

Competence 3.1 Recognize their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels.

Journal Entry from Holocaust Museum

In order to increase my understanding of advocacy and its importance, I went to the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. By approaching this with a social work paradigm, I was struck in many ways. Seeing how many were influenced by propaganda to support Hitler demonstrated to me the importance of thinking critically about issues for myself instead of just going along with the majority of those around me. One group of German young adults did this and called themselves the “White Roses.” They spoke out against the Nazi regime and gave their lives doing this. I want to be that dedicated to doing what is right even at a cost to myself. A man who was a representative for the Polish Jews took his own life in trying to make a statement on their behalf.

I read about one a situation where a ship carried Jewish refugees to Cuba, but Cuba would not take them. Then the ship took them to America, but America would not take them. The ship returned to Europe where most of the Jewish refugees died at the hand of the Nazi regime. Reading about how America denied many Jewish refugees made me wonder why and what I could have done as an American if I were alive at this time. I am inspired by the story about how a social worker, Martha Sharp, and her husband were sent to Europe twice to help Jewish refugees by the American Unitarian Association.

One part of the museum showed that the majority of Americans during that time did not want to get involved with what was going on in Europe. Although Americans were dealing with their own challenges, many failed to show compassion on the

numerous oppressed people in Europe. Instead, many seemed more focused on their own needs and the risk that it would impose on America to act. Seeing this put a fire under me. I do not want to be complacent about what is going on in the World and how I can act on behalf of others.