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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LESTER WARD AND Committee  
ITS REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW DEAL

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Ward had been one of the early advocates of a planned economy and a regulated society. In the New Deal, the idea was again introduced, but more forcefully and with greater acceptance by the general public. How greatly did Ward influence the preparation and promulgation of the New Deal?

It is always difficult to trace direct lines of influence between the philosophy of one man and its practical application by a later generation. Such was the case in this investigation. There is no evidence that Franklin Roosevelt ever read any of the works of Ward, nor was he personally acquainted with him. However, much of the ideology of the New Deal and of Roosevelt exemplifies the spirit of Wardian philosophy. Like Ward, Roosevelt saw the necessity of planning society in order that it might benefit all its members. As Daniel S. Field states:

The belief that government had a responsibility for social welfare and that the individual could claim government aid—ideas then taking form in the writings of Ward, My, Patten, and

## INTRODUCTION

A cursory study of intellectual history reveals that theories sometimes appear in one period of time, apparently disappear for a while, and then reappear at some later date. Such a situation, the apparent similarities between the philosophy of Lester Ward, an American sociologist in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the policies and attitudes of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his advisers in the 1930's, stirred this writer's curiosity.

Although there were reform movements between the period of Lester Ward and Roosevelt, such as Populism and Progressivism, no reform movement until the New Deal advocated the positive governmental action to the degree that Ward had foreseen. While Populism and Progressivism called for government to be a regulator, the New Deal designed government to be an active initiator of social programs.

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It is always difficult to trace direct lines of influence between the philosophy of one man and its practical application by a later generation. Such was the case in this investigation. There is no evidence that Franklin Roosevelt ever read any of the works of Ward, nor was he personally acquainted with him. However, much of the ideology of the New Deal and of Roosevelt exemplifies the spirit of Wardian philosophy. Like Ward, Roosevelt saw the necessity of planning society in order that it might benefit all its members. As Daniel R. Fusfeld states:

The belief that government had a responsibility for social welfare and that the individual could claim government aid---ideas then taking form in the writings of Ward, Ely, Patten, and

others, and in the political agitation of the Populists---went beyond the ideals of noblesse oblige of the Hudson Valley aristocracy. The older viewpoint recognized that the individual had a responsibility for others, while the newer argued that the community as a whole had a responsibility for its less fortunate members.<sup>1</sup>

This paper will explore the possible connection between Roosevelt and Ward, or at least, the parallel between Ward's thought in the 1880's and Roosevelt's programs of the 1930's.

Ward was born on June 15, 1841, in Juliet, Illinois, the tenth and last child of James and Silience Ward. His father was a jack-of-all-trades and the family spent much time travelling throughout the Middle West and New York State. Ward spent his childhood and early adulthood outdoors as a farm hand, and through this work gained a great love for and curiosity about nature. This interest continued throughout his life when, becoming more scientific through his study of history, geology, and biology.<sup>2</sup>

The Ward family was never wealthy. James Ward died when Lester was sixteen, leaving him and his brothers with the responsibility of the economic well-being of the family. An elder brother, George O'Brien Ward, had opened a factory to produce wagon hubs in Spanglers, Pennsylvania, where Lester and another brother, Ernest, was employed in 1855. During this period, Ward educated himself in Greek, French, German, and Latin in his spare time. After two years, the factory failed, and Ward was forced to find odd jobs to maintain existence. Through these struggles, Ward gained a great

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel R. Fusfeld, The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Origin of the New Deal (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 15.

## LESTER FRANK WARD AND THE TEMPER OF HIS TIMES

In glancing through modern college sociology texts one is hard pressed to find the name of Lester Frank Ward mentioned. Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and William Graham Sumner are identified and given credit for the formation of modern sociological theories. But Ward seems to be the lost prophet. In his preface to his biography of Lester Ward, Samuel Chugerman says:

The neglect of Ward is one of the major intellectual crimes of the age. Although he was born a century, perhaps more, ahead of his time, and his ideas are still caviar to the general public, the civilized world, where it has not yet been infected by fascism, moves today, whether consciously or not, in the shadow of his doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

Ward was born on June 18, 1841, in Joliet, Illinois, the tenth and last child of Justus and Silence Ward. His father was a jack-of-all-trades and the family spent much time travelling throughout the Middle West and New York State. Ward spent his childhood and early adulthood outdoors as a farm hand, and through this work gained a great love for and curiosity about nature. This interest continued throughout his life time, becoming more scientific through his study of botany, zoology, and biology.<sup>3</sup>

The Ward family was never wealthy. Justus Ward died when Lester was sixteen, leaving him and his brothers with the responsibility of the economic well-being of the family. An older brother, Cyrenus Osborn Ward, had opened a factory to produce wagon hubs in Myersburg, Pennsylvania, where Lester and another brother, Erastus, were employed in 1858. During this period, Ward educated himself in Greek, French, German, and Latin in his spare time. After two years, the factory failed, and Ward was forced to find odd jobs to continue existence. Through these struggles, Ward gained a great

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<sup>2</sup>Samuel Chugerman, Lester F. Ward: The American Aristotle (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1939), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-27.

deal of knowledge about the hardship of poverty and the handicap of poor education that he would later incorporate in his philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

Ward's first taste of formal education was in 1861 when he attended Susquehanna Collegiate Institute of Towanda, Pennsylvania, for the one term he could afford. He was amazed to find that through his own individual study of Greek and Latin he was far ahead of the other young men at the academy. Unfortunately, his formal education was interrupted at this time not only by his lack of funds, but also by the outbreak of the Civil War. Ward felt obligated to serve in the Union Army, in spite of the fact that five days before he left for the front, he secretly married a childhood sweetheart, Elizabeth Vought. His army career was ended at the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863 where he received three gunshot wounds.<sup>5</sup>

Following his recovery, Ward was appointed to the position of clerk in the Treasury, thus beginning his career in the Federal government where he would remain until the last few years of his life. He also resumed his formal education at night at Columbian University (now George Washington University) in Washington, D. C. He was admitted as a sophomore and in two years had completed requirements for a Bachelor of Arts degree. In 1872, Ward received a Master of Arts degree in botany, qualitative chemistry and practical anatomy. Furthermore, in 1871, he received a Bachelor of Law degree and was admitted to the Bar in 1872, and received a diploma in medicine. Ward practiced neither law nor medicine, for he felt that he wanted to study in the field of social theory, for during this period he had become interested in the works of Comte and Spencer.<sup>6</sup>

Continuing his government service, Ward worked for the Smithsonian Institute and the Biological Society of Washington. He was

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33.

distinguished for botanical research, and was given the title of Honorary Curator of Botany and Paleobotany in the National Museum in Washington.<sup>7</sup> Finally, in 1881, Ward became a geologist for the United States Geological Survey and culminated his government career by being appointed chief paleontologist of this agency two years later.<sup>8</sup>

In 1906, Lester F. Ward received the opportunity for which he had waited most of his life. He was asked to take the newly created chair of sociology at Brown University. After his first wife's death in 1871, Ward had married, in 1872, Rose A. Pierce. Ward's second wife became ill about the time of his appointment to Brown University and remained in Washington. For the last five years of his life, Ward travelled between Providence, Rhode Island, to teach, and Washington, to visit his wife. It was during one of these visits to Washington in 1913 that Ward himself died at the age of seventy-two.<sup>9</sup>

Before surveying Ward's contributions to his fields of biology and sociology, it would be well to review the climate of American intellectual thought. The writings of Ward appear most significant in opposition to the prevailing philosophy of the times. America in the 1880's and 1890's, when most of Ward's important works were produced, was greatly influenced by the writings of Charles Darwin, and the many interpretations and applications of his writings. In Darwin's Origin of Species, published in 1859, the author outlined his revolutionary theory of biological evolution. Darwin was by no means the first individual to formulate such a theory, but the evidence he presented to support his theory was so convincing that it could no longer be ignored by the majority of the public. In general, his theory was based on three principles. The first, an idea that Darwin admittedly took from Thomas Malthus, was that Nature produced far more creatures, both plant and animal, than could possibly

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-37.



be supported by the existing food and land supply. Secondly, there were universal variations in all species, which appeared at random, but once possessed, were transmitted from one generation to the next by means of heredity. Finally, the most advantageous of these variations allowed one creature to survive and procreate in nature while the absence of that variation, or the presence of a different one, caused other creatures to perish. This process is called natural selection.<sup>10</sup>

Darwin's evolutionary theory startled not only the scientific world, but also the religious and philosophical world by his apparent denial of the Biblical Story of creation.<sup>11</sup> Up until 1859, the general public adhered firmly to the traditional belief in God's design in creating the universe. However with Darwin's new evidence and theory, the traditional belief was put to serious question.

Evolution banished the absolute, supplanted design, challenged not only the Scriptural story of creation but creation itself, and revealed man not as a product of beneficent purpose but of a process of natural selection that, by defying the interposition of the Deity, confounded the concept of omnipotence.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, with the publication of The Descent of Man in 1871, Darwin showed man that he was no longer created in God's image, but that he was merely a product of evolution, as were all other plants and animals.<sup>13</sup>

Darwinism, as the new evolutionary system came to be called, was both highly praised and criticized as it became known in the

<sup>10</sup>Stow Persons, American Minds (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), pp. 237-238.

<sup>11</sup>Merrill Peterson, "Introduction" to Major Crises in America, II (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962), p. 69.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 83.

<sup>13</sup>Peterson, p. 71.

United States. Men of science, such as the Harvard professors, Asa Gray and Louis Agassiz, held widely divergent views on the truth of Darwin's theory. Organized religion in America also met Darwinism with mixed reaction. Although the majority of churchmen felt there could be no acceptance or compromise with this theory, there were a few who saw it as the answer to many universal questions.

As Darwinian evolution was shaking the scientific and religious worlds, the reverberation of this theory was beginning to appear in other realms of human knowledge, most importantly in sociology. In many respects, Herbert Spencer was to Social Darwinism (evolution applied to sociology) as Charles Darwin was to biological evolution. Spencer completed the work begun by Darwin by applying his principles to all other areas of human life.<sup>14</sup> Although Spencer formulated much of his thought before being exposed to Darwin, he found Origin of Species to be a virtual quarry of scientific data to support his conclusions. Spencer defined a principle of universal evolution that developed from homogeneity, or similar nature, to heterogeneity, or unlike and more complex units of nature. This theory could be applied equally well to a developing society and to creatures in nature.<sup>15</sup> The search for perfection in society would be completed only at the time of utmost differentiation.<sup>16</sup> This process, Spencer reasoned, must be allowed to continue at its own pace and in its own way, for any attempt to change or impede the process would result in chaos. For this reason, Spencer was opposed to any form of social legislation because he believed it was useless and even harmful. There could be no quick social change and progress could not be artificially induced.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Commager, p. 85.

<sup>15</sup>Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1944), p. 17.

<sup>16</sup>Persons, p. 226.

<sup>17</sup>Hofstadter, pp. 41-43.

The great task of sociology, as Spencer envisioned it, is to chart "the normal course of social evolution," to show how it will be affected by any given policy, and to condemn all types of behavior that interfere with it.<sup>18</sup>

Although the term "survival of the fittest" was often attributed to Charles Darwin, it was actually coined by Herbert Spencer. This struggle was as fierce in society as it was in nature. The weak and unfit would be eliminated.

If they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live, and it is well they should live. If they are not sufficiently complete to live, they die, and it is best they should die.<sup>19</sup>

Spencer, more than any other nineteenth century philosopher, was responsible for the transfer of biological laws into the social realm.

America was particularly well prepared to embrace Social Darwinism. That part which was accepted primarily from Spencerian thought by the mass of American people was his economic and political views rather than his philosophical and psychological teachings. The former appealed to a traditional belief in individualism and the prevailing conservative view of life.<sup>20</sup> The Spencerian theory was particularly advantageous to American businessmen who could point with pride to their own success as a sign of their "fitness" to survive, and justify the elimination of "underprivileged" as unfit to survive.<sup>21</sup> Businessmen used Conservative Darwinism to protect the ideas of the status quo. Legislative intervention was unwise and poverty could be cured only through centuries of evolution.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>19</sup>Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, pp. 414-415, quoted in Hofstadter, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup>Commager, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>22</sup>Eric Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Vintage Books - Random House, 1956), pp. 70-72.

The persistent American myths of the gospel of wealth and laissez-faire were buttressed by the evolutionary concept. Among America's wealthiest men, John D. Rockefeller, James J. Hill, and Andrew Carnegie were followers of Darwin and Spencer.<sup>23</sup> The American court system seemed as pleased with Spencerian philosophy as was the business community, and used the "survival of the fittest" idea to strike down any attempt to enact social legislation.<sup>24</sup>

Spencer's nearest American counterpart and perhaps a stronger exponent of Social Darwinism was William Graham Sumner.

No one applied more rigorously to the social realm the Darwinian doctrine of survival of the fittest than this Episcopal rector turned sociologist, who conceded to the commandments of Manchester an authority he could not concede to those from Mt. Sinai.<sup>25</sup>

Sumner, who began his career at Yale as a pre-ministerial student, returned to Yale after a brief period as a rector to become a professor of social science. After reading Darwin and Spencer, Sumner never doubted that man made progress only through evolutionary science.<sup>26</sup> Society, as Sumner saw it, employed a certain unfortunate, but necessary, brand of "antagonistic cooperation" in which its component parts joined together in a division of labor arrangement. This was necessary because intra-species competition was wasted effort, for everyone must struggle against the environment.<sup>27</sup> This type of cooperation would have to exist until the perfect society could at last be achieved and only the most fit would survive, and everyone could "mind his own business" in peace.<sup>28</sup> Any aid to the poor or

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<sup>23</sup>Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1940), p. 158.

<sup>24</sup>Hofstadter, pp. 46-47.

<sup>25</sup>Commager, p. 201.

<sup>26</sup>Gabriel, p. 239.

<sup>27</sup>Persons, pp. 245-248.

<sup>28</sup>Commager, p. 201.

any type of governmental assistance would perpetuate the unfit, and in Sumner's black or white world, this would be the survival of the unfittest, not the fittest. Democracy in the nineteenth century was merely a superstition of the age, he held. Men were not created equal, but unequal, and the only inalienable right man was born with was his choice to leave the world if he could not survive happily in it. The only function government and politics served was to guard the property of man and the honor of woman.<sup>29</sup>

William Sumner was also very well received by the conservative element in America. Although Sumner was more pessimistic than Spencer, he did advocate the status quo and defend rugged individualism.<sup>30</sup> The huge fortunes amassed by the wealthy were the rewards and the wages for their position. Sumner further believed in the passing of wealth in a family from one generation to another as a means of perpetuating the most fit in society. The conservatives were able, quite admirably, to ignore the fact that Sumner was also opposed to any kind of governmental interference with laissez-faire that might favor big business, such as high tariffs.<sup>31</sup> In summary, Sumner became like one of the Trinity to the average big businessman in need of justification for his wealth. "Like some latter-day Calvin, he [Sumner] came to preach the predestination of the social order and the salvation of the economically elect through the survival of the fittest."<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not the wealthy class in America really knew what Darwin, Spencer and Sumner were actually teaching is questionable and immaterial. This class borrowed what was necessary to justify its actions and dismissed the rest. The reason America gave Social

<sup>29</sup>Persons, p. 248.

<sup>30</sup>Peterson, p. 76.

<sup>31</sup>Hofstadter, pp. 58-63.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

Darwinism its warmest welcome was that America had the greatest percentage of the economically "fittest" or potentially "fittest" in the world. When the century came to a close, Social Darwinism was still on trial, but victory seemed inevitable because belief in it was so strong and the desire to change almost nonexistent.<sup>33</sup>

... the world, both physically and intellectually, by the process of evolution. In volume two of the same work, Ward indicated that man, through proper education, could learn to maneuver his environment to his best possible advantage. In this volume, and subsequent works, Ward was primarily concerned with the means by which man could apply evolution to work the apparent benefits of evolution.<sup>34</sup> He rejected Darwin's notion of all life through the unrelenting evolution of nature, according to Ward:

... the [human] not only failed to see clearly the essential distinction between social evolution and organic evolution but was unable to distinguish between organic and social evolution, both of which he regarded as one process governed by the same natural law.<sup>35</sup>

Ward put particular emphasis on the fact that man was accepted as the primary evolutionary process because he possessed something that no other living organisms -- the ability to think rationally. Therefore, with this superiority to other animals, man ought to be able to rise above the narrow conditions of competition by applying what he learned to the living conditions. This idea of man transcending his environment was opposed to Spencer's and Darwin's concept of "survival of the fittest." Furthermore, man's knowledge, said Ward, was not inherited but it was acquired with other man's knowledge. In other words, man's greatest benefit was derived from cooperation beyond of the individual. The best agent to aid the public through cooperation was an active and positive government, not the laissez-faire government of the nineteenth century. (Quotation from *Ward's Ideology*, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*)

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<sup>33</sup>Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Modern America (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 287.

<sup>34</sup>Ward, p. 187.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF LESTER WARD

Conservative Darwinism did not, however, go completely unchallenged in America. Such a challenge came in Lester Frank Ward's works beginning with the publication of Dynamic Sociology in 1883. In this over-view of the universe, Ward explained the formation of the world, both physically and intellectually, by the process of evolution. In volume two of the same work, Ward indicated that man, through proper education, could learn to maneuver his environment to his best possible advantage. In this volume, and successive works, Ward was primarily concerned with the means by which man could apply sociology to break the apparent bondage of evolution.<sup>34</sup> He rejected Spencer's answer to all life through the unmolested evolution of nature. According to Ward:

He [Spencer] not only failed to see clearly the essential distinction between cosmic evolution and organic evolution but was unable to distinguish between organic and social evolution, both of which he regarded as one process governed by the same natural laws.<sup>35</sup>

Ward put particular emphasis on the fact that man was excepted from the ordinary evolutionary process because he possessed something denied to other living organisms -- the ability to think rationally. Therefore, with this superiority to other animals, man ought to be able to lift himself above the morass of competition by applying what he learned to his living conditions. This idea of man controlling his environment was opposed to Spencer's and Sumner's concept of fight for survival. Furthermore, man's knowledge, said Ward, was more beneficial when it was coupled with other men's knowledge. In other words, man's greatest benefit was derived from cooperation instead of from competition. The best agent to aid the public through cooperation was an active and positive government, not the laissez-faire government of the nineteenth century. Chugerman, Ward's biographer, summarized this view:

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<sup>34</sup>Chugerman, p. 53.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

The drift and aim of Ward's sociology, is towards the increasing extension of co-operative human agencies for the benefit of all. This would necessarily include societal ownership and control of all social possessions and achievements, the abolition of all caste and class, and the equalization of opportunity as well as intelligence. His destruction of Spencer's doctrine of laissez-faire with its crown of rugged individualism, is epoch-making. As a constructive substitute for the pain economy under which present competitive society lives, Ward offers a real 'New Deal' in a government under sociocracy in which social science is a governmental function. The road to that ideal society is the road of scientific education -- the path of universal knowledge -- which he identifies with the road to happiness.<sup>36</sup>

Most of Ward's later works, The Psychic Factors of Civilization, Outlines of Sociology, Pure Sociology and Applied Sociology are merely restatements of Dynamic Sociology or more matured views of his earlier theories. Glimpses of the Cosmos is primarily an autobiography.

There are some aspects of Ward's work that must be examined in greater detail because of their bearing on the subject of this paper. These areas are Ward's view on the science of sociology, economic matters, individualism and opportunity, and the ideal or perfect society, which Ward calls sociocracy.

Sociology, to Ward, unlike any other study, was the highest study of man because it dealt with the happiness and well-being of man. Although man's social actions could not be exactly measured like an amount of acid in chemistry, sociology was none-the-less a science complete with workable laws.<sup>37</sup> As a matter of fact, sociology was the queen of all sciences because it is a combination of all the lesser sciences, such as anthropology, archaeology, demography,

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 195.



economics, ethics, ethnology, history, jurisprudence, politics and technology.<sup>38</sup> Knowledge from all these areas was used in the study of man in society.

Ward differed from Spencer in his view of the basis for sociological investigation. Spencer insisted that the entire cosmos including the society of man evolved according to natural biological and physical laws.

Spencer's life task was to combine into a single, unified system, the entire sweep of cosmic, physical, biological, psychical, social and ethical science. That was possible only by observing the evolutionary process, formulating the natural law of change which underlies it and following it through the history of the cosmos from its inception in the star dust.<sup>39</sup>

Ward, on the other hand, saw man somewhat removed from the biological processes because of his functioning mental ability. Ward therefore based his study of sociology on psychological factors instead of biological ones.

It was Auguste Comte who first divided the study of sociology into two areas; pure sociology, or the study of sociological theory, and applied sociology, which was the study of how man could apply his knowledge of theory to create a better world for himself in the future.<sup>40</sup> Of the two branches, applied sociology was infinitely more important than pure sociology for in this study was the hope for man's improvement.

Ward stated that our economic system of laissez-faire capitalism was outdated and caused man more miseries than it brought benefits. Economic factors were not ignoble in themselves, and became so only when private property which developed from cannibalism, slavery and

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<sup>38</sup>Lester F. Ward, Outlines of Sociology (New York: 1897), pp. 66, 136., quoted in Chugerman, p. 198.

<sup>39</sup>Chugerman, p. 184.

<sup>40</sup>Lester F. Ward, Pure Sociology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903), p. 4.

feudalism, thus became an end in itself.<sup>41</sup> Left completely uncontrolled, private property imprisoned the masses as no system had before it. These elements of property and wealth were not injurious to mankind if they were controlled. Indeed, through the proper use of wealth, man could be freed to study and to create without the economic necessity of labor.<sup>42</sup>

Although man's ability to produce had been greatly improved through time, the system of distribution of goods sadly lagged behind. Eventually, Ward prophesied, this inability to purchase would lead to depression.<sup>43</sup>

Society had to increase the power of the masses to consume and pay for needed items. This could best be accomplished by regulating business and planning the economy of a society.

To the power of production there is practically no limit, and all that is needed to place in the possession of every member of society every object of his desire, is the power to purchase it...It is therefore useless to talk of increasing production except by the increase of the power to consume. The problem is no longer how to increase consumption; not the desire to consume, for that already exists...but the opportunity to earn. The reduction of the hours of labor is one of the means to that end is certainly clear. The discovery of other means and of the best way to put every means into practice seems to me to constitute the chief economic problem of our times.<sup>44</sup>

Ward noted the two greatest economic paradoxes of our times. First, the owners of big business combined into trusts for greater gain, while laborers were slow to organize. The second paradox, perhaps

<sup>41</sup>Ward, Pure Sociology, pp. 273-278.

<sup>42</sup>Lester F. Ward, Glimpses of the Cosmos, IV (New York: G. P. Putman Son's, 1913), p. 49.

<sup>43</sup>Ward, Pure Sociology, pp. 278-282.

<sup>44</sup>Ward, Glimpses, IV, pp. 164-165. (Ward's italics.)

greater than the first, was that in a world of plenty, men were starving.<sup>45</sup> In connection with this second point, Ward contended that Thomas Malthus was wrong in his assumption that man would eventually "eat up" the world. Through increased means of production, man had actually created a surplus of food. The problem of modern man was to get this surplus to those who were in need of it. It was only when the study of economics was based upon biological laws that it was the dismal science. Nature, not man, was wasteful. She was willing to expend numerous organisms in order to achieve a single perfect one. This, however, could not be called civilization. Man with his intelligence could control and check natural competition and raise himself to a higher level of life, or what could truly be called a society.<sup>46</sup>

The belief to which nineteenth century man clung, individualism, caused the modern dilemma. This belief stemmed largely from Spencerian philosophy and its justification of laissez-faire. Ward rejected both these ideas as being basically animalistic. To sit idly by and wait for society to improve itself was both foolish and wasteful. Man, given the opportunity, possessed the power to change his environment.<sup>47</sup> Competition, far from developing the best in man, often destroyed all but the most physically strong or shrewd. Ward even questioned the merits of competition in nature. It had been proved that certain fruit trees and domestic animals had been improved in their breeding by the intelligence of man, and had produced offspring far superior to those produced by natural competition.<sup>48</sup> The belief that competition stirred the initiative of man was also false, as more often it spawned poverty, unemployment and war.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Chugerman, pp. 294-295.

<sup>46</sup>Lester Ward, Dynamic Sociology, II (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883), p. 494.

<sup>47</sup>Ward, Glimpses, III, p. 213.

<sup>48</sup>Lester Ward, The Psychic Factors of Civilization (New York: Ginn and Company, 1892), p. 260.

<sup>49</sup>Ward, Pure Sociology, p. 544.

The answer to the problem was very simple. Instead of practicing competition, man had to use cooperation. "The moral equivalent of individualism is collectivism, social achievement."<sup>50</sup> To calm the fears of those who felt that the removal of competition would lead to paternalism Ward says:

Modern society is suffering from the very opposite of paternalism -- from undergovernment, from the failure of government to keep pace with the change which civilization has wrought in substituting intellectual for physical qualities as the workers of injustice....

The true function of government is not to fetter but to liberate the forces of society; not to diminish but to increase their effectiveness. Unbridled competition destroys itself. The only competition that endures is that which goes on under judicious regulation.<sup>51</sup>

Ward's confidence in man was shown in his belief that all men had a latent talent and usefulness in need of discovery. The greatest harm was done to mankind when universal education was denied. It was only through education that society could improve. Where ignorance prevailed, the crime rate tended to be high.<sup>52</sup> Yet, where the opportunity for education was available, more of the genius in every man was discovered. The potential intellectual ability of all men could be developed equally if all were given equal opportunity. In the past, Ward stated, too much attention had been focused on heredity for producing men of talent. In doing so, many brilliant or potentially brilliant people have been forgotten because of their lack of opportunity to demonstrate their ability. It was time that we became more concerned with the environment in which all men lived instead of being concerned with the parents to whom men were born. Ward further rejected all beliefs in racial or class superiority. The differentiations were merely superficial and artificially applied.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Chugerman, p. 313.

<sup>51</sup>Ward, Glimpses, V, p. 235.

<sup>52</sup>Chugerman, p. 426.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 433-435.

It would appear from the foregoing presentation that Lester Ward was quite a Utopian, and so he was. Yet, he did not anticipate any quick change or general upheaval of the American system. What he did look for was a society governed by experts in the field of sociology, a government he called sociocracy, a term borrowed from Comte.<sup>54</sup> Ward felt that nineteenth century man had come to value the dollar more dearly than human rights and the time was ripe to reverse that thought. Government which would allow all individual achievement to be shared by society was far superior to the hoarding of intellectual accomplishment.

Ward did not draw up <sup>a</sup> specific plan of government, but gave a number of guide lines. The principle of sociocracy should be cooperation and a positive, active government.<sup>55</sup> Sociocracy was not the same as socialism for whereas socialism attempted to enforce equality upon all, sociocracy would give to all the equal opportunity to achieve to the limits of their innate ability.<sup>56</sup> Instead of repudiating democracy, Ward was attempting to strengthen it by retaining the democratic form of government but making it more powerful to act positively.<sup>57</sup> Hence, the change from the democracy of the nineteenth century to the sociocracy of the future would be comparatively simple. Man needed only to transfer the power from the plutocracy of the big businessmen to the majority of the people. To educate the leaders of sociocracy, Ward advocated the formation of a National Academy of Social Sciences. All government job-seekers would be properly instructed in the best ways to benefit society.<sup>58</sup>

Ward saw the world of the 1890's and 1900's as ready for sociocracy, but nothing of that nature came about. His dream would have to wait for another fifty years before the times would indicate that America was ready for a change in the direction of positive government.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 320.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 327.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>58</sup>Ward, Glimpses, IV, p. 325.

Fifty years after the publication of Dynamic Sociology, Franklin Roosevelt became President of the United States. Prior to his presidency, Roosevelt had indicated his interest in social and economic reform through other public offices. In many of his addresses, the concepts of Ward can be clearly seen.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the man destined to lead America out of depression and through the most destructive war to date, was born in 1882 at Hyde Park to James and Sarah Roosevelt.<sup>59</sup> Young Franklin enjoyed all the pleasures of cultural and social refinement denied to Lester Ward in his boyhood. He was descended from a long line of Hudson River Dutch aristocracy. After four years at Groton School in Massachusetts, Roosevelt went to Harvard where he received his B.A. degree in 1903. After his marriage on March 17, 1905, to Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, niece of Theodore Roosevelt, he attended Columbia University Law School and was admitted to the New York State Bar before graduation in 1907.<sup>60</sup>

Roosevelt's first venture into public life came in 1910 when he ran successfully for New York State Senator on the Democratic ticket and <sup>was</sup> re-elected to that position in 1912. Because of his energetic support of Woodrow Wilson in 1912, Roosevelt was appointed Assistant Secretary of the United States Navy by the new President, a position earlier held by Roosevelt's famous relative, Theodore. In 1920, he was nominated for the vice-presidency along with James Cox, but was badly defeated in the "back to normalcy" campaign. During the period in which he returned to his private law practice, Roosevelt was stricken with infantile paralysis at his summer home in Campobello in 1921. His next political appearance was in 1924, when he placed

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<sup>59</sup>The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, Current Volume D (New York: James T. White and Company, 1934), p. 1.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

the name of Alfred E. Smith in nomination for Democratic candidate for the Presidency. In that same year, he was persuaded to run for the governorship of New York. He won the election and was re-elected in 1930. In 1932, Roosevelt won the Democratic nomination for President, and during his campaign first announced his plans for a "New Deal" for the American people. After his landslide victory, he put into effect through the famous one hundred legislative days, from March to June, some of the most startling and controversial bills that this country had ever seen.<sup>61</sup>

The problems tackled were large and some appeared unsolvable. In order of passage, the important legislation passed during these days was first, emergency banking legislation, an attempt to balance the budget, a bill to revoke the Volstead Act, conservation legislation, aid to agriculture, aid to the unemployed, the Tennessee Valley Authority, correction of the stock market, an employment service, loans to home owners, an attempt at industrial recovery, a bill to alleviate transportation difficulties and one to establish credit for the farmer.<sup>62</sup>

The importance of this legislation must be seen not only for its substantive content, but also for the spirit in which it was introduced, enacted and received by the American people. In it, I believe, one can see the shift that had taken place in the bases of American thought from the ideology of Herbert Spencer to that of Lester Ward.

To understand the depression of 1929 and the attitude of the American people about it, it is necessary to look at the period just prior to the economic collapse. In this period we can see not only reaction, but also a lingering of the reform spirit that would characterize the New Deal.

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-3.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5.

The progressive movement of 1912 was pretty well ended because few people could be interested in reforming anything. Arthur S. Link, in an informative article written for The American Historical Review, states that there are four basic reasons for the collapse of the reform spirit in the 1920's. First, the progressives could not gain control of any party.<sup>63</sup> The Republican Party showed no concern for reform, the Democratic Party was badly split regionally, and third parties proved weak and ineffective. Secondly, the progressives themselves were divided as to what kind of reform program they desired. Thirdly, there was a decided lack of leadership.<sup>64</sup> Finally, certain extraneous factors made it nearly impossible to sustain a reform interest. The middle class abandoned the reform movement as it became the dominant class in America. This is the group that displayed a sense of contentment about American life. Also the intellectuals left the reform movement, as well as leaving American soil due, to the disillusionment following World War I.<sup>65</sup>

Yet, reformism was not entirely defunct during this period. Spokesmen for the farmer were particularly strong in Congress from 1919 to 1929. There was also agitation for public ownership of the electric power industry during these years. Finally, on the level of state and city government, reformism was kept very much alive. More and more cities were employing managers and educational opportunities were increased.<sup>66</sup>

The fact that the spirit of reform was carried on through the 1920's in state and local government is important because in these areas Franklin Roosevelt served his political apprenticeship. In

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<sup>63</sup>"What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?" LXIV (July, 1959), pp. 833-851, quoted in Abraham S. Eisenstadt, ed., American History, Recent Interpretations, II (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1962), p. 300.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 301-303.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 306-310.



one of Roosevelt's early political speeches given on March 3, 1912, to the People's Forum of Troy, New York, he showed his interest in reforming the economic system in America.

To state it plainly, competition has been shown to be useful up to a certain point, but co-operation, which is the thing we must strive for today, begins where competition leaves off. This was what the founders of the republic were groping for and it is precisely today along every possible walk of life.<sup>67</sup> (sic.)

In his early months in the State Senate of New York, Roosevelt came out for legislation to aid labor and the farmer and to further conservation. His interest at that time was not so much for a general change in philosophy of government, but to solve specific problems.<sup>68</sup> He followed the progressive ideas of Wilson, an association that was politically important to him when he was running for the Presidency in 1932. He won many old progressive votes to his cause because of his support of Wilson.<sup>69</sup>

Roosevelt's first taste of national politics came in 1920 when he was nominated as James Cox's running mate. In his acceptance speech, Roosevelt indicated the type of program he felt the American public was really calling for. This was primarily "organized progress" and "intensified development of our resources and a progressive betterment of our citizenship".<sup>70</sup> Roosevelt contended that America needed a change away from the old order of uncontrolled economy and corrupted government.

Our opposition is to the things which once existed in order that they may never return. We oppose money in politics, we oppose the private control of national finances, we oppose the treating of

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<sup>67</sup>Quoted in Basil Rauch, ed., The Roosevelt Reader (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 14.

<sup>68</sup>James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and The Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956), p. 46.

<sup>69</sup>Rexford G. Tugwell, The Art of Politics (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1958), p. 168.

<sup>70</sup>(Hyde Park, August 9, 1920), Rauch, p. 29.

human beings as commodities, we oppose the saloon-bossed city, we oppose starvation wages, we oppose rule by groups or cliques.<sup>71</sup>

Even though Roosevelt and Cox were defeated, Roosevelt came from the campaign with "a firm conviction that agricultural and industrial life could be made better for the people by conscious government programs".<sup>72</sup> It was also after the 1920 campaign that Roosevelt began to feel that limited reforms would not be sufficient.

In the year 1924 Roosevelt began to formulate his plans for an organized society that would later characterize the spirit of the New Deal. First, he placed the name of Alfred E. Smith in nomination for the Democratic candidacy for President. It was a particularly shrewd political move to support Smith in 1924. It indicated how weak Smith was as a national figure, and put Roosevelt in the limelight.<sup>73</sup> It was also the year that Roosevelt was encouraged to run for the governorship of New York. Again in this campaign one can see the interest Roosevelt had in social and economic change, even in a period of relative prosperity. Roosevelt desired to continue the ideals of the preceding administration. Among these ideals were the establishing of a higher standard of living for the people of New York, an opportunity to work and the guarantee of security in time of need.<sup>74</sup> Samuel Rosenman dates Roosevelt's concern for liberal and progressive politics from his election to the governorship. Most of his social ideas were formulated from four to eight years before he entered the White House.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>72</sup>Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 28.

<sup>73</sup>Tugwell, p. 172.

<sup>74</sup>Perkins, p. 47.

<sup>75</sup>Samuel Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), pp. 29-31.

During his tenure Roosevelt made a number of important speeches that contain definite Wardian overtones. In 1931, he spoke to the State Legislature of New York and asked the following question:

What is the State? It is the duly constituted representative of an organized society of human beings created by them for their mutual protection and well-being. "The State" or "The Government" is but the machinery through which such mutual aid and protection are achieved... One of these duties of the State is that of caring for those of its citizens who find themselves the victims of such adverse circumstances as makes them unable to obtain even the necessities for mere existence without the aid of others....

To these unfortunate citizens aid must be extended by government not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of social duty.<sup>76</sup>

One of the most important talks Roosevelt ever gave during his early political years was a radio broadcast from Albany, New York, on April 8, 1932. In this early "fireside chat," Roosevelt spoke of the "forgotten man" in American society, but interpreted the phrase quite differently from William Graham Sumner.

'Forgotten man' was a phrase that had been used by William Graham Sumner in an essay in 1883. But as used by the Governor at Moley's suggestion, it referred to a wider group in American society than Sumner had had in mind. The 'forgotten man' was a living person to Roosevelt, not merely an oratorical abstraction. He was the man without money, power, or social position. He was the worker in the sweat-shop; he was the small farmer who had to face the problem of high debt and low income; he was the little businessman struggling against ever growing monopoly; the housewife beset with high prices and a light pay envelope, the rural youngster who had no good local school; the child laborer, the unemployed, the destitute, aged, and the handicapped.<sup>77</sup>

Roosevelt's progressive mood in Albany was proclaimed by the New Republic as an excellent beginning in government planning. It stated that this idea must be carried over into the Federal government as

<sup>76</sup>Quoted in Robert E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 31.

<sup>77</sup>Rosenman, pp. 61-62.

all the nation's people were suffering like those of New York State, but that nothing was being done on the national level. "The main reason the federal government is continually called upon to extend its power is because the state and other local governments fail to supply the needs of a modern people."<sup>78</sup>

To carry his message of planned economy and regulated society to the federal level was Roosevelt's plan as he announced his candidacy in 1932. In his acceptance speech delivered to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on July 2, 1932, Roosevelt indicated both his interest in helping those who were destitute and in making the federal government responsible for that aid.

Our Republican leaders tell us economic laws --- sacred, inviolable, unchangeable -- that these laws cause panics which no one can prevent. But while they prate of economic laws, men and women are starving. We must lay hold of the fact that economic laws are not made by nature. They are made by human beings.  
.....

I say that while primary responsibility for relief rests with localities now, as ever, yet the Federal Government has always had and still has a continuing responsibility for broader public welfare.<sup>79</sup>

Among F. D. R. 's many campaign speeches, the one given at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, September 23, 1932, has often been called the most important statement of Roosevelt's political philosophy. It is interesting to see how very greatly Roosevelt sounds like Ward, even to the extent of using his language and phrases.

The issue of government has always been whether individual men and women will have to serve some system of government or economics, or whether a system of government and economics exists to serve individual men and women.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup>"A Ten Year Program for a State," New Republic, LXIV, (August 27, 1930), p. 30.

<sup>79</sup>Rauch, pp. 72-73.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

Therefore, government's job is:

...the soberer, less dramatic business of administering resources and plants already in hand, of seeking to reestablish foreign markets for our surplus production, of meeting the problem of under consumption, of adjusting production to consumption, of distributing wealth and products more equitably, of adapting existing economic organizations to the service of the people. The day of enlightened administration has come.

This implication is, briefly, that the responsible heads of finance and industry instead of acting each for himself, must work together to achieve the common end. They must, where necessary, sacrifice this or that private advantage, and in reciprocal self-denial must seek a general advantage. It is here that formal government -- political government, if you choose, comes in.... government may properly be asked to apply restraint. Likewise, should the group ever use its collective power contrary to public welfare, the government must be swift to enter and protect the public interest.<sup>81</sup>

How very much Roosevelt sounds like Ward can be seen in the following quotation from Applied Sociology.

It (government) will undertake to solve not only questions of general interest to the state, ... but questions of social improvement, the amelioration of the conditions of all the people, the removal of whatever privations may still remain, the adaptation of means to the positive increase of social welfare, in short the organization of human happiness.<sup>82</sup>

This concept of the positive role of government displays the difference between Roosevelt and his Republican opponent, Herbert Hoover. Hoover, who stood for the laissez-faire doctrine, believed that the depression would ultimately work itself out, and that interference in that process ought not be allowed, regardless of the cost in human misery. "On the other hand, was the doctrine of Roosevelt

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>82</sup>Ward, Applied Sociology, (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1906), p. 339.

that the government had an affirmative duty to step in with bold action, and to use the resources of the nation to stop the distress and prevent ultimate disaster."<sup>83</sup> In November of 1932, the American people chose not only between two individuals, but also between two basic philosophies of responsibility of government. America overwhelmingly called for a change away from laissez-faire with her selection of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as her leader. Ward would have approved because, "Government is becoming more and more the organ of social consciousness and more and more the servant of social will."<sup>84</sup>

On a bleak day in March, 1933, when America was in the depths of depression and hopelessness, Roosevelt delivered his famous inaugural address of hope and action. He first told the assembled crowd that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" and went on to say:

If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we cannot merely take but we must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Rosenman, p. 52.

<sup>84</sup>Ward, Psychic Factors, p. 304.

<sup>85</sup>Rauch, p. 90.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

## ROOSEVELT'S NEW DEALERS

Roosevelt, aware of the tremendous tasks that lay ahead of him, selected as advisers and cabinet members men of experience, ability, and theoretical knowledge, who have been collectively called the "Brain Trust" or "New Dealers." Some of these individuals had worked with Roosevelt during his governorship of New York. These men, too, through their words and actions, indicated that they were at least indirectly influenced by the works of Lester Ward.

The term "Brain Trust" narrowly defined included only Raymond Moley, professor at Columbia University, Rexford G. Tugwell, economist from Wharton School of Finance of the University of Pennsylvania and also a professor at Columbia, and Adolf Berle from Harvard and Columbia.<sup>87</sup> All three were academicians and scholars in fields in which Roosevelt felt he needed the most help and advice, such as economics and law. Never before had the academic world been invited en masse<sup>88</sup> to Washington as they were during the Roosevelt administration.

The "New Dealers" included a much larger group, among them personal secretaries, advisers and cabinet members from whose ideas Roosevelt formulated his plans and to whom he gave administrative positions to keep them close at hand. In this group were Louis MacHenry Howe, secretary to the President and long time friend; Henry Morgenthau, Jr., economic adviser and eventually Secretary of the Treasury; Lewis Douglas, Director of the Budget, and Samuel Rosenman, adviser and one of Roosevelt's chief speech writers. Among the cabinet members, William Woodin, Secretary of the Treasury; Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior; Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor; Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture; and James A Farley, Postmaster General, can be considered true New Dealers. To the newly created

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<sup>87</sup>Sherwood, p. 44.

<sup>88</sup>"President Roosevelt's Academic Advisers," School and Society, XXXVII, (April 15, 1933), p. 497.

offices of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the National Recovery Administration, Roosevelt appointed as directors, Harry Hopkins and Hugh S. Johnson, respectively.<sup>89</sup> There were other special appointments made as new federal jobs and agencies were developed. According to Raymond Moley, there was no apparent unity in the selection of the cabinet. Each man was chosen for his potential contribution to the President's program and not necessarily for his intellectual and personal compatibility one with another.<sup>90</sup>

Each man of the group around F. D. R. had a particular area in which he might be called an expert. Although they were not the group of sociologists that Ward visualized for government guidance, they were all well educated and favorably disposed to an active government. In the case of one of Roosevelt's chief advisers, Raymond Moley, there was no question that he saw the need for positive government.<sup>91</sup> Moley stated that he was influenced in his social thought by Tom Johnson, the reform Mayor of Cleveland. Johnson had been a strong advocate of city owned utilities, such as public transportation. He had also supported the expansion of good public education. It was from Johnson that Moley received his direction in politics. He was further influenced by Newton Baker, who followed Johnson as Mayor of Cleveland and had served as Secretary of War under Woodrow Wilson. On the national scene, Moley called Roosevelt the man most like Tom Johnson.<sup>92</sup>

According to Moley, the objective of the New Deal was to take the "preliminary steps toward a balanced and dynamic economic system."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Sherwood, p. 44.

<sup>90</sup>Raymond Moley, After Seven Years (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1939), pp. 110-111.

<sup>91</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 182.

<sup>92</sup>Moley, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 184.



The belief that economic bigness was here to stay; that the problem of government was to enable the whole people to enjoy the benefits of mass production and distribution (economy and security); and that it was the duty of government to devise, with business, the means of social and individual adjustment to the facts of the industrial age -- these were the heart and soul of the New Deal.<sup>94</sup>

Rexford G. Tugwell was greatly influenced by Simon N. Patten while he studied at Wharton. Patten had held that laissez-faire was no longer workable in society and that greater benefits could be derived from a planned and regulated economy. Both Ward and Patten were aiming for similar social goals, Ward through sociology and Patten through economics. Tugwell visualized a consciously coordinated legislative program to assure enduring social welfare.

It did not seem to me that we could put forward an alternative program with any seriousness at all unless it had its premises in coordination or collectivism as over against his (Hoover's) individualism and atomism.<sup>95</sup>

Tugwell felt that the New Deal was not out of line with American tradition but was an essential and obvious antidote to the conservatism that had not served democracy in practice as it was expected to in theory. He held:

That the general cause of our insecurity and political stagnation lay in the nature of laissez-faire and that the logical antithesis of this was a system which private initiative was subordinated to a charted scheme of production.<sup>96</sup>

Tugwell saw a need that Ward had seen in 1883.

Using legislation as the expression for the method by which social science is applied, it is clear that all

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>95</sup>Rexford G. Tugwell, "The Progressive Orthodoxy of Franklin D. Roosevelt," Ethics LXIV, (October, 1953), p. 2.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

successful legislation must consist in a true process of invention, as the result of scientific, experimental study in the domain of social forces. This is dynamic sociology or applied sociology.<sup>97</sup>

Harold Ickes, Secretary of Labor, had been a long time progressive in Chicago before coming to President Roosevelt's cabinet. He had been a supporter of Roosevelt since the election of 1920. His concepts of what the New Deal meant and why government planning was necessary reflected his Progressive background. Ickes stressed the importance of governmental protection of its citizens.

We have learned the better lesson since 1929 that we are mutually dependent on each other. We know now that if one considerable section of our population lacks sufficient food and clothing and proper shelter, our whole social structure is impaired and weakened.

. . . .

The real significance of all these government undertakings is a social significance. Our government is no longer a laissez-faire government, exercising traditional and more or less impersonal powers. There exists in Washington a sense of responsibility for the health, safety and well-being of the people.<sup>98</sup>

Ward stated his concern for governmental protection as follows:

It was not for the protection of individuals, as it is so frequently stated, that society was originally formed. This protection is the true province of government.<sup>99</sup>

Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture, came from a long line of important Iowa farmers and journalists. His father had served as Secretary of Agriculture under Warren G. Harding and his grandfather had been a member of Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life Commission. He explained his part in the New Deal as follows:

<sup>97</sup>Ward, Glimpses V, p. 135. (Ward's italics)

<sup>98</sup>Harold L. Ickes, "The Social Implications of the Roosevelt Administration," Survey Graphic XXIII, (March, 1934), pp. 111-112.

<sup>99</sup>Ward, Dynamic Sociology II, p. 219. (Italics provided by author).

To reorganize agriculture, co-operatively, democratically, so that the surplus lands on which men and women now are toiling, wasting their time, wearing out their lives to no good end, shall be taken out of production -- that is a tremendous task. The adjustment we seek calls first of all for a mental adjustment, a willing reversal of driving pioneer opportunism and ungoverned laissez-faire.<sup>100</sup>

Wallace views the entire New Deal as a step in a new direction for modern government. A definite reflection of Ward's opposition to natural competition in society can be seen in the following passage.

I think we are coming -- by fits and starts of course -- to a time when there is to be infinitely more co-operation than we had in the past, where the law of the jungle does not prevail to the same extent as it did in 1929. I think the New Deal faintly foreshadows certain ultimates in that direction.<sup>101</sup>

Harry Hopkins, the Director of Federal Emergency Relief, was greatly influenced as a student at Grinnell College, Iowa, by Jesse Macy, an early advocate of experimental positive government. He was also molded by Dr. Edward A. Steiner from whom he took a course in Applied Christianity.<sup>102</sup> Hopkins held that Christian ideas ought to be observed in social work. He became familiar with the problems of unemployment while working in New York State when Roosevelt was governor. Hopkins believed in spending money to give immediate aid to the destitute as Director of Federal Relief, but felt that the long range problems of unemployment would have to be solved through making employment.<sup>103</sup>

We have got to find a way of living in America in which every person in it shares in the national income, in such a way, that poverty in America is abolished. There is no reason why the people of

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<sup>100</sup>(From a speech given on the air, May 13, 1933), printed in *Democracy Reborn* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1944), p. 45. (Wallace italics).

<sup>101</sup>Seminar in Economics at Iowa State College, October, 1936, printed in *ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>102</sup>Sherwood, pp. 17-18.

<sup>103</sup>Schlesinger, p. 275.

America should dwell in poverty.<sup>104</sup>

Although Hopkins distributed more than \$5,000,000 in his first two hours in the office of Federal Emergency Relief, he held firmly to the belief that the government's real responsibility was to find or make jobs for those who wanted to work.<sup>105</sup>

Hugh S. Johnson, Director of the National Recovery Administration, spent a great deal of his life prior to his position in the Roosevelt administration as an army officer. He had, however, studied law and was a very successful businessman. He saw that unchecked competition had no place in modern America.

The very heart of the New Deal is the principle of concerted action in industry and agriculture under government supervision looking to a balanced economy as opposed to the murderous doctrine of savage and wolfish individualism, looking to dog-eat-dog and devil take the hindmost.<sup>106</sup>

Lester Ward also saw that only through human supervision could there be true "economy."

It is in rational man, therefore, that the first applications of anything worthy of the name of economy is made. Nature has no economy. Only through foresight and design can anything be done economically.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>104</sup>(Grinnell College Speech, 1939), quoted in Sherwood, p. 21.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-46.

<sup>106</sup>The Blue Eagle, 93, 101, 114, 153-155, 169, 172, 187-188, quoted in Schlesinger, p. 88.

<sup>107</sup>Ward, Psychic Factors, p. 256.

Throughout the New Deal, many innovations occurred in America, some of which have passed into history, others endure today. Two of these innovations, the Tennessee Valley Authority and the National Youth Administration demonstrate two particularly important Wardian concepts. The first project, the Tennessee Valley Authority, embodied Ward's idea of government regulation of public utilities as well as the fulfillment of social needs. The second, the National Youth Administration, Ward would have highly praised also, because it was an agency that gave American youth an educational opportunity that might otherwise have been impossible during the Depression.

Never before T. V. A. had the government been authorized to develop a water project for the benefit of the people in this area. Previous development had been primarily for electrical power.<sup>108</sup> The job was for the benefit of all; business, labor, the consumer -- "for the sustained productivity of all of us."<sup>109</sup> However, the greatest benefit derived from the project, explained David Lilienthal, Director of T. V. A., was the successful experiment in government planning.

The idea of unified resource development is based upon the premise that by democratic planning the individual's interest, the interest of private undertaking can increasingly be made one with the interest of all of us, i.e. the community interest.

. . . . .

In the last analysis, in democratic planning it is human beings we are concerned with.<sup>110</sup>

The Tennessee Valley Authority was an experiment not only in regional planning and conservation but also the beginning of compe-

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<sup>108</sup>David Lilienthal, T. V. A.: Democracy on the March (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), p. 49.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., pp. 96-97.

tition between public and private utilities for purposes of providing a more accurate standard for rate regulation.<sup>111</sup> Roosevelt, in a message to Congress proposing his T. V. A. bill, emphasized the need of governmental planning.

Many hard lessons have taught us the human waste that results from lack of planning. Here and there a few wise cities and counties have looked ahead and planned. But our nation has "just grown." It is time to extend planning to a wider field, in this instance comprehending in one great project many states directly concerned with the basin of one of our greatest rivers.<sup>112</sup>

The Tennessee project had another interesting feature that would have met with Ward's approval. Ward wrote his work not only for the consumption of Democrats, but also<sup>for</sup> all who believed in social justice. Actually, Ward saw little need for political parties at all. T. V. A. had the quality of bipartisanship that often characterized the New Deal legislation. As a matter of fact, many of the important bills concerning T. V. A. were introduced by George W. Norris, the "fighting liberal" Republican Senator from Nebraska. Norris had long been a Progressive of the "Bull Moose" style, and had supported Theodore Roosevelt on that ticket in 1912.<sup>113</sup> His interest in support of the project was humanitarian as well as utilitarian. T. V. A., as well as producing power, would also act as a flood control mechanism for the Kentucky and Tennessee Rivers.<sup>114</sup>

The National Youth Administration indicated the New Dealers' concern with educational opportunity, probably the single most im-

<sup>111</sup>Moley, p. 193.

<sup>112</sup>Rauch, p.1102.

<sup>113</sup>George W. Norris, Fighting Liberal (New York: Macmillan Company, 1945), p. 147.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

portant facet of Ward's philosophy. The administration provided means by which young people could work their way through college. It provided America with a core of educated men and women, during the crucial war period that followed, who might otherwise have been denied education during the depression.<sup>115</sup>

Roosevelt had been particularly concerned about education since the days of his governorship of New York. "He has consistently held to the modern American policy of equal opportunity in education."<sup>116</sup> During Roosevelt's Presidency, he had the opportunity to address a number of college audiences concerning his views on education. On October 20, 1934, he spoke at the College of William and Mary on the great need in government for men and women who were well educated. "As education grows it becomes the partner of government."<sup>117</sup> During a speech given at Temple University on February 22, 1936, Roosevelt remarked:

As literacy increases people become aware of the fact that government and society form essentially a cooperative relationship among citizens and the selected representatives of those citizens.

. . . .

As education grows men come to recognize their essential dependence one upon the other. There is revealed to them the true nature of society and of government, which in a large measure, culminates in the art of human cooperation.<sup>118</sup>

In a telegram sent to John W. Studebaker, the United States Commissioner of Education, Roosevelt indicated why he thought education was vital in a democracy.

<sup>115</sup>Perkins, p. 350.

<sup>116</sup>Frank Pierrepont Graves, "President Roosevelt and Education," National Education Association Journal, XXV (March, 1933), p. 75.

<sup>117</sup>"Address at the College of William and Mary," School and Society, XL (November 3, 1934), p. 570.

<sup>118</sup>"Address by President Roosevelt," School and Society, XLIII (February 29, 1936), pp. 300-301.

During times like these, when changes are widespread and rapid, schools and colleges have an unusual responsibility to bring to the people an understanding of these changes in order that modifications in government practices may be made rapidly enough to keep government abreast of the demands for social and economic progress. If governmental changes lag too far behind vital social needs, the government is bound to appear impotent in its efforts to serve the common citizen and to advance public welfare.<sup>119</sup>

The means by which Ward hoped man could come to know sociology and how to apply it was through education. Chugerman explains:

Only through universal scientific education of the masses can the social will find expression. The philosophy of education furnishes the rational basis for intelligent programs of social action and lays the foundation for social control and reconstruction without class wars or bloody revolutions.<sup>120</sup>

Man could not wait for the geniuses to save the world, for they were far too few and far between. Every man had a latent talent which must be developed for the benefit of all.

Roosevelt and the New Dealers were interested in conserving all of America's natural resources; her water power, her rich soil, her young and inquisitive minds, and above all, her peoples' lives. As Ward desired, the value of a human life had come to surpass that of the dollar.

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<sup>119</sup>Telegram reprinted in National Education Association Journal, XXV(April, 1936), p. 110.

<sup>120</sup>Chugerman, p. 204.



## SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW DEAL

How, then, does the New Deal exemplify the social goals of Ward? There are a number of different way in which historians view the New Deal, such as denial of individualism, an extension of older reform movements, or as a humanitarian program. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. sees it primarily as a repudiation of the old order of individualism.

The tenets of the First New Deal were that the technological revolution had rendered bigness inevitable; that competition could no longer be relied on to protect social interests; ...; and that the formula for stability in the new society must be combination and cooperation under enlarged federal authority.<sup>121</sup>

Other critics are inclined to see the New Deal as an extension of the reform movements that had brought America Populism, Progressivism, New Freedom, and New Nationalism in the past. Eric Goldman views the New Deal in this light in Rendezvous with Destiny.

Many of the bills whisked through Congress bespoke the central ideas common to both principal reform traditions, the New Freedom and the New Nationalism -- the belief that the best solution for economic and social ills was action by the federal government under strong executive leadership.<sup>122</sup>

Samuel Rosenman also feels that the New Deal, particularly under the leadership of Roosevelt, was of the Progressive brand of reform.<sup>123</sup> Rexford Tugwell saw in Roosevelt's actions the desire to correct evils that reformers had long protested.

Recovery could be had by spending without collectivizing; and reform could consist in filling out the progressive agenda -- reorganizing the stock market, revising the banking laws, and the like.<sup>124</sup>

Furthermore, it was about the right time for a reform movement to occur in America. In an enlightening article written for the

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<sup>121</sup>Schlesinger, p. 179.

<sup>122</sup>Goldman, p. 225.

<sup>123</sup>Rosenman, p. 33.

<sup>124</sup>Tugwell, p. 248.

Columbia University Forum, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., says that there probably would have been a New Deal even without a depression, although the depression did quicken its coming.<sup>125</sup> The public had become very skeptical of normalcy and there was a "profound discontent with the monopoly of power and prestige by a single class and the resulting indifference of the national government to deeper tensions."<sup>126</sup> The New Deal was primarily as successful as it was because it offered change to America at a time of hopelessness; change away from fixed economic and social laws that had grown meaningless.

On the other hand there were those who felt that Roosevelt's principal motivation was a feeling of humanitarianism, which led him to try anything and everything that might in some way aid those in need. Such aid to the destitute, they asserted, was not a general plan of economic renovation or political upheaval, but merely the use of available means in the most expedient way.

His job, as he saw it, was to patch up an ailing economic system, to rescue human lives, to bring about generally agreed-on reforms, and above all to promote economic security.<sup>127</sup>

Frances Perkins agreed that the New Deal was greatly influenced by a humanitarian feeling that had pretty well captured the Democratic Party in the 1930's.

He [Roosevelt] represented the humanitarian trend. The idea was that all political and practical forces of the community should and could be directed to making life better for ordinary people. This was accepted by most of the dominant elements in the Democratic Party in 1933.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup>"Sources of the New Deal," Columbia University Forum II (Fall, 1959), pp. 4-12, reprinted in Eisenstadt, p. 339.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>127</sup>Burns, p. 197.

<sup>128</sup>Perkins, p. 167.

Although a few clung to the ancient doctrine that the government should not interfere with private business at all, the American people at large rejected that theory as vigorously as they rejected the doctrines of an extreme socialism....<sup>133</sup>

Moreover, in 1933, America found itself in the depths of the worst depression ever experienced. There was no escape from depression, for it was not only nationwide, but worldwide. In a country that could produce more than ever before in its history, America was faced with problems of starving citizens. This change of circumstances charged the atmosphere and elicited a demand for "change" that was partially responsible for the acceptance of Ward's philosophy of a planned society. The inactivity of the Republican administration made the American public aware of the fact that negative government was not going to relieve the depressed economy.

Another very convincing indication of the changing mood of America can be seen in the Supreme Court decisions after 1936. The Court's position on social legislation had changed considerably from the view expressed in Lochner v. New York in which Justice Holmes filed his famous dissent containing the words, "the fourteenth amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's Social Statics,"<sup>134</sup> to the unanimous decision in United States v. Darby upholding the Fair Labor Standards Act. By 1941, it had become the opinion of the Court that Congress not only had the right but the duty to see that power to regulate commerce is used "correctly and safely" for the positive purposes of social well-being.<sup>135</sup> In the National Labor Relations Board case of 1937, Justice Hughes in giving the Court's decision upholding the National Labor Relations Act and the Wagner Act, recognized that:

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p. 547.

<sup>134</sup>Lochner v. New York, 198 U. S. 45 (1905), Robert Cushman, Leading Constitutional Decisions (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958), p. 205.

<sup>135</sup>United States v. Darby, 372 U.S. 100 (1941), ibid., p. 333.

Contemporary periodicals had varied views on what the New Deal was, and what it was going to do for America, and its relative success. Some felt that they were being led down the road towards socialism, because the New Deal was not going to stop once recovery had been achieved.<sup>129</sup> Others took a more generous view of Roosevelt's attempts by saying that most Americans were pleased with the New Deal because it was bold, courageous, and fulfilled long forgotten promises of reform.<sup>130</sup> Yet, other more liberal magazines, such as the New Republic, felt that the New Deal was disappointingly slow in accomplishing any really necessary reforms. It stated that the New Deal had brought America no better than "half way back from the lowest point of the depression" during its first year.<sup>131</sup>

Regardless of what the New Deal meant to those who viewed it during its existence, the problem still remains as to what brought it about. Was it merely the depression, or would it have come without it? Was the nation once again in a reform mood? Was it that the country merely wanted to replace experimentation for waiting for prosperity to come around the corner? Or was it that, somewhere in the background, the words of Lester F. Ward began to take on real meaning for practical politicians?

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<sup>129</sup>"An Evolutionary Revolution," Christian Century, LI, (January 17, 1934), p. 79.

<sup>130</sup>Garrison Villard, "The Evolution of President Roosevelt," Contemporary Review, CXLV, (May, 1934), p. 526.

<sup>131</sup>"Mr. Roosevelt's First Year," New Republic, LXXVIII, (March 14, 1934), p. 116.

## THE SPIRIT OF CHANGE

To attempt to find direct links of influence from one man's writings to other men's actions separated by more than a generation is both challenging and frustrating. Unfortunately, the study of history does not lend itself easily to the tracing of the transmutation of idea to action. However, one cannot deny the possibility of influence simply because the direct link between the policy of the former period and the program of the latter is not readily apparent. The term "cultural lag" can be well applied to the central point in this paper. Although the period in which Lester Ward expounded his theory of planned society and economy was unprepared to accept his ideas, these ideas were not forgotten. After a preliminary exposure during the Progressive Era, a "lag" of fifty years elapsed between the publication of Dynamic Sociology and the New Deal, when his ideas did find acceptance.

In those fifty years, America experienced many changes. In 1883, industrialization was in high gear, changing America from a predominantly rural culture to a nation of big business. But the opportunity for the expression of rugged individualism still existed. The promise of the West still offered escape to those who could not make their fortunes in the East. By 1929, the individual had been forced into a secondary position behind the corporation. The West was no longer open to floods of dissatisfied Easterners.

Changing conditions of economic organizations had their effect on patterns of thought and intellectual currents that constitute the "temper of the times". By 1921, the changes were prevalent enough to be immured in high school text books. For example, a widely used high school history text could make the point that America, though not calling for revolution, had begun to demand reforms that would distribute the nation's wealth more evenly.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Charles A. Beard and Mary Beard, History of the United States (New York: Macmillan Company, 1921), p. 522.

Congress could seek to make appropriate collective action of employers an instrument of peace rather than of strife.<sup>136</sup>

In a particularly important decision concerning the extent to which the Federal government could legislate for the general welfare, Justice Cordoza delivered the Court's decision that the Social Security Act was constitutional. In that decision, he stated:

The social security act is an attempt to find a method by which all these public agencies may work together to a common end.<sup>137</sup>

If such a tradition-bound body as the United States Supreme Court responded to the changing atmosphere, such a perceptive politician as F. D. R., one who was unusually sensitive to public sentiment, would not fail to be influenced. Roosevelt's background, moreover, had prepared him to accept the more positive role of government. Although there is no evidence that Roosevelt had ever read any of Ward's works, or of social thinkers influenced by him, there is evidence that Roosevelt rejected the same economic premises that Ward rejected. While at Harvard, Roosevelt took a number of economic courses, but he often disagreed with the authorities.<sup>138</sup> He became engrossed in the reform spirit in the early 1900's in New York as a law student at Columbia,<sup>139</sup> and his support of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 further indicated his responsiveness to the ideals of social justice.<sup>140</sup> Roosevelt functioned under no rigid theory of government, but from an innate desire to cure social ills by pragmatic means.

<sup>136</sup>National Labor Relations Board v. Jones Laughlin Steel Corporation, 301 U.S. 1 (1937), ibid., p. 355.

<sup>137</sup>Charles C. Steward Machine Company V. Davis 301 U.S. 548 (1937), ibid., p. 294.

<sup>138</sup>Burns, p. 20.

<sup>139</sup>ibid., p. 23.

<sup>140</sup>Perkins, p. 17.

Roosevelt was no theorist. It is doubtful that he chose this course as a result of a well-defined political philosophy. It simply emerged, shaped only roughly by his underlying concept of the public good, from the day-to-day projects and improvisations of his regime.<sup>141</sup>

Furthermore, Roosevelt's desire to aid the poor was more than the noblese oblige of his aristocratic background, for while the concepts of noblese oblige would lead to charity, Roosevelt was to become a spokesman for newer ideas.<sup>142</sup>

The New Dealers, too, were moved not only by the spirit of change, but were also influenced by experience in earlier reform movements. These men were predominantly from the Midwest, where Populism had been strong, and were educated at state universities in this area. They were, by profession, involved with the law, sociology, college teaching and economics.<sup>143</sup>

Roosevelt and his advisers were not only influenced by the climate of the times, but actually helped create that climate through their words and actions. How much one can ascribe to the spirit of the times in weighing the origins of the New Deal varies from one historian to another. David Fusfeld felt that it is of primary importance. "In the first place, Roosevelt's thought was derived primarily from the climate of opinion of his time, out of which F. D. R. selected some ideas and rejected others."<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup>Burns, p. 198.

<sup>142</sup>Fusfeld, p. 15.

<sup>143</sup>Schlesinger, The Coming, p. 18.

<sup>144</sup>Fusfeld, p. 5.

In the study of social and intellectual history, no idea ever appears completely isolated from all other ideas. Nor is any theory of any merit without influence upon later actions. Such is the case with the work of Lester Ward. Although it was unacclaimed by the majority in the period in which it was written, it did foreshadow the reversal of the laissez-faire tradition in America.

Indeed, New Deal thought is more closely identified with Ward than with that of Populism and Progressivism. Its specific differences in this from earlier movements, in the role ascribed to government, are significant. It called not only for government regulation, but also government sponsorship of economic activities. The state could no longer merely be a mediator, or a controller, it was to be a positive planner of society. This is not the idea of Wilson, Bryan, or Theodore Roosevelt, but of Lester Ward. Although the New Dealers did not plan their programs with a copy of Dynamic Sociology in hand, they did work in the sociological atmosphere created by Ward.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt found convincing the public of the need of positive governmental action much less difficult than Lester Ward did in his time, because by the 1930's most Americans were of the opinion that man could rise above rigid evolutionary laws. However, man in the 1930's needed to know how to accomplish that triumph. Roosevelt and the New Dealers supplied the plan, which, through passages of speeches quoted above, I have attempted to compare with the thoughts of Ward. I think the two trends of thought reveal a striking similarity.

If Ward can not be given credit for actually drawing up the blue prints of the New Deal, he must at least be recognized as the "spiritual formulator" of the atmosphere that allowed the New Deal to be created. Ward never gave up his theory that man could "create a better world through the use of reason, ...."<sup>145</sup> In Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal one finds this principle practically applied.

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<sup>145</sup>David Noble, The Paradox of Progressive Thought (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), p. 136.



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