

# **Lester Frank Ward: Godfather of American Central Planning**

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Major work: *Dynamic Sociology: Or Applied Social Science, as Based Upon Static Sociology and the Less Complex Sciences* (New York: D. Appleton, 1883). It sold 500 copies in the 1880s: <http://bit.ly/WardDS500>. Second printing: 1897. Available on Google Books.

Volume 1: <http://bit.ly/DynamicSociology-1>

Volume 2: <http://bit.ly/DynamicSociology-2>

His perspective:

No teleology (purpose) in the natural realm (I, 57; II, 32).

Human consciousness is teleological (II, 9).

Human teleology is opposed to laissez faire (I, 55).

Man now directs nature and evolution (I, 29; II, 89).

The state directs social evolution (I, 37).

The state is a society (II, 397).

Science is the basis of progress (II, 497, 507).

A scientific elite must direct progress (II, 504, 535).

The masses are thoughtless (II, 506, 600).

The masses can be taught (II, 598, 602).

The state must monopolize education (II, 572, 589, 602).

Censorship is mandatory (II, 547).

Nature wastes; man should not (II, 494).

Competition is wasteful (I, 74; II, 576, 584).

Competition is laissez faire (I, 74).

Mankind is honest (II, 508).

Man's problem is lack of knowledge (II, 238).

Ignorance produces crime (II, 241).

Dominion is by means of the intellect (II, 385).

Government is to be founded on secrecy (II, 395).

Dissent can be illegitimate (II, 407).

Morality is strictly an individual matter (II, 373).

Scientists are selfless (II, 583).

State administration is almost always better (II, 579).

Profitless management is honest management (II, 582).

Population control is mandatory (II, 307, 465).

The masses must be made comfortable (II, 368).

The social goal is zero suffering (II, 468).

## Bibliography

### *Lester Frank Ward*

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Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind* ch. X: "Lester Ward and the Science of Society." New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950. <http://bit.ly/CommagerWard>

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Sidney Fine, *Laissez-Faire and the General Welfare State*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956. (pp. 253–64)

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Murray N. Rothbard, "The Politics of Political Economists." *Economic Controversies*. One sentence: "And let us not overlook the eminent interventionist sociologist Lester Frank Ward, whose proposed 'scientific,' 'positive,' planned economy, would consist of a 'social engineering' based on statistical information fed from all parts of the country into a central bureau of statistics." (p. 340)

### *Social Darwinism*

Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*. Boston: Beacon Press, [1944] 1959. <http://bit.ly/HofstadterSD>

Thomas C. Leonard, "Origins of the Myth of Social Darwinism: The Ambiguous Legacy of Richard Hofstadter's Social Darwinism in American Thought," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* (March 2009). <http://bit.ly/LeonardHofstadter>

Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Social Thought, 1860–1945: Nature as model and nature as threat*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

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