

By the late 1920s fascists in Italy and Germany had begun to incorporate these notions of aviation and the aviator-hero into their myth, rhetoric and displays. Esposito argues that the aeroplane and the aviator together became a 'technoid totem of a fascist order'—for Italian journalist Guido Mattioli in his 1937 *Mussolini aviatore*, 'there appears to be a necessary, inner spiritual affinity between aviation and fascism. Every aviator is a born fascist.' Aviation became a way of visualising and dramatising fascist myths, symbols and rituals, helping to make the 'fascist religion' accessible and amenable to the masses. Exhibitions such as the 1934–5 Esposizione dell'aeronautica italiana in Milan, which the author reviews in some detail, helped to relay Futurist tropes and nationalistic narratives of sacrifice and salvation (such as D'Annunzio's) to the public, turning elite discourses into fascist ideology fit for mass consumption.

This work contains several original historical case-studies, and conceptually synthesises theoretical frameworks developed by a diverse range of thinkers: George L. Mosse on the cult of soldiers, Roger Griffin on fascist paligenetic mythology, Emilio Gentile on political religion and Nietzsche on the crisis of mythical order, among others. It is a valuable addition to studies on fascism and aviation, and, more broadly, will also be of interest to readers looking for sophisticated analyses of the interplay between technology and ideology.

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*The Transnational World of the Cominternians*, by Brigitte Studer (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; pp. 227. £60).

Brigitte Studer's book fills a lacuna in the history of the Communist International (or Comintern), which the Bolsheviks, barely two years after taking power in Russia, established in Moscow in 1919 for the purpose of expanding communism elsewhere. On Stalin's order, it was dissolved in 1943 as a goodwill gesture to his British and American allies. Most historians have viewed the Comintern in binary terms: on the one hand there was the Soviet leadership, which subordinated the interests of international communism to those of the Soviet Union, while on the other were the foreign communist parties that obsequiously complied with whatever the Soviet leadership demanded of them.

But Studer shows this dichotomy to be superficial. In her view there existed, between these two entities—the Soviet leadership and foreign communist parties—a netherworld, with its own political culture, inhabited by Comintern officials in Moscow who, while performing their assigned task of training foreign communists to foment revolutions abroad, were also strictly segregated from Soviet society. These officials, whom Studer calls 'Cominternians', tried to mediate the inherently unequal relationship between the foreign communist parties they came from and a Soviet leadership that identified these parties' interests with whatever the interests of the Soviet Union happened to be.

Studer succeeds admirably in describing what everyday life was like for these Comintern officials, and shows in great detail how their predicament worsened as the original Leninist leadership in the Kremlin was succeeded

in the late 1920s by the more murderous Stalinist one. Especially insightful in this regard is what she writes about women in the Comintern, who, no less than their male counterparts, had to condemn what they had previously supported and support what they had previously condemned. This, of course, is well known among historians of the Comintern and of the Soviet Union. Studer's originality is in demonstrating that this extended to matters pertaining especially, or exclusively, to women. A prime example of this was when Stalin, in the mid-1930s, decided that proscribing abortion and apotheosising motherhood were essential if the staggering loss of population caused by the forcible collectivisation of agriculture earlier in the decade was to be ameliorated. Whatever their personal opinion of abortion, the Cominternians and the foreign communists they trained adopted the new party line without any evident hesitation. At the same time, female foreign communists, in contrast to Soviet women, hardly benefited from the exaltation of motherhood and the nuclear family that now prevailed. For example, the Romanian communist, Ana Pauker, had to leave her children behind in Moscow when she was ordered to go to France, and the American communist, Peggy Dennis, could not take her five-year-old son with her when she and her husband Eugene returned to the United States; prior to their departure, on orders from their superiors in the Comintern, they deliberately allowed their son's English to deteriorate so that, after they left the Soviet Union, he would not reveal their activities to visiting Americans.

To be sure, the Cominternians shared with the Soviet leadership many of the privileges the latter enjoyed: special food rations, access to superior medical care and larger apartments, many with central heating, gas stoves, and showers with running water. They also received what by Soviet standards were more than adequate salaries. But they were also, during Stalin's Terror, more vulnerable than foreign communists fortunate enough to find themselves in their own countries, where the NKVD could carry out operations targeted at specific individuals, such as the Comintern 'impresario' Willi Münzenburg, but nothing like the mass purges conducted inside the Soviet Union itself. Studer pays careful and sufficient attention to all of this, and notes perceptively that, because renouncing communism meant defecting from the Soviet Union (which, in the Stalin era, was next to impossible), many Cominternians simply stifled their doubts, if they had any, and loyally followed the peregrinations of the Party Line.

She also makes the important point that the foreign communists trained in the international cadre schools engaged in the same kind of self-criticism and self-examination required of Soviet Communist Party members, and that those of them who applied for party membership had to undergo the same elaborate procedures, which included writing an autobiography, answering questionnaires and submitting recommendations from superiors attesting to one's *bona fides* as a Marxist-Leninist. Indeed, the Cominternians were participants, no less than the Soviet people, in the creation of the New Men and Women who would inhabit the communist society of the future. In this regard, Studer rightly points out that assigning a pseudonym to Cominternians was a means not only of disguising their identity should they be sent to foment revolutions abroad, but also of underscoring the totality of their individual personal transformation.

Studer is especially adept in getting across to the reader the unique vulnerability which the Cominternians experienced while living in Moscow.

During Stalin's Terror, in fact, the Cominternians were even more defenceless than ordinary Soviet citizens and, by virtue of their being foreigners, in greater danger. Those lucky enough to survive the Terror lost what little autonomy they had previously enjoyed, and while Studer never uses the term 'totalitarianism', she shows that the Cominternians endured an existence that replicated, in microcosm, many of the attributes of a totalitarian society. With their individual autonomy and their ancillary organisations destroyed by what Studer calls 'the atomization of this cosmopolitan society', the Cominternians were imprisoned as thoroughly as any criminal confined to a jail cell. In the Hotel Lux, which served as the social centre for foreign communists in Moscow—and as a model of the international brotherhood that would prevail when communism existed everywhere—the mutual fear and suspicion that the Terror created caused those not yet arrested to sit at meals strictly by nationality.

Studer's book is exhaustively researched and cogently argued, and shines much-needed light on a category and subculture of communists who for too long have been mostly ignored. While perhaps too specialised for undergraduates, her book should be required reading for specialists in Soviet history and the history of international communism. Its only flaw is the inclusion, mostly in the introduction, of jargon drawn from Foucault that confuses more than it clarifies. With terms such as 'distantiation', 'subjectivation', and 'normative efficacy of discourse' removed, this fine book would have been even better.

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*Darfur: Colonial Violence, Sultanic Legacies and Local Politics, 1916–1956*, by Chris Vaughan (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2015; pp. 231. £45).

Flogging, humiliation and extortion contributed to the everyday culture of violence that marked British colonial rule in Darfur. Chris Vaughan builds a persuasive case for this claim while drawing on reports, diaries, memoirs and letters from the British National Archives, the Sudan Archive at Durham University and the National Records Office in Khartoum. He focuses on the four decades after 1916, when British military authorities, with locally-recruited, Baqqara Arab 'friendlies' (p. 59), invaded Darfur, overthrew its last sultan, Ali Dinar, and incorporated the region into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Vaughan also considers the nineteenth-century antecedents to British rule, and connects his story to the early twenty-first century wars that ravaged Darfur after 2003. Taking this long view, the book argues that a succession of 'incoherent' (p. 6) but rapacious states (including the British colonial state) contributed to patterns of destabilisation while seeding conflict as a tactic of rule.

This book grew from Vaughan's doctoral thesis in African history at the University of Durham. It pays close attention to the institution of colonial chieftaincy, which arose from the British colonial policy of 'Native