

SOCIAL DARWINISM

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTELLECTUAL MOOD

LOUIS ANDREWS

During the Edwardian era in England a new intellectual mood was reaching its peak. The new mood manifested itself in many ways: as a new feeling of nationalist exclusiveness, as economic protectionism, as jingoistic imperialism, as social imperialism, and in appeals to “efficiency.” Some have seen it as an intellectual reaction against humanitarianism and sentimentality, and indeed “might” and “necessity” were to some extent replacing the old concept of “right” in public policy.¹

There were several factors behind the new mood, including a general increase in literacy that had resulted in a new, more popular, journalism, the decline in fundamental religious beliefs, and a Hegelian authoritarian trend in philosophy. But perhaps the primary factor was the impact of a new sociobiological school of thought, Social Darwinism.²

Social Darwinism³ can by no means be considered a monolithic system of thought. It began as a liberal and individualistic construct, concerned largely with man’s relationship to his own society in evolutionary terms, but soon developed into a collectivist doctrine, concerned with each society as a unit, and its relationship to other societies in evolutionary terms. Currents of Social Darwinism that focused on the latter can be characterized somewhat by the term “external,” since they considered extranational forces the most important in evolutionary development. The earlier individualistic school can be called “internal” Social Darwinist, since its special interest was in intranational forces.⁴

The various schools of Social Darwinism were the product of the revolution which began in 1859 with the publication of Charles Darwin’s monumental work, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. The idea of physical evolution had been prevalent for many years, but it had generally taken a directly environmental form, such as the inheritance of acquired characteristics, and had been largely rejected for various scientific and religious reasons. Darwin’s great contribution was that he combined long and detailed observations with careful and cautious scientific reasoning, producing a theory that, disregarding teleological considerations, tended to explain how life had evolved and to do it much more satisfactorily than any previous theory had done. Nevertheless, this theory did not always win acceptance from the members of the old guard

in biology, and certainly not in religion. In fact, the opposition that orthodox Christianity supplied was in many ways both beneficial to the eventual acceptance of the theory and harmful to the religious structures. The Darwinian theory was developed at a time when Western religion was undergoing a severe crisis, and it was quickly drawn into this crisis. Darwinism emerged triumphant and religion was perhaps irreparably damaged.

As a new theory, evolution had a great appeal to the new guard in biology. In fact, as far as biologists themselves were concerned, it can be argued that basically only the new guard accepted Darwinism; the rest gradually (and literally) died away, thus ending major opposition.

The two major ideas which Darwin expressed were the “struggle for existence,” dealing with the eternal validity of competition of all forms, both intraspecific and interspecific, and “natural selection,” the by-product of this competition or struggle, by which evolutionary advancement had occurred.⁵ Since the “new biology” considered man a part of nature, not above or apart from it, these ideas and their many subsequent corollaries rapidly became part of contemporary discussions of man and the social, religious, economic, ethical, and political facets of his existence. Thus the intellectual framework was created for the development of Social Darwinism.

HERBERT SPENCER AND THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL DARWINISM

The first major figure considered to be a Social Darwinist was Herbert Spencer.⁶ Spencer was the classic Social Darwinist: individualistic, liberal to the core, and an enthusiastic proponent of *laissez faire* economics. Easily the best known of all Social Darwinists and the founder of its most prominent school, he nevertheless played no direct role in that collectivistic Social Darwinism which chiefly concerns this essay. Still, he exerted a great influence on his contemporaries as well as on those later schools of Social Darwinism that rejected him for his defense of individualism and democracy.

Spencer espoused two major points that entered into the considerations of the later Social Darwinists. The first of these has been touched on previously, that man is physically an animal, and therefore the natural laws of the new biology applied as much to him as to the alligator or songbird. As an animal, man was subject to heredity, so Spencer felt that he could prove that the empiricists were wrong in maintaining that the mind was a *tabula rasa*.⁷ Spencer's second point was that groups, or societies, had also evolved, and thus society itself was an organism.⁸ He took this idea, which had been popular with Edmund Burke and the Romantics, and attempted to reinforce it with the prestige of the new evolutionary science. The physical organism, man, could be related scientifically and biologically to the social organism, society. Spencer felt that the many facets of man's development, e.g., his culture in the broad sense, were the products of evolution. Man's physical, mental, and

sociocultural evolution formed a system, a unified whole, which could be used to provide the proper explanations for all major questions concerning man and his problems. As a result, Spencer was able to make a systematic application of his Social Darwinism to many fields, and he wrote ponderous works on psychology, sociology, and ethics.

First generation Darwinists and Social Darwinists were generally optimistic and dedicated believers in progress as a result of the evolutionary processes, and Spencer was no exception. Of the struggle for existence, he wrote that

inconceivable as have been the horrors caused by the universal antagonism which, beginning with the chronic hostilities of small hordes tens of thousands of years ago, has ended in the occasional vast battles of immense nations, we must nevertheless admit that without it the world would still have been inhabited only by men of feeble types sheltering in caves and living on wild food.⁹

Despite the apparent harshness of this statement, Spencer, perhaps because he was a humanitarian, refused to take the logical step of arguing for the necessity and, to reinforce this pragmatically, the glorification, of war in the present. For some reason, he negated the value of war for the present, thus in a sense rejecting the idea of the continuity of history. This was indeed inconsistent for a thinker who placed such emphasis on terms such as the “persistence of force” and the “indestructibility of matter and energy.”¹⁰

WALTER BAGEHOT

Spencer, as a *laissez-faire* liberal, placed a strong emphasis on rationalism, believing that man’s actions were based largely on reasoned self-interest. He was also somewhat anti-traditional, despite his theory of organic social development. Walter Bagehot,¹¹ the author of *Physics and Politics* (1873) and editor of the still influential journal, *The Economist*, was both a traditionalist and an irrationalist. He can perhaps best be viewed as a transitional figure in the development of Social Darwinism from its individualistic Spencerian form to a largely collectivist body of thought. Bagehot, even though he stood for office as a Liberal, was basically a conservative. He wrote “the first duty of society is the preservation of society.”¹² As an irrationalist, he believed in the value of a “noble myth” and “dreams of glory.”

No orator ever made an impression by appealing to men by their plainest physical wants, except when he could allege that those wants were caused by someone’s tyranny. But thousands have made the greatest impression by appealing to some vague dream of glory or empire or nationality.¹³

The special value of Bagehot to the later theorists was that he went far beyond Spencer in emphasizing the value of the group. He believed that in the struggle for existence the individuals who were able to work together to create and maintain a strong unified group survived. Competition then occurred between groups; those that proved themselves best able to compete, in other words the

best disciplined, most compact, and homogeneous, survived. A major factor in his argument was that the part must submit to the whole, since survival in an evolutionary sense depended on the latter.¹⁴

Concerning moral progress, Bagehot wrote that in a situation in which groups or nations were equal in strength, the noblest would be the victor in conflict. Naturally, where the groups were unequal, the most powerful would be the noblest. Thus, Bagehot wrote, "in every particular state of the world those nations which are strongest tend to prevail over the others and in certain marked peculiarities the strongest tend to be the best."¹⁵

It would perhaps do an injustice to Bagehot to fail to mention that his theory also had a liberal side. He felt that groups or nations would eventually evolve to a point where some system of democracy and personal freedom could be allowed without endangering the existence of the state. Almost humorously, Bagehot called this period in a state's development "The Age of Discussion."¹⁶

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there was a general trend in much of British thought away from liberalism toward a more collectivist and authoritarian nationalism. Neo-Kantians and neo-Hegelians were finding a place in British intellectual life. Attacks on the idea of free trade, a basis of internationalism, were multiplying. This was in part due to the successes of the German Zollverein and the writings of the German economist, Friedrich List, whose book *National Systems of Political Economy* (1841) had become popular in England. These influences all helped foster the development of a new and radical opposition to individualism and free-trade liberalism that had dominated the early Social Darwinist thought of the period.

A new, or partially new, form of Social Darwinism developed out of this radical environment. This "external" Social Darwinism, even though it had developed out of the earlier "internal" type discussed above, soon came to disregard or reject much of the approach of the "internal" school. It was probably Bagehot who began this trend, since he argued that at most stages of its development, a nation had to create a sense of unity to protect itself adequately against all external rivals.

By the 1890s, as England was confronted with greater problems in foreign policy, ideas of organic development became prevalent. Often these connected, interdependently, the nation and the Empire with the world in which nation stood opposed to nation in a supposedly bloody Darwinian struggle for existence. Because of the increasing contact with alien races, British racial pride was growing rapidly. In 1892, Alfred Milner¹⁷ wrote concerning the British in Egypt "by the nature of our interests, by the nature of our power, and by certain special qualities in our national character, we seem marked out for the ...job of stabilizing the economic situation." He added "the qualities of the race have triumphed."¹⁸

BENJAMIN KIDD

In 1894, Benjamin Kidd's¹⁹ *Social Evolution* appeared. Even though poorly argued and written, it quickly went through several printings to sell over 250,000 copies, a huge number for the day.²⁰ Kidd, like Spencer, attempted to build a system that would use evolutionary theory to indicate the direction in which English society should develop. Unlike Spencer, Kidd was most concerned with Britain's ability to meet external challenges and to maintain its place in the world. His book advanced programs designed to reduce the internal struggle so that a more cohesive nation would result, one better able to meet the ever-increasing external competition. Kidd felt that in the future those who had been excluded from internal competition due to poverty and other factors could be brought in on terms of equal political and social opportunity.²¹ He believed that the major opposition to his programs was among the Spencerians and the socialists.²² Both groups had worked for the interests of factions within the social organism, not for the organism itself. Their approaches had led to an increased stratification of society, resulting in a situation where class warfare had become a distinct possibility. Kidd wrote that "the forces which are working out our development are primarily concerned not with these interests of the individual, but with those widely different interests of a social organism subject to quite other conditions and possessed of an indefinitely longer life."²³

For Kidd, the "interests of the social organism and those of the individuals comprising it at any particular time are actually antagonistic; they can never be reconciled...."²⁴ Therefore individual and intragroup interests must be subordinated to those connected with the survival of the social organism as a whole. It was the duty of the state to achieve some sort of social equality so that this might be accomplished. The state to which he referred was of course a racially homogeneous one.

Kidd believed that an innate quality of discipline, which led to social efficiency, had made Britain and the Empire strong.²⁵ He felt that religion would be an important factor in leading to greater national unity and an increase in social efficiency. This religion would be "a form of belief, providing an ultra-rational sanction for that large class of conduct in the individual where his interests and the interests of the social organism are antagonistic, and by which the former are rendered subordinate to the latter in the general interests of the evolution which the race is undergoing...."²⁶

SOCIAL DARWINISM AND BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

In February 1896, an article entitled "Biological View of our Foreign Policy" appeared in the pages of the *Saturday Review*. It was unsigned, but written by a biologist, probably a Professor Mitchell.²⁷ The author described international

relations in a strongly neo-Darwinian tone. “The great nations of the earth are local varieties, species in the making, which are gathering themselves together, emphasizing their national characters, and unconsciously making for specific distinctness.”²⁸ He added that foreign policy, as long as it didn’t represent only individual ambition or opportunism, was:

anticipation of, and provision for, struggles for existence between incipient species... feeble races are being wiped off the earth and the few great, incipient species are themselves against each other. England as the greatest of these—greatest in race pride—had avoided for centuries the only dangerous kind of war. Now with the whole earth occupied and the movements of expansion continuing, she will have to fight to the death against successive rivals.²⁹

In subsequent years other articles by various authors appeared, associating Social Darwinism with war, military preparations, and the Empire. One such article, by W. F. Wyatt, was entitled “The Ethics of Empire.” Wyatt argued that biological law was indeed the foundation of Empire. He believed that humanitarians were the major opponents of this idea and characterized their argument as :

[T]his brutal law of which you speak may prevail and does prevail in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and it has doubtless prevailed among mankind. But now we have reached to the higher code of morality.... The principle of altruism is superceding the principle of competition.³⁰

The author argued that if Britain were to follow a humanitarian policy, embracing altruism and withdrawing from international competition, that another power would simply take her place, grow stronger, and eventually control world affairs. Britain would “wither away and cease to operate as a moving factor in the affairs of men.”³¹

All of the great institutions and ideas which England had developed and then spread to many parts of the world would then be lost. To forestall that it was thus her obligation, in a truly humanitarian sense, to disregard the so-called humanitarians.³² Wyatt went on to characterize the maintenance of British military might as more than a matter of vital self-interest, indeed “a high and sacred obligation of morality.”³³

Just before the Hague Peace Conference of 1899, Wyatt published an article entitled “War as the Test of National Value,” in which he advanced Social Darwinist ideas. He argued that war was not, as some had asserted, an unmixed evil, but that it “has been the absolutely necessary condition of human advance,” declaring “if at any given period in the past, war could have been abolished...social evolution must have been stereotyped.”³⁴

Wyatt struck an especially strong Social Darwinist note in remarking that contemporary wars were:

only the expression of vast natural forces, having their roots far down in the national character...there is something melancholy and pitiful in the delusion that they can ever be arrested by the breath of [foreign] ministers sitting round a table.³⁵

While he did feel that the trend of history was leading toward a more cosmopolitan world, eventually to be united in peace, he viewed this rather pessimistically. "The attainment of this much desired peace will be the signal for the beginning of universal decay."³⁶ In the absence of diversity between groups, stagnation would occur, and this would be closely followed by corruption.

In May 1899 an article entitled "The Hypocrisies of the Peace Conference" appeared on the Hague Conference. Written by Sidney Lowe, a well-known publicist, this essay vividly described the agony and brutality of war, yet argued that compared to industrial competition, on the surface apparently less brutal, war nonetheless was possibly less cruel. Lowe wrote:

[a] righteous and necessary war is no more brutal than a surgical operation. Better [to] give the patient some pain, and make your own fingers unpleasantly red, than allow the disease to grow upon him until he becomes an offence to himself and the world.³⁷

Around the turn of the century, British Social Darwinist thought again became concerned with the importance of the internal problems of the nation, but largely because it was felt that Britain must gird her internal strength in order to better face the challenges of the external world. The importance of surmounting these external challenges was still the primary concern; internal development was viewed as merely a means to that end.

In "The Breed of Man," H. H. Almond expressed a deep-felt concern about the quality of the British people. He argued that reform was needed, especially in education. Such reform was seen as a necessary preparation for war. Almond also urged universal conscription and a reform of the navy. Concerned about the general poor quality of the military establishment, he even urged that "a 'still strong man' be made absolute dictator over our whole military system."³⁸

KARL PEARSON, SOCIAL DARWINISM, AND EUGENICS

Developing contemporaneously with Darwinism and Social Darwinism was another closely related scientific school, the ideas of which held broad implications for the improvement of man, and was thus of interest to Social Darwinists. This was the science of eugenics,³⁹ founded by Sir Francis Galton,⁴⁰ who published his first work on the subject as early as 1865.⁴¹

The appeal of eugenics to Social Darwinists was especially strong, since it sought to improve the quality of the race. That possibility interested others as well. In October 1906, Sidney Webb, one of the founders of the (socialist) British Fabian Society, wrote two letters to *The Times* on the population problem and the declining birth rate, in which he revealed that a study by the Fabian Society had urged the endowment of motherhood, to improve the quality and quantity of the English race.⁴²

One Social Darwinist in particular, Karl Pearson,⁴³ was especially concerned with eugenics. In 1911 he became the first Galton Professor of Eugenics at the University of London. Pearson allied a thorough knowledge of evolutionary theory and a strong faith in eugenics with a deep social conscience, dating back to his studies of Marxist thought while a student in Germany. The result was perhaps the profoundest expression of Social Darwinism in the period. Pearson's ideas were distant indeed from those of the first Social Darwinist, Herbert Spencer.

Pearson based much of his synthesis on the idea of the organic nature of the state. As early as 1894, he wrote that “[h]uman societies cannot be symbolized as rigid structures of stone and iron, they are organic growths, yielding and accommodating themselves, if sound, to almost every form of internal and external stress.”⁴⁴ He felt that, in evolutionary terms, the external struggle was far more important than internal competition. According to Pearson, history has shown only one way “in which a high state of civilization has been produced, namely, the struggle of race with race, and the survival of the physically and mentally fitter race.”⁴⁵

Professor Pearson seems to have accepted Marxian economic theory and considered himself a socialist, but he rejected the internationalism of most contemporary socialist thought. His was a national form of socialism.⁴⁶ Pearson's politics were firmly based on the idea of an organic state. He felt that the state must be a “homogeneous whole,” and he denounced those socialists who stirred up class antagonisms. Since he viewed the struggle for existence as one between nations and/or races, the unity of the state was paramount. He urged that the state be considered a sacred principle, that “an offense against the state ought to be looked upon as a far graver matter than the offence against the individual.” Socialists, he believed, must “inculcate that spirit which would give offenders against the State short shrift and the nearest lamp-post.”⁴⁷

Pearson attacked the Social Darwinist theories of both Kidd and Spencer. He argued that they had both rejected socialism by false reasoning and that they based their views on the internal struggle for existence on false biological premises.⁴⁸ He maintained that the social and economic “intra-group struggle plays little, if any, part in natural selection of man.”⁴⁹ Pearson argued that social progress actually “depended on an organization of society checking very largely the individual struggle for existence within the group.”⁵⁰ The ability to withstand external competition depended to a large extent on the level of social stability. Thus the “victory of the more capable, or the more fortunate, must not involve such a defeat of the less capable that social stability is endangered by the misery produced.”⁵¹

Indeed, England could “be crushed” without great difficulty if she allowed too great an amount of internal competition.⁵² But Pearson had a dogmatic faith in the inevitability of the reduction of intragroup competition, and wrote that “the future *will* be socialistic, the intra-group struggle *will* be weakened rather than intensified.”⁵³

Pearson argued that true natural selection occurred in man (within society) before it reached the stage of intragroup competition; therefore the industrial and class competitions could safely be reduced.⁵⁴ In the true socialist state “less artificial protection for the weakling will be possible, less chance of their surviving....” The real socialist believed that “the progress of man has depended in the main on the minimizing of [the intra-group struggle] in order to emphasize the action of another factor—extra-group selection.”⁵⁵

Pearson rejected intragroup struggle as a means of bettering the race, but he had other ideas which he felt would improve the quality of the people. Primary among these was his advocacy of eugenics, designed to increase the production of more capable individuals and to lessen the numbers of the “unfit.” To facilitate this, he urged a biological view of the status of women. Concerning female emancipation, he wrote

How can woman follow her sexual and maternal instincts?...how can she do freely what she alone can do for society.... The answer...does not lie in “equality of opportunity,” it lies in special protection, in the socialization of the State.⁵⁶

Thus he urged a “national insurance for motherhood” and the regulation of the labor of women, all toward the end of improving the quality of the individuals within the state.⁵⁷

Pearson’s views on race were related to his eugenic creed, “man varies, and these variations, favorable and unfavorable, are inherited.” Concerning African races, he wrote

How many centuries, how many thousands of years have the Kaffir or the Negro held large tribal districts in Africa undisturbed by the white man? Yet their inter-tribal struggles have not yet produced a civilization in the least comparable with the Aryan. Educate and nurture them as you will, I do not believe that you will succeed in modifying the stock.⁵⁸

Within England, Pearson hoped for the time

when conscious race culture will cope with the ills which arise when we suspend the full purifying force of natural selection.... The higher patriotism and the pride of race must come to our aid in stemming deterioration.⁵⁹

It was “a false view of human solidarity, a weak humanitarianism” that regretted the fact that “a capable and stalwart race of white men should replace a dark-skinned tribe.”⁶⁰

This race-building program would better prepare the nation for war. War was, to Pearson, totally necessary for evolutionary progress:

You may hope for a time when the sword shall be turned into the ploughshare...but, believe me, when that day comes mankind will no longer progress...the relentless law of heredity will be controlled and guided by natural selection.⁶¹

Social Darwinism, in its ultimate form, as has been outlined in the preceding pages, was at the core of much of the thought of the Victorian and Edwardian eras in England. Whether Liberal, Fabian, or Unionist, many of the most important individuals of the latter period reflect, in varying degrees, some consciously and some unconsciously, Social Darwinist ideas and theories.

ALFRED MILNER, IDEALIST

How pervasive was Social Darwinism can perhaps best be understood by looking at a man who, as a product of his age, unconsciously exhibited Social Darwinist tendencies in almost every aspect of his thought. Viscount Alfred Milner never spoke of “evolution,” “natural selection,” or “survival of the fittest” in biological terms, but nevertheless, his ideas and interests paralleled in many respects those of the later Social Darwinists.

Milner was an idealist, despite the fact that he shared many of the ideas of the realists. He was a nationalist to the core and allied this nationalism with outspoken racist ideas. In most cases, Milner’s nationalism extended to seeing the Empire as a unit. In 1905 he declared: “[w]hen we who call ourselves Imperialists, talk of the British Empire, we think of a group of states, independent of one another in their local affairs, but bound together for the defense of their common interests and the development of a common civilization...in a permanent organic union...”⁶² He felt that not only national but Imperial unity was essential if Britain was to master the challenges of the twentieth century.

Milner regarded race as of overwhelming importance. His biographer, A. M. Gollin, wrote of his views on race that “they were the motive force behind every one of his political and Imperial proposals.” Gollin added that “this race patriotism was not the vulgar racialism that sought to conceal British Imperial self-interest behind those tedious neo-Darwinian slogans which claimed that the strongest were best fitted to survive and to dominate in world affairs...”⁶³ Yet despite the fact that Milner never tried to rationalize his views with an appeal to science, he does seem to fit within the spectrum of later Social Darwinist thought. Many of his ideas align clearly with those of Karl Pearson.

Milner’s Social Darwinism was based, not on science, but on nationalism, patriotism, and anti-cosmopolitanism. He wrote:

[m]y patriotism knows no geographical but only racial limits. I am an Imperialist...because I am a British Race Patriot.⁶⁴

He declared that his first great principle was that

[t]he British State must follow the race, must comprehend it, wherever it settles in appreciable numbers as an independent community.... We cannot afford to part with so much of our best blood.⁶⁵

Elsewhere Milner wrote:

I have emphasized the importance of the racial bond. From my point of view this is fundamental. It is the British race which built the Empire and it is the undivided British race which can alone uphold it...deeper, stronger, more primordial than...material ties is the bond of common blood, a common language, common history and traditions.⁶⁶

Lord Milner believed that the maintenance of the Empire was essential to the prosperity and strength of the nation and he often spoke of their interdependence. He was convinced that Great Britain must maintain a strong military force to protect the Empire, and thus he advocated both conscription and military education. Milner also felt that the time was coming when the home island would no longer be able to supply capable men in the numbers required to run the Empire, and recommended the emigration of good stock to build communities in the colonies. One aim of his imperialism was to maintain those communities as parts of an organic whole, thus providing for a continuity of race, nation, and Empire.⁶⁷

It was Milner's conviction that the British had a national and racial mission; to accomplish it, they must keep racially strong. He hoped, as had Pearson, that Britain would develop a form of socialism, a national type of socialism, to strengthen the nation and to maintain and improve the race. This was to have a form which would not magnify class conflicts, since according to Milner "among civilized peoples of more or less equal size, that one will be, as it will deserve to be, the strongest, which is most successful in removing the causes of class antagonism in its midst."⁶⁸

Milner's socialism was of a moderate form—"Gas and Water Socialism"⁶⁹—which would result in a greater amount of social equality, leading to a more dynamic physical and moral strength for the British people in order that they would be better able to defend the nation and the Empire. His support of tariff reform (i.e., raising tariffs on imports) can be considered part of this program. Milner hoped that, through his influence, tariff reform might be broadened.⁷⁰ He believed that it was designed in the interests of "the nation as a whole, not only one class," and would "let all pay according to their means,"⁷¹ thus helping to decrease class conflict.

Was Milner a true Social Darwinist? Perhaps not, but he was a product of the spirit of his age, albeit an extreme one, and the roots of this spirit lay to a great extent in the Darwinian revolution.

TODAY: SOCIAL DARWINISM AND SOCIOBIOLOGY

Is there a continuity between the Social Darwinism of Edwardian era England and today's sociobiology?⁷² Certainly the egalitarian leftist opponents of sociobiology and its offspring, evolutionary psychology and biosociology, invariably attempt to link them to a totally discredited (in their eyes) Social Darwinism.⁷³ In response, some supporters of these late twentieth century disciplines have tried to distance themselves and their disciplines from the earlier school.⁷⁴ Where does the truth lie?

It is certainly true that various ideas and movements⁷⁵ with connections to Social Darwinism continued to develop to the mid-twentieth century and beyond. Nevertheless, we must recognize that the universal conquest of the Western nations by leftist egalitarians in matters social and political following our second great fratricidal war of the century virtually ended any connection of significant social or scientific movements with Social Darwinism. It had become a pariah in the very world it had helped build. Sociobiology was an independent creation—in fact E.O. Wilson, its creator, knew virtually nothing of the history of Social Darwinism. His primary interest lay in ants. It was only after the publication of his world-shaking classic, *Sociobiology*, that he began a serious study of either human evolution or the background of Social Darwinism. So the leftist critics are surely wrong: sociobiology and its offspring have no linear connection. Both arose independently, based on the scientific information available at the time and the social needs of the era. But are those (generally egalitarian) supporters of sociobiology who reject any possible ties with Social Darwinism correct? Let's look at the evidence.

1. The “new biology” on which Social Darwinism was based considered man a part of nature, not above or apart from it. So does sociobiology.

2. Social Darwinists believed that all life, and especially all human life, could be explained without the invocation of an all-powerful god. Sociobiology agrees.

3. Social Darwinists believed that the concept that drives all egalitarian leftist ideologies, the mind as a *tabula rasa*, was nonsense. Sociobiology rejects this concept just as emphatically.

4. The evolutionary importance of competition and cooperation between individuals and groups was integral to Social Darwinism. While with sociobiology the emphasis is often on the individual gene, recently the importance of group competition has grown in sociobiology.

5. Social Darwinists were generally strong in their support for eugenics and the improvement of the quality of humans being born. While sociobiologists are largely silent on eugenics, it is clear that sociobiological thinking is generally supportive of eugenic ideas and in no case supports anti-eugenic thought, regardless of rhetoric.⁷⁶ Despite the general public posture of most intellectuals, left and right, against the “evils of eugenics,” today support for eugenics is growing rapidly, even if mostly in private.⁷⁷

6. Social Darwinists accepted race differences, not only in the obvious physical characteristics, but also in mental and behavioral characteristics. It is fair to say that most sociobiologists avoid issues involving race as they would the Ebola virus. Nevertheless, private support among them for *The Bell Curve* and even for J. Philippe Rushton's *Race, Evolution and Behavior* is considerable and growing. A huge “fear factor” is involved here, but time and science are clearly on the side of the race-realists (as some of them call themselves).

Where does this leave us? Had our second great fratricidal war been averted, or even if—as that ardent believer in eugenics, Charles Lindbergh, urged—a negotiated peace had been achieved, perhaps the egalitarian leftist conquest of the social and political institutions of the West might not have occurred. In which case it seems likely that the development of contemporary sociobiology might have occurred earlier, influenced by, if not an outgrowth of, Social Darwinism. Since history took a different path, Social Darwinism remains a past and a prologue, but the contemporary sociobiology grew from a different branch on the Darwinian tree.

*Louis Andrews is a businessman and creator of the **Stalking the Wild Taboo** website. He is also web editor/publisher and business manager of **The Occidental Quarterly**. Mr. Andrews has written for **Right Now!** as well as other publications and lives in Augusta, Ga.*

END NOTES

1. L. T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1904), 59-60.
2. *Ibid.*, 75-84.
3. Although Social Darwinism is sometimes defined simply as the equating of business competition with natural selection leading to evolutionary progress, here it is more broadly used as any system or approach to the study of man and society that utilizes evolutionary theory on the biological level.
4. I have borrowed these terms from Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960.), 30.
5. Although a little dated, Garrett Hardin provides an excellent review of the development of evolutionary theory and its implications for man in *Nature and Man's Fate* (New York: Rinehart, 1959).
6. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Liberal philosopher, published works on almost all major phases of knowledge including philosophy, ethnology, biology, sociology, psychology, political science, history, and mathematics. He was a member of both the 'X' and Athenaeum clubs. *Dictionary of National Biography (1901-1911)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 360-369.
7. For a brief discussion of Spencer's theories and their relation to the development of authoritarian thought, see William M. McGovern, *From Luther to Hitler* (London: George G. Harrap, 1946), 457-463.
8. Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, vol. 1, part II (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 449 ff.
9. Cited in Carlton J. H. Hayes, *A Generation of Materialism* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 11.
10. *Ibid.*

11. Walter Bagehot (1826-1877). Educated at the University of London. Journalist and economist. Editor of the *Economist*. *Dictionary of National Biography (From the Earliest Times to 1900)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 865-868.
12. Cited in McGovern, 464.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895), chapters 3 & 4.
15. *Ibid.*, 43.
16. *Ibid.*, 156 ff.
17. Alfred Milner, Viscount (1854-1925). Educated at Tübingen; King's College, London; awarded first scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford. Liberal journalist; Director General of Accounts (Egypt), 1889; Undersecretary to the Khedive, 1890; Board of Internal Revenue (Eng.), 1892; C.B., 1894; K.C.B., 1895; High Commissioner to South Africa, 1897-1905; War Cabinet, 1916; Secretary of the Colonial Office, 1918-1921. *Dictionary of National Biography (1922-1930)*, 588-602.
18. Alfred Milner, *England in Egypt* (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), 356.
19. Benjamin Kidd (1858-1916). Civil servant, sociologist. *Western Civilization*, 1902; *The Science of Power*, 1918. *Dictionary of National Biography (1912-1918)*, 305-306.
20. William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*, vol. 1, 87. See also Crane Brinton, *English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 282-292.
21. Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1894), 227.
22. *Ibid.*, Chapters 1 and 7 generally.
23. *Ibid.*, 78.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, 277-287.
26. *Ibid.*, 103. For a criticism of Kidd's religious theories, see Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1928), 672 ff.
27. Langer, 87.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*
30. W. F. Wyatt, "The Ethics of Empire," *Nineteenth Century*, April 1897, 524.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, 525-529.
33. *Ibid.*, 530.
34. W. F. Wyatt, "War As the Test of National Value," *Nineteenth Century*, February 1899, 218.
35. *Ibid.*, 220.
36. *Ibid.*, 224-225.
37. Sidney Lowe, "The Hypocrisies of the Peace Conference," *Nineteenth Century*, May 1899, 692.
38. H. H. Almond, "The Breed of Man," *Nineteenth Century*, October 1900, 667.

39. Eugenics is concerned with the genetic or hereditary improvement of man. In its beginnings it was largely concerned with the possibility of the improvement of innate intelligence or "talent." Perhaps its major "theorem" is that "Man's political actions have genetic consequences." Hardin, 214.
40. Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911). Founder of the school of Eugenics; creator of fingerprint analysis. Conducted studies in evolution, experimental psychology, and heredity. Numerous awards and honors from scientific societies in England and France. *Dictionary of National Biography (1901-1911)*, 70-73. Hardin, 214 ff.
41. *Macmillan's Magazine* 11 (November 1864-April 1865), 157-166. This as well as his second essay, a continuation of the first, were reprinted in *The Occidental Quarterly*, 2 (3), Fall 2002, 45-68.
42. For a discussion and criticism of these letters, see James W. Barclay, "The Race Suicide Scare," *Nineteenth Century*, December 1906, 895-899.
43. Karl Pearson (1857-1936). Statistician and biologist; educated at University College School; King's College, Cambridge; University of Heidelberg; University of Berlin; from 1884, at University College, London; FRS, 1896; Darwin Medal, 1899; founded journal *Biometrika*, 1901; 1911 first Galton Professor of Eugenics; numerous scientific papers and books. *Dictionary of National Biography (1931-1940)*, 681-684.
44. Karl Pearson, "Women and Labor," *Fortnightly Review*, January-June 1894, 562.
45. Cited in Hobhouse, 114-115.
46. Semmel, 37.
47. *Ibid.*, 39.
48. Karl Pearson, "Socialism and Natural Selection," *Fortnightly Review*, July-December 1894, 2-5.
49. *Ibid.*, 18.
50. *Ibid.*, 5.
51. *Ibid.*, 6.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*, 11.
54. *Ibid.*, 14.
55. *Ibid.*, 16.
56. Pearson, "Women and Labor," 569.
57. *Ibid.*, 576.
58. McGovern, 499.
59. Semmel, 49.
60. *Ibid.*, 50.
61. Hayes, 340.
62. A. M. Gollin, *Proconsul in Politics: A Study of Lord Milner in Opposition and in Power* (London: Anthony Blond, 1964), 123.
63. *Ibid.*, 127.
64. *The Times*, July 27, 1925.
65. *Ibid.*
66. Gollin, 130-131.

67. Edward Crankshaw, *The Forsaken Idea: A Study of Viscount Milner* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952), 162.
68. Cited in Semmel, 181.
69. Gollin, 156.
70. Gollin, 115.
71. Semmel, 181-182.
72. In the balance of this essay, sociobiology refers to both sociobiology and its offspring, evolutionary psychology and biosociology.
73. For example, see William H. Tucker, *The Science and Politics of Racial Research* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
74. For example, see Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 2002), reviewed in this issue of *The Occidental Quarterly*.
75. Group evolution, the socialization of the state, and the British Empire and its race-based paternalism.
76. Louis Andrews, "Science for Tomorrow," *The Occidental Quarterly* 2, (1) Spring 2002, 73-79.
77. Richard J. Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1994) and Malcom Brown, "What Is Intelligence, and Who Has It?" *The New York Times*, October 16, 1994.