

## AFD Ep 337 Links and Notes - Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward" 1888 futurist utopian novel

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Bellamy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Bellamy)
  - *Although Bellamy retrospectively claimed he did not write Looking Backward as a blueprint for political action, but rather sought to write "a literary fantasy, a fairy tale of social felicity", [8] the book inspired legions of inspired readers to establish so-called Nationalist Clubs, beginning in Boston late in 1888. [9] Bellamy's vision of a country relieved of its social ills through abandonment of the principle of competition and establishment of state ownership of industry proved an appealing panacea to a generation of intellectuals alienated from the dark side of Gilded Age America. By 1891 it was reported that no fewer than 162 Nationalist Clubs were in existence. [10]*
  - *Bellamy's use of the term "Nationalism" rather than "socialism" as a descriptor of his governmental vision was calculated, as he did not want to limit either sales of his novel or the potential influence of its political ideas. [11] In an 1888 letter to literary critic William Dean Howells, Bellamy wrote:*
    - *Every sensible man will admit there is a big deal in a name, especially in making first impressions. In the radicalness of the opinions I have expressed, I may seem to out-socialize the socialists, yet the word socialist is one I never could well stomach. In the first place it is a foreign word in itself, and equally foreign in all its suggestions. It smells to the average American of petroleum, suggests the red flag, and with all manner of sexual novelties, and an abusive tone about God and religion, which in this country we at least treat with respect. [...] [W]hatever German and French reformers may choose to call themselves, socialist is not a good name for a party to succeed with in America. No such party can or ought to succeed that is not wholly and enthusiastically American and patriotic in spirit and suggestions. [12]*
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalist\\_Clubs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalist_Clubs)
  - originating from Boston, middle class dominated...
  - but proved important to a number of Socialist politicians...
  - eventually became very popular in California, which later saw author Upton Sinclair attempt to lead a literature-driven socialist electoral movement ...
  - however the Populist "People's Party" movement and the 1893 economic crisis ended up taking the wind out of the Nationalist sails early)
  - "Nationalist" name has more to do with nationalization of industry than what we would now think of with regard to nationalism
  - Critics, especially later on, argue that the Nationalist Clubs and "Looking Backward" depended too heavily on the idea of an industrialized military force intervening and running a military government for the people and that the Nationalist movement was either anti-democratic or never gave it much thought
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New\\_Nation\\_\(United\\_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Nation_(United_States))
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Looking\\_Backward](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Looking_Backward)
- "the nation is the sole employer and capitalist" - Nationalism and Bellamy Clubs
- Looking backward sequel [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equality\\_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equality_(novel))
  - *On the other hand, John Dewey (who called Bellamy "a great American prophet") preferred Equality, considering it to be "more populist and democratic" than the "more popular and authoritarian" Looking Backward. [5] Peter Kropotkin also received the book more favourably, arguing that it was superior to Looking Backward because*

*Bellamy had removed the authoritarian aspects. Kropotkin claimed that these elements did not fit the character of the former work in any case, and stated that he believed that if someone suitable could have conversed with Bellamy, they could have convinced him to declare for anarchism.<sup>[6]</sup>*

- , political reaction from radicals - too technocratic/ the sequel was more populist/feminist
- The era of trusts replaced by one big trust
- No money, but predicted credit cards - UBI-like allotment system
- Army of industry - president is top industrial general, music rooms/alarm clocks, invalid corps
- "The worker is not a citizen because he works, he works because he's a citizen"
- Bonds with Dr Leete about reading Dickens - "Judged by our standards, he overtops all the writers of his age, not because his literary genius was highest, but because his great heart beat for the poor, because he made the cause of the victims of society his own, and devoted his pen to exposing its cruelties and shams. No man of his time did so much as he to turn men's minds to the wrong and wretchedness of the old order of things, and open their eyes to the necessity of the great change that was coming, although he himself did not clearly foresee it."
- Waiters are respected and most everyone serves as one at some point, public umbrella system
- Amazon/COSTCO-like warehouses
  - All measurements recorded, exact
  - More efficient price system
- Retire at 45, enjoy your interests - its the new 21 says Dr Leete
- Charlestown prison gone - criminality is atavism
- No legal profession or jury system but there are judges/magistrates
- College is free and it's cost was inflated back in the 19th century (LOL)
  - We have simply added to the common school system of compulsory education, in vogue in Massachusetts a hundred years ago, a half dozen higher grades, carrying the youth to the age of twenty-one and giving him what you used to call the education of a gentleman, instead of turning him loose at fourteen or fifteen with no mental equipment beyond reading, writing, and the multiplication table."
- 19th century
  - The producers of the nineteenth century were not, like ours, working together for the maintenance of the community, but each solely for his own maintenance at the expense of the community. If, in working to this end, he at the same time increased the aggregate wealth, that was merely incidental. It was just as feasible and as common to increase one's private hoard by practices injurious to the general welfare.
  - The day dream of the nineteenth century producer was to gain absolute control of the supply of some necessity of life, so that he might keep the public at the verge of starvation, and always command famine prices for what he supplied. This, Mr. West, is what was called in the nineteenth century a system of production
  - Business crises, unemployment - "Moreover, every change in the adjustments of business, every slightest alteration in the condition of commerce or manufactures, not to speak of the innumerable business failures that took place yearly, even in the best of times, were constantly throwing a multitude of men out of employment for periods of weeks or months, or even years. A great number of these seekers after employment were constantly traversing the country, becoming in time professional vagabonds, then criminals. 'Give us work!' was the cry of an army of the unemployed at nearly all seasons, and in seasons of dullness in business this army swelled to a host so vast and desperate as to threaten the stability of the government."
- Reading 1887 newspaper with news of strikes
  - Change didnt come from socialists/anarchists (paid by capital to turn people away with extremists rhetoric) nor Labor party but "National" Party

- Women - out of the kitchen, into the industrial army (get the lighter work)
  - Women general in chief has a veto on the Cabinet over the president on women's issues
  - Get credit cards with the same amount as men
  - Male-female relations are more level - women are more open about their interest in men
  - Incels predicted!!!
    - Celibates nowadays are almost invariably men who have failed to acquit themselves creditably in the work of life. The woman must be a courageous one, with a very evil sort of courage, too, whom pity for one of these unfortunates should lead to defy the opinion of her generation—for otherwise she is free—so far as to accept him for a husband
- CH26
  - Base-5 weeks instead of base-7