

animals do not and cannot have this trait. Leading evolutionists do claim that man is an animal. G. G. Simpson<sup>1</sup> states:

Man is not *merely* an animal, that is, his essence is not simply in his shared animality. Nevertheless he *is* an animal and the nature of man includes and has arisen from the nature of all animals. (Italics are his)

It is true that man has much in common with animals in a physical sense, but to claim that his mental and spiritual endowments have come from animals is not only inadequate-it is dangerous!

#### Conscience, Responsibility Important

Consider that little spark of divinity in the human heart which is called conscience. It makes one aware of doing right or wrong. If one has been taught rightly, and has not seared his conscience by repeated disobedience, it prompts him to do the best that he knows. Can you imagine an animal with such a mentor in its heart? It is most contented when its stomach is full, regardless of the method of filling that organ. It may learn to shun punishment, but it never feels remorse.

Of equal importance is man's sense of respon-

sibility, which an animal does not and cannot have. It is not alone in the Bible that responsibility is taught; every nation assumes it when it formulates laws. Animals are not responsible, laws are not made for them, but they are fenced in. This is exactly what will befall people, if they insist on adhering to the idea that they are animals, and therefore not responsible for their conduct. They will be fenced in by autocratic governments.

It cannot be denied that the doctrine of evolution by natural selection gives aid and comfort to dictators. Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini were logical, if you grant the validity of their belief. They overlooked the truth that man's inmost nature has come down from God above.

It is not only unproved, it is even dangerous to believe that man is the product of struggle among selfish, irresponsible lower organisms.

#### References

- <sup>1</sup>Simpson, G. G. 1966. *Science*, 152:472.  
<sup>2</sup>Carter, S. S. 1957. A hundred years of evolution. Macmillan, New York.  
<sup>3</sup>Jones, D. F. 1924. Genetics in plant and animal improvement, Wiley, New York, p. 414.  
<sup>4</sup>Glass, Bentley. 1965. The ethical basis of science, *Science*, 150:1254-1261.  
<sup>5</sup>Simpson, G. G., *Op. cit.*, p. 472.

## SOCIAL DARWINISM

BOLTON DAVIDHEISER\*

*Social Darwinism has been used by unscrupulous industrialists to condone their unethical practices toward laborers and competitors. Darwinism also offered a basis for acts which have resulted in racial strife. Further, the Darwinian theory of evolution has been used by militarists to glorify war. Abuses toward multitudes of human beings have been sanctioned and abetted with evolution as an excuse; and, if evolution is not true, such inhumanity toward men seems all the more tragic.*

Application of the principle of "survival of the fittest" to human affairs came to be known as Social Darwinism in the nineteenth century. It is generally believed that Darwin did not condone the extrapolation of his natural selection theory into social relationships, but the fact is that he himself taught that human evolution proceeded through warfare and struggle between isolated clans.

Robert E. D. Clark says, "Darwin often said quite plainly that it was wrong to ameliorate the conditions of the poor, since to do so would hinder the evolutionary struggle for existence."<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to H. Thiel in 1869, Darwin wrote:

You will really believe how much interested I am in observing that you apply to moral and social questions analogous views to those which I have used in regard to the modifica-

tion of species. It did not occur to me formerly that my views could be extended to such widely different and most important subjects.<sup>3</sup>

Wallbank and Taylor in their textbook *Civilization Past and Present* say that Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest "became a vogue that swept western thought in the late nineteenth century. It also became a convenient doctrine for justifying various economic and political theories."<sup>4</sup>

#### Unscrupulous Men Misused Theory

Unscrupulous industrialists took advantage of Darwin's theory to condone their unethical practices. When they put others out of business, they declared that it was just another case of survival of the fittest.

The railroad magnate, James J. Hill, manipulating to get more railways under his control, said that "the fortunes of railroad companies are determined by the law of the survival of the fittest."<sup>5</sup>

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In his autobiography, Andrew Carnegie, who made his fortune in steel, describes his conversion to evolution on reading Darwin and Spencer as follows:

I remember that light came as in a flood and all was clear. Not only had I got rid of theology and the supernatural, but I had found the truth of evolution. "All is well since all grows better," became my motto, my true source of comfort. Man was not created with an instinct for his own degradation, but from the lower he had risen to the higher forms. Nor is there any conceivable end to his march to perfection. His face is turned to the light; he stands in the sun and looks upward.<sup>6</sup>

John D. Rockefeller declared to a Sunday school class: "The growth of a large business is merely a survival of the fittest. . . . This is not an evil tendency in business. It is merely the working-out of a law of nature and a law of God."<sup>7</sup>

Robert E. D. Clark comments, "Evolution, in short, gave the doer of evil a respite from his conscience. The most unscrupulous behavior towards a competitor could now be rationalized; evil could be called good."<sup>8</sup>

#### **Darwinism Influenced Social, Racial Ills**

Evolution soothed the consciences of not only the big industrialists in their dealings with competitors, it also aided those who took advantage of the poor. Efforts to improve the living and working conditions of the poor and of women and children were opposed by the ruling class on the grounds that this would be contrary to the principle of evolution, for the prosperity of the wealthy and the miserable condition of the destitute was just the working out of the principle of the survival of the fittest.

Darwinism also offered a basis for acts which have resulted in racial strife. Wallbank and Taylor say:

The pseudo-scientific application of a biological theory to politics . . . constituted possibly the most perverted form of social Darwinism. . . . It led to racism and anti-semitism and was used to show that only "superior" nationalities and races were fit to survive. Thus, among the English-speaking peoples were to be found the champions of the "white man's burden," an imperial mission carried out by Anglo-Saxons. . . . Similarly, the Russians preached the doctrine of pan-Slavism and the Germans that of pan-Germanism.<sup>9</sup>

Darwin postulated, in the sixth chapter of his *Descent of Man*, that the time would come when the white peoples would have destroyed the black. He also thought that the anthropoid apes would become extinct. He believed that when these two eventualities had occurred the evidence of evolution among living creatures would not be as strong as previously.

#### **Militarists Used Darwinian Theory**

The Darwinian theory of evolution has also been used by militarists to glorify war. They said that the outcome of a war is determined by the principle of the survival of the fittest.

The Prussian militarist, Heinrich von Treitsche, said, "The grandeur of war lies in the utter annihilation of puny man in the great conception of the State, and it brings out the full significance of the sacrifice of fellow-countrymen for one another. In war the chaff is winnowed from the wheat."<sup>10</sup>

The German philosopher Frederich Nietzsche, who held Christianity in contempt, said, "You say, 'A good cause sanctifies war'; but I say, 'A good war sanctifies every cause!'"<sup>11</sup> Wallbank and Taylor comment,

Likewise, he ridiculed democracy and socialism for 'protecting the worthless and weak and hindering the strong. Social Darwinism and the antidemocratic cult of naked power, as preached by advocates like Nietzsche, were laying the foundations of fascism, which would one day plunge the world into the most terrible convulsion in its history.'<sup>12</sup>

Frederich von Bernhardi was a German soldier, who retired in 1909, and wrote an inflammatory book, *Germany and the Next War*, which extolled militarism. Of this book anthropologist M. F. Ashley-Montagu says,

"War," declared Bernhardi, "is a biological necessity"; it "is as necessary as the struggle of the elements of nature"; it "gives a biologically just decision, since its decisions rest on the very nature of things," "The whole idea of arbitration represents a presumptuous encroachment on the natural laws of development," for "what is right is decided by the arbitration of war." In proof thereof such notions of Darwin's as "The Struggle for Existence," "Natural Selection," and the "Survival of the Fittest" are invoked with sententiousness quite military both in logic and in sense. According to Bernhardi, it is plainly evident to anyone who makes a study of plant and animal life that "war is a universal law of nature." This declaration and fortification of Germany's will to war—for it had the highest official sanction and approval—was published in 1911. Three years later the greatest holocaust the world had ever known was launched. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Benito Mussolini, who brought fascism to Italy, was strengthened in his belief that violence is basic to social transformation by the philosophy of Nietzsche.<sup>14</sup> R. E. D. Clark says, "Mussolini's attitude was completely dominated by evolution. In public utterances he repeatedly used the Darwinian catchwords while he mocked at perpetual peace, lest it should hinder the evolutionary process."<sup>15</sup>

Likewise Adolph Hitler in Germany based his fascism on evolutionary theory. This is evident from his speeches and his book *Mein Kampf*. R. E. D. Clark has pointed out that in the large number of books which have appeared describing every phase of the Hitler regime, there is hardly a mention of the evolution of Charles Darwin. He interprets this to mean that the authors refrain from mentioning evolution in this context because they fear they might be considered to be anti-evolutionary.<sup>16</sup>

#### Communists, Like Fascists, Used Darwinism

Friederich Engels, one of the founders of Communism, wrote to Karl Marx, December 12, 1859, "Darwin, whom I am just now reading, is splendid."<sup>17</sup> Karl Marx wrote to Friederich Engels, December 19, 1860, "Although it is developed in the crude English style, this is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our views."<sup>18</sup>

Again Marx wrote to Engels, January 16, 1861, "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural selection for the class struggle in history . . . not only is it a death blow dealt here for the first time to 'teleology' in the natural sciences but their rational meaning is emphatically explained."<sup>19</sup>

Marx wished to dedicate to Darwin his book *Das Kapital*, but Darwin declined the offer.

E. Yaroslavsky, a friend of Joseph Stalin, wrote a book on the life of Stalin. This book was published in Moscow by the Communists while Stalin was in power. The author says, "At a very early age, while still a pupil in the ecclesiastical school, Comrade Stalin developed a critical mind and revolutionary sentiments. He began to read Darwin and became an atheist."<sup>20</sup>

Yaroslavsky quotes another boyhood friend of Stalin, who relates the following:

I began to speak of God. Joseph heard me out, and after a moment's silence said: "You know, they are fooling us, there is no God. . . ."

I was astonished at these words. I had never heard anything like it before. "How can you say such things, Soso [a name for Stalin]?" I exclaimed.

"I'll lend you a book to read; it will show you that the world and all living things are quite different from what you imagine, and all this talk about God is sheer nonsense," Joseph said.

"What book is that?" I inquired. "Darwin. You must read it," Joseph impressed on me.<sup>21</sup>

But the Marxists were never completely sold on Darwinism. Conway Zirkle, Professor of Botany at the University of Pennsylvania, says that the Marxists do not accept or reject biological theories in accordance with objective evidence, but by how well they fit Communist doctrine. Darwinism does not altogether fit.

T. D. Lysenko, whose ideas supplanted the science of genetics in Russia until recently, said

in 1948, "Darwin was unable to free himself from the theoretical mistakes which he committed. These errors were discovered and pointed out by the Marxist classicists."<sup>22</sup> Evolution by natural selection is at present not acceptable under Communism, but evolution by a Lamarckian type of environmental influence. (In his old age Darwin himself came closer and closer to this view.)

#### Some Evolutionists Embarrassed

There are a few evolutionists who have been embarrassed by the social implications of evolution and who have stressed cooperation (instead of struggle) as a factor in evolution. Kropotkin and Allee may be cited here.<sup>23</sup> Others have said that the theory of evolution is improperly applied when it is used to defend militarism and social abuses.

Of course, the application of Darwinian survival of the fittest to human affairs by unscrupulous men has no direct bearing on the question of whether human beings and other creatures evolved from simple forms of life. But these abuses have been sanctioned and abetted with evolution as an excuse; and, if evolution is not true, it seems all the more tragic.

#### References

<sup>16</sup>There is evidence of this in various places; for example, the disagreement between Darwin and Wallace on the evolution of the human brain. See also R. E. D. Clark, Darwin: before and after. and Arthur Kieth, Essays on evolution.

<sup>17</sup>Clark, Robert E. D. 1958. Darwin: before and after. Paternoster Press, London, p. 120.

<sup>18</sup>Darwin, Francis. 1896, Editor. The life and letters of Charles Darwin. D. Appleton and Co., N.Y. Vol. 2, p. 294.

<sup>19</sup>Wallbank, T. Walter and Alastair M. Taylor. 1961. Civilization past and present. Fourth Edition. Scott, Foresman and Co., N.Y. Vol. 2, p. 361.

<sup>20</sup>Hofstadter, Richard. 1955. Social darwinism and american thought. Revised Edition. Beacon Press, Boston, Mass. p. 45.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>23</sup>Clark, *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup>Wallbank, T. W. and A. M. Taylor, *Op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 362. (This is quoted from H. C. von Trietsche, Politics. Translated by B. Dugdale and T. de Bille. Constable and Co., London. Vol. I, pp. 66 and 67.)

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 362.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>28</sup>Ashley-Montagu, M. F. 1961. Man in process. World Pub. Co., N.Y. pp. 76 and 77.

<sup>29</sup>The encyclopedia britannica. 1962. Vol. 16, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup>Clark, *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>32</sup>Zirkle, Conway, 1959. Evolution, marxian biology, and the social scene. University of Pennsylvania Press.

<sup>33</sup>Philadelphia. p. 85.

<sup>34</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>36</sup>Yaroslavsky, E. 1940. Landmarks in the Life of Stalin. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. p. 8.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 8 and 9.

<sup>38</sup>Zirkle, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup>Kropotkin, Peter. 1902. Mutual aid. W. Heinemann, N.Y. W. C. Allee. 1951. Cooperation among animals with human implications. Revised Edition. Henry Schuman, N.Y.