

Resist the surrender of our courage
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Vocales Verticales

In 1933, Hannah Arendt and her mother were briefly arrested by the Nazis, who had already come to power. At that time, Arendt was conducting research on anti-Semitism in Germany. This incident was a clear warning of what was to come, prompting them to escape as soon as possible, without taking the time to arrange their documents.

Their escape was remarkable: they did so with the help of a German family that was sympathetic to Jews and other persecuted individuals. This family had a house with a front entrance in Germany and a back door that led to the border with Czechoslovakia, which was still a free country. They would invite people to dinner, who would enter through Germany and exit through the back into Czechoslovakia. In this way, Hannah Arendt and her mother managed to escape. Arendt made it to Prague, then to Geneva, and finally to New York.

Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

In the United States, during the time of slavery, the Underground Railroad was an organized network of secret routes and safe houses used by enslaved people seeking freedom to escape to the abolitionist states in the North and Canada. The network, primarily the work of free and enslaved African Americans, was assisted by abolitionists and others who supported the cause. Enslaved individuals who risked capture and those who helped them are collectively referred to as the “passengers” and “conductors” of the “Railroad.”

Harriet Tubman was born into slavery in 1822 and later escaped from Dorchester County, Maryland, to Philadelphia, where she lived as a free woman. Tubman dedicated her life to the abolition of slavery as a conductor on the Underground Railroad. She freed approximately 70 enslaved African Americans, leading them to freedom in the North, and assisted hundreds more. Throughout her life, she traveled from one end of the East Coast of the United States to the other, during which she raised funds to help those fighting for their freedom, served as a nurse and scout during the American Civil War, and fought for universal suffrage—and the list goes on.

Challenging the systems of oppression

I write about these two examples because they clearly illustrate what it means to take an active role in the face of tyranny and to challenge systems of oppression, rather than being a bystander who seeks refuge in their own comfort. It is essential to recognize our privilege, regardless of its magnitude, and to understand the responsibility that comes with it. We must reflect on how to use that privilege and what role we should play in the face of the onslaught of authoritarianism. We should not look the other way; we must be as brave as possible and establish strategies within our community, asking ourselves, "How can I contribute and be helpful in these times?"

Often, heroic acts do not have to be grand, and many of the most important and transformative gestures are not recorded in history books. It is not about competing for recognition but about standing firm and serving our communities. It is essential to choose the kind of society we want to live in and reject the tyrannical impositions that seek to be enforced upon us. We are at a critical moment in history, and no one can afford to be indifferent; it is not a time to resign

ourselves to the inevitable or the banal. It is time to remember that ethics and moral principles are much more than mere temporary conventions. We must commit to ideals and causes that transcend our own interests and egos.

It is a moment to challenge official measures that counteract our own sense of humanity; it is not a time to limit ourselves to witnessing and being passive observers of the destruction of the most fundamental concepts of a democratic society. Let us not allow our critical thinking, independent spirit, and nonconformity to be captivated or intimidated. In whatever capacity you choose to help, remember to be brave and that others fought hard for this freedom before you. Don't take democracy for granted.