They First Came For...

with apologies to Paster Martin Niemoeller, victim of the Nazis

Wayne Price

March 25, 2007

They first came for the immigrants, and I did not speak up—because my family had not been immigrants for three generations.

Then they came for the U.S. Muslims and Arab-Americans, and I did not speak up—because I did not want anyone to think I was sympathetic to "terrorism."

Then they came for the African-Americans, shot them down in the streets and put thousands of their young men in prison, but I did not speak up—because I did not want to look "soft on crime."

Then they came for the Gays and Lesbians, and I did not speak up—because I did not want anyone to think I was Gay.

Then they came for the atheists and secularists, and I did not speak up—because atheists are even more unpopular than Gays.

Then they came for the union organizers, and I did not speak up—because many people said that unions were "out of date" and "no longer needed."

Then they came for environmental activists and animal liberationists, and I did not speak up—because I did not approve of some of their tactics.

Then they came for the trouble makers, rabble rousers, antiwar activists, women liberationists, anarchists, socialists, civil libertarians, enemies of the state, prison abolitionists, and other disturbers of the comfortable, and I did not speak up—because I did not want any trouble.

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

> So long as there is a working class, I am of it.
> So long as there is a criminal element, I am in it.
> So long as there is a soul in prison, I am not free.
>
> —Eugene V. Debs

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