

political parties, student radicalists and the robust Marxian currents in Nigerian universities, as well as case studies of some of the country's most influential Marxist thinkers. This approach enables Mayer to comprehensively examine revolutionary thought in Nigeria.

The strength of this book notwithstanding, it has a number of shortcomings. Although the author states that he intentionally made his definition of Marxism to be broad and inclusive (p. 18), a clear conceptualisation of his broad notion of Marxism and its various strands such as Trotskyism and Maoism would have made comprehending some of the arguments easier for readers not familiar with Marxian theories. The discussion of 'The Nigerian Condition' in Chapter 2 (pp. 19–24), is the weakest aspect of the book and rather perplexing for a book devoted to revolutionary Marxist thought in Nigeria. Relying on the dominant conservative and neo-Weberian-inspired Afropessimistic analysis of Africa's political economy, the author makes unsubstantiated and exaggerated claims. For instance he states that '(R)ich Nigerians most often have to take their property's title deeds to their London lawyers because they cannot trust a Nigerian law firm ... [and that this] is also true for the title deeds of a run-down 40-year-old Peugeot' (p. 20). He equally wrongly claims that many of the medical doctors practicing in Nigeria 'bought their diplomas in the diploma mills of the country' (p. 21). It should also be pointed out that Kunle Adepeju was shot dead by Gowon's men and not Obasanjo's men as claimed by the author (pp. 69–70). Although the book fairly comprehensively examines the ideas of Yusufu Bala Usman, a glaring omission of the study is the failure to comprehensively examine the radical and Marxist-inspired Zaria School of History, which was nurtured by Usman, and two Tanzanian scholars, Arnold Temu and Bonaventure Swai, and which was in the forefront of Marxist discourse and the production of Marxist-inspired works as embodied by Master's theses, Doctoral dissertations and various published works from the 1970s to the early 1990s. In spite of these limitations, this book is a significant contribution to the study of Marxist-inspired thought and activism in Nigeria and provides a road-map for future studies of Nigerian Marxisms.

JEREMIAH DIBUA
Morgan State University

Living by the Gun in Chad by MARIELLE DEBOS (translated by ANDREW BROWN)
London: Zed Books, 2016. Pp. 239. £19.99 (pbk).

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Marielle Debos has written something rare: an academic page-turner about Chad. She intrigues us with basic questions and suggests theoretical answers by telling a down-to-earth story about daily life of Chad's 'men in arms'. *Living by the Gun in Chad* is an indispensable book for all African scholars, with or without a special interest in Chad.

Living by the Gun in Chad is an updated translation of her 2013 book *Le métier des armes au Tchad* (Paris: Karthala). How Chad's small men in arms managed and reflected upon their lives in the first decade of the millennium is the empirical focus in the book. However, material both prior to 2000 and after 2010 has

been included. In Part I, she discusses the political developments in Chad from the colonial era to 2004. Based on extensive reading the literature on this under-researched central African country, Debos sets the tone for her own contribution. She asks questions and formulates theories about the coercive, criminal or creative ways of gaining or retaining power in Chad, both by small and 'Big Men'.

Debos' study is informed by her travels, observations and discussions of everyday life in Chad from 2004 to 2010, and complemented by her knowledge of films and novels about the country. She uses interviews with powerful people and ordinary citizens. I am particularly fascinated by her use of small and apparently insignificant in-situ situations – what she calls 'anecdotes' – as gateways to understand larger and more complicated issues. She is less eager to tell us the reasons that Chad's men take up arms than to explain to us their own logics of taking up arms.

In Part II, she reflects upon the fluid loyalties of Big Men and their supporters. Detailed stories of three Big Men – important politico-military leaders – give the reader empirical examples of the changing political allegiances in Chad. Illustrating the 'spatial, political and social mobility' (p. 91) of these three Big Men, all former allies of the regime, Debos convincingly argues that 'loyalties are the products of unstable social and political identities' (p. 97), and that material resources, including external support, are crucial to politico-military mobilisation. With peace between Sudan and Chad since January 2010 and the death of Khadafy in Libya in October 2011, the politico-military leaders in Chad lost their prime external supporters and their movements lost their attractiveness to the (small) men in arms who were primarily interested in reaping the material benefits from a political change.

In Part III, Debos first describes the 'militianised army' using three analytical dimensions: factionalisation, outsourcing and informalisation. These dimensions structure ways of understanding that 'recruitment, placement and career advancement obey a logic of patronage' (p. 130), but it also helps us to comprehend the blurred boundaries between soldier and rebel, between legal and illegal armed activities and the ambiguity of official records when it comes to men in arms.

I do not agree with Debos' discussions of the weakness or fragility of the state in Chad (pp. 167–71). Debos discusses 'for whom is the state 'weak' or 'fragile?'" (p. 167). In my view, this question is not relevant insofar as she does not distinguish the state from the regime. To me, the state consists of its official institutions; the regime determines how the country is governed and power exercised. With that distinction, the Chadian regime is very strong with Deby as an unchallenged democratic dictator at the top. The state itself, however, is close to collapse, delivering fewer and fewer public goods to its citizens. Yet, this is a trivial objection to an excellent piece of scholarship.

It is true that the book is 'extensively revised and updated' (p. xi) from the French 2013 edition. However, while some chapters are substantially altered and new information and references included, other chapters are only slightly changed. Chapter 6, 'Governing the inter-war' examines the production of inequalities in Chad. Since 2010 the country has been in an inter-war situation, but the empirical examples and the analysis are based on situations prior to

2010. In fact, this last chapter seems to have been the least updated. In the present 'inter-war period', civil movements in Chad seem to have taken over from politico-military ones, a point that Debos makes only in passing in the conclusion of her book.

Andrew Brown has done an excellent job in translating the book. However, the tone and feel of the French edition, where Debos takes the reader into the streets of N'Djamena, listening to the jargon and idioms, wordplay and alliterations used by ordinary Chadians in their daily lives, is impossible to render in English. One example may be the elegant title of Chapter 6: 'L'Etat, c'est du commerce' subtitled 'La banalité des modes illicites et violents d'accumulation' (p. 196 in the French edition) which reads 'The untouchables: positions of accumulation and impunity' (p. 147) in the English edition. In a way, one is privy to more of Chad's daily life in the French edition. Yet, Debos has convincingly explained to us how '[i]n Chad, resorting to arms, as a mode of political protest and as a way of life, is routine' (p. 11).

KETIL FRED HANSEN
University of Stavanger

The Katangese Gendarmes and War in Central Africa by ERIK KENNES and MILES LARMER

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Erik Kennes and Miles Larmer have written an important and extraordinarily well-researched book. Future historians studying Katangese separatism will find this book sitting alongside Jules Gerard-Libois' *Katanga Secession* (1966) as the two vital touchstones that all students of this topic must know well. As the title indicates, their story follows the twisting history of the Katangese gendarmes as they moved through time and space, from being the purported 'national' army of the secessionist state from 1960–63, to their many decades in exile in Angola, to being a largely mythical force in the Congo today, along the way passing through shifting, counterintuitive alliances, adopting various and contradictory ideological styles, and taking on seemingly innumerable names and acronyms. But what is remarkable about this book is that from this single, tangled strand the authors are able to tell a much broader African story that escapes from the narrow borders of the Congo, laying out in a profound way the transnational and multi-layered nature of Central African history.

This book performs two simultaneous actions on Katangese history: it frees Katanga's history from the confines of Congolese national history, while also repatriating the Katangese experience as being properly within African history. One of the more fascinating themes of this book is its destabilisation of the terms autochthonous and foreign in African history, which have been more often used rhetorically or pejoratively than analytically. Kennes and Larmer convincingly argue that the Katangese secession, and later the Katangese gendarmes in exile, had aims and goals that were allied with, but independent from those of their various foreign supporters, whether they were Belgian, Portuguese, Angolan or Cuban. In so doing, this book stands