Ristad's column on Kirkpatrick draws fire
Defends Israeli democracy

To the Editor:
Eric Sven Ristad, in his column [22] and on the West Bank, a center of Palestinian scholarship. However, Bir Zeit is also known to be a training center for PLO terrorists, and the director of the university's school board, Hana Nasir, is a member of the PLO National Council. Thus, Israel saw fit to temporarily close the school during the height of the fighting in Lebanon. Bir Zeit was subsequently reopened, not destroyed as Ristad asserts.

First of all, Israel is a democracy. Accused criminals, even suspected terrorists, are guaranteed trial and the right to appeal. Claims of torture in Israeli prisons have occasionally been made, but they have always been found to be baseless by State Department studies. Leo Nevas, chairman of the American Bar Association's UN Committee, declared, after visiting Israeli prisons and interviewing Arab prisoners there, that Israel is more concerned with upholding individual rights than "a number of democratic Western counties I once visited." So many of the great 5th Liberty Hall demonstrations were a double standard.

And now, the old attackers of the "Israeli terror." Disinformation is the popular slogan. The Tech's "Apologies to Auschwitz," Eric Sven Ristad [April 22]. Double standards are applied increasingly often today. How many times must we sit quietly while terroristCKETISE on is attacked whereas terror on the left is ignored?

So many of the great 50's heroes, the victors, have repeated the same double standard. Pete Seeger, the great folk singer of the 1940s and 1950s while singing songs of freedom. He stood apathetic as the murderers of hundreds of brilliant young men, innocent of any fault, each of whom killed a martyr's death. And now, the old attackers of the "Israeli terror." Disinformation is the popular slogan. The Tech's "Apologies to Auschwitz," Eric Sven Ristad [April 22]. Double standards are applied increasingly often today. How many times must we sit quietly while terroristCKETISE on is attacked whereas terror on the left is ignored?

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Ristad replies to letters challenging facts, opinions

Eric Sven Ristad replies:
I wrote that the US press has presented Jeane J. Kirkpatrick as a noble champion of free speech and an ardent opponent of repression whose right to free speech has been violated, and that nothing could be farther from the truth. I said Kirkpatrick supports repressive regimes, their right to free speech was not violated by legitimate political dissent, the members of Kirkpatrick's audience have a right to free speech, and as individuals whose views seldom appear in the press, their freedom of speech was in significantly greater danger than hers was.

Judith Fleischman seems to have missed the point of my column. The topic was Kirkpatrick's support of terror and repression; since Kirkpatrick does not find it in her heart to support the Soviet Union or China, it would hardly be appropriate to mention those countries.

Kirkpatrick was heckled while giving a lecture at the University of California at Berkeley. The disruptions stemmed primarily from Kirkpatrick's initial refusal to answer questions following her talk, Judith Fleischman 86

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I was somewhat in awe of the non-colored logic in Eric Sven Ristad's guest column of April 22 which maintained that those demonstrators who disrupted Jeane Kirkpatrick's lecture at Berkeley were not denying her freedom of speech. While, perhaps Ms. Kirkpatrick could have continued her lecture -- although trying to outshoot an opponent is a less than gratifying experience -- the protesters were denying others the even more fundamental right of being allowed to listen to a speaker in a civilized surrounding.

Ristad, to support his arguments, launches into a histrionic attack on the "terrorists" which maintains that those who would claim to oppose terror and repression; for instance the students who were not interested in the personal history of steps taken by the press, their freedom of speech as a noble champion of free speech and an ardent opponent of repression whose right to free speech has been violated, and that nothing could be farther from the truth. I said Kirkpatrick supports repressive regimes, whose right to free speech was not violated by legitimate political dissent, the members of Kirkpatrick's audience have a right to free speech, and as individuals whose views seldom appear in the press, their freedom of speech was in significantly greater danger than hers was.

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