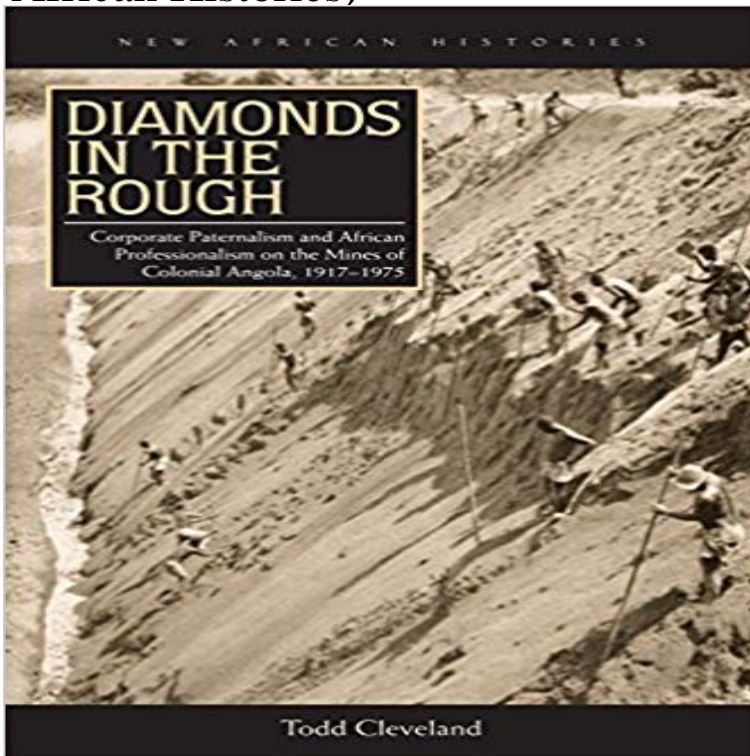


Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917–1975 (New African Histories)



This meticulous study is a must read for scholars and graduate students interested in African labor history and Portuguese colonialism. Those with an interest in (diamond) mining will take away as much as those reading for information on forced labor or on the interplay between the Portuguese colonial state and concessional companies. However, those keen to learn about the rich texture of workers experiences, both on and off the mine, stand to gain the most. *H-Net* *Diamonds in the Rough* explores the lives of African laborers on Angolas diamond mines from the commencement of operations in 1917 to the colonys independence from Portugal in 1975. The mines were owned and operated by the Diamond Company of Angola, or Diamang, which enjoyed exclusive mining and labor concessions granted by the colonial government. Through these monopolies, the company became the most profitable enterprise in Portugals African empire. After a tumultuous initial period, the companys mines and mining encampments experienced a remarkable degree of stability, in striking contrast to the labor unrest and ethnic conflicts that flared in other regions. Even during the Angolan war for independence (1961-75), Diamangs zone of influence remained comparatively untroubled. Todd Cleveland explains that this unparalleled level of quietude was a product of three factors: African workers high levels of social and occupational commitment, or professionalism; the extreme isolation of the mining installations; and efforts by Diamang to attract and retain scarce laborers through a calculated paternalism. The companys offer of decent accommodations and recreational activities, as well as the presence of women and children, induced reciprocal behavior on the part of the miners, a professionalism that pervaded both the social and the workplace environments. This disparity

between the harshness of the colonial labor regime elsewhere and the relatively agreeable conditions and attendant professionalism of employees at Diamang opens up new ways of thinking about how Africans in colonial contexts engaged with forced labor, mining capital, and ultimately, each other.

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