

ISSUE INTRODUCTION

The articles we publish in this issue focus on the middle years of the twentieth century. They echo the current strengths of research in African history and the influence on the field of the rich archival collections and intersecting oral histories that reflect on that period. The articles all speak to the complexity, and the drama, of decolonization across the continent and to the contradictory politics that the changes generated. **Robyn d'Avignon's** article examines the paradoxes of policies on mining in Guinea (French West Africa), where planners and engineers moved between dreams of attracting metropolitan investors and the realisation of the economic value of small-scale African miners. A related set of contradictions derived from the decolonizing moment emerges in **Ashley Parcells'** examination of the early apartheid planners' attempts to coerce customary rulers into taking responsibility for unpopular policies for the improvement of communal land holdings. Interviews with the former students who attended the Catholic schools in Benin and Senegal in the moment of decolonization allow **Rachel Kantrowitz** to draw out the enduring forms of political imagination and civic responsibility fostered by these institutions. **Marissa Moorman** uses the archives of the Portuguese military and secret police to explore the effects of guerilla broadcasts on their audiences in Angola and on the defenders of the colonial state. Testimony from the survivors of the Mulele crisis in Congo provides **Emery Kalema** with sources to explore the memories of those scarred by the brutal violence of that period and the long-term social effects of their individual trauma. Finally, **David Morton** examines the efforts of the residents of Maputo's Reed Town to build substantial homes while navigating the politics of the material restrictions imposed by the city's planners.

THE EDITORS