

A look at anti-human ecologism's forebear

by Stuart K. Lewis

The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist: Darwin

by Adrian Desmond and James Moore
Warner Books, New York, 1991
808 pages, hardbound, \$35

For anyone who's suspected that the Charles Darwin, author of the dominant atheistic modern theory of evolution called "natural selection," had a political and ideological rather than a scientific agenda, this book provides a massive compilation of facts to prove it.

In some 700 pages of text, the authors show that Darwin, who published his *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* in 1859, was an avid follower of the economic theory of Parson Thomas Malthus (natural resources can't keep up with population) and based his entire theory on malthusian tenets.

The book portrays Darwin's hostility to the concept of *imago viva Dei*, or man made in the living image of God as the crown of creation, which is shared by Jews and Christians. The authors say: "Apes failed to frighten him; the brutalization threat passed harmlessly overhead. What angered him was quite the reverse, the arrogance of those who put mankind on a pedestal," or "Darwin became more and more frustrated by an arrogant theology. 'People often talk of the wonderful event of intellectual Man appearing,' he sniffed, smashing another idol, yet 'the appearance of insects with other senses is more wonderful.' Human chauvinism [sic] now outraged him."

Darwin's disbelief in any spark of the divine nature in man is also evident in the malthusian mechanics of how he thought evolution functions. Instead of a negentropic universe where natural law guides events to a higher state of perfection, Darwin believed the hand of evolution is guided by mechanistic forces, like the magic workings of the "invisible hand" in the economic theories of Malthus and Adam Smith:

"More and more he realized the irony of perfection arising from cutthroat competition. The perfect adaptive nuance was 'the surviving one of 10,000 thousand trials—each step being

perfect or nearly so . . . to the then-existing conditions.' Out of the millions that perish comes the one perfect being."

Darwin's tradition today

It is also interesting to see how Darwin's anti-scientific tradition persists today. In the forthcoming Spring 1993 issue of the Schiller Institute quarterly *Fidelio* in an article entitled "On the Subject of God," Lyndon LaRouche criticized a recent address by Oxford's Richard Dawkins, which had labeled belief in God a disorder of the brain analogous to a "computer virus." The address had included the formulation: "These are arbitrary, hereditary beliefs which people are told at a critical age, passed on from your parents rather like a virus." Dawkins had added "that 'evolutionary theory' has removed any scientific basis for arguing the existence of God, and said that people who believe in a God who is responsible for the order and beauty of the universe are 'stupid.'"

Dawkins's attack on the coherence of science and faith is just a printout from the beliefs of Darwin, paraphrased by Desmond and Moore as follows: "Habits and beliefs had evolved, inextricably linked to the mental machinery, every instinct, every desire could be located here, each and evolutionary inheritance—even the adoration of God; 'love of the deity [is the] effect of such organization.'" Darwin thought that "instincts pass from generation to generation, coded somehow in the brain." He even thought that "anti-social behavior can be inherited"—a belief later codified by the Nazis.

What kind of person held such views? According to the authors, "Darwin was living on a family fortune, and thrusting a bitter competition on a starving world for its own good." He was a petty English squire who never worked a day in his life and associated himself with the atheistic freethinkers of his day—although he himself was too scared to publicly admit much of their anti-Christian bias. He took over 20 years to publish his theories of evolution because he feared for his reputation. Throughout his life he associated with those who went to séances and those who believed in phrenology (judging people by the shape of their heads) and claimed the "European aristocracy is handsomer than the middle classes."

Darwin collected specimens—worms, barnacles, beetles—his major occupation. He declared, "I am a withered leaf for every subject except Science," and "Orchids moved him more than pipe organs, corals more than the Hallelujah Chorus." He suffered from a severe stomach ailment, the cause of which no one could figure out—to the point of taking quack remedies. His ailments kept him from traveling so much that in 1870s when he went visiting, it was "the first time in 25 years that Charles had been anyone's house guest outside the immediate family." While the great detail was certainly welcome, when the authors described the period to put his life in historical context, or his travels on the *Beagle*, it became a bit much in the last chapter in endless descriptions of Darwin's final days. Who cares about brandy trickling down his beard onto his nightdress, or how many times he vomited?