

## What Chicago's fight against ICE can teach us all about how to resist

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Earlier this year, the Trump administration reversed the convention that nobody would be snatched by immigration and customs enforcement, or ICE, by a school, church or hospital. In the Rogers Park area of Chicago, a group of citizens are organising to resist such immigration raids. They have numerous accounts of undocumented migrants warned off driving right into a raid, which is galvanising, but they also see and hear dismaying things all the time: vehicles standing empty, one door open, not robbed, merely relieved of their drivers. Earlier this month, the Protect Rogers Park group got 1,500 calls in a day.

I only know about **Rogers Park from Criminal**, a true-crime podcast. But who, in this episode, is the criminal? It's plain from the start that its creator is not talking about the whistleblowers, and yet it still takes a while for your brain to catch up: she has got to mean the federal government. It's a terrifying thing to articulate: if your government is breaking the law, what do laws mean? How do you tell the difference between living in such a society and hiding in it?

Hannah Arendt discussed the term *Gleichschaltung*, roughly translatable as "coordination" or "synchronisation". It came from the Nazi justice minister Franz Gürtner to mean, broadly, that all political, social, cultural and civic institutions had to fall in line with the totalitarian state. Such a thing can only be achieved with the complicity of everyone: the minute-by-minute decisions of people who will do anything, personally or professionally, to stay with the majority.

This is the trap many Democrats are currently in, and it is partly a boiling-frog effect: ICE has been in existence since 2003, introduced by George W Bush after 9/11; Barack Obama was no stranger to deportations; that uptick of detainees may break records, and the sheer activity of ICE across the US is running communities ragged, but there were nearly 40,000 migrants in detention when Donald Trump took office in January. Nobody gets a memo when democracy tips into something else.

But it's not all avoidance: most people prefer to synchronise, to stick with the majority. The anthropologist Michael Maccoby, writing in *The Leaders We Need* almost 20 years ago summarised quite bluntly that only about 15% of people resisted nazism. It wasn't because they were fervent supporters, or even, at the outset, because they were scared, but because that's where the herd was.

Don't wait until your government is so racist that it's lifting people off ladders while they are trying to work, or seizing kids as they are trying to get to school, before you protest. Every time you hear aggressive xenophobia and racist insinuation from those in power and check in with how it polled before you say it's disgusting, you are building the herd that will suffocate opposition when it matters.

In an event this autumn, Olly Knowles from Led By Donkeys said "The time to fight fascism isn't five to midnight", going on to say that he didn't think we were at five to midnight in the UK. Someone in the audience said "What time is it?", and it was funny because, really, who can say? It's the question to ask with each fresh wave of anti-migrant policy, and rhetoric: what time does that make it? Because five to midnight is too late.