



— Where do you stand? —

# Reflections on the Dynamics of Hate & Intolerance

**Victims & perpetrators** are in a mutually dependent relationship. One does not exist without the other. At different times or in different situations, victims and perpetrators may trade places. The various parties involved in the conflicts of the Middle East are perfect examples. The action of the perpetrator causes the suffering of the victim. The perpetrator is the cause; the victim is the effect.

**Rescuers & collaborators** are actively involved with the victim. One opposes and the other supports the perpetrator. Collaborator and rescuer may trade places as well. For example, Oskar Schindler changed from collaborator to rescuer over time. The action of the rescuer diminishes or ends the suffering of the victim, while the action of the collaborator prolongs or increases the suffering of the victim.

**Bystanders**, though not directly involved with the victim, are passively supporting the perpetrator through inaction because of fear, ignorance, apathy, or a lack of compassion or concern. The bystander's role is quite fluid; it can go from bystander to collaborator or rescuer or, in rare cases, even to perpetrator or victim. The victim's suffering is prolonged by the bystander's inaction.

Here is a famous quote by a well-known "bystander" who in turn became a victim himself:

*"First they came for the Socialists,  
and I did not speak out —  
because I was not a Socialist.*

*"Then they came for the Trade-Unionists,  
and I did not speak out—  
because I was not a Trade-Unionist.*

*"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."*

Rev. Martin Niemöller  
(1892 – 1984)

Where would you fit in?

