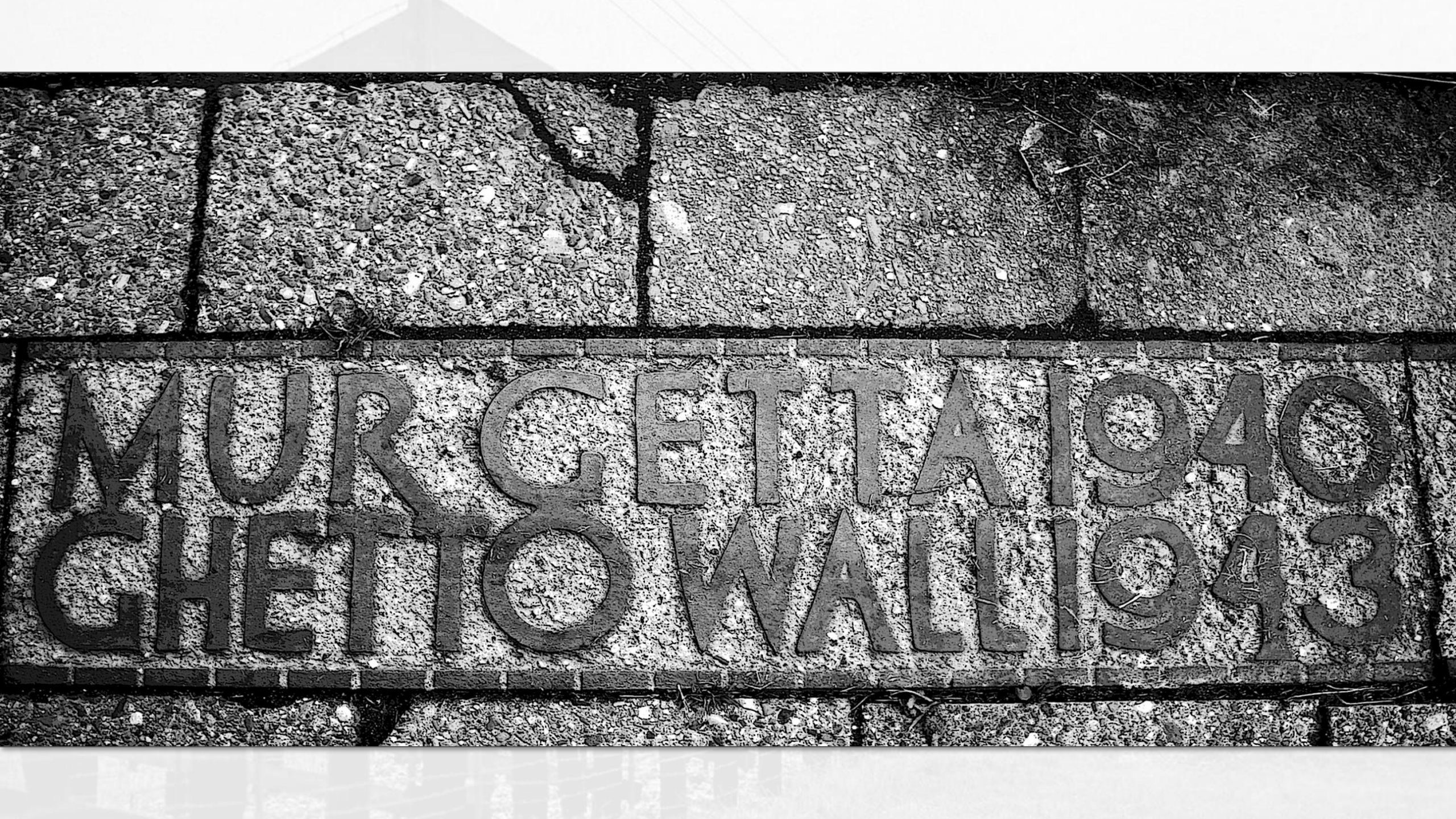
In September 1939, Hitler invaded Poland

In the summer of 1941, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union

The systemic extermination of Jews began through *Einsatzgruppen* (Bauer, 2001, p. 210)

The *Einsatzgruppen* proved to be ineffective and costly





MUR GETTAIO 1940
GHETTO WALLI 1943

MAJOR EVENTS OF THE SHOAH

Hitler ordered the development of a plan to answer the Jewish question

Aktion Reinhard was the code name for the plan to eliminate European Jews (Bauer, 2001, pp. 226-230)

Hitler's Aktion plan called for the development of an efficient method to execute large numbers of Jews

The Chełmno extermination camp was the first camp used to perfect the method for the mass murder and disposal of Jews

MAJOR EVENTS OF THE SHOAH

What developed was the construction of three extermination camps in Nazi occupied Poland: **Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka**

These “death camps” were built not to profit from slave labor

The ultimate purpose of these death camps was the mass extermination of Jews upon arrival

Between 1942 and 1943 nearly one and a half million Jews perished in these three death camps

BEŁŻEC

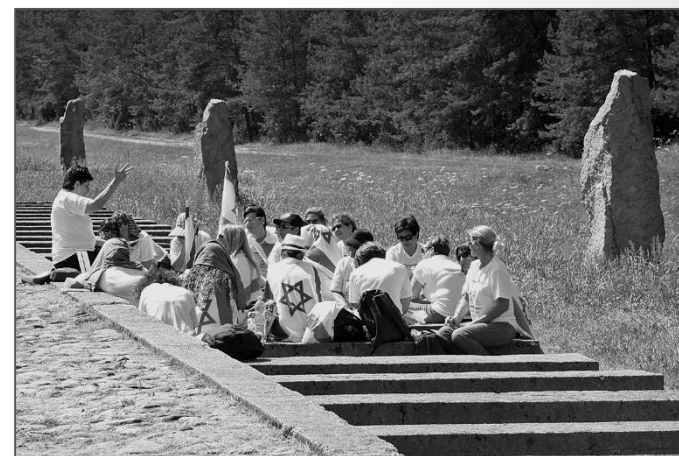
Between 430,000
and 500,000 Jewish
victims murdered





TREBLINKA

Between 700,000 –
900,000 Jewish
victims murdered



MAJOR EVENTS OF THE SHOAH

The Nazis advanced their methods from the lessons learned at **Chelmno** and the **Aktion camps** and applied them at the **Majdanek** and **Auschwitz** concentration camps



MAJDANEK

78,000 – estimated
of which roughly
80% were Jewish
victims murdered







AUSCHWITZ

1.1 million
(estimated) Jewish
and non Jewish
victims murdered





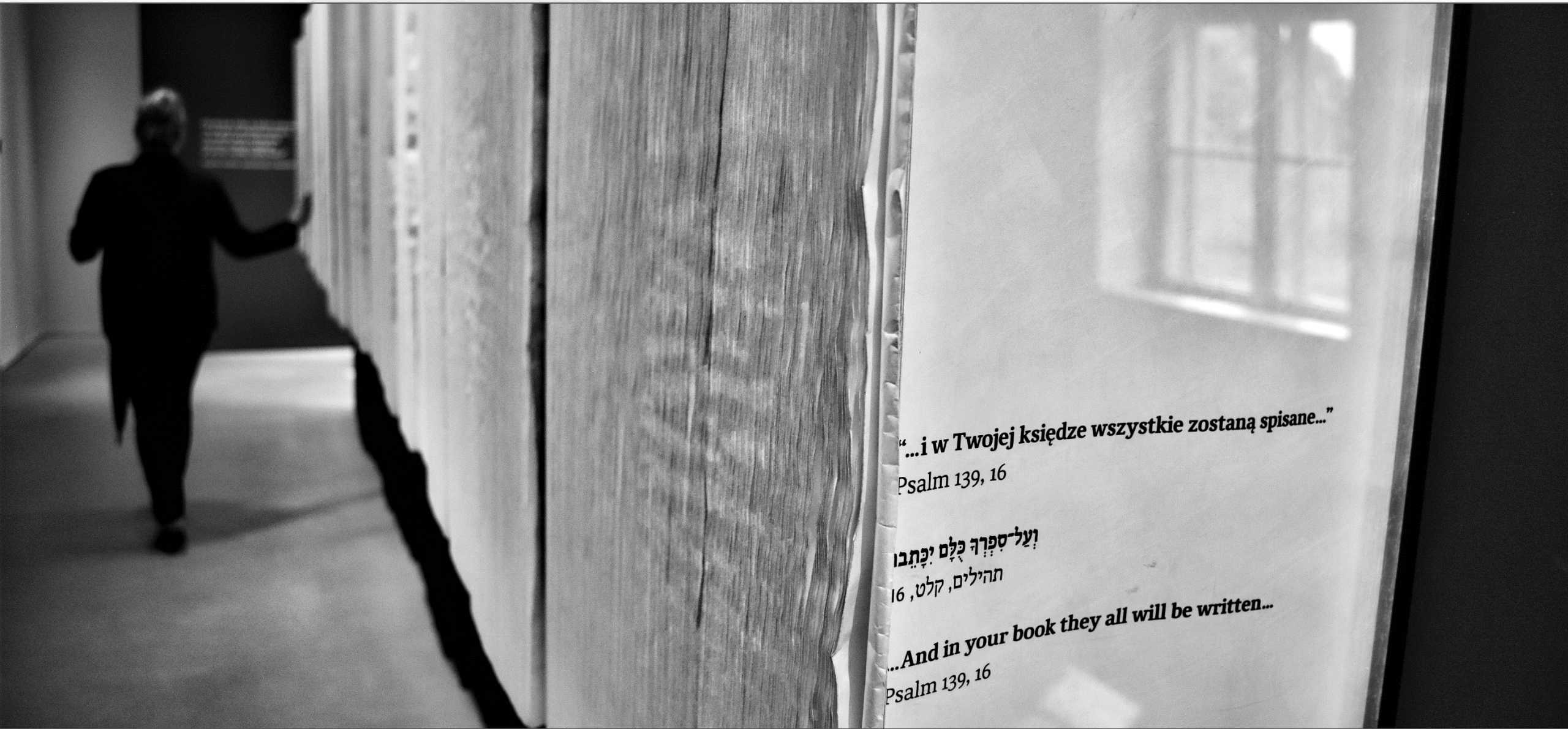


MAJOR EVENTS OF THE SHOAH

At Auschwitz the Nazi system was perfected culminating in the systematic and effective mass murder of innocent people

Estimates place the death toll at Auschwitz between 1.1 and 1.5 million people with the overwhelming majority of them being European Jews

In the end Hitler's solution to the Jewish question resulted in what we know today as the Shoah and the extermination of six million European Jews of which more than half were Jews from Poland



“...i w Twojej księdze wszystkie zostaną spisane...”

Psalm 139, 16

וְעַל-סֵפֶרְךָ כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂי יִכְתָּבוּ

תהילים, קלט, 16

...And in your book they all will be written...

Psalm 139, 16

OPPOSING MEMORIES

In present day Oświęcim, Poles often talk “about their suffering in the war” and “their stubborn struggle against the Nazi invaders, and little of the Jews and their fate.”

The Israelis and the global Jewish community “excluded the Poles and their history from the commemoration enterprise and concentrated on religious and national narratives. Only in the past decade did the two communities begin to see the other side.”

Tomasz Sabolsky

