



# THE TRIBE SCRIBE

YOM HASHOAH

On Sunday 23rd April, 27th Nissan it will be Yom HaShoah. Each year Tribe takes a group of Year 12 students on a five day journey to Poland. Below is an excerpt from an article by Alex Kitsberg one of the eighty participants from our most recent trip.

The last day of the trip, was spent in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Auschwitz One. There is a common misunderstanding that there is only one Auschwitz camp. In fact, there are three main camps at Auschwitz with 48 other sub-camps surrounding them. We began by visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau; the largest extermination camp run by Nazi Germany. Accompanying us was a lady named Bobby. Bobby's family were killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau whilst she survived in the camp and has lived on to tell her haunting story. Bobby is, without any doubt in my mind, the strongest person I have ever met in my entire life. Needless to say, her story is astounding and awe-inspiring but even more impressive, this lady was returning to the very place where she was put through a living hell in order to tell a group of teenagers, who she has never met before, her life story. She returned to the exact spot where she last saw her parents. The very place where she so narrowly escaped death. Most striking was the manner in which she carried herself as the memories came flooding back. It was with a smile that she recounted memories of her family. Her witty sarcasm, despite the gravity of the events she recounted, made her instantly likeable. For me, the most amazing experience of the entire trip was when, as a group, we sat 'shiva' with Bobby. In the centre of Auschwitz we stood around her and one at a time approached her. I found it incredibly difficult to know what to say to someone who has been through so much.

Walking out of the infamous gates of Auschwitz One later that day was a journey many Jews would unfortunately never have experienced. Again, I was subject to the surreal nature of the setting as the rich reds and oranges of the autumn leaves somewhat glorified the picture before me. I had to remind myself that this is nothing more than an illusion of the death that envelops these camps and the whole of Poland. It is also the illusion of the sum of 6 million being the only noteworthy thing about the Holocaust to be remembered, that needs to be swept aside.

Having had the opportunity to experience Poland, I would strongly advise visiting in order to gain your own experience of what occurred during the Holocaust. It is certainly not something that should just be forgotten and is furthermore a part of history that cannot be conveyed just through a textbook. Everyone is subject to a different experience and is emotionally affected at different times but one fact is a certainty for all that go - it is a life-changing experience.



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