

## REVIEWS

*William Morris on Socialism: Uncollected Essays* edited by Florence Boos. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2023. xii, 432 pp. + 12 colour, 28 b&w illus. ISBN 978-1-4744-5808-5 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4744-5810-8 (epub). \$165.00.

It is easy to feel that the many threads of William Morris's intellectual, artistic, entrepreneurial, and social vision do not tie up neatly into a harmonious pattern. The range of his accomplishments alone can be intimidating; examining the development and possible connections among them has occupied admirers and scholars of Morris for more than a century. In this intriguing collection, Florence Boos focusses on twenty-six political essays Morris wrote from 1878 to 1896. All but one of the chronologically presented, full-text essays were previously unpublished or had only been published in edited form; many were given as public lectures, some were printed in newspapers, and several are manuscripts, drafts with working notes, or transcriptions. Boos frames her collection of Morris's socialist writings with a critical introduction that provides the historical, intellectual, and archival context of Morris's work; her editorial introduction to each piece examines it individually and in relation to the other essays as well as to his life and work during that specific period; and she includes invaluable notes on textual variants, annotations, and an appendix. Many of the book's chapters are separated by well-selected images of Morris's family, colleagues, manuscripts, and art works as well as maps, newspaper clippings, and socialist documents, inviting the reader to experience the materiality of Morris's work and Boos's scholarly research.

This book is our first opportunity to read Morris working out his developing role as a socialist spokesperson during the evolving, often contentious phases of 19th-century socialism and his insistence that establishing unity among the competing socialist factions was essential to achieving – perhaps even remembering – their shared goal of radical social change. Boos begins the volume by noting the disorganized state of much of Morris's "great wealth of material" despite the efforts of previous scholars to catalogue and collect his writings. His daughter, May Morris, assembled a 24-volume series, *The Collected Works of William Morris* (1910-1915), but only Volumes 22 and 23 contain political writings. Her later collection, *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* (1936), included more of Morris's political essays, but she edited or fragmented many of the entries. In addition, Morris frequently wrote different versions of a talk using the same title, with only one version published; many of his writings were gifted, sold, or lost, making the scholarly task of relocating and organizing his work particularly difficult. As Boos notes,