

# Editorial

The Society's decision to mark the centenary of the first publication of *News from Nowhere* in *Commonweal* will give rise to many events in 1990, a year in which people are already thinking more than is usual about the future. As editor of *The Journal* I am pleased to be able to offer the present substantial volume, which I hope demonstrates the continuing value of Morris's ideas in several different areas — but sees them opening up areas of discussion, not as constituting dogma. This point strikes me particularly as I consider the recent events in Eastern Europe, and ask what kind of an irony it is that it is *there*, in countries already officially deemed Communist, that the revolutions of 1989 have taken place, and not in any of the Western European countries, while in Tiananmen Square the old men of Chinese Communism appallingly out-performed Sir Charles Warren. The answer must surely be that Stalinist Communism, especially as imposed on other countries by the Soviet Union, because of its centralized and totalitarian character failed to satisfy the reasonable expectations of the people for both freedom and consumer goods. Morris's works have been seen for some time to contain within them a critique of State Socialism as well as Capitalism (see for example, Asa Briggs's Introduction to his Penguin selection of Morris); Morris's repudiation of the state in *News from Nowhere* is very much to the point here: we can't imagine him lasting long in any Stalinist regime. What I, like I imagine many others, now hope is that the newly freed energies of the people of Eastern Europe (aided, I trust, by support from the West) will not dissipate themselves in creating Western-style consumerist market economies, but will be used to create truly democratic Socialist societies — like that in Morris's *Nowhere* — in which individual creativity serves a human community.

Peter Faulkner