

One of the most important lessons which could have (and should have) been learned from the Holocaust was the need for the average citizen **not** to stand idly by and watch how minority groups are attacked—physically and verbally—by those in the majority who wish to “get rid of them.” This so-called *bystander mentality* became a state of mind among many Germans from the former East Germany after the reunification of Germany in 1989. In many cities and towns in the former East Germany, skinhead groups would attack foreigners who had lived and worked in their country for many years. Vietnamese, for example, had been brought into the country as a viable work force. As the jobless rate among young, former East Germans increased, hostility against foreign workers such as the Vietnamese increased as well. Violent attacks among foreigners became an all too frequent occurrence. In one city, a building housing Vietnamese was set on fire by roaming skinheads; several people died in the fire as many German citizens looked on. Even the police, hostile themselves toward foreigners in Germany, were far too slow in reacting and protecting the victims of violence.

The following single from a CD released in 1992 is a very poignant commentary on contemporary German prejudice against non-Germans and against the tendency of the typical German citizen to simply be a passive observer of violence. Ten years later, the message continues to be very relevant as unemployment rates are very high in Germany and hostility towards foreigners living and working in Germany remains as strong as ever.

Read the following text and answer the questions.

REAL WORLD: STOP THE VIOLENCE (STOP THE SILENCE)

**BRAND NEW FACE ON THE BLOCK
SHOULD I SHAKE HANDS
SHOULD I GRAB A ROCK
WHOLE NEIGHBOURHOOD IS IN SHOCK
SCREAM'N
FOREIGNERS OUT DEATH TO THE FLOCK
WHO'S GONNA SPEAK FOR THE FEW
WHEN I GRAB MY BAT AND
MAKE'EM BLACK AND BLUE
ANYTIME ANYTHING FAIL
SCAPEGOAT
NOTHING MORE BETTER
THAN A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL
GOTTA KEEP MY LAND PURE
DON'T WANT NO FOREIGNERS
LIVING NEXT DOOR
ALL THEY BRING IS CRIME
ALL THE TIME CRIME CRIME CRIME
REVENGE WILL BE MY OWN
WHEN I KILL THEIR KIDS AND**

**BURN DOWN THEIR OWN
HOW YA GONNA HANDLE MY VIOLENCE
BETTER MAKE A MOVE AND
STOP THE VIOLENCE**

STOP THE VIOLENCE STOP THE SILENCE

**EVERYBODY SPEAKS LIKE THEY CARE
BUT WHERE'S EVERYBODY
WHEN THE BAD BOYS GET HERE
POLICE ALWAYS LATE TO REACT
PACKED MADE TRACKS
TO AVOID THE ATTACK
HEADS TURN EYES CLOSE ON THE SCENE
EVIL LURKS IN THE DARK
TO DESTROY MY DREAMS
POLITICIANS DO THE LIP SERVICE
NEIGHBOURS NOT DOWN
TOO SCARED TOO NERVOUS
SOMEBODY GOTTA FIND A WAY TO HELP
QUIT WORRING ABOUT WEALTH
AND LOOKING OUT FOR SELF
PEOPLE GOTTA USE THEIR BRAINS
USE THEIR BRAINS
GOTTA USE THEIR BRAINS
SHAME IS THE NAME OF THE GAME
SOME AIM TO RECLAIM WITH THE FLAME
VICTIMS ALL SEACH FOR SOLUTION
IGNORANCE LEADS TO CONFUSION
SOME SAY THAT THEY HATE
TO SEE IT HAPPEN
BUT THEN SOME STANDING
IN THE BACKGROUND CLAPPING
REALLY SHOULDN'T BE A LARGE CHALLENGE
WE STOP THE SILENCE WE STOP THIS VIOLENCE
STOP THE VIOLENCE STOP THE SILENCE**

1. The song includes several suggestions on how the violence against foreigners can be stopped. Please list as many as you can find.
2. What are some of the stereotypes mentioned which make it easy for Germans to mistrust foreigners. Are these reasons unusual? Could you relate to them in your own cultural environment?

3. There is one word that reminds the reader/listener of the Holocaust. Can you find it? Why is it an important element in the repertoire of those who hate?
4. How are the police and the politicians portrayed in the song? The following Web site link will explain more about European politicians and their relationship to foreigners in their country :
www.geocities.com/Paris/5121/weak.htm
5. Discuss in your own words the line: “ Shame is the name of the game.” A link to a commentary from Elie Wiesel’s Night gives us some great insight
<http://www.nightthebook.com/readersguide.htm>
6. If “ignorance leads to confusion,” then what might be an important step in overcoming prejudice and acts of violence against foreigners?
7. Would you agree with the writer that preventing people from “clapping in the background” would not be a “large challenge?”