

Aborigines and Evolutionary Racism

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The sinful desire to dominate, reject, ignore or mistreat others for one's own particular motives has never required much excuse. However, Darwin gave it a tremendous impetus, as has been shown before by both evolutionist and creationist writers. An unusual book helps document the links between evolutionary thinking and an upsurge in racism in Australian colonial history.

The book is called *Aborigines in White Australia: A Documentary History of the Attitudes Affecting Official Policy and the Australian Aborigine 1697–1973*.¹ Apart from a few introductory/editorial comments, it consists largely of substantial excerpts from documents as varied as parliamentary transcripts, court records, letters to editors, anthropological reports, and so forth.

Increase in brutality

Far from showing a progressive enlightenment as time goes on, one can see a distinct change for the worse after 1859, with a marked increase in callousness, ill-treatment and brutality towards Aborigines being evident in official attitudes. As the book's editor writes:

'In 1859 Charles Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species* popularized the notion of biological (and therefore social) evolution. Scholars began to discuss civilization as a unilinear process with races able to ascend or descend a graduated scale. The European was ... the "fittest to survive" ... [The Aboriginal] was doomed to die out according to a "natural law", like the dodo and the dinosaur. This theory, supported by the facts at hand [i.e. that Aborigines were dying out, which was due to ill-treatment and disease—C.W.]

continued to be quoted until well into the twentieth century when it was noticed that the dark-skinned race was multiplying. Until that time it could be used to justify neglect and murder.'

In the transcript of an interrogation of a policeman during a Royal Commission of inquiry in 1861 (p. 83), we read concerning the use of force against tribal Aborigines:

'And if we did not punish the blacks they would look upon it as a confession of weakness?'

'Yes, that is exactly my opinion.'

'It is a question as to which is the strongest race—if we submit to them they would despise us for it?'

'Yes ...'

The influence of evolutionary thinking can also be seen in a transcript on page 100. The writer, also author of an 1888 book, is justifying the killing of Aborigines in the State of Victoria. He writes:

'As to the ethics of the question, there can be drawn no final conclusion.'

He says that this is because it is

'a question of temperament; to the sentimental it is undoubtedly an iniquity; to the practical it represents a distinct step in human progress, involving the sacrifice of a few thousands of an inferior race. ... But the fact is that mankind, as a race, cannot choose to act solely as moral beings. They are governed by animal laws which urge them blindly forward upon tracks they scarce can choose for themselves.'

In other words, he is justifying 'iniquity' (another word for sin) by appealing to the 'animal laws' of the evolutionary struggle for survival. Opposition can be dismissed as 'sentimental'—lacking understanding of such 'natural laws'.

On page 96, someone also writing in an 1880 newspaper said:

'Nothing that we can do will alter the inscrutable and withal immutable laws which direct our progress on this globe. By these laws the native races of Australia were doomed on the advent of the white man, and the only thing left for us to do is to assist in carrying them out [i.e. helping the "laws" of

evolution by hastening the Aborigines' doom—C.W.] with as little cruelty as possible ... We must rule the blacks by fear ... '.

These immutable 'laws of evolution' have, of course, always been a complete fiction. The continuing social tension surrounding Aboriginal issues is, in large part, a legacy of these past evils.

Church backdown on creation

Many genuine Australian Christians and church institutions, though occasionally somewhat patronizing, seem to have tried to protect Aborigines from the full brunt of the many inhumanities sanctioned by evolutionary thinking. However, like today, most church leaders and institutions compromised in some form or another with this new Darwinian 'science'.

Virtually no Christian voice did what was required—to affirm boldly the real history of man as given in the Bible. To stress that we all go back only a few thousand years, to Noah's family, would have refuted Darwinian racism. It would have anticipated the findings of modern genetics, that we are all biologically extremely close. It would also have given a completely different perspective on Aboriginal status and culture—for example, it would have been seen as no surprise that they already had many stories of their own about the Flood, and some about Babel. What a dramatically different starting point for missionary outreach—reaching your relatives, not inferior 'savages'!

The false belief system of evolution has been used since its inception to dull people to the moral absolutes of Scripture, whether justifying Nazism, Stalinism, the abortion holocaust, indifference to starvation in Africa, or the maltreatment of indigenous people.

God's Word has always stated that He has 'made of one blood [i.e. from one man, Adam] all nations of men' (Acts 17:26, cf. 1 Cor. 15:45). The answer to racism is in Genesis, which tells us that all people are closely related.

Official Crimes

We have already documented¹ the murderous trade in body parts to northern

hemisphere museums, based on Darwin's teaching that indigenous Australians were living 'missing links'. Early atrocities against Aborigines (which were also often 'justified' by pre-Darwinian evolutionary ideas) frequently brought swift retribution from the authorities. But after Darwin's work appeared, such horrors, of all types, were much more often officially sanctioned.

A letter-writer to a newspaper in 1880, incensed by the treatment of his fellow man, stated:

'This, in plain language, is how we deal with the aborigines: On occupying new territory the aboriginal inhabitants are treated exactly in the same way as the wild beasts or birds the settlers may find there. Their lives and their property, the nets, canoes, and weapons which represent as much labor to them as the stock and buildings of the white settler, are held by the Europeans as being at their absolute disposal. Their goods are taken, their children forcibly stolen, their women carried away, entirely at the caprice of white men. The least show of resistance is answered by a rifle bullet ... [those] who fancied the amusement have murdered, ravished, and robbed the blacks without let or hindrance. Not only have they been unchecked, but the Government of the colony has been always at hand to save them from the consequences of their crime.'²

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