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Angola

a country study



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a country study

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On the cover: Portion of a fresco depicting revolutionary scenes at the Karl Marx Institute of Education in Luanda

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Foreword

This volume is one in a continuing series of books now being prepared by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress under the Country Studies—Area Handbook Program. The last page of this book lists the other published studies.

Most books in the series deal with a particular foreign country, describing and analyzing its political, economic, social, and national security systems and institutions, and examining the interrelationships of those systems and the ways they are shaped by cultural factors. Each study is written by a multidisciplinary team of social scientists. The authors seek to provide a basic understanding of the observed society, striving for a dynamic rather than a static portrayal. Particular attention is devoted to the people who make up the society, their origins, dominant beliefs and values, their common interests and the issues on which they are divided, the nature and extent of their involvement with national institutions, and their attitudes toward each other and toward their social system and political order.

The books represent the analysis of the authors and should not be construed as an expression of an official United States government position, policy, or decision. The authors have sought to adhere to accepted standards of scholarly objectivity. Corrections, additions, and suggestions for changes from readers will be welcomed for use in future editions.

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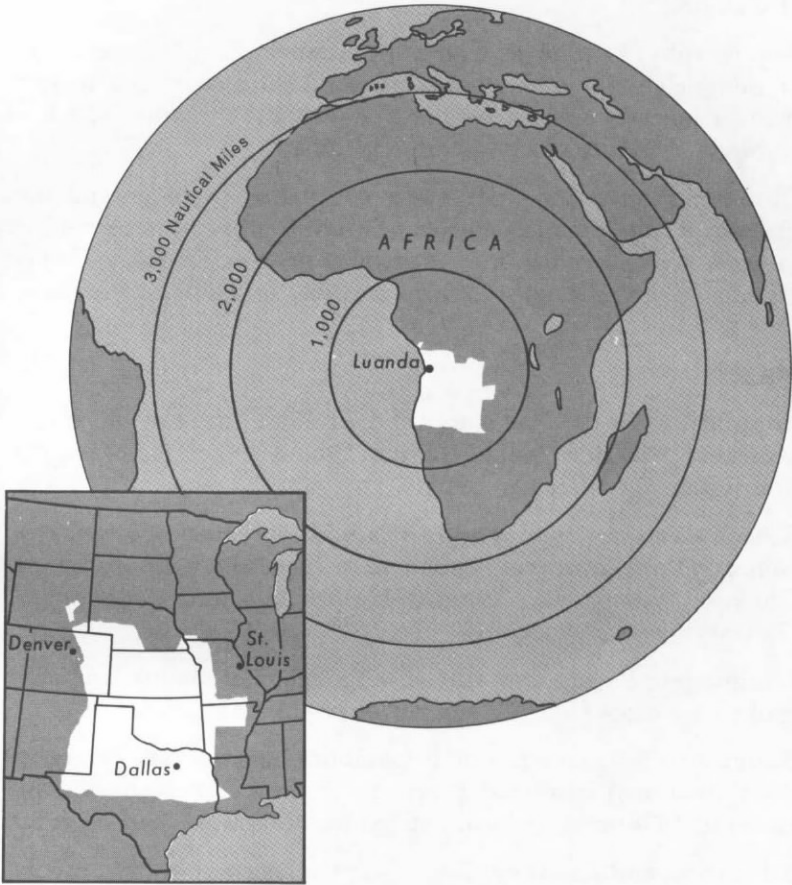
Preface

Like its predecessor, this study is an attempt to treat in a concise and objective manner the dominant social, political, economic, and military aspects of Angolan society. Sources of information included scholarly journals and monographs, official reports of governments and international organizations, foreign and domestic newspapers, and numerous periodicals. Up-to-date data from Angolan sources for the most part were unavailable. Chapter bibliographies appear at the end of the book; brief comments on some of the more valuable sources suggested as possible further reading appear at the end of each chapter. Measurements are given in the metric system; a conversion table is provided to assist those readers who are unfamiliar with metric measurements (see table 1, Appendix A). A glossary is also included.

Place-names follow a modified version of the system adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names and the Permanent Committee on Geographic Names for British Official Use, known as the BGN/PCGN system. The modification is a significant one, however, in that some diacritical markings and hyphens have been omitted.

Terminology and spelling sometimes presented problems. For example, after independence Angola's ruling party was known as the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—MPLA). In 1977, however, in asserting its commitment to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the MPLA added to its nomenclature "Partido de Trabalho." The term is translated in this book as "Workers' Party" but is elsewhere often seen as "Labor Party." Furthermore, because the spelling of the names of ethnic groups occasionally varies, in some cases alternate spellings are given in parentheses. Finally, many Angolan officials who fought in the liberation struggle against the Portuguese acquired noms de guerre; these officials are often referred to in press accounts by their nicknames. When such officials are cited in the text, their noms de guerre are given in parentheses after their surnames.

Country Profile



Country

Formal Name: People's Republic of Angola.

Short Form: Angola.

Term for Citizens: Angolans.

Date of Independence: 1975, from Portugal.

Geography

Size: Approximately 1,246,700 square kilometers, including enclave of Cabinda.

Topography: Coastal lowland along Atlantic; Namib Desert south of Benguela; hills and mountains paralleling coast rise to high plateau in east, divided by many rivers and streams. Much of Cabinda Province coastal plain and hills.

Climate: Hotter and drier along coast than in mountains and plateau. Rainy season in northern part of country from September to April; in southern part from November to about February. Coolest months July and August. Warm and wet in Cabinda Province.

Society

Population: In 1988 estimated at 8.2 million, most of which concentrated in western half of country. About 46 percent of population under age fifteen in 1986.

Ethnic Groups: Ovimbundu, Mbundu, and Bakongo constituted nearly three-fourths of population in 1988. Other groups Lunda-Chokwe, Nganguela, Nyaneka-Humbe, Ovambo, *mestiço* (see Glossary), and European.

Languages: Portuguese official language, but Bantu languages spoken by more than 95 percent of population.

Religion: Christians (Roman Catholics and various Protestant denominations) estimated at between 65 and 88 percent of population in 1988; remainder practiced traditional African religions.

Education and Literacy: Eight-year course compulsory until age fifteen, but enrollment severely disrupted by insurgency. Separate school system in rebel-controlled areas. Overall literacy rate about 20 percent in 1987.

Health and Welfare: Very poor health care because of years of insurgency. High prevalence of infectious diseases; 20,000 to 50,000 amputees. Large number of foreign, especially Cuban, medical personnel in country. Life expectancy in 1987 forty-one for males and forty-four for females.

Economy

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Approximately US\$4.7 billion in 1987; US\$600 per capita.

Extractive Industries: Oil most important sector of economy. Contributed 30 percent of GDP in 1985. Concentrated in areas offshore of Cabinda Province. Diamond mining in northeast disrupted by fighting.

Agriculture: In steep decline as result of insurgency. Contributed only 9 percent of GDP in 1985. Coffee principal export crop.

Manufacturing: Stagnant in late 1980s because of insurgency and lack of spare parts. Contributed 16 percent of GDP in 1985. Main industries food processing, construction, and textiles.

Exports: Oil revenue nearly 90 percent of total export earnings in 1988.

Imports: Foodstuffs, military equipment, and inputs to petroleum industry most important imports.

Currency: In December 1988, official rate of kwanza was Kz29.3 to US\$1, but United States dollar traded on parallel market at up to Kz2,100.

Fiscal Year: Calendar year.

Transportation and Telecommunications

Railroads: Three lines with total of 3,075 kilometers of track ran from coast to hinterland. Benguela Railway, longest line, severely damaged by insurgency.

Roads: Total of about 70,000 kilometers of roads, of which 8,000 kilometers paved.

Ports: Three major ports (Luanda, Lobito, and Namibe) and several smaller terminals.

Inland Waterways: Nearly 1,300 kilometers of navigable rivers.

Airports: International airport at Luanda; thirteen other major airports.

Telecommunications: Fairly reliable system included microwave, troposcatter, and satellite links.

Government and Politics

Government: Marxist-Leninist government based on 1975 Constitution (later revised) but dominated by Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Workers' Party (Movimento Popular de

Libertação de Angola-Partido de Trabalho—MPLA-PT). Government composed of executive branch led by president, who appointed Council of Ministers and Defense and Security Council. Legislative branch consisted of People's Assembly. As of late 1988, because of inability to hold elections, People's Assembly had been appointed. Justice system composed of Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, people's revolutionary courts, and series of people's courts.

Politics: Real power resided with MPLA-PT, whose chairman was president of republic. Political Bureau most important body in party. Central Committee, although subordinate to MPLA-PT party congress, wielded greater influence over party policies. No legal opposition parties, but beginning in 1976 National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola—UNITA) waged devastating insurgency from bases in southeast and elsewhere.

Foreign Relations: Government relied on Soviet Union and its allies, especially Cuba, for military support. United States and other Western nations played important economic roles. South Africa, which has supported UNITA, most important regional threat. December 1988 regional accords with South Africa and Cuba—which provided for cessation of South African support for UNITA, withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, and independence for Namibia—may change complexion of regional politics and foreign relations.

International Organizations: Member of African Development Bank, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (observer status), Customs Cooperation Council, Group of 77, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization, Nonaligned Movement, Organization of African Unity, Southern African Development Coordination Conference, United Nations and its agencies, and World Federation of Trade Unions.

National Security

Armed Forces: Active-duty strength consisted of army of 91,500, air and air defense force of 7,000, and navy of 1,500; reserve personnel of 50,000. At end of 1988, armed forces supported by nearly 50,000 Cuban troops and a few thousand Soviet and East German advisers. Army supported by 50,000-member Directorate of People's Defense and Territorial Troops, a kind of reserve militia. Two years of universal and compulsory conscription.

Combat Units and Major Equipment: Army organized into more than seventy brigades in ten military regions. Operated about 1,100 Soviet-manufactured tanks and armored fighting vehicles. Air force organized into three regiments (fighter-bomber, transport, and helicopter). Combat aircraft included MiG-23 and MiG-21 fighters. Navy used three ports and had guided missile fast patrol boats and torpedo boats.

Military Budget: Amounted to US\$1.3 billion in 1986 (in constant 1980 dollars)—more than 40 percent of government expenditures and about 30 percent of GNP.

Paramilitary and Internal Security Forces: Largest group was People's Vigilance Brigades, a lightly armed citizens' militia with strength of from 800,000 to 1.5 million. In 1988 about 7,000 border guards and 8,000 police officers (supported by force of 10,000).



Figure 1. Administrative Divisions of Angola, 1988

Introduction

AN IMPORTANT SYMBOLIC EPISODE in the course of Angolan history took place on June 22, 1989, in the remote Zairian town of Gbadolite. On that date, Angolan president José Eduardo dos Santos shook the hand of Jonas Savimbi, leader of the anti-government movement, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola—UNITA). This friendly gesture occurred at the end of a meeting attended by representatives from seventeen African nations and held under the auspices of Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko. Accompanying the handshake was a communiqué calling for a cease-fire between government forces and UNITA rebels, national reconciliation, and direct negotiations; specific provisions were to be arranged later. But like many other incidents in Angolan history, this promising event soon became a disappointment as the parties failed to make progress along the path to peace. And so, scarcely two months after the so-called Gbadolite Declaration, UNITA announced the end to the cease-fire. As the internal turmoil resumed, Angolans once again became victims in a civil war that by 1989 had lasted for fourteen years.

Clearly, turmoil, victimization, and disappointment are themes that have pervaded Angola's history, especially since the arrival of Europeans in the fifteenth century. Although the Portuguese crown initially sent to Angola teachers to educate and priests to proselytize, Portugal eventually came to view the area mainly as a source for slaves, especially for Brazil, its colony across the Atlantic Ocean. In the several centuries during which the slave trade flourished, scholars estimate that 4 million Africans from the Angola region were taken into slavery. Of this number, perhaps half died before reaching the New World.

During its five centuries of colonization, Portugal treated Angola mostly with indifference or hostility. Although Angolans were often responsible for enslaving other Africans, Portuguese traders provided the impetus and the market for slaving. By raising small armies, Portuguese fought their way into Angola's interior, disrupting as they went kingdoms having sophisticated civilizations. Less alluring to Portuguese settlers than Brazil, Angola generally attracted poorer immigrants, a great many of whom were *degradados* (see Glossary), or exiled convicts. Portugal's exploitation of Angola did not cease even after slavery had been legally abolished in Angola in 1858. Lisbon spent the last part of the nineteenth century engaged

in wars against the African kingdoms that it had not yet conquered and in consolidating its hold on territories awarded to it at the Berlin Conference of 1884 during the so-called scramble for Africa.

In the twentieth century, and particularly after 1926 and António Salazar's rise to power in Portugal, Lisbon exploited Angola's agricultural and mineral wealth. Salazar facilitated this exploitation by inducing greater numbers of Portuguese to settle in Angola to manage plantations and mines and by enacting labor laws that forced Angolans to work for Portuguese. He also ensured that Africans could not easily participate in or benefit from the colonial administration.

In the 1950s and 1960s, as most other African colonies were winning their independence, many Angolans, especially educated *mestiços* (see Glossary) and *assimilados* (see Glossary), came to resent the continued oppressiveness of the Salazar regime, which steadfastly refused to consider granting independence to its African holdings. As a consequence, in the early months of 1961 a rebellion erupted in the northern part of the colony. This event sounded the opening shots of Angola's war of liberation, a conflict that dragged on until 1974. In that year, a military coup d'état in Lisbon toppled the government of Marcello Caetano (who had replaced Salazar in 1968). The generals who assumed power had fought the anti-colonialists in Africa and were weary of that battle. And so, soon after the coup they announced plans for the independence of all of Portugal's African possessions.

Unlike other Portuguese African colonies, the transition to independence in Angola did not proceed smoothly. During the 1960s and 1970s, the three most important liberation movements were the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—MPLA), the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola—FNLA), and UNITA. When these groups could not resolve peacefully their differences about the leadership and structure of a unified government, they turned their guns on each other; the FNLA and UNITA eventually formed a loose coalition to oppose the MPLA, the movement that finally prevailed. The subsequent chaos, however, induced most Portuguese to repatriate, leaving Angola critically deficient in skilled professionals such as managers, teachers, and technicians.

The resultant civil war had domestic, regional, and international dimensions. Domestically, the movements tended to be divided along ethnic lines: the MPLA came to be identified with the Mbundu, the FNLA with the Bakongo, and UNITA with the Ovimbundu. In the late 1980s, ethnicity was still a sensitive issue.

Regionally, Zaire came to the aid of the FNLA by supplying bases and some combat troops. South Africa, concerned about communist expansion in southern Africa, invaded Angola from neighboring Namibia. Internationally, the Soviet Union backed the MPLA with matériel and advisers, while Cuba supplied thousands of combat troops. The United States sided with the FNLA by providing financial assistance and by helping to hire mercenaries.

By mid-1976 most of the fighting had died down. The South Africans had withdrawn, and, for the most part, the FNLA and UNITA had been routed, thanks primarily to the effectiveness of Cuban forces. Consequently, the MPLA was able to legitimize its claim of control over the government. Nonetheless, despite its legitimization and the recognition of its claim by most African states and many other countries and international organizations, the MPLA still was confronted with an insurgency. Leading this insurgency from the southeast part of the country was Savimbi's UNITA, which had regrouped with the assistance of South Africa, and, after 1985, with aid from the United States. By 1989 this conflict, which many believed was merely an extension of the civil war, had claimed an estimated 60,000 to 90,000 lives, had exacted hundreds of thousands of casualties, and had forced about 700,000 people from their homes.

During the 1980s, the strains of the conflict were everywhere apparent. A significant portion of Angola's young populace (median age 17.5 years in 1988), estimated at 8.2 million in 1988, was moving westward away from the principal battlegrounds. Between 1975 and 1987, cities such as Luanda, Huambo, and Benguela witnessed an almost unchecked population explosion. But as the cities filled, the countryside emptied. The consequences of this rural-to-urban migration were devastating to the nation's welfare. The cities were unable to absorb such masses so quickly; the government could not provide adequate services, such as medical care and education; and jobs and housing were in short supply. Most important, with agricultural workers leaving their farms, the cities could not obtain enough food for their residents. By the late 1980s, Angola, once a food exporter, was importing more than half of its grain requirements. Moreover, thousands of those who could not reach cities settled in displaced persons camps, many of which were funded and operated by international relief organizations. Unrecorded as of 1989 were the psychological effects on the populace of leaving the relatively stable, traditional environment of the country for the uncertain, modern society of the city.

Exacerbating these demographic strains was the economy's poor performance in the 1980s in relation to its vast potential. The

production of coffee, sisal, sugar, iron ore, and diamonds either declined or stagnated. Furthermore, the closure by UNITA insurgents of the Benguela Railway, which linked the rich mining regions of Zaire and Zambia with Atlantic ports, denied transit fees to the government. As a result, the economy became almost exclusively dependent on petroleum. Production of oil had begun in 1956, and by the late 1980s, with the financial and technical assistance of Western companies, oil sales accounted for nearly 90 percent of export earnings. Most Angolans, however, failed to benefit from these earnings. To finance the war against UNITA, the government in 1986 allocated more than 40 percent of its budget to defense expenditures, leaving relatively little for pressing social needs.

Several other factors contributed to economic weaknesses. First, because of the lack of foreign exchange, imported consumer goods were scarce, especially in state-run stores. This scarcity generated a widespread parallel market in which goods were frequently bartered rather than sold because Angola's unit of currency, the kwanza (for value of the kwanza—see Glossary), was virtually worthless. And because of commodity shortages, graft and pilfering (particularly at points of entry) became government concerns. National production also suffered because industrial workers and agricultural laborers were reluctant to work for kwanzas; as a result of the shortage of goods, the government often could not even barter for the services of workers or the output of farmers.

The UNITA insurgency and its associated disruptions notwithstanding, the government itself was responsible for some economic ills. Critics of the government claimed that mismanagement in centralized planning, state-run companies, and state-owned farms contributed significantly to the nation's economic decline. The government, in fact, seemed to agree in 1987, at which time President dos Santos announced plans to restructure the economy, calling for greater commercial liberalization and privatization of enterprise.

But while the government was willing to concede the economic shortcomings of Marxism-Leninism, it was resolutely opposed to accepting the notion of sweeping changes in political ideology. Since the First Party Congress in December 1977, when the MPLA became a "workers' party" and added "PT" (for Partido de Trabalho) to its acronym, Angola's leadership had followed a course that some observers have described as "Moscow oriented." Despite this characterization and the fact that Angola's enmeshed party-government structure resembled that of the Soviet Union, the dos Santos regime was notably more moderate than the regime of his predecessor, Agostinho Neto. In the late 1980s, however, political

power remained in the hands of dos Santos and his small inner circle.

For the most part, Angola's goal of installing a functioning socialist state had not been attained. Although millions of Angolans had been mobilized into mass organizations or defense forces, political debate was narrowly constrained. The party, with a membership of only about 45,000, dominated the government. As of 1989, the People's Assembly—nominally the highest state organ—was largely an appointed body, unrepresentative of the constituents it was designed to serve. Likewise, the MPLA-PT was controlled primarily by the eleven-member Political Bureau (led by its chairman, dos Santos) and secondarily by the Central Committee; the party congress, the MPLA-PT's theoretical supreme body, in practice was subordinate to the other organs. In addition, reflecting the nation's precarious security situation, many serving in party and government positions were military officers.

Angola's foreign relations wavered in the 1980s. Within black Africa, Luanda's relations with other states generally were good. Those with Zaire, however, fluctuated from normal to poor because of Kinshasa's sponsorship during the 1970s of the FNLA and because of Angola's support during the same period of an anti-Mobutu armed movement. In addition, although Zaire denied aiding UNITA, most observers agreed that during the 1980s Kinshasa allowed Zairian territory to be used to support Savimbi's movement, creating another bone of contention between the two neighbors. Angola's principal antagonist in the region, however, was not Zaire but South Africa. Since its invasion of Angola in 1975 and 1976 during the war of independence, Pretoria has frequently violated Luanda's sovereignty, either in pursuit of members of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO—a group fighting for Namibian independence) or in support of UNITA forces.

In the late 1980s, Angola's ties to the superpowers were in a state of flux. Although Luanda was closely aligned with the Soviet Union and its allies, this relationship generally was considered an outgrowth of Angola's security predicament. In economic concerns, the MPLA-PT often turned to the West, particularly in matters relating to the oil sector but also for trade and commerce and in other areas. Reportedly, the Soviet Union prodded the Angolan government into participating in the December 1988 regional accords, but in late 1989 it was uncertain how the reforms being carried out in the Soviet Union under Mikhail S. Gorbachev would affect the policies and practices of the MPLA-PT government. The other superpower, the United States, also played an important role in the accords. After their signing, however, United States

president George P. Bush affirmed American support for the UNITA rebels and vowed to continue backing Savimbi's movement until the MPLA-PT and UNITA reached an accommodation.

The MPLA's independence struggle and subsequent conflict with UNITA and South Africa compelled the government to develop the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola—FAPLA). Comprising a ground force, air and air defense force, and navy, FAPLA was one of the largest and most heavily armed militaries in Africa. In 1988 experts estimated its strength at 100,000 active-duty personnel, 50,000 reservists, and many hundreds of thousands more in a variety of militias and internal security units. Bolstering this force in the late 1980s were about 50,000 Cuban troops, who provided logistical and combat support.

FAPLA was armed and trained by the Soviet Union and its allies. Its major equipment included MiG-21 and MiG-23 aircraft, T-62 and T-72 main battle tanks, and an assortment of air defense, field artillery, and naval assets. Although this arsenal and the assistance of Cuban troops and Soviet and East European advisers had prevented a UNITA victory, by 1988 Luanda had incurred an external debt estimated at almost US\$4 billion, most of which was owed to Moscow for military matériel and assistance.

In late 1989, Angola's economic and political prospects appeared less bleak than they had only a year or two earlier. The economic restructuring program, together with other austerity measures, convinced the International Monetary Fund (IMF—see Glossary) to admit Angola as a member in June 1989 (over the objection of the United States). This event opened the door for greater financial assistance. Furthermore, the December 1988 regional accords, which provided for the staged withdrawal of Cuban troops, the cessation of South African support for UNITA, and the independence of Namibia, augured well for Angola's future. Observers reasoned that as the Cuban troops departed (and by mid-1989 more than 10,000 had left), Luanda's payments to Havana for military aid would drop; with South Africa's cutoff of support to UNITA, that organization's ability to disrupt the economy would decline and perhaps push it closer to accepting a peace plan; and with independence for Namibia, the threat of South African aggression would diminish substantially. Carrying this logic one step further, reporters argued that if the peace process begun at Gbadolite in June 1989 could be revitalized and an agreement between the MPLA-PT and

UNITA achieved, Angolans stood a chance of reversing the pattern of turmoil, victimization, and disappointment that had plagued the country for the previous 500 years.

October 18, 1989

* * *

A few significant events occurred in Angola after the completion of the research and writing of this manuscript. By mid-1990 it became clear that Angola, Cuba, and South Africa, the signatories of the December 1988 regional accords, were intent on faithfully executing the provisions of the agreement. Since the signing, more than 37,000 Cuban troops had departed Angola, and the remaining 13,000 Cubans, most of whom were stationed near Luanda, were to be brought home by mid-1991. As promised, South African forces withdrew from Angolan territory, and Pretoria ceased aid to UNITA. Finally, Namibia held elections and, as planned, celebrated its independence on March 21, 1990.

These positive developments notwithstanding, most Angolans enjoyed little improvement in their quality of life, and, for many, conditions deteriorated. The primary reason for this decline was that the MPLA-PT and UNITA had failed to make much progress on the path to peace. Each side of the dispute held a different interpretation of the Gbadolite Declaration. Analysts suggested that Mobutu, the mediator of the Gbadolite talks, may have presented varying versions of the agreement to each side. In any case, warfare persisted from mid-1989 to mid-1990 as FAPLA and UNITA troops battled each other for control of the southeastern town of Mavinga. Government forces captured the town in early February 1990, but intense fighting continued in the region for several months. Following a heavy engagement, FAPLA retreated from Mavinga in early May, and UNITA reoccupied it.

In addition to the combat that raged in Angola's southeast, UNITA reportedly made inroads in the country's northwest. This success allegedly was accomplished through Zairian operational support and United States assistance. According to some sources, the Zairian government was resupplying UNITA forces there via cargo flights from Kinshasa. The United States, using this Zairian air bridge, reportedly provided UNITA with matériel and other assistance worth an estimated US\$45 million to US\$60 million annually. By mid-1990 UNITA forces sabotaged water facilities and electric power lines to Luanda and generally disrupted the economic life of the nation.

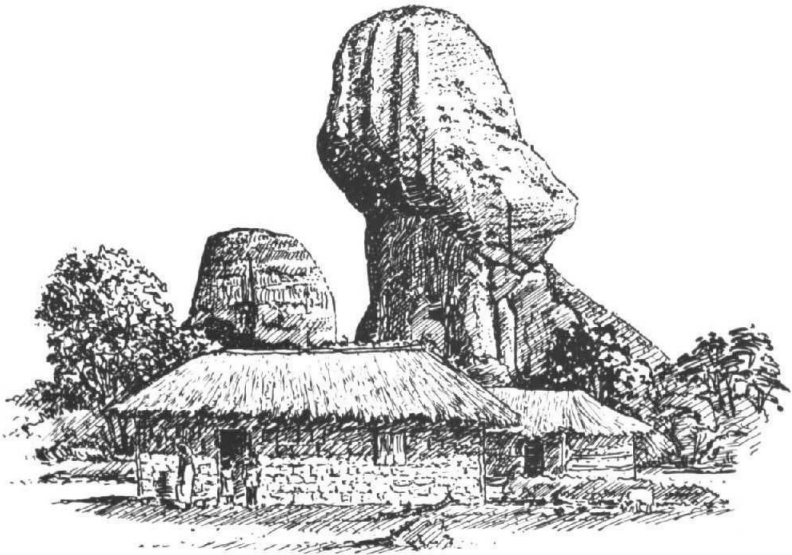
Despite the on-going military situation, there appeared to be some softening of political positions. In April 1990, government and UNITA representatives met in Portugal for negotiations. As a result, UNITA recognized the Angolan state with President dos Santos as its head. UNITA, however, also called for the replacement of the single-party state with a multiparty government chosen in free elections. Observers saw a coincidence of interests here because the MPLA-PT had pledged to hold elections in which non-party candidates—including members of UNITA—could run for seats in the People's Assembly. The single-party versus multiparty issue was to be debated at the Third Party Congress, scheduled for December 1990.

Regardless of the outcome of this congress, however, observers believed that UNITA's battlefield successes might encourage Savimbi to hold out for a total military solution. With the continued United States commitment to UNITA, at the same time that Cuban troops were withdrawing and the Soviet Union's interest in supporting the MPLA-PT government was weakening, some analysts reasoned that a UNITA victory in Angola, whether on the battlefield or at the polls, was merely a question of time.

September 9, 1990

Thomas Collelo

Chapter 1. Historical Setting



*A village near Pungo Andongo, formerly Pungu-a-Ndondong,
the capital of the Ndongo Kingdom in the sixteenth century*

IN NOVEMBER 1975, after nearly five centuries as a Portuguese colony, Angola became an independent state. By late 1988, however, despite fertile land, large deposits of oil and gas, and great mineral wealth, Angola had achieved neither prosperity nor peace—the national economy was stagnating and warfare was ravaging the countryside. True independence also remained unrealized as foreign powers continued to determine Angola's future.

But unattained potential and instability were hardships well known to the Angolan people. They had suffered the outrage of slavery and the indignity of forced labor and had experienced years of turmoil going back to the early days of the indigenous kingdoms.

The ancestors of most present-day Angolans found their way to the region long before the first Portuguese arrived in the late fifteenth century. The development of indigenous states, such as the Kongo Kingdom, was well under way before then. The primary objective of the first Portuguese settlers in Angola, and the motive behind most of their explorations, was the establishment of a slave trade. Although several early Portuguese explorers recognized the economic and strategic advantages of establishing friendly relations with the leaders of the kingdoms in the Angolan interior, by the middle of the sixteenth century the slave trade had engendered an enmity between the Portuguese and the Africans that persisted until independence.

Most of the Portuguese who settled in Angola through the nineteenth century were exiled criminals, called *degradados* (see Glossary), who were actively involved in the slave trade and spread disorder and corruption throughout the colony. Because of the unscrupulous behavior of the *degradados*, most Angolan Africans soon came to despise and distrust their Portuguese colonizers. Those Portuguese who settled in Angola in the early twentieth century were peasants who had fled the poverty of their homeland and who tended to establish themselves in Angolan towns in search of a means of livelihood other than agriculture. In the process, they squeezed out the *mestiços* (people of mixed African and white descent; see Glossary) and urban Africans who had hitherto played a part in the urban economy. In general, these later settlers lacked capital, education, and commitment to their new homelands.

When in the early 1930s António Salazar implemented the New State (Estado Novo) in Portugal, Angola was expected to survive on its own. Accordingly, Portugal neither maintained an adequate

social and economic infrastructure nor invested directly in long-term development.

Ideologically, Portugal maintained that increasing the density of white rural settlement in Angola was a means of “civilizing” the African. Generally, the Portuguese regarded Africans as inferior and gave them few opportunities to develop either in terms of their own cultures or in response to the market. The Portuguese also discriminated politically, socially, and economically against *assimilados* (see Glossary)—those Africans who, by acquiring a certain level of education and a mode of life similar to that of Europeans, were entitled to become citizens of Portugal. Those few Portuguese officials and others who called attention to the mistreatment of Africans were largely ignored or silenced by the colonial governments.

By the 1950s, African-led or *mestiço*-led associations with explicit political goals began to spring up in Angola. The authoritarian Salazar regime forced these movements and their leaders to operate in exile. By the early 1960s, however, political groups were sufficiently organized (if also divided by ethnic loyalties and personal animosities) to begin their drives for independence. Moreover, at least some segments of the African population had been so strongly affected by the loss of land, forced labor, and stresses produced by a declining economy that they were ready to rebel on their own. The result was a series of violent events in urban and rural areas that marked the beginning of a long and often ineffective armed struggle for independence.

To continue its political and economic control over the colony, Portugal was prepared to use whatever military means were necessary. In 1974 the Portuguese army, tired of warfare not only in Angola but in Portugal’s other African colonies, overthrew the Lisbon regime. The new regime left Angola to its own devices—in effect, abandoning it to the three major anticolonial movements.

Ideological differences and rivalry among their leaderships divided these movements. Immediately following independence in 1975, civil war erupted between the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola—MPLA) on the one hand and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola—FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola—UNITA) on the other hand. The MPLA received support from the Soviet Union and Cuba, while the FNLA turned to the United States. UNITA, unable to gain more than nominal support from China, turned to South Africa. Viewing the prospect of a Soviet-sponsored

MPLA government with alarm, South Africa invaded Angola. The Soviet and Cuban reaction was swift: the former provided the logistical support, and the latter provided troops. By the end of 1976, the MPLA, under the leadership of Agostinho Neto, was in firm control of the government. Members of UNITA retreated to the bush to wage a guerrilla war against the MPLA government, while the FNLA became increasingly ineffective in the north in the late 1970s.

The MPLA, which in 1977 had declared itself a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party, faced the task of restoring the agricultural and production sectors that nearly had been destroyed with the departure of the Portuguese. Recognizing that traditional Marxist-Leninist policies of large-scale expropriation and state ownership would undermine redevelopment efforts, Neto permitted private involvement in commercial and small-scale industry and developed substantial economic relations with Western states, especially in connection with Angola's oil industry.

After Neto's death in 1979, José Eduardo dos Santos inherited considerable economic difficulties, including the enormous military costs required to fight UNITA and South African forces. By the end of 1985, the security of the Luanda regime depended almost entirely on Soviet-supplied weaponry and Cuban troop support. Consequently, in the late 1980s Luanda's two main priorities were to end the UNITA insurgency and to make progress toward economic development. By late 1988, a United States-sponsored peace agreement held out some hope that, given time, both priorities could be achieved.

Precolonial Angola and the Arrival of the Portuguese

Although the precolonial history of many parts of Africa has been carefully researched and preserved, there is relatively little information on the region that forms contemporary Angola as it was before the arrival of the Europeans in the late 1400s. The colonizers of Angola, the Portuguese, did not study the area as thoroughly as British, French, and German scholars researched their colonial empires. The Portuguese, in fact, were more concerned with recording the past of their own people in Angola than with the history of the indigenous populations.

The limited information that is available indicates that the original inhabitants of present-day Angola were hunters and gatherers. Their descendants, called Bushmen by the Europeans, still inhabit portions of southern Africa, and small numbers of them may still be found in southern Angola. These Khoisan speakers lost their predominance in southern Africa as a result of the southward expansion of Bantu-speaking peoples during the first millennium A.D.

The Bantu speakers were a Negroid people, adept at farming, hunting, and gathering, who probably began their migrations from the rain forest near what is now the Nigeria-Cameroon border. Bantu expansion was carried out by small groups that made a series of short relocations over time in response to economic or political conditions. Some historians believe that the Khoisan speakers were peacefully assimilated rather than conquered by the Bantu. Others contend that the Khoisan, because of their passive nature, simply vacated the area and moved south, away from the newcomers.

In either case, the Bantu settled in Angola between 1300 and 1600, and some may have arrived even earlier. The Bantu formed a number of historically important kingdoms. The earliest and perhaps most important of these was the Kongo Kingdom, which arose between the mid-1300s and the mid-1400s in an area overlapping the present-day border between Angola and Zaire (see fig. 2). Other important kingdoms were Ndongo, located to the south of Kongo; Matamba, Kasanje, and Lunda, located east of Ndongo; Bié, Bailundu, and Ciyaka, located on the plateau east of Benguela; and Kwanhama (also spelled Kwanyama), located near what is now the border between Angola and Namibia. Although they did not develop a strong central government, the Chokwe (also spelled Cokwe) established a significant cultural center in the north-east of present-day Angola.

The precolonial kingdoms differed in area and the number of subjects who owed allegiance, however nominal, to a central authority. The kings might not directly control more land or people than a local ruler, but they were generally acknowledged as paramount. Kings were offered tribute and were believed to possess substantial religious power and authority. A king's actual secular power, however, was determined as much by his own personal abilities as by institutional arrangements.

The African kingdoms tended to extend their lines of communication inland, away from the Atlantic Ocean. Until the arrival of the Europeans, Africans regarded the sea as a barrier to trade. Although the sea might supply salt or shells that could be used as currency, the interior held the promise of better hunting, farming, mining, and trade.

Kongo Kingdom

In the middle of the fifteenth century, the Kongo Kingdom was the most powerful of a series of states along Africa's west coast known as the Middle Atlantic kingdoms. Kongo evolved in the late fourteenth century when a group of Bakongo (Kongo people)

moved south of the Congo River into northern Angola, conquering the people they found there and establishing Mbanza Kongo (now spelled Mbanza Congo), the capital of the kingdom. One of the reasons for the success of the Bakongo was their willingness to assimilate the inhabitants they conquered rather than to try to become their overlords. The people of the area thus gradually became one and were ruled by leaders with both religious and political authority.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the *manikongo* (Kongo king) ruled the lands of northern Angola and the north bank of the Congo River (present-day Congo and Zaire). Kongo was the first kingdom on the west coast of central Africa to come into contact with Europeans. The earliest such contact occurred in 1483 when the Portuguese explorer Diogo Cão reached the mouth of the Congo River. After the initial landing, Portugal and Kongo exchanged emissaries, so that each kingdom was able to acquire knowledge of the other. Impressed by reports from his returning subjects, Nzinga Nkuwu, the *manikongo*, asked the Portuguese crown for missionaries and technical assistance in exchange for ivory and other goods.

The ruler who came to power in 1506 took a Christian name, Afonso. He too admired European culture and science, and he called on Portugal for support in education, military matters, and the conversion of his subjects to Christianity. Many historians, in fact, maintain that Afonso behaved more like a “Christian” than most of his teachers. Afonso, therefore, soon came into conflict with Portuguese bent on exploiting Kongo society. The most insidious and lasting aspect of this exploitation was the slave trade.

Not long after Afonso became king, Portugal began to turn its attention to the exploration of Asia and the Americas. As Portugal’s interest in another of its colonies, Brazil, increased, its interest in Africa declined. Over time, the Portuguese crown came to view Kongo primarily as a source of slaves. Slaves were used first on the sugar plantations on nearby Portuguese-claimed islands but later were sent mainly to Brazil. Once Kongo was opened to the slave trade, halting or limiting it became impossible. Afonso’s complaints to the Portuguese crown about the effects of the trade in his lands were largely ignored. By the 1520s, most of the missionaries had returned to Portugal, and most of the remaining whites were slave traders who disregarded the authority of the *manikongo*.

In addition to the slave trade, Kongo faced other challenges in the sixteenth century. After the death of Afonso in the 1540s, the kingdom endured a period of instability that culminated in an upheaval in 1568. This rebellion was long attributed by Portuguese sources and others to the invasion by a group of unknown origin

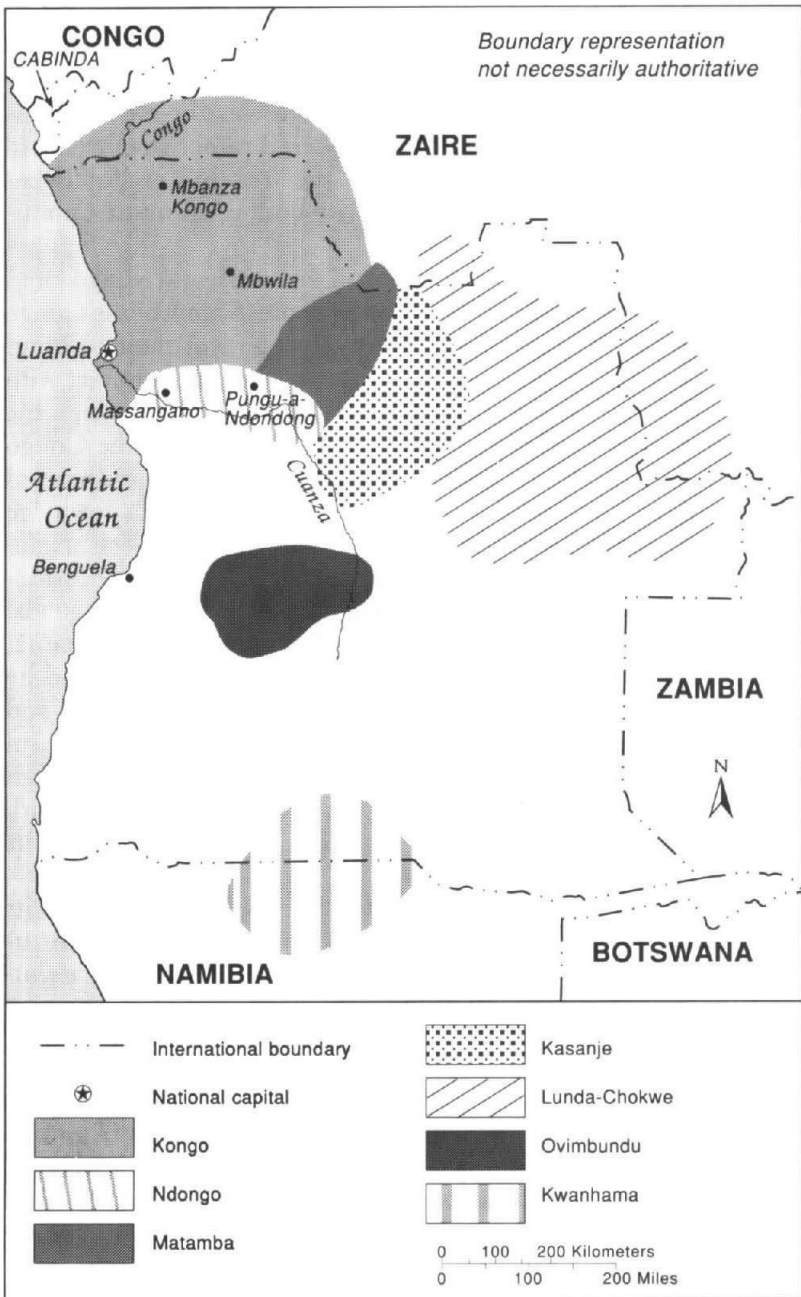


Figure 2. Major Angolan Kingdoms, 1200-1900

called the Jaga. Others, however, believed that the attack was probably launched by a Bakongo faction opposed to the king that may have been joined or aided by non-Bakongo seeking to gain control over the Kongo slave trade and other trading routes. In any case, the assault on the capital (which had been renamed São Salvador) and its environs drove the king, Alvaro I, into exile. The Portuguese governor of São Tomé, responding to pleas from Alvaro I, fought the invaders from 1571 through 1573, finally ousting them and occupying the area until the mid-1570s.

A few years earlier, Sebastião, the Portuguese king, had granted the area south of the Bakongo as a proprietary colony to Paulo Dias de Novais, an associate of Portuguese Jesuits and an experienced explorer of the West African coast. In 1576, in effective control of the countryside and facing no organized Kongo opposition, the Portuguese founded the town of Luanda, in effect establishing the colony of Angola. Other African leaders, however, continued to resist the Portuguese, and the Europeans only managed to establish insecure footholds along the coast. Concerned that African attacks might impede the stream of slaves to Brazil and Portugal, in 1590 the crown assumed direct control of the colony.

Alvaro I and his successor, Alvaro II, brought stability to the Kongo Kingdom by expanding the domain of their royal authority while keeping at bay encroachment by the Portuguese, whose colony during the late years of the sixteenth century remained confined to the area south of Kongo. But after the death of Alvaro II in 1614, conflicts over access to cultivable land between Kongo and the Portuguese colony of Angola soured formerly amicable relations, and in 1622 the Portuguese governor of Angola launched an attack on Kongo. Although not entirely successful from the Portuguese point of view, the war had a number of lasting effects. First, the colony captured a large number of slaves, which demonstrated how rewarding slave raiding could be. Second, the Portuguese came out of the war convinced of the existence of silver and gold mines in Kongo, a belief that encouraged a series of conflicts between the colonists and the Kongo Kingdom for the next half century. The war also created a xenophobia among the Bakongo of the interior, who drove away many Portuguese. Because the trading system depended largely on the Bakongo, commerce was greatly disrupted, with effects on the Angolan colony as great as those on the Kongo Kingdom.

Adding to Kongo's troubles in the early 1600s was a general dissatisfaction among the Bakongo with their rulers, some of whom were greedy and corrupt. Consequently, conflicts arose over succession to the throne, and more and more sections of the kingdom

gained substantial degrees of autonomy and established local control over the trade that had so enriched the monarchy in earlier years.

Ndongo Kingdom

Shortly after Cão made his initial contact with the Kongo Kingdom of northern Angola in 1483, he established links farther south with Ndongo—an African state less advanced than Kongo that was made up of Kimbundu-speaking people. Their ruler, who was tributary to the *manikongo*, was called the *ngola a kiluanje*. It was the first part of the title, its pronunciation changed to “Angola,” by which the Portuguese referred to the entire area.

Throughout most of the sixteenth century, Portugal’s relations with Ndongo were overshadowed by its dealings with Kongo. Some historians, citing the disruptions the Portuguese caused in Kongo society, believe that Ndongo benefited from the lack of Portuguese interest. It was not until after the founding of Luanda in 1576 that Portugal’s exploration into the area of present-day Angola rivaled its trade and commerce in Kongo. Furthermore, it was only in the early seventeenth century that the importance of the colony Portugal established came to exceed that of Kongo.

Although officially ignored by Lisbon, the Angolan colony was the center of disputes, usually concerning the slave trade, between local Portuguese traders and the Mbundu people, who inhabited Ndongo. But by mid-century, the favorable attention the *ngola* received from Portuguese trade or missionary groups angered the *manikongo*, who in 1556 sent an army against the Ndongo Kingdom. The forces of the *ngola* defeated the Kongo army, encouraging him to declare his independence from Kongo and appeal to Portugal for military support. In 1560 Lisbon responded by sending an expedition to Angola, but in the interim the *ngola* who had requested Portuguese support had died, and his successor took captive four members of the expedition. After the hostage taking, Lisbon routinely employed military force in dealing with the Ndongo Kingdom. This resulted in a major eastward migration of Mbundu people and the subsequent establishment of other kingdoms.

Following the founding of Luanda, Paulo Dias carried out a series of bloody military campaigns that contributed to Ndongo resentment of Europeans. Dias founded several forts east of Luanda, but—indicative of Portugal’s declining status as a world power—he was unable to gain firm control of the land around them. Dias died in 1579 without having conquered the Ndongo Kingdom.

Dias’s successors made slow progress up the Cuanza River, meeting constant African resistance. By 1604 they reached Cambambe,



*A Roman Catholic church in Luanda, built by the Portuguese
Courtesy Richard J. Hough*

where they learned that the presumed silver mines did not exist. The failure of the Portuguese to find mineral wealth changed their outlook on the Angolan colony. Slave taking, which had been incidental to the quest for the mines, then became the major economic motivation for expansion and extension of Portuguese authority. In search of slaves, the Portuguese pushed farther into Ndongo country, establishing a fort a short distance from Massangano, itself about 175 kilometers east of Angola's Atlantic coast. The consequent fighting with the Ndongo generated a stream of slaves who were shipped to the coast. Following a period of Ndongo diplomatic initiatives toward Lisbon in the 1620s, relations degenerated into a state of war.

The Defeat of Kongo and Ndongo

The Portuguese imposed a peace treaty on the Bakongo. Its conditions, however, were so harsh that peace was never really achieved, and hostilities grew during the 1660s. The Portuguese victory over the Bakongo at the Battle of Mbwila (also spelled Ambuila) on October 29, 1665, marked the end of the Kongo Kingdom as a unified power. By the eighteenth century, Kongo had been transformed from a unitary state into a number of smaller entities that recognized the king but for all practical purposes were independent. Fragmented though they were, these Kongo states

still resisted Portuguese encroachments. Although they were never again as significant as during Angola's early days, the Bakongo played an important role in the nationalist and independence struggles of the twentieth century.

The Ndongo Kingdom suffered a fate similar to that of Kongo. Before the Dutch captured Luanda in 1641, the Portuguese attempted to control Ndongo by supporting a pliant king, and during the Dutch occupation, Ndongo remained loyal to Portugal (see *The Dutch Interregnum, 1641–48*, this ch.). But after the retaking of Luanda in 1648, the *ngola* judged that the Portuguese had not sufficiently rewarded the kingdom for its allegiance. Consequently, he reasserted Ndongo independence, an act that angered the colonists. In 1671 Ndongo intransigence prompted a Portuguese attack and siege on the capital of Pungu-a-Ndondong (present-day Pungo Andongo). The attackers killed the *ngola*, enslaved many of his followers, and built a fort on the site of the capital. Thus, the Ndongo Kingdom, which had enjoyed only semi-independent status, now surrendered entirely to Portugal.

Matamba and Kasanje Kingdoms

As Portugal became preoccupied with the Ndongo Kingdom as a source of slaves, two inland Mbundu states—Matamba and Kasanje—prospered. Little is known of Matamba before the seventeenth century, but in 1621 Nzinga (called Jinga by the Portuguese), the sister of the *ngola a kiluanje*, convinced the Portuguese to recognize Ndongo as an independent monarchy and to help the kingdom expel the Imbangala people from its territory. Three years later, according to some sources, Nzinga poisoned her brother and succeeded him as monarch. Unable to negotiate successfully with a series of Portuguese governors, however, she was eventually removed. Nzinga and many of her followers traveled east and forged alliances with several groups. She finally ascended to the throne of the Matamba Kingdom. From this eastern state, she pursued good relations with the Dutch during their occupation of the area from 1641 to 1648 and attempted to reconquer Ndongo. After the Dutch expulsion, Nzinga again allied with the Portuguese. A dynamic and wily ruler, Nzinga dominated Mbundu politics until she died in 1663. Although she dealt with the Europeans, in modern times Nzinga has been remembered by nationalists as an Angolan leader who never accepted Portuguese sovereignty.

After Nzinga's death, a succession struggle ensued, and the new ruler tried to reduce Portuguese influence. Following their practice with the Ndongo, the Portuguese forced him out and placed their own candidate, Kanini, on the throne. Kanini coveted the

nearby kingdom of Kasanje—peopled by Mbundu but ruled by Imbangala—for its role in the slave trade. Once he had consolidated power, in 1680 Kanini successfully moved against Kasanje, which was undergoing a succession crisis of its own. Kanini's defeat of the Kasanje state made his Portuguese benefactors realize that as his empire expanded, Kanini was increasingly threatening their own slaving interests. Subsequently, Kanini defeated a Portuguese military expedition sent against him, although he died soon after. In 1683 Portugal negotiated with the new Matamba queen to halt further attempts to conquer Kasanje territory and, because of mounting competition from other European powers, convinced her to trade exclusively with Portugal.

Lunda and Chokwe Kingdoms

The Lunda Kingdom lay east, beyond Matamba and Kasanje. It developed in the seventeenth century, and its center was in present-day Zaire's western Shaba Region (formerly Katanga Province). The Lunda Kingdom expanded by absorbing the chiefs of neighboring groups in the empire, rather than by deposing them. The Lunda consolidated their state by adopting an orderly system of succession and by gaining control of the trade caravans that passed through their kingdom.

The Portuguese hoped to deal directly with the Lunda for slaves and thus bypass the representatives of the Matamba and Kasanje, who acted as intermediaries. Apparently entertaining similar ideas, the Lunda attacked Matamba and Kasanje in the 1760s. The Lunda, however, proved no more successful than the Portuguese at totally subduing these Mbundu kingdoms.

The Chokwe, who, according to oral accounts, migrated from either central Africa or the upper reaches of the Kasai River in present-day Zaire, established themselves as trading intermediaries in eastern Angola in the middle of the nineteenth century. With guns that they obtained from the Ovimbundu, they attacked and destroyed the Lunda Kingdom in 1900. The Chokwe rapidly expanded their influence in the northeast and east, replacing the Lunda culture with their own language and customs.

Ovimbundu and Kwanhama Kingdoms

Between 1500 and 1700, the Ovimbundu peoples migrated from the north and east of Angola to the Benguela Plateau. They did not, however, consolidate their kingdoms, nor did their kings assert their sovereignty over the plateau until the eighteenth century, when some twenty-two kingdoms emerged. Thirteen of the kingdoms, including Bié, Bailundu, and Ciyaka, emerged as

powerful entities, and the Ovimbundu acquired a reputation as the most successful traders of the Angolan interior. After the Portuguese conquered most of the Ovimbundu states in the late nineteenth century, the Portuguese colonial authorities directly or indirectly appointed Ovimbundu kings.

The Kwanhama, belonging to the Bantu-speaking group, established a kingdom early in the nineteenth century in the vicinity of the border with present-day Namibia. Kwanhama kings welcomed trade with Europeans, especially with Portuguese and German gun dealers. Feared even by the Portuguese, the well-armed Kwanhama developed a reputation as fierce warriors. Their kingdom survived until 1915, when a large Portuguese army invaded and defeated them.

The Dutch Interregnum, 1641–48

During the first half of the 1600s, when Portugal became involved in a succession of European religious and dynastic wars at the insistence of Spain, the Portuguese colonies were subjected to attacks by Spain's enemies. Holland, one of Spain's most potent enemies, raided and harassed the Portuguese territories in Angola. The Dutch also began pursuing alliances with Africans, including the king of Kongo and Nzinga of Matamba, who, angered by their treatment at the hands of the Portuguese, welcomed the opportunity to deal with another European power.

When it rebelled against Spain in 1640, Portugal hoped to establish good relations with the Dutch. Instead, the Dutch saw an opportunity to expand their own colonial holdings and in 1641 captured Luanda and Benguela, forcing the Portuguese governor to flee with his fellow refugees inland to Massangano. The Portuguese were unable to dislodge the Dutch from their coastal beachhead. As the Dutch occupation cut off the supply of slaves to Brazil, that colony's economy suffered. In response, Brazilian colonists raised money and organized forces to launch an expedition aimed at unseating the Dutch from Angola. In May 1648, the Dutch garrison in Luanda surrendered to the Brazilian detachment, and the Dutch eventually relinquished their other Angolan conquests. According to some historians, after the retaking of Luanda, Angola became a *de facto* colony of Brazil, so driven was the South American colony's sugar-growing economy by its need for slaves.

Angola in the Eighteenth Century

Slave Trading in the 1700s

Slave trading dominated the Portuguese economy in eighteenth-

century Angola. Slaves were obtained by agents, called *pombeiros*, who roamed the interior, generally following established routes along rivers. They bought slaves, called *peças* (pieces), from local chiefs in exchange for commodities such as cloth and wine. The *pombeiros* returned to Luanda or Benguela with chain gangs of several hundred captives, most of whom were malnourished and in poor condition from the arduous trip on foot. On the coast, they were better fed and readied for their sea crossing. Before embarking, they were baptized en masse by Roman Catholic priests. The Atlantic crossing in the overcrowded, unsanitary vessels lasted from five weeks to two months. Many captives died en route.

During the sixteenth century and most of the seventeenth century, Luanda had been the main slave port of the Portuguese, but toward the end of the 1600s they turned their attention to Benguela. Although the first efforts at inland expansion from Benguela failed, the Portuguese eventually penetrated the Ovimbundu kingdoms and subjected their people to the same treatment that had earlier befallen the Mbundu. By the end of the eighteenth century, Benguela rivaled Luanda as a slave port.

According to historian C.R. Boxer, African slaves were more valued in the Americas than were American Indian slaves because Africans tended to adjust more easily to slavery and because they were less vulnerable to the diseases of Europeans. Boxer also suggests that Jesuits in the New World opposed the notion of using Indians as slaves, whereas they were less resistant to the use of Africans as slaves. Many of these African slaves were sent to Spanish colonies, where they brought a higher price than they would have if sold in Brazil.

From the late sixteenth century until 1836, when Portugal abolished slave trafficking, Angola may have been the source of as many as 2 million slaves for the New World. More than half of these went to Brazil, nearly a third to the Caribbean, and from 10 to 15 percent to the Río de la Plata area on the southeastern coast of South America. Considering the number of slaves that actually arrived, and taking into account those who died crossing the Atlantic or during transport from the interior to the coast for shipping, the Angola area may have lost as many as 4 million people as a result of the slave trade.

By the end of the eighteenth century, it became clear that Lisbon's dream of establishing a trading monopoly in its colonies had not been achieved. Competition from foreign powers contributed significantly to Portugal's inability to control the slave trade, either in Angola's interior or on the coast. In 1784, for example, the French expelled a garrison that the Portuguese had established a

year earlier in Cabinda. Portugal was also concerned about the northward expansion of Dutch settlers from the Cape of Good Hope area. Moreover, at this time the British, Dutch, and Brazilians, not the Portuguese, were contributing most of the capital and vessels used in the slave trade. Furthermore, many of the European goods arriving at Angolan ports were coming from nations other than Portugal.

Portuguese Settlers in Angola

The Portuguese authorities and settlers in Angola formed a motley group. The inhabitants resented the governors, whom they regarded as outsiders. Indeed, these officials were less concerned with the welfare of the colony than with the profit they could realize from the slave trade. But governing the small colony was difficult because any central administrative authority had to deal with a group of settlers prone to rebellion. Because Brazil was the jewel of Portugal's overseas territories, Portuguese who immigrated to Angola were frequently deserters, *degradados*, peasants, and others who had been unable to succeed in Portugal or elsewhere in the Portuguese-speaking world.

Owing principally to the African colony's unsavory reputation in Portugal and the high regard in which Brazil was held, there was little emigration to Angola in the 1600s and 1700s. Thus, the white population of Angola in 1777 was less than 1,600. Of this number, very few whites were females; one account states that in 1846 the ratio of Portuguese men to Portuguese women in the colony was eleven to one. A product of this gender imbalance was miscegenation; for example, the *mestiço* population in 1777 was estimated at a little more than 4,000.

Besides exporting them, Europeans in Angola kept slaves as porters, soldiers, agricultural laborers, and as workers at jobs that the Portuguese increasingly considered too menial to do themselves. At no time, however, was domestic slavery more important to the local economy than the exporting of slaves.

The 1800s: Turmoil in Portugal, Reform and Expansion in Angola

The Early Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century ushered in a period of crisis for Portugal. The invasion by Napoleon's armies in 1807 forced the Portuguese court into exile in Brazil. In 1820 the regency was overthrown, and a conflict began between constitutionalists and monarchists that did not end until 1834. Many of these changes

were echoed in Angola, where there were uprisings and an army mutiny that toppled the colony's governor.

The instability in Europe in the first three decades of the nineteenth century removed Portugal, Britain, France, and Holland from the Angolan slave market. But this turn of events allowed Angolan traders access to other markets. Unfettered trade with Brazilians, Cubans, and American southerners enabled the Portuguese slave dealers to enjoy a period of great prosperity, while the Angolan kingdoms suffered increased depopulation. After the constitutionalist triumph in Portugal in 1834, a provisional junta took charge in Luanda.

Abolition of the Slave Trade

In the early 1830s, the Portuguese government appointed a progressive prime minister, the Marquês de Sá da Bandeira, whose most important reform was the abolition of the slave trade in 1836. The decree, however, could not be enforced adequately, and it took Britain's Royal Navy to put an end to the activity in the middle of the nineteenth century.

In 1858 slavery was legally abolished in Angola. Government slaves had already been freed in 1854, but the 1858 proclamation declared that all slavery should cease by 1878. Legislation was passed to compensate owners and to care for the freed people. But many of the colonists found ways to circumvent the decree, so that the actual conditions of labor did not change significantly.

Expansion and the Berlin Conference

The abolition of the slave trade coincided with increased Portuguese expansion in Angola. Expansion began in 1838 with the conquest and establishment of a fort at Duque de Bragança (renamed Calandula), in an area east of Luanda. By mid-century the Portuguese had extended their formal control still farther east to the Kasanje market near the Cuango River (see Matamba and Kasanje Kingdoms, this ch.). In 1840 the Portuguese founded the town of Moçâmedes (present-day Namibe) on the coast south of Benguela. The Portuguese also attempted to gain control of the coast from Luanda north to Cabinda through military occupation of the major ports. Because of British opposition, however, they were unable to complete this attempt and never gained control of the mouth of the Congo River.

The cost of military operations to secure economically strategic points led in 1856 to the imposition on Africans of a substantially increased hut tax, which for the first time had to be paid with currency or trade goods rather than with slaves. As a result, many

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Africans either refused to pay or fled from areas controlled by the Portuguese. By 1861, therefore, the Portuguese lacked the resources for continued military expansion or economic development, and most of the interior remained in the control of African traders and warriors.

From the late 1870s through the early 1890s, Portugal renewed expansion into the interior. Part of the impetus came from the Lisbon Geographical Society, founded in 1875 by a group of industrialists, scholars, and colonial and military officials. This society stimulated a popular concern for the colonies in Portugal. In reaction to the activities of the society and the growing interest among Europeans in colonial adventure, the Portuguese government allotted large sums for public works in Africa and encouraged a minor revival of missionary work.

An advisory commission to Portugal's Ministry of the Navy and Colonies formed an expedition in the 1870s to link Angola on the Atlantic coast with Mozambique on the Indian Ocean coast. The Portuguese government supported this expedition because it aspired to control a solid strip of territory across the central part of the continent. Nonetheless, Portugal was unable to gain control of the hinterland.

Aware of French and Belgian activities on the lower Congo River, in 1883 the Portuguese occupied Cabinda and Massabi north of the Congo River, towns that Portugal had long claimed. In the same year, Portugal annexed the region of the old Kongo Kingdom. Seeking to uphold these claims against French and Belgian advances in the Congo River Basin, Portugal negotiated a treaty with Britain in 1884; the other European powers, however, rejected it. Portugal's subsequent demands for an international conference on the Congo fell on deaf ears until German chancellor Otto von Bismarck seized on the idea as an opportunity to diminish French and British power.

At the Berlin Conference of 1884, the participants established in principle the limits of Portugal's claims to Angola, and in later years, treaties with the colonial powers that controlled the neighboring territories delineated Angola's boundaries. But because other, more powerful European states of the nineteenth century had explored central Africa, they, not Portugal, determined Angola's boundaries. The west coast territory Portugal acquired included the left bank of the Congo River and the Cabinda enclave, an acquisition whose value to the state was demonstrated in later years by the discovery there of oil. Britain, however, forced Portugal to withdraw from Nyasaland (present-day Malawi) and Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe and Zambia).

Portugal and Belgium concluded several agreements between 1891 and 1927, establishing a complex border generally following natural frontiers. Cabinda's boundaries with the French Congo and the Belgian Congo were delimited in 1886 and 1894, respectively, and by the end of the nineteenth century, Portugal had staked out most of its claims in Angola.

As far as Europe was concerned, Angola was in the Portuguese sphere of influence, and its status was not subject to further deliberations. Considering its diminished stature in relation to other European powers, Portugal had done well to hold onto as much territory as it had. But the fact that Angola was recognized as a Portuguese possession did not mean that it was under Portuguese control. The work of conquest took the better part of twenty-five years, and in some remote areas even longer.

Settlement, Conquest, and Development

The Demographic Situation

As the spheres of interest in the African interior became clarified, European nations turned to fulfilling the obligation imposed by the Berlin Conference of effectively occupying all territories claimed. For Portugal, meeting this obligation involved not only the conquest of the independent African kingdoms of the interior but also an attempt to settle Portuguese farmers.

Immigration in the late nineteenth century was discouraged by the same conditions that had deterred it earlier: a difficult climate and a lack of economic development. Although there were fewer than 10,000 whites in Angola in 1900 (most of whom were *degradados*), there was a substantial increase in white female immigration; the male-to-female ratio that year was a bit more than two to one. Concomitantly, there was a drop in the ratio of *mestiços* to whites; whereas *mestiços* had outnumbered whites in 1845 by more than three to one, in 1900 this ratio was reversed. Africans still constituted more than 99 percent of the population in 1900. Their numbers reportedly declined from an estimated 5.4 million in 1845 to about 4.8 million in 1900, although scholars dispute these figures. Whites were concentrated in the coastal cities of Luanda and Benguela. In addition to farming and fishing, Europeans engaged in merchant activities in the towns and trade in the bush. In the south, colonies of farmers who had settled earlier in the century had dwindled into small outposts, as many settlers returned to Luanda.

In the late nineteenth century, Africans controlled trade in the plateaus of the interior, despite Portuguese expansion. The Ovimbundu proved highly successful intermediaries on the southern

trade route that ran from the Bié Plateau to Benguela. The Ovimbundu were more competitive than the *sertanejos* (people of the frontier, as Europeans and their representatives in the rural areas were called), who often had to pay tribute and fines to African chiefs through whose territory they traveled. By the mid-1880s, the Ovimbundu by and large had replaced the *sertanejos*. The Chokwe and Imbangala also took advantage of their positions in the interior to extend their control over the region's trade. Nonetheless, by the late 1800s Portuguese encroachments and the imposition of European rule limited the political freedom of these Africans and diminished their prosperity.

Military Campaigns

After the Berlin Conference, the Portuguese military was preoccupied with the subjugation of the African inhabitants of the hinterland, and by 1915 it secured the colony for Portugal. Before African resistance was broken, intensive military action was necessary in several areas. One campaign took place in the southern region in response to a request from the Boer settlement near Humbe that was threatened by the Kwanhama. Sporadic campaigning included several serious reverses for the Portuguese. The Portuguese were able to bring the Kwanhama under control only with the assistance of field artillery and the establishment of a series of fortified garrisons. One of the most difficult Portuguese military campaigns was waged against the Dembos, a Kimbundu-speaking people who lived less than 150 kilometers northeast of Luanda. The Portuguese attacked the Dembos repeatedly over a period of three years before the Dembos were finally subdued in 1910. Because of difficult conditions, including the tropical climate, the Portuguese did not complete their occupation of Dembos land until 1917.

Administration and Development

Portuguese colonial policies toward civil administration were first formulated in Mozambique, where in the 1890s António Enés, former minister of colonies, advocated close control and full use of African labor, administrative reorganization, and colonization schemes. In 1899 Paiva Couceiro, who had been with Enés in Mozambique, published a volume in which he advocated white colonization, decentralization of administration from Lisbon, and the necessity of inculcating in the Africans the "habit of work." As governor general of Angola between 1907 and 1910, Couceiro prepared the basis of civil administration in the colony. Military officers were to oversee administrative divisions, and through them European civilization was to be brought to the Africans. Many

of Couceiro's reforms were incorporated in legislation in 1914 that brought, at least in theory, financial and administrative autonomy to the colony.

There was considerable progress toward the development of an economic infrastructure during the first quarter of the twentieth century. New towns sprang up in the interior, and road construction advanced. The key to development, however, was the Benguela Railway, which would become Angola's largest employer and which linked the mines of the Belgian Congo's Katanga Province (in present-day Shaba Region in Zaire) to the Angolan port at Lobito.

In the 1920s, the Diamond Company of Angola (Companhia de Diamantes de Angola—Diamang), an exclusive concessionaire in Angola until the 1960s, initiated diamond mining. As the employer of more Africans than any other industry, Diamang deeply affected the lives of its 18,000 African workers through extensive investment and the provision of social services.

The Portuguese, however, were generally unable to provide Angola with adequate development capital or with settlers. Trade had fallen off sharply when the rubber boom ended just before World War I, and the war itself produced only a brief revival of foreign trade. At the end of what is commonly referred to as Portugal's republican era (1910–26), the finances of the colony were in serious difficulty.

Angola under the Salazar Regime

Angola under the New State

The right-wing Portuguese military coup of May 1926, which ended the republican era, led to the installation of a one-party regime in Portugal and the establishment of what came to be known as the New State. A young professor of economics, António Salazar, became minister of finance in 1928, and by 1930 he was one of the most prominent members of the government. He held the post of prime minister from 1932 until 1968, when he was incapacitated by a stroke. During his tenure in office, he left a lasting impression on events in Angola.

The most important changes introduced into Angola by the new regime were embodied in the Colonial Act of 1930. This act brought Angola's economy into line with economic policies that the new regime was implementing at home. But Portugal's application of strict financial controls over the colony also halted the drift toward political autonomy in Angola.

Portugal's policies toward Angola in the 1930s and 1940s were

based on the principle of national integration. Economically, socially, and politically, Angola was to become an integral part of the Portuguese nation. In line with these policies, Portugal renamed African towns, usually after Portuguese heroes. Still later, in the early 1950s, Portugal withdrew the currency, known as the *angolar*, and replaced it with the Portuguese escudo.

Portugal integrated its economy with that of Angola by erecting protective trade tariffs and discouraging foreign investment capital, except in the construction of the Benguela Railway and in the exploitation of diamonds. In this way, Portugal sought to make Angola self-supporting and, at the same time, to turn it into a market for Portuguese goods. But despite a certain degree of success, Angola enjoyed no real prosperity until after World War II, when higher coffee prices brought enormous profits to Angolan producers. The consequent economic success of the coffee plantations, owned primarily by newly arrived Portuguese settlers attracted by the colony's increasing wealth, continued until independence in 1975, when the Portuguese exodus and civil war severely disrupted the Angolan economy.

Salazar's Racial Politics

Until 1940 Portuguese constituted less than 1 percent of Angola's population, and it was not until 1950 that their proportion approached 2 percent. This increase in the number of Europeans and the continuation of forced labor (not abolished until 1962) and other labor abuses led to an intensification of racial conflict. Before 1900 *mestiços* had been engaged in a variety of commercial and governmental roles, but as the white population came to outnumber them, the status of *mestiços* declined. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, laws and regulations requiring a certain level of education to hold some government positions effectively excluded *mestiços* from access to them. In 1921 the colonial administration divided the civil service into European and African branches and assigned *mestiços* and the very few African *assimilados* to the latter, thereby limiting their chances of rising in the bureaucratic hierarchy. In 1929 statutes limited the bureaucratic level to which *mestiços* and *assimilados* could rise to that of first clerk, established different pay scales for Europeans and non-Europeans in both public and private sectors, and restricted competition between them for jobs in the bureaucracy. Given this legal framework, the immigration of increasing numbers of Portuguese led to considerable disaffection among *mestiços*, who had hitherto tended to identify with whites rather than with Africans.

Beginning in the 1940s, the system of forced labor came under renewed criticism. One particularly outspoken critic, Captain Henrique Galvão, who had served for more than two decades in an official capacity in Angola, chronicled abuses committed against the African population. The Salazar government responded by arresting Galvão for treason and banning his report. Despite the introduction of some labor reforms from the late 1940s through the late 1950s, forced labor continued.

Legislation that was passed in Portugal between 1926 and 1933 was based on a new conception of Africans. Whereas Portugal previously had assumed that Africans would somehow naturally be assimilated into European society, the New State established definite standards Africans had to meet to qualify for rights. The new legislation defined Africans as a separate element in the population, referred to as *indígenas* (see Glossary). Those who learned to speak Portuguese, who took jobs in commerce or industry, and who behaved as Portuguese citizens were classified as *assimilados*. In accepting the rights of citizenship, *assimilados* took on the same tax obligations as the European citizens. Male *indígenas* were required to pay a head tax. If they could not raise the money, they were obligated to work for the government for half of each year without wages.

The colonial administration stringently applied the requirements for assimilation. In 1950, of an estimated African population of 4 million in Angola (according to an official census that probably provided more accurate figures than previous estimates), there were fewer than 31,000 *assimilados*. But instead of elevating the status of Africans, the policy of assimilation maintained them in a degraded status. The colonial administration required *indígenas* to carry identification cards, of major importance psychologically to the Africans and politically to the Portuguese, who were thus more easily able to control the African population.

The authoritarian Salazar regime frequently used African informants to ferret out signs of political dissidence. Censorship, border control, police action, and control of education all retarded the development of African leadership. Africans studying in Portugal—and therefore exposed to “progressive” ideas—were sometimes prevented from returning home. Political offenses brought severe penalties, and the colonial administration viewed African organizations with extreme disfavor.

Rise of African Nationalism

In the 1940s and 1950s, African acquiescence to Portuguese colonization began to weaken, particularly in the provinces bordering

the Belgian Congo and in Luanda, where far-reaching changes in world politics influenced a small number of Africans. The associations they formed and the aspirations they shared paved the way for the liberation movements of the 1960s.

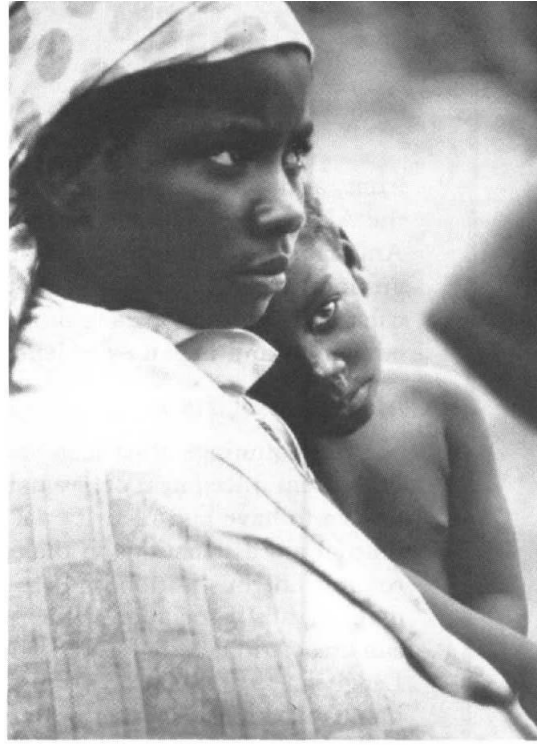
The colonial system had created a dichotomy among the African population that corresponded to that of the Portuguese social structure—the elite versus the masses. Within the context of the burgeoning nationalist struggle, competition developed between the small, multiracial class of educated and semi-educated town inhabitants and the rural, uneducated black peasantry that formed the majority of Angola's population. At the same time, black Angolans identified strongly with their precolonial ethnic and regional origins. By the 1950s, the influence of class and ethnicity had resulted in three major sources of Angolan nationalism. The first, the Mbundu, who inhabited Luanda and the surrounding regions, had a predominantly urban, elite leadership, while the Bakongo and Ovimbundu peoples had rural, peasant orientations. The major nationalist movements that emerged from these three groups—the MPLA, the FNLA, and UNITA—each claimed to represent the entire Angolan population. Before long, these movements became bitter rivals as the personal ambitions of their leaders, in addition to differences in political ideology and competition for foreign aid, added to their ethnic differences (see *Ethnic Groups and Languages*, ch. 2).

Roots of Discontent

Portugal's assimilationist policy had produced a small group of educated Africans who considered themselves Portuguese. But as this group recognized that it was not fully respected by the Portuguese and as it became increasingly aware of its alienation from its traditional origins, some members began to articulate resentment, both of their own ambiguous social and cultural situations and of the plight of the nonassimilated majority of Africans. From among their ranks emerged most of the first generation of liberation movement leaders.

The influx of rural Africans to towns also bred anticolonial resentment. In the 1950s, the population of Luanda almost doubled, and most of the growth was among Africans. Lured by the expectation of work, Africans in towns became aware of the inequality of opportunities between Europeans and Africans. The compulsory labor system that many had experienced in rural areas was regarded as the most onerous aspect of Portuguese rule. More than any other factor, this system, which was not abolished until 1962, united many Africans in resentment of Portuguese rule.

Under the Salazar regime, Angolans who neither spoke Portuguese nor behaved as Europeans, like this mother and child, were classified as indigenas.
Courtesy Richard J. Hough



The Salazar government's settlement policies contributed to the spread of anticolonial resentment, especially after 1945. These policies resulted in increased competition for employment and growing racial friction. Between 1955 and 1960, for example, the government brought from Portugal and the Cape Verde Islands more than 55,000 whites. Induced to emigrate by government promises of money and free houses, these peasants settled on *colonatos* (large agricultural communities). Many immigrants to the *colonatos* were unskilled at farming, often lacked an elementary education, or were too old for vigorous manual labor. Consequently, many of them were unsuccessful on the *colonatos* and, after a time, moved to towns where they competed with Africans, often successfully, for skilled and unskilled jobs. The Portuguese who held jobs of lower social status often felt it all the more necessary to claim social superiority over the Africans.

External events also played a role in the development of the independence movements. While most European powers were preparing to grant independence to their African colonies, the Salazar regime was seeking to reassert its grasp on its colonies, as witnessed by the effort it expended in the ill-fated *colonato* system.

There were two basic patterns in the rise of nationalism in Angola. In one case, African *assimilados* and other urban Africans with some education joined urban *mestiços* and whites in associations based on the assumption that their interests were different

from, and perhaps in competition with, those of the majority of the African population still attached to their rural communities. Angolans also formed organizations based on ethnic or religious groupings that encompassed or at least sought to include rural Africans, although the leaders of these organizations often had some education and urban experience.

African Associations

The beginnings of African associations, to which the liberation movement traced its roots, remained obscure in 1988. Luanda was known to have had recreational societies, burial clubs, and other mutual aid associations in the early 1900s. After the Portuguese republican constitution of 1911 increased freedoms of the press, opinion, and association in the African colonies, a number of African associations were formed, including the Lisbon-based African League in 1919. Sponsored and financed by the Portuguese government, partly in response to pressure from the League of Nations with which African League leaders had established contacts, the African League was a federation of all African associations from Portuguese Africa. Its avowed purpose was to point out to the Portuguese government injustices or harsh laws that ought to be repealed. In 1923 the African League organized the second session of the Third Pan-African Congress in Lisbon.

Assimilados (*mestiço* and African) dominated most associations, and their membership seldom included uneducated Africans. Because the associations were under close Portuguese control, their members were unable to express the full extent of their discontent with the colonial system. As a result, extralegal, politically oriented African associations began to appear in the 1950s. Far-reaching economic and social changes, the growth of the white settler population, increased urbanization of Africans, and the beginnings of nationalist movements in other parts of Africa contributed to the growth of anticolonial feeling. In 1952 some 500 Angolan Africans appealed to the United Nations (UN) in a petition protesting what they called the injustices of Portuguese policy and requesting that steps be taken to end Portuguese rule.

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola

The earliest anticolonialist political group in Angola, founded about 1953, was the Party of the United Struggle of Africans of Angola (Partido da Luta Unida dos Africanos de Angola—PLUA). In December 1956, the PLUA combined with other organizations in Luanda to form the MPLA, whose aim was to achieve independence for Angola by means of a united front of all African interests.

After many of its leaders were arrested in March 1959, the party moved its headquarters to Conakry, Guinea. The MPLA's first leader, Mário de Andrade, an educated *mestiço* and a poet, gave the party a reputation for representing primarily the interests of urban intellectuals rather than the indigenous masses.

The MPLA traces its Marxist-Leninist origins to its ties with the clandestine Portuguese Communist Party (Partido Comunista Português—PCP). The initial MPLA manifesto called for an end to colonialism and the building of a modern society free of prejudice, a goal that could be realized only after a lengthy period of political preparation followed by a revolutionary struggle. The MPLA leadership sought a definite direction and a set of objectives for the independence struggle, in contrast with the broad nationalist approach of its greatest rival for supremacy in the struggle, the FNLA. Thus, the MPLA's program, outlined in a policy document in the 1960s, avoided a stated commitment to socialism or Marxism-Leninism, but it clearly alluded to the movement's adherence to Marxist-Leninist principles and the Nonaligned Movement. The organization's leftist orientation attracted the support of the Soviet Union and China, both of which envisioned prospects for a foothold in Africa provided by a ruling Marxist-Leninist vanguard party.

The National Front for the Liberation of Angola

The FNLA was founded in 1954 as the Union of Peoples of Northern Angola (União das Populações do Norte de Angola—UPNA). Founded to advance the interests of the Bakongo rather than to promote independence, the UPNA petitioned the UN in 1957 for restoration of the Kongo Kingdom, an objective shared by the Alliance of Bakongo (Alliance des Bakongo—Abako) in the Belgian Congo (present-day Zaire; see Kongo Kingdom, this ch.). Because of important ties to the Bakongo in the Belgian colony and because of the difficulties of operating in Angola, the UPNA was based in Léopoldville (present-day Kinshasa, capital of Zaire). In 1958, acknowledging the futility of its quest, the UPNA adopted the title Union of Angolan Peoples (União das Populações de Angola—UPA) and the aim of independence for all of Angola.

Organizational Weaknesses

The Angolan African organizations active before 1961 were disorganized and lacked resources, membership, and strong leadership. There were a number of reasons for these weaknesses. First, their members were not prepared for either a political or a military struggle during the 1950s, however attractive they may have

found nationalist ideals. Second, they were divided socially as well as ethnically. There were gulfs between the *mestiços* and the *assimilados*, on the one hand, and the *indígenas*, on the other hand, that frequently resulted in the pursuit of different goals. Third, although a substantial proportion of the white community also wanted Angola to break away from Portuguese domination, it hoped to perpetuate the colonial regime in every aspect except its control by Lisbon.

Finally, there was a critical lack of capable black leaders in the 1950s. The newly developing elite was not large enough to run a nationalist movement, and traditional leaders, focused on ethnic issues, were not prepared to lead such a movement. Church leaders, who might have been capable as national movement leaders, did not enter the struggle unless disaffected or until they became targets of police repression.

Beginning of Revolution

After 1959, as several African states won their independence, anticolonial sentiment intensified in Portugal's overseas territories. The Portuguese met this sentiment with stiffening opposition characterized by increasing surveillance and frequent arrests. In December 1959, the Portuguese secret political police, the International Police for the Defense of the State (Polícia Internacional de Defesa de Estado—PIDE), arrested fifty-seven persons in Luanda who were suspected of being involved in antigovernment political activities. Among those arrested were a few Europeans, *assimilados*, and other Africans. After this incident, the Portuguese military in Angola reinforced its position, particularly in the northwestern provinces, and became increasingly repressive.

In the first months of 1961, tensions came to a head. A group of alleged MPLA members attacked police stations and prisons in an attempt to free African political prisoners. Then, a group of disgruntled cotton workers in Malanje Province attacked government officials and buildings and a Catholic mission. In the wake of further sporadic violence, many wealthy Portuguese repatriated. They left behind them the poor whites who were unable to leave on short notice but who were ready to take the law into their own hands.

The violence spread to the northwest, where over the course of two days Bakongo (thought by some to have been UPA members) in Uíge Province attacked isolated farmsteads and towns in a series of forty coordinated raids, killing hundreds of Europeans. Also involved in the rural uprisings were non-Bakongo in parts of Cuanza Norte Province. During the next few months, violence spread northward toward the border with the former Belgian Congo as the

Portuguese put pressure on the rebels. Although it had not begun that way, as time passed the composition of the rebel groups became almost exclusively Bakongo.

The Portuguese reacted to the uprising with violence. Settlers organized into vigilante committees, and reprisals for the rebellion went uncontrolled by civilian and military authorities. The whites' treatment of Africans was as brutal and as arbitrary as had been that of the Africans toward them. Fear pervaded the country, driving an even deeper wedge between the races.

The loss of Africans as a result of the 1961 uprisings has been estimated as high as 40,000, many of whom died from disease or because of famine; about 400 Europeans were killed, as well as many *assimilados* and Africans deemed sympathetic to colonial authorities. By summer the Portuguese had reduced the area controlled by the rebels to one-half its original extent, but major pockets of resistance remained. Portuguese forces, relying heavily on air power, attacked many villages. The result was the mass exodus of Africans toward what is now Zaire.

In an effort to head off future violence, in the early 1960s the Salazar regime initiated a program to develop Angola's economic infrastructure. The Portuguese government increased the paved road network by 500 percent, stimulated the development of domestic air routes, provided emergency aid to the coffee producers, and abolished compulsory cotton cultivation. To reestablish confidence among Africans and among those who had been subject to reprisals by white settlers, the military initiated a campaign under which it resettled African refugees into village compounds and provided them with medical, recreational, and some educational facilities.

The uprisings attracted worldwide attention. In mid-1961 the UN General Assembly appointed a subcommittee to investigate the situation in Angola, and it produced a report unfavorable to Portuguese rule. The events also helped mobilize the various liberation groups to renewed action.

Angolan Insurgency

The rebels who had coordinated the 1961 uprisings later began to undertake effective military organization. The several nationalist organizations set up training camps and attracted external military aid. In the summer of 1961, for example, the UPA, which had strong support among the Bakongo, formed the National Liberation Army of Angola (Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola—ELNA), a force of about 5,000 untrained and poorly armed troops. Subsequently, groups of Angolans went to Morocco and Tunisia to train with Algerian forces, then fighting for

their own nation's independence. After winning its independence in 1962, Algeria supplied the ELNA with arms and ammunition.

In March 1962, the UPA joined with another small Kongo nationalist group, the Democratic Party of Angola (Partido Democrático de Angola—PDA) to form the FNLA. The FNLA immediately proclaimed the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (Governo Revolucionário de Angola no Exílio—GRAE). The president of the FNLA/GRAE, Holden Roberto, declared his organization to be the sole authority in charge of anti-Portuguese military operations inside Angola. Consequently, he repeatedly refused to merge his organization with any other budding nationalist movement, preferring to build the FNLA/GRAE into an all-Angolan mass movement over which he would preside.

By 1963, with training and arms from Algeria, bases in Zaire, and funds from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the FNLA/GRAE military and political organization was becoming formidable. Still, it made no significant territorial gains.

Meanwhile, the MPLA, which had been behind the initial uprisings in Luanda in February 1961, had suffered a great deal from Portuguese reprisals, with many of its militant leaders dead or in prison. The rebuilding of the MPLA was substantially aided in 1962 by the arrival of Agostinho Neto, an assimilated Mbundu physician who had spent several years in jail for expressing his political views and had recently escaped from detention in Portugal. Neto attempted to bring together the MPLA and Roberto's FNLA/GRAE, but his efforts were thwarted by Roberto's insistence that his organization represented all Angolans.

Initially based in Kinshasa, as was the FNLA/GRAE, in 1963 the MPLA shifted its headquarters to Brazzaville (in present-day Congo) because of Roberto's close ties to Zairian president Mobutu Sese Seko. From Brazzaville, the MPLA launched small guerrilla operations in Cabinda, but the movement was militarily far weaker than the FNLA. Moreover, it lacked an operations base from which it could reach the densely populated north and center of Angola.

As it dragged on into 1964 and 1965, the conflict became stalemated. Hampered by insufficient financial assistance, the insurgents were unable to maintain offensive operations against a fully equipped Portuguese military force that had increased to a strength of more than 40,000. The FNLA settled into a mountain stronghold straddling the border of Uíge and Zaire provinces and continued to carry on guerrilla activities. The insurgents found it increasingly difficult to sustain the cohesion they had achieved after 1961 and 1962. Between 1963 and 1965, differences in leadership, programs, and following between the FNLA and the MPLA led

to open hostilities that seriously weakened each group's strength and effectiveness.

Ascendancy of the MPLA

In 1964 the MPLA reorganized and increased its efforts to reinforce its units fighting in the Dembos areas. The improved efficiency of the movement's political and military operations attracted support from other African countries, the OAU, and several non-African countries, all of which had previously scorned the MPLA because of its internal problems.

The growing military success of the MPLA in the mid-1960s was largely the product of support from the governments of Tanzania and Zambia, which permitted the organization to open offices in their capitals. More important, Tanzania and Zambia allowed the transport of Chinese and Soviet weapons across their territories to the Angolan border. Because of the influx of weapons, in 1965 the MPLA was able to open a military front in eastern Angola, from which it launched a major offensive the following year. By this time, the MPLA had become a greater threat to Portugal's colonial rule than the FNLA.

In June 1966, the MPLA supported an unsuccessful coup against President Marien Ngouabi of Congo, whereupon activities of all guerrilla groups in Brazzaville were curtailed. After the MPLA moved its headquarters to Lusaka, Zambia, in 1968, it conducted intensive guerrilla warfare in the Angolan provinces of Moxico and Cuando Cubango.

Beginning in 1969, attacks in Lunda and Bié provinces forced the Portuguese to resettle many inhabitants of these areas in fortified villages. Wherever MPLA guerrillas were in control, they created new political structures, mainly village action committees. Politically indoctrinated MPLA guerrillas, some of whom had received military training in Eastern Europe, ranged all over eastern Angola. By 1968 the MPLA was able to hold regional party conferences inside the country.

The MPLA had a political advantage over the FNLA because of the links of MPLA leaders to the international ideological left. Its multiracial, Marxist-Leninist, and nationalist (versus ethnic or regional) views appealed to liberals in Europe and North America. Because of his radical orientation, however, Neto failed to get help from the United States. During the mid-1960s, the MPLA's ties to the communist world intensified as MPLA military cadres traveled to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria. Beginning in 1965, the MPLA began to receive training from Cuban forces.

Emergence of UNITA

The MPLA and FNLA faced a third competitor beginning in 1966 with the emergence of UNITA. UNITA first came to international attention when, in December 1966, a group of its guerrillas attacked the town of Vila Teixeira de Sousa (renamed Luau), succeeding in interrupting the Benguela Railway and stopping Zambian and Zairian copper shipments for a week. The new organization was formed by Jonas Savimbi, the former foreign minister and main representative of the Ovimbundu within the FNLA/GRAE, whose disagreements with Roberto over policy issues led to Savimbi's resignation in July 1964. Savimbi had traveled to China in 1965, where he and several of his followers received four months of military training and became disciples of Maoism. Perhaps the strongest impact of Maoism on UNITA has been Savimbi's insistence on self-sufficiency and maintenance of the organization's leadership within Angolan borders. Upon his return to Angola in 1966, Savimbi turned down an invitation from the MPLA to join its organization as a rank-and-file member and moved UNITA into the bush, where the organization began its guerrilla war with a small amount of Chinese military aid transported via Tanzania and Zambia.

Although UNITA lacked educated cadres and arms, it attracted the largest following of the three movements from the Ovimbundu, who comprised about one-third of the population. And, unlike the MPLA and FNLA, UNITA enjoyed the benefits of a unified and unchallenged leadership directed by Savimbi. Moreover, in contrast to the *mestiço*-dominated, urban-based MPLA, Savimbi presented UNITA as the representative of black peasants. UNITA's constitution proclaimed that the movement would strive for a government proportionally representative of all ethnic groups, clans, and classes. His Maoist-oriented philosophy led Savimbi to concentrate on raising the political consciousness of the peasants, most of whom were illiterate and widely dispersed. Savimbi preached self-reliance and founded cooperatives for food production and village self-defense units. He set up a pyramidal structure of elected councils grouping up to sixteen villages that—at least in theory—articulated demands through a political commissar to a central committee, whose thirty-five members were to be chosen every four years at a congress.

In the early 1970s, UNITA began infiltrating the major population centers, slowly expanding its area of influence westward beyond Bié. There, however, it collided with the eastward thrust of the MPLA, which was sending Soviet-trained political cadres



*Agostinho Neto, Angola's first president, delivers a speech on independence day.
Courtesy United Nations (J.P. Laffont)*

to work among the Ovimbundu and specifically with the Chokwe, Lwena, Luchazi, and Lunda, exploiting potential ethnic antagonisms (see *Ethnic Groups and Languages*, ch. 2).

On the eve of independence, UNITA controlled many of the rich, food-producing central and southern provinces and was therefore able to regulate the flow of food to the rest of the country. At the time, it claimed the allegiance of about 40 percent of the population.

Liberation Movements in Cabinda

Several movements advocating a separate status for Cabinda were founded in the early 1960s, all of them basing their claims on their own interpretation of Cabindan history. The most important of these was the Movement for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (Mouvement pour la Libération de l'Enclave de Cabinda—MLEC), led by Luis Ranque Franque, which had evolved out of various émigré associations in Brazzaville. In December 1961, a faction of the MLEC headed by Henriques Tiago Nzita seceded to form the Action Committee for the National Union of Cabindans (Comité d'Action d'Union Nationale des Cabindais—CAUNC). A third group, Alliance of Mayombe (Alliance de Mayombe—Alliama), led by António Eduardo Sozinho,

represented the Mayombe (also spelled Maiombe), the ethnic minority of the enclave's interior. The three groups resolved their differences and united in 1963 as the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (Frente para a Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda—FLEC). When the MPLA began its military incursions into Cabinda in 1964, it encountered hostility not only from coastal members of FLEC who were living in and near the town of Cabinda but also from Mayombe peasants, whose region near the Congo frontier MPLA guerrillas had to cross.

Emulating the FNLA, FLEC created a government in exile on January 10, 1967, in the border town of Tshela in Zaire. Reflecting earlier divisions, however, the faction headed by Nzita established the Revolutionary Cabindan Committee (Comité Révolutionnaire Cabindais) in the Congolese town of Pointe Noire.

Portuguese Economic Interests and Resistance to Angolan Independence

Portugal's motivation to fight Angolan nationalism was based on economic factors. Salazar had instituted an economic system in 1935 that was designed to exploit the colonies for the benefit of Portugal by excluding or strictly limiting foreign investments. But by April 1965, Portugal faced increasing defense expenditures in order to resist the growing military strength of the nationalist movements, the MPLA in particular. This turn of events forced Salazar to permit the influx of foreign capital, which resulted in rapid economic growth in Angola.

One of the most lucrative foreign investments was made by the Cabinda Gulf Oil Company (Cabgoc), a subsidiary of the United States-based company Gulf Oil (now Chevron), which found oil in the waters off Cabinda. Other economic concerns included iron, diamonds, and the manufacturing sector, all of which experienced an enormous increase in production from the mid-1960s to 1974 (see Background to Economic Development, ch. 3). By this time, Angola had become far more valuable economically to Portugal than Mozambique or any of its other colonies. Consequently, Angola's economic growth reinforced Portugal's determination to refuse Angolan independence.

One of the most far-reaching and damaging features of the Portuguese counterinsurgency was the implementation of a resettlement program in 1967. By grouping dispersed Africans into large villages organized by the military in eastern and northwestern Angola, the Portuguese hoped to achieve organized local defense against guerrilla attacks and to prevent insurgent infiltration and mobilization among peasants. Outside the fighting zones, the

Portuguese used resettlement villages to promote economic and social development as a means of winning African support. The Portuguese further controlled the African population by establishing a network of spies and informers in each resettlement village.

By 1974 more than 1 million peasants had been moved into resettlement villages. The widespread disruption in rural Angola caused by the resettlement program, which failed to stop the insurgency, had profound and long-term effects on the rural population. The breakdown in the agricultural sector in particular was so pervasive that rural reconstruction and development in independent Angola had, as of 1988, never really succeeded.

The Portuguese armed forces gained an advantage over the insurgents by the end of 1973 through the use of napalm and defoliants. The MPLA suffered the most from counterinsurgency operations, which were concentrated in the east, where the MPLA had its greatest strength. The MPLA's military failures also caused further conflicts between its political and military wings, as guerrilla commanders blamed the MPLA political leadership for the organization's declining military fortunes. In addition, the Soviet Union's support for Neto was never wholehearted.

The FNLA, which fought from Zairian bases, made little progress inside Angola. Furthermore, the Kinshasa government, reacting to a 1969 Portuguese raid on a Zairian border village that the FNLA used as a staging base, shut down three border camps, making it even more difficult for the FNLA to launch actions into Angola. Moreover, internal dissent among FNLA troops exploded into a mutiny in 1972; Mobutu sent Zairian troops to suppress the mutiny and save his friend Roberto from being overthrown. Although the Zairian army reorganized, retrained, and equipped FNLA guerrillas in the aftermath of the mutiny, the FNLA never posed a serious threat to the Portuguese.

UNITA was also suffering from a variety of problems by the end of 1973. Militarily it was the weakest nationalist movement. The organization's military arm lacked sufficient weaponry. Many of its Chokwe members, who did not have the ethnic loyalty to the organization felt by the Ovimbundu, went over to the better-armed FNLA and MPLA.

The Portuguese Coup d'Etat and the End of the Colonial Era

During the early 1970s, its African wars—including fierce nationalist struggles in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau—were draining Portugal's resources. By 1974 the Portuguese had lost 11,000 military personnel in Africa. On April 25, 1974, a group of disillusioned military officers, led by the former governor and

commander in Guinea-Bissau, General António de Spínola, overthrew the Lisbon government.

On July 14, Spínola acceded to the wishes of officers who favored independence for the Portuguese territories in Africa and promised to take steps toward their freedom. At the end of July, Spínola appointed Admiral Rosa Coutinho as head of a military council formed to oversee Angola's independence. Also during this time, UNITA and the MPLA signed cease-fire agreements with Portugal; the FNLA initially moved military units into northern Angola, but later it too signed a cease-fire. The liberation movements set up offices in the major population centers of the country, eager to mobilize support and gain political control.

The approximately 335,000 whites in Angola, who had no political experience and organization under years of Portuguese authoritarian rule, were unable to assert a unilateral independence. In addition, their security was severely threatened as the new Spínola government began releasing political prisoners and authorized Angolans to organize, assemble, and speak freely. In July 1974, white frustration exploded into violence as Luandan whites rioted, pillaged, and massacred African slum dwellers. The Portuguese army quickly suppressed the riot, but when the Portuguese government announced that it intended to form a provisional Angolan government that would include representatives of both the nationalist movements and the white population, further rioting by whites erupted in Luanda.

Coalition, the Transitional Government, and Civil War

In the wake of the coup in Portugal, there remained a wide split in the Angolan nationalist movement. Lisbon was anxious to relinquish power to a unified government and took an active role in bringing about a reconciliation of the three liberation movements. In addition, at the urgings of the OAU, Neto, Roberto, and Savimbi made several attempts to form a common front. At a meeting in Kenya in early January 1975, they recognized their parties as independent entities with equal rights and responsibilities, agreed that a period of transition was necessary before independence could be achieved (during which they would work with the Portuguese to lay the foundation for an independent Angola), and pledged to maintain Angolan territorial integrity. They also agreed that only their three organizations would be included in a unity government. FLEC, with its goal of a Cabindan secession, did not support territorial integrity and was excluded. In addition, an MPLA splinter group led by Daniel Chipenda was not considered a legitimate nationalist movement, and it too was excluded.



*Angolans celebrating independence in the streets of Luanda,
November 1975
Courtesy United Nations (J.P. Laffont)*

Meeting in Alvor, Portugal, on January 10, the Lisbon government and the nationalist movements produced an agreement setting independence for November 11, 1975. Under the Alvor Agreement, a transitional government headed by a Portuguese high commissioner was formed; it included the MPLA, UNITA, and the FNLA.

One factor that influenced these agreements was the role of Admiral Coutinho. His pro-MPLA proclivities threatened the delicate balance that the liberation movements had achieved. Angered by his activities, Spínola removed him at the end of January 1975.

On January 31, 1975, the transitional government was sworn in, but the coalition, based on a fragile truce, had serious difficulties, as the leaders of its three member organizations bickered over a number of issues, including personal power. Within days, localized conflicts between MPLA and FNLA forces were renewed. Moreover, on February 13 the MPLA attacked the Luanda office of Chipenda's faction, after which Chipenda joined the FNLA and became its assistant secretary general.

Foreign Intervention

During the transition period, foreign powers were becoming increasingly involved as the situation in Angola rapidly expanded into an East-West power struggle. In late January, a high-level United States government policy-making body authorized a grant of US\$300,000 to the pro-Western FNLA, which at the time seemed to be the strongest of the three movements. In March the Soviet Union countered by increasing arms deliveries to the MPLA, and by mid-July that group had become appreciably stronger militarily. Alarmed, the United States increased funding to the FNLA and, for the first time, funded UNITA. Cuba, which had been aiding the MPLA since the mid-1960s, sent military instructors in the late spring of 1975. By early October, more Cuban military personnel had arrived, this time primarily combat troops; their total then probably reached between 1,100 and 1,500.

In April the presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, and Botswana decided to support Savimbi as leader of an Angolan government of national unity, believing that UNITA attracted the widest popular support in Angola. Savimbi also had the support of some francophone states and of Nigeria and Ghana. Some of these countries later withdrew that support when the OAU pleaded for reconciliation and adherence to the Alvor Agreement.

Collapse of the Transitional Government

Inevitably, the delicate coalition came apart as the leaders of the

three movements failed to resolve fundamental policy disagreements or control their competition for personal power. Although the OAU brought Neto, Roberto, and Savimbi together in June 1975 for negotiations that produced a draft constitution, heavy fighting broke out in early July and spread swiftly throughout the country. Within a week, the MPLA had forced the FNLA out of Luanda, while the FNLA had eliminated all remaining MPLA presence in the northern towns of Uíge and Zaire provinces. UNITA formally declared war on the MPLA on August 1, 1975. A year earlier, the MPLA had created its military wing, the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola—FAPLA), which became the core of the post-independence army (see *Armed Forces*, ch. 5). The FNLA and UNITA, recognizing that their separate military forces were not strong enough to fight the MPLA, formed an alliance and withdrew their ministers from the provisional government in Luanda, heralding full-scale civil war. The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), meanwhile, initiated a covert program to have American and European mercenaries fight with the FNLA.

On August 14, 1975, the transitional government collapsed. Portugal ordered the dissolution of the coalition government and announced the assumption of all executive powers by the acting Portuguese high commissioner in Angola. In reality, MPLA officials filled those ministries abandoned by the FNLA and UNITA, thereby allowing the MPLA to extend its political control throughout the Luanda government.

South African Intervention

South Africa's interest in Angolan affairs began during the Portuguese colonial period, especially after 1966 when the insurgency spread to the east. South Africa's military and intelligence services cooperated closely with those of Portugal. South Africa and Portugal opened a joint command center in Cuito Cuanavale in southeast Angola in 1968, and from there South African troops participated in actions against Angolan nationalist guerrillas as well as against southern Angola-based guerrillas of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the Namibian group fighting for independence from South African rule.

The collapse of Portugal's empire and the prospect of black rule in Angola (and Mozambique) caused enormous concern in Pretoria. Especially troubling to the South African government was the leftist orientation of several of these nationalist movements. Thus, in August 1975 South African military forces came to the aid of the FNLA-UNITA alliance and occupied the Ruacaná hydroelectric

complex and other installations on the Cunene River. On October 23, a force of 300 South African troops, assisted by about 3,000 South African-trained Angolans, invaded Angola. They advanced rapidly north for nearly 1,000 kilometers and came within 100 kilometers of Luanda. This force was later increased to as many as 10,000, but most of these troops were Angolans under South Africa's military command.

The South African invasion had several international consequences. It prompted a massive increase in the flow of Soviet military supplies to the MPLA and caused Cuba to send thousands of men to Angola in defense of the government. Moreover, because the United States was supporting the same factions as the South African regime, the United States involvement drew harsh criticism from the international community. Furthermore, many African countries that until then had opposed the MPLA, including Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, and Sudan, reversed themselves and recognized the MPLA government.

Independence and the Rise of the MPLA Government

Unlike Portugal's other African possessions, which had made relatively peaceful transitions to independence months earlier, by November 11, 1975, Angola was in chaos. In the absence of a central government to which Portuguese officials could relinquish control, Portugal refused to recognize any faction; instead, it ceded independence to the people of Angola. The MPLA subsequently announced the establishment of its government in Luanda and called the territory it controlled the People's Republic of Angola.

The FNLA and UNITA announced a separate regime with headquarters in the southern city of Huambo and called their territory the Democratic People's Republic of Angola. But because of continuing hostility between them, the FNLA and UNITA did not set up a government until December 1975, nor did they attempt to fuse their armies. Moreover, the FNLA-UNITA alliance received no formal recognition from other states, mostly because of its South African support. In general, the international community, particularly other African states, viewed South African involvement in favor of the FNLA and UNITA as a legitimization of Soviet and Cuban support for the MPLA.

By January 1976, with the support of some 10,000 to 12,000 Cuban troops and Soviet arms worth US\$200 million, it was clear that the MPLA had emerged as the dominant military power. By February 1976, the FNLA and its mercenaries had been defeated in northern Angola; under international pressure, South African troops had withdrawn into Namibia; and the MPLA was in control

in Cabinda. Furthermore, United States assistance to the FNLA and UNITA ceased following the passage by the United States Senate of the Clark Amendment, which prohibited all direct and indirect military or paramilitary assistance to any Angolan group. The OAU finally recognized the MPLA regime as Angola's official government, as did the UN and Portugal and more than eighty other nations.

Transformation into a Marxist-Leninist Party and Internal Dissent

Although Marxist influences were evident before independence, Marxism-Leninism had not been the MPLA's stated ideology. But during a plenum of the MPLA Central Committee in October 1976, the party formally adopted Marxism-Leninism. The plenum also resulted in several major organizational decisions, including the creation of a secretariat, a commission to direct and control the Department of Political Orientation, and the Department of Information and Propaganda. The National Party School, founded in February 1977, trained party cadres to fill national and provincial party positions, and at the First Party Congress in December 1977, the MPLA transformed itself into a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party to be called the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Workers' Party (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola-Partido de Trabalho—MPLA-PT).

The estimated 110,000 members of the MPLA-PT had widely diverse backgrounds and political ideas, which made factionalism inevitable. The Neto regime soon faced problems generated by independent left-wing organizations and militant workers. Neto made the first public reference to internal dissent on February 6, 1976, when he denounced a demonstration that had protested the termination of a popular radio program that had been critical of the new government and that had demanded rule by workers and peasants. The government arrested some of the demonstrators and launched a major crackdown on opposition elements. One of these was the so-called Active Revolt, a faction founded in 1973 that comprised intellectuals of varying political orientation and included the MPLA's first president, Mário de Andrade, and other prominent MPLA leaders. Another opposition element was the Organization of Angolan Communists (Organização dos Comunistas de Angola—OCA), a Maoist movement founded in 1975 that attacked the MPLA as a bourgeois party, condemned Soviet imperialism, and called for the withdrawal of all Cuban forces.

Shaba Invasion and the Nitista Plot

Several incidents in the mid- to late 1970s contributed to the MPLA regime's reliance on Soviet military aid and the presence

of Cuban troops. The first incident occurred on March 8, 1977, when the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo (Front National pour la Libération du Congo—FNLC), a political opposition group hostile to Zaire's President Mobutu, launched an attack from Angola on Zaire's economically vital Shaba Region. Although the Zaire government halted the invasion with the aid of Moroccan troops, Mobutu accused the MPLA of having instigated the attack. In return, Neto charged Mobutu with harboring and militarily supporting both the FNLA and FLEC. The MPLA government, faced with continuing border violations and engaged in recriminations with the Mobutu regime, requested and received an increase in the number of Cuban troops.

Another incident brought factionalism in the MPLA leadership into sharp focus. Two ultraleftists, minister of interior and Central Committee member Nito Alves and Central Committee member José Van Dúnem, had become critical of the government's economic policies, which both men considered too moderate. They also criticized the government leadership for its heavy representation of whites and *mestiços*. In October 1976, the MPLA condemned Alves for factionalism and abolished his ministry. The government set up a commission of inquiry that investigated reports that Van Dúnem and Alves had purposely caused food shortages to stir up discontent. The commission found the men guilty and expelled them from the Central Committee in May 1977. Later that month, Alves and Van Dúnem led an uprising in the capital and called for mass demonstrations outside the presidential palace. The uprising failed, but Alves, Van Dúnem, and their followers seized a number of senior government leaders, whom they later killed.

The Neto regime, already alarmed by party factionalism and the number of members who did not actively support the party's Marxist-Leninist objectives, conducted a massive purge. It reorganized the party and the mass organizations, many of which had supported Alves and Van Dúnem. The commissars and directing committees in eight provinces, appointed by Alves when he had been minister of interior, were removed. Thousands of Alves supporters, referred to as Nitistas, were dismissed from their positions and detained. All mass organizations were made subordinate to the MPLA. Finally, to achieve these changes, national and provincial restructuring committees were set up. By December 1980, the party had shrunk from 110,000 members to about 32,000 members.

Strengthening Ties with the Soviet Union and Its Allies

The Nitista plot shook the Neto regime severely and was a stark

After independence, an MPLA soldier stands on an armored vehicle in front of a Portuguese statue that has been deliberately covered with a cloth.

*Courtesy United Nations
(J.P. Laffont)*



reminder of the young government's vulnerability in the face of internal factionalism and South African destabilization efforts. In the aftermath of the failed coup attempt, the government came to the realization that its survival depended on continued support from the Soviet Union and its allies. Consequently, the government's reliance on Soviet and Cuban military support increased, as did its commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology.

A new phase of Angola's formal relationship with the Soviet Union had already begun in October 1976, when Neto signed the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union pledging both signatories to mutual military cooperation. The treaty was significant in global terms in that it gave the Soviet Union the right to use Angolan airports and Luanda harbor for military purposes, enabling the Soviet Union to project its forces throughout the South Atlantic region.

For the Soviet Union, its intervention in Angola was a major foreign policy coup. Soviet leaders correctly judged that the United States, because of its recent Vietnam experience, would be reluctant to intervene heavily in a distant, low-priority area. Conditions would thus be created in which the Soviet Union could exert its influence and gain a firm foothold in southern Africa. In addition, South African involvement in Angola convinced most members of the OAU that Soviet support for the Angolan government was a necessary counterweight to South African destabilization efforts.

Furthermore, United States support for UNITA during the civil war had tainted the United States in the eyes of the OAU and many Western governments, which perceived a South African-American link.

Beginning in 1978, periodic South African incursions into southern Angola, coupled with UNITA's northward expansion in the east, forced the Angolan government to increase expenditures on Soviet military aid and to depend even more on military personnel from the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), and Cuba.

The Angolan government's relationships with the Soviet Union and Cuba were linked in some ways but distinct in other respects. Clearly, the Soviets and Cubans were both attracted to the Angolan government's Marxist-Leninist orientation, and Cuba generally followed the Soviet Union's lead in the latter's quest for international influence. Nonetheless, Cuba had its own agenda in Angola, where Cuban leader Fidel Castro believed that by supporting an ideologically compatible revolutionary movement he could acquire international status independent of the Soviet Union.

Although Soviet and Cuban interests in Angola usually converged, there were also disagreements, mostly because of the factionalism within the MPLA-PT. On the one hand, the Soviet Union seemed to have favored Minister of Interior Alves's more radical viewpoints over those of Neto and probably supported the Nitista coup attempt in 1977. The Cubans, on the other hand, played an active military role in foiling the coup attempt and increased their troop presence in Angola shortly thereafter in support of the Neto regime.

Economic Problems and Implementation of Socialist Policies

One of the priorities of the Neto regime after independence was to repair the country's infrastructure, which had been shattered by the liberation struggle and the civil war (see Background to Economic Development, ch. 3). There had been extensive damage to bridges, roads, and transport vehicles, and most undamaged vehicles had been taken out of the country by the Portuguese. With no means of transporting food and other essential supplies to many areas of the country, the distribution system collapsed. Furthermore, a good part of the economy disintegrated when most of the Portuguese settlers, including skilled workers and government and economic development administrators, left the country at independence.

Perhaps more in response to the economic emergency than as a result of the party's long-term commitment to a planned socialist economy, the government created a large state sector as stipulated in a resolution passed during the October 1976 party plenum (see *Role of the Government*, ch. 3). Earlier that year, the government allowed state intervention in the management of private companies that had suffered most from the Portuguese withdrawal and passed the Law on State Intervention in March 1976, which provided for the formal nationalization of private companies. As a result, a large part of the economy, including abandoned commercial farms, the mining industry, and the banking sector, became publicly owned. The government, however, acknowledging the massive reconstruction task it faced, continued to encourage and support the private sector and to welcome foreign investment.

The MPLA leadership gave urgent priority to the revival of the agricultural sector, which employed about 75 percent of the economically active population. But the government's rejection of market incentives, the massive dislocations caused by warfare, the disorganization of the new bureaucracy, and hostility among the peasants to imposed collectivization of their land doomed most government efforts. Once a food exporter, Angola was forced to import an ever-increasing amount of food.

Although the agricultural sector barely continued to produce, the Angolan economy survived because of the oil produced by and sold to Western private enterprise (see *Oil*, ch. 3). The honest and straightforward approach of the Angolan government toward its Western investors earned it the admiration of its partners and resulted in the inflow of capital not only in the oil industry but also in mining and fishing.

The UNITA Insurgency and the South African Threat

In addition to severe economic disruptions, in the late 1970s the Angolan government was also challenged by the UNITA insurgency. UNITA was able to survive after the war for independence, first, because of the continued loyalty of some of its traditional Ovimbundu supporters, but, more important, because of military and logistical support from South Africa. Pretoria established its relationship with UNITA for several reasons. Vehemently anticommunist, South Africa felt threatened by the MPLA's turn toward the Soviet Union and its allies. The South Africans also wished to retaliate for Luanda's support of SWAPO. Furthermore, by helping UNITA shut down the Benguela Railway, which linked the mining areas of Zaire and Zambia to Atlantic ports, Pretoria

made these two countries more dependent on South Africa's transportation system and thus more responsive to South African wishes.

In support of UNITA leader Savimbi, the South African Defense Force (SADF) set up bases in Cuando Cubango Province in southeastern Angola. Savimbi established his headquarters in Jamba and enjoyed air cover provided by the South African air force from bases in Namibia (see fig. 16). The SADF also trained UNITA guerrillas in Namibia and provided UNITA with arms, fuel, and food. On occasion, South African ground forces provided direct support during UNITA battles with FAPLA.

Damaging though the UNITA assaults were, the greatest threat to Angola's security in the late 1970s was posed by the SADF. Following its withdrawal from Angola in mid-1976 after its involvement in the war for independence, the SADF routinely launched small-scale incursions from Namibia into southern Angola in pursuit of SWAPO guerrillas. The first large-scale South African incursion into Angola took place in May 1978, when the SADF raided a Namibian refugee camp at Cassinga and killed hundreds of people. By the end of 1979, following the SADF bombing of Lubango, the capital of Huíla Province, an undeclared border war between South Africa and Angola was in full force.

The Final Days of the Neto Regime

By the late 1970s, Angolan head of state Agostinho Neto had reached a better understanding of the motivations behind the 1977 Nitista coup attempt. Accordingly, he sought a more pragmatic approach to balancing the diverse personalities and schools of thought within the government and party. In December 1978, Neto began a series of government and party reorganizations designed to increase the powers of the president, purge both ruling structures of incompetent and corrupt officials, and balance ethnic, racial, and ideological elements. By abolishing the offices of prime minister and deputy prime minister, Neto was able to deal directly with his ministers rather than through intermediaries. The reorganization also resulted in the dismissal or reassignment of a large number of senior party officials. Neto effected the most dramatic change in the MPLA-PT Political Bureau, which had been dominated by *mestiços* and Mbundu. He reorganized the Political Bureau by appointing officials, including three Bakongo and two Cabindan members, who gave it a broader ethnic representation (see Structure of Government, ch. 4). These reorganizations were accompanied by a partial amnesty that included the release from prison and return from exile of members of the Active Revolt, many of whom Neto reintegrated into the party. Furthermore, Neto

welcomed back to Angola a number of FNLA members and, according to some sources, even made friendly overtures to Chipenda. By 1979 Neto had largely succeeded in molding the MPLA-PT into a cohesive organization of carefully selected cadres.

Neto also pursued a foreign policy designed to weaken external support for UNITA (and what was left of the FNLA and FLEC) and to secure friendly relations with as many states as possible for both security and economic reasons. Included in this last goal was a July 1979 foreign investment law that provided more attractive benefits for foreign investors and that Neto designed primarily to encourage further Western investment in oil exploration.

The Dos Santos Regime

When Neto died in September 1979 in a Moscow hospital, he was still in the process of consolidating his power and reconciling with former opponents. To his credit, the internal party cohesion that he fostered allowed a smooth transfer of power to José Eduardo dos Santos, a Soviet-educated Mbundu who had served as first deputy prime minister and then as minister of planning following the December 1978 reorganization.

Despite his student years in the Soviet Union, dos Santos was a moderate with a pragmatic outlook, not unlike that of Neto. He soon expressed his preference for a mixed economy with an important role for the private sector. The direction in which he guided the MPLA-PT was especially telling. He pushed for the promotion to the Central Committee of four moderates—Manuel Alexandre Rodrigues (nom de guerre Kito; Mbundu), Kundi Paimama (southern Ovambo), Paulo Jorge (*mestiço*), and Roberto de Almeida (*mestiço*). The ethnic backgrounds of these four men also demonstrated the new regime's continuing commitment to broadened representation in the top party leadership. Nonetheless, no Ovimbundu—the largest ethnic group and the one to which Savimbi belonged—was a member of the Political Bureau. Dos Santos defended this omission by explaining that there were no politically educated Ovimbundu who could fill top party positions. The promotion of Minister of Foreign Relations Jorge to full membership in the Central Committee was especially significant because, during the Neto regime, Jorge had initiated contact with the West and maintained the flexible foreign policy that characterized that regime, despite Soviet objections. Minister of Domestic and Foreign Trade Almeida, also promoted to full Central Committee membership, was an active participant in the fostering of Angola's economic ties with the West as well.

Steps Toward a Stronger Party and Political Discord

The party unanimously confirmed dos Santos as its president during the MPLA-PT's First Extraordinary Party Congress held in December 1980. The congress also increased the number of Central Committee members from fifty-eight to seventy, and it took a decisive step toward creating a greater role for the party in running the nation and a diminished role for the government. A major constitutional change that had been enacted earlier paved the way for the formation of the national People's Assembly. Provincial assemblies, elected by the public, then elected assembly members, who in turn elected a twenty-five-member permanent commission that included the president and the entire Political Bureau. Thus, the People's Assembly, which replaced the government's Council of the Revolution, became an organ primarily of the party rather than the government.

During a meeting in March 1981, the Central Committee further reinforced the MPLA-PT's primacy over the government by assigning to itself increased responsibility for the job of orienting and supervising the work of the Council of Ministers. A government reorganization followed the meeting, and several ministers left the government to take on senior party positions, where they had greater opportunities to gain power. Because most of the ministers who remained in the Council of Ministers were technocrats, the bureaucratic skills of government officials improved, and the reorganization further differentiated government and party functions.

Dos Santos's efforts to secure the supremacy of the party over the government, however, created sharp divisions within the government and party elites along political and racial lines. On one side were the Africanists, or nationalists, who were mostly black and held most of the senior positions in the government and ministries. The Africanists, for the most part, were known as pragmatists and favored improved relations with the West and a rapprochement with UNITA. On the other side were the ideologues, mostly *mestiços* and whites, who dominated the party and adhered adamantly to the Soviet Marxist-Leninist line. Although these divisions caused bitter schisms and numerous policy-making problems, they were not unusual for a government that dealt with both the Soviet Union and its allies (in the military sphere) and the West (in the economic sphere).

The Namibia Issue and Security Threats in the 1980s

In the early 1980s, the status of Namibia evolved into a

complex international issue involving principally the governments of the United States, Angola, South Africa, and Cuba. The United States, troubled by the growing Soviet and Cuban presence in Angola, sought to reduce this influence by becoming directly involved in negotiations for a withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola and for Namibian independence. For its part, Angola claimed that if the SADF threat were removed from its southern border, it could safely reduce the number of Cuban troops and Soviet advisers. The most obvious way this could be done was if South Africa granted independence to Namibia. South Africa, already preoccupied with the leftist regime in Angola, was reluctant to relinquish control of Namibia and allow free elections because of the possibility that these elections would bring its traditional nemesis, SWAPO, to power.

In 1977 Britain, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), and the United States formed an informal negotiating team, called the Contact Group, to work with South Africa to implement a UN plan for free elections in Namibia. The South African government, however, was fundamentally opposed to the UN plan, which it claimed was biased in favor of the installation of a SWAPO government in Namibia. Pretoria continued to attend negotiating sessions throughout the early 1980s, always prepared to bargain but never ready to settle.

By the beginning of 1981, South Africa's undeclared war with Angola and its support for an increasingly effective UNITA had become the focus of the dos Santos regime. After the failure in January 1981 of the UN-sponsored talks on the future of Namibia, South African military aggression escalated and became directed as much against Angolan targets as against SWAPO guerrillas. In August 1981, the SADF launched Operation Protea, in which several thousand troops and accompanying equipment penetrated 120 kilometers into southwestern Angola. This invasion marked the beginning of a different kind of war, one in which South Africa no longer pretended to restrict its incursions to the pursuit of SWAPO units but openly intensified its assaults on Angolan economic targets and began to occupy Angolan territory, particularly in Cuanene Province. Furthermore, SADF support for UNITA in 1982 and 1983 increased to the extent that the South African Air Force (SAAF) participated in UNITA operations against FAPLA.

The rapid escalation of South African military aggression in Angola was matched by the massive infiltration of the countryside by UNITA forces. This activity far exceeded UNITA's previous hit-and-run operations aimed primarily at the Benguela Railway. But perhaps the most detrimental effect of the UNITA

insurgency was the disruption of the economy, particularly the agricultural sector. By the end of 1985, fighting between UNITA and FAPLA had forced hundreds of thousands of peasants to flee from the fertile central highlands. The result was a precipitous drop in food production. UNITA guerrillas also frequently mined roads and railroads, blew up electric power transmission lines, and attacked dams, mining facilities, and coffee plantations. Moreover, they began taking foreign technicians hostage in the hope of gaining publicity for the UNITA cause.

Second Party Congress

The Second Party Congress of the MPLA-PT, held in December 1985, focused on two main themes: greater economic efficiency and improved defense capabilities. The party had little to celebrate in view of the deplorable conditions that then prevailed. Politically, the party lacked sufficiently educated cadres, and economically, the government was forced to import 80 percent of its food and had become dependent on Western oil companies to keep the economy afloat. The large number of party members attending the congress who were also military officers (about a quarter of all party delegates) exemplified the MPLA-PT's emphasis on the defense sector. The Central Committee report to the congress projected that more than one-third of the government budget would go to defense and security over the next five years.

During the congress, party officials expressed their dissatisfaction with economic policies patterned on Soviet models that had failed to revive Angola's agricultural sector. In fact, the most significant results of the congress were a purge of Soviet hardliners and an influx of well-trained nationalists with more pragmatic viewpoints. Within the party's senior ranks, many leading ideologists were demoted, as were a number of *mestiços*; they were replaced with younger black technocrats and the president's closest supporters.

An unexpected change involved one of the most prominent members of the pro-Soviet group, Lúcio Lára, who had been considered the second most powerful figure in the MPLA-PT. Lára lost his position in the Political Bureau and ended up with the largely honorary position of first secretary of the People's Assembly. Overall, the most notable outcomes of the congress were the enhanced prestige and authority of dos Santos and a more professional and loyalist party leadership, in which the armed forces were heavily represented.

By the late 1980s, Angola had far to go in its quest to become a viable, sovereign state. More than 50,000 Cuban troops remained

in the country to provide security; UNITA and the SADF launched attacks with impunity; the oil sector—and hence the treasury—suffered grievously from the worldwide slump in petroleum prices; and hundreds of thousands of Angolans, in the countryside as well as in the increasingly crowded cities, were malnourished. Yet, in late 1988 there were a few reasons for optimism. United States-sponsored negotiations were finally successful, opening the door for a settlement of the Namibia dispute, the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola, and an accord between the MPLA-PT and UNITA—in short, the conditions necessary for Angola to resume the process of nationbuilding and to prepare a better future for its people (see Regional Politics, ch. 4).

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Sources emphasizing the early history of the Africans in Angola are Jan Vansina's *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, Douglas L. Wheeler and René Pélissier's *Angola*, and Joseph C. Miller's *Kings and Kinsmen*. The best accounts of Portuguese expansion in Angola are Gerald J. Bender's *Angola under the Portuguese* and Lawrence W. Henderson's *Angola: Five Centuries of Conflict*, both of which deal extensively with the brutality of Portuguese colonial policies and institutions. Other useful works are Malyn Newitt's *Portugal in Africa*, C.R. Boxer's *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825*, and John Sykes's *Portugal and Africa*.

By far the most complete and valuable account of the Angolan nationalist struggle is John A. Marcum's *The Angolan Revolution*. This work is divided into two volumes: *The Anatomy of an Explosion, 1950-1962* and *Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962-1976*. Keith Somerville's *Angola: Politics, Economics, and Society* is an exhaustive and well-written account of the MPLA's institutions and policies.

A wealth of material exists on Angola's security problems and the escalation of Soviet and Cuban military support. Some of the best sources are Tony Hodges's *Angola to the 1990s*, a special report published by the Economist Intelligence Unit; John A. Marcum's paper prepared for the United States Information Agency titled "Radical Vision Frustrated: Angola and Cuba"; Gerald J. Bender's article in *Current History* titled "The Continuing Crisis in Angola"; two chapters by John A. Marcum titled "UNITA: The Politics of Survival" and "A Quarter Century of War" in *Angola, Mozambique, and the West*, edited by Helen Kitchen; two articles by Gillian Gunn titled "The Angolan Economy" and "Cuba and

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Angola," also in Helen Kitchen's edited volume; and Arthur Jay Klinghoffer's *The Angolan War*.

Documentation of Angola's recent history can be found in the annual *Africa Contemporary Record* and various issues of *Africa Confidential*, as well as many periodicals dealing with Africa. (For further information and complete citations, see Bibliography.)

Chapter 2. The Society and Its Environment



A young Angolan celebrates during a carnival.

IN LATE 1988, ANGOLAN SOCIETY still bore the scars inflicted by five centuries of colonial rule and by a thirteen-year-long insurgency that had drained the national treasury and frustrated the government's efforts to implement Marxist-Leninist policies. Complicating the study of contemporary Angolan society was the limited information available to researchers. During the period of turmoil that began in 1975, few Western observers had been allowed access to government-controlled areas. Furthermore, the Angolan press was closely controlled by the government and prone to propagandistic reporting; antigovernment sources were equally slanted.

Despite these limitations, certain features of Angolan society could be outlined, if not clearly discerned. In 1988 Angola had an estimated population of 8.2 million, the great majority of whom lived in the western half of the country. Nearly 7 million Angolans lived in government-controlled areas. The remainder, an estimated 1.25 million, resided in rebel-held regions. Most Angolans inhabited rural areas, although there had been a significant trend since the 1970s toward urban growth. By 1988 about a third of the population was living in towns and cities. Most of the urban areas were in the more populous western half of the country.

Scholars often divided the population into a number of ethno-linguistic categories, but in many cases these categories had been devised by others, both Portuguese and Africans. Physical boundaries based on these categories had been established by the Portuguese for use in census taking and related activities. Although they acquired a certain meaning for the people included in them in the course of the colonial period and during the nationalist struggle, these categories were neither fixed nor internally homogeneous, and they were subject to change under shifting historical conditions.

The three largest categories—the Ovimbundu, the Mbundu, and the Bakongo—together constituted nearly three-quarters of Angola's population. *Mestiços* (persons of mixed European and African ancestry; see Glossary), at less than 2 percent of the population, had played an important role in the ruling party since independence, mostly because they were fairly well educated in a society in which educated persons were relatively few. They had, however, been the target of much resentment, a consequence of their former identification with the Portuguese and, often, of their expressions

of superiority to Africans. The regime of José Eduardo dos Santos, who became president in 1979, sought to dissipate this resentment by replacing high-ranking *mestiço* party and government officials with individuals of other ethnic backgrounds.

Little is known of the actual workings of indigenous social systems as modified during the colonial period. The most persistent of groupings and institutions, such as clans or tribes, were based on descent from a common ancestor, in most cases a common female ancestor, and were traced through females. (With rare exceptions, however, authority lay in male hands.) As enduring as these had been, such groupings and institutions were showing signs of losing their significance toward the end of the colonial era. In many instances, they were further disrupted by the devastating effects of the insurgency waged by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola—UNITA), which caused massive displacement of much of the rural population, particularly from the eastern provinces.

The Portuguese-imposed national structure was almost totally destroyed by the Marxist-Leninist institutions established after independence in 1975. There have been significant changes, however, in the ideology of the country's leaders in the mid- to late 1980s. Although the ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola-Workers' Party (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola-Partido de Trabalho—MPLA-PT), inveighed against what it called petit bourgeois tendencies, its leaders accepted private enterprise and a more tolerant attitude toward personal gain as means of coping with the country's massive economic and administrative problems.

Despite its opposition to religion, the Marxist-Leninist government did not prohibit the existence of religious institutions. Many Angolans were Roman Catholics or Protestants, and missionaries had been instrumental in providing education to Angolans during the colonial era when schooling had been largely denied to Africans by the colonial authorities. Nonetheless, the government was suspicious of large organized groups that could threaten its stability, particularly the Roman Catholic Church, because it had not overtly opposed Portuguese colonialism. There was less hostility toward the Protestant churches, which had not maintained particularly close ties to the Portuguese colonial authorities. Indigenous religions continued to influence the lives of a large segment of the population, even though some of these people also belonged to Christian denominations.

In the late 1980s, there was a tremendous need for educated Angolans in both the economic and the governmental sectors, especially in technical fields. Although the government had made steady progress in providing education at the primary and secondary school levels, there were still severe teacher shortages, mostly in rural areas, and vast problems in reaching those children living in areas where UNITA military actions were most frequent.

There were also shortages of trained Angolan personnel in the health field, which had forced the government to bring in hundreds of foreign health care personnel to meet the needs of the population as well as to train Angolans in health care practices. Nonetheless, the high infant mortality rate and proliferation of diseases, exacerbated by poor sanitation and malnutrition, attested to the government's insufficient progress in this area.

Physical Setting

A total area of 1,246,700 square kilometers (including Cabinda Province) makes Angola the seventh largest state in Africa, but it is also one of the most lightly populated (see fig. 1). The country is bordered to the north and east by Zaire, to the east by Zambia, and to the south by Namibia. The 7,270-square-kilometer enclave of Cabinda, which is separated from the rest of Angola by a strip of Zairian territory, is bordered on the north by Congo.

Terrain

Angola has three principal natural regions: the coastal lowland, characterized by low plains and terraces; hills and mountains, rising inland from the coast into a great escarpment; and an area of high plains, called the high plateau (*planalto*), which extends eastward from the escarpment (see fig. 3).

The coastal lowland rises from the sea in a series of low terraces. This region varies in width from about 25 kilometers near Benguela to more than 150 kilometers in the Cuanza River Valley just south of Angola's capital, Luanda, and is markedly different from Angola's highland mass. The Atlantic Ocean's cold, northward-flowing Benguela Current substantially reduces precipitation along the coast, making the region relatively arid or nearly so south of Benguela (where it forms the northern extension of the Namib Desert), and quite dry even in its northern reaches. Even where, as around Luanda, the average annual rainfall may be as much as fifty centimeters, it is not uncommon for the rains to fail. Given this pattern of precipitation, the far south is marked by sand dunes, which give way to dry scrub along the middle coast. Portions of the northern coastal plain are covered by thick brush.

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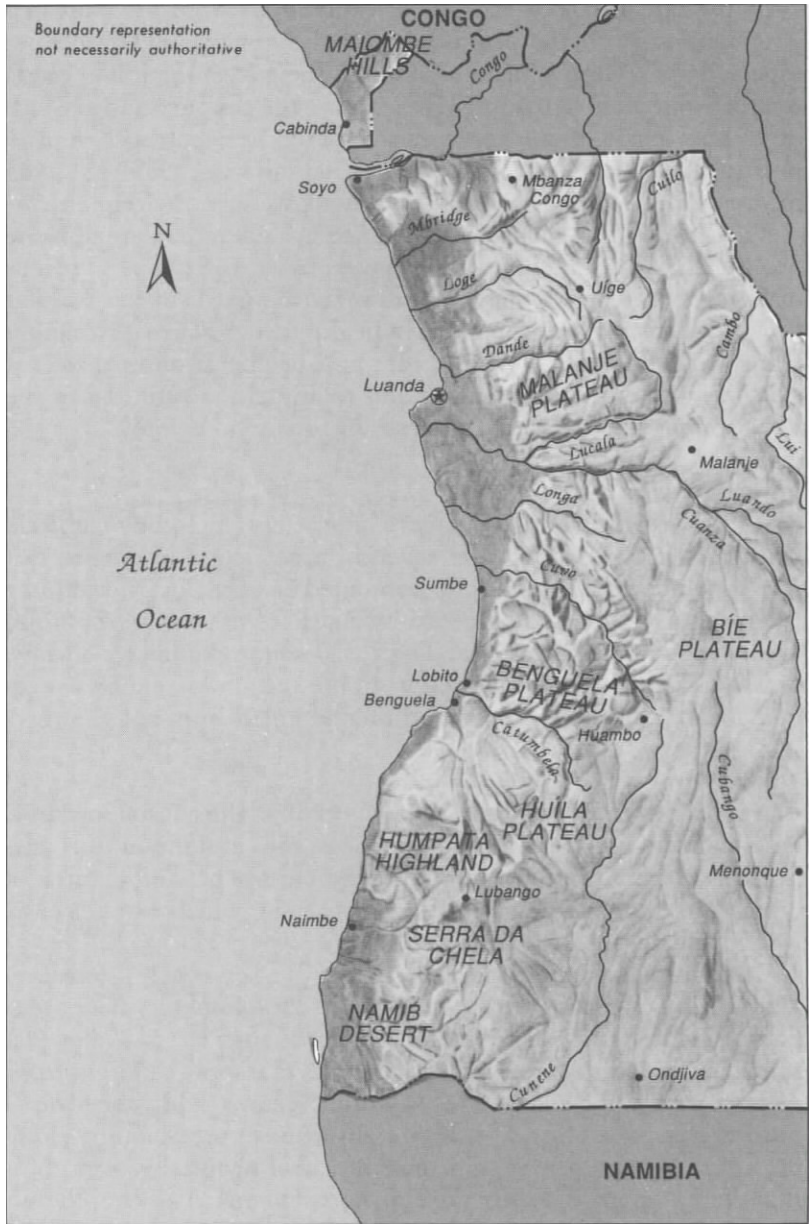
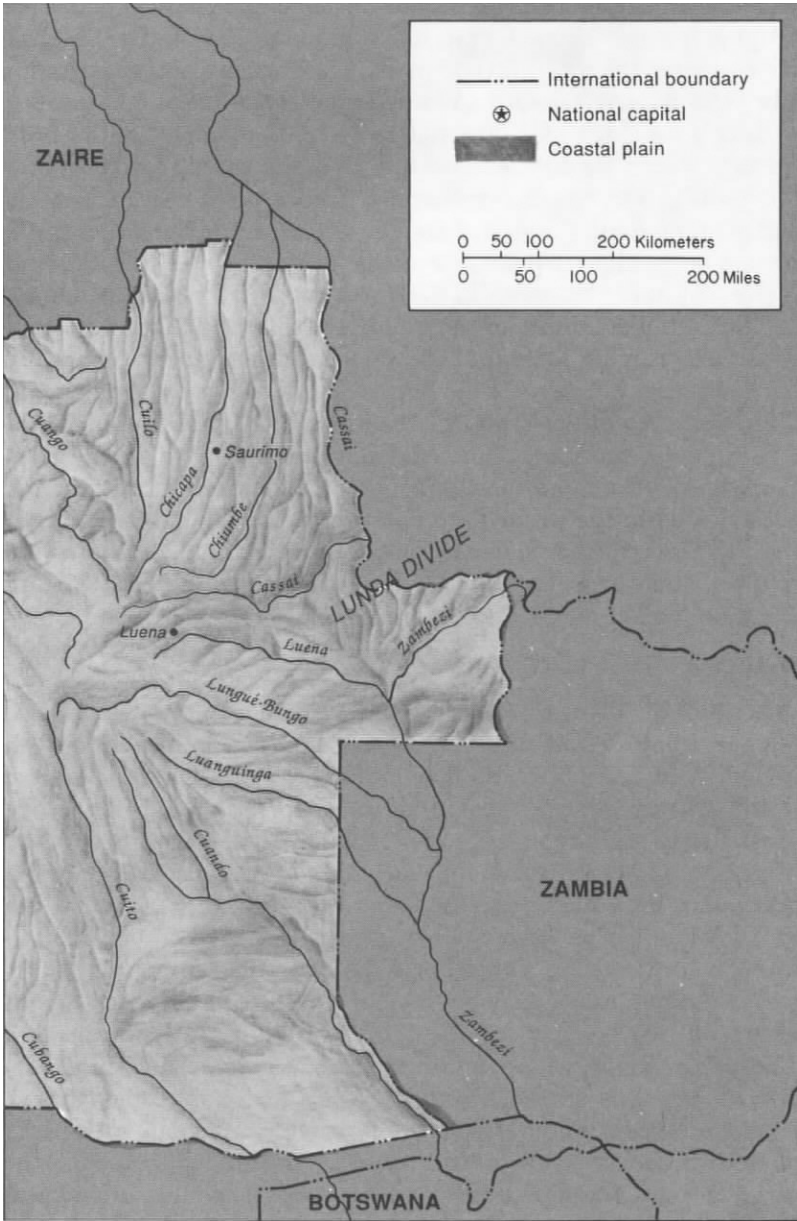


Figure 3. Topography and Drainage



The belt of hills and mountains parallels the coast at distances ranging from 20 kilometers to 100 kilometers inland. The Cuanza River divides the zone into two parts. The northern part rises gradually from the coastal zone to an average elevation of 500 meters, with crests as high as 1,000 meters to 1,800 meters. South of the Cuanza River, the hills rise sharply from the coastal lowlands and form a high escarpment, extending from a point east of Luanda and running south through Namibia. The escarpment reaches 2,400 meters at its highest point, southeast of the town of Sumbe, and is steepest in the far south in the Serra da Chela mountain range.

The high plateau lies to the east of the hills and mountains and dominates Angola's terrain. The surface of the plateau is typically flat or rolling, but parts of the Benguela Plateau and the Humpata Highland area of the Huíla Plateau in the south reach heights of 2,500 meters and more. The Malanje Plateau to the north rarely exceeds 1,000 meters in height. The Benguela Plateau and the coastal area in the immediate environs of Benguela and Lobito, the Bié Plateau, the Malanje Plateau, and a small section of the Huíla Plateau near the town of Lubango have long been among the most densely settled areas in Angola.

Drainage

Most of the country's many rivers originate in central Angola, but their patterns of flow are diverse and their ultimate outlets varied. A number of rivers flow in a more or less westerly course to the Atlantic Ocean, providing water for irrigation in the dry coastal strip and the potential for hydroelectric power, only some of which had been realized by 1988. Two of Angola's most important rivers, the Cuanza and the Cunene, take a more indirect route to the Atlantic, the Cuanza flowing north and the Cunene flowing south before turning west. The Cuanza is the only river wholly within Angola that is navigable—for nearly 200 kilometers from its mouth—by boats of commercially or militarily significant size. The Congo River, whose mouth and western end form a small portion of Angola's northern border with Zaire, is also navigable.

North of the Lunda Divide a number of important tributaries of the Congo River flow north to join it, draining Angola's north-east quadrant. South of the divide some rivers flow into the Zambezi River and thence to the Indian Ocean, others to the Okavango River (as the Cubango River is called along the border with Namibia and in Botswana) and thence to the Okavango Swamp in Botswana. The tributaries of the Cubango River and several of the southern rivers flowing to the Atlantic are seasonal, completely dry much of the year.

Climate

Like the rest of tropical Africa, Angola experiences distinct, alternating rainy and dry seasons. In the north, the rainy season may last for as long as seven months—usually from September to April, with perhaps a brief slackening in January or February. In the south, the rainy season begins later, in November, and lasts until about February. The dry season (*cacimbo*) is often characterized by a heavy morning mist. In general, precipitation is higher in the north, but at any latitude it is greater in the interior than along the coast and increases with altitude.

Temperatures fall with distance from the equator and with altitude and tend to rise closer to the Atlantic Ocean. Thus, at Soyo, at the mouth of the Congo River, the average annual temperature is about 26°C, but it is under 16°C at Huambo on the temperate central plateau. The coolest months are July and August (in the middle of the dry season), when frost may sometimes form at higher altitudes.

Population Structure and Dynamics

As of late 1988, the last official census in Angola had been taken in 1970. As a result, most population figures were widely varying estimates based on scanty birth and death rate data. According to the United States Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census, Angola's 1988 population was about 8.2 million. The United States Department of State gave a 1986 figure of 8.5 million, while the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Africa estimated the mid-1986 population at 8.9 million. The Angolan government estimated the 1988 population at almost 9.5 million (see table 2, Appendix A). The government figure, however, may have included Angolan refugees in neighboring countries. According to the U.S. Committee for Refugees, a private agency, in mid-1987 more than 400,000 Angolan refugees resided in Zaire and Zambia. There were about 50,000 Cuban soldiers and civilians and about 2,000 military and civilian advisers and technicians from the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) stationed in Angola. There were also about 10,000 South African refugees, most associated with the antigovernment African National Congress (ANC); 70,000 Namibian refugees, most associated with the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO); and 13,200 Zairian refugees. There was no officially reported immigration or emigration.

In spite of warfare, poor health care, and the large number of Angolans in exile, the population was growing steadily in the late 1980s. Like population estimates, however, growth rate