

MARK CHAREDOFF

Publisher's Note



LONG before I became an American citizen—I grew up in Canada—I was an Americanophile. I loved America’s story, her heroes, her passion. I believe in America as a proposition. During the Bicentennial, I memorized each and every one of those *Schoolhouse Rock!* commercials that taught me about the Constitution, American law, and the great American melting pot.

Now, as America celebrates her 250th birthday, all one reads is about a nation in decline, a nation whose best years are behind her.

America is not short on diagnoses. We have commissions, media panels, and “save America” nonprofit organizations in abundance. What we lack is confidence, confidence that our civic inheritance is worth repairing rather than discarding and confidence that serious reform is possible without first tearing everything down.

This issue of SAPIR begins from a simple judgment: America’s institu-

tions are strained, not spent. They are falling short in visible ways—on trust, on speech, on education, on civic formation—but they remain capable of renewal. Repair, not revolution, is the work of the moment.

For American Jews, the matter is not abstract. We have flourished in a (small-r) republican order that balances liberty and obligation, pluralism and cohesion. When that balance erodes, Jews feel it early. When it holds, we benefit disproportionately—not only as a minority but as citizens invested in the success of the whole. Jewish tradition is unambiguous on this point: With inheritance comes obligation. We must sustain and strengthen what we receive in trust before we pass it on.

The contributors to this issue do not agree on every remedy. They were not asked to. What they share is a refusal to indulge in despair or fantasy—to assume either that America is beyond repair or that renewal requires starting over. The essays that follow take America's institutions seriously, even when they are critical of them, and they insist that reform must be grounded in history, culture, and moral responsibility.

Throughout the issue, a common set of tensions recur: between liberty and security, openness and authority, individual rights and civic obligation. These are not new dilemmas, but they feel newly brittle in a distracted, polarized age. Fixing America, as these pages suggest, is less about discovering novel solutions than about recovering neglected disciplines—of attention, of formation, of service, and of restraint.

America's challenges cannot be understood in isolation. Domestic confidence and international credibility are linked; civic fragmentation at home shapes posture abroad. Any serious effort at renewal must therefore reckon with both—without collapsing one into the other and without mistaking moral clarity for simplicity.

Fixing America is not a project for one party, ideology, or generation. It is the responsibility of those who have benefited most from

the country's freedoms and institutions—and who understand that stewardship requires more than critique. It demands sustained investment in ideas, leadership, and civic capacity, so what we pass on is not diminished by neglect but strengthened by care.

That is the work this issue invites. We hope you will join us on this journey. *

MARK CHARENDOFF is publisher of SAPIR.

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