play of sights, sounds, and pleasures all work to produce an in tense gestalt of sensual feeling" (143). These attributions, coupled with lengthy literature reviews on theories of folklore, performance, and globalization, tend at times to subordinate the subjects of Sasso to her structural models and sometimes well-worn tools of analysis. When, felicitously, this is not the case, we hear the voices and follow the micropractices of everyday individuals in a small north-central Italian town whose "modernity" they shape and which shapes their "modern" identities.

Jason Pine
University of Missouri

John Callaghan, *Cold War, Crisis and Conflict: the CPGB 1951–68.* London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2003. xii + 320 pp. $27.95 paper.

DOI: 10.1017/S0147547907000245

Like every other history, the official history of the British Communist Party (CPGB) has a history of its own. Originating in a commission set up in the crisis year of 1956, its first volumes by James Klugmann, appearing in the late 1960s, took the story only as far as 1926 and were fully as stilted and evasive as their official status then demanded. Subsequent volumes by Noreen Branson, published in 1985 and 1994, showed far greater frankness and intellectual honesty, though they remained a sort of self-representation for the party itself. Picking up the story in 1951, John Callaghan's fifth volume in the series is a different matter altogether. As Callaghan recounts, the CPGB itself no longer exists to provide either invigilator or official imprimatur, and its archives are now freely accessible to any historian who wishes to produce such a history. The series is thus being completed as more than an overtly political publishing enterprise, and Callaghan's contribution is best located within the burgeoning academic historiography on British communism partly stimulated by these archives. Functions of advocacy and celebration having passed with the party that required them; the treatment is critical and descriptive in the best sense and the book provides the first systematic exploration of a postwar period of British communist history. As such, it will provide an indispensable point of reference for future researchers in the field.

Callaghan has organized his materials thematically and there is much to be said for this approach. In chapters on cultural work, international campaigns and the all-important issue of communist activity in the unions, the book provides a series of wide-ranging essays drawing in large part on original sources in default of any extensive secondary literature. Inevitably there is fuzziness over definitions. The chapter on internationalism, as its subtitle suggests, deals essentially with the "crisis of Britain and the British empire," and issues like the European Economic Community and the CPGB's Soviet ecology are

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014754790600024X Published online by Cambridge University Press

dealt with separately. Antiracist campaigns, more curiously, are located on the cultural front, though, as Callaghan points out, throughout his period racism in Britain was linked by communists with the similar policies and practices of the British Empire. More than that, it was frequently the same activists who tended to make most seriously what they no doubt saw as different aspects of the same politics of solidarity. No doubt a different format might have left greater scope for more discursive explorations of such issues as the merging of national and international identities into a distinctive communist world view. Similarly, though a topic like women is discussed, as the CPGB itself tended to approach it, as an organizational and campaigning issue, less is said here about the deeply gendered constructions of communist leadership and activism or the ways in which issues like peace and the economic struggle were themselves constructed in gendered terms. It is indicative of Callaghan's objectives that the excellent use he makes of party archives and printed materials is not really matched by any comparable utilization of the interviews with party activists which evidently also formed part of the research.

The advantages of the genre are nevertheless perhaps too easily underestimated—not least by those, like this reviewer, who have sometimes been critical of narrowly-focused institutional accounts. What Callaghan succeeds in providing is a convincing account of the CPGB as a collective political actor. In respect of areas such as anticolonialism, his very considerable specialist knowledge will already be familiar to many. However, Callaghan's particular advantage as a commentator is his breadth of knowledge of the period and his ability to situate the CPGB collectively within its broader social and political context, and more particularly in relation to British social democracy. Though more critical than its predecessors, in both the literal and colloquial senses of the word, the volume shares with them the object of locating Britain's communists within the society they proposed to transform. Within the constraints of the series, the validity of this basically institutional approach to communist party history, while leaving a number of issues necessarily unexplored, is strikingly confirmed.

Another external constraint is perhaps less easily negotiated, concerning the period that Callaghan has been allocated. For an official party narrative, the starting point of 1951, predetermined by his predecessor, had at least the rationale that it marked the first appearance of the British Road to Socialism, the program for a peaceful transition which in successive drafts guided CPGB almost until its demise in 1991. As Callaghan fully recognizes, however, this was not quite the defining moment that both official mythology and countermythology often used to suggest. Rather, the Cold War of Callaghan's title marks a more distinct and coherent period of communist history, identifiable internationally with the launching of the Cominform in 1947; and in the anatomy of the CPGB with which Callaghan opens his account he is sensible enough not to take too literally the landmark of supposed 1951. Even so, the anatomy he provides is very much a Cold-War one. Hence, though an impression is given here of a "militaristic organisation and ethos" somewhat evenly maintained even into the 1950s, this Cold War period marked a palpable

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014754790600024X Published online by Cambridge University Press

intensification of such "sectarian militancy" which the earlier "fight against fascism," in its British variant, had clearly led to being diluted (9–10). Similarly, the description of the CPGB's inner core as united by a "common alienation from the Labour Party" (8), while true enough by 1951, does not fully capture the more complex reactions of figures like William Gallacher, who as a Member of Parliament, had made much of his warm relations with Labour backbenchers.

The issue is further complicated by the crisis of 1956–57, which Callaghan evokes with considerable skill in his second chapter, but which also bisects his allotted period with a clearly cathartic moment in which fully a quarter of the CPGB's members actually left the party. The party that they left, as Callaghan demonstrates, was painfully slow to change after 1956. Nevertheless, by 1968, when the leadership falteringly distanced itself from the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and when the party itself was publicly at daggers drawn over the issue, it was clear that the old unifying symbols of party authority no longer had the force they had had at the beginning of Callaghan's period. To capture such developments, for example as they were manifested in the attitudes of communist trade unionists towards the party leadership and apparatus, is no mean feat in thematic chapters bifurcated in this way. Given the objects of the series as a whole, Callaghan might have been better served by a more conventional periodization, either focusing on the Cold War or tracing developments from 1956 to the political divisions of the 1970s.

Making the best of his commission, Callaghan has nevertheless provided a serviceable and stimulating account which can be highly commended. Among the intriguing questions he discusses is how far the CPGB's Soviet connections continued to provide it with a wider political credibility, deriving from the space-age image of an economic colossus, or served to isolate from a public that by this time was more profoundly hostile to communism than at any time between the wars. Though Callaghan does not provide a conclusive answer to this defining conundrum, he does present a rich source of data and argument for this and other future lines of enquiry.

Kevin Morgan
University of Manchester

Niek Pas, *Imaazje! De verbeelding van Provo 1965–1967.* Amsterdam: Wereldbiblioteek, 2003. 463 pp. $37.50 paper.

DOI: 10.1017/S0147547907000257

In the last third of the twentieth century, the Netherlands, and in particular Amsterdam, became internationally famous as an oasis of permissiveness, tolerance, and an open-minded civic culture. That the Netherlands, in earlier

https://doi.org/10.1017/S014754790600024X Published online by Cambridge University Press