

Here and here and here.

While I bumped into a lot of Jewish tourists while in Berlin, there is still a contingency that wants nothing to do with the place. But after visiting, I think going goes past "want" and becomes more important than that.

A huge, albeit almost entirely dour, chunk of Jewish (and World) history happened there. The Germans have confronted it, or are at least trying to, and perhaps you should similarly pay your respects and try and wrap your head around it in person. You will--of course--fail. There is no way to completely wrap your head around it because it defies sense and is far too colossal. As cliché as invoking Nazism to symbolize the end of the world is, it is nevertheless still appropriate. I mean, one person wanted to take over entire world--and he was actually doing it.

I knew before going, but it was made more evident during my visit that the events that took place did not happen because it was in Germany. Sylvia, a French-Belgian I met while in Luxembourg said that Parisian school teachers would make Jew jokes in class. While in Prague I read about roma (gypsy) being forced to move from their homes and into squalor, as well as take the mortgages. The Taliban exploded giant structures of Buddha months before 9/11. Matthew Shepard. James Byrd, Jr. What was different was that the events kept on stacking up, compounding each time and too few people--from inside and out--condemned and tried to intervene as it was taking place. The rest is hindsight.