

## Notes on Social Darwinism

### 1) Charles Robert Darwin (1809-82)

ODNB = “naturalist, geologist, originator of the theory of natural selection”

Philosophy: materialist, love of science in itself

Slogans: “natural selection”, “preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life”

*Journal of Researches into the Geology and Natural History of the Various Countries visited by HMS Beagle* (1839)

*On the Origin of Species* (1859)

*The Descent of Man* (1871)

### 2) Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)

ODNB = “philosopher, social theorist, and sociologist”

Philosophy: utilitarian individualist

Slogans: “law of organic progress”, “survival of the fittest”

*First Principles* (1860)

*Principles of Biology* (1864-7)

*Principles of Sociology* (1876-96)

*Principles of Ethics* (1879-93)

early articles in *Westminster Review*

### 3) Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895)

ODNB = “biologist and science educationist”

Philosophy: agnostic

Slogan: “the struggle for existence”

*Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863)

*Evolution and Ethics* (1893)

articles in the *Nineteenth Century*

### 4) Karl Pearson (1857-1936)

ODNB = “statistician and eugenicist”

Philosophy: national socialist

Slogans: “the organic nature of the state”, “the struggle of race with race”

*Chances of Death, and Other Studies in Evolution* (1897)

*Treasury of Human Inheritance* (1909-33)

founder with the zoologist WFR Weldon of *Biometrika* (1901-)

### Other significant thinkers:

Charles Lyell, A.R. Wallace, Francis Galton, August Weismann, Benjamin Kidd

### Further Reading

Peter Dickens, *Social Darwinism*, Open University Press, 2000

Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945*, CUP, 1997

P.J. Bowler, *Charles Darwin: The Man and his Influence*, 1990