



YEAR 12 MODERN HISTORY EXCURSION

On Friday, 22 August, students from our two Year 12 Modern History classes travelled to the Sydney Jewish Museum in Darlinghurst, for a special program focused on *Power & Authority in the Modern World*, the HSC core topic.

The program began with a tour of the museum, with each group led by a guide who had a family connection to the Holocaust. As the museum is currently under renovations, it is closed to the public, meaning that many of the artefacts were able to be taken out of their glass cases and even handled by our students. The tours focused on pre-war Jewish life, the Nazi Party's rise to power, and the way that persecution of the Jews escalated over time.

The students then took part in a workshop which provided an effective recap of the reasons for the emergence and rise of the Nazi Party, with a focus on analysing both visual and physical primary sources. The instructor was excellent, and it was great to hear students sharing what they have learned from their studies in response to his questions.



The program concluded with a moving talk from Holocaust survivor, Professor Mark Spigelman. Born in southern Poland in November 1940, Spigelman survived only through the courage and determination of his parents. His mother, with her blonde hair and blue eyes, disguised him as a girl for five years to shield him from Nazi inspections. Twice they were caught, and twice they survived because German officers mistook him for a “lovely little girl.” The family endured unimaginable hardship, hiding in a ghetto, in bunkers, rubbish tips, and eventually in a farmhouse near Auschwitz.

Spigelman recalled the nightmares he experienced as a child, which he later came to understand were based on the traumas of his earliest years. He also spoke of his arrival in Sydney after the war, where, to his relief, classmates treated him as an equal and showed genuine interest in his story.

In his talk, Spigelman shared extracts from his cousin Art Spiegelman’s celebrated graphic novel, *Maus*, which powerfully retells the story of their family’s survival.

At the end of his talk, he presented our College with a copy of his wife’s recent book, *Blue Eyes*

Wide Open, which recounts his survival journey for his granddaughters – this will be available soon in the College's library.

Mr Samuel Mills

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