

# The Arab Boycott of Israel: Official and Popular<sup>1</sup>

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This is a preliminary overview of the fractured Arab boycott of Israel, which includes also highlights of areas that need closer study. The Arab boycott may be divided into two categories, official and popular. When boycott is official, it is usually observed society-wide as the state bans dealings with Israel, and the official and popular become indistinguishable. The popular boycott acquires its distinct presence when an Arab government normalizes relations with Israel, but large segments of society remain hostile to the idea, and individuals and organized groups try actively to block normalization. The organized groups consist mainly of opposition parties, where they are permitted to operate, and professional associations, which in many Arab countries are more of an arena of political contestation than the rubber stamp legislative bodies. The Arab boycott differs in history and form from the recent, growing international campaign of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), although they both aim at making people question the racist nature of the Israeli state and at compelling it eventually to acknowledge the national and human rights of the Palestinian people.

It is often forgotten in the discussion of the boycott that the Zionists were the first to introduce the practice to the conflict by shunning Palestinian labor and produce and by building Jewish-only settlements—all because they wanted to be separate, exclusivist. The Arab official boycott commenced after the *Nakba* (1948), which saw the mass expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland at the hands of Jewish forces. It was fairly well-observed until it began to fray after the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty (1979), slowly at first then at a quickened pace since the signing of the Oslo accords (1993). Today, the governments that have normalized with Israel include adjacent states as well as ones from the geographic margins, in the Maghreb (“North Africa”) and the Gulf. When the Arab League convened its last boycott conference in Damascus in 2006 only fourteen<sup>2</sup> of twenty two members showed up.<sup>3</sup> The website of the Arab League does not highlight the issue and the link to the Center is hard to locate. Yet, the boycott cannot be said to have collapsed, because several key Arab states maintain it, and Israel remains a pariah for the bulk of Arab citizens, its relentlessly aggressive behavior ensuring that the barometer of their hostility stays at high mark. Under these circumstances, the boycott retains a great symbolic value.

The Arab boycott is a broad topic. It includes the evolution and effectiveness of the boycott; the stance of various Arab states, publics, and media; and the role of the United States, and increasingly European governments, in undermining it.<sup>4</sup> The subject sorely lacks academic or think-tank research in the Arab world; the press reports on it, but as a news item or an opinion piece. There seems to be more interest in the topic among Israeli researchers and their allies than among Arabs—itsself a contrast worth investigating.

I focus in this essay on the official and popular aspects of the boycott-- diplomatic, economic, and cultural/ academic. The boundary between the official and popular is not always clear-cut. The diplomatic, political sphere is clearly an official domain, but the official and popular overlap when it comes to economics and culture. I discuss the economic component in conjunction with the official boycott, in part because Jordan and Egypt each signed a free trade agreement with the United States granting qualified industrial zones (QIZ) duty-free access to US markets. (In addition to the QIZ, Jordan had ratified a bilateral trade agreement in 1995 with Israel with a clause stating that Jordan was ending any form economic boycott.) The exemption from customs is predicated on some commodities inclusion of a set percentage of Israeli content, rendering the QIZ a legitimization site of economic normalization. Egypt perhaps receives more attention here, although not more scrutiny, than any other Arab country, for the simple reason that it is the key Arab state and provides a good case study. The hope is that the article will inspire others to study the topic and cover more countries in depth.

### Arab Boycott and BDS

The Arab word for violating the boycott is *tatbi'*, or “naturalization,” although the commonly used English equivalent is “normalization,” not a readily understood term like “boycott,” or *muqata'a* in Arabic. *Tatbi'* carries additional meaning; not only does it make relations with Israel appear “natural,” it equally reconfigures the subjectivity of the Arab person, habituating him/ her to the normalcy of a relationship deemed “natural.” Semantically, both *tatbi'* and normalization place those who are *for* the boycott in what sounds like a belligerent position of being *against* something. Nonetheless, words and categories acquire their connotations through social practice.

The Arab boycott differs in several respects from BDS (the international campaign for boycott, divestment, and sanctions). The BDS is a popular, worldwide campaign without official backing so far, but the Arab boycott is both official and popular. The Arab boycott is much older than BDS, and whereas the latter aims at initiating a boycott, the effort in the Arab world starts from the opposite point of trying to maintain an already existing boycott. Further, BDS is “soft” and the Arab boycott is “hard.” BDS calls on international communities to boycott Israeli institutions, not persons, in an apparent recognition of the difficulty of implementing a more comprehensive boycott, at least at present. On the other hand, the Arab boycott before its rupture was comprehensive, incorporating the political, economic, and cultural spheres. It consisted of three forms, primary, secondary, and tertiary. These designations, as Nancy Turck pointed out, were not made by the Arab League, but by US legislators<sup>5</sup> who broke it down into components in order to break it up. We use them here, nevertheless, because they appear in the literature and are convenient analytically. The primary boycott required that Arab states not establish relations with Israel; the secondary signified boycotting companies that had extensive links with Israel—Coca Cola was but one famous example. The third form, tertiary, blacklisted companies with substantial links to Israel. The same pattern was applied in the field of culture.

Those today who oppose normalization want to maintain a state of hard boycott of Israel. They reason that once distinctions are made among gradations of boycott, a Pandora’s box is opened and the practice becomes elastic, providing openings and justifications for those who find it in their own personal interest to violate it.

Although the Arab boycott and BDS have some unique characteristics, they share a similar goal. They seek to make individuals and groups question and re-consider their unexamined view of

and dealings with Israel, and eventually compel the Israeli elite to pay for the wrongs they have committed against the indigenous people of Palestine. Ironically, BDS has become incorporated into Arab boycott discourse, sometimes as a way to reinforce the idea among the Arabs themselves by pointing out how non-Arab citizens have joined the boycott endeavor.

### Features of Official Boycott

The tight Arab boycott lasted more than four decades, 1948-1979, during which Arab governments withheld recognition of Israel and eschewed diplomatic, economic, and cultural exchanges that state, save for the occasional secret meetings between an Arab leader and an Israeli counterpart. Egypt broke ranks when President Anwar Sadat signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, which mandated the establishment of relations in various sectors. Normalization between Egypt and Israel was slow-paced and hesitant; the relationship was dubbed a “cold peace,” but it may have been getting less cold in the last five years or so, as will be indicated later in the essay. It took the agreement of Declaration of Principles (known as Oslo) between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, however, to accelerate and widen the scope of normalization. Jordan’s peace treaty with Israel nearly a year later no doubt was made possible by Oslo. Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority all signed a document at a meeting in Taba, February 1995, that backed ending the Arab boycott of Israel.<sup>6</sup>

The relation between Jordan and Israel was meant to be warm from its inception, in line with the historical relationship between the Hashemite monarchy and the Zionist movement. Yet, fear in Jordan that Israel has not forsaken the idea of Jordan as the homeland for Palestinians—*al-watan al-badil*, or the alternative homeland—might have begun to disturb the trend. This year the anniversary of the accord was hardly observed in Amman, compared to joint celebrations that included the Israeli ambassador in years past.<sup>7</sup>

Normalization has not been limited to Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. Geographic outliers as well have established various forms of linkages with the Zionist state. Barely a year after the Oslo accords were signed in Washington, the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries declared they were no longer bound by the rules of the secondary and tertiary boycott. Although the act in itself did not constitute normalization, it made it easier later. Bahrain, Morocco, Oman and Qatar had all at various dates opened commercial offices for Israel in their capital cities, which were subsequently closed down following the Palestinian *Intifada* (2000); the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (2006), or of Gaza (2008). Yitzhak Rabin, the assassinated Israeli prime minister, was hosted by Morocco and Oman, and both Shimon Peres as head of state and Tzipi Livni as foreign minister by Qatar.

It is ironic that Kuwait and Iraq have refrained from normalization, although the first owed the restoration of its sovereignty in 1991 to the US and the second is occupied by its army, and both had misgivings about what they considered intimate relation between the Palestinian leadership and the late President Saddam Hussein. Speculation about why they have kept Israel at arms length may not be helpful without specific research. A key state that has seemed to wobble on occasion, but has not acquiesced, at least publicly, to US pressure is Saudi Arabia; should it yield, the Arab official boycott could be dealt a mortal blow. Syria, too, remains a pivotal player. The two countries could, if they choose to, put spokes in the wheels of normalization, for

example, by not attending the multinational forums to which Israel is invited, at least when held on Arab soil, compelling host governments to choose between them and Israel.

It is crucial to underscore that the conduct of the PA has been a vital element in the rupture of the Arab boycott. The Palestinians perhaps could still put the brakes on and even reverse the movement toward normalization, but they may not be able to do so for long once normalization becomes an autonomous force and interests vested in its expansion proliferate. There are signs that this is already taking place, as will become apparent by the end of the essay. The PA in Ramallah, and president Mahmoud Abbas in particular, have been outspoken on many issues that are not popular among the Palestinians, but remain silent on the question of the Arab boycott. The PA, which attended the Arab League meeting in Damascus mentioned earlier, would be fully justified in rescinding its signature on the 1995 agreement with Egypt and Jordan to stand behind efforts aimed at eradicating the boycott since Israel has failed to implement its obligations under the Oslo accords.

Normalization in the cases of Egypt, Jordan, and the PA occurred not before, but after peace accords were signed. The Arab Peace Initiative issued in 2002 by the Arab summit in Beirut offers Israel normalization with all Arab states upon its withdrawal from all the Arab lands it conquered in the 1967 war. That some Arab states have chosen to normalize prior to such an eventuality runs counter to the Initiative, and raises questions about the credibility of declarations by Arab leaders. The US and European governments, as well as economists and political scientists of functionalist persuasion, want the Arabs to believe that exchange, whether economic or cultural, would pave the way for peace. They invoke the post-WWII European Coal and Steel Community initiative as a model to emulate, overlooking that it was forged in a completely different context from that of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The same could be said of the “social constructivist” theory of international relations. The theory posits that identities and interests are shaped by practice and shared ideas, not by material forces. Palestinians and Israelis, however, have engaged in more dialogue and exchange than perhaps any other two adversaries, to no avail, if not to Israel’s advantage. It may be that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict provides a good case study of the limitation of social constructivism. The conflict is not simply about the removal of a psychological barrier, as has been sometimes suggested, most famously by Anwar Sadat himself. Rather, it is a deep dispute between a Euro-American-created- and-maintained powerful machine, bent on the dispossession of an indigenous population with minimal means. “Truth and reconciliation” can only commence after, not before, Israel dismantles the apartheid it spawned systematically in Palestine.

### Normalization as Everyday Practice

Apart from embassies, consulates, and commercial offices, normalization is an everyday practice, manifested in reciprocal visits by high officials, in Arab governments hosting regional or international conferences to which Israel is invited, and in the presence of Arab officials at international forums wherein Israel takes part. The Egyptian and Jordanian governments have been the most forthcoming in receiving Israeli officials and dispatching their own to Israel. Although President Hosni Mubarak has not personally visited Israel-- except for Rabin’s funeral in 1995-- Israeli leaders have been frequent guests in Cairo and Sharm al-Shaykh, and Mubarak has even congratulated Israel’s president on independence—Palestinian *Nakba*-- day. Jordan’s King Abdullah II also received Israeli prime ministers in Amman and met with them elsewhere. There exists a continuous, if not routine, diplomatic intercourse between the two Arab states and

Israel. Officials from Egypt and Jordan have on many occasions presented themselves as impartial mediators between the Palestinians and the Israelis, urging both to negotiate seriously and make the necessary concessions.<sup>8</sup> Other Arab governments do the same, perhaps less often and less publicly.

It appears, however, that a convenient/ favorite venue for normalization is multinational forums. It was through the multilateral negotiations which were a spin-off of the Madrid process that began in 1991, and purportedly dealt with economic and technical, apolitical matters, that Israel was first “introduced” to Gulf states. Europe has capitalized on the Mediterranean geographic commonality to bring together the Arab states, including Syria, and Israel. (Mediterranean forums are also a favorite for “civil society” normalization). The Moroccan monarch—Mohammad VI—who heads the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference-- seems also bent on normalizing with Israel. The latest move has seen a high-level Israeli delegation in that country in conjunction with the Davos global economic forum, as well as other Israelis in a variety of cultural festivals, despite Israel’s relentless Judaization of Jerusalem, and protest by Islamists and nationalists (this opposition seems to have succeeded in forcing the government to cancel a planned visit by Shimon Peres).<sup>9</sup> In a similar vein the U.A.E. received the Israeli minister of energy, Uzi Landau, at the International Renewable Energy Conference (IRENA) in January 2010, the first time the Emirates hosts such a high-ranking Israeli. The minister claimed that he and his delegation were confined to the hotel, but hoped the occasion would be the “splinter” that opens a crack for Israel-U.A.E normalization.<sup>10</sup>

Meetings between Arab and Israeli officials also take place in secret, behind “closed doors,” a tactic dating back to the Jordanian King Abdullah’s negotiations with Zionist leaders before 1948. The encounters are often exposed years later, sometimes after declassification of official documents. But disclosure time has been shortened with a more omnipresent media and technology that diversifies the means available for whistleblowers. The massive Wikileaks of US diplomatic cables are but the latest revelations. They have uncovered secret dialogues, for example, between Israeli officials, on one hand, and Qatari (to renew the frozen ties), U.A.E. and even perhaps Saudi counterparts, on the other hand. The Israelis have often capitalized on the high social metabolism of the Arabs to establish person-to-person ties to keep the channels of communications open and to make deals. In this case, according to WikiLeaks, a “good working, personal relationship” developed between Tzipi Livni, during her term as foreign minister, and U.A.E. foreign minister Abdullah Ibn Zayed. The two ministers, however, would not “do in public what they say behind closed doors.”<sup>11</sup> Why not? Is there an iceberg beneath this tip of Arab-Israeli encounters?

Arab official normalization with Israel is not irreversible. We have already seen how countries closed down, at least publicly, the commercial Israeli offices they had opened. Mauritania, which established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1996 to win favors in Washington, severed these relations after the Israel invasion of Gaza in 2008. Reversal also may happen in the other direction when public anger at Israel abates and/ or contingent reasons that brought about the breakdown of relations cease to exist, permitting governments to revert back to normalization. A most recent illustration of such pattern is a cable on WikiLeaks stating that Qatar and Israel have been discussing the restoration of former ties. It would seem that the tendency has become for some Arab regimes to seek normalization, until Israel goes on one of its rampages.<sup>12</sup>

In principle, the Arabs have little to gain from normalization with Israel. There is not a technology, a commodity, a service, or a scientific discovery that is not available to them on the world market. Even on a state level it is not, for example, in Egypt's interest to have a strong bully as a neighbor. Why do Arab governments then normalize? Some argue that they do so to please the United States or to have the Israel lobby assist or not sabotage their standing with Washington. It is true that authoritarian Arab regimes are mainly interested in perpetuating their own rule, that the US has persisted in pressuring its clients among them to normalize, and that some governments find it convenient to placate the US by making concessions on the Palestinian question, especially when Palestinian officialdom itself is knee-deep in normalization. However, the need to mollify the US can only provide a partial explanation as to why Arab governments opt for normalization. The cases of Saudi Arabia and Syria demonstrate that the US needs and deals with these regimes irrespective of their stance on the boycott, particularly at a time when the US is bogged down in two costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and feels menaced by al-Qa`eda. Israel itself, some argue, has become a burden on the United States' strategic objectives in the region and as such is not the omnipotent intermediary with the Americans it sometimes depicts itself to be.

A second explanation as to why Arab governments normalize asserts that it would be easier to persuade Israel to make the concessions necessary for peace, if they reward it with the carrot of normalization. This is a perennial US argument that has been repeated by Arab officials. King Abdallah II of Jordan declared on more than one occasion that his country's relations with Israel help the Palestinians. Defending the QIZ, Gamal Mubarak, President Hosni Mubarak's son, reportedly said that that normalization with Israel served Palestinian interests.<sup>13</sup> The opposition in Egypt accused that the improvement of ties with Israel was a calculated move to win the US and Israel's backing for Gamal Mubarak to inherit the presidency from his father. Anyone with a cursory acquaintance with Israeli policies and practices and with the Palestinian condition cannot take the justifications of the king and Gamal Mubarak seriously.<sup>14</sup>

The core question as to why some Arab regimes choose to normalize and others do not when they are cut basically from the same fabric thus remains open for further inquiry.

### Economic Normalization

Apart from diplomacy, economic ties, especially in the trade and tourism sectors, have progressed gradually between Arab states and Israel. The overall volume of the publicly reported trade is still insubstantial, compared to Israel's external trade. For example, in 2008, Egypt's commodity exports to Israel reached \$132 million and Israel's to Egypt, \$139 million.<sup>15</sup> These figures were miniscule compared to total Israeli exports of about \$50 billion, or of Egyptian of nearly \$30 billion, both in the year 2008.<sup>16</sup> One reason for these low trade figures is that Israel switched from low-tech to high-tech manufacturing, thanks in part to the Oslo accord, which aided Israel in breaking out of its isolation and opened global markets for its imports and exports.

Egypt had begun economic cooperation with Israel in the 1980s, during the tenure of Yousef Wali as minister of agriculture. Wali was attacked by Egyptian journalists in 2000 for, among other things, normalization with Israel, and sued for libel, winning the case that, however, did not include reference to normalization.<sup>17</sup> Israeli produce and agricultural inputs have since found their way into the Egyptian market. Agricultural research and development projects have also been fruits of this cooperation, often with third party participation, European or American. A

showcase of this form of cooperation is the 15-hectare or so Nubaseed demonstration research farm south of Alexandria, inaugurated in 1987, a joint Egypt-Israel-US enterprise owned by the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>18</sup>

Both Egypt and Jordan also became linked to the Israeli economy in a roundabout way through trade agreements with the United States-- QIZ (qualified industrial zones), as mentioned previously. The QIZ arrangements exempt goods manufactured in these zones from US duties, with the proviso that they contain set proportions of Israeli and Arab country content.<sup>19</sup> This is a telling example of the extent to which the US has been willing to go to bring about normalization between Israel and Arab states. The PA was the first to obtain such a deal in 1996; Jordan second, in 1998; and Egypt third, in 2004.<sup>20</sup>

The QIZ boosted both countries' exports, mainly of textiles, to the US, with which Egypt has had chronic trade deficits. While Jordan's QIZ exports have declined and those of Egypt risen steadily, both stood at less than \$1 billion each in 2008 (how much of this amount is local value added is unclear).<sup>21</sup> The contraction of Jordan's exports has been attributed by Jordanian and American officials in Amman to the US recession and to Egyptian competition. Jordan's QIZ employ mainly migrant labor, more than two-thirds of the 30,000 workers, whose treatment has come under scrutiny from international labor organizations. In addition to QIZ, Jordan has signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with United States which spares goods that have 35 percent Jordanian value added from tariffs.<sup>22</sup> The FTA is part of former President George W. Bush's project of free trade with the greater Middle East. The FTA may eventually make the QIZ trade passé; it might also present an opportunity for Jordanian businessmen, should they be so inclined, to wiggle out of the unpopular QIZ project.

In normal circumstances, the QIZ would be praiseworthy because textile quotas were going to be eliminated under the WTO rules and replaced by relatively hefty duties. From the US point of view, however, they bore a political intent as well; politics is also the primary Israeli motivation. Arab businessmen who participate in joint economic exchange with Israel, in contrast, usually make the disclaimer that they do not want to mix economics and politics!<sup>23</sup> It must be said that the QIZ seem to be popular among Egyptian businessmen and workers alike.<sup>24</sup> And whereas in the past political developments impinged on the volume of transactions, this may be no longer the case. Neither Israel's invasion of Lebanon nor of Gaza seems to have impeded the growth of QIZ in Egypt. The QIZ arrangements must be judged as successful instants of *tatb'i*, not only because they provide built-in links between Arab economies and that of Israel; they also condition Arab workers to consider the economic exchange with Israel as being "in the nature of things." It is tempting to draw the unoriginal conclusion that money trumps patriotism for some, and makes the world of normalization go round. In the end, the QIZ reflect the alliance of power and capital in Egypt and Jordan and their failure at industrial transformation, which have made them willing to compromise the sovereignty of their countries for mostly low-tech textile exports worth relatively little on the world market.

The third area of economic normalization is tourism. Israelis travel to Egypt and Jordan in large numbers for the beaches and historical sites, some of which are germane to Jewish memory, but lured equally by the proximity of the destination and relatively low costs. Israeli tourism to Egypt peaked in 1999, with an estimated 415,000 Israeli visitors. In contrast, the high number of Egyptian tourists to Israel reached around 28,000 in 1995.<sup>25</sup> The figure plummeted to 2,000 in

2002,<sup>26</sup> in reaction to the *Intifada*. It can be safely concluded that tourism is largely a one-way flow, from Israel to Egypt. Tourism, unlike QIZ, involves close human interaction, limited as it might be to those largely working in this sector, tourists themselves, and personnel in the companies that manage the business on both sides. Little is known about the effects of such encounters on the mutual perceptions of the Arab and Israeli interlocutors.

Apart from trade and tourism, Egypt also signed a memorandum of understanding for the supply of natural gas to Israel in 2005, with actual flow starting in February 2008. The move has engendered popular resentment. The opposition complained about the low price paid by Israel, and about providing energy to Israel at a time when it laid siege to Gaza, and when Egyptians themselves faced energy shortages and disruptive power outages.<sup>27</sup> The opposition also questioned the legality of the transaction; eventually the Supreme Court issued a verdict stating that the deal was legal.<sup>28</sup> The issue, however, is likely to linger because it is an official venture and finds a responsive audience confronting economic hardships, unlike the QIZ which is diffuse and benefits many people.

Normalization has not been an easy affair for Arab officials or businessmen because the national benefits are dubious and public opposition remains strong. This assertion is illustrated by the need felt by Arab officials to keep their meetings with Israelis hushed up. The difficulty of normalization is also underscored in a book-length memoir by Ephraim Doweck about his service in Egypt, including as an ambassador in 1990-1992. The author is of the opinion that official Egypt wanted to do the minimum to keep the peace. He relays, for example, the resistance that Yousef Wali faced from other bureaucrats when he tried to boost agricultural cooperation with Israel. Doweck<sup>29</sup> concludes that

“almost after 20 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations and more than 20 years since the conclusion of a full-fledged peace accord, Israel has not succeeded in getting Egypt to develop minimal technical cooperation between the two countries.” P. 224

In order to propel cooperation forward, Doweck<sup>30</sup> states that Wali told him that he (Wali) had to bring in the “believers,” or those “who were dedicated to peace and convinced that it was in Egypt’s interest to co-operate with Israel.” P. 219

Although Doweck exaggerates, his assessment is a testimony that even at the highest levels of state the barriers to normalization, even if surmountable, are formidable. However, as politicians and businessmen become more enmeshed in a web of connections with Israel and shed their sensitivities, the tide of *tatb`i* becomes harder to hinder.

In summary, the Arab official boycott has unraveled, and could undergo gradual erosion rather than sudden collapse. Normalization has included a good number of states, with only two, Egypt and Jordan, having diplomatic relations at the ambassador level, and the PA with its peculiar links to the occupying power. Although Egypt opened the door, it was the Palestinian agreement with Israel and subsequent PA conduct that generated a normalization-domino effect. Economic normalization covers trade and tourism, among other sectors. Normalization is not only material, the participants must process it cognitively and develop ways to explain it to themselves. In general, the level of normalization’s “transactions” has fluctuated in response to Israel’s



behavior, although this pattern seems to have changed as evidenced by the lack of any slowdown after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and of Gaza. The US has been a primary mover in the drive for normalization, by applying political pressure and offering economic enticements. Both the US and Israel want to break the back of the boycott for political reasons, not for economic gain. Key Arab states, like Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and Syria maintain the diplomatic and primary economic boycott. Other states that would have been expected to normalize, namely Iraq and Kuwait, owing to their special relationship with the United States, have not done so. In other words, the behavior of Arab states regarding normalization is not uniform, although most keep close ties with the United States and govern in authoritarian style.

We have barely scratched the surface of the Arab official boycott and its unraveling. Much remains to be understood about this strategic issue: How far has it progressed? What do Arab leaders think of it, and what constrains even the “believers” from going full steam? Why have some states normalized and others have not? Does an iceberg lurk beneath the tip of secret exchanges? Whither the boycott, especially with the emergence of BDS?

The shifts in the official boycott cannot be understood without examination of the popular responses to it, the subject of the second part of the essay.

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<sup>1</sup> The present posting covers only the official boycott; the popular boycott section will be added subsequently.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell Bard, “The Arab Boycott,” ([http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Arab\\_boycott.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/Arab_boycott.html)) (updated September 27, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> The reason for the choice of Damascus is that it has been since 1951 the headquarters of the Central Boycott Office which administers the boycott. For information about the Arab League, see (<http://www.arableagueonline.org/las/index.jsp>).

<sup>4</sup> For an excellent background about the boycott until 1977, see Nancy Turck, “The Arab Boycott of Israel,” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 55, no. 3, 1977, pp. 472-493 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20039682>, accessed: 15/07/2010 12:15). For an update, especially on the US activity and legislation to end the boycott, see Martin Weiss, “Arab League Boycott of Israel,” Congressional Research Service Report for Congress, updated August 27, 2008. (<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33961.pdf>).

<sup>5</sup> Turck, “The Arab Boycott of Israel,” p. 473.

<sup>6</sup> Bard, “The Arab Boycott,” p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Bassam al-Baddarin, “The Anniversary of Wadi Araba,” *Alquds Alarabi*, (<http://81.144.208.20:9090/pdf/2010/10/10-27/All.pdf>), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Hosni Mubarak, “A Peace Plan Within Our Grasp,” Op-Ed contributor, *New York Times Global Edition* (<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/01/opinion/01mubarak.html>).

<sup>9</sup> *Alquds Alarabi*, “Amidst Protest Demonstrations in Morocco” (Oct 29, 2010). (<http://www.alquds.co.uk/index.asp?fname=today\29z49.htm&arc=data\2010\10\10-29\29z49.htm>).

<sup>10</sup> Ron Friedman, “First Visit by Israeli Minister to UAE,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 18, 2010.

(<http://www.jpost.com/Israel/Article.aspx?id=166040>).

<sup>11</sup> Barak Ravid, “WikiLeaks blows cover off Israel’s covert Gulf states ties,” *Haaretz* November 29, 2010 (<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/wikileaks-blows-cover-off-israel-s-covert-gulf-states-ties-1.327758>).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Gamal Essam El-Din, “NDP rallies to defend the QIZ” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, December 23-29, 2010, issue no. 722 (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/722/eg2.htm>).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* This charge against the regime has been a constant theme of many in the Egyptian opposition since it began to sense that Gamal Mubarak aspired for the office of the presidency.

<sup>15</sup> The Israel Project (TIP), “Timeline of Bilateral Israel-Egyptian Relations,” (<http://www.theisraelproject.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=hsJPK0PIJpH&b=689705&ct=8519581#timeline>), July 12, 2010.

<sup>16</sup> For Egypt, see ([http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/egypt/egypt\\_economy.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/egypt/egypt_economy.html)), last updated January 27, 2010; for Israel, (<http://www.indexmundi.com/israel/exports.html>), citing *CIA Factbook*, November 3, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, Annual Report, 1999-2000, (<http://www.eohr.org/annual/2000/s3.htm>); International Freedom of eX(sic)change, “Alert: Three Journalists Sentenced to Prison Terms of up to Two Years,” ([http://www.ifex.org/egypt/2000/04/03/three\\_journalists\\_sentenced\\_to/](http://www.ifex.org/egypt/2000/04/03/three_journalists_sentenced_to/)), April 3, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> United States Agency for International Development, “USDA/OICD Research and Scientific Exchanges Trilateral (Egypt-Israel-U.S.) Nubaseed Research Project, Annual Fiscal Report FY-90 ([http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PDABD527.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDABD527.pdf)); Israel Ministry for Foreign Affairs, “The Nubaseed Agricultural Demonstration Farm,” (<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Mashav+%E2%80%93+International+Development/Activities/The+Nubaseed+Agricultural+Demonstration+Farm.htm>), August 23, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> For the text of the agreement between Egypt and the United States, see Ministry of Trade and Industry, Egypt, “Industrial and Trade Agreements,” (<http://www.mfti.gov.eg/english/Agreements/qiz.htm>).

<sup>20</sup> Mary Jane Bolle et al, “Qualifying Industrial Zones in Egypt and Jordan,” Congressional Research Office Report for Congress, (<http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=23391>), updated July 5, 2006; Vikash Yadav, “The Political Economy of the Egyptian-Israel QIZ Trade Agreement,” *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* (MERIA), vol 11, no 1, article 11/ 11, March, 2007 (<http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2007/issue1/jv11no1a11.html>).

<sup>21</sup> QIZEgypt (Qualifying Industrial Zones), <http://www.qizegypt.gov.eg/>, updated May 6, 2008; Abeer Nouman, “Imports from the US surpass Jordanian Exports under QIZ, FTA Arrangements,” *Jordan Times*, (<http://www.jordantimes.com/?news=23391>), January 22, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Abeer Nouman, *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Gamal Essam El-Din, "Flourishing QIZ," *Common Ground News Service* (<http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=3030&lan=en&sid=0&sp=0>), October 26, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> The Israel Project (TIP), "Timeline of Bilateral Israel-Egyptian Relations."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> For the ambiguity of the sale price, see Amr Kamal Hamouda, "Depleting Egypt's Reserves," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, (<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/964/ec1.htm>), September 9-16, 2009, issue 964.

<sup>28</sup> Yolande Knell, "Egypt Lifts Ban on Gas to Israel," <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8540715.stm>, last updated February 27, 2010; *Almasry Alyoum*, English edition, "Egyptians Protest Against Israel," <http://www.almasyalyoum.com/en/multimedia/photo/egyptian-protests-against-israel>, last updated May 31, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Ephraim Dowek, *Israel-Egyptian Relations 1980-2000*, London: Frank Cass, 2001.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*