

Then They Came for Me

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First they came for the Muslims, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Muslim.

Then they came to detain immigrants indefinitely solely upon the certification of the Attorney General, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't an immigrant.

Then they came to eavesdrop on suspects consulting with their attorneys, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a suspect.

Then they came to prosecute non-citizens before secret military commissions, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a non-citizen.

Then they came to enter homes and offices for unannounced "sneak and peek" searches, and I didn't speak up because I had nothing to hide.

Then they came to reinstate Cointelpro and resume the infiltration and surveillance of domestic religious and political groups, and I didn't speak up because I had stopped participating in any groups.

Then they came for anyone who objected to government policy because it aided the terrorists and gave ammunition to America's enemies, and I didn't speak up because.....I didn't speak up.

Then they came for **me**..... and by that time no one was left to speak up.

Stephen Rohde, a constitutional lawyer and President of the ACLU of Southern California, is indebted to the inspiration of Rev. Martin Niemöller (1937).