



Editorial

Someone once wrote that there are decades where nothing happens, and there are sometimes weeks where decades happen. Quite a lot has happened over the course of the last decade, but, of late, there have also been rather a few weeks during which it has felt as if decades have happened, and the pace of events shows no sign of slowing down. The utopian imagination, with its extended temporal horizon, offers a kind of mooring during such a period of widespread social crisis, ecological breakdown and political destabilisation. At the same time, it challenges those of a more quietist and apolitical bent to confront the reality of the crisis from which many would prefer to keep their eyes averted as they seek the spurious comforts of retrogressive nostalgia, an obsolete and irrelevant centrism or a retreat into private life.

This issue opens with two theoretically informed and politically enriching engagements with *News from Nowhere*. Tony Pinkney imagines an encounter between Morris and Fredric Jameson, the American Marxist and theorist of utopia. He extends this critical thought-experiment, via Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse and several twentieth-century utopian texts, to offer a persuasive (and sometimes playfully speculative) reading of *News from Nowhere's* 'Jamesonian negativity' (p. 11). Pinkney's article has previously appeared in Chinese in the Spring 2013 issue of the journal *Research on Marxist Aesthetics*, and I am pleased to publish it here for the first time in English. Andrew J. Wood, meanwhile, opens some intriguing lines of dialogue between Morris and another important twentieth-century thinker, Georges Bataille, the French theorist of excess and 'base' materialism. Wood focuses on a single chapter of *News from Nowhere* in order to elucidate some striking patterns of similarity between Morris's and Bataille's thinking about art as the 'most fundamentally human production' (p. 17).

Elsewhere in this issue, Anna Vaninskaya considers the various challenges that faced socialist lecturers and agitators as they engaged with working-class audiences during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century. This piece was originally written for oral presentation as an extension of the section on 'Apathy or Enthusiasm' in chapter 5 of her 2010 book *William Morris and the Idea of Community: Romance, History and Propaganda 1880-1914*, and therefore reproduces some material from the published book. Peter Faulkner, meanwhile, offers a concise overview of Eric Hobsbawm's reflections on Morris, drawing on Hobsbawm's *How to Change the World: Tales of Marx and Marxism* (2011).

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