

Name: _____ Class: _____

First They Came...

By Martin Niemöller
1950

Martin Niemöller (1892-1984) was a German anti-Nazi and Lutheran pastor who is most famous for his words below. Niemöller was originally a supporter of Hitler, but he eventually opposed the Nazis. From 1937-1945, Niemöller was imprisoned in two concentration camps. He narrowly escaped execution, but was plagued by regret once he got out. The following statement was made by Niemöller in 1946 and was published in 1950. As you read, take notes on the author's perspective on justice and indifference, and the structure he uses to make his point effectively.

- [1] First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Socialist.¹
Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Trade Unionist.²
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me.



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1. A socialist is a person who believes that industries should be controlled by the government rather than by individual people and companies.
2. A trade unionist is a person who belongs to a trade union (a group of workers who have organized in order to advocate for better wages, better hours, etc.).

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best describes the tone of this quotation? [RL.4]
 - A. Hopeful
 - B. Frightened
 - C. Regretful
 - D. Reflective

2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. "Then they came"
 - B. "I did not speak out"
 - C. "Because I was not a Jew"
 - D. "for me"

3. The quotation ends with "there was no one left to speak for me." What TWO answers [RL.2] best explain why there is no one left?
 - A. Everyone else had already been taken
 - B. Socialists believe the government should not be questioned
 - C. It was the author's turn to be taken
 - D. No one was willing to speak out for a person who had not spoken out for them
 - E. The speaker was the one doing the taking
 - F. The speaker had lied about not belonging to any of the other three groups

4. How does the repetition/parallelism contribute to the development of the text's theme? [RL.5]

5. How does the author's point of view contribute to the effectiveness of his statement? [RL.6]
 - A. The author is warning other people not to remain silent in the face of injustice, like he did
 - B. The author is warning his readers that they are not safe
 - C. The author is condemning other people who do not speak up in the face of injustice
 - D. The author is rallying other people to stand up in the face of injustice, like he did

