

tion of the state at all but are studies of other processes.

Yet, in the end, the volume is successful. It raises more questions than it answers. It invites discussion and further investigation about issues that despite the assumption by a number of scholars, are not already resolved or well understood. And perhaps most importantly, *Colonial Leviathan* firmly establishes that a reexamination of colonial Canada is both legitimate and important.

**Jane Errington**  
**Royal Military College**

Alan M. Wald, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals: Selected Essays on Marxist Traditions in Cultural Commitment* (New Jersey: Humanities Press 1992).

Alan Wald is a cultural historian well known for his major study of *The New York Intellectuals*. He has also been a committed left activist since the 1960s, and was for some time involved with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. At a time when Leninism is out of fashion on much of the left, Wald insists that a crucial failure of the sixties was the failure to "construct a serious, internally democratic, coherent socialist organization with a pro-working-class perspective that could have embodied the experiences of the past and synthesized those of the present."(xiv)

It is this concern with, and experience of, not just socialist activism but socialist *organisation* that gives this collection of essays and reviews their strength. When Wald talks about the tensions felt by intellectuals and artists within the socialist movement, he writes not as an academic onlooker, but as one who has lived the problems.

The essays range over a number of topics from the cultural history of the left. Wald moves with ease from Communist novelist Howard Fast to Trotskyist historian George Breitman, from sculptor Duncan Ferguson to singer Pete Seeger, from Chicano radicalism to proletarian publishing. He is at his best with cultural figures outside the mainstream. A model in this respect is his essay on the last years of Victor Serge, in which he shows quite clearly that Serge never repudiated Leninism,

while at the same time subjecting Serge's views in his last years to a sympathetic but searchingly critical appraisal.

Wald devotes a whole section of the book to problems of race and culture. There is a sensitive discussion of the problems of "free speech" and a sharp critique of the "ethnicity" school, which seeks to equate the experience of Blacks, Chicanos and other victims of what Wald calls "internal colonialism" with that of European immigrants to the USA. Wald counterposes to this what he calls the "class, gender and race methodology," though he would need to spell out at much greater length the interrelation between the three factors to be wholly convincing.

In this context Wald tries to show how literary studies in the USA have been dominated by European values and standards. Thus he compares an extract from Eliot's *Waste Land* to a poem by N. Scott Momaday, a writer of Native American ancestry, showing how the former depends on European references, while the latter requires judgment in terms of a completely different set of criteria.

In urging that literature syllabuses be restructured to break the grip of Euro-American values Wald is undoubtedly right; however in so doing he perhaps underestimates the importance for the oppressed of a study of their oppressors' culture. In reading Wald's devastating critique of Eliot, I am reminded of the words of the West Indian writer C.L.R James (to whom Wald devotes a disappointingly short essay in this book): "T.S. Eliot ... is of special value to me in that in him I find more often than elsewhere, and beautifully and precisely stated, things to which I am completely opposed."

This points to a wider problem. Wald makes extensive use of the concept of culture (drawing in particular on the work of Raymond Williams), but makes relatively little reference to ideology. Yet to study the products of a dominant culture as manifestations of ideology is precisely what a Marxist critique requires.

In the longest study in the book, on the Trotskyist sculptor Duncan Ferguson, Wald confronts the thorny problem of the relation between political organization and artistic practice. Ferguson spent his life torn between the urge to perfect his art and the demands of political militancy. In 1941 Ferguson asked

SWP leader James P. Cannon whether he should become chairman of the Art Department at Queens College New York, or take a job in a steel-mill. Cannon advised the former, while making clear that it was not a question of party discipline; Ferguson opted for the latter.

Wald quotes Ferguson's mature view of the problem in 1965: "I have known that conflict for some thirty years; and I have never resolved it. I don't think it will ever be resolved short of the lack of need of a revolutionary party because the revolution has been made. And the conflict is going to remain there for any artist who comes into the party." (31)

Wald appears to endorse this judgement. He is aware of the dangers of Stalinist manipulation of art (though he also argues, powerfully, that the cultural history of American Communism involves very much more than merely manipulation). But there is no formula, to be found in Trotsky or anywhere else, to define the 'correct' relation of artist and party; the contradiction is rooted in capitalism itself. But Wald's own blend of scholarship and commitment shows that contradictions may bear valuable fruit.

**Ian Birchall**  
**Middlesex University**

Hamish Kimmins, *Balancing Act: Environmental Issues in Forestry* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1992).

As reflected by their titles (for example, *Lost Initiatives* and *Heritage Lost*), previous accounts of forest management in Canada have often been diatribes which offered little but scathing criticism of past forest policies. In *Balancing Act: Environmental Issues in Forestry*, Kimmins endeavours to supply the departure point for a new approach to proper forest management. The author exhorts the extremists on both sides of the current environmental debate to put their "polarized rhetoric" to rest. It is time, he contends, to approach rationally the volatile subject of how we should care for this planet's trees. Consequently, he provides "the average concerned citizen or forester with an introduction to the ecological aspects of the major environmental

issues facing the managers of Canada's great forest resource." (4) In doing so, he presents a monograph that is refreshingly balanced in its analysis and written in layperson's language which renders seemingly complex and technical subjects easily comprehensible. Thus, *Balancing Act* does much to ensure that future armchair critics of environmental policy will be able to see the forest, and will no longer be blinded by the trees.

Kimmins focuses on change, and how modern society has developed a deep aversion to it. At the same time, however, he reminds us that change is an integral — indeed an oftentimes desirable — part of nature. He astutely asserts that "urbanites of industrialized nations" have become detached from nature and "the ebb and flow of natural change and its time scales." (25) This situation has led many people to take an irrational approach to forest policy. For example, "snapshot, frozen-in-time images of recently disturbed forest ecosystems" frequently elicit emotional outcries from citizens critical of "irresponsible" forest policy. (26) Many of these same citizens support programmes which have as their goal the preservation of the environment as if it were a static entity. But, as Kimmins emphasizes, this is simply not a logical approach to nature, because "[o]ne can preserve a landscape view in a photograph or painting ... but ... the single most fundamental characteristic of ecosystems is that they change over time." (88)

Consequently, Kimmins provides a rational explanation of the role that change plays in the environment. For example, he lucidly describes how such complex things as soil, vegetation, wildlife, and weather are all undergoing continuous transformations. He also reveals that these changes are not necessarily to be feared, but rather that they should be understood in a rational way; it is only in this manner that the danger or boon they represent can be properly assessed.

It is also with exceptional clarity that Kimmins explains the basics of forestry. In doing so, he dispels many of the popular misconceptions which currently cloud debates about forest policy. For example, he cleverly demonstrates the irrational nature of much of the uproar over the inclusion of herbicides in silviculture: "While herbicides are still widely used in agriculture to produce the food we eat