
Satan and the Scopes Monkey Trial

How *Do* These Buttons Get Hot?

by Stanley Ezrol

Lyndon LaRouche called the Nov. 2 Presidential election a second loss of the Scopes Monkey Trial of July 1925.

That trial in Dayton, Tennessee, marked the crest of the already breaking, 1920s Fundamentalist wave, in which “evolutionism” became the hot button trigger to wildly irrational fear and rage against a scientific approach to understanding progress. This functioned much as “pro-life” and “gay marriage” became the leading hot-buttons by means of which tens of millions were impelled to march, zombie-like, to the polls in support of the supposed moral values of crazy, homicidal George W. Bush against the supposed immorality of abortion and same-sex marriage.

As with our recent election campaign disaster, the super-heated Creationism controversy of the 1920s was carefully shaped by key figures promoting the stupidity on both sides of the issue. As in our situation today, the partisans of this inane conflagration focussed on it, rather than on the still unresolved economic crisis which had precipitated the Great War of 1914-1918, and which continues to threaten the very existence of the modern, American System of sovereign nation states dedicated, each to their own welfare, and to that of the others, both for now and for posterity.

Although in the United States, the effects of the failure of the 1920s to reverse the debt-spiralling system of the 1919 Versailles Treaty were blocked by Franklin Roosevelt’s election and subsequent Presidency, we are now still confronted by the same synarchist movement whose Fascist regimes we defeated in World War II. Now, however, they have the toe-hold in our Presidency, which Roosevelt’s movement had denied them in the 1930s.

‘Hell and the High-Schools’

The stage for the Scopes trial was set by the post-World War I activity of The World’s Christian Fundamentals Association and the Anti-Evolution League, whose leading spokesman was William Jennings Bryan, three-time Presidential candidate and Woodrow Wilson’s pre-War Secretary of State. Bryan, as typified by his famous “Cross of Gold” speech at the 1896 Democratic Party convention, had built his earlier career and popularity, as a champion of the common man against the rapacious financial aristocracy. But, in the face of the post-war collapse of U.S. agriculture, and the

build-up of the speculative securities bubble, which was to pop in 1929, Bryan focussed his efforts not on the public welfare, but on the lunatic insistence on the “literal truth” of the *Genesis* account of Creation.

The creationists’ chief text was a Jonathan Edwards-style screed, *Hell and the High-Schools*, by the Mississippi evangelist, T.T. Martin. The fundamentalists successfully organized a number of southern states to outlaw the teaching of “evolution” or, as the Tennessee statute put it, “any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible,” and to put this question to all candidates for public office as a test of “Christian” support. In *Hell and the High-Schools*, Martin demanded the pulling down of the “two pillars” of the evolutionists, namely, school board trustees and the state legislatures which vote funding for the teaching of evolution, as Samson pulled down the temple of the Philistines.

Just as our pro-lifers today insist that abortion is worse than the mass slaughter of innocent men, women (pregnant or not), and children, through unprovoked war, preventable famine, plague, or floods and other natural disasters which modern infrastructure could render relatively harmless, Martin wrote: “We will slay these Philistines, the greatest curse that has come upon man since God created him in His own image. What is a war, what is an epidemic that sweeps people away by the hundred thousand, compared to this scourge that under the guise of ‘science’ . . . is sweeping our sons and daughters away from God, away from God’s word, taking from them their Redeemer and Saviour, to spend eternity in hell?”

Drawing on the propaganda of the Great War, Martin explained: “The Germans who poisoned the wells and springs of northern France and Belgium that the little children might drink and die, were angels compared to the text-book writers and publishers who are poisoning the books used in our schools that our children . . . may have their souls poisoned and sent down to eternal death; that the Germans who poisoned candy and poured it out from aeroplanes that the starving Belgian and French children might eat it and die, were angels compared to the teachers, paid by our taxes, who feed our children’s minds with the deadly, soul-destroying poison of Evolution.”

But, the putatively “pro-science” opposition championed Darwinist race theories, not the Platonic scientific tradition of Nicholas of Cusa, Johannes Kepler, Gottfried Leibniz, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Kästner, Carl Gauss, and Bernhard Riemann. Britain’s Thomas Henry Huxley, the leading figure of the British “Liberal Imperialist” opposition to the American System, which was to center in the kooky Fabian Society, was the key 19th Century promoter of Darwinism. The Fabians’ claim was that Darwin’s theory of evolution, through random mutation and survival of the fittest, eliminated any necessity to believe either in a Creator of the Universe, or in the creative capabilities of man.

At the time of the creationism controversy, “Darwinism”

was openly associated with the Nazi race-cleansing policies which, we now politely forget, were widely held by figures in Europe and the Americas, who are now commonly held to be respectable, rational, and humane. Hunter's *Civic Biology*, the book which Scopes was brought to trial for using in his teaching, ends its section on evolution with this:

"The Races of Man. At the present time there exist upon the earth five races or varieties of man, each very different from the other in instincts, social customs, and, to an extent, in structure. These are the Ethiopian or Negro type . . . the Malay or brown race . . . the American Indian; the Mongolian or yellow race . . . and finally, the highest type of all, the Caucasians, represented by the civilized white inhabitants of Europe and America."

In *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin had written, "The civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace the savage races."

The Dayton Affair

The Scopes Trial, or at least its escalation to become a great circus, watched from all corners of the globe, was planned in Richmond, Virginia, in the home of the occultist, pornographic novelist James Branch Cabell, at a meeting between his friend, the Baltimore curmudgeon journalist H. L. Mencken (known as the leading popularizer in the United States of the Nazi precursor, Friedrich Nietzsche), and the Nietzschean atheist attorney, Clarence Darrow. A fourth, unseen, presence in the room would have been the mutual friend and collaborator of Cabell and Mencken, the Fabian Satanist who called himself "The Great Beast," Aleister Crowley.

Crowley and Mencken had collaborated in spreading ostensibly "pro-German" propaganda in the United States prior to World War I, whose rabid character seemed calculated to provoke antipathy, not sympathy, for their cause. H.G. Wells, and others of Crowley's colleagues at the Fabian *New Age* journal, had joined Britain's Wellington House war propaganda agency, at the same time that Crowley travelled to the United States to work with Mencken. Mencken introduced Crowley to Cabell, who, in his medieval "Sorcerers and Dragons" type of sex fantasy novels, expressed ideas he shared with Crowley through the mouth of his fictional hero, Juergen, who often repeated the following: "Do that which pleases you. For all men that live have but a little while to live and none knows his fate thereafter. So that a man possesses nothing certainly save a brief loan of his body: and yet the body of man is capable of much curious pleasure," and "I'll drink anything once."

In that Richmond lair of Satan, Mencken secured Darrow's agreement to defend the cause of "science," in the person of the teacher, John Scopes, whom the Dayton town fathers had arrested to test Tennessee's new anti-Evolution statute, after ensuring American Civil Liberties Union backing for their defendant. Bryan agreed to head the prosecu-

tion team.

Thus, the Dayton Affair became an international media event. It was reported throughout the United States, in London, and worldwide. It was the first trial from which live radio broadcasts were made. The atmosphere in Dayton that hot mid-July week was that of a mass revival meeting. Faith healers, snake charmers, holy rollers, and others crowded the small village. The Anti-Evolution League set up outdoor book-tables where *Hell and the High-Schools* and other material was sold. After the first day's trial, for which 1,000 spectators crowded the village courtroom, the proceedings were moved outdoors to the courthouse lawn, and conducted in this part-carnival, part-revival-meeting atmosphere. Mencken contributed to the heat by calling the locals "morons," "ignoramuses," and "yokels."

Although Scopes was convicted by the Dayton jury, the Tennessee Supreme Court reversed the decision on a technicality, without overturning the statute, or provoking the Federal appeal which Darrow and Mencken had sought. Tennessee, however, never again attempted to enforce the statute, and the whole anti-Evolution craze fizzled out. Bryan died of a heart-attack six days after the end of the trial.

Postscript

The Fundamentalist anti-Evolution craze died out, but Mencken and Darrow's efforts were not entirely without issue. Mencken, through his reporting on the trial, continued a provocation he had begun in 1917, with his essay attacking the cultural wasteland of the South, "The Sahara of the Bozart." There, he claimed that the South failed to achieve because the "Whites" were genetically inferior to the "Mulattoes," because, he argued, the Whites were largely Celtic, whereas the "Mulattoes," were enriched with the Norman genes of the plantation owners. Thus, he claimed, the slaves and their progeny were superior because they were more closely related than were the poor whites, to the English Plantagenet dynasty. This essay, along with "The Dayton Affair," is what Nashville's *Fugitive* poet group claimed as their motivation for launching the "Nashville Agrarian" movement. That movement promoted the culture of the slave-holding Confederacy, as part of the American Fascism of the 1930s. Mencken and Cabell participated in the great public debates which built the influence of the Agrarians in the thirties.

Together with its allies among pro-Spanish Inquisition renegades from the Catholic Church, the Agrarian tradition is embraced as the founding doctrine of today's so-called "Religious Right," as well as of the synarchist's Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF) movement against classical culture. It is that effort which laid the basis for the post-1964 counter-culture, including a revival of hot-button Fundamentalism, which plagues us today. It is also true that, to this day, the dispute between "Darwinian Evolution" and "Biblical Creationism," has overshadowed any real scientific understanding of natural development in American culture.