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Todd Cleveland. *Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917-1975*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015. 289 pp. ISBN 978-0-8214-2134-5, \$32.95 (paper)

Todd Cleveland has written a fascinating study of diamond mining in Angola, making a significant contribution to the history of labour and corporate enterprise in colonial Africa. In contrast to his previous book, *Stones of Contention*, which touched on multiple aspects of diamond extraction in sub-Saharan Africa, *Diamonds in the Rough* is thoroughly focused on the experience of workers, in this case the free and coerced labourers of Diamang, a concessionary company in colonial Angola, once the fourth largest diamond producer in the world. Based on meticulous research in Diamang's archives and interviews with more than eighty former workers and women who travelled with their husbands to Angola's diamond mines, Cleveland makes a provocative argument about the relationship between the company and its indigenous labour force. Breaking with a long Africanist tradition of studying the question of labour under colonial rule through the prism of resistance, Cleveland argues that the workers of Diamang, even those recruited against their will, were generally cooperative and committed to the job.

Established by a group of international investors in 1917, Diamang obtained exclusive diamond and labour procuring rights from the Portuguese government in the Lunda region of northeast Angola. Because diamond mining in this region is alluvial and the company invested little in mechanization, its operations always remained labour-intensive. The number of workers annually required to excavate, transport and refine the precious stones went up from five-hundred in 1917 to 27,000 in 1975, the year Angola became independent and the future of Diamang uncertain. Labour supplies came in two forms: so-called *voluntários* who travelled willingly to the Lunda mines from their homes nearby and worked on short-term and informal contracts or as day labourers, and *contratados* who were forcibly recruited by the colonial government and had to sign contracts lasting from six to twenty-four months. From the beginning Diamang aimed to reduce its reliance on contract workers, who were more expensive than free wage workers. To attract and keep workers, in the 1930s the company decided to invest in healthcare, food provisioning, housing, recreational activities, and the improvement of onsite labour conditions, but it never chose to offer better wages. In fact, Diamang could pay

notoriously low wages to its African workers because alternative forms of waged labour did not exist in Lunda; for Africans in need of cash, Diamang was practically all there was. This managerial strategy, which Cleveland calls 'pragmatic paternalism', was partially successful. Given the lack of violent conflict on the mines and interviewees' mainly positive memories of their time with Diamang, workers ostensibly appreciated their relationship with the company. But over time only about half the recruits were *voluntários* (with some only volunteering to avoid contract labour) and the company remained dependent on the colonial provision of forced labour into the 1960s. In addition, Cleveland argues that 'professionalism' characterised workers' attitudes to Diamang, as they generally accepted the labour regime imposed on them, negotiated by complaint rather than resistance, and engaged in peaceful social activities after work.

Besides offering a comprehensive analysis of the experience of forced labour from the moment of conscription to repatriation, with a level of detail and understanding rarely seen in the Angolan historiography, *Diamonds in the Rough* also speaks to a broader audience as Cleveland often compares Diamang's labour policies to mining sectors elsewhere in colonial Africa. He argues that the management of Diamang, which became increasingly Portuguese over time, borrowed many of their ideas about organizing labour from the African Copperbelt and South Africa, while clearly identifying some foreign models as unhelpful. The result was a unique package of benefits that compensated African workers for the low wages they received with decent food (contract workers generally gained weight during their time on the mines), uncrowded accommodations in encampments near the mines, medical treatment and financial compensation for injured workers, and access to lowly priced consumer goods in company stores. Managerial paternalism and workers' professionalism explain, in Cleveland's analysis, why labour scandals and revolts are remarkably absent from the history of Diamang.

Without neglecting that many Angolans went to work at the Lunda mines simply because their chiefs told them to go, *Diamonds in the Rough* tends to emphasize the positive memories Africans kept of their time with Diamang. This approach has its advantages. Most importantly, in highlighting the material and immaterial rewards workers got for spending time away from home, the book offers a nuanced alternative to standard narratives of forced labour in Portuguese Africa, **in which work under colonial rule has often been defined as slavery**. But in laying so

much emphasis on paternalism and professionalism, Cleveland probably knew he would be in for some criticism, especially from scholars who view colonial labour relations in less benevolent terms. So, it is only fair to give him a bit of pushback here. As Cleveland himself acknowledges, working for Diamang was not all harmony and joy. The book's main conundrum resides in the fact that despite its paternalism Diamang only partially achieved its goal of reducing the number of *contratados* working on the mines; moreover, the company had a very poor record of retaining contract workers as *voluntários* after their contracts ended. Cleveland explains that staying on was complicated by a cumbersome repatriation process and the obstructionist agendas of local administrators and village chiefs, but low wages, the harsh nature of alluvial mining, and the coercive conditions under which *contratados* were originally recruited must have deterred many workers from signing up again. Workers might have found that life at the mines was not all that bad, but it seems many did not want to be there in the first place. In fact, many *contratados* only returned to the mines because they were forced, again, which was a fate few inhabitants of the Lunda region managed to escape. As Diamang's need for workers increased over time, company officials often disregarded mandatory intervals between contracts, thus continuously draining male labour from local household economies. Another flipside of the company's paternalism was its repressive stance on diamond theft and desertion, necessitating tight surveillance of a concessionary area twice the size of Portugal. Diamang was called a 'state within the state' for some reason; it gave its African subjects some exceptional benefits, but coercion was a core part of its business, too.

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