

is silent on the other transitional fossil series that I mentioned, the Kenya mollusks.

Mayr defends Darwin's theory in chapters 8, 9, and 10 of the *Growth of Biological Thought* and there explains how the unwise mistake the controversies over the mechanisms of evolution for refutations of the fact of evolution. This is one of the many creationist errors and it was to their arguments that any fair-minded reader would see my article was directed. I made both things plain on pages 37 and 42. Indeed, I cited Gould, who has been such a tireless defender of Darwin that only a desperate man, or an ignorant one, could cite him to the contrary. Lewontin, a deeply committed Marxist, explains and defends Darwinism clearly and accurately in part one of the *Dialectical Biologist* (with R. Levins, Harvard University Press, 1985). The French Nobel Laureates Jacques Monod and Francois Jacob explain and defend natural selection and its improvements in *Chance and Necessity* (Alfred Knopf, 1971), and *The Possible and The Actual* (University of Washington Press, 1982) respectively.

Mr. Johnston likes Michael Denton's book. Denton, too, argues like a creationist. No room for modern theory in his science. "By its very nature," Denton claims, "evolution cannot be substantiated in the way that is usual in science by experiment and direct observation."⁴ It is tiresome to repeat, but in my article I said that scientific theories are postulations of mechanisms and events that explain regularities in nature and thus go well beyond the observable empirical evidence (see pages 40-42, 49). If Denton's criteria were applied to Newton, to relativity, or to quantum mechanics, we would have to say they are also inadequate theories because there is no observable evidence for them. But there is direct evidence for them, and for natural selection and the

synthesis with genetics as well. They explain and predict successfully. That is what scientific theories do.

Denton's is one of a genre of books that attempts to debunk scientific theories by showing that their founders speculated or that the theories do not explain everything. But this is true of every scientific theory, as Mr. Denton should know since he cites Thomas Kuhn, who began a brilliant career in part by pointing this out. Denton succeeds only in breaking down open doors leading to empty rooms. The literature cited in my article and the article itself are sufficient to refute every damaging claim Denton alleges. In the real world Darwinian theories of evolution are alive and well.

Notes

1. See "Natural Selection and its Scientific Status," in *Popper: Selections*, ed. David Miller (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 242.
2. Ernst Mayr, *Growth of Biological Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belnap Press, 1982), 430.
3. See Niles Eldredge, *The Monkey Business* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1982), 67.
4. Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, Md.: Adler and Adler, 1986), 55; cf., 56, 69, 75.

Teaching American Foreign Policy

To the Editor:

I seldom write intemperate letters, and I usually write shorter ones. This one will be long and intemperate, and you and your contributor, André Ryerson ("Questions of Bias: How Eight College Courses Teach American Foreign Policy," 1 (Fall 1988): 5-34) deserve it.

Several times in his (otherwise somewhat interesting) review essay, Ryerson refers to me as coming from the "far Left" (19-20). He thinks I "portray America as an evil empire."

His only "evidence" for this assertion is his gross misreading of my short book, *Defining Defense: The 1985 Military Budget*. If Ryerson had noticed that this was published by the Cato Institute in Washington, D.C., and if he knew something about the orientation of think tanks in this country, he could not have said these things. I spent two years in the 1970s as a fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. Though I did not agree with I.P.S.'s policy on domestic social and economic matters, and on the international economy, and though I differed from its predominant revisionist analysis of the origins of the cold war and the sources of other American "interventions," and though I did not share the sympathies of most of I.P.S.'s members for this or that government in the world, particularly the Third World, I enjoyed working with several I.P.S. fellows and directors on matters relating to the United States military budget.

I consider myself a member of the Old Right, in my orientations toward domestic economic and social matters and toward international politics—sort of like Robert Taft. Felix Morley, who was Robert Taft's foreign policy advisor, once wrote a nice introduction to one of my books, also published by Cato. I do not believe that America is an "evil empire." My thinking is also akin to that of William Graham Sumner, who taught at Yale around the turn of the twentieth century.

I served as a division director in the Pentagon for the better part of three years. I do not criticize the American military, and I enjoyed very good relations with military

professionals. My objections to the kind of military budget, national strategy, and foreign policy that we have had for almost forty years stems from their statist imposition on the liberties and scope of autonomous economic activities of private individuals and groups in our own country.

Before government, I was the chief executive officer of an industrial corporation. I am a *practicing* capitalist. My first two presidential votes were for Dwight Eisenhower in 1956 and Richard Nixon in 1960. Lately I have been voting for Libertarians.

Maybe Mr. Ryerson should issue me an apology, in your pages. Maybe he should read my book(s). Maybe he should learn something about the intellectual history of foreign policy in this country. Maybe he should learn some political science (French and humanities will not do in this league). Maybe he should understand capitalism better.

In fact—because I am getting sick and tired of such ignorant and vicious remarks in your kind of journal—I will generalize a bit. Looking at your masthead, I see a bunch of statist—indeed, erstwhile Marxists and Trotskyites and such. Let me say (since we are dealing here with a McCarthyite witch-hunt) that I, in contrast, have never been a Marxist or a Trotskyite. I don't have your burden of penance.

Oh, to be sure, your people are now neoconservatives. But I regard neoconservatives as old statist liberals warmed-over, or just liberals who have been mugged, by someone here or abroad. I don't like their former politics, and I don't trust their conversions. In particular, they do not seem to care what the state spends—and then exacts coercively from its citizens—for various ideological crusades in the world. They do not understand, or give a rap for, American enterprise. Few, if any, of them have earned

a dime honestly—and by that I do not mean on editorial pages or in academia. In many cases their sympathies for certain foreign countries outweigh their concern for solvency, and for individual liberties, at home.

You are lucky that I am so *laissez-faire* and antistatist that I do not resort to libel suits. Just never print such stupid remarks again.

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Dr. Ryerson Responds:

If one sorts out the omnidirectional buckshot blast of vituperation from Dr. Ravenal's letter, his essential grievance is that I have situated his foreign policy and defense writings on the wrong side of the political spectrum.

The short answer to Dr. Ravenal is that his domestic policy positions are so far to

the right—in their antistatistism—as to require a foreign policy of American global retreat and categorical nonintervention that coincides with the policy recommendations of the Left. Dr. Ravenal concedes that our adversaries will probably gain ground as we retreat, but he thinks we will do even worse should we stand firm, because, as he puts it, "The American Century is over." We should respond to the East-West tensions of Europe by dissolving NATO, and if the Soviets threaten our land-based missiles, we should dismantle them. Such are the policy changes that logically follow, according to Dr. Ravenal, from our defeat in Vietnam.

The point of my article was that in teaching foreign policy, American colleges give a disproportionate place to the positions of the Left. If the writings of Dr. Ravenal are used to "balance" the Left with the views of the Right, this can only be conceived as an inspired political joke.