

Sir,

While agreeing with Mr Stoke's estimate in your first number of William Morris' influence as an artist on Bernard Shaw, I think that his account of their political views is confusing. Morris did read Marx with thoroughness, despite his understandable dislike for pure economics. The evidence – statements by Morris that he did so, and a precis of the economic portions of *Capital* that he wrote – will be found discussed in the appendix to E. P. Thompson's biography. Morris' phase as an active socialist agitator ended not with Bloody Sunday in 1887, but with the capture of the Socialist League by anarchists in 1890. Even then he continued to speak at outdoor socialist meetings, although ill-health and the end of the League much reduced his activity. Throughout this period his writings both on politics and the history of art present – with perhaps more clarity than Marx – a wholly Marxist reliance on the class struggle as the explanation of the past and the hope of the future. The Fabian Tract No. 113, 'Communism', mentioned by Mr Stokes, is a good example. Shaw, on the other hand, ceased to believe after 1887 that revolution was a possibility, and at the same time was convinced by Wicksteed that the Marxist economic theory of value was wrong. After this he tried a variety of political theories from Fabian gradualism to Fascism, in which he wholly rejected the influence of Morris. If he never ceased to *want* a revolution at heart, was this not more due to his own spirit than to his memory of a revolutionary friend?

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