



OPINION and ANALYSIS

Vol 5, Number 1: 11 May 2011

**A selection of some of the more challenging and thought-provoking
local and international writings on the Middle East**

<http://www.sazionfed.co.za>

- 1. *Daniel Gordis* **Challenge and Responsibility on Yom Ha-Atzma'ut****
Our celebration of Israel's independence takes place this year under the cloud of an awareness that the Jewish state's future is tenuous and fragile.
- 2. *Aaron David Miller* **Circus of the Dancing Bears****
The Hamas-Fatah unity agreement is a dangerous game -- and a gift to Israel's right wing.
- 3. *Alan Dershowitz* **There's that double standard again****
It was only when Israel managed to kill the head of Hamas, that the international community, with the striking exception of the USA, decided that targeted killing was illegal and immoral.
- 4. *Hasan Afzal* **Help us help you****
It's time for a hasbara rethink, says the director of British Muslims for Israel. Israel must empower and equip its friends in Europe to rightfully reclaim the human rights agenda from the anti-Israel mobs, and ensure that hasbara activists can make the case that Israel is under attack from an enemy that wishes to replace our civilization with a society run by clerical fascists.
- 5. *David Suissa* **There's something about winning****
Jews and Israel have always been juicy targets for people out for blood. So, how should one deal with such aggression?

Challenge and Responsibility on Yom Ha-Atzma'ut

Daniel Gordis, A Jerusalem Post Column , 6 May 2011

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Article.aspx?id=219389>

There were years when Yom Ha'atzmaut was cause for near-euphoria. The first sovereign Jewish state in 2,000 years, Israel represented to Jews everywhere much more than a country, a flag, and even a homeland. Independence for Jews was synonymous with a renewed lease on life, and therefore, even in the midst of unending wars, periodic economic crises and many dark clouds on the horizon, Israelis' celebration of independence was much more than a good party. There was an existential quality to Yom Ha'atzmaut, a sense of sanctity that not everyone could articulate, but that everyone could feel.

This year, however, that unbridled euphoria is going to be hard to come by. Israel is marginalized in ways that would have been difficult to predict just years ago. Hamas and Fatah sign a treaty, but the international pressure for Israel to negotiate, and perhaps even to capitulate, continues unabated. President Barack Obama can say with impunity that America "will be relentless in defense of our citizens," but Israeli leaders are not permitted that same unabashed determination. Osama bin Laden can be summarily killed, and no one calls it an extra-judicial killing. Egypt threatens to open the border to Gaza, Iran pursues its weapon, Turkey jettisons Israel and cozies up to Iran, Hezbollah has completely rearmed under the nose of the UN - and the pressure to make peace is consistently applied only to the Jewish state.

Our celebration of Israel's independence - an extraordinary accomplishment by any measure - takes place this year under the cloud of an awareness that the Jewish state's future is tenuous and fragile.

Consider this: There is no other country about which the following two predictions can be made with equal plausibility.

The first prediction: In 50 years, Israel will be a thriving democracy, at the cutting edge of technology, medicine and education, a First World country in every way.

The second prediction: In 50 years, Israel will not exist.

There is good reason to put stock in the first. Israelis receive far more Nobel Prizes per capita than any other country, boast a hi-tech industry second only to the United States, have cutting-edge military power, medical care and research, and universities that are impressive by any international standard. Israel today exceeds by far what anyone in 1948 could have dared imagine. This could be but the beginning of our greatness.

But the second possibility is equally plausible. Increasing numbers of academics and diplomats, as well as rank-and-file Europeans, now assert that the creation of the Jewish state was a mistake. Polls show that Europeans rank Israel close to North Korea as a threat to international peace. Israel is the only country that British academics are eager to boycott. No other country's "right to exist" is openly debated in the pages of the New York Review of Books. It is not out of the question that the world could end Israel's Jewish character or bring it to its knees altogether.

We would do well to note the patterns of Jewish history. Israelite national history in the Bible began in the crucible of Egyptian slavery, marched toward homeland and independence and crested with the rule of King David. From there, it was descent into division, relentless attack from the outside, defeat and exile.

Then, the pattern began again. From the depths of Babylonian exile, stragglers returned, rebuilt Jerusalem, reclaimed independence.

The peak, perhaps, was the Maccabean revolt against foreign domination and influence along with the short-lived relative independence that followed, but that success also faded quickly. Internal division, a loss of moral compass and religious moorings, short-sighted foreign policy and external powers too enormous to contend with - again brought defeat and exile.

Might that pattern be playing itself out again? Our round of Jewish sovereignty was born in the depths of European exile and anti-Semitism, gained momentum during and after the Shoah, led us to November 29 and then May 14, and then to a country more powerful, more democratic, more stable and more flourishing than anyone had a right to expect 63 years ago.

We have had our peak moments. The lightning victory of 1967. The heroism of 1973 that turned the tides of initial defeats. Peace with Egypt and Jordan, even if chilly, suggested the possibility of a different future. Israeli leaders once went to the White House in celebration, not in dread. There was an era in which it was clear to the world that only the Israelis were the ones pursuing peace.

How times have changed. Today, Egyptian peace may be fraying. Jordan's King Abdullah is vulnerable. Relations with the Obama administration are strained. Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad can speak at Columbia and walk the streets of New York, but Britain issues arrest warrants for Tzipi Livni. Israelis wonder with whom, precisely, they are supposed to negotiate a deal when Hamas and Fatah become one, yet the world still holds Israel accountable for the impasse.

It is an unenviable situation to be prime minister faced with a speech to a joint session of Congress, but as Mordecai said to Esther, this is not the moment to permit history to carry us away in its currents. This is the time to act, to do something, "for who knows if it was for a moment like this that you came to power."

The prime minister's predicament is our predicament. It is a moment in which there are no good moves, but in which not acting is also unthinkable. It is a difficult time to write a speech, a difficult year in which to reclaim the initiative.

But act we must, and celebrate we must. For only by rejoicing in the accomplishments of the past 63 years can we gird ourselves for the complicated days ahead. Only by reminding ourselves of what is at stake do we have any chance of finding the fortitude to stand firm where we must and to bend where it will serve our future.

Israel is still the Jewish people's new lease on life, and whatever our politics, our religious dispositions or our place of residence, none of us has any obligation more sacred than to cultivate it, and to bequeath it - whole and flourishing - to generations to come.

Circus of the Dancing Bears

Aaron David Miller, *Foreign Policy*, 4 May 2011

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/05/04/circus_of_the_dancing_bears

The late Yitzhak Rabin used to say that the only problem with dancing with a bear is that once you start, you can never let go.

Watching the current Hamas-Fatah unity circus, I can't help but think of Rabin's comment. For the former Israeli prime minister, Yasir Arafat was the bear and the Oslo process was their choreographed dance. Rabin was no sentimentalist and he recognized Arafat's many weaknesses as a partner, but he continued to engage with him because he believed his counterpart had taken tough positions. Oslo was a good faith effort to achieve a goal.

The Hamas-Fatah unity gambit signed last Wednesday in Cairo isn't about good faith, consequential agreements, nor is it about peacemaking. The forging of Palestinian unity is a product of narrower calculations of two key parties -- Fatah and Hamas -- who are looking for a way to improve their respective positions during a very turbulent and uncertain period. This is an instance of two bears dancing with one another. Israel is right to be wary.

There's a certain logic to this diplomacy. But the problem of course is what the CIA calls blowback -- unintended consequences that return with unpredictable and usually negative results. The Fatah-Hamas accord is unlikely to produce either unity or improve prospects for peacemaking; indeed, along the way it could actually make serious negotiations and a settlement harder to achieve.

Hamas's calculations in seeking unity are perhaps the easier to read than those of Fatah. They're driven by a mix of motives: In Gaza, despite improved order and security, Hamas hasn't delivered economically. Gaza remains for a million and half Palestinians a variation of what it's been for some time now -- a small and confining prison where economic, political, and movement horizons are constrained by Israeli border closures and poor Palestinian governance.

As for Hamas, a nominally revolutionary organization, its message has grown old and tired. Against the backdrop of a largely young and secular Arab Spring, its Islamist trope isn't all that compelling any more. Nor was armed struggle ever a terribly resonant tactic if the goal was to improve the lives of Palestinians in Gaza. In fact, quite the opposite -- it had a Kevorkian death-wish quality to it, as revealed by Hamas's willingness to risk Israel's invasion of Gaza in 2008-2009. Hamas's leaders could have taken advantage of tensions with Israel along the border last month to go back to the battlefield. They wisely chose not to -- they know better now. You can't eat or pay for food with myths and symbols of struggle. Hamas's leaders are now worried, looking in the rearview mirror, and wondering how long it may take the Arab Spring to come to their portion of Palestine.

And then there's the Syrian angle. One of Hamas's two major patrons is now confronted with potentially regime-changing turmoil. Not only are there now reports that Hamas's external leadership is looking for a new home outside of Damascus, but their association with two regimes (Syria and Iran) that are gunning down their own citizens in the streets isn't an endearing image for the Palestinian public. Unity with Fatah and making nice with Egypt (which brokered the agreement) is a strategic move for the short term -- at least until it is clear where the dust is settling in Syria.

The calculations of Mahmoud Abbas and Fatah are somewhat harder to read, but still transparent. According to those close to him, the Palestinian Authority (PA) president was surprised by Hamas's decision to go for unity -- and he made sure the deal was done on his terms. (Abbas remains as president

of the PA and head of the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization.) But Abbas also had a stake in keeping the new Egyptian government and perhaps also the Saudis -- long fans of unity -- happy too.

More to the point, Abbas has concluded that no negotiations with Israel are likely now, and that US President Barack Obama isn't going to do much to support him. So he's broken out on his own with a UN statehood gambit geared for September. But it's hard to go the international community and claim virtual statehood over the West Bank and Gaza when a rival Palestinian faction is controlling the latter half and using the territory to shoot rockets at Israelis.

Whether Abbas thinks Hamas would actually support such an initiative is dubious, but for now it buys him some domestic political space and temporary acquiescence from Hamas. The peace process and the UN statehood gambit weren't part of the intra-Palestinian negotiations. Abbas is still in charge of both portfolios and can do what he wants -- if only because neither side truly believes they'll amount to much.

All of this seems so logical -- and yet the traps are as compelling as the seeming advantages. First, it's not clear how any real power sharing can work. These political rivals, with their bloody history, are now somehow supposed to establish a technocratic government, prepare for national elections, and assume joint responsibility for security -- even though they don't share any real trust or ideology. This isn't just a matter of competition over seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Hamas and Fatah have different visions for what and where Palestine should be.

Second, Abbas is also sacrificing his longstanding goal of winning the hearts and minds of the international community. Shackling himself to Hamas and its extremist, anti-Semitic statements undermines his international credibility. Abbas will try to resist this association -- Hamas's Prime Minister Ismail Haniya praised Osama bin Laden this week as a martyr, while Abbas took the opposite tack -- but that equivocation won't be sustainable when the two are actually governing together.

The same problem will occur with regard to armed struggle. Hamas will have to abandon its violent political platform or risk putting Abbas into the position of having to condemn his governing partner. The moment of truth is likely to come soon. It's almost inconceivable the Israel-Gaza border will be free of violence over the next six months, given the track record.

Third, there's the pesky problem of the international assistance. Even if, on the American side, the legal hurdles of assisting the PA (with Hamas supporting the government) can be finessed, it's unlikely the politics will be manageable. The Obama administration will be in a position -- like Abbas -- of having to explain away every Hamas statement and action. That's just not tenable.

Finally, there are the Israelis. This unity deal is not just a birthday present to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and those to his right, but a gift that will keep on giving. How can anyone say to Israelis that they have to negotiate with -- much less make concessions to -- a Palestinian government, half of which won't recognize Israel or lay down its arms? Yes, it's fair to point out that the current peace process wasn't going anywhere anyway; but what Abbas is doing now is helping Israel delegitimize Palestinians as putative partners. Guilt by association is still a very effective conceit in Middle Eastern politics.

For now, Palestinian unity seems like the right play for the parties involved; but it has a sense about it of being too clever by half. We'll see as the anomalies and contradictions of this latest marriage of convenience play out. One thing is clear: Anyone who wants to even touch the peace process during this period better be prepared for a dangerous dance. It's going to require some very fancy footwork to avoid some serious stumbles with the new Palestinian dancing partner.

There's that double standard again

By Alan Dershowitz, Newsmax.com, May 2, 2011

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?id=219239&R=R7>

The decision to target and kill Osama Bin Laden is being applauded by all decent people. Approval to capture or kill this mass-murdering terrorist leader was given by Presidents Obama and Bush. It was the right decision, both morally and legally.

Although bin Laden wore no military uniform and held no official military rank, he was an appropriate military target. As the titular and spiritual head of al-Qaida, he was the functional equivalent of a head of state or commander in chief of a terrorist army.

From the beginning of recorded history, killing the king was the legitimate object of military action. The very phrase "check mate" means "the king is dead," signifying the successful end of the battle.

Yet there are those who claim that all targeted killings are immoral and illegal. These critics characterize such actions as "extrajudicial executions" and demand that terrorist leaders and functionaries be treated as common criminals who must be arrested and brought to trial.

The operation that resulted in bin Laden's death was a military action calculated to kill rather than to "arrest" him. It is possible, though highly unlikely, that he could have been captured alive and brought to trial. The decision to employ military personnel with guns, rather than a drone firing rockets, was probably made by generals rather than lawyers.

Had it been militarily preferable to fire a rocket, that option would almost certainly have been selected--as it was by the NATO forces that rocketed Gaddafi's compound. A rocket attack would have been a pure targeted killing with no possibility of live capture.

The operation directed against bin Laden may have been designed, in part, to have preserved the theoretical option of "arrest," though the likelihood of a live capture was virtually impossible under the circumstances. Indeed it is likely that bin Laden's death was deemed preferential to his capture and trial, because the latter would have raised the probability that al-Qaida would take hostages and try to exchange them for bin Laden.

Indeed, a US national security official has confirmed to Reuters that "this was a kill operation" and there was no desire to capture bin Laden alive. This was a targeted kill appropriate for a military combatant but not for an ordinary (or even extraordinary) criminal.

Nonetheless, our government felt it necessary to announce that bin Laden was shot after he allegedly resisted thus suggesting he was not killed in cold blood. But it is clear that he would have been killed whether or not he resisted, since this was a kill operation from the outset and it is unlikely he was ever given the opportunity to surrender an opportunity not required under the laws of war.

Accordingly, those who have opposed the very concept of targeted killings should be railing against the killing of Osama bin Laden. Among others, these critics include officials in Britain, France, Italy, Russia, the EU, Jordan, and the United Nations. Former British Foreign Secretary once said, "The British

government has made it repeatedly clear that so-called targeted assassinations of this kind are unlawful, unjustified and counterproductive."

The French foreign ministry has declared that extrajudicial executions contravene international law and are unacceptable. The Italian Foreign Minister has said, Italy, like the whole of the European Union, has always condemned the practice of targeted assassinations.

The Russians have asserted that Russia has repeatedly stressed the unacceptability of extrajudicial settling of scores and targeted killings. Javier Solana has noted that the European Union has consistently condemned extrajudicial killings.

The Jordanians have said, Jordan has always denounced this policy of assassination and its position on this has always been clear. And Kofi Annan has declared that extrajudicial killings are violations of international law.

Yet none of these nations, groups or individuals have criticized the targeted killing of Osama bin Laden by the US. The reason is obvious. All the condemnations against targeted killing was directed at one country. Guess which one? Israel, of course.

Israel developed the concept of targeted killings and used it effectively against the "Osama bin Laden's" of Hamas, who directed terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, killing and wounding more Israelis, as a percentage of its population, than the number killed by bin Laden. It was when Israel managed to kill the head of Hamas, that the international community, with the striking exception of the United States, decided that targeted killing was illegal and immoral.

But now that it has been used against an enemy of Britain, France, Italy and other European nations, the tune has changed. Suddenly targeted killing is not only legal and moral, it is praiseworthy (except, of course, to Hamas, which immediately condemned the US killing of Bin Laden).

Well the truth is that when used properly, targeted killing has always been deserving of approval—even when employed by Israel, a nation against which a double standard always seems to be applied.

Indeed, in Israel, the use of targeted killings has been closely regulated by its Supreme Court and permitted only against terrorists who are actively engaged in ongoing acts of terrorism. In the United States, on the other hand, the decisions to use this tactic is made by the President alone, without any form of judicial review.

So let the world stop applying a double standard to Israel, and let it start judging the merits and demerits of military tactics such as targeted killing. On balance, targeted killing, when used prudently against proper military targets, can be an effective, lawful, and moral tool in the war against terrorism.

Help us help you

Hasan Afzam Jerusalem Post, 27 April 2011

(The writer is director of British Muslims for Israel, a pro-Israeli advocacy group fighting the delegitimization of Israel in the British Muslim community and beyond. British Muslims for Israel is under the umbrella of The Institute for Middle Eastern Democracy)

<http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-EdContributors/Article.aspx?id=218130>

In Europe, hasbara is nothing more than a theory that friends of **Israel** allude to at interfaith events, and the occasional objection to a boycott motion through the student union. Yet among the countless threats with which the Jewish state must deal, it is indisputable that one of them is perpetual delegitimization, to the point where the state's very existence is now up for debate.

It is not easy to fight this phenomenon when grassroots hasbara in the UK is almost solely a Jewish endeavor. If a non-Jewish student on campus wishes to campaign against **Hezbollah**, oppose a university's attempt to twin with a Hamas-controlled university or run an event with a pro-Israeli speaker, who does he turn to? He certainly can't go to the "human rights" societies that work with Islamist speakers. Nor can he turn to the somewhat exclusive Jewish society which is entrusted as the sole steward of hasbara on campus.

The pro-Palestinian movements are successful because they are diverse. Islamists, socialists and middle-class white women all wave the Hamas flag quite happily at anti- Israel protests .It is imperative that those of us who are Christian, Muslim or Hindu be given a chance to help.

Israel is the only liberal democracy in the Middle East. It guarantees minority rights and political pluralism, holds its politicians to account both in and out of office, and is the only country in the Middle East that provides equality under the law for homosexuals and women. Despite these trophies of liberty, the state is relentlessly demonized by the Western world using the language of human rights.

Sadly, too few people in the **United Kingdom** are aware of the facts. When well-meaning Europeans are informed of the realities in Israel and the neighboring states, their reaction is often complimentary. With the right kind of advocacy, those who consider themselves pro-Palestinian can be persuaded to rethink their position.

"The only democracy? The only place with legal equality for homosexuals and women?" they query. With the right sort of advocacy from the right sort of person, self-styled Palestinian activists can be encouraged to confront the increasingly extreme "student leaders" and radical Islamists that manage and exploit the Palestinian solidarity movements. Those who become aware that they have been ill-informed are, of course, left wanting answers.

Recently, I was invited to give an interview to Israel's Channel 10, and I highlighted this exact point. When one moves Israeli advocacy from a reactionary approach to proactively focusing on the human rights situation in the Middle East, it immediately invites people to reconsider their position. Islamists can no longer shroud themselves in the sanitizing perspective that Israel is an "oppressor" - an excuse that legitimizes the Islamists' real agenda. Rightfully reclaiming the human rights agenda is the type of hasbara we assume is happening, but shockingly, in reality it is rarely practiced in Europe.

No rational observer doubts that Israel has an excellent army, but now the Jewish state must beef up its public diplomacy to defend its image. Israel must hold those to account who, in the Western media, academia and political sphere, attempt to rationalize the terror attacks perpetrated by Hamas by calling them "strikes" – painting them as somehow morally acceptable. We must challenge those who consistently demonize Israel, and expose their visceral hatred and double standards.

Urgent action is required. People in Europe are no longer thinking about how a two-state solution may be implemented, but have begun asking nonsense questions such as, "Should Israel exist?" The faculty and student societies in universities regularly invite speakers who offer a one-sided, anti-Israel point of view. Islamist groups frequently parade openly anti-Semitic speakers, who enjoy the very freedom of expression they seek to destroy. Hasbara cannot be merely reactive – a manifestly failed method still employed by a large majority of British Jewish leadership. It must be proactive. It is all very well to splutter that boycotts are bad, but what use is that when there is no one to say Israel is good?

Wherever Hamas apologists lurk in the media, a carefully chosen story with selective quotes and violent pictures will do their cause wonders. In other words, the other side realizes that though it can never defeat Israel militarily, if it can define the conflict, rewrite its history and put up a convincing story, then although Israel may have won the military battle, it will lose the real war – the war of ideas.

Even more scandalous is the state of affairs in the Palestinian territories. Palestinian nationhood is increasingly being defined by extreme violence and a culture of victimization. Gaza is now a breeding ground for Islamists willing to kill their own people as Gaza descends into a culture of wanton violence far more terrifying than under the Arab nationalism of the PLO. We should be asking the world, how can you stand by and allow the Palestinian people to be represented like this? We must ask how the world, in all seriousness, can attack the way Israel defends its peoples and their democratic values against the tyranny of Islamism, especially while Islamists perpetually and overtly demonstrate that when their ideology is left to reach its logical conclusion, the effects are always violent and fatal.

Israel must empower and equip its friends in Europe to rightfully reclaim the human rights agenda from the anti-Israel mobs. It must ensure that hasbara activists can make the case that Israel is under attack from an enemy that wishes to replace our civilization with a society run by clerical fascists. The conflict is not solely taking place in the Middle East, but in Western television studios, radio stations, blogs and social media. As religious and community institutions, whether intentionally or not, finance the murderous ideals of Palestinian terror groups, we need your support – help us help you.

There's something about winning

By David Suissa, Jewish Journal 3 May 2011

[\(http://www.jewishjournal.com/david_suissa/article/theres_something_about_winning_20110503/\)](http://www.jewishjournal.com/david_suissa/article/theres_something_about_winning_20110503/)

I'll never forget sitting with a group of intellectuals several years ago, at the height of the messy war in Iraq, and discussing why President Bush and America had fallen so low in the esteem of the world.

One great mind after another offered sophisticated analyses. My head was spinning.

Finally, someone piped up: "Everything would be different if Bush were winning the war."

At which point a distinguished professor from Israel said: "This is brilliant! Bush's real problem is that he's not winning!" I sat there, slightly stunned, thinking: How can something so complicated lend itself to such an easy insight?

I reflected on that insight the other night when President Obama announced the killing of Osama bin Laden after a nearly 10-year pursuit.

Here was a president who had suffered relentless criticism for his handling of foreign affairs. And now,

as Jeffrey Goldberg wrote on his blog: "Our President, in the blink of an eye, has gone from a hyper-criticized, seemingly-swamped possibly-one-term leader to an American hero, a commander-in-chief who calmly oversaw the killing of the greatest mass murderer in American history." And why did he become a hero? Not because he made one of his inspiring speeches or announced a brilliant new policy. He became a hero because he got a win. It's as simple — and as complicated — as that.

We love to teach our kids that life is not about winning and losing but "how you play the game." That may be true when you're dealing with people of good faith. But when you're dealing with people who are out for blood, it's a good idea to know how to win. Naturally, Jews and Israel have always been juicy targets for people out for blood. So, how should one deal with such aggression?

I found a wonderful answer last week in a shoe store, of all places, on trendy St. Denis Street in downtown Montreal. The French Canadian owner of the store, who has been there for 25 years, decided last year to carry a woman's shoe line from Israel called Beautifeel. Well, wouldn't you know it, within a few months, a vicious boycott campaign was under way against the store, led by a popular local politician, Amir Khadir.

To give you an idea of the tone of their campaign, one of the boycotters' leaflets had an oversize image of a woman's shoe stomping on a pile of buried naked bodies — reminiscent of those horror shots of emaciated bodies you see in Holocaust documentaries. Written on the shoe was "Beautifeel. Made in Apartheid Israel." On top was the headline, in French, "Boycottons la boutique Le Marcheur" ("Let's boycott the boutique Le Marcheur").

Week after week, the boycotters recruited large and noisy crowds to hand out the leaflets and implore people not to enter Le Marcheur. Their mission was to pressure the owner, Yves Archambault, to stop carrying the Israeli shoe line so that the neighbourhood would be "apartheid free." But Archambault refused, out of principle. It didn't seem right to him that he should be told how to run his business. His business suffered, but he held firm.

The story hardly ends there. The Jewish community in Montreal got wind of the boycott and went nuts. A "boycott" campaign was launched, and Jews from all over the city came to buy shoes at Le Marcheur. A woman bought a hundred pairs. Archambault became a local hero. Meanwhile, creative minds went to work producing counter leaflets mocking the BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions) movement as "Boycott Derangement Syndrome," explaining the discrimination and hypocrisy inherent in the movement. These leaflets gave people the Israeli side of the story.

Archambault did his own research and found out that the Israeli shoe company (besides making great shoes!) hired women, minorities and Palestinians and treated their employees very well.

The Quebec General Assembly drafted a unanimous resolution condemning the boycott and supporting the store.

And what happened to the boycott initiator, Amir Khadir? He went low-key and stopped coming to the demonstrations. Apparently, he concluded that the backlash might not be good for his political future.

I tell you this story not to remind you of the insidious global movement to demonize the Jewish state. That's old hat by now. I'm telling you this story because it's a tribute to the noble virtues of fighting back and winning.

Too often, we recoil at the idea of fighting. It leaves a bad taste in our mouth. We dread the thought of "lowering ourselves to the level of mudslinging." We prefer notions like "engagement" and "bridge building."

But the nasty boycotters of St. Denis Street who used Nazi imagery to malign an Israeli shoe company were not looking for engagement or bridge building. They were looking for blood — and a victory. Faced with such aggression, how else to respond but to fight back? Yes, in such cases, life is a zero sum game. One side wins, and the other side loses. The Jewish community of Montreal, with the support of a brave French Canadian shoe merchant, fought back ferociously and smartly against what it perceived as a grave injustice to the State of Israel. And, guess what — they won.

It's not as dramatic as taking down bin Laden, but we'll take it.

NOTE: The views expressed in certain articles are not necessarily those of the SAZF