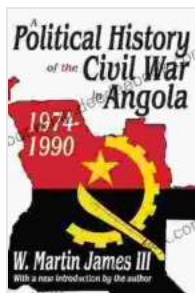


# The Political History of the Civil War in Angola: East-South Relations, 1974-1990

The Angolan Civil War, a conflict that spanned nearly three decades, was a complex and multifaceted struggle that involved a multitude of actors and factors. Among these, the East-South relations played a significant role in shaping the course of the war and the political landscape of Angola.

This article explores the political history of the Angolan Civil War, with a particular focus on the East-South relations. It examines the involvement of external powers, such as the Soviet Union, the United States, Cuba, and South Africa, and their respective alliances with the warring factions. The article also analyzes the impact of these external interventions on the war and the broader political dynamics of the region.



## A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990 (The East-South Relations Series) by José Solana Dueso

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1035 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 320 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported

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## Background: Angola's Independence and the Outbreak of the Civil War

Angola gained independence from Portugal in 1975, after a protracted and bloody war. The newly independent country was immediately plunged into a civil war between three main factions: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA).

The MPLA, led by Agostinho Neto, was the dominant force in the country's political scene. It had the support of the Soviet Union and its allies, including Cuba. UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, was based in the south-eastern part of the country and had the backing of the United States and South Africa.

### **The Involvement of External Powers**

The Angolan Civil War quickly became a proxy war between the Cold War superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviets provided military and economic support to the MPLA, while the US backed UNITA. These external interventions had a profound impact on the course of the war and the balance of power between the warring factions.

In addition to the superpowers, Cuba played a significant role in the conflict. Cuban troops were deployed to Angola in large numbers, providing vital support to the MPLA's war effort. South Africa, on the other hand, provided military aid and training to UNITA, while also engaging in direct military interventions in Angola.

### **The East-South Axis and UNITA**

The East-South relations played a crucial role in the survival and longevity of UNITA. South Africa, a pariah state in the international community due to

its apartheid regime, found a common cause with UNITA in their opposition to Soviet and Cuban influence in Angola. South African military support, including the provision of weapons, training, and logistical support, was vital to UNITA's ability to sustain its guerrilla campaign against the MPLA.

The East-South axis also provided political support to UNITA. South Africa recognized UNITA as the legitimate government of Angola, despite the fact that the MPLA controlled most of the country. This recognition gave UNITA a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the international community and helped to prolong the conflict.

### **The Role of Angola in the Cold War**

The Angolan Civil War was not just a local conflict; it was also a key battleground in the Cold War. The Soviet Union saw Angola as a strategic foothold in Africa, while the United States was determined to prevent the establishment of a Soviet satellite state in the region. The involvement of these superpowers turned Angola into a proxy war, with the warring factions becoming pawns in the global power struggle.

The Angolan Civil War had a significant impact on the Cold War dynamics. The Soviet intervention in Angola was seen as a major setback for the United States, as it challenged American dominance in the post-colonial world. The Cuban presence in Angola also became a source of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, as the two superpowers came close to direct confrontation.

### **The End of the Civil War and the Post-War Period**

The Angolan Civil War ended in 1990 with the signing of the Bicesse Accords. The peace agreement provided for a ceasefire, the integration of

UNITA into the Angolan army, and the holding of multi-party elections. However, the peace process was fragile, and the country soon plunged into a renewed civil war in 1992.

The end of the Cold War had a significant impact on the Angolan Civil War. The Soviet Union withdrew its support from the MPLA, while the United States reduced its aid to UNITA. The end of the superpowers' involvement created a more balanced situation and made it possible for a peace settlement to be reached.

The post-war period in Angola has been marked by ongoing political instability and economic challenges. The country has struggled to recover from the decades of war and to establish a stable and democratic political system. The legacy of the East-South relations continues to shape the political landscape of Angola, as UNITA remains an influential political force in the country.

The political history of the Angolan Civil War is a complex and multifaceted story that involves a multitude of actors and factors. The East-South relations played a significant role in shaping the course of the war and the political landscape of Angola. External interventions, such as those by the Soviet Union, the United States, Cuba, and South Africa, had a profound impact on the balance of power between the warring factions and the broader political dynamics of the region.

## **A Political History of the Civil War in Angola, 1974-1990**

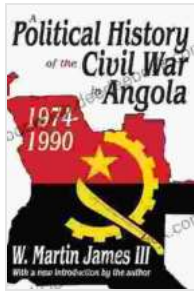
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