Opinion

Social Darwinism revisited

To the Editor:

I would like to reply to a letter by Paul Linenthal [*Ideas: Social Darwinism and Capitalism are on the Wane," March 12]. Many people have commented on the length of my previous letter, so I will try to keep this one short.

First, I'd like to set the record straight. I was not quoting Linenthal when I stated that someone had said to me, "I don't have to live like this; I can read it." It is correct that Linenthal attributed it to himself. I am sorry if Linenthal took it personally. But obviously, it inspired him to write his letter.

Yes, it is unfortunate that I had mischaracterized Social Darwinism and Capitalism as being in the same breath without taking pains to make them clear. I am sure that you do not doubt Linenthal's sincerity. I believe he is a man of good will. However, all too often I have heard from the mouths of neo-conservatives, "Let them figure it out for themselves. Whichever way you look at it, lacking the weaker members of society is to find for themselves the fruits of Social Darwinism."

What is a laid-off, 40-year-old, Has-a-collage worker going to do to feed his family? Go to computer programming school? Where is the food going to come from if he does?

Ideally, our government and society should be worrying about long-range problems. But, in the immediate situations, weaker members of society need help. I believe that, if one expects anything from society, society should expect something in return. Life's big bang is very small. I don't understand why the concept of "going to society" conjures up horrible visions of emptying one's pockets to Uncle Sam. Certainly, you know that your time and effort is much harder to give.

This is why we are in the present dilemma we are in today. It is so much easier to give money that people have been hoping that the money would make the problems go away. I am certainly not in favor of free handouts. It is a crying shame that so many people are unemployed when we know that there are so many things that need to be done.

US Post Office recognizes "Next House"

To the Editor:

Evidently the name "Next House" is finally official, according to the US Postal Service. Within one of the USPS's latest publications, the ZIP +4 guide for 1985, MIT has been broken down into nearly 100 sections, each with its own nine-digit ZIP code. For the most part, these sections are listed by their addresses; in some, in addition to the address, the name of the building or company is also given. For 50 Memorial Drive, "Next House" is prominently listed. For that matter, "New House" is listed as being next door.

This interested in the actual codes may call 800-228-8777.

For the three years that I lived in Next House, I always hoped that MIT would officially refer to the community by the name used by its residents. Perhaps now that the USPS has picked it up, MIT will follow.

Stuart Gilbow '84

Questions for German House

To the Editor:

About the origin of harassment.

I would like to take the opportunity and raise a few questions to members of the German House which are the undersigned of a Feedback letter ["German students harassed by films," March 5].

1) Do you agree that millions of people were gassed, experimented on, and denied their basic human rights by Germans during the Second World War?
2) Do you advocate that we stop showing any movie that blames any people or country for war crimes?
3) Do you think that people should not be reminded of war crimes because some people or nations responsible for the crimes had enough of remembering and would like to forget?
4) Do you think that the rest of us can forget?

David Israel-Rosen G

Greenhound gives the Beavers a break on Spring Break.

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