



## Foreword Bellamy

Erich Fromm  
(1960f-e)

First published in: E. Bellamy: *Looking Backward* (2000-1887), New York (New American Library) 1960, p. V-XX. The numbers in {brackets} refer to the pages of this first English publication.-

**Copyright** © 1960 by Erich Fromm; **Copyright** © 1981 and 2011 by The Literary Estate of Erich Fromm, c/o Dr. Rainer Funk, Ursrainer Ring 24, D-72076 Tuebingen / Germany. – Fax: +49-(0)7071-600049; E-Mail: fromm-estate[at-symbol]fromm-online.com.

### I

Few, especially among the younger readers of this book, will realize that Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* is one of the most remarkable books ever published in America. First of all in terms of its popularity--after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Ben-Hur*, it was the most popular book at the turn of the century, printed in many millions of copies in the United States, translated into over twenty languages. But the fact that it was one of the three greatest bestsellers in its time means little in comparison with the intellectual and emotional influence this book had, following its publication in 1888. It stimulated utopian thinking to such an extent that from 1889 to 1900 forty-six other utopian novels were published in the United States and quite a few others in Europe. Three outstanding personalities, Charles Beard, John Dewey, and Edward Weeks, independently making a list of the twenty-five most influential books published since 1885, all put Bellamy's work in the second place, Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* being in the first.<sup>1</sup>

In order to appreciate what this estimate means, it is worth while to consider that the book attracted and deeply influenced men like John Dewey, William Allen White, Eugene V. Debs, Norman Thomas, and Thorstein Veblen.<sup>2</sup> It is no {VI} exaggeration to say that the lives of some of these, and of many other men, were changed by reading Bellamy's book. Its impact was not only felt by a number of intellectuals--it is one of the few books ever published that created almost immediately on its appearance a political mass movement. Between 1890 and 1891 one hundred and sixty-five „Bellamy Clubs“ sprang up all over the United States, devoted to the discussion and propagation of the aims expressed in *Looking Backward*. The Populist Party, which at its peak attracted

---

<sup>1</sup> See John Hope Franklin, „Edward Bellamy and the Nationalist Movement,“ *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 11 (December, 1938), pp. 739-772. See also Elizabeth Sadler, „One Book's Influence: Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*,“ *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 17 (December, 1944), pp. 530-555.

<sup>2</sup> See Edward Bellamy, *Selected Writings on Religion and Society*, ed. Joseph Schiffman (The American Heritage Series, No. 11; New York: The Liberal Arts Press, Inc., 1956), Introduction, p. xxxv. See also Sylvia E. Bowman, *The Year 2000: A Critical Biography of Edward Bellamy* (New York: Bookman Associates, Inc., 1958).

over one million votes throughout the States, was to a large extent influenced by Bellamy's ideas, and got many of its votes from his adherents.

The impact of *Looking Backward* is, to a large extent, due to the remarkable vision of the book, its poignant criticism of nineteenth-century society, and its attractive style, but these alone do not explain entirely the success of the book. In the 1890's, America was open and ready for visions of the „good society.“ While twentieth-century novels that try to paint a picture of the future, such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, or George Orwell's 1984, describe a dehumanized society, governed by hypnoid mass suggestion or terror, Americans at the end of the nineteenth century were willing to believe in, and capable of believing in, a society that would fulfill the promises and hopes that are at the root of our whole Western civilization.<sup>3</sup>

*Looking Backward*, although in form a fanciful romance, is intrinsic part of the American tradition but, like all utopias, it expresses one of the most characteristic elements of Western civilization. Indeed, while the Judeo-Christian tradition shares many basic religious and ethical ideas with the other great {VII} humanistic religions of the world, the utopia is the one element that is almost exclusively a product of the Western mind. What is meant here by „utopia“?

While the word is taken from the title of Sir Thomas More's sixteenth-century *Utopia*, the more general meaning is that a „utopia“ is a society in which man has reached such perfection that he is able to build a social system based on justice, reason, and solidarity. The beginning and the basis of this vision lie in the Messianic concept of the Old Testament prophets. The essential idea of this concept is that man, after losing his primary and pre-individual unity with nature and with his fellow man (as symbolically expressed in the story of the Fall and the expulsion from Paradise), begins to make his own history. His act of disobedience was his first act of freedom. He becomes aware of himself as a separate individual, and of his separation from nature and from all other men. Such awareness is the beginning of history; but history has an aim and a goal: that man, driven by the longing for renewed union with nature and with man, will develop his human faculties of love and reason so fully that eventually he attains a new union, a new harmony with nature and with man. He then will no longer feel separate, alone, and isolated, but will experience his at-onement with the world in which he lives; and he will feel himself truly at home and no longer a stranger in his world. The prophetic idea is that man makes his own history-neither God nor the Messiah changes nature or „saves“ him. He himself grows, unfolds, and becomes what he potentially is; this new state of society is called the „Messianic time.“

The Messianic period is characterized by the end of conflict and fighting between man and man and between man and nature, by universal peace and justice, and by the end of nationalism. As Micah put it (Micah 4: 3-5)

---

<sup>3</sup> Three words are used in this introduction to which people react in an allergic fashion, i.e., *utopia*, *socialism*, and *nationalism*. It is interesting to see why in our time these words have lost their original meaning. All three have in common the quality of lost hopes and ideals: *Utopia*, in our materialistic world, means idle dreaming, instead of the ability to plan and change into a truly human world; *Socialism* has been betrayed by the reformist leaders of 1914, and by the communist leaders of the Stalinist and Khrushchevist systems, while originally it expressed in a more realistic and scientific way the goals of the utopia; *Nationalism* has deteriorated to the idolatry of the nation-state, instead of retaining its original meaning of a free and truly human national life. It is necessary to consider the original meaning of these concepts, and to recapture it.

And he shall judge among many people,  
And rebuke strong nations afar off;  
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
And their spears into pruning hooks  
Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation,  
Neither shall they learn war any more. {VIII}  
But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree;  
And none shall make *them* afraid:  
For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.  
For all people will walk every one in the name of his god,  
And we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

The Messianic concept was a historical one: the brotherhood of man is to be achieved by man's own efforts to attain enlightenment within historical time.

Christianity tended to change this concept in the direction of a purely spiritual and nonhistorical salvation; medieval thought is dominated by this concept of salvation, which is to be realized not in history, but in a transhistorical, eschatological future.

For many hundreds of years the prophetic vision of the good society slumbered--until that decisive period in Western history beginning with the Renaissance, when the seed of rational and theoretical thought, transferred from Greece into the soil of Europe, began to germinate. The Renaissance was the time during which man discovered, as Jakob Burckhardt has stated, nature and the individual, the time in which he began to found a new science, in which he became aware of his own power and his capacity to transform nature through the power of his thought. A new sense of strength arose, and man began to feel himself the potential master of his world. At this point, two trends of Western civilization were joined: the prophetic vision of the good society as a goal of history, and the Greek faith in reason and science. The result was that the idea of the utopia was born again, the idea that man was capable of transforming himself, and of building a new world peopled by a just, rational society of men, a world in which justice, love, and solidarity would be realized. Each era--the Renaissance, the English Revolution, the Age of Enlightenment, the nineteenth century--created its own utopia.<sup>4</sup> The nineteenth century had a new form of utopian thinking, different from the traditional form of imaginative fantasy--that of writings which expressed the Messianic content, in systems {IX} of philosophical and sociological thought. Fourier, Robert Owen, Kropotkin, Hegel, and Marx are the outstanding figures who represent this new form of scientific-utopian thought.

This is the soil in which the American utopias grew. These are the roots of the most important of all American utopias: Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

## II

Who was the man who wrote the classic American utopia?

Edward Bellamy was born in 1850, into an old New England family. He came, on both his father's and mother's side, from families of clergymen who generally exhibited

---

<sup>4</sup> See Marie Louise Berneri, *Journey Through Utopia* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1950).

an independent, deviant quality.<sup>5</sup> His grandfather on his mother's side was forced to resign his pastorate at Salem, Massachusetts, after joining the Masons, and his father was denied his pulpit at Chicopee Falls after thirty-four years of service. He was reared along Calvinist lines, but the traditional faith of his family did not long remain with Edward Bellamy. He forsook the doctrines of the church and became, especially after a trip to Europe, obsessed with „man's inhumanity to man.“ He passed his bar examination, but his longing to work for social change made him turn to newspaper work. At the age of twenty-two he delivered his first address, entitled *The Barbarism of Society*. He returned at this time to the essence of Christian teaching, the idea of love of man and of human solidarity, and when he was only twenty-four years old, he wrote a manuscript, never published in his time, *The Religion of Solidarity*,<sup>6</sup> in which he gave expression to this feeling. Plagued by poor health, which eventually led to his early death at the age of forty-eight, he had to give up newspaper work, and become a free-lance writer. At the age of thirty-six, against the background of Haymarket and the „ten thousand strikes,“ he began to work on *Looking Backward*, which was published in 1888. Even when he became a famous national figure, he never lost his deep modesty and humility, his {X} unsparing devotion to his ideals, his love for man. In spite of sickness and economic difficulties, he would refuse to accept fees for lectures given to spread his political ideas.

This was the man, and one has to know something about him to understand his work.

### III

What is the nature of the society which Bellamy describes in *Looking Backward*?

It is a society which not so much because of technical inventions, but rather through the rationality of its organization can produce enough to satisfy everyone's economic needs. People do not have an unlimited amount of goods, and they are not stimulated to consume more and more all the time. If they like to travel, for instance, they must be satisfied to spend less for housing or clothing, but nobody lacks the basis for a dignified and rich human life. Everyone receives the same amount of money, regardless of the amount of work he does. Everyone has the right to a decent human life not because he excels in this or that, but because he is a man. „Desert is a moral question, and the amount of the product a material quantity. It would be an extraordinary sort of logic which should try to determine a moral question by a material standard... The basis of his claim is the fact that he is a man.“ All means of production are in the hands of the state, and there is no private owner of capital or business. Both the kind and the extent of work anyone does is determined by individual choice. Bellamy's good society is one the aim of which is not luxury and consumption *per se*, but the good life; and work, while freely chosen, is not the aim of life either. After the age of forty-five, everyone is exempt from further economic -service to the nation, with the exception of very specialized pro-

<sup>5</sup> See Schiffman's Introduction in Bellamy's *Selected Writings*, p. XI ff.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Bellamy, *The Religion of Solidarity*, ed. Arthur E. Morgan (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Bookplate Company, 1940). *The Religion of Solidarity* is reprinted in Bellamy's *Selected Writings* by permission of Arthur E. Morgan.



professional and administrative jobs which give pleasure and require a great deal of experience. It is Bellamy's basic principle that the system is „entirely voluntary, the logical outcome of the operation of human nature under rational conditions.“

One of the striking features of Bellamy's utopia is the fact that people not only live better materially, but that they are different psychologically. There is no individual {XI} antagonism, but a sense of solidarity and love. Their principle is that one accepts only those services one is willing to return. They are frank and they do not lie, and there is complete equality of the sexes, with no need for deceit or manipulation. In other words, it is a society in which the religion of brotherly love and solidarity has been realized.

#### IV

A great deal of criticism has been directed against Bellamy's utopia. Not only, as would be natural, has it been criticized by those who are opposed to a socialist society, but it has also been censured by many whose sympathies are entirely with a society without private property in the means of production, and of mutual solidarity. Two main criticisms seem to be quite justified.

The first and most important one refers to the hierarchical bureaucratic principle of administration which governs in the society of the year 2000. There is no effective democracy; only those over forty-five and not connected with the industrial army have the right to vote. The administration is organized according to the principles of an army. While it is true that skill, education, and proved capacity are the conditions for advancement in this hierarchy, it is nevertheless a society in which the majority of the citizens are subject to the commands of industrial officers, and have little chance to develop on their own initiative. Bellamy's state is a highly centralized one, in which the state not only owns the means of production, but also regulates all public activities.

If this criticism was directed against Bellamy's utopia in his lifetime, how much more justified does it seem in the middle of the twentieth century, in a society which is developing more and more into a managerial society. We have witnessed, both in the Soviet Union and in the great industrial countries of the West, the development of a class of managers who are not the legal owners of the enterprise, but its effective, social owners, and are not subject to the control of those whose work they direct. The individual is being transformed more and more into a cog in a vast bureaucratic machine, into a „thing“ directed by bureaucrats.

Bellamy did not see the dangers of a managerial society and {XII} of bureaucratization. He did not recognize that the bureaucrat is a man who administers things and people, and who *relates himself to people as to things*. Bellamy did not see that a society in which the individual does not act as a responsible participant in his own work lacks the essential elements of democracy, and is one in which man loses his individuality and initiative; that the bureaucratic system eventually tends to produce machines that act like men and men who act like machines. This emphasis on bureaucratic, centralized government seems to be, indeed, the worst defect of Bellamy's utopia (a pitfall that was clearly seen and described in another important utopia, *News from Nowhere*, by William Morris), but it may be said that at a time when callous and irresponsible private

owners directed production, the danger of a class of skilled managers was not yet so visible as it has become to those living in a period of a managerial society.

Another criticism which has been made is not without merit either. It seems that Bellamy's good society is in a perfect equilibrium, that there is no need for further development, that there are no conflicts and human problems which transcend the existing order. But again it would seem that one has to consider the time in which Bellamy lived and wrote. It was a period of great wealth and great want, a period of squalor and poverty. Bellamy was not primarily a philosopher or a psychologist, but he was concerned with the abolition of those very conditions which deprive human life of its dignity and man of his capacity to enjoy life. He wanted to show what life could be if it were organized rationally, and did not concern himself with the picture of the future of man transcending this first step into a truly human society.

A third criticism directed against Bellamy seems to me less justified, and to be based on a lack of sufficient knowledge of his ideas as expressed in other, and at the time unpublished, works. The essence of this criticism was expressed by a contemporary of his, who said, „it is certainly a new idea that virtue is a child of comfort.“ This implies that Bellamy's society is one in which material comfort is the main aim of life and in which the human and spiritual development of man is neglected. In 1960, this criticism seems to deserve even more attention than it did at the end of the nineteenth century.

Western society has become profoundly materialistic. In {XIII} contrast to the nineteenth century, in which saving was a virtue, the twentieth century has made consumption into the main virtue. The aim of life has changed so that the consumption of more and better things has taken the place of the Messianic vision of a society of solidarity and love. While lip service is paid to the traditional religious ideas, the fact is that these ideas have become an empty shell. Not perfection of man, but the perfection of things is the aim of contemporary society, in the countries of the West, as well as in the communist system. The well-fed, well-clad, and well-amused man is our goal--a man who has much and *uses* much--but *is* little. It has dawned upon many thoughtful persons today that while we started out to make mass production a means for a better human life, the means have become transformed into ends. As Emerson put it, „Things are in the saddle and ride mankind.“

This last criticism against Bellamy, however, is different from the ones mentioned before. In those areas Bellamy did not see problems and dangers which only developed fully in the subsequent sixty years. Here, Bellamy is criticized for a shallow materialism that is foreign to his own outlook. Although it is true that in *Looking Backward* he described men and women of a much higher psychological and spiritual development than those of his--or our--time, he did not stress this aspect as much as he might have. Maybe he was afraid that more emphasis on the moral and spiritual aspects would weaken the popular appeal of the novel. But his real concern is clearly expressed in his other writings. Bellamy considered love of the human race as the essence of the religious spirit. The „cardinal motive of human life,“ he writes in *The Religion of Solidarity*, „is a tendency and a striving to absorb or be absorbed in or united with other lives and all life... It is the operation of this law in great and low things, in the love of men for women, and for each other, for the race, for nature, and for those great ideas which are the symbols of solidarity, that has ever made up the web and woof of human passion... As individuals we are indeed limited to a narrow spot in today, but as universalists we in-

herit all time and space.”<sup>7</sup> {XIV}

Bellamy's philosophy was a spiritual one, in which the experience of complete union was the basic aim of a nontheistic mysticism. Furthermore, Bellamy had a profound concept of the development of the human psyche. He believed that man in his history goes through a development in which new psychic forces and experiences come to the fore, and that those very forces lead to his perfection. This „tendency of the human soul,” he writes in *The Religion of Solidarity*, „to a more perfect realization of its solidarity with the universe ... is already ... a matter of history. I would call attention to the fact that sentimental love of the beautiful and sublime in nature, the charm that mountains, sea, and landscape so potently exercise upon the modern mind through a subtle sense of sympathy, is a comparatively modern and recent growth of the human mind. The ancients knew, or at least say, nothing of it. It is a curious fact that in no classical author are to be found any allusions to a class of emotions and sentiments that take up such large space in modern literature. It is almost within a century, in fact, that this susceptibility of the soul seems to have been developed... If culture can add such a province as this to human nature within a century, it is surely not visionary to count on a still more complete future development of the same group of subtle physical faculties.”<sup>8</sup>

It is quite clear how deeply related Bellamy's thought is to that of the great American tradition as expressed in the thinking of Whitman, Thoreau, Emerson, and that great but much less known thinker, Richard M. Bucke.<sup>9</sup> Bellamy's religious experience is that of love and solidarity, of union, of the at-onement of man with man and man with nature, of love for the human race, of supranational universalism; he believed that „there is no stronger attribute to human nature than this hunger for comradeship and mutual trust.” Bellamy's philosophy was deeply rooted in the spirit of Christianity. He turned against the Christian religion only because he felt that „the church failed to put the emphasis on religion where it {XV} belonged, namely on the translation of the Golden Rule into human relations; that it sang constantly about the glories of Heaven and did not denounce or attempt to correct evil and wickedness here below.”<sup>10</sup>

## V

In discussing Bellamy's utopia the question arises: Was his goal socialism?

There can be little question that in all the most essential elements, his utopia is one of socialism and in many respects one of Marx's socialism. Bellamy describes a society in which all means of production are in the hands of the state, in which there is complete equality of income, and in which classes have ceased to exist. Bellamy, like Marx, assumed that capitalism had led to an ever-increasing concentration of capital and to the formation of giant enterprises, and in this way had prepared the way for the new stage--

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Schiffman's Introduction to Bellamy's *Selected Writings*, p. xviii.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Schiffman's Introduction to Bellamy's *Selected Writings*, p. xvii.

<sup>9</sup> See Richard M. Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness, A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, 17th ed. (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1954).

<sup>10</sup> Arthur E. Morgan, *The Philosophy of Edward Bellamy*, (New York: King's Crown Press, 1945), pp. 84-85. Quoted in Schiffman's Introduction to Bellamy's *Selected Writings*, p. xxxviii.

that of the whole economy being a super-enterprise directed by the state and its state-appointed managers.

There are several factors, however, in which Bellamy's explanation differs from Marx's theory: One is that the new society comes into existence without class struggle, and without the specific effort of the working class for its own emancipation. Another point of difference lies in the idea of a completely centralized state without effective democracy. In this respect Bellamy's utopia would be more similar to the Khrushchevist form of communism than to Marx's socialism--with the one basic difference, however, that Bellamy's goal is not the automatized mass-man with ever-increasing consumption, as is that of Khrushchevism, but a man capable of brotherly love and of union with man and nature. While Marx had certain centralistic tendencies and believed that it was necessary to conquer the state and even to strengthen its power during a period of transition, his vision of socialism clearly was one in which the state would wither away and be replaced by a society of freely cooperating individuals.

While, in fact, Bellamy's utopia is essentially socialist, he {XVI} himself did not use the word „socialism“ in his book, nor was it used in the political movement which resulted from the book. He called this movement „nationalist,“ referring by this word both to the nationalization of all means of production and to the fact that only this form of society could bring about the rich flowering of a nation's life. Nevertheless, it seems that he was by no means an anti-“socialist“. He wrote an introduction to the American edition of the *Fabian Essays* (1894) stating that „nationalism was a form under which socialism was brought to the notice of the American public.“<sup>11</sup> He endorsed the Fabian creed of public ownership of industry and commerce, and criticized it only because it did not go far enough, especially with regard to the completely equal distribution of income. However, the question of whether Bellamy was a socialist has an interest beyond the point of ascertaining what his own conscious concept was.

In reading his book today, not only are the problems of the development of industrial society in the last seventy years brought to our attention, but also the problem of what happened to socialism in the same period. One fails to understand *Bellamy if one does* not understand what socialism was in the concept of Marx and others, and how it has become changed and distorted in the years since then.

Socialism, in Marx's concept, was by no means primarily a movement for the abolishment of economic inequality; its aim was essentially man's emancipation, his restoration to the unalienated, uncrippled individual who enters into a new, rich, spontaneous relationship with his fellow man and with nature. The aim of socialism was that man should throw away the chains which bind him, the fictions and unrealities, and transform himself into a being who can make creative use of his powers of feeling and of thinking. Socialism wanted man to become independent, that is, to stand on his own feet; and it believed that man can only stand on his own feet if) as Marx said, „he owes his existence to himself, if he affirms his individuality as a total man in each of his relations to the world, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, willing, loving-in short, if he affirms and expresses all organs of his individuality.“ {XVII}

The aim of socialism was individuality, not uniformity; liberation from economic bonds, not the making of material aims into the main concern of life. Its principle was

---

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Sadler, *New England Quarterly*, p. 539. XVI



that each man is an end in himself, and must never be the means of another man. Socialism wanted to create a society in which each citizen actively and responsibly participated in all decisions, and in which he could participate because he was a man and not a thing, because he had convictions and not synthetic opinions. It wanted to build a society in which man controls circumstances, rather than is controlled by them. In the nineteenth century and until the beginning of the first World War, socialism, rooted in the tradition of prophetic Messianism and modern rationalism was the most significant humanistic and spiritual movement in Europe and America.

What happened to socialism?

It succumbed to the spirit of capitalism which it had wanted to replace. Instead of understanding socialism as a movement for the liberation of man, many of its adherents and its enemies alike understood it as being exclusively a movement for the economic improvement of the working class. The humanistic aims of socialism were forgotten, or only paid lip service to, while, as in capitalism, all the emphasis was laid on the aims of economic gain. Just as the ideals of democracy have lost their spiritual roots, the idea of socialism lost its deepest root--the prophetic-Messianic faith in peace, justice, and the brotherhood of man.

Thus socialism became the vehicle by which the workers could attain their place *within* the capitalistic structure, rather than transcending it; instead of changing capitalism, socialism was absorbed by its spirit. The failure of the socialist movement became complete when in 1914 its leaders renounced international solidarity, choosing the economic and military interests of their respective countries as against the ideas of internationalism and peace which had been their program.

The misinterpretation of socialism as a purely economic movement, and of nationalization of the means of production as its principal aim, occurred both in the right wing and in the „left“ wing of the socialist movement. The reformist leaders of the socialist movement in Europe considered it their primary aim to elevate the economic status of the worker within the capitalist system, and they considered as their most radical {XVIII} measures the nationalization of certain big enterprises. Only recently have many realized that the nationalization of an enterprise is in itself not the realization of socialism, that for the worker to be managed by a privately appointed bureaucracy is not basically different from his being managed by a publicly appointed bureaucracy.

The leaders of the communist party in the Soviet Union interpreted socialism in the same purely economic way. But, living in a country much less developed than Western Europe, and without a democratic tradition, they applied terror and dictatorship to enforce the fast accumulation of capital, which in Western Europe had occurred in the nineteenth century. They developed a new form of state capitalism that proved to be economically successful--and humanly destructive. They built a bureaucratically managed society in which class distinction--both in an economic sense and as far as the power to command others is concerned--is deeper and more rigid than exists in any of the capitalist societies of today. They define their system as „socialistic“ because they have nationalized the whole economy, while in reality their system is the complete negation of all that socialism stands for--the affirmation of individuality and the full development of man. In order to win the support of the masses who had to make insufferable sacrifices for the sake of the fast accumulation of capital, they used socialistic, combined with nationalistic, ideologies, and this gained them the grudging co-operation of the governed.

Thus far the free-enterprise system is vastly superior to the communist system because it has preserved one of the greatest achievements of modern man, political freedom, and, with it, a respect for the dignity and individuality of man, which links us to the fundamental spiritual tradition of humanism. Our political freedom permits possibilities of criticism and of making proposals for constructive social change which are practically impossible in the Soviet police state. It is to be expected, however, that once the Soviet countries have achieved the same level of economic development that Western Europe and the United States have achieved--that is, once they can satisfy the demand for a comfortable life--their leaders will not need terror, but will be able to use the same means of manipulation that are used in the West; suggestion and persuasion. This development will bring about the convergence {XIX} of twentieth-century capitalism, and twentieth-century communism. Both systems are based on industrialization; their goal is ever-increasing economic efficiency and wealth. They are societies run by a managerial class and by professional politicians. Both are thoroughly materialistic in their outlook, regardless of lip service to Christian ideology in the West and secular Messianism in the East. They organize the masses in a centralized system, in large factories, in political mass parties. In both systems, if they proceed as they are going now, the mass-man, the alienated man--a well-fed, wellclothed, well-entertained automaton-man governed by bureaucrats who have as little a goal as the mass-man has--will replace the creative, thinking, feeling man. *Things* will have the first place, and man will be dead; he will talk of freedom and individuality while he will *be* nothing.

One must understand this development of socialism in order to appreciate fully Bellamy's vision. In spite of certain shortcomings and superficialities, his vision is the same as that of humanistic socialism: the transformation of present-day society into a rational and planned one, in which inequality and injustice have disappeared. But this economic and social transformation is only a means to an end. The end is the emancipation of man, and the overcoming of alienation. It is the fulfillment of humanism within an industrial society. It is the realization of the spiritual ideals in which our whole Western civilization is rooted.

To read Bellamy's *Looking Backward* today is certainly important, not only because it gives an imaginative vision of how a rational society could be organized, but also because it shows all the problems which confront us today. Are we going to be lost in an empty materialism in which the danger is not any longer as in the past that men become slaves, but that men become robots? Or are we striving for a revitalization of the basic longings of Western man without which Western society, in spite of all its wealth, is in danger of dying from its own lack of vitality and purpose?

Contemporary man is fascinated by technical visions of travel to the moon and to the planets. It seems that this kind of scientific utopia is a poor substitute for the humanist utopia that leads from prophetic Messianism to Bellamy--the vision of the „good society“ in which man makes his world a truly {XX} human home. Yet, it is certainly no more difficult to devise plans for a rationally organized and truly human society than it is to construct atomic bombs, intercontinental missiles, and travels to the moon.

No more fitting lines could be said about Bellamy's *Looking Backward* than those of William Morris in *The Earthly Paradise*:

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time



Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?  
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme  
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,  
Telling a tale not too importunate  
To those who in the sleepy region stay,  
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.