

We are back in a conceptual limbo, where issues of typological exactness are replaced by a desire to show human sympathy, understandable enough but logically destructive of the purpose at hand.

I WILL venture no further. Except for the Holocaust itself (the treatment of which deserves a mixed grade), the additional cases anthologized in this volume are all dubiously labeled genocide. The pity is that the subject dealt with by Chalk and Jonassohn is one of great seriousness and importance. Precision, learning, and the ability to make crucial distinctions are an absolute requisite if one is to transcend moralizing and ethnic parochialism and offer a real contribution to our understanding of both the past and the present. *The History and Sociology of Genocide*, though empowered by admirable intentions, falls very short of these criteria.

America & Israel

THE \$36 BILLION BARGAIN: STRATEGY AND POLITICS IN U.S. ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL. By A.F.K. ORGANSKI. *Columbia University Press*. 315 pp. \$30.00.

Reviewed by DANIEL PIPES

WHY does the U.S. government provide such generous support to Israel? Conventional wisdom points to American Jews, their votes, their political donations, and their well-organized lobbying efforts. Whole books (notably Paul Findley's *They Dare to Speak Out* and Edward Tivnan's *The Lobby*) have been written to make this point.

A.F.K. Organski, professor of political science at the University of Michigan, comes to a different conclusion. Looking at the record of American aid to Israel, he observes

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a striking fact: U.S. aid was very low before 1970 and very high afterward. And noting that American Jews exerted about the same efforts on Israel's behalf before 1970 as after that date, he asks himself why the dramatically different aid levels? Logic holds that a constant factor cannot explain a variable event; obviously, then, Organski concludes, American Jews cannot be the decisive factor here. To clinch this argument, he points out that it was Richard Nixon, a politician singularly not beholden to Jews (according to Henry Kissinger, he "delighted in telling associates and visitors that the 'Jewish lobby' had no effect on him") who raised the levels of aid.

Organski posits a contrary argument for the turn in 1970. For him, the critical change had to do with American attitudes toward Israel's utility. From Harry Truman through Lyndon Johnson, he demonstrates, American administrations saw Israel as a weak country that could provide no help in the Great Game versus the Soviet Union; if anything, the Jewish state was perceived as a liability. But the 1967 Arab-Israeli war persuaded Nixon that Israeli military power was a significant benefit to the United States. This new view was then confirmed in the aftermath of the 1973 war.

As we know from his previous books, most notably *The Stages of Political Development*, Organski has a powerful and disciplined intelligence. In *The \$36 Billion Bargain*, he relentlessly analyzes a large, amorphous body of data, and so goes far beyond the anecdotal montages that have served other authors as evidence. The result is a tour de force which actually settles a highly contentious issue. This rare accomplishment deserves to be rewarded by calling off the old and sterile debate over the Israel lobby.

About that debate, the book is full of insights. Organski shows how it is in almost everyone's interest to advance the myth of the Jewish lobby. Jewish leaders clearly benefit from being perceived as having a decisive impact. Israeli leaders like to believe that they have

influential friends. American policy-makers exploit the Jewish lobby to explain away decisions that Arab leaders oppose. American opponents of aid love the lobby, for it strengthens their argument that close relations with Israel result from domestic considerations rather than from a sober assessment of foreign-policy interests. Even Arab leaders cling to the myth, which makes unpalatable decisions reached in Washington much easier for them to swallow.

BUT most of *The \$36 Billion Bargain* is devoted to proving that the U.S.-Israel connection owes more to strategic considerations than to the activism of American Jews. The evidence includes a review of American public opinion about Israel, a comparative look at American foreign aid, and an assessment of the influence of the U.S. over Israel. A finely tabulated account of Senate votes reveals that ideology has much more to do with the way Senators vote than the size of their Jewish constituencies or the contributions they get from Jewish or pro-Jewish sources. And there is another, more perverse, impetus: aid to Israel provides the Congress with one of those few instances of foreign policy (the Afghan rebels were another) when it can take the initiative away from the executive branch: "It can demand that aid be increased, scolding bureaucrats and political appointees for dragging their feet, and, in so doing, claim the political credit for supporting Israel, while savoring the pleasure of driving the bureaucracy to distraction."

But why should a Congress usually so skeptical about foreign aid be so enthusiastic in the case of Israel? Organski does not quite explain the anomaly. He quotes a Senator to the effect that the Jews are "hardworking," but that hardly suffices.

The main reason for so much aid to Israel, as Tom Bethell points out in the July 1990 issue of the *American Spectator*, is that financial transfers have turned into the premier symbol of the U.S.-Israel partnership, and have thereby become an end in themselves. To argue

against funds for Israel is seen as tantamount to being anti-Israel.

LOOKING to the future, Organski sees a weakening of U.S.-Israel ties if any of three conditions obtain: the Soviet threat declines; the threat of radicalism in the Middle East declines; or an Arab ally so modernizes that it becomes a tempting alternative to Israel as our main ally. Organski discounts the third possibility, and he is right, for other than Turkey there is no Muslim country in the Middle East on the track of true modernization, and the Turks stay as far away from Middle East imbroglios as they can.

What of the first two conditions? From the perspective of 1991, the threat to U.S. interests from Moscow is declining at about the same speed as that of the radical Arabs, personified by Saddam Hussein, is growing. This combination of trends accounts for the perplexing sight of an American Secretary of State pleading with Soviet leaders to send troops to the Persian Gulf. In other words, changes in the region cancel out changes in the world. While Israel is less useful vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, it is more so vis-à-vis the Arabs and Middle East oil, and its overall value to the United States remains fairly constant. If Organski is right about the key to U.S.-Israel relations lying in a hardheaded analysis of American interests, then changes ahead in that relationship should not be as major as many today expect.

On the other hand, the President and his aides need not always be hardheaded. It is entirely possible that they will make a mistake, either out of poor analysis or out of emotional pique. This seems to be exactly what the Bush administration is doing at present in its obsessive effort to maintain the fragile coalition against Saddam Hussein. Thus, if public opinion and shared values count for as little as Organski suggests, U.S.-Israel relations may be very much more volatile in the months ahead. Indeed, there is even a small chance that a working alliance nurtured over twenty years will be suddenly and lastingly damaged.

Class Struggle

THE IMPERIAL MIDDLE: WHY AMERICANS CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT ABOUT CLASS. By BENJAMIN DEMOTT. *Morrow*. 264 pp. \$18.95.

Reviewed by RICHARD BROOKHISER

METAPHORS of empire have turned pale since the Persian Gulf became a scene of struggle over the real thing. But Benjamin DeMott, professor and cultural commentator, argues that the "imperial middle," which he has taken on in his book of the same name, is a force for real ill in American life, producing "a nation in shackles, its thought, character, and public policy locked in distortion and lies."

The "middle" is the middle class, and it is "imperial" because its norms and prejudices control the way Americans talk and think about their lives, and the way upper- and especially lower-class Americans are compelled, often against their own inclinations, to live them. Even worse than the middle's success in running America is its success in concealing the fact that it does so. The very notion of class, except as a label for consumer preferences, or as an adjunct to discussions of race, has been rendered unusable, so strong is the middle's grip on our minds and our vocabularies. *The Imperial Middle* is an attempt to awaken its readers' class senses. The truth is, DeMott argues, we are all different from each other; and this is the only truth that will set us free.

The style of *The Imperial Middle* is in a different league from standard sociologese. There is not a graph to be seen, and very little jargon. DeMott is good at describing states of mind which he deplores, such as the condition of faux-egalitarian bonhomie which

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he calls "the omni syndrome." It goes like this:

As a sprightly citizen-democrat I'm not locked into my status but am at ease (in my fancy) with people differently situated. . . . "I was their pal," says Lee Iacocca, remembering his relations with "union guys" in his autobiography. "They embraced me," "I'm a biker," said Malcom Forbes.

When DeMott turns from mind-sets to specific issues, however, he loses his grip. The instances of class injustice which he discusses in the greatest detail, and to the greatest effect, are the case of Mary Beth Whitehead, mother of "Baby M," and the Vietnam-era draft. Confronted with Mary Beth Whitehead, the media (which, for DeMott, is always the imperial middle's media) asked, in wonder and disdain, What kind of woman would enter into a contract to bear and sell her own child? Simple, DeMott answers: the kind of woman who had lived a non-middle-class life. Whitehead's mother, "a single parent with eight children who was erratically employed as a beautician, had called frequently on neighbors for extended help." Mary Beth

and her husband often shared the burdens of friends incapacitated by accident or other emergency. . . . Her class experience, together with her own individual nature, made it natural [for her] to perceive the helping side of the surrogacy as primary. . . .

But the middle was unable to understand her experience, decided she was unnatural, and awarded her child to the professional couple which had paid her to have it.

The draft is supposed to be one of the egalitarian institutions of a democratic society, a summons you cannot buy your way out of. Yet during the Vietnam war, the boys of the middle, wise in the ways of bureaucracy, got deferments and exemptions, while lower-class kids, unskilled in such evasions, marched to boot camp, and to battle. One Congressman, DeMott writes, polling 100 random inductees from his district, "found that