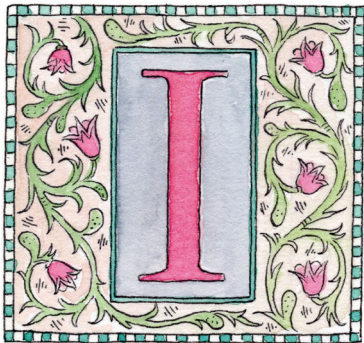


MARK CHARENDOFF

Publisher's Note

*Jewish continuity is strengthened by crisis,
and always has been*



IN AN ESSAY in *Commentary* in 1994, the historian Jonathan D. Sarna pushed back on the Jewish community's then-obsession with "continuity." Continuity had become the rallying cry of North American Jewish Federations and JCCs, and Sarna was making the case that "when Jewish life has been threatened," the solution often came from *discontinuity*: a break from the past, a new approach. "The false messiahships of Shabbetai Zevi and Jacob Frank" gave way to Hasidism. "In the 19th century, crises of continuity stimulated by emancipation, Enlightenment, and renewed anti-Semitism" gave way to Reform Judaism, Conservative Judaism, and Zionism. The Jewish people have a history of responding to crisis with creativity, with recommitment, with resilience.

I attended a retreat recently for a small group of American Jewish leaders. Three Israelis were also in attendance, and they remarked that they were surprised that the Americans still seemed to be stuck

in the fear of October 7. They felt that Israelis had left that fear behind. They said there was much to be concerned about militarily and geopolitically, but they were too busy with today's fight to dwell on the events of the 7th. They serve, they grieve, but they go on with their lives knowing that the bulk of the fight may still lie ahead. They are prepared to fight it. They honor the dead through their devotion to the living.

For those of us on “the Western front” of the war, as one of the Israeli participants described American Jews, how do we respond? How do we honor the Israeli soldiers who are fighting for the survival of our people? How do we honor the students on campus who proudly proclaim their Zionism in the face of hateful Hamas supporters who call for their destruction? How do we honor the young couple getting married because, despite the exhortations of the media, they are eager to build a *bayit neeman b'Yisrael*, a new faithful home among the Jewish people?

We honor them by being resolute.

We resolve to deepen our commitment to Jewish learning for ourselves and our families.

We resolve to wear our Zionism proudly and declare it loudly.

We resolve to love our fellow Jews and appreciate our Gentile allies.

We resolve to seek peace with a willingness to fight the good fight when necessary.

We resolve to speak truth despite the consequences.

Being a Jew in 2024 and beyond is going to be a different proposition than it was just a few years ago. But I could not be prouder to be a part of this people at this time. *