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Susan Sontag

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BOSTON 50 REVIEW

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Ingr

30, NUMBER 5 SEPTEMBER/OCT

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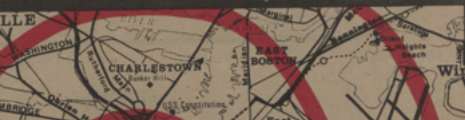
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TODD GITLIN ON PRESIDENTIAL CAMPA
SEAMUS HEANEY ON T.S.
RALPH NADER ON SUING THE GOVERN
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BOSTON

Boston Critic, Inc., 100 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge, MA 02138

BOSTON REVIEW



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FROM THE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

THE FIRST ISSUE OF *BR* appeared in June 1975. The magazine was then called *New Boston Review*, published by a small nonprofit and focused on literature and the arts. Vol. 1, No. 1 was 32 pages and sold for 75 cents, with Susan Sontag in the front and classifieds in the back. In 1991, with *New* gone from the name, the magazine took a sharp editorial turn. Politics had always been in our pages, but we resolved that it would now be our beating heart.

We focused increasingly on political argument, and our format shifted too. We brought people into conversation about what justice requires and how best to realize it. The result became our signature feature—the forum—which confronts seemingly intractable challenges with new ideas and perspectives.

After fifty years, we are proud of what we have done. Still independent and nonprofit, we have published groundbreaking work by leading writers and vital new voices. We have helped to expand the terms of political debate, drawing millions of readers each year, and sustained a reputation as a home for bold thinking. And we do it all without paywalls—ensuring that all readers are welcome.

But we are not celebrating this anniversary with lavish galas. At this dangerous moment, our democratic purpose is more urgent than ever. We face an autocratic executive eroding basic liberties, targeting the most vulnerable in spectacular displays of cruelty—and working overtime to crush independent institutions, free expression, and critical thought.

We are celebrating by standing up for precisely those things. Our 2025 anniversary issues have kept faith with the democratic commitments that serve as our north star. And we have rolled out new designs, published weekly archive features introduced by the writers and editors we admire most, and held events with our writers in New York, Chicago, Oakland, and Boston.

This extraordinary milestone has only been possible through the generous support of our broad base of readers and donors. Without you, there simply would be no *Boston Review*. To help ensure another fifty years of fearless argument, constructive debate, and vibrant imagination, we hope you'll consider making a contribution today.

Sincerely,



Deborah Chasman



Joshua Cohen

Publisher & Coeditor-in-Chief

Deborah Chasman

Associate Publisher

Jasmine Parmley

Coeditor-in-Chief

Joshua Cohen

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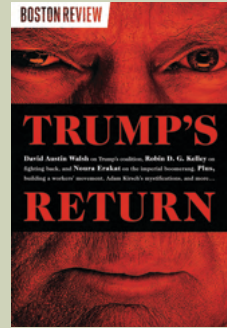
David Austin Walsh

Olúfẹ̀mí O. Táíwò

THIS YEAR'S ISSUES

TRUMP'S RETURN

Donald Trump is back in the White House. How did he get there? Why did the Democrats fail? And what can we do to fight back? This issue includes essays on Trump's coalition, the Democrats' economic policy since the Great Depression, the imperial boomerang from Palestine, a revival of class solidarity, and more.

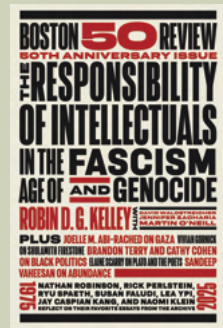


CHECKS AND BALANCES WON'T SAVE US NOW. WHAT WILL?

Amid the brazen attacks of Trump's first 100 days in office, courts have played a leading role in resistance to the authoritarian onslaught. This issue warns against relying on them to defend democracy and lays out a more robust vision for facing our challenges.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INTELLECTUALS IN THE AGE OF FASCISM AND GENOCIDE

Our 50th anniversary issue features many of our long-time contributors, and celebrates classics from our archive. Robin D. G. Kelley leads a forum with Martin O'Neill, Jennifer Zacharia, and David Waldstreicher, plus work by Vivian Gornick, Elaine Scarry, Brandon M. Terry, Cathy J. Cohen, and more.



WINTER 2025 (FORTHCOMING)

What are borders for? Featuring political theorist Lea Ypi along with Olúfẹ̀mí O. Táíwò, Joan Scott, Daniel Denvir, and more.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF BOSTON REVIEW

TO CELEBRATE OUR FIFTIETH anniversary, fifty writers and editors selected an essay from our archive and shared what they love about it. Describing work that ranges from war reporting to cultural criticism to philosophical argument, “rigorous” and “startling” essays to debate-defining writing about our political, economic, and social arrangements, they praise these pieces for their “remarkable prescience” and “reasoned compassion,” for being “revelatory” and “essential” and “alive to the world.” We are grateful for their words—and proud, as one writer puts it, to be recognized as “a vital venue for discussions of how to build a more just world.”

FEATURING APPRECIATIONS FROM:

David R. K. Adler • Wajahat Ali • Seyla Benhabib • Wendy Brown
• Elizabeth Bruenig • Daniel Denvir • Junot Díaz • Lisa Duggan
• Noura Erakat • nia t. evans • Susan Faludi • John Ganz • Greg
Grandin • Jennifer M. Harris • Jeet Heer • Katrina vanden
Heuvel • Lily Hu • Walter Johnson • Jay Caspian Kang • Robin
D. G. Kelley • Naomi Klein • Jessie Kindig • Larry Kramer • Mark
Krotov • Pankaj Mishra • Evgeny Morozov • Samuel Moyn •
Jan-Werner Müller • Martha Nussbaum • Osita Nwanevu •
Martin O’Neill • Rick Perlstein • Brad Plumer • Corey Robin •
Nathan J. Robinson • Dani Rodrik • Becca Rothfeld • Elaine
Scarry • George Scialabba • Mark Schmitt • Nikhil Pal Singh
• Quinn Slobodian • Ryu Spaeth • Alexander Star • Cass
Sunstein • Astra Taylor • Brandon M. Terry • Rebecca Traister •
Mark Tushnet • Lea Ypi

50

Tamás’s “On Post-Fascism” has unfortunately turned out to be one of the most prescient and insightful political texts of the new century. Tamás foresaw the emergence of a “post-totalitarian” variation on fascism that could nest itself in the structures of representative democracy and the globalized economy to carry out its violently anti-Enlightenment project. It is an essential text to understand our times. *Boston Review* is among a shrinking few publications that would publish material of this seriousness and depth.



— **JOHN GANZ**, author of *When the Clock Broke*, on G. M. Tamás’s “On Post-Fascism” (2000)

Surveying anti-lockdown coalitions that included far-right parties, wellness gurus, and entrepreneurial activists, Callison and Slobodian coined the term “diagonalism” to describe these emergent alliances. Their original framing helped many of us to understand the ways that pandemic-era conspiracy culture has carried the far right to terrifying heights in country after country. It’s timely and rigorous work like this that makes *Boston Review* indispensable.



— **NAOMI KLEIN**, activist and author of *The Shock Doctrine*, on William Callison and Quinn Slobodian’s “Coronapolitics from the Reichstag to the Capitol” (2021)

2021 50

2025 EVENT SERIES

SPRING 2025 ISSUE LAUNCH

Virtual | June 12

Lisa L. Miller, Samuel Moyn, Eric Blanc, and Alex Gourevitch, moderated by Jake Grumbach

MARGUERITE CASEY FOUNDATION BOOK CLUB: WHAT IS THE STATE FOR?

Virtual | March 12

Olúfémí O. Táíwò, Thea Riofrancos, and Astra Taylor

THE AI WE DESERVE

Stanford University | February 26

Evgeny Morozov, Audrey Tang, and Terry Winograd, moderated by Brian Merchant

MASTERY AND DRIFT: PROFESSIONAL- CLASS LIBERALS SINCE THE 1960S

Virtual | February 20

Brent Cebul, Lily Geismer, Dylan Gottlieb, Nicole Hemmer, and Danielle Wiggins, moderated by Simon Torracinta

50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

CHICAGO

October 9

With Cathy J. Cohen, Adom Getachew, and Rick Perlstein



BOSTON

October 22

With Elaine Scarry, Brandon M. Terry, and Quinn Slobodian



NEW YORK

November 6

With Robin D. G. Kelley, Vivian Gornick, and David Waldstreicher



OUR MOST-READ RECENT FEATURES

BOSTON REVIEW'S WORK THIS year has been shared widely, including in the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, MSNBC, *Democracy Now!*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Nation*.

"HOW CAN WE LIVE TOGETHER?"

Olúfémí O. Táíwò on what calls for "civility" get wrong

"A GENERAL AIR OF ANXIETY"

Joan Wallach Scott on McCarthyism and defiance

"THE RIGHT TO BE HOSTILE"

Alex Gourevitch, Nicole Hemmer, Tabatha Abu El-Haj, and others on campus student protests and free speech

"THE REAL PATH TO ABUNDANCE"

Sandeep Vaheesan on the abundance agenda

"THE RESPONSIBILITY OF INTELLECTUALS IN THE AGE OF FASCISM AND GENOCIDE"

Robin D. G. Kelley on going beyond speaking the truth and exposing lies

"CREATURES APART"

Vivian Gornick on Shulamith Firestone's portraits of madness

"GAZA AND THE END OF HISTORY"

Joelle M. Abi-Rached on the contradictions at the heart of the liberal international order

"THE BOOMERANG COMES BACK"

Noura Erakat on the war on Palestine and authoritarianism at home

"BLOOD TIES"

Jeanne Morefield on Trump's immigration "invasion" narrative and the real story of pain in America

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

ABOUT OUR 2025 ESSAYS AND ISSUES:

“Mandatory reading. A master class in deftly braiding the complexities of this moment (and our recent histories) into a compelling narrative path forward.”

**-ON OLÚFÉMI O.
TÁÍWÒ'S "HOW CAN WE
LIVE TOGETHER?"**

“*Boston Review* is one of the few periodicals that have risen to meet the moment.”

**-ON OUR 50TH
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE**

“A beautiful meditation on the never-ending need to defend democratic education and the refusal to relent even when final victory is not guaranteed or even unlikely.”

**-ON JOAN WALLACH
SCOTT'S "A GENERAL
AIR OF ANXIETY"**

“This article is a must-read for all of us involved in, or who care about, what is happening at our universities.”

**-ON ALEX GOUREVITCH'S
"THE RIGHT TO BE HOSTILE"**

“There have been many outstanding pieces about the ongoing genocide in Gaza. This is one of the best.”

**ON JENNIFER ZACHARIA'S
"ISRAEL'S WAR ON
JOURNALISTS"**

“There is writing of the moment and writing that's momentous. This tour-de-force—part memoir, part history, part theory, part journalism, and the sum, so much more—is both.”

**ON JEANNE MOREFIELD'S
"BLOOD TIES"**

ABOUT OUR WORK:

“I think *Boston Review* is doing work like no other journal.”

-JOAN WALLACH SCOTT

“Provocations to thinking in place of thought-terminating clichés: that is what *Boston Review* does so well.”

-RICK PERLSTEIN

“Plays a critically important role in getting ideas out in the world that can have a real impact in confronting the monumental challenges we face today.”

-NOAM CHOMSKY

“An essential, invaluable resource.”

-ASTRA TAYLOR

“Lucky us we have *Boston Review*.”

-GREG GRANDIN

“In our swamp of media sensationalism and group-speak, *Boston Review* stands out as a bold voice for reason and argument, one of the very, very few places that offer intelligence, integrity, and variety.”

-MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM

“When it comes to publishing fresh and generative ideas, *Boston Review* has no peer.”

-ROBIN D. G. KELLEY

“A tremendous resource in this time of chaos.”

-DANIELLE ALLEN

NEW WEBSITE AND PRINT DESIGN

AS PART OF OUR 50th anniversary efforts, we have rolled out a new website and print design, with an updated look and features designed to showcase the bold writing and thinking we have published for five decades. As always, our website remains free for all to read.



2016

VIVIAN GORNICK FEELING PARANOID

On the day after Donald Trump's 2016 election, which a lot of us spent dreading, Vivian Gornick wrote letters in a 4800-page tome on democracy and paranoia in ancient Athens. Her bibliographic reflex brought her to the resonant comparison that she chronicles in *Democracy Review*. Gornick took the scholarly book's thesis—that societies and individuals thrive or collapse depending on whether their political ideas take on pathology or are deflated by a desire to understand "the other"—and illuminated the elegant metaphor by applying it, inherently, to herself. She aimed to have the most personal of political decisions, her election decision earlier, before to empathize with the very people who would deny her that option. "Feeling Paranoid" demands reading by the most thoughtful and our current political season, where the horrid of conspiratorial rage may yet still be quelled by the unexpected impulse for Gornick puts it as well—"Honor the solutions of the one and the courses."

—Susan Faludi, *Pullitzer Prize-winning author of *Democracy**

GAZA AND THE END OF HISTORY

Joelle M. Abi-Rached



URING A RECENT PAPER on Gaza and human rights in *Democracy Review*, I was asked whether the destruction of Gaza represents a watershed moment for the twenty-first century. The answer, of course, is unequivocally in the affirmative. Nearly two years into Israel's occupation, we have heard something like this claim made many times: there is the world before this annihilation, and the world after. How was it really understood what this means?

Gaza's utterly ruined landscape serves as a mirror, reflecting the ultimate reductive of abuses of the liberal international order. Israel's war-torn bombardment not just of Gaza but of Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, and now Syria, its unprecedented and systematic devastation of health care systems and the most basic infrastructure for sustaining human life, its blockade of humanitarian aid, attacks at food distribution sites, and use of starvation as an instrument of collective punishment. It is a criminal disregard for the murders and land grabs committed by settlers in the West Bank—the totality of this relentless aggression, captured only in part by this morbid catalogue and compounded by every mechanism of rationalization and denial, reveals the complete erosion of international humanitarian law, the double standards that govern the rhetoric of human rights, and the racism that sits at the core of the West's strained efforts to maintain geopolitical hegemony. A poll conducted by researchers at Pennsylvania State University and reported in *Haaretz* earlier this year found that 92 percent of Israeli Jews support expelling Palestinians from Gaza, 89 percent support expelling Israel's own Arab citizens, 87 percent endorse the Israel Defense Forces acting "as Joshua did in Jericho—kill all its inhabitants," and, among those who see Palestinians as animals, 93 percent believe the biblical injunction

RECENT AWARDS

Numerous pieces have been cited as “notable essays” in **THE BEST AMERICAN ESSAYS**, including “Unmaking Asian Exceptionalism” by Gaiutra Bahadur (2023) and “What Makes Laws Unjust” by Randall Kennedy (2022).

NoViolet Bulawayo won the **2025 BEST OF CAINE AWARD** for her short story “Hitting Budapest” (2010).

Our Spring 2024 issue, *What Is the State For?*, was selected for the **MARGUERITE CASEY FOUNDATION'S BOOK CLUB**.

Our Fall 2022 issue, *Imagining Global Futures*, was named a **BOOK OF THE MONTH BY INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**.

Becca Rothfeld’s “Pleasure and Justice” (2022) was selected as a finalist for *Washington Monthly*’s **KUKULA AWARD FOR NONFICTION WRITING**.

ALUMNI UPDATE

- Naomi Bethune (former intern) is the John Lewis Writing Fellow at *The American Prospect*.
- Lisa Borst (former intern) is the coeditor-in-chief of *n+1*.
- Kelton Ellis (former fellow) is an Editorial Copy Associate at *The New Yorker*.
- Nate File (former fellow) is Communities & Engagement Reporter at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.
- Chloe Fox (former executive editor) is deputy editor at *Foreign Affairs*.
- Nausicaa Renner (former web editor) is a founding editor of *Drop Site News* and contributing editor at *Parapraxis*.

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

I FIRST CAME ACROSS *BOSTON Review* twenty years ago at a time when I had become disenchanted with the American media's commercialism and lack of substance.

After reading an essay by legal scholar Larry Kramer—"We the People: Who Has the Last Word on the Constitution?"—I was so impressed by the magazine's content, intellectual rigor, and accessibility that I immediately subscribed. I have been a devotee ever since, serving as chair of *Boston Review*'s board for more than ten years.

Throughout my time as a reader and supporter, I have come to appreciate *Boston Review* as a rare publication: a model of robust and intellectually honest debate about pressing public issues. As the publication celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, and at a moment when independent media is increasingly under attack, I only grow more impassioned about its commitment to delivering the tools citizens need to be fully engaged with democratic life and to providing content for free. Democracy requires it.

Boston Review continues to treat its readers as partners in a discussion, not as purchasers of a product. The role of its board is to support and expand that mission—to get its content in front of an ever-growing audience of engaged citizens. I hope you will join us as citizens, readers, subscribers, and supporters.

Sincerely,



Derek Schrier

BOSTON REVIEW BY THE NUMBERS

	2024 (Actual)	2025 (Budget)
INCOME		
Annual Fund	\$ 159,334	\$ 170,000
Retail Sales	29,909	20,000
Support		
Individual Gifts (1k and over)	51,545	50,000
Board Contributions	269,189	300,000
Grants	120,000	250,000
Grants—Editorial Fellowship	50,000	0
Interest Income	4,234	
Total Income	684,211	790,000
EXPENSES		
Design & Production	71,001	74,890
Fellowship and Internship Program	80,452	35,451
Editorial	388,773	416,754
Administrative	239,203	243,846
Development and Circulation	40,849	26,184
Marketing	7,717	8,468
TOTAL EXPENSES	827,995	805,593
NET INCOME/LOSS	\$ (143,784)	\$ (15,593)

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BOSTONREVIEW.NET