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The History of Angola

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Summary and Keywords

Angola's contemporary political boundaries resulted from 20th-century colonialism. The roots of Angola, however, reach far into the past. When Portuguese caravels arrived in the Congo River estuary in the late 15th century, independent African polities dotted this vast region. Some people lived in populous, hierarchical states such as the Kingdom of Kongo, but most lived in smaller political entities centered on lineage-village settlements. The Portuguese colony of Angola grew out of a settlement established at Luanda Bay in 1576. From its inception, Portuguese Angola existed to profit from the transatlantic slave trade, which became the colony's economic foundation for the next three centuries. A Luso-African population and a creole culture developed in the colonial nuclei of Luanda and Benguela (founded 1617). The expansion of the colonial state into the interior occurred intermittently until the end of the 19th century, when Portuguese authorities initiated a series of wars of conquest that lasted up until the end of the First World War. During the 20th century, the colonial state consolidated military control over the whole territory, instituted an infrastructure of administration, and developed an economy of resource extraction. A nationalist sentiment developed among Luso-African thinkers in the early 20th century, and by the 1950s these ideas coalesced into a nationalist movement aimed at independence. Simultaneously, anticolonial movements developed among mission-educated elites in the Kikongo-speaking north and in the Umbundu-speaking central highlands. Portugal's authoritarian New State leaders brutally suppressed these disparate nationalist movements during more than a decade of guerrilla war. A revolution in Portugal in 1974 ushered in negotiations leading to Angolan independence on November 11, 1975. Competing nationalist movements, bolstered by foreign intervention, refused to share governance and as a result plunged Angola into a brutal civil war that lasted until 2002.

Keywords: transatlantic slave trade, forced labor, Luso-African, colonialism, New State, nationalism, civil war, west central Africa

Environment and Early Settlement

Angola is nearly half a million square miles in area (Figure 1). A defining feature of Angola's geography is the existence of two distinct zones: the littoral and the plateau. A narrow coastal plain, the littoral, gradually ascends to a central plateau that lies at least 3,280 feet above sea level. This relief is least pronounced in the north near the Congo River and becomes increasingly pronounced in the south, where the highlands are generally 6,500 feet above sea level. Most of Angola covers the northwestern part of the great African plateau south of the equator, where savannas are interspersed with forests along riverbeds. Rainfall decreases from north to south. Cabinda, an Angolan enclave north of the Congo River, is covered by rainforest. The coastal plain south of Luanda is semiarid, turning to desert in the far south. Annual rainfall ranges from two inches near the southern Namibe desert to sixty inches in the central plateau. There are two pronounced seasons: a cool, dry season known as *Cacimbo* (May to October), and a hot, rainy season (November to April). The rains fall regularly in the northern rainy season, but are less dependable in the south. Due to altitude, temperatures on the central plateau are mild, with annual average temperatures below 68°F.

It is no accident that the most densely populated regions of Angola before the 20th century occurred in the medium rainfall belts of savanna south of the rainforest and on the relatively well-watered central plateau. Economic activities included grain and tuber cultivation on the plateau and in the river valleys of the littoral as well as nomadic pastoralism in the semi-desert and deserts of the south. The smelting of iron, closely connected to iron-ore deposits, provided iron implements and weapons and was associated with spiritual powers.

The existence of stone fortifications can be found throughout Angola, although archaeological analysis is limited and little archaeological work has been carried out since independence in 1975. The southern part of the plateau contains the vestiges of protective walls, built of loose stones, with a technique similar to that used in Great Zimbabwe.¹ The ruins indicate centralized states in the region in the 13th century.

Hunter-gathering San peoples were the first to inhabit the region that became Angola. Late in the first millennium, Bantu-speaking people migrated into the region from the north and east. Bantu-speakers brought with them iron-smelting skills and agricultural practices, which they used to develop lineage-based villages. By the 14th century, Kikongo speakers had organized a centralized state south of the estuary of the Congo River based on matrilineal descent groups called *kanda*. The *mani* Kongo (lord or governor of Kongo) profited from taxing trade across disparate ecological zones. Outlying provinces of Kongo reached as far south as the Kimbundu-speaking Ndongo Kingdom. Kimbundu-speaking lineages controlled the iron-rich region near the Nzongezi River, which by the early 16th century served as the economic basis of the Ndongo Kingdom,

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ruled by the *ngola a kiluanje* (a political title, analogous to “king,” in the Mbundu states). It is from this title that the name “Angola” is derived. Mbundu *ngola a kiluanje* held divine powers closely associated with iron smelting, which added to their authority and prestige.



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Figure 1. Map of Angola, Containing Indicators for Agricultural Production and Salubrity, 1885.

Source: Comissão de Cartographia, Lisbon. Edited by Antonio Augusto d'Oliveira, L. de Moraes e Souza, and Ernesto de Vasconcellos. Scale 1:3,000,000.

Independent States and Conquest

The Portuguese presence in west central Africa began with the arrival of explorer Diogo Cão at the mouth of the Congo River in 1483. Portugal found a willing trade partner in the centralized Kingdom of Kongo. The Kongo already boasted a system of rotating markets; a standardized shell currency, the *nzimbu*; and a regulated trade network. In a region with few draft animals, Kongo authorities prescribed the volume and weight for headloads. A regular trade between Portugal and Kongo developed by 1491. In that year, Nzinga a Nkuwu, the *mani* Kongo, as well as elite representatives of central Kongo's ruling *kanda*, were baptized and welcomed European missionaries. Christianity bolstered the spiritual power of Kongo's rulers and enabled trade and communication with Portugal. The Kongo wanted luxury goods (varieties of cloth and alcohol, for example) and technical advisors, and the Portuguese wanted slaves to grow sugar on their newly established colony on São Tomé, an island in the Gulf of Guinea. Slaves initially came from the sale of dependents from within the Kongo heartland, but by 1514 they came increasingly from military campaigns against neighbors and from local kidnapping. Even though 2,000-3,000 slaves were exported each year from Kongo by the 1520s, the numbers did not satisfy Portugal's demand, so Portuguese traders resident in the Kongo capital, Mbanza Kongo/São Salvador, financed itinerant traders, known as *pombeiros*, to

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visit interior markets to buy slaves. An ever-increasing demand for slave labor in the Americas fueled an expansion in the volume of slaves exported from Kongo's ports to over 7,000 per year by the 1560s.²

Meanwhile the Portuguese established a new slave-trading "captaincy," or colony, on the southern fringes of the Kongo Kingdom at Luanda Bay in 1576. The Portuguese Crown granted this new captaincy to Paulo Dias de Novais, a grandson of the explorer Bartholomew Dias, who ruled as absolute lord over what came to be called Portuguese Angola (see above). Fortuitous for the Portuguese, mobile warriors, originally from what is now central Angola and known as Imbangala, arrived around the mouth of the Kwanza River, just south of Luanda, at about the same time. The Imbangala warriors, known by their enemies as "Jaga," a derogatory term meaning "marauding bandits," rejected kinship in their social organization and focused their societies on the *kilombo*, or war camp. They enacted prohibitions on natural parenthood and focused on kidnapping and incorporation of young members from the peoples they attacked. The Portuguese and Imbangala created alliances to undermine the authority of the Ndongo Kingdom, and by the mid-17th century the small coastal Portuguese state of Angola, led by *conquistadores*, worked with neighboring states such as Kasanje, now governed by Imbangala elites, to profit from the export of slaves across the Atlantic. Portuguese and Luso-African (people of mixed Portuguese and African origin and culture) traders controlled the entrepôt at Luanda as well as a small territory between the Bengo and Kwanza rivers.

During much of the 17th century, the Kingdom of Matamba, further east than other Imbangala-led Mbundu states and ruled by the famous Queen Njinga, led the opposition to Portuguese military control over the interior. Njinga claimed the *ngola a kiluanje* political title after the Portuguese had put puppet rulers in the place of the original Ndongo kings during the 1620s. She adopted practices and symbols of the *kilombo* and cooperated with the Dutch while they held Luanda from 1641 to 1648. The Dutch occupation cleared the way for large-scale exports of slaves from Matamba and fueled Njinga's rise to the stature of the most powerful ruler in the interior during the 1640s. She established a virtual monopoly over the slave trade from the interior during that decade.³ The shift in the slave trade to Kasanje prompted her to sign a peace treaty with the Portuguese in 1657. She died in 1663 at the age of eighty-two and is commemorated in contemporary Angola as an anticolonial warrior and proto-nationalist.⁴

In the small colonial state of Angola a creole society developed. In Angolan history, the term "creole" refers to predominantly black Africans who lived with a mixture of Portuguese and African cultures. Creolization occurred as a two-way process of cultural mixing. Individuals chose and negotiated elements of African and Portuguese culture, adopting institutions, beliefs, and practices they found most relevant in their lives. For example, Portuguese officials borrowed and adopted African institutions, such as the *mucano* tribunal (in Kimbundu "*mucano*" means "litigation"), an institution among the Mbundu states near Luanda and incorporated into the Portuguese legal system in Angola by the middle of the 17th century.⁵ The *mucano* tribunal provided Kimbundu speakers living in Portuguese-controlled Angola a familiar place to have civil and criminal cases

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adjudicated. Another example of Mbundu culture practiced among a wide swath of people in Luanda, including recently arrived Mbundu creoles of long urban residence and some Portuguese settlers, was the *ndua* oath (*juramento de ndua*). A judge, or an *nganga*, a religious authority, presided over a ritualized ceremony. The judge or *nganga* prepared a beverage containing roots of poisonous plants. Historian Roquinaldo Ferreira reports, “The religious authorities would then divide the beverage in equal shares and give it to the litigants. The first person to expel the poisonous beverage would be considered innocent, whereas the other party would have to drink portions of stronger poisonous beverages.”⁶

Meanwhile, the growing slave trade from Luanda empowered the state of Angola, and wealth from the Atlantic slave trade enabled the independence of coastal Kongolesse states such as Soyo, thus weakening the Kongo state. In 1665 Portuguese forces defeated the Kongo armies at Mbwila, which led to the kingdom’s demise. The Atlantic trade had a similar impact on the Ndongo state. In 1671, Portuguese forces and their Imbangala allies defeated the Ndongo Kingdom and established a *presídio* (interior military-administrative outpost) in the capital city of Ndongo. Within a century of establishing their permanent settlement at Luanda, the Portuguese had conquered militarily the two strongest states in west central Africa, establishing Portuguese Angola as an increasingly powerful presence.

Further south, the Portuguese established a second settlement near the *Baía das Vacas* (Cow Bay) in 1617. The settlement, named Benguela, was governed as a separate captaincy and only came under control of Luanda in 1779. This region had no large state to conquer and initially the small Portuguese colony traded with Ndombe pastoralists for cattle. As in the north, the trade in slaves soon became the dominant economic activity. Officials in Benguela used both military raids and alliances with cooperative “vassal” (subordinate) African rulers as a means to guarantee a supply of slaves and to secure the borders of the small settlement. In order to cement allegiances, the Portuguese incorporated the practice of *undar*, a ceremony borrowed from the transmission of power in the Ndongo Kingdom. Historian Mariana Candido explains: “*Undar*, according to contemporary witnesses, was performed when a prospective ruler lay down on the floor and dust or flour was thrown over his body. This dust then was spread over his chest and arms, marking his rise to power and his acceptance by the elders of the community.”⁷

The Atlantic Slave Trade

From its relatively modest beginnings in the early 16th century, the slave trade from Angola grew to enormous dimensions and impacted nearly all societies across the breadth of central Africa, with the exception of semi-nomadic hunter-gathering societies in the far southern desert of Angola. According to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, roughly five million slaves left the ports of west central Africa during the three centuries between the 1650s and 1860s.⁸ The demand for slaves in Brazil—the most important destination by volume of slaves leaving Angolan ports—grew almost unabated from the discovery of gold in the Minas Gerais in the late 17th century up until the mid-19th century. By the 1780s, the number of slaves exported annually from Angola to Brazil reached 40,000. These numbers increased yet further between 1810s and 1830s, due to international abolition efforts north of the equator. After Brazilian independence in 1822, the British exerted pressure on the Brazilians to end the import of slaves by 1830, so that there was a rush to export more legal slaves from Angola. In 1836, Portugal forbade the export of slaves across the Atlantic. Given resistance from traders in Angola and demand in the Americas, however, the illegal slave trade continued until 1850 when Brazilian ports abolished the import of slaves. Of course, illegal slave trading continued even after 1850, and the ban on exports did little to curb the trade of slaves within Angola. In 1878, Lisbon abolished slavery in Angola. Although by the 1890s coffee and cocoa plantations on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea revived a trade in *serviçais* (servants) who had been acquired as slaves. This “modern slavery” continued until 1909, when international pressure forced the Portuguese government to suspend the trade.

The trade in slaves impacted all aspects of life in central Africa. The demand for captives fueled wars of conquest, and the importation of firearms to execute those wars led to the collapse of states, such as Kongo and Ndongo, while creating new alliances, such as the ones between the Angola and the Kingdoms of Kasanje and Matamba. The slave trade also changed consumption patterns and destabilized communities’ senses of safety and ideas about right and wrong. The expansions of slavery undermined communities and thus negatively impacted agricultural production and natural production. The wealth to be accrued from the trade in slaves warped the administration of justice because elites could increase their wealth and political authority through the sale of those convicted of crimes. The trade also spread a form of commercialization based on European credit far into the interior of west central Africa. To maintain and enforce their slave-exporting colony, Portuguese officials encouraged the development of an intermediary, Luso-African population (known as *filhos da terra* [sons of the land] and *naturais* or [Angolan-born]). Profits from the slave trade, Catholicism, the Portuguese language, and ties of marriage and family characterized the creole community. Baptism and manumissions allowed for some slaves to be incorporated into the free, Christian community and bolstered the population of the colonial nucleus.⁹ Some creole women prospered from trade and their

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role in colonial society exemplified the opportunities available to those who worked as intermediaries of the Portuguese.¹⁰

Assessing the demographic loss to African societies during the Atlantic slave trade is difficult to determine. By the start of the 19th century, it is estimated that the population of west central Africa, including Angola, was somewhere between ten and twenty million people, numbers much lower than other comparable regions of Africa. Historians Joseph Miller and Mariana Candido disagree about the extent to which this relatively sparse population resulted from the Atlantic slave trade. In theory, the skewed gender ratio of the Atlantic slave trade—approximately two-thirds of slaves leaving Angolan ports were men—meant that the reproductive capacity of women remaining in west central Africa would have made up for some of this demographic loss. In the 19th century, the societies of west central Africa contained large concentrations of women slaves, who became wives or concubines of powerful men, and thus not only augmented agricultural production but also demographic growth, offsetting some of the demographic loss from the slave trade.

Nineteenth Century: Extending and Contesting Portuguese Hegemony

Due to Brazilian independence in 1822, the Portuguese government took a renewed interest in its African colonies. Portuguese elites viewed Angola as a valuable market for trade. In Angola, the end of the Atlantic slave trade by the 1860s meant that Luso-African traders shifted their focus to agricultural plantations along the Bengo, Dande, Lucala, and Kwanza rivers near Luanda, and on the banks of the Catumbela and Coporolo near Benguela. The Land Law (*Lei de Terras*) of 1856 did not recognize land belonging to African lineages, and thus allowed the government to give concessions of up to 1,000 hectares to its supporters. These plantations (*fazendas*) existed alongside small farms (*arimos*), owned by Luso-Africans, which supplied the urban centers with foodstuffs.¹¹ *Serviçais* and *libertos* (liberated slaves) whose legal existence hovered in the gray area between slave and free, worked these plantations and produced *aguardente* (cane brandy), an important commodity for trade with interior kingdoms. Trade networks linked the Portuguese and Luso-African merchants in Luanda and Benguela with these interior kingdoms. On the central plateau, these kingdoms included the Ovimbundu kingdoms of Mbailundo and Viye. Trade items traveling from the interior to the coast included ivory, rubber, beeswax, and slaves. In addition to *aguardente*, trade items heading to the interior included cloth, guns, and salt.

The industrial revolution in Europe sparked a growing trade in raw materials from Angola, including ivory, palm oil, and rubber. In the 1880s and 1890s, a boom in rubber prices created prosperity for the Umbundu kings of MBailundo and Viye. The capital of Viye, Ecovongo, served as one of the most important inland markets. Nineteenth-century slave and ivory trader, António Ferreira da Silva Porto, made Ecovongo his home because

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of its location between west central and central African commerce. The three-hundred-mile journey from Benguela on foot by experienced caravans required several weeks of marching. Umbundu kings owned caravans, known as *omaka*, which made biannual trips to Benguela. These caravans consisted of up to 3,000 people. Human porters carried trade goods. According to Lázló Magyar, a Hungarian who spent thirty years living in Viye, caravans consisted of both hired carriers and slave labor. The hired carriers received payment in cloth, which served as a unit of currency along the coast and in the interior.¹² Magyar reported a hierarchy in the salaries earned by porters based on the merchandise they carried. The first and best-paid category consisted of those who transported a bundle of assorted goods called a *kupa*. The *kupa* consisted of ten *covados* (“bundles”) of fine cloth, ten *covados* of coarse cloth, two jugs of rum, and cloth for the purchase of food. The second category consisted of those who transported *aguardente*, gunpowder and weapons. Porters who carried salt fell into the third category. Salt was a commodity of lesser value, so carriers of salt received about half the salary of carriers of *kupa*. Magyar reported that slaves almost always transported personal items and food. This burgeoning trade created wealth for African exporters and traders, but ultimately it paved the way for colonial conquest.

In the midst of the rubber boom, in 1890, a Portuguese force defeated the army of King Ndunduma of Viye, ushering in a period of colonial expansion. Increasing numbers of Portuguese traders, such as Silva Porto, established themselves in Ovimbundu kingdoms. Missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) established their first mission at Mbailundu in 1880. In this context of the growing prominence of traders and missionaries, Ovimbundu kings lost authority and, in 1902, a faction in Mbailundo instigated a war to expel foreigner traders and to protest the decline in international rubber prices, which hurt Ovimbundu traders and their buying power with Portuguese merchants. Portuguese forces conquered Mbailundu, thus ending political independence in the central highlands.

The war in Mbailundu was part of a wider period of military conquest between 1880 and 1920. In 1904, Portuguese forces went to war with the Kwanyama on the southern frontier with the German colony of Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia), although without a definitive victory. In 1915, as part of the Portugal’s efforts against the Germans in the First World War, the Kwanyama would be defeated militarily, although the last pockets of resistance in the frontier region with Southwest Africa would not be crushed until the 1920s.¹³ In 1913, Portugal sent forces to the Kongo region of northern Angola. As in the central highlands, the rubber boom attracted traders who challenged the authority of the chiefly families. When the rubber trade collapsed in 1912, the tensions contributed to the outbreak of a civil war in the Kongo region. The Portuguese intervened with troops and the installation of colonial administration.¹⁴

In 1911, a new Republican government in Portugal made it illegal to produce *aguardente* in Angola or sell hard liquor to Africans. The ban resulted from ideas current in Europe about the so-called white man’s burden to protect African societies from the vices of Western societies, which discouraged the sale of hard liquor to African societies, as well

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as economic considerations that the ban (which exempted wine and beer sales) would benefit Portuguese wine producers who hoped to expand the market for their wine. The decision initially hurt the sugar-plantation economy owned by Portuguese settlers, but soon new investment and protective tariffs for Angolan-produced sugar led to a growing sugar industry.

Further to the south, in the desert regions south of Benguela, small populations of Herero-speaking pastoralists, such as the Kuvale and Ndombe, remained isolated from the main colonial settlements. In 1840, as the slave trade waned in importance, merchants from Luanda founded the trading port of Moçâmedes on the south coast in order to access ivory from the highland interior. Voluntary immigrants from Brazil, Madeira, and the Algarve region of Portugal, as well as *Voortrekkers* (Afrikaners) from South Africa, settled in Moçâmedes and its highland interior. Slave labor contributed to a burgeoning fishing industry, agricultural enterprises, and a growing trade with the interior.¹⁵

Twentieth Century: Consolidating Colonialism

In the early 20th century, Portugal consolidated its rule over Angola. Military campaigns suppressed the last pocket of resistance in the 1920s. The government extended civil administration across the colony and granted land concessions to business interests to construct railways. The extension of taxation, particularly the “hut tax” (*imposto de cubata*) in effect from 1907, and forced labor requirements provided contract workers (*contratados*) for settler-owned businesses.¹⁶ In 1919 the government replaced the hut tax with a “native tax” (*imposto indígena*). These taxes became cornerstones for colonial Angola’s notorious forced labor system.

In northeast Angola, the government granted a huge concession area to the diamond prospecting company DIAMANG, a company with Belgian, South African, and French capital, in exchange for 40 percent of profits. The concession gave the company control over the policing, administration, and provision of services in the Lunda province.¹⁷ The Benguela Railway (*Companhia do Caminho de Ferro de Benguela*, CCFB), completed in 1929, also received land concessions. The railway became Angola’s largest employer, and it linked a deep-water seaport constructed at Lobito in the 1920s with the copper industry of southern Congo. The railway became the primary transport bringing goods and settlers from the coast to the central highlands (including to the town of Huambo founded in 1912 and renamed Nova Lisboa in 1928) and transporting maize and other goods from the highlands to the port of Lobito.

In 1932 Portugal became an authoritarian dictatorship under António Salazar’s New State, which sought to integrate Angola into the Portuguese economy as a market for Portuguese goods, such as wine and textiles, and as a supplier of tropical commodities, including coffee, sugar, and maize. The Colonial Act of 1930 placed strict financial

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controls on Angola's economy, including protective trade barriers to reserve Angola primarily for Portuguese business interests. To make sufficient labor available for the production of sugar, coffee, maize, cotton, sisal, and palm oil, the government used its administrative network to recruit forced labor for private employers.

African farmers responded to market incentives to produce crops such as maize. Most of the 300-percent growth in maize exports from Angola between 1926 and 1960 resulted from the output of African farmers.¹⁸ For less profitable and utilitarian crops such as cotton, the government forced African farmers to produce quotas. Forced cotton production became extremely unpopular and led to a revolt by cotton farmers in the Baixa de Kassange region of Malanje Province in November–December 1960.

In 1926, the Native Statute (*Estatuto Político, Social e Criminal dos Indígenas de Angola e Moçambique*) created a special legal status for African "natives," the *Indigenato*, and structured relations between *indígenas* ("natives") and *não-indígenas* ("non-natives"). These legal categories codified existing categories and practices. In order to be deemed *civilizado* ("civilized," the legal term to refer to black and mixed-raced people who were not under the Native Statute, and considered Portuguese citizens), black and mixed-raced people had to pass an examination administered by a colonial official. The process lacked centralized oversight; there was no standard exam, only a series of questions determined by the official involved. In 1950, only 30,000 Africans—less than 1 percent of the 4.6 million Africans in Angola—were officially recognized as "civilized." In effect, the *Indigenato* codified a caste system with a small, mostly white elite and a large African underclass denied the rights of citizenship. Achieving *civilizado* status exempted one from forced labor and allowed Portuguese authorities to hold up the tightly controlled access to citizenship as an example of what it deemed to be its civilizing mission in Angola. The *Indigenato* also protected white settlers from economic and political competition. Africans generally despised the *Indigenato* system, which explains why the Portuguese government abolished it in 1961 after the outbreak of the nationalist war for independence.

Forced Labor

Efforts to regulate recruitment of and working conditions of *serviçais* led to the adoption of a Native Labor Code (*Código do Trabalho dos Indígenas*) in 1899. The law enshrined the principle of forced labor for African subjects. The *Indigenato* of 1926 codified the principle of forced labor until 1961. Portuguese advocates of forced labor argued that it would make Angola profitable. In Angola a small number of courageous Luso-African journalists wrote stirring editorials about what they described as "labor stealing" and "outright slavery" under the guise of regulated forced labor. From 1870 to 1926, the press in Portugal and Angola enjoyed relative freedom, and so these journalists used newspapers such as *O Futuro d'Angola* and *O Cruzeiro do Sul* to advocate for reform.¹⁹ They railed against Portuguese racism and disrespect for African culture. Journalist José de Fontes Pereira (1823–1891) cited the expression "*com preto e mulato nada de*

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contrato (“With mulattoes and blacks, no need for contracts”) in a 1882 editorial in *O Futuro d’Angola* as an example of this disdain.²⁰ In 1901, a group describing themselves anonymously as “*Os Naturais*” (“Angolan-born”) published a collection of essays titled *Voz D’Angola Clamando no Deserto, Offerecida aos Amigos da Verdade Pelos Naturaes* (“Voice of Angola Crying Out in the Desert, Offered to Friends of Truth by the Angolan-Born”). In it they questioned the humanity of the colonial work regimen:

The black is a miserable instrument of shameful interests, which impose on him a cruel regimen of the whip, injuring him with intellectual blows and physical force, until criminal excess sends him to the grave. The black prefers prison to this kind of tyrannical, inhuman, violent and barbarous kind of work.²¹

The authors of *Voz D’Angola Clamando no Deserto* argued for equality before Portuguese law for all assimilated Angolans, and they criticized colonists whom they denigrated as “poor whites” with no more civilization than the “uncivilized black” (*preto boçal*).²² These defensive insults reflected the complex political and social hierarchy of colonial Angolan society. The authors wanted an end to discrimination based on color and the delivery of social and economic development as promised in Portugal’s colonial rhetoric.²³ These arguments anticipated foreign critics of Angolan forced labor who would question Portugal’s capacity to effectively govern a colonial empire.

An international campaign against forced labor in Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe gained momentum by 1909, after nearly a decade of published exposés on the issue, including a 1906 book titled *A Modern Slavery* by British journalist Henry Nevinson.²⁴ An estimated 67,000 *serviçais* had been shipped to the islands between 1888 and 1908.²⁵ At the time, São Tomé e Príncipe were the world’s leading sources of cacao, and their plantations created a great deal of wealth for their Portuguese owners and the Portuguese treasury. The government of Portugal quietly acknowledged that the forced labor system bringing workers from the Angolan interior to the islands resulted in a lifelong servitude akin to slavery, and in 1909 suspended the shipment of *serviçais* to the islands.

Forced labor, however, continued to supply settler-owned businesses across Angola (Figure 2). Governor José Norton de Matos, who served as governor of Angola 1912–1915 (and then later as high commissioner in the 1920s) took measures to regulate labor conditions. However, forced labor continued, and the state became a supplier of forced laborers to private industries. The imposition of a “native” tax (*imposto indígena*) that all “native” men had to pay in Portuguese currency worked as an indirect method of compelling men who could not pay their tax to work as “contract workers” (*contratados*) for private employers. Employers such as the Cassequel Sugar Company in Catumbela contacted provincial administrators each year to indicate how many *contratados* they would need to meet their labor needs. Provincial administrators would then send orders to local district administrators (*chefes de posto*) in the interior districts, and these would then request a given number of *contratados* from African chiefs (*sobas* [Portuguese from

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Kimbundu *sóvã*, pl. *jísóvã*) and headmen (sing. *sekulu*; pl. *olosekulu* [Umbundu]) under his jurisdiction.



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Figure 2. Factory Workers in Angola, c. 1920.

Source: Sugar Company of Angola Photo Album.

Once the requested number of men were “recruited,” they would be sent to an employer to fulfill their contracts, which usually lasted between six and nine months, and sometimes longer. Contract workers received nominal pay, but the consequences for refusing to fulfill the contract could be severe,

including arrest, imprisonment, and longer and harsher terms of service. Oral histories conducted in 2006 with former *contratados* reveal why this labor system was one of the most hated aspects of colonial rule. Here is how Mr. Tchimbe Ngucika described his work as a *contratado* at Cassequel Sugar Company in the 1940s:

The first time I entered Cassequel was in 1943/44, I worked on clearing out the irrigation canals and the planting of sugar cane. The work was by task, and if you did not complete your task for whatever reason you would be whipped (*chicotada*). Each time I went there the system worked the same: carrying cane by hand to the railway cars, cutting cane by hand with your cutlass, without any clothes except a loin cloth (*chilambo*) made of burlap.²⁶

Private employers were not the only entities to benefit from forced labor. The state itself used forced labor, including that of women and children, to construct and maintain an extensive road network. In short, Africans did the heavy work of building an extractive colonial economy without receiving fair wages or the benefits of citizenship. White settlers often saw access to forced labor as a right of conquest and insisted on maintaining a racial hierarchy.

Christian Missions and Angolan Christians

The Catholic Church arrived with Portuguese explorers along the coast of the Kongo kingdom in the late 15th century. At the invitation of the *Mani* Kongo, the Portuguese dispatched Capuchin and Jesuit missionaries to convert the people of Kongo.²⁷ The early missionary presence in Kongo ended in the late 17th century. In Portuguese Angola, missionary activities were limited to the coast and the region along the Kwanza River. However, by the mid-19th century, the church had almost vanished. A second missionary effort (Catholic and Protestant) took place beginning in the 1880s, in many areas before

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the expansion of Portuguese hegemony into the interior. As a result of the Berlin Conference, Portugal had to accept non-Catholic missionaries from other Western nations. The government assigned a certain region to each Protestant mission. British Baptists operated in northern Angola among Kikongo speakers beginning in 1878. American and Canadian Congregationalists worked among Umbundu speakers in the central highlands beginning in 1880. In 1885, missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States established missions in the region between Luanda and Malanje among Kimbundu speakers. Besides these three primary, Protestant mission churches, a Swiss mission, the Mission Philafricaine, was also established in the southern highlands.

In the early decades of the second wave of missionary activity, missionaries struggled to attract converts. However, by the time Portugal conquered the interior in the first two decades of the 20th century, substantial numbers of Angolans had adopted Christianity. Mission schools offered access to Western education, health care, industrial training, and —after 1926—the possibility of *civilizado* status. In the context of a colonial society offering virtually no opportunity for education or economic advancement to the vast majority of Africans, the missions offered an alternative means to self-enrichment and economic progress. In 1905 the ABCFM, after nearly twenty-five years of work among Umbundu-speaking peoples in central Angola, recorded only 283 church members.²⁸ By the time of the church's fiftieth anniversary in 1930, the ABCFM/United Church of Canada reported 9,000 church members and 6,000 catechumens (individuals learning the tenets of Christianity, but not yet baptized into the church).²⁹ Christian missions created a new African elite, educated in mission schools, literate in Portuguese, and working in a range of professions. The opportunities for advancement in a colonial society that provided few opportunities to “natives” explains why so many Angolans converted. Portuguese colonial officials often distrusted Protestant missionaries, whom they suspected of subverting Portuguese control. Protestants faced state harassment after the publication of Edward Ross's 1925 *Report on Employment of Native Labor in Portuguese Africa* to the League of Nations' Temporary Slavery Commission, for example.

Colonial authorities favored the Catholic Church and looked to it to further Portuguese culture and language in Angola. In 1940, the Portuguese government and the Holy See signed a concordat and a missionary accord. The Catholic Church was entrusted with providing “native” education; the state focused on education for the “civilized” population. Thus, the Portuguese government incorporated the Catholic Church's missionary activities (education and evangelization) into its own colonial strategy.³⁰ However, the alliance between the Catholic Church and the Portuguese government did not mean that all Catholic missionaries, or the male seminarians assembled from across Angola whom they trained, shared this loyalty to the colonial state. As historian Maria da Conceição Neto argues, Catholic seminaries offered to male seminarians a level of education found in only a few *Liceus* (elite high schools) in Angola. Seminarians often became politically aware and joined the fight against colonialism for independence.³¹ On

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the international level, the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) opened up the Church to a series of reforms, including greater lay participation and the “vernacularisation” of the institution.³²

A distinct type of Angolan nationalism developed among mission-educated elites—products of both Catholic seminaries and Protestant secondary schools. Protestant missions were only allowed to open secondary schools in 1954. An example of such a school was Dôndi, run by the ABCFM and United Church of Canada, in Huambo. Many of the nationalists behind the war for independence begun in 1961 received their education in mission schools, including the leaders of each of the nationalist movements: Holden Roberto, Agostinho Neto, and Jonas Savimbi. Missions provided international networks, scholarships, and worldviews distinctly different from the dominant colonial perspective on Angola. Protestant missions in particular celebrated aspects of rural African culture, promoted vernacular languages, and often shared their congregations’ distrust for Portuguese colonial society. Colonial authorities scapegoated Protestant missions for the outbreak of war for independence in 1961 and closed the Baptist, the Methodist, and the North Angola Missions.

Economic and Political Developments after 1945

Substantial economic growth occurred in Angola after the Second World War when higher coffee prices brought prosperity to local planters. As world demand for coffee skyrocketed, Angolan output rose to 200,000 tons a year between 1945 and independence in 1975. Between 1948 and 1961, the land area focused on coffee production grew from 120,000 to 500,000 hectares. In 1946, coffee surpassed diamonds as the colony’s most valuable export, a position maintained until 1973, when oil took over as the most valuable export.

Postwar prosperity led the Portuguese government to invest in large infrastructure projects in Angola including dams, transportation networks, and hydroelectric power stations. After 1956, these projects would be highlighted on Angolan currency as the colonial government sought to convince Angolans to support the colonial state. By the mid-1950s, several mining operations had been developed for the extraction of iron ore, copper, and magnesium. In 1966, the Gulf Oil Company discovered extensive oil deposit off the coast of Cabinda. By the early 1970s, production from the Cabindan oil fields had reached almost ten million tons of oil per year. Between 1971 and 1974, oil revenues accounted for more than 40 percent of Portugal’s foreign earnings from Angola.

Economic expansion after World War II attracted growing numbers of voluntary immigrants from Portugal. The white population of Angola grew from about 9,000 in 1900 to 44,000 in 1940, and then grew rapidly to 172,826 in 1960 and 335,000 in 1973. The new settlers competed for jobs with *assimilados* and *mestiços*. White racism grew in the

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20th century as a result of the contemporary current of social Darwinism, competition among white and black job seekers, and growing numbers of white settlers.³³

After the suppression of the 1961 revolt (see section “ANGOLAN NATIONALISM AND THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE”) in northern Angola, a massive influx of Portuguese troops largely succeeded in defeating the guerrilla war. The main stage of the nationalist war for independence was political, and it involved Portugal and the three nationalist movements. Salazar opened Angola to foreign investment in an effort to hasten development and win the support of the Angolan people. The opening up of the economy to foreign investment, the discovery of oil, and the arrival of tens of thousands of Portuguese troops jumpstarted the economy. Angola’s industrial production increased an average of 15 percent annually from 1961–1966;³⁴ the colony’s gross internal product increased more than threefold from \$850 million in 1963 to nearly \$3 billion in 1973 due to a combination of foreign and domestic investment; high prices for commodity exports such as coffee, diamonds, and oil; and the liberalization of exchange controls between the colonies and the metropole.³⁵

Angolan Nationalism and the War for Independence

It is impossible to put an exact date on the beginning of Angolan nationalism. Some scholars see the writings of late 19th- and early 20th-century Luso-African journalists as the beginnings of a nationalist sentiment that celebrated a distinct, often urban, creole Angolan identity.³⁶ Journalist José de Fontes Pereira (1823–1891) is an example of such an intellectual. He wrote about a sense of *Angolanidade* (a sense of “Angolanness” rooted in the cultural milieu of urban Luanda) and criticized the abuses of colonial rule.³⁷ This relative press freedom existed until the early 1920s, when High Commissioner Norton de Matos (1921–1923), persecuted the “nativist” press under suspicion of promoting anti-Portuguese agitation.³⁸ He also shut down associations made up of Luso-African members, including the *Liga Angolana* (Angolan League, founded in 1912) and the *Grémio Africano* (African Association, founded in 1913). The associations had focused on social uplift, literacy, and the moral and intellectual development of members. Members discussed greater administrative and economic autonomy for Angola, but few advocated for independence.³⁹ In 1929, the government sanctioned the founding of another association, the *Liga Nacional Africana* (National Angolan League), also aimed at cultural uplift, but government sanction came at a cost. In 1938, for example, the government required the *Liga* to contribute monies for the construction of a new monument honoring Dom Afonso Henriques (Portugal’s first king) and then advertised that support in a propaganda film *Viagem do Chefe do Estado às Colónias de Angola e São Tomé e Príncipe* (“Voyage of the Head of State to the Colonies of Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe”), produced in 1939 by António Lopes Ribeiro for Portugal’s National Propaganda Office (Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional, SPN).

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By the 1950s, nationalist ideas circulated among members of a range of cultural associations and churches. Musicians contributed to this growing cultural sovereignty with their *semba* music. Its unique beat gave this music its distinctively Angolan sound.⁴⁰ In 1951, dozens of *Liga* members signed a twenty-five-page letter to the United Nations detailing systematic abuses of African rights under the *Estado Novo* in Angola.⁴¹ In 1957, the PIDE (*Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado*, International and State Defense Police), the secret police of the *Estado Novo*, established offices in Angola and built up a network of informers. Two years later, in what is known as the Processo de 50 (Trial of 50), the colonial government arrested, tried, and jailed fifty-seven Angolans and a handful of Portuguese whom it accused of “activities against the external security of the state.”⁴² At this point, many involved in nationalist politics fled into exile. By the time of the Second All African Peoples’ Conference in Accra in January 1960, two Angolan liberation movements had emerged. The first was the UPA (*União das Populações de Angola*, Union of the Angolan Peoples) led by Holden Roberto, a Bakongo whose support came primarily from northern Angola’s Bakongo population. Also present at the Conference was the MPLA (*Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola*, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), headed by Agostinho Neto. Many of the MPLA’s leaders shared a background of Methodist mission schooling and benefited from church-related networks. The MPLA expounded a nationalist, non-racial, anti-imperialist, and Marxist ideology, and aligned the movement with socialist countries. The UPA’s nationalism expounded a non-racial ideology to foreign supporters, but on the ground in northern Angola its supporters distrusted whites and *mestiços*. The UPA allied with Mobutu’s Republic of the Congo (renamed Zaire from 1971) and its Western supporters.

Armed resistance to the *Estado Novo* regime first began in a cotton-growing region of Malanje Province known as the Baixa de Kassange. Forced to grow cotton and to sell their crop at a fixed price to a private company named Cotonang (*Companhia Geral dos Algodões de Angola*, SARL), local people stopped work and refused to pay taxes in November–December 1960. In January 1961 the Portuguese military carried out intimidating maneuvers to send a message that the local population should return to work. In defiance, workers attacked several shops, an administrative post, and a Catholic mission. The Portuguese army used force to end the attacks and to compel people back to work by mid-March. Estimates of those killed in the reprisals ranged from Portuguese sources citing several dozen to nationalist sources claiming as many as 10,000.⁴³ According to oral histories taken in 2012, the uprising’s participants aimed to end labor abuses and forced cotton cultivation, and to cause the departure of white settlers.⁴⁴

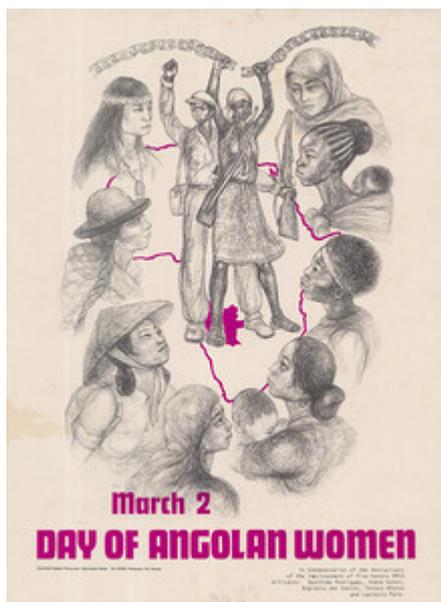
Due to press censorship and its remote location, the uprising in the Baixa de Kassange did not receive much press coverage, unlike the next uprising to occur. At dawn on February 4, 1961, about 200 people, some shouting “Viva UPA,” attacked the São Paulo de Luanda prison, which housed political prisoners. The MPLA claimed credit for the attack, although it appears to have played no role in its organization.⁴⁵ The attack failed and led to severe repression by the PIDE.

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On March 14–15, 1961, a much more serious challenge to Portuguese colonialism erupted in the coffee-growing areas of northern Angola. As a result of Portuguese confiscation of land totaling 360,000 acres, about half the population of African smallholder coffee producers had been forced off their land during the 1950s. This coffee-producing land was turned over to white settlers and investors who, with the help of *contratados* imported from Angola's central highlands, established coffee plantations. The land expropriation and the arrival of Umbundu-speaking workers caused widespread resentment among local Kikongo-speaking peasants. These conditions contributed to an outbreak of violence, orchestrated by the UPA, against the colonial state and white settlers in March 1961. The rebellion killed between 300 and 500 whites and perhaps as many as 1,500 Africans. Participants in the revolt stated a mixture of messianic as well as nationalist objectives. The major bloodshed, however, occurred after the uprising in a series of brutal reprisals. The Portuguese military instigated extensive operations and estimates of African dead over the next several months range between 30,000 and 50,000; many tens of thousands of Bakongo fled over the border into the recently independent Congo Republic. The Portuguese military increased from about 3,000 soldiers in Angola at the beginning of 1961 to nearly 50,000 by the end of the year.⁴⁶ In 1962 the UPA changed its name to the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA, *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola*).

In 1966 Jonas Savimbi founded a third nationalist movement—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*). UNITA's support came primarily from the Ovimbundu of the central highlands. The establishment of UNITA completed the tripartite structure of Angolan nationalism.

The three movements faced internal divisions and never formed a unified front against the Portuguese. In fact, the guerrilla armies of the movements often fought one another. For example, in 1967, FNLA soldiers arrested a group of MPLA guerrilla fighters in northern Angola. The guerrillas included five women—Deolinda Rodrigues de Almeida, Irene Cohen de Brito Teixeira, Lucrecia Paim, Teresa Afonso Gomes, and Engrácia dos Santos—who had integrated the 130-member Camy Squadron in 1966 and are celebrated, at least by supporters of the MPLA, as the *heroínas* (“heroines”). The Camy Squadron received training and equipment from Cuban officers in Congo-Brazzaville. The women died at the FNLA's Kinkuzu military base in Congo-Kinshasa in 1968.⁴⁷



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Figure 3. Poster Title: “March 2. Day of Angolan Women. In Commemoration of the Anniversary of the Imprisonment of Five Heroic MPLA Militants: Deolinda Rodrigues, Irene Cohen, Engracia dos Santos, Teresa Afonso and Lucrecia Paim.”

Source: Liberation Support Movement (LSM), Information Center. (No date). From the poster collection of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien.

The published diaries of Deolinda Rodrigues, the only woman in the MPLA leadership in the 1960s, provides the unique perspective of an Angolan woman who joined the MPLA and volunteered for the difficulties of guerilla life in the fight for independence. Although the necessities of guerrilla war created space for women’s empowerment and the socialist critique of colonial society heralded women’s emancipation as a primary goal of postcolonial society, women such as Rodrigues faced expectations to remain subordinate to their male colleagues.⁴⁸ In

her diary, Rodrigues writes of being denied the opportunity to train in Ghana: “They told me that I would not go to Ghana because I am a woman . . . this discrimination based only on my sex revolts me.”⁴⁹ Rodrigues’s role in the liberation movement demonstrates the Angolan revolution’s possibilities for greater gender equality, while simultaneously pointing out its limits (Figure 3).⁵⁰

The Angolan revolution occurred in the context of two larger geopolitical processes: decolonization across Africa and the Cold War. In southern Africa, white rule became more entrenched during the 1960s as white minority governments in South Africa and Rhodesia cooperated with Portuguese authorities in Angola and Mozambique on security issues and regional development plans. At the same time, Angola’s nationalist movements received support from regional leaders of newly independent states such as Congo and Zambia. All three Angolan nationalist movements fought one another for international recognition and support. The MPLA received most of its support from Cuba and the Soviet Union, whereas FNLA relied on Zairian and covert U.S. support. UNITA received support initially from Zambia, then collaborated with the Portuguese military against the MPLA in the eastern Angolan savanna. This collaboration led to support from South Africa in the run-up to independence and from the United States and South Africa in the post-independence civil war.

Independence, 1974-1976

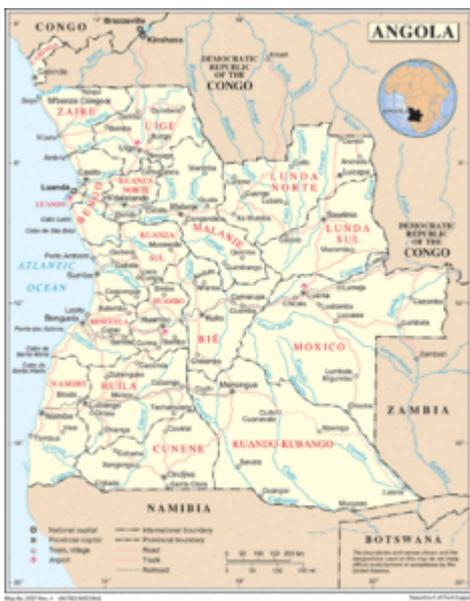
After more than thirteen years of war, during which time the Portuguese Armed Forces maintained control over most of Angola, events in Lisbon finally brought Portuguese officials and Angolan nationalists to the negotiating table. On April 25, 1974, a group of army officers, known as the Movement of the Armed Forces (MFA), who opposed Portugal's ongoing wars to suppress liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau, overthrew the dictatorial *Estado Novo* that had ruled Portugal and its colonies for forty-eight years. These officers instigated talks with Angolan nationalists, which were held at Alvor in southern Portugal. The Alvor Accord that was reached in January 1975 stipulated that the three nationalist movements and the Portuguese administration would together govern Angola and would hold elections prior to independence on November 11, 1975. Tragically, divisions among Angola's three nationalist parties led to internecine warfare, the interim government fell apart, and elections were never held. The MPLA, after an airlift of 36,000 Cuban troops in November 1975 (known as Operation Carlota), defeated invasions by South African and Zairian forces. The Portuguese administration focused on evacuating tens of thousands of Portuguese settlers and the last Portuguese governor fled Angola without turning over power to any political movement. The MPLA declared itself the ruling party of the People's Republic of Angola on November 11, 1975, and on the same day UNITA and the FNLA joined forces to declare the Democratic People's Republic of Angola with its capital in Huambo.

In January and February 1976, the UNITA/FNLA alliance fell apart and was defeated by the MPLA-Cuban army. South Africa withdrew into Namibia by March 1976. The MPLA took control over most of the territory. Savimbi and some UNITA troops became guerrillas based in the southeastern savannas of the country. The United Nations admitted Angola in December 1976.

Civil War (1976-2002) and Post-Conflict Angola

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The MPLA adopted Marxism in 1976, which strengthened its ties to Cuba and the Soviet Union. Angolan support for the independence movement of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), fighting for the independence of South West Africa (now known as Namibia), which had been under South African control since 1915, led to further South African support for UNITA as well as a series of South African Defense Forces (SADF) military maneuvers inside Angola throughout the 1980s. After Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980, the United States supplied assistance to UNITA. By 1988, there were over 65,000 Cuban troops in Angola. Cuban involvement in Angola stemmed from its leaders' ideas of socialist internationalism, which entailed exporting Cuba's model of revolution to peoples ready "to fight colonialism, capitalism and 'American neo-imperialism' in the world."⁵¹ Cuba also sent tens of thousands of civilian *cooperantes* (friends) to serve in a range of fields, including medicine, education, and agriculture.



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Figure 4. Map of Modern Angola.

Source: Geospatial Information Section, United Nations.

A resolution to the multilayered conflict unfolded in the late 1980s. As part of a diplomatic solution spearheaded by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker, diplomats linked the withdrawal of the Soviet and Cuban presence in Angola with a cessation of South African and U.S. support for UNITA and independence for Namibia. In 1987–1988, after a series of costly battles known as “Cuito Cuanavale” in southern Angola, the parties came

together to sign the New York Accords. This peace agreement led to the independence of Namibia in 1990 and a new peace initiative to end the Angolan civil war. Despite the withdrawal of Cuban troops and an end to South African incursions into Angolan territory and elections in 1992, attempts to broker a durable peace fell apart, and the war continued.

The MPLA government initiated reforms, importantly shifting away from Marxism in 1991–1992 and strategically adopting markets and a multiparty political system. These moves opened the door to negotiations with UNITA. The Bicesse peace accord in 1991 and Angola's first multiparty elections in 1992, turned out to be a brief pause in the civil war. When Savimbi lost the election for the presidency, he resumed fighting. Savimbi no longer had support from the United States or apartheid South Africa, but he was able to

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buy relatively cheap, second-hand weapons from the countries of the former Soviet Union. UNITA financed its war against the government through the sale of diamonds extracted from the rivers of eastern Angola. The war continued until 2002, except for a brief period of peace after the Lusaka peace accords (1994). UNITA dubbed this war (1992–2002) the “second war for liberation.” On February 22, 2002, the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) shot and killed Savimbi, thus bringing to an end Angola’s decades-long civil war (Figure 4). Representatives of both the MPLA and UNITA signed the Luena Memorandum on April 4, 2002, but did nothing to share power or uncover the brutality of a civil war which had killed hundreds of thousands (estimates range from roughly half a million to a million people), injured and maimed perhaps half a million more, and displaced millions.⁵² The MPLA declared an amnesty covering war crimes committed by all involved and welcomed UNITA leaders into a subordinate stake in the postwar order. In 2008 and 2012, Angola held its second and third multiparty parliamentary elections. The MPLA achieved decisive victories in each election. In 2012, for example, the MPLA received almost 72 percent of the 220 National Assembly seats, although three opposition parties, including UNITA, denounced the results as fixed and unfair.⁵³

Political Economy since Independence

North of the Congo River is the oil-rich enclave of Cabinda, a historical oddity resulting from boundary negotiations between French, Belgian, and Portuguese diplomats in the late 19th century. The oil wells off the Cabinda shore, and in later decades south of the Congo River in the shallow, offshore waters of mainland Angola, provided more than three-quarters of Angola’s total export revenue for much of the 1980s–2000s. This oil wealth cushioned the MPLA elite and its networks, primarily based in Luanda, throughout the brutal civil war. This wealth also insulated the well connected from the collapse of the rural economy after independence as a result of warfare and the MPLA’s nationalization of property. By 1985, industrial production declined to little more than 30 percent of its 1973 level.⁵⁴ The nationalization and confiscation of property, coupled with the demonization of settlers and capitalism, led to a dearth of technicians and management. Further economic deterioration led to a brain drain.

The MPLA created a one-party state where decisions—whether political, economic, or cultural—were made at the top and handed down to “the people.” Free speech was circumscribed, critics of the government were intimidated, the press was harassed, and a centralized economy left most (i.e., those outside the well-connected networks close to the MPLA) with access to limited goods. In 1977, the MPLA massacred thousands after an alleged coup against party leaders.⁵⁵ Repression of dissidents engendered fear and led to self-censorship among critics of the regime. In many ways, the postcolonial economic and political systems mirrored the extractive colonial economy and repressive political structure.

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Although Angola has been a multiparty democracy since its first elections in 1992, President José Eduardo dos Santos has continued to govern Angola, as he has done since 1979, by distributing oil revenues, positions in the civil service, an even urban housing to garner support from key aspects of Angolan society: the military, members of civil society, and well-connected urban and provincial elites. This patronage allows dos Santos sufficient support to repress opposition and build an apparent consensus of support for the MPLA.

The Angolan press is marginally more free than it was during the late colonial period, although critics of the government continue to face harassment and arrest. There are openings, however. Blogs such as *Maka Angola*, run by investigative journalist Rafael Marques, expose government corruption.⁵⁶ The group *Central Angola 7311* organized a pro-democracy demonstration in 2011.⁵⁷ However, the fragility of such spaces for challenging the MPLA was made clear in March 2015 with the imprisonment of hip-hop artist Luaty Beirão and sixteen other critics of the dos Santos regime for “conspiring against the government.”⁵⁸ Beirão received a five-and-a-half-year prison sentence on March 28, 2016. It remains to be seen whether these small and transitive openings will ultimately overcome the culture of fear in post-liberation Angola.

Discussion of the Literature

The writing of Angolan history dates to the 17th century. The dominant themes in these early studies written by resident Portuguese and missionaries focused on the Portuguese conquest and the history of African states (António de Oliveira Cadornega, *História Geral das Guerras Angolanas* [1680]; and J. A. de Montecúccolo Cavazzi, *Descrição Histórica dos Três Reinos do Congo, Matamba e Angola* [1687]). Since the 1960s, historians including Jan Vansina, Joseph C. Miller, John Thornton, José C. Curto, Roquinaldo Ferreira, and Mariana Candido have built on these early works to provide a fuller picture of events, including profiles of how individuals experienced life in the kingdoms of Kongo, Ndongo, and Matamba, and the small, coastal Portuguese colony of Angola. Historians of 17th-century Angola have debated the origin of the Imbangala, itinerant warriors who challenged the authority of lineage-based states. Although the origins of the Imbangala are still obscure, there is consensus that the mature form of their war camps and of their political ideas developed in what is now central Angola.⁵⁹

Finding African voices in archival, archaeological, and oral sources is a primary goal of most historians writing about Angola. These voices are easier to include for recent events such as the liberation movement and civil war because historians may record oral histories. Finding these voices for past centuries is more challenging, although not impossible.

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The Atlantic slave trade is a major topic within Angolan historiography due to the region's importance for the trade (estimates are that about 40 percent of Africans who left west Africa embarked from Angolan ports). Historians such as Joseph C. Miller and Mariana P. Candido have debated why the region became such an important source for slaves. A few of the key factors were the existence of centralized states such as Kongo and Ndongo in the 16th century, which provided Portuguese and Dutch slave traders with early partners; the existence of trade networks stretching across the savanna of west central Africa; and the existence of periodic droughts, especially in the southeastern part of Angola, which may have facilitated the capture of slaves. Some of the most exciting historical research in recent years has focused on the Angolan side of the slave trade. Studies of colonial Angolan society emphasize a shared or entangled history and move beyond the simplistic notion of the center-periphery dichotomy in relations between Portugal and Angola. We can see this change, for example, in how historians such as José C. Curto, Vanessa Oliveira, Roquinaldo Ferreira, and Mariana P. Candido are analyzing the creation of a creole society in the small areas under Portuguese control beginning in the late 16th century until the 1890s-1920s when Portugal conquered the independent African polities that make up the territory of Angola delineated by European powers after the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference.

Portuguese imperial expansion is another important topic within Angolan historiography. Two leading historians on Portuguese imperial expansion and this period in Angola are W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Third Portuguese Empire*, and Valentim Alexandre, "A questão colonial no Portugal oitocentista," in Alexandre and Jill Dias, eds., *O Império Africano 1825-1890*. The work of Jill Dias (1998) and Aida Freudenthal (2005) is essential for understanding 19th-century Angolan society. Due to its economic importance for independent African states such as Viye and for influencing Portuguese colonial policymakers to expand their empire in the Angolan interior, historians such as Beatrix Heintze, Isabel Castro Henriques, and Maria Emilia Madeira Santos ask questions about how commodity trades (ivory, rubber) functioned.

There is no comprehensive history covering all of 20th-century Angola, although there are several rich studies of topics such as armed resistance, forced labor, urban history, white immigration, and missionary and church histories. A major question asked by historians is how Africans responded to and adapted to change in the 20th century. Historians such as René Pélissier, Douglas Wheeler, David Birmingham, Franz Heimer, Linda Heywood, Didier Péclard, and Maria da Conceição Neto explain how Angolans responded to colonial repression, adopted Christianity, and seized social and economic opportunities provided by mission churches and the urban economy. Studies of labor history based on archival and oral history sources by Emmanuel Esteves, Jeremy Ball, and Todd Cleveland provide insight into how private companies benefited from forced labor and how African workers experienced and responded to the forced labor regime.

The formation of Angolan nationalism, the war for independence, and the civil war are major topics in Angola historiography. Christine Messiant's *1961: L'Angola colonial, histoire et société: Les prémisses du mouvement nationaliste* provides valuable insight

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into late colonial society. In recent years, studies based on the opened PIDE archives and oral interviews have added insight to scholars' understanding of Angola's multiple nationalisms and challenged dominant historical narratives. For the MPLA, see Marcelo Bittencourt's *"Estamos juntos": o MPLA e a luta anticolonial*, and for a guide to sources and interpretations, see Christine Messiant's "Em Angola, até o passado é imprevisível." Marissa Moormon's work (2008) explores the role of music in the creation of Angolan nationalism. A recent book by Margarida Paredes (2015) examines the role of Angolan women soldiers in the anticolonial and civil wars and contains rich excerpts of oral histories. Piero Gleijeses's work is important for understanding the international and regional dimensions of the Angolan civil war (1975–2002). There are relatively few environmental histories of Angola, but articles by Jill Dias and Joseph C. Miller and the work of Immanuel Kreike on the ecological borderlands of the Ovambo floodplain stand out as among the best. Maria da Conceição Neto's dissertation provides a timely case study of urbanization in 20th-century Huambo.

Angolan literature provides valuable insight into Angolan ways of seeing and understanding past and present realities. A good place to start is reading works by Pepetela and José Eduardo Agualusa. For those who cannot read Portuguese, several books by these authors are available in English translation.

Primary Sources

A rich array of primary sources dating to the 16th century and covering a range of topics and Angolan regions are available to historians. It should be noted, however, that modern understanding of Angolan history is shaped by reliance on primary sources produced overwhelmingly from a colonial perspective. Documents for the period before the arrival of the Portuguese in the late 15th century do not exist and the archaeological evidence for this early period is limited. Oral traditions about the past may be useful but must be used with care. For analysis of oral traditions as an historical source, see Joseph C. Miller, ed., *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History*. Oral histories are another primary source. Although there is no center for oral history in Angola, several historians have and are recording oral histories about topics such as the liberation movement, the anticolonial war, forced labor, and independence.

For a detailed discussion of the various primary sources written by Catholic missionaries covering the 17th-century Kongo kingdom, see John Thornton's explanation in *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641–1718*. Written records for the Mbundu are relatively abundant and accessible owing to the 16th- and 17th-century activities of the Portuguese government, Dutch trading companies, and missionaries in the area. Most primary sources are found in Angolan and Portuguese archives.

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Angolan Archives

The Arquivo Histórico de Angola (AHA) in Luanda contains colonial reports, correspondence, photographs, and a small oral history collection. The AHA is richest for the distant past, that is, the 16th through 19th centuries. The archive has material on the 20th century, but this is, for the most part, not catalogued. Lots of material was destroyed by the war or removed because of political repression.

Luanda's Biblioteca Municipal contains a rich collection of colonial-era newspapers and published magazines and reports as well as the documentation generated by the Municipal Council of Luanda.

The Associação Tchiveka de Documentação, also in Luanda, houses an important collection of private papers from Angolan nationalist Lúcio Lara and oral histories of the liberation war.

The Arquidiocese de Luanda (AAL) is accessible to researchers with permission and contains baptismal records, marriage, and burial records.

Portuguese Archives

In Lisbon there are several archives and libraries with rich collections of primary and published materials about Angola: the Arquivo Histórico Militar (AHM) contains reports about wars of conquest; the Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (AHU) contains a vast collection of reports and statistics from colonial administrators; the Biblioteca Nacional houses published sources, including newspapers and manuscripts; the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (SGL) is a treasure trove of published sources, maps, and reports about the former Portuguese colonies; the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo houses the PIDE archives and a rich collection of photographs and manuscripts; and the Centro de Intervenção para o Desenvolvimento Amílcar Cabral boasts a comprehensive collection of materials about Angola's liberation movements.

Missionary Archives

Missionary archives offer another valuable source for Angolan history, especially about rural Angolan societies in the late 19th and 20th centuries. These archives include the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) archives housed at Harvard University's Houghton Library and The United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto. The archives of the Mission Philafricaine are held by the Alliance Missionnaire Évangélique Suisse in Winterthur. Archives for the Holy Ghost Mission are located at the Archives généraux spiritaines, Chevilly-Larue (Paris). For more on mission sources, see Lawrence W. Henderson, *The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents*.

Digital Archives

The digitalization of archival material makes transcripts of oral history interviews, reports, photographs, and posters available to a wider public. Digital resources for Angola include the “Struggles for Freedom–Southern Africa” collection; a rich collection of materials from the colonial-era Diamang–Companhia de Diamantes de Angola housed at the Universidade de Coimbra; Memórias de África e Oriente digital library; Fundação Mário Soares: Casa Comum; and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission contains reports about the South African Defense Force’s destabilization campaign in Angola, as well as information about African National Congress (ANC) and South West Africa Peoples’ Organization (SWAPO) bases and prisons in Angola.

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- (11.) Aida Freundenthal, *Arimos e Fazendas A transição agrária em Angola 1850-1880* (Luanda: Edições Chá de Caxinde, 2005), 144-150; and Vanessa S. Oliveira, "Gender, Foodstuff Production and Trade in Late-Eighteenth Century Luanda," *African Economic History* 43 (2015): 57-81.
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- (17.) Todd Cleveland, *Diamonds in the Rough: Corporate Paternalism and African Professionalism on the Mines of Colonial Angola, 1917-1975* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015).
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(41.) “Governo-Geral,” “Carta-Relatório, 1951–2,” Caixas de Luanda, Caixa 5710, Arquivo Histórico de Angola (AHA), 17. See also Douglas Wheeler, “‘May God Help Us!’ Angola First Declaration of Independence: The 1951 Petition/Message to the United Nations and USA,” *Portuguese Studies Review* 19. 1–2 (2011): 271–291.

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(43.) Wheeler and Pélissier, 174; and Aida Freudhental, “A Baixa de Cassanje: algodão e revolta,” in *Revista Internacional de Estudos Africanos* (1995–1999), 245–283.

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(47.) Limbânia Jimenez Rodríguez, *Heroínas de Angola* (Luanda: Mayamba Editora, 2010).

(48.) Margarida Paredes, “Deolinda Rodrigues, da Família Metodista à Família MPLA, o Papel da Cultura na Política,” *Cadernos de Estudos Africanos* 20 (2010): 11–26; and Rodríguez, *Heroínas de Angola*.

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(59.) For an overview of the historiographical debate about the origins of the Imbangala/Jaga, see Neto, 47–50.

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