

# Counterpoint

» In "An Unholy Act" [September], Jesse Katz writes that I am "hawkish" and that my articles are often "bellicose." In reality, I have merely pointed out that Israel remains under fierce armed attack, that it is the target of a massive propaganda war as well, that anti-Semitism remains rife in the world, and that Jews continue to be imperiled everywhere. These are simply facts that no one who reads the daily and weekly newspapers, especially the leading Israeli and American Jewish ones, can dispute.

Mr. Katz asserts that Israel is being oppressive. Israel has actually displayed remarkable restraint and even generosity toward its enemies despite 60 years of unrelenting war initiated against it. For example, when Israel began its "occupation" of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza in 1967, these regions had no university. Now they have 20! The standard of living of the Palestinian Arabs rose dramatically during the Israeli "occupation" between 1967 and 1994, in spite of frequent terrorist attacks on Israelis by Palestinian Arabs. It began to decline only when Israel unwisely transferred control over the Palestinian areas to the Fatah, Hamas, and other terrorist factions.

Mr. Katz's assertion, which he also depicts as the view of Rabbi Seidler-Feller, that the Jewish people "thrived" for 2,000 years without a state, is false. During those 2,000 years, Jews endured the killing of over 1 million of their people and the enslavement of millions more by imperial Rome, innumerable pogroms in both the Christian and Muslim countries between roughly 350 C.E. and (in the case of the Muslim world) as late as 1967, the Spanish Inquisition, mass expulsions, forced segregation, legal discrimination, and finally the Nazi extermination that claimed the lives of one-third of the world's Jews. Some Jews have somehow survived these persecutions. To assert that Jews have thrived during these centuries of persecution considerably overstates the case.

Mr. Katz's equating the word "kapo" with the notorious "N word," used to insult

African Americans, is an egregious distortion. While the "N word" is purely racist, "kapo" is an historical expression used by inmates of Nazi death and concentration camps to describe camp inmates, of a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds, who acted, usually unwillingly, as overseers of their fellow inmates for the Nazi guards.

My disagreements with Mr. Joel Beinin and others do not stem from their support for "equal rights for Palestinians." Rather, I have criticized Mr. Beinin and others who have publicly expressed hostility to, and contempt for, Israel, and sympathy and support for the terrorist groups that are waging a genocidal war against her citizens. For example, Mr. Beinin has described Hamas terrorists who have murdered Israeli women and children as "martyrs."

Mr. Katz's depiction of me as someone who "hounds" the Jewish "Left" is unsupported and unfair. Actually, opponents of Israel as well as some supporters of Rabbi Seidler-Feller have harassed me. I have been subjected to continuous harassment by "hate" phone calls and e-mails, "spamming" with serial e-mails, and e-mail-sent computer viruses.

The Alef Group is not sponsored by Haifa University, as Mr. Katz's article seems to suggest. It is a private chat list using the computer system of Haifa University as its "mailman." It is an anti-Semitic extremist list that posts Holocaust denial materials

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## » AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

Contributing writer Steve Erickson's novel *Zeroville* is being published this month by Europa Editions.

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as well as claims that Jews were behind the 9/11 attacks. Mr. Joel Beinin and Mr. Yigal Arens are members of Alef.

The "blogosphere" did not "dub" me a "nudnik." Mr. J.J. Goldberg, who never contacted me to hear my side of this unfortunate story, applied this epithet to me in one editorial in *The Forward*. His counterpart, Rob Eshman, editor-in-chief of the *Jewish Journal*, published the public letter of apology (as submitted by Rabbi Seidler-Feller by the court order) in its Internet edition but refused to publish it in its print edition even for a substantial sum as an advertisement. All I wanted was to restore my good name after Eshman and his colleagues at the *Journal* published inaccurate accounts of the incident.

My personal life was irrelevant to the story. I shared personal matters with Mr. Katz with the understanding that they were "off the record." I am offended that you permitted him to include details about my private life and friendships in his article.

I invite readers to visit my Web site, [middleeastolutions.com](http://middleeastolutions.com), to judge for themselves about my long-standing work in defense of the Jewish people.

In retrospect, what pains me most about this sordid episode are not the deep political divisions it reveals, but the fact that so many educated people rushed to make excuses for a prominent man who physically assaulted a middle-aged woman.

Rachel Neuwirth  
LOS ANGELES

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## Mail\*

» **Mr. Katz**, you took things out of context, as I never characterized Rachel Neuwirth as someone who is impolite. She is my friend, and I will always invite her to any event I would ever have. I have been with her in many social contexts, and she has been nothing but an exemplary guest.

### Gary P. Ratner

SOUTHERN PACIFIC DIRECTOR,  
AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS  
SANTA MONICA

**JESSE KATZ RESPONDS:** *Although I have no doubt that she was mistreated by Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller, Rachel Neuwirth is blind to her own obsessive and dogmatic tendencies. At no time was any portion of our many conversations off the record. The details of her private life were shared willingly, and with no small degree of pride. Although I am sure that Gary Ratner does not wish to offend her, I cannot imagine what context he believes his quotes were removed from. We were discussing Ms. Neuwirth's contentious personality, which he readily affirmed. He used even more colorful language than what I included in the story, comparing her to an army combatant—the kind of "tough motherfucker" you want on your side.*

## No Defense

» **John Powers's gripe** [Open City, "In Defense of Liberal Hollywood," September] is that every once in a while the Left reveals itself in all its unabashed stupidity in a "Hanoi" Jane Fonda, Barbra Streisand, or Laurie David. Powers praises a socialist Hollywood worldview as smug and intolerant as Bill Maher's, but he wants it to be candy coated for consumption by Heartland America. John Powers's ilk much prefers the dishonesty of a Hillary Clinton, who downplays her admiration of left-wing anarchist Saul Alinsky, to an honest far-left lib like Dennis Kucinich.

### R. Richards

WESTLAKE VILLAGE

### CORRECTION

» In "Napa Can Wait" (Buzz, The Weekender, September), we recommended taking Highway 45 as an alternative route to Paso Robles. The correct route is Highway 46.

» **Los Angeles** magazine welcomes your comments. Please send letters to "Letters to the Editor," Los Angeles magazine, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Floor, Los Angeles, CA, 90036; or reach us by fax at 323-801-0105 or e-mail at letters@lamag.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.