Lester Frank Ward:
Godfather of American Central Planning
Gary North
Austrian Economics Research Conference
(March 24, 2018)


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


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


Lester Frank Ward (1841-1913) was an American paleobotanist, sociologist, and educator. He was the leading American opponent of social Darwinism and of impotent government. Lester Ward was born in Joliet, Ill., on June 18, 1841. In short, Ward anticipated the development of modern governmental responsibilities (the welfare state), planning, and the expansion of formal education as a funnel for maximum participation by citizens in public affairs. Ward epitomized the "engaged" or involved intellectual who values knowledge for its application to the resolution of social problems. He strongly favored cooperation between social welfare and the social sciences—though a divergence between the two was characteristic of the last decades of his life.