

**A SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF DISPLACED
PEOPLE: THE MEHEBA REFUGEE SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE,
1971 - 1994**

By

WAMBURAKWAO J. SAPAO

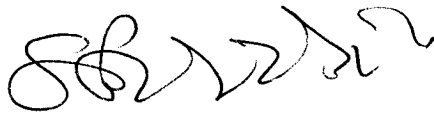
**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (History)**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
LUSAKA
1996**

DECLARATION

I, WAMBURAKWAO J. SAPAO, hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own work, and that it has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or another University.

Signature:



Date:

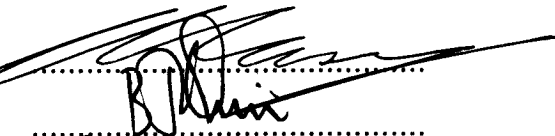
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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **John Wamburakwao Sapao** is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History by the University of Zambia.

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Several individuals and organisations contributed to the success of this study. I am deeply indebted to Dr. B.J Phiri for supervising the work. His criticism was a source of inspiration. I am grateful to Mr. B. Siamwiza for his fruitful advice during the initial stage of the work. Dr. F. Gadsden and Dr. S. Chipungu must be thanked for being good teachers. All the above are in the Department of History, University of Zambia (UNZA.)

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DEDICATION

To all the world's displaced persons,
My daughter Suzgo - Phylis
And her late mother Rose.
For you also the sun shall rise.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAR	Association to Aid Refugees (Japan)
AFC	Agricultural Finance Company
ANC	African National Congress
CSZ	Catholic Secretariat of Zambia
FAO	Food Agricultural Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Committee
LINTCO	Lint Company
LWF/ZCRS	Lutheran World Federation/Zambia Christian Refugee Service
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MMCS	Meheba Multipurpose Cooperative Society
MPLA	Popular Movement of the Liberation of Angola
NGOS'	Non-Governmental Organisations
NWCU	North-Western Cooperative Union
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
Oxfam/VSO	Oxfam/Voluntary Services Overseas (London)
PAC	Pan African Congress
Renamo	Mozambican Resistance Army
RRC	Rural Reconstruction Centres
SWAPO	South-West African Peoples Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNITA	National Union for Total Independence of Angola
UNZA	University of Zambia
WFP	World Food Programme
ZCF	Zambia Cooperative Federation
ZNS	Zambia National Service
ZRC	Zambia Red Cross

INTRODUCTION

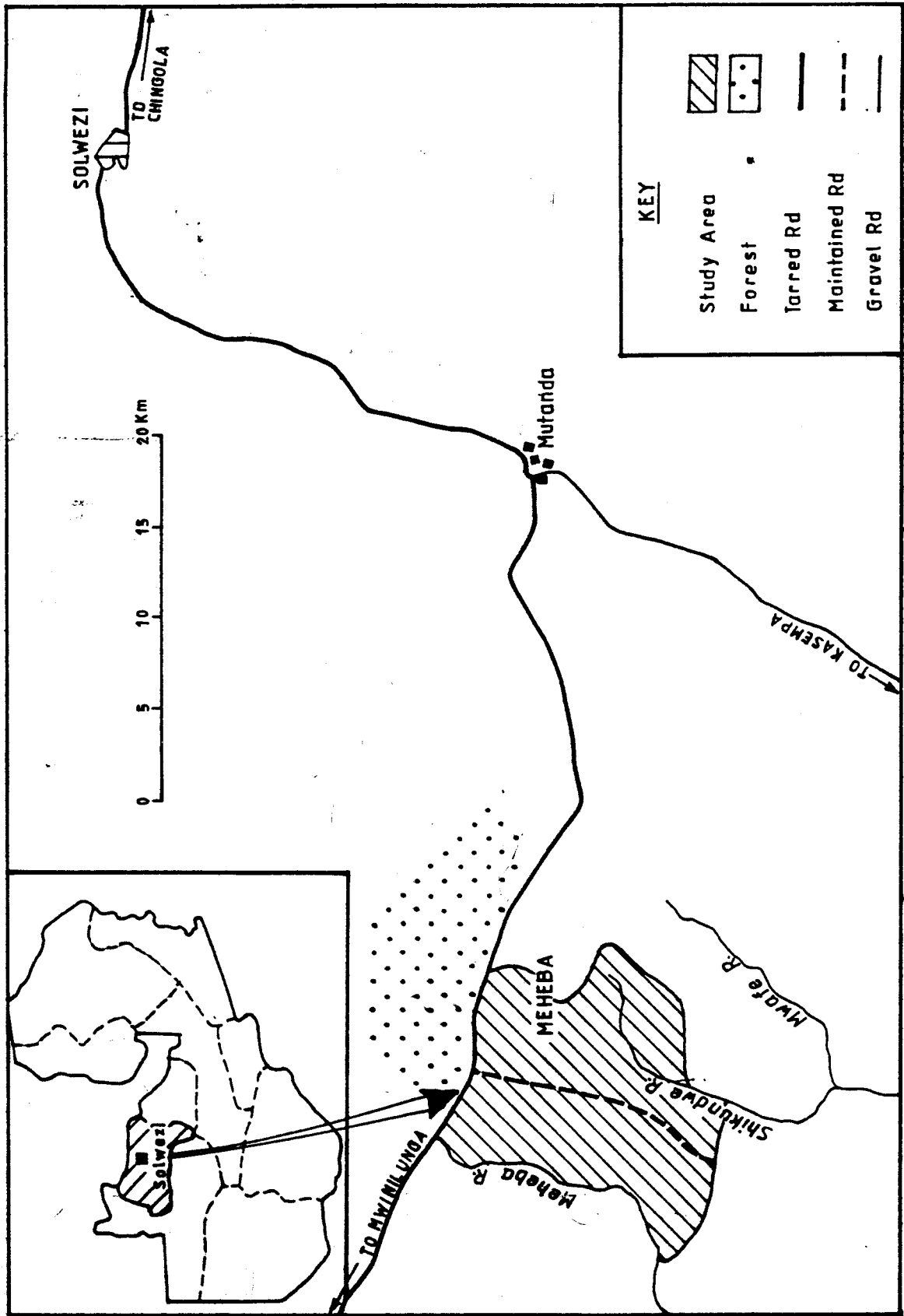
AREA OF STUDY

Meheba Refugee Settlement: Geographical Background

Meheba Refugee Settlement, the subject of this study, was established in 1971 to cater for refugees from Angola.¹ The settlement is divided into two: old Meheba and a new extension which was started in 1987 where new arrivals were still being allocated land by 1994.² The settlement is located about seventy-five kilometres south-west of Solwezi, one of the six districts that constitute the North-Western Province. Throughout this study, the original spelling Meheba as actually uttered by the local inhabitants of the province and used in official documents by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agents working in the settlement has been adopted, instead of Maheba, which has largely been popularised by the print and electronic media.

The settlement lies at an altitude of between 700 metres and 100 metres above sea level. It has two main gravel roads which branch into smaller roads from which branch off smaller but all-weather truck roads connecting all the villages built along these roads. On the west of Meheba Refugee Settlement is Meheba River, a natural boundary after which the settlement is named while Mafwe River marks the south-eastern boundary. The boundary in the northern side of the settlement is the Solwezi - Mwinilunga Road, marking the southern-most part of Acres Forest Reserve out of which the settlement was carved. The total land area of the settlement is 720 square kilometres. Meheba Settlement has twenty-four people per square kilometre while Solwezi has four

MAP 1: LOCATION OF MEHEBA SETTLEMENT

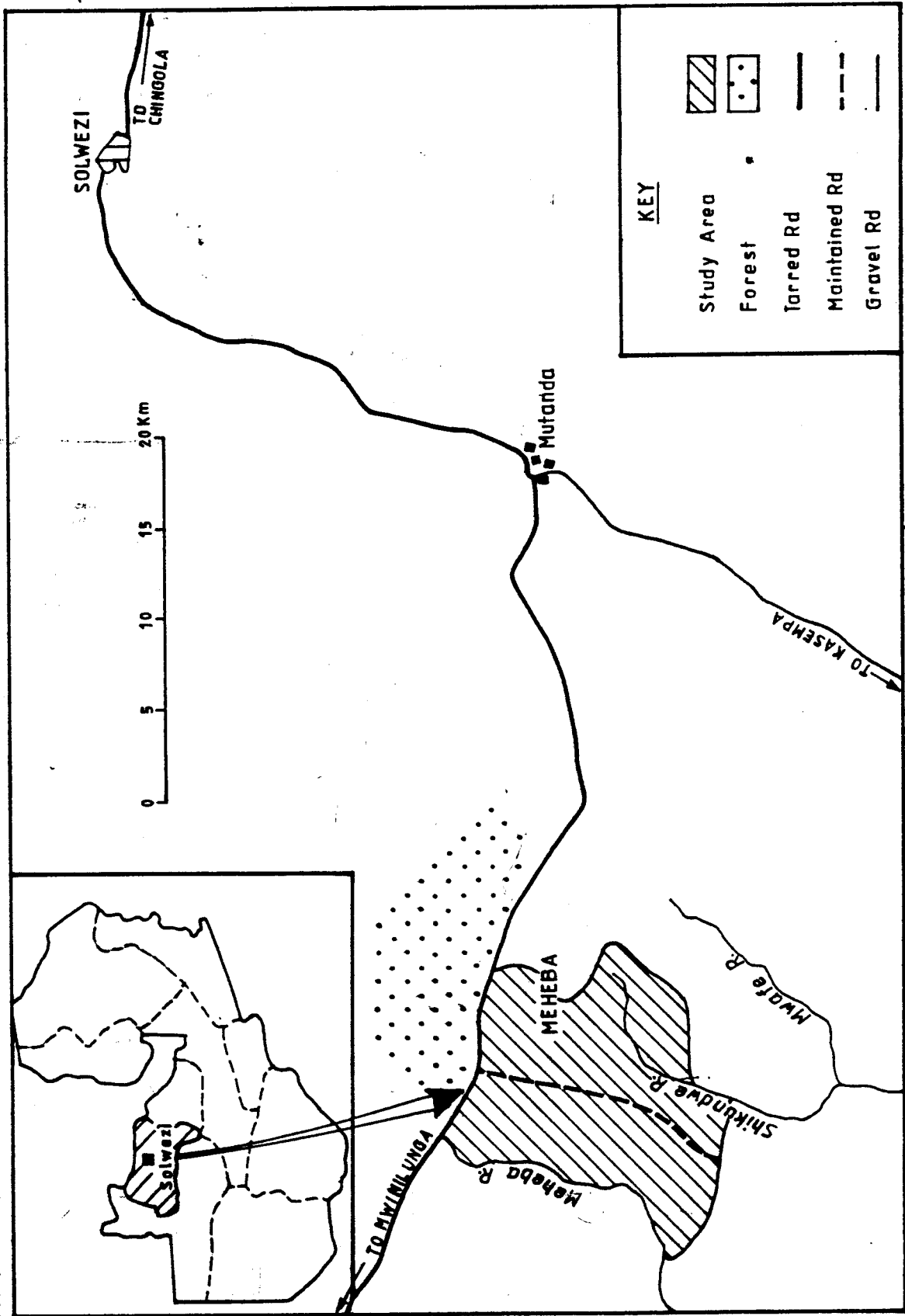


KEY

- Study Area (diagonal hatching)
- Forest (dotted pattern)
- Tarred Rd (solid line)
- Maintained Rd (dashed line)
- Gravel Rd (dotted line)

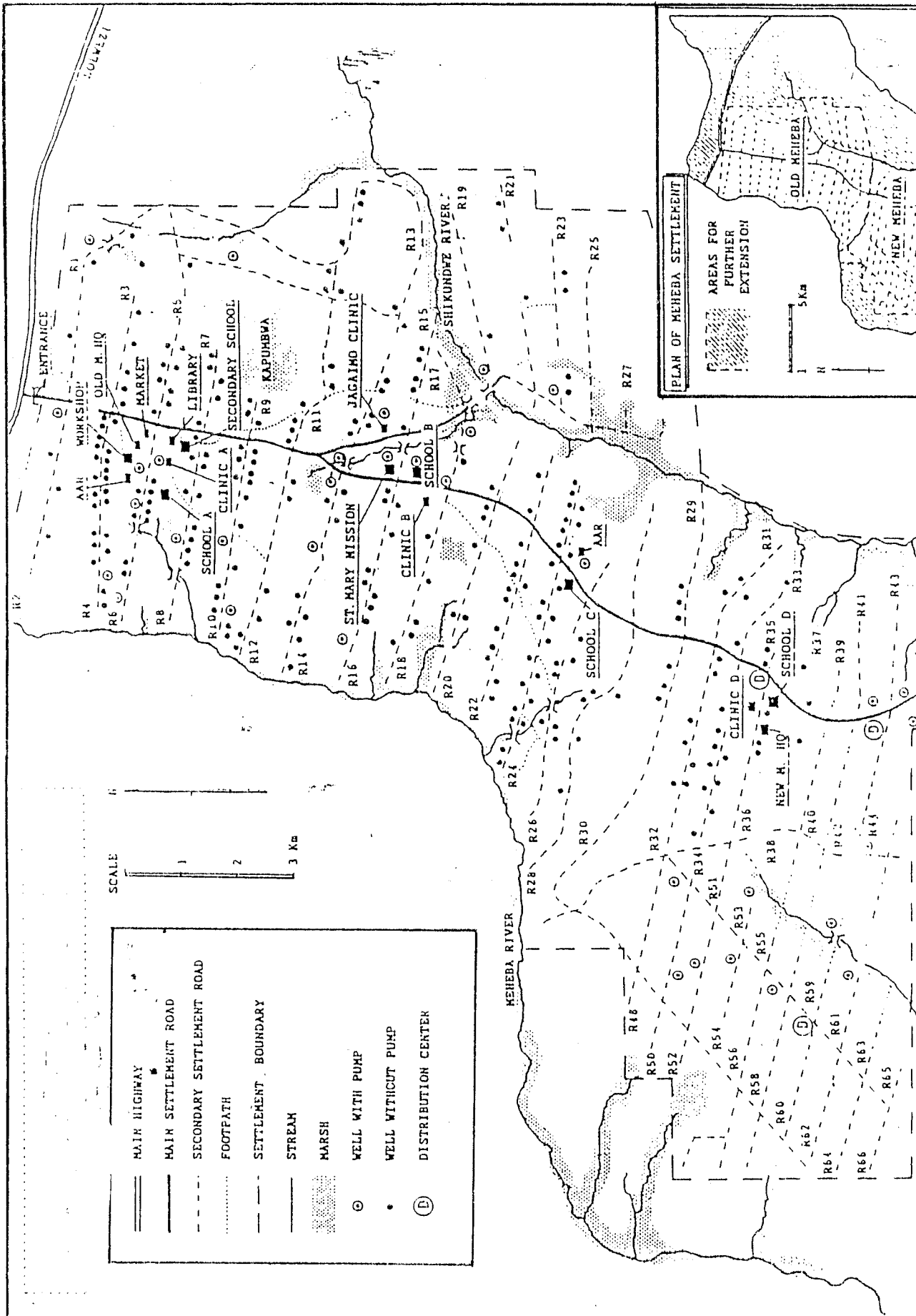
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MAP 1: LOCATION OF MEHEBA SETTLEMENT

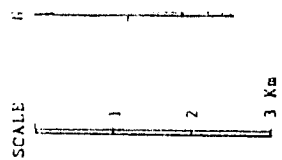


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MAP 2: INFRASTRUCTURE OF MEHEBA REFUGEE SETTLEMENT



	MAIN HIGHWAY
	MAIN SETTLEMENT ROAD
	SECONDARY SETTLEMENT ROAD
	FOOTPATH
	SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY
	STREAM
	MARSH
	WELL WITH PUMP
	WELL WITHOUT PUMP
	DISTRIBUTION CENTER



PLAN OF MEHEBA SETTLEMENT

AREAS FOR FURTHER EXTENSION

5 Km

OLD MEHEBA

NEW MEHEBA

people per square kilometre. It is thus more densely populated than Solwezi.

Most of Meheba Refugee Settlement is covered by the leached sandy soils. These sand soils cover 90 percent of Solwezi District.³ They are a good soil type with high potential for crop production. The settlement has some patches of Barotse sands which are sandy and very acidic. There are also some patches of dambo soils which are either permanently or temporarily saturated soils. Dambo soils are very suitable for vegetable-growing. Along the dambo edges and stream banks are some occasional strips of alluvial clay which are rich in humus. Red-earths are another soil type in Meheba Settlement. These soils are sandy clays and are well drained, less acidic with higher reserves of fertility. These red-earths are considered the best available class of Zambian soils. The soils in Solwezi District in general and in Meheba Settlement in particular are on the whole good. This contrasts with the rest of the province where most of the soils tend to be classified as having a low potential for crop production.

The settlement has a suitable climate for farming. Three seasons can be identified: a relatively warm rainy season followed by a cool dry season and a warm dry season. The humid Congo air from the north profoundly determines the climate of Meheba Settlement and brings rain from October to April. The average rainfall of between 1,300 millimetres and 1,400 millimetres per annum is recorded. Because the rains in Solwezi District are reliable, all areas in the district including Meheba Refugee Settlement are suitable for a variety of crops under rain-fed cultivation.

Maize and cassava are the main crops grown by the Meheba refugees. Other crops include sweet-potatoes, some tobacco and vegetables like tomatoes, onions and cabbages. Fish-farming and bee-keeping for honey and wax and beer brewing are also notable economic activities in the settlement.

The prevalence of tsetse flies hindered the development of farming in the settlement. The flies carry a fatal disease called sleeping-sickness (trypanosomiasis) from game to humans and also spread the disease between livestock as well as from humans to humans. Because of tsetse flies, it was not possible to raise large livestock to any economical scale in Meheba Refugee Settlement. Further, the prevalence of tsetse flies in the settlement made the use of ox-drawn ploughs and carts not possible on a large scale, thereby slowing down agricultural development in the area. However, human habitation in tsetse fly infested areas like Meheba is possible because the fly is not often found in the villages and the surrounding open garden plots.

Heavy miombo woodland is the characteristic vegetation type in the Meheba Refugee Settlement Scheme. The vegetation cover is more dense on red-earths than on the sandy soils. Many thick and tall trees grow on red-clays. The vegetation cover on dambo soils comprises hyparrhenia grass species. The settlement is well watered by tributaries of the Zambezi river and has flat, water-logged areas. Meheba was Zambia's biggest government organised refugee settlement by 1994.

Zambia became a sovereign independent state from British colonial rule in 1964. It is a landlocked country in South-Central Africa bordered by Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe,

Botswana, Namibia, Angola and Zaire. The population comprises more than 70 Bantu-speaking ethnic groupings. Like elsewhere in Africa, migrations of indigenous peoples in southern Africa pre-dates the presence of European colonisers who drew the current international boundaries to form colonial territories which were, in turn, honoured by the emerging independent African states.

Zambia's geopolitical position and its commitment to the liberation of the southern African region rendered it a place of refuge for both individuals and groups who for various reasons migrated involuntarily from their original places of habitation. This study is essentially concerned with the social and economic aspects of Angolan refugees living in Meheba Refugee Settlement in the North-Western Province of Zambia between 1971 and 1994. Reference to the period earlier than 1971 is made in order to relate the discussion to its historical context. The term *refugee settlement scheme* or *refugee settlement* denotes projects in which a group of refugees in the country of asylum move permanently or semi-permanently, to occupy and cultivate an area of unused or under utilised rural land, under the guidance of an agency external to the settler community.⁴

Displacement

By displacement in this study we are referring to forced population movements from a usual place of habitation to a strange environment.⁵ The process is often accompanied by the disruption of the affected people's established socio-economic patterns and their general way of life. Forced movements are often closely

connected with a controlling social organisation that overpowers individuals and directs their movements in one way or another.⁶ The displaced are often stripped of their status, wealth, position and power. These disruptions are often sudden, unforeseen and life threatening. The victims experience a multifaceted loss and must travel through physical as well as social space before arriving at a place where they may begin to rebuild and re-establish life and social positions.⁷

The legal recognition as refugees is only accorded to those displaced persons who cross international boundaries and relocate outside their home-country. Only those externally displaced who are recognised as refugees are granted protection under international law. On the other hand, the internally displaced do not enjoy international legal protection because they remain within their country of nationality.

The Development of Legal Instruments Defining a Refugee, 1951-1974

The Second World War produced millions of refugees in Europe, and it was not surprising that the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees considered the refugee problem an European phenomenon.⁸ Article (1) A(2) of the 1951 Convention clearly stipulated that only those persons who were affected "as a result of the events occurring before January, 1951" qualified as refugees.⁹ This international legal instrument implied that the causes that generated refugees ceased with the end of the Second World War. Meanwhile, towards the end of the 1950s and more so during the 1960s, the phenomenon of mass

influx of refugees increasingly became common in Africa, particularly as the struggle for liberation from colonial rule and the resistance against apartheid gained momentum. However, owing to the dead-line clause in the Convention, Africans did not benefit from the UNHCR until towards the end of the 1950s.

It became clear that the causes that generate refugees did not cease with the end of the Second World War. Subsequently, Article 1 (A)2 of the 1951 UN Convention was amended by the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. The phrase "as a result of events occurring before January, 1951 ..." was deleted. A refugee came to be defined by the UN as a person who:

Owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a political union, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable to or owing to such fear is unwilling to return to it.¹⁰

Thus, under this Convention, two conditions were to be fulfilled before a person could acquire the status of a refugee: residence outside the country of nationality and lack of diplomatic protection by any state.

The legal status of the African refugee was further strengthened by the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, which came into effect on 20th June, 1974. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention was an expansion of the 1967 UN definition of a refugee. According to the OAU Convention:

The term refugee shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing the public order either in part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is *compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.*¹¹

The term refugee in this study draws on persons who are internationally displaced for reasons that would qualify them as refugees under the 1969 OAU Convention. This is the definition the UNHCR uses when considering whether or not to get involved in a particular situation of international displacement in Africa. It is important to note that there are a number of African states that have not yet ratified the OAU Convention. Nevertheless, even such African countries do in practice abide by the Convention.

Zambia is a signatory to both the UN and the OAU instruments pertaining to the legal status of refugees discussed above. The country got accession to both the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol in 1969.¹² The refugee policy of the Zambian government is contained in the Zambia Refugee Act No. 40 of 1970.¹³ However, the Zambian Act does not assume the definition of a refugee as stipulated by the 1969 OAU Convention. Instead, the Act confers upon the Minister of Home Affairs to use his discretion to declare whether or not one is a refugee among the immigrants in the country.

Literature Review

Despite a wide range of sources available on displaced persons there is virtually no comprehensive scholarly work on the

subject written from an historical perspective on Zambia. Some brief but useful historical articles on refugees such as those written by Nindi on the refugee situation in Africa¹⁴ and Musambachime on Zaire and Zambia, are available.¹⁵ There is one major sociological study available on refugees in the country. This is by Kasuta¹⁶ on refugee education and training in Zambia. Most major studies available on refugees conducted on the continent are anthropological, sociological, geographical and legal. Part of the explanation for limited historical studies on refugees, as emphasised by Maluma, is that refugee research is interdisciplinary and does not neatly fit into any one specific field.¹⁷ The following literature review heavily draws on refugee studies conducted in some of the above disciplines in different African countries.

Musambachime argues that tyranny exercised by some African Chiefs, was a major cause of displacement of peoples during the pre-colonial and colonial eras. Tyrannical chiefs, it is argued, lost their subjects to other chiefs who were not tyrannical.¹⁸ An obvious strength of the article is its exhaustive and varied sources to support the discussion.

In his article, Nindi points out that the definition of a refugee by the UNHCR is inadequate because it does not include "economic refugees" or internally displaced persons.¹⁹ It is also pointed out that in Africa, particularly in the rural areas it is difficult to come up with accurate estimates of the populations of refugees. Countries of first asylum deliberately inflate the estimates when these estimates are the yard-stick for financial assistance to refugees by the international community.

There are two works by Christensen that are relevant to the present study. The first one provides a historical case study of Burundian refugees in Tanzania.²⁰ In this work Christensen is of the view that there are social links between refugees and the surrounding host population, and how the development towards self-sufficiency proceeds. It is suggested that the integration of refugees in the social-economies of the host communities can have positive and negative effects for the refugees as well as for the receiving society. The second work is a sociological field study on the food situation of refugees in three camps in Somalia.²¹ It is argued that there are links with regard to food, between the refugees and the surrounding host populations. The study demonstrates that part of the food-aid is bartered by the refugees for fresh food while some is sold for cash to meet their basic needs. The refugees are also actively engaged in the exploitation of the immediate camp environment; firewood and water are sold to the local people. Though brief, the merit of the study is that it views the refugee problem from the perspective of the refugees' viewpoint.

Hansens's first anthropological study provides a historical background on the first wave of Angolan refugees into Zambia in 1966.²² It is argued that refugees prefer self-settlement among their host villagers to formally organised settlement schemes for refugees like Meheba. The second anthropological study by Hansen analyses the social and economic welfare of Angolan refugees in Meheba Refugee Settlement and those refugees who are self settled in the host border villages.²³ He concludes that on average Angolan refugees in Meheba Settlement are less self reliant in

food production and that they are less fully integrated into the host society because most of them regard themselves as refugees and are so regarded by Zambians. Most of the males would like to return to Angola. That is in sharp contrast to self settled refugees who consider themselves as Zambians and do not wish to return home. Hansen's study is relevant because the present study equally seeks to analyze the question of the social and economic integration of Meheba refugees into the host rural society.

Holborn's anthropological study is relevant to the present study.²⁴ It provides the background to the establishment of Lwatembo and Mayukwayukwa refugee settlements in Zambezi and Kaoma districts, respectively, to cater for Angolan refugees. Also documented is the sudden closure of Lwatembo Settlement a significant reduction of refugee population in Mayukwayukwa Settlement and their eventual movement to Meheba Settlement in 1971. This study considers refugees in the context of their political environment.

The anthropological study by Spring evaluates the strategies employed by the spontaneously settled Angolan refugees in the North-Western Province to overcome their socio-economic problems.²⁵ It notes that refugees are generally poor upon arrival, but that left to their own initiative, they gradually re-establish their pre-flight socio-economic standards. Young women speed their economic recovery more quickly than older ones by marrying in the host community. A few older women gain income and prestige by practising medicinal skills. By contrast, refugee men are divorced by their wives to marry in the host

community. Remarriage for men is difficult because they cannot afford bride-wealth.

The anthropological studies conducted by Hamrell²⁶ and Keller²⁷ on African refugees are equally important to this study. The scholars attribute the magnitude of the twentieth century refugee problem to the "tribal" factor. They are agreed that arbitrarily created boundaries by colonial powers placed former tribal enemies who could not live together peacefully, under one state. Keller observes that tribes have their members, to whom they have greater allegiance than to the modern multi-tribal state, across boundaries. Both scholars contend that the long standing animosity among tribal groups which was suppressed by the strict colonial system was broken up by decolonization, thus culminating in the present refugee problem.

Kibreab, however, in his well argued anthropological study, rejects the foregoing "tribal" factor as an explanation.²⁸ Instead, he terms it a constraint on an explanation because he sees no correlation between multi-ethnicity and the problem of refugees. He contends that in the absence of a clear and imminent danger, there is no evidence to prove that people have fled from their country of origin to join their co-ethnics across the border as claimed by the proponents of the "tribal" factor. He also points out that whether or not refugees have members of their national groups in the host country, they often repatriate voluntarily when the danger in their country of origin recedes. Finally, it is argued that the various groups inhabiting border regions in the African multi-national states identify themselves more with their country of origin than with their co-ethnics in

neighbouring countries. The violation of basic human rights by racist regimes or dictatorships are viewed as the root cause of the refugee problem. A major strength of the study lies in its consideration of a wide range of sources to support the arguments.

In his anthropological article on Rwandese and Burundi refugees in organised Settlements in Tanzania, Armstrong contends that the refugees' nostalgic longing to return to their native countries must be interpreted as an indication of inadequate opportunities and facilities in the settlements.²⁹ The article attempts to demonstrate that despite the apparent impressive visual infrastructure such as roads, schools, clinics and plots for refugees on which to grow agricultural food crops, the life experienced by refugees in the settlements is miserable. It is asserted that the refugees receive little benefit of the substantial resources channelled into the settlements. Apart from problems of corruption and theft, some settlement programmes are misguided and unsuccessful. Armstrong proposes that the solution to the problem lies in redesigning and increasing assistance so that it yields maximum benefits for the refugees. Like Chambers, Armstrong is of the opinion that the call by some scholars to reduce over-generosity in refugee settlements is misplaced.³⁰

Another illuminating work to this study is Aall's journalistic account of some urban refugees on transit from South-West Africa to Zambia.³¹ The article considers how the bureaucratic delays to settle refugees in the country of asylum frustrate refugees, making them uncooperative towards

authorities. During the long wait, the refugees are not engaged in any constructive activity. Meanwhile, they continue to receive free food and shelter. Eventually, inactivity and unfulfilled anxiety demoralise the refugees' self-motivation to work out their own solutions to their problems. They end up taking everything the wrong way and begin to make impossible demands on the authorities.

Although a geographical study, Markakis' work provides a detailed historical background to the refugee problem in Somalia.³² Contrary to the above explanations, the discussion attempts to justify the contention that the collapse of the subsistence economy has fuelled the violence that has displaced millions of people. According to the study, refugees are a result of the increasing process of marginalisation of the peasant and pastoralism by the colonial states. For centuries, these subsistence producers wrestled a precarious livelihood on mobility. However, with the arbitrarily imposition of colonial boundaries, the growth of towns and the growing strength of the military and the state, the traditional economy has been left to face, without assistance, a situation of expanding population and diminishing resources. The collapse of the subsistence economy has resulted in violence and the displacement of people.

Gorman's sociological study lists down some of the reasons that make it difficult for countries of asylum in Africa to provide meaningful assistance to refugees.³³ The work notes that refugees have a significant and negative impact on the social and economic infrastructure of host countries. Often, there is deforestation of wide areas surrounding refugee settlements. It is suggested

that the vast demands to cater for refugee education, vocational and technical training and health are major constraints on host African countries, which, like Zambia, are some of the world's poorest countries.

The works by Harell-Bond³⁴ and Bulcha³⁵ are opposed to the foregoing proposition. Theirs is the view assumed in this dissertation that the presence of a refugee population in a particularly remote, underpopulated and economically backward locality like Meheba in Solwezi District can play a significant role towards the integration of refugees in the indigenous community, and provide the necessary environment for the refugees to actively participate in the regional as well as national development.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses involuntary migrations into and within Zambia focusing on the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. It is argued that slave trade and ethnic wars were among the chief causes of forced migrations in pre-colonial Zambia. Later, excesses of the colonial state, which included the introduction of poll and hut taxes, compulsory labour and the imposition of over-congested African land reserves also led to migration. In post-colonial Zambia, forced migration is attributed to apartheid in South Africa and anti-colonial and civil wars waged in some of the neighbouring countries. The implication of Zambia's declining economy on the welfare of the refugees in the country is equally considered.

Chapter Two provides the immediate background to the establishment of Meheba Refugee Settlement. It is argued that Lwatembo and Mayukwayukwa refugee settlements established for the occupancy of Angolan refugees in 1966 in Zambezi and Kaoma districts, respectively shortly failed because the planners did not conduct a thorough preliminary resource survey before the refugees were moved to the sites. In addition, the introduction of compulsory communal farming was at variance with the traditional land tenure system based on individual farming practised by the refugees before their flight from Angola.

The third chapter is concerned with refugee participation in their social organisation within the Meheba Settlement community between 1971 to 1987. It is demonstrated that a laissez-faire administration unlike a paternalistic one, enabled refugees to be actively involved in fairly complex social organisations. The fourth chapter seeks to find out why the Meheba Multipurpose Cooperative Society (MMCS) an affiliate member of the North Western Cooperative Union, failed to develop into a viable business venture. It explores not only the performance of the MMCS for explanations, but also considers the performance of the North Western Cooperative Union.

The last chapter explores the adequacy of food in the settlement as well as its impact on the host community and vice-versa. It is advanced that to generalise that the entrenchment of dependency among the Meheba farmers was the cause of inadequacy of food in some years, without analysing the circumstances surrounding each hunger situation is wrong. Meheba farmers were not a burden to the Zambian national economy because

they contributed towards its food requirements. And the existing social and economic ties between Angolan refugees and the local villagers examined in the chapter indicate that many refugees were by 1994 already integrated or progressing towards being integrated in the host society.

Methodology

Documents at the National Archives of Zambia were not consulted in this study because by the completion of the study in June 1996 the Ministry of Home Affairs had not deposited any files there. The period from April to August 1995 was spent consulting materials in two University of Zambia (UNZA) libraries: the main UNZA Library situated along the Great East Road and the one at the Institute of African Studies, situated along the Kaunda Square Road off the Great East Road. Both primary and secondary documents were consulted in the libraries. During the above period, consultancy reports on refugees at the UNHCR, Lusaka mini-library were also consulted.

All NGOs that worked in Meheba Settlement had their headquarters in Lusaka. Data on Meheba Settlement at some of the these Lusaka based NGOs was gathered between September and October, 1995. Some NGOs were uncooperative. Files on Meheba Settlement held by Oxfam were consulted. The Zambia Christian Refugee Service provided annual reports. The first half of November 1995 was spent at the Times of Zambia library in Lusaka. News articles on Meheba Settlement were consulted. The month of December 1995 was spent gathering data in Meheba Settlement. Monthly and annual reports by Care International were consulted.

Personal interviews were conducted with 20 refugees and 10 local villagers. This was a more reliable source of data. Observation of settlement life in Meheba enriched the student's knowledge of Meheba Settlement. Finally, the UNCHR Centre for Documentation on Refugees in Geneva sent some documents in December 1995 on request. The documents were consulted in January, 1996. Research and the writing up of this historical study were largely co-current.

NOTES

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CHAPTER ONE

ZAMBIA: INVOLUNTARY MIGRATIONS

Pre Colonial and Colonial Migration

Most ethnic groupings in Zambia trace their descent to the Luba-Lunda Empire in southern Zaire. Through emigrant chiefs, court conquests and cultural borrowing the Lunda dynasty gave rise to the Chokwe and Mbangala chieftainships of Angola. The Lunda dynasty also gave rise to the Luvale, Ndembu, Lunda and the Kaonde of Chief Musokantanda.¹ The Chief had a central role in the organisation and the political machinery of the tribal states. According to Clark:

Zambia's pre-colonial history consisted of successive waves of migrations into the area. Major waves of these immigrants came in the 15th Century, with larger influxes coming during the late 17th Century into the 19th Century. They came primarily from Luba and Lunda tribes in Southern Zaire and Northern Angola, and were joined [in the 19th Century] by the Ngoni from the South.²

The Ngoni of eastern Zambia were actually described by Barnes as refugees who fled from the rising power of Shaka in the area which became Swaziland, Natal and Transkei.³

The onset of the slave-trade also caused involuntary migrations of peoples within and into present day Zambia. The discovery of the West Indies, Brazil and America in 1498 resulted in the demand for labour from Africa to work in the sugar and coffee plantations and in the mines.⁴ Davidson pointed out that from about 1510 up to the end of

the 19th century, the trade in African captives became important.⁵ By 1850 many Arab-Swahili slave traders from East Africa were regularly coming to Zambia, and their activities increasingly displaced the peoples there.⁶ For example, from his headquarters in Zaire, Msidi and his Yeke followers pillaged the Kaonde, Lamba and Lala to the south and the Aushi, Bisa, Chishinga and Shila to the east.⁷ Consequently, many Zambian peoples migrated involuntarily from their usual places of habitation. Involuntary migrations arising from inter-tribal wars started earlier than the advent of the Arab-Swahili slave traders in pre-colonial Zambia. However, the scale of the migrations was protracted by the presence and activities of the slave traders. Hall noted that to maintain the supply of slaves:

... the Arabs and the Yeke caused fundamental change in the relationship between neighbouring tribes. Enmity was fostered between rival chiefs and they were supplied with guns to wage wars.⁸

According to Hall, Tippo Tib, another Arab slave trader plundered the North-West of Zambia. That displaced many persons, forcing them to emigrate in search of a peaceful area in which to settle.

The quest to exploit social and natural resources also led many to migrate during the pre-colonial period. The Gwembe Tonga for example, freely moved back and forth across the present day Zambia-Zimbabwe boundary for the above reasons.⁹ Spring also observed that Angolans gradually drifted into Zambia.¹⁰ Possibly, some individuals or groups, for example the Bakongo who frequently

crossed into Zambia for the initial purpose of trade may have liked the place and stayed on indefinitely in the country.¹¹ It should be noted that migration for social and economic reasons may have been predominantly voluntary, unlike the rest of the migrations discussed in this study. Therefore, those did not necessarily constitute displacement or refugee problems.

The colonial period in Africa was characterised by the creation of arbitrary political boundaries which divided people belonging to the same political and cultural sphere. This was particularly evident in the case of North-Western Province where the Lunda people were divided among three political states: Angola, Zambia and Zaire.¹² The citizens of these countries often migrated across the international boundary to a 'sister' country when their life was threatened in their home country. This trend continued in the post-colonial period.

The major causes of involuntary migration in colonial Africa were the avoidance of poll and hut taxes, fleeing from compulsory labour and fleeing from the over-congested African Land Reserves.¹³ The imposition of hut tax in 1901 on the people of Northern Province and North-Eastern Zambia, together with the activities of *recruiting agents* led to emigration of labour. The colonial administration often burnt down villages of obstinate chiefs and commoners who evaded forced labour.¹⁴ As a result, many Africans were displaced. Similarly, in eastern Zambia, many able bodied men emigrated from the over crowded Native Reserves

to work in the mines on the Copperbelt, Zaire, Zimbabwe and South Africa.¹⁵ In many parts of the country, thousands of men were forced to leave their villages and look for employment from which they could pay taxes. While the precolonial era's hierarchy of settlement areas was limited to villages, chief's villages and paramount chiefs' villages, the colonial era superimposed on the foregoing structures the levels of district centres, provincial centres and the capital city.

Some scholars consider persons who migrated because of the evils of slave trade in the precolonial era or the excesses of the colonial state machinery as refugees, although the migrations may have occurred half a century before the enactment of the 1951 United Nations Convention referred to above.¹⁶ In that respect, the Ngoni who fled into Zambia from the South in the 19th century may rightly be termed refugees.¹⁷ This study however, simply describes such migrants as *displaced persons* because the migrations took place before the enactment of the 1951 Convention. Therefore, refugees are considered as those persons, who were internationally displaced after the Convention and did actually meet the Convention's definition of the term.¹⁸

Post-Colonial Refugee Flows into Zambia

Post-colonial Zambia has had a complex history as a country of asylum. Since the refugees began to arrive in the early 1960s, it received refugees from all of its neighbours, except Tanzania.¹⁹ The political stability

enjoyed in Zambia, its geopolitical position, coupled with the political leadership's commitment to the liberation of the southern African region contributed to the influx of refugees into the country. As the liberation struggle gathered momentum in Zambia's neighbours: Rhodesia, South West Africa, Angola and Mozambique, the number of people seeking refugee status in the country increased. For many displaced people in the region, Zambia was usually their destination.²⁰ Countries which were not neighbours to Zambia but did generate refugees into the country included South Africa, Uganda, Somalia, Burundi and Rwanda.

Angolans made up the majority of the refugee population in Zambia during the period under review. The largest number of these refugees came in the 1960s, the 1970s and the second half of the 1980s. Increasing military activity between Angolan nationalist guerrilla forces and the Portuguese colonial forces displaced many peoples in Angola. Prior to 1975 Angolan refugees were fleeing from the effects of the struggle against the Portuguese colonial government. Since then, others continued to flee the civil war between the central government and the rebel forces of the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) headed by Jonas Savimbi and supported by America and racist South-Africa.

Beginning in late 1985, a new influx of Angolan refugees took place. Most of these refugees settled themselves in the North-Western and Western Provinces of Zambia. According to Clark:

This influx picked in 1986. The influx was estimated to have totalled 18,000 persons by April 1987. Most [of the refugees] reported fleeing fighting between the competing forces of coercion by UNITA to join with them.²¹

The Zambian government was committed to relocating most of these new arrivals who settled themselves among their co-ethnics in border areas to Meheba Refugee Settlement. The government facilitated the expansion of Meheba Settlement by creating a new settlement within the existing settlement boundaries to accommodate the new arrivals. In the main, the Angolan refugees composed of Luvale, Mashi, Luena, Luchazi, Mbunda and Chokwe peoples. More will be said about the Angolan refugees in the subsequent chapters.

Zaireans formed the second largest refugee population in Meheba Settlement during the period under review. The main waves of Zairean refugees arrived in Zambia in 1965-1967 and 1970-1978. The largest numbers came in 1977 and 1978 during the Katangese gendamarie insurgencies in the Shaba Province in Zaire, following an abortive bid to topple President Mobutu Sese Seko's government by secessionist forces. Many later returned home when security conditions improved in Shaba Province. By 1987 about 7,100 Zairean refugees remained spontaneously settled among their Lunda co-ethnics in the North-Western Province, and 1,700 in the Luapula Province.²² Small numbers of Zairean refugees were also mixed in the ^{Zambian} Zairean population in the urban areas of the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. A night raid in May 1990 by security forces on rebellious students at Lubumbashi University left about 100 dead and

forced many students to flee into Zambia.²³ Some of the students ended up at Meheba Settlement. Following mounting military conflicts between the liberation forces in Tete District of Northern Mozambique, about 5,000 displaced Nsenga fled that country and crossed into the Eastern Province of Zambia, where they settled among their coethnics in 1965.²⁴ Because there had been a great deal of intra-ethnic migration across the boundary extending to pre colonial times, the Mozambican refugees' stay in eastern Zambia was made easier than it would otherwise have been.²⁵ The Mozambican refugees in Zambia voluntarily repatriated when the Portuguese colonial authorities granted them a reprieve in February 1966.²⁶

New influxes of Mozambican refugees began arriving in Zambia in June 1985 and by the end of the year their population was about 22,000. Two years later the Mozambican refugee population in Zambia increased by 5,000.²⁷ The flow of Mozambican refugees into Zambia was precipitated by the displacement of peoples in that country arising from the conflict between the Mozambican government and the Mozambican Resistance Army of Renamo. Many of the refugees fled from the economic effects of Renamo attacks which prevented wide areas of farm land from being cultivated and relief aid from reaching the targeted displaced peoples mainly comprising the rural population of that country. Ukwimi Refugee Settlement in Petauke District of Eastern Province was established in 1976 to cater for Mozambican refugees. The refugees in Ukwimi

Settlement were repatriated to their home country in 1994 following the signing of a peace accord between the Mozambican government and Renamo.

Other refugee groups which sought sanctuary in post colonial Zambia included South Africans and Namibians. These refugee groups were mainly assisted by their respective liberation fronts: African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC) for South Africa and South West African Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), for Namibia. These refugees resident in Zambia, and assisted by their respective political fronts tended to be disproportionately young persons. The underlying reason being that it was essentially the youthful and physically energetic who could translate their political ideas into actual physical confrontation against the oppressive colonial regimes in their respective countries of origin.

The life of Angolans, Zaireans, Mozambicans and other refugees in Zambia was invariably marked by nostalgia and a strong desire to return voluntarily after the cessation of the violence that generated them in their home country.²⁸ Thus, it can safely be asserted that, ethnic groups living along national international boundaries tended to exploit ethnic interests to further their national interests. When a conflict situation arose in their home country some citizens fled and took refuge among their co-ethnics across the international boundary in Zambia. As soon as the conflict situation was resolved, the refugees voluntarily returned to their home country.

Arguably, therefore, national aspiration and allegiance was upheld above ethnic interests.²⁹ A balanced consideration of refugees in Zambia exemplifies the thesis that although intra ethnic group migration could be traced back to the pre-colonial times, by the 1960s, Africans increasingly began to identify themselves more with the other groups within their independent countries or colonial territories rather than with the members of their ethnic group from the pre-colonial period living across the border.

The colonial government in Northern Rhodesia allowed refugees from the neighbouring territories to settle themselves in the villages among their co-ethnic hosts. That was basically because the colonial government pursued a refugee policy which emphasised tribal identity and local semi-sovereignty under the policy of Indirect Rule. Like the local people, the spontaneously settled refugees found their own means of livelihood, and were generally in control of their lives. However, the post colonial refugees were received as Angolans, Mozambicans or Zimbabweans by a Zambian government which did not want the new comers to settle themselves in the villages and be absorbed into the Zambian population.³⁰

The post colonial Zambian government organised settlement schemes such as Meheba Refugee Settlement , Ukwimi Refugee Settlement and Mayukwayukwa Settlement. In the settlements land was set aside in a rural setting for the settlement of refugees where they were provided with land for farming, farm implements and seeds. Facilities such as health centres, schools and clean

drinking water were provided by the authorities with the assistance from international agencies such as the Association to Aid Refugees of Japan and the UNHCR. Refugees in such a scheme, unlike those refugees in self settlement, lived under the supervision of authorities.

Interestingly, the case of the Angolan refugees in Zambia showed that they preferred living a difficult life in self settlement among their co-ethnics in border areas where essentially the refugees were in control of their lives, to living a relatively easier but controlled life by settlement authorities in government organised settlement schemes.³¹ The government, on the other hand, viewed the presence of refugees in border areas as posing a security risk to its nationals and insisted that refugees be moved to organised settlements. There were some skirmishes on some Zambian villages in the border areas believed to have been hosting refugees.³² Between the end of 1966 and June 1969, Portuguese forces based in Angola and Mozambique made more than sixty military incursions into Zambia. In addition to loss of life, economic development, social life and communication came to a standstill.³³ Below is evidence of military activities by alien forces carried out after the establishment of Meheba Settlement. However, as will be noted in the evidence, the brutalities experienced by Zambians in the border areas where the activities took place demonstrate the reason why the government took the initiative to move self-settled refugees away from border areas to organised settlement schemes deeper in the country.

In February 1982 the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the opposition UNITA harassed villagers in Sinjembela, Western Province.³⁴ Border areas between Zambia/Angola and Zambia/Mozambique posed a security risk in the late 1980s because UNITA and Renamo troops planted land-mines there.³⁵ On 22nd May, 1991 the Times of Zambia carried a story indicating the extent of the activities by alien troops on Zambian soil and nationals living in border areas for providing sanctuary to refugees. The report observed that:

On November 28, 1987 Renamo forces crossed into Pinye near Mwanjabantu in Petauke district ... they abducted two women and set 12 huts ablaze. In July 1990 7 people were killed and more than 20 were injured seriously when Renamo forces set ablaze 7 trucks... near Nyimba. The same month 10 people were burnt beyond recognition by Renamo forces. On September 12, 1990 a driver and a mechanic... were shot dead by Renamo forces. The forces set ablaze 2 trucks laden with maize ... near Kacholola in Eastern Province. 2 days later two girls aged 16 were abducted while Rufunsa Rural Health Centre was raided and drugs stolen near Luangwa district ... A week later 11 people were killed and 49 went missing after Renamo forces ambushed a bus and three days later 10 more people were killed through the same means in Eastern Province.³⁶

International charitable organisations such as the UNHCR could not operate in Zambian border areas in some years because the security situation was not safe. Consequently, both refugees and Zambian nationals in these areas continued to suffer and sometimes died of neglect as emergency relief could not reach them. To provide security for both its nationals and refugees and safeguard the country's infrastructure, the Zambian government insisted that self-settled refugees along the country's border be

moved to organised settlements like Meheba. The presence of the influxes of refugees in border areas, particularly since the mid 1970s when Zambia's economy was on the decline, created a strain on the meagre socio-economic infrastructure such as schools and health services. In addition, the government sought to meet the UNHCR requirement that to qualify for assistance a refugee population be regrouped at least 50 kilometres away from the border of their home country.³⁷

In view of the foregoing reasons, the Zambian government over the years carried out a number of "sweeps" in the main areas of self settlement, gathering up refugees to settlements.³⁸ Despite such government efforts, the population of the self settled Angolan refugees in particular and the population of the self settled refugees in Zambia in general substantially remained higher than the population of those refugees in government organised settlement schemes.

Table 1 tabulates the lifespan and the location of refugee settlements in Zambia and the country of origin of the majority of the refugees in these settlements.

TABLE 1: LIFESPAN OF RURAL REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS IN ZAMBIA, 1965-1994

Settlement	Province	Town	Lifespan
Nyimba: Mozambicans	Eastern	Nyimba	1965-1970
Mayukwayukwa: Angolans	Western	Kaoma	1966*
Lwatembo: Angolans	North-Western	Zambezi	1966-1971
Meheba: Angolans, Zaireans	North-Western	Solwezi	1971*
Ukwimi: Mozambicans	Eastern	Petauke	1976-1994

* By February 1996, these Settlements were still functioning

Source: Petterman, "A Comparative Survey", Africa Today, 31,1 (1st Quarter, 1984), p.46.

Of the above refugee settlements Ukwimi was economically the most successful not only in the country but on the entire continent. Ukwimi Settlement was a model for Africa. Then followed Meheba Settlement. That did not mean that these settlements did not experience serious social and economic problems. The following chapters will demonstrate some successes as well as failures at Meheba Settlement.

Zambia's Economic Crisis: its Bearing on the Post Colonial Refugee Situation, 1973-1994

Zambia was one of the most prosperous countries south of the Sahara for nearly a decade since independence. The in-flow of a few thousand refugees into the country during this period caused little negative effects on the country's socio-economic life. However, after the "dual shock"

comprising the oil shock of 1973 when the price of oil sky rocketed, followed by the copper shock of 1976 in which the price of the country's chief foreign exchange earner collapsed, a declining economic trend set in.³⁹ The effects of the declining economy were felt mainly by the low income groups, which were the vulnerable groups shouldering the decline in the standard of living as the cost of living rose.⁴⁰ The rural based refugees in Zambia, especially the newly arrived refugees, whether self settled or government settled, were among the country's most vulnerable groups. This category among the indigenous population included the lowly paid, the urban unemployed and the rural poor.

The burden of the country's vulnerable groups in general, and that of the refugees in particular, was worsened by the programmes put in place by the government in its attempt to resuscitate the economy. A full stabilisation programme was adopted in the late 1970s which culminated in the devaluation of the Kwacha (national currency) in 1983 by 20 per cent.⁴¹ Two years later the government introduced the auctioning of the national currency for foreign exchange.⁴²

In September 1985 the government increased the price of mealie-meal by 50 per cent. That was in an attempt to make up for the K27.6m spent on importing grain to meet the shortfall that arose from the drought of the 1983/84 season.⁴³ The structural adjustment measures, especially the decontrol of food prices and the reduction of subsidies

hit the poor hard. These structural adjustment measures, meanwhile achieved little to address the declining national economy.

As a result of the devaluation of the national currency by government, many industries were either forced to operate on less than full capacity or closed down altogether. Other industries were forced to lay off some workers because of shortage of raw materials. Devaluation of the currency meant that importing into Zambia by individuals or companies became prohibitively expensive while foreign firms cheaply exported into the country. Many Zambian companies failed to import the necessary raw materials. The companies equally failed to bid for the necessary foreign exchange at the Bank of Zambia because under the prevailing economic conditions they could not raise the Kwacha cover they needed to buy foreign exchange. Zambia was towards the end of 1985 classified among the sixty-six countries in the world which fell under the low-income category by the Organisation for Economic Corporation Development.⁴⁴ The economic measures taken by the government to improve the national economy worsened the inflationary spiral and made life more desperate for the vulnerable groups. According to Chanda, the December 1986 country-wide food riots were a direct social-political manifestation of the hardships the structural measures unleashed on the people.⁴⁵

It was precisely during the period of sharp economic deterioration that the pace of refugee influx into Zambia also stepped up. In a country facing serious economic crisis like Zambia, it was inevitable to view an influx of foreign population as yet an addition to the country's economic problems. Examples of influxes of self-settled refugees into Zambia as an economic burden to the already precarious local economic situation abound. Malnutrition, for example, was rampant in Mwinilunga District following thousands of displaced Angolans fleeing their country and settling in the border district in the late 1980s.⁴⁶ Food resources, education and medical facilities available in the district were inadequate in the face of the refugee influx.

The land issue was a major economic factor that prompted government attempt to move self-settled refugees from border areas to organised settlement schemes. Shortage of land could in extreme circumstances not allow refugees to remain among their co-ethnics in border areas. For instance, host villagers in Mwinilunga, in November 1987 protested and demanded that self-settled Angolan refugees in their midst be moved to Meheba Settlement or another place.⁴⁷ Furthermore, land shortage was one of the main causes of bad relations between the Angolan refugees and Zambians in the district.

The laws of Zambia were explicit on the question of land tenure. The April 1985 Parliamentary Amendment to the Land Conversion of Titles Act of 1975 stipulated that: "No land in Zambia shall as from the 1st April 1985 be granted, alienated, transferred or leased to non Zambians".⁴⁸ Nonetheless,

traditional rulers ignored these provisions and allotted land to self-settled refugees partly because of ignorance and mainly because they were traditionally responsible for the allocation of land during the colonial era. According to Mwanza and Seshamani, the economic crisis prompted the Zambian government to reduce public expenditure on the vulnerable groups in general and on refugees in particular, resulting in limited access by the refugees to medical, transport and education services.⁴⁹ Kaunga and Ncube's observation on the provision of scarce national resources by the Zambian government to the peasants in relation to other social groups during harsh economic times is comparable to the position of the refugees under study. They observed that:

...when there is negative growth in the economy, the reduction in resources available to the various social groups is usually not proportional. Depending on the bargaining power of such groups, resistance to a reduction in resources will differ. If ... urban workers' trade unions are stronger than peasant organisations, then it is possible for urban workers to maintain their resource level at the expense of the peasants.⁵⁰

Although during most of the period under review indigenous peasants in Zambia did not have an organisation to articulate their social-economic interests, unlike refugees, the peasant farmers being Zambians had at least the right to present their grievances to the government through their area member of parliament or party officials. Because refugees presented the least possible opposition to the government, they experienced reduction on unnecessary

expenditure on them. As a result, refugee programmes heavily depended on funding from the international community which the UNHCR disbursed to the various agencies carrying out refugee work in the country.

Table 2 shows the number of refugees received and gross national product (GDP) per capita of the countries in the southern African region to 1981, while Table 3 illustrates the refugee influx in the region in April, 1987.⁵¹ According to UN estimates, countries registering a GDP below 300 United States Dollars must be considered extremely poor. The statistics in Table 2 should be interpreted cautiously, because in the subsequent years, most of the GDP in the region declined.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF REFUGEES RECEIVED AND GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT PER CAPITA IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION IN 1981

Country of Reception	GNP Per Capita in US\$	No. of Refugees Received	% of SAR Total Refugee Population	Ration Between Refugees and Nationals
Angola	440	73,000	57.9	1:95
Botswana	720	1,000	0.8	1:773
Lesotho	340	10,000	7.9	1:1,130
Mozambique	250	50	0.03	1:204,000
Swaziland	650	6,000	4.8	1:90
Zambia	510	36,000	28.5	1:152
Zimbabwe	470	50	0.03	1:142,940
TOTAL		126,100	100	

Source: H. Christensen, Refugees and Pioneers: History and Field Study of a Burundian Settlement in Tanzania, (Geneva: Research Institute for Social Development, 1985), p.28.

The case of Zambia for example: "Due to zero overall GDP growth since 1974 and a population growth of 3% per capita, GDP in 1987 was 60% of what it was in 1965".⁵¹ Thus, despite the 1981 seemingly favourable GDP for most countries in southern Africa, the actual economic realities were far from comfortable in the subsequent years.

It will be noted in Table 3 that although Zambia recorded the second largest number of refugees after Malawi, no other country in the region had refugees from five different countries. The refugees in the rest of southern African asylum countries consisted of only three or less nationalities. Bearing in mind Zambia's declining economy during the period under review, the refugee influx posed a great challenge not only to the host government and the international community, but to the refugees themselves as well.

TABLE 3: ESTIMATED NUMBER OF REFUGEE INFLUX IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION, APRIL 1987

Host Country	Number	Country of Origin	% of the Total in the Region
Malawi	150,000	Mozambique	32.35
Zambia	140,000	Mozambique, Angola, Zaire, Namibia, South Africa	30.20
Angola	91,000	Namibia, Zaire, South Africa	19.62
Zimbabwe	60,000	Mozambique	12.94
Swaziland	13,000	Mozambique	2.80
Botswana	5,000	Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia	1.08
Lesotho	4,000	South Africa	0.86
Mozambique	700	Latin America	0.15
TOTAL	463,700		100.00

Source: UNHCR Branch Office, Lusaka, 6th April, 1987, quoted in The Voice of the Refugees, 22 (June, 1987), p.12.

Table 4 shows the distribution of the refugee population in Zambia by December 1987. According to the statistics in Table 4, spontaneously settled refugees in Zambia were 500 per cent more than those who were in organised settlements in 1987. The trend remained unchanged in the subsequent years despite government intervention. The influx of the spontaneously settled refugees often caused competition over the local economic and social resources available with the indigenous population. Facilities like land for cultivation, education and medical facilities became inadequate. That was partly the reason the government

moved some of the spontaneously settled refugees to organised settlements.

TABLE 4: REFUGEE POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN ZAMBIA, 1987

Category/Place in Zambia	Population	% of Total Refugee Population in Zambia
(i) Organised Settlement		
<u>Maheba</u> (Angolans, Zaireans, Ugandans)	14,467	9.8
<u>Ukwimi</u> (Mozambique)	3,648	2.5
<u>Mayukwayukwa</u> (Angolans)	2,543	1.7
Sub Total	20,658	
(ii) Political Party Members		
<u>South-West African People's Organisation</u> (Namibia)	7,300	4.9
<u>African National Congress</u> (South Africa)	3,000	2.0
Sub Total:	10,000	
(iii) Spontaneously (Self) Settled		
<u>Western, North-Western Provinces</u> (Angolans)	80,000	54.2
<u>Luapula Province</u> (Zaireans)	9,000	6.1
<u>Eastern Province</u> (Mozambicans)	25,000	16.9
Sub Total	114,000	
(iv) Urban Refugees	2,660	1.8
Sub Total:		
GRAND TOTAL	147,618	100

Source: The Voice of the Refugees, 23, (June 1988), p.9.

From the foregoing it can be observed that there were several factors that led to displaced persons fleeing into post-colonial Zambia. The South Africa apartheid system generated several thousands of refugees into Zambia. Even

after obtaining self-government, most neighbouring countries lapsed into civil wars, which also generated thousands of refugees into the country. Zambia provided asylum to many displaced persons fleeing into her territory. Most of these displaced persons settled themselves among their co-ethnics in the border areas while some were settled by the government in refugee settlement schemes like Lwatembo Settlement in Zambezi and Mayukwayukwa Settlement in Kaoma.

Notes

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2. Lance Clark, "Country Reports on Five Key Asylum Countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, Migrations News, (July - December, 1987), p.48.
3. J.A. Barnes, Politics in a Changing Society: A Political History of Fort Jameson Ngoni, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), p.4.
4. Grain Kibreab, Reflections on the African Refugee Problem: A Critical Analysis of Some Basic Assumptions, (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1983), pp.12-13.

See also Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, (Dar-es-Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972)
5. Basil Davidson, Black Mother: Africa the Years of Trial (London: Victor Gollanciz, 1961), pp. 61-62; 83.
6. Richard Hall, Zambia, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1965), p.42.
7. Vernon William Brelsford, Tribes of Northern Rhodesia, (Lusaka: Government Printers, 1956), p.108.
8. Hall, Zambia, p.46; See also Margret Read, "Migrant Labour in Africa and its Effects on Tribal Life," International Labour Review XLV, 6(1942), pp. 605-631.
9. T. Scudder, "Development - Induced Relocation and Refugee Studies: 37 Years of Change and Continuity Among Zambia's Gwembe Tonga", Journal of Refugee Studies, 6, 2 (1993), p.127.
10. Anita Spring, "Women and Men as Refugees: Differential Assimilation of Angolan Refugees in Zambia", in Art Hansen and Anthony Oliver-Smith (eds.), Involuntary Migration and Resettlement: The Problems and Responses of Displaced People, (Colorado: Westview University Press, 1982), p.37.
11. Romance Chanda Sampa Snr., "Ethnic Group Interests and Zambia's Policy on the Decolonisation of Angola, 1965 - 1980, (M.A. dissertation, University of Zambia, 1991), p.55.
12. Freund and Kalumba, "The Social and Economic Conditions of Refugees", p.14.

13. Kibreab, Reflections on the African Refugee Problem, p.20.
14. Henry S. Meebelo, Reaction to Colonialism: A Prelude to the Politics of Independence in Northern Rhodesia, 1893-1930, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971), p.86.
15. See L. Vail, "Ecology and History: The Example of Eastern Zambia", "Journal of Southern African Studies", 3, 1 (1976). pp. 129-155; L.H. Zgambo, "Workers Responses to Conditions on the Settler farms of the Eastern Province, 1898-1964 in (ed) Ackson M. Kanduza, Socio-Economic Change in Eastern Zambia: Precolonial to the 1980's, (Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia, 1992), pp. 84-88.
16. Kibreab, Reflection on the African Refugee Problem, p.20.
17. Barnes actually describes this group of the Ngoni as refugees. Barnes, Politics in a Changing Society, p.4.
18. For a detailed explanation, see the introduction of this study on pages 8 - 9.
19. Clark, "Post Emergency Assistance", p.20.
20. J.R. Rogge, "Some Comments on Definitions and Typologies of Africa's Refugees", Zambia Geographical Journal, 33/34 (1978/79), p.56.
21. Lance Clark, "Refugee Participation Case Study: The Meheba Settlement in Zambia", (Refugee Policy Group, Centre for Policy Analysis and Research on Refugee Issues, November, 1987), p.3.
22. See Clark, "Refugee Participation Case Study", p.4.; Times of Zambia (1st March, 1987).
23. Times of Zambia, (24th May, 1991).
24. Louise W. Holborn, Refugees: A Problem of Our Time, The Work of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 1951-1972, Vol. (2 Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Inc., 1975) p. 1288
25. Cato Aall, Refugee Problems in Southern Africa, in Sven Hamrell (ed.), Refugee Problems in Africa, (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1967), p.2.
26. Holborn, Refugees, A Problem of Our Time,. p. 1288
27. Clark, "Refugee Participation Case Study", p.4.

28. See I. Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe, "The Nature of the Social Relationship between Angolan Refugees and their Zambian Hosts," (A Paper Resulting from a Multi-Disciplinary Field Research by UNZA Teaching Staff, 1990)
29. For a reverse interpretation see, Romance Chanda Sampa Snr. 'Ethnic Groups Interests and Zambia's Policy on the Decolonisation of Angola, 1965-1980', (M.A. dissertation, University of Zambia, 1991) p.59.
30. Art Hansen, "Once the Running Stops: The Socio-Economic Resettlement of Angolan Refugees, 1966-1972, in Zambian Border Villages", Ph.D Thesis, Cornell University, (1977), p.27.
31. Julian Powlez, "Tales of Fish: Field Report", September, 92 - July, 93 (Solwezi: 1995) p.3.
32. A.M. Mwanza and V. Seshamani, "Refugees as an Important Aspect of the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Crisis: Zambia's Study", An unpublished paper, 1989 p.18.
33. Romance Chanda Sampa Snr, 'Ethnic Groups' Interest and Zambia's Policy on the Decolonisation of Angola, (1965-1980), (M.A. dissertation, the University of Zambia, Lusaka, 1991), pp. 56-7.
34. Times of Zambia, (4th February, 1982).
35. Times of Zambia, (21st June, 1987); Times of Zambia, (16th July, 1983).
36. Times of Zambia, (22nd May, 1991).
37. Times of Zambia, (28th June, 1987).
38. Powlez, "Tales of Fish: Field Report," p. 3.
39. Mwanza and Seshamani, "Refugees as an Important Aspect," p. 10; E.C. Kaunga and P.D. Ncube, "An Overview of the Zambian Economy," (A Paper presented at a National Development Research Centre held in Lusaka, Zambia, 27th-29th April, 1984.
40. John M. Mwanakatwe, End of Kaunda Era, (Lusaka: Multimedia Publications, 1994), p. 137.
41. Times of Zambia, (10th January, 1983); Times of Zambia, (13th January, 1983).
42. Times of Zambia, (15th July, 1986); Times of Zambia, (5th November, 1986).

43. Times of Zambia, (14th September, 1985); Times of Zambia, (4th August, 1987); Times of Zambia, (5th December, 1987).
44. Donald Chanda The Real Implications of the Economic Stabilisation, on the Low Income Groups in Zambia (Libya: African Centre for Applied Research and Training Development, 1990), p.1
45. Chanda, The Real Implications of Economic Stabilisation, p.1.
46. Times of Zambia, (13th December, 1983)
47. Times of Zambia, (16th December, 1987).
48. As quoted in the Times of Zambia (18th May, 1987).
49. Mwanza and Seshamani, "Refugees as an Important Aspect of Human Dimensions", p.15.
50. Kaunga and Ncube, "An Overview of the Zambian Economy", p.169.
51. H. Christensen, Refugees and Pioneers: History and Field Study of a Burundian Settlement in Tanzania, (Geneva: Research Institute for Social Development, 1985), p. 27; see also Daleep Singh, "Angola: Conflict and Elusive Settlement," Africa Quarterly 35,4(1995), p. 93.
52. Clark, "Country Reports on Five Key Asylum Countries", See also John M. Mwanakatwe, End of Kaunda Era, p. 141.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TRANSITORY PHASE OF REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS: LWATEMBO AND MAYUKWAYUKWA SETTLEMENTS, 1965-1971

Lwatembo and Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlements were styled along land development projects. In Zambia, such projects included the Zambia National Service, assisted tenant schemes, livestock schemes, tobacco schemes, the settlement of small-scale commercial farmers, the settlement of people from the subsistence sector, village regrouping schemes and youth resettlement schemes.¹ All land development projects including organised refugee settlement schemes like Lwatembo and Mayukwayukwa in Zambezi and Kaoma districts respectively, were rural based schemes in which farming activities occupied a central role. Much as the host Zambian government, the UNHCR and other agencies working in the refugee settlements attempted to assist the refugees become self-sufficient in food production, the actual results between 1966 and 1971 indicated that their efforts resulted in abject failure.

Sources of Angolan Refugees in Zambia

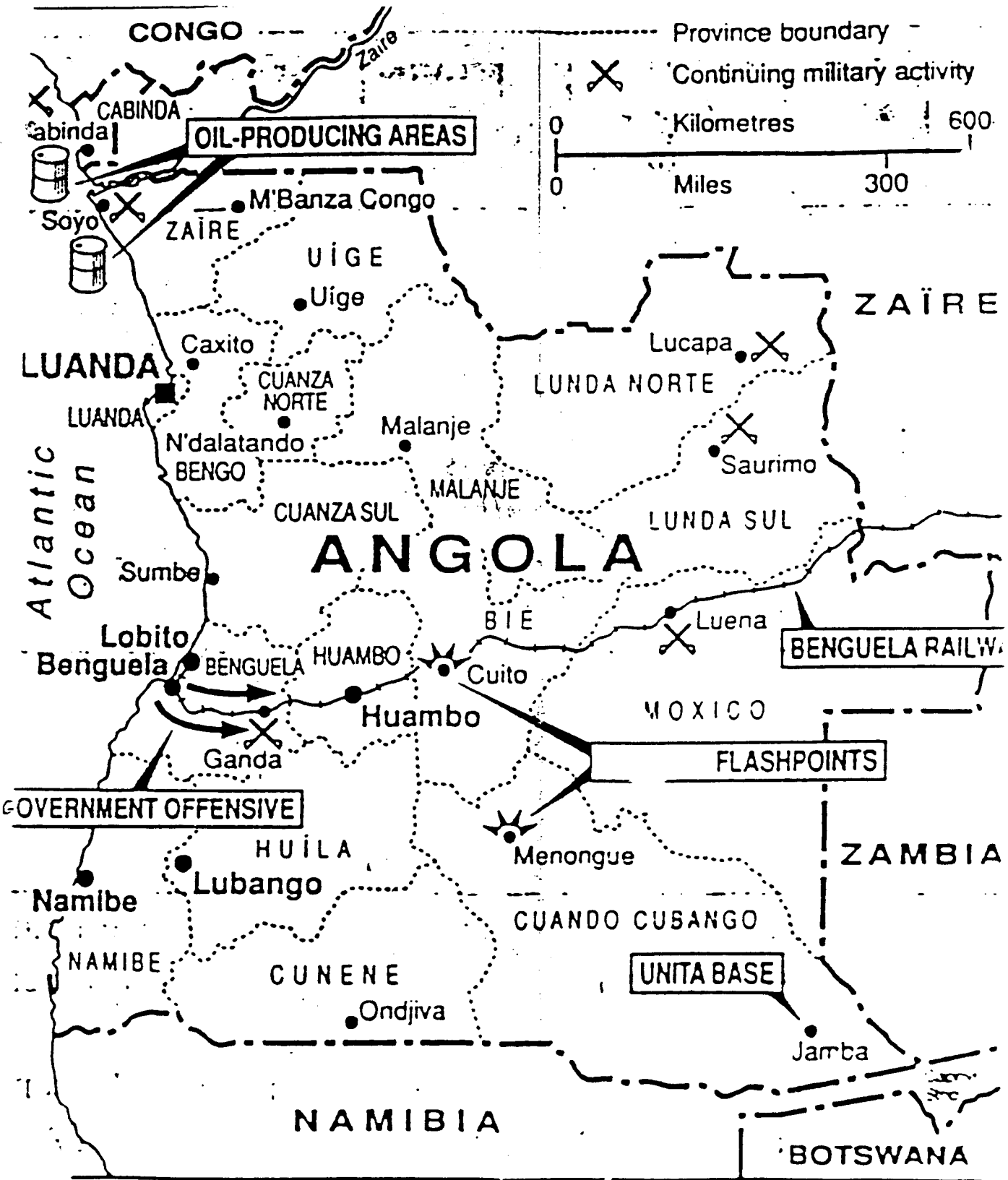
The major sources of refugees from neighbouring Angola into Zambia during the period under review were the districts of Moxico and Cuando Cubango. A district in Angola is the administrative equivalent of a province in Zambia. The refugees were generated as a result of concerted military activities by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) forces against the

Portuguese colonial forces. The nationalist movements sought to end Portuguese colonial rule in that country and mobilised political support among the Angolan populace including those of Moxico and Cuando Cubango districts in 1965.² The fighting uprooted many in the eastern part of that country. As a result, about 3,300 displaced Angolans crossed the international boundary and entered the North-Western Province and another but smaller refugee population consisting of 1,300 entered the Western Province.³

The Angolan refugees were predominantly illiterate and of a rural based agricultural background. In the pre-flight period the chief was the custodian of the land on behalf of his subjects who had the right to use it. The specific economic needs of each household largely determined the size of the land the chief apportioned to it for cultivation. A household was a basic socio-economic unit. Father, mother, children and some members of the extended family made up a household. Because the household was a single unit and was headed by one member (often the oldest) in the unit, the traditional land tenure system practised by the Angolans before they fled into Zambia was based on individual land allotment. Each household worked on its "own" farmland. The refugees whilst in Angola grew cassava as a staple food crop. They also grew some maize and kept some cattle and also fished in the seasonal rivers and lakes of the Upper Zambezi basin. Many of the earliest refugees into Meheba Settlement were former residents of Lwatembo Refugee Settlement and Mayukwayukwa Refugee

Settlement in the North-Western Province and Western Province, respectively. The origins of Meheba Settlement can therefore be best understood by focusing at the history of Lwatembo and Mayukwayukwa settlements.

ANGOLA: POINT OF CIVIL STRIFE AND DISPLACEMENT



SOURCE: CARE International (Z) Meheba Refugee Settlement, P.O. Box 11033, SOLWEZI

Lwatembo Refugee Settlement, 1966 - 1971

Most of the Angolan refugees settled themselves among their host Zambian villagers nearest to the Angola-Zambia boundary. The government hurriedly secured land away from the international boundary at Lwatembo, ten kilometres east of Zambezi town in the North-Western Province for the relocation of Angolan refugees in 1966.⁴ A project involving the UNHCR, the government, World Food Programme (WFP) and the Zambia Red Cross (ZRC) was worked out. The government provided the necessary administrative staff while the UNHCR provided the technical personnel as well as co-ordinated the funding. The WFP provided food rations and the ZRC carried out general emergency relief services.

The food rations by the WFP were supplemented with fish and elephant meat obtained from the local environment. A few refugees had managed to flee with some herd of cattle into Zambia. Those were the refugees who had lived on the Angolan side of the Angola-Zambia boundary nearest Zambia in the pre-flight period. That was why they managed to enter Zambia with their animals when trouble started in Angola. The health of these early arrivals was relatively better than that of late arrivals who mostly came from deep in eastern Angola in smaller scattered groups and families. The refugees in the latter category endured more suffering and when they entered Zambia they were often malnourished, weak and susceptible to disease, having long exhausted their food reserves on their trek to safety.

In settlements such as Lwatembo, these weakened persons were crammed in one place which according to Hansen was:

... an unfortunate situation from an epidemiological standpoint, in an alien institutional environment that caused other social and psychological stresses. Under these conditions it was inevitable that the [Settlements] would acquire unhealthy reputations.⁵

Deaths among refugees during the early period of Lwatembo Refugee Settlement were so common that the settlement was associated with disease and death.⁶ Consequently some refugees fled the settlement and settled themselves among the local indigenous villagers. During the first half of 1967, 560 acres of land were cleared for compulsory communal farming, with small plots allotted for tobacco, cabbage and pumpkins.⁷ Notable accomplishments by the refugees in the settlement included the construction of a dispensary and the sinking of five boreholes. Other than that, there was little else to indicate that there was a bright future for Lwatembo Settlement.

A major hindrance to the attainment of self-sufficiency in food production by over 3,000 refugees relocated by the government to Lwatembo Settlement was the government's insistence that the refugees forego their traditional land tenure system and instead cultivate land communally. Like Tanzania's Ujamaa, the Zambian government imposed compulsory communal farming on the refugees in the country because of the influence of its then national philosophy of Humanism. Both Ujamaa and Humanism were doctrines of African socialism

with a utopian central theme of communalism as man's highest stage of socio-economic development. The Zambian government had a deliberate policy to develop Lwatembo Settlement into a socialist village where groups of families would live together on a communal farm for their common benefit.⁸ The policy led to the failure of refugee settlements in Zambia by 1971. The government made a similar land allotment mistake when it launched the Rural Reconstruction Centre (RRC) programme for its nationals in April 1975, resulting in the failure of the RRC.

The RRC programme was originally designed to provide training to young people drawn from school leavers and the urban unemployed with the objective of fitting them for life in the rural sector. The original plan was that 53 centres created throughout the country would each have 800 youths resulting to a national population of 42,400. Each centre was to be 10,000 hectares in size. If successfully implemented, it would have involved one-third of Zambia's population in 1974.⁹ However, the RRC project failed because the centres were poorly located in isolated places and could not benefit from the pre-existing social-economic infrastructure such as roads, schools and medical services. Like the refugee settlements in question, the centres were heavily capitalised yet showed low agriculture production. Kalapula estimated the average rates of deserting as high as 80 per cent per centre.¹⁰

The outcome of the imposition of communal land-use by the government on the Lwatembo refugees was an immediate

failure, partially because the arrangement did not provide any security for individual refugee households. The policy of compulsory communal agriculture tended to overwhelmingly alter as well as destroy the traditional economic organisation of Angolan refugees in the settlement. As Gould observed:

The abrupt and unforeseen change in physical location of the refugees need not destroy or alter to any great extent their established economic organisation.¹¹

The government policy of compulsory communal land-use on the whole hardly left any room for individual economic initiative by the refugees working on the land. Such government paternalism merely reduced the refugees to perpetual economic dependence. It was not by coincidence, therefore, that throughout the lifespan of Lwatembo Settlement, from 1966 to 1971 the refugees just managed to subsist without attaining agricultural self-sufficiency. The refugees' subsistence was largely made possible because of WFP food rations. That kind of assistance saved lives at the cost of destroying a way of life.

Insufficient land to cater for the needs of both the local population and the needs of the refugee population in the Lwatembo area was another factor that hindered the attainment of agricultural self-sufficiency in the settlement. Cuenod pointed out that success in implementing a settlement programme was dependent on whether land in the given area was in sufficient quantity for cultivation and for the habitation of extra

population.¹² The experience at Lwatembo proved that the planners of the project had overlooked that aspect and failed to conduct a thorough pilot survey of the resources available before moving the refugees to the site.

It took a serious land dispute in 1967 between the Lovale and the Lunda, the key host ethnic groups in the area, for the government to realise that the presence of refugees in Zambezi District intensified an already existing problem of hunger for land among the host population. No conflict developed over land between the refugees in the settlement and their hosts, but it was apparent that a dispute was inevitable. According to Bulcha:

When different ... groups come to live together their relationship ... is usually peaceful and exploratory at first, followed by competition for scarce resources and perhaps conflicts as the result of this competition.¹³

As a result of the interaction between the Angolan refugees at Lwatembo Settlement and the neighbouring Zambian villagers, most of Bulcha's above points took place. What remained to develop were open conflicts between Zambians and Angolan refugees.

The livelihood of many refugees at Lwatembo Refugee Settlement was not solely dependent on the assistance rendered by the Zambian government and the agencies working in the settlement at that time. The harsh economic conditions obtaining in the settlement prompted some of the refugees to employ an array of effective survival strategies. Some

enterprising refugees in the settlement competed for scarce resources as well as for customers on the local market in a nearby market-town of Zambezi with the local community. Thus, some of the refugees felled down trees in the vicinity of the settlement for charcoal burning which they sold to the Zambezi community. Other notable supplementary survival strategies by the refugees at Lwatembo Settlement included the selling of tobacco grown on their small individual plots and the selling of fish which they caught in the nearby rivers.

To forestall the development of an open conflict arising from the on-going competition over resources between the refugees at Lwatembo Settlement and the local community, the government moved the refugees to a recently established Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement 45 kilometres west of Kaoma in the Western Province. The move started in July 1967 and by mid-October a total of 1,721 persons had been transferred.¹⁴ In addition 700 refugees left Lwatembo Settlement and settled themselves elsewhere in the province, partially in resentment against the policy of compulsory communal farming. According to Holborn by the end of October 1967 only 1,200 refugees remained at Lwatembo Refugee Settlement.¹⁵

The following year the Zambian Christian Refugee Service (ZCRS) was requested by the government to become the principal operational partner at Lwatembo Settlement. A report compiled by a team of experts from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) indicated in 1969 that:

The situation had now reached the point where agricultural tasks could only be completed by the use of a tractor and paid refugee labour. [Even then], given the nature of the soil, ... mechanised farming could not ... be able to produce a surplus at Lwatembo.¹⁶

The observation highlighted how poor the soil was at Lwatembo from an agricultural perspective and how deep rooted the refugees resented communal farming. The FAO report further recommended that government should abolish the existing communal land tenure system for the refugees in settlements and revert to individual land allotment. In response to the FAO report, government abolished compulsory communal farming in favour of individual farming in 1970. Secondly, towards the end of 1971 Lwatembo Refugee Settlement was closed down altogether and the 2,600 Angolan refugees were moved to a new settlement at Meheba.

Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement, 1966 - 1971

An influx of Angolan refugees into Senanga District of Western Province in September 1966 prompted the Zambian government to establish yet another refugee settlement in Kaoma District.¹⁷ The provincial agricultural authorities were instrumental in securing the land which came to be known as Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement, to which self-settled refugees in Senanga and other border areas were relocated.

Of the estimated 1,500 refugees only 452 entered the settlement, the remainder having refused to move so far inland if they had to leave their cattle behind.¹⁸ Many of

the refugees arriving in the settlement were severely malnourished. Therefore, the initial task of the UNHCR and the government was to provide emergency food and medical relief for the refugees. Like the experience at Lwatembo Settlement near Zambezi, lack of road and rail infrastructure between Kaoma and the rest of the country made the transportation of drugs and especially that of food to the refugees at Mayukwayukwa Settlement extremely difficult. A dispensary was hastily erected for the sick. Food for the refugees was purchased from the local community. The provincial veterinary personnel conducted some precautionary health measures on about 20 head of cattle brought to Mayukwayukwa Settlement by some of the refugees.

Like at Lwatembo, many deaths were recorded at Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement.¹⁹ Paul Katemo, an Angolan refugee who stayed in Mayukwayukwa for six months during 1974 before moving to Meheba Settlement in the same year, attributed the high incidence of death in Mayukwayukwa Settlement to overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions.²⁰ He recalled that Mayukwayukwa refugees begged for the supply of vegetables from their hosts. That suggested how far needy the refugees were and how remote they were from attaining self-sufficiency in food production.

Refugees at Mayukwayukwa Settlement also strongly resented the policy of compulsory communal farming pursued by the Zambian government. According to Holborn, the unhappy atmosphere in the settlement was heightened by the

inefficiency of an inexperienced refugee officer in charge of the day to day administration in the settlement. To defuse the growing restlessness among the refugees in the settlement, the Lutheran World Federation/Zambia Christian Refugee Service (LWF/ZCRS) seconded an agricultural expert to advise the refugees by mid 1967. The agricultural expert's effort did ease the tension among the refugees. The following year the LWF/ZCRS became the principal operational partner in a tripartite agreement to assist the refugees in the settlement to achieve self sufficiency in food production. The other parties in the agreement were the Zambian government and the UNHCR.

In 1968 new arrivals from Angola and Namibia were for the convenience of receiving emergency assistance accommodated in temporary reception centres near the international boundaries at Sesheke and Senanga districts, respectively. The refugees from Namibia fled from South African military activities in the Caprivi Strip. The refugees at both reception centres were later moved to Muyukwayukwa Settlement. By 1969 the refugee population in the settlement had reached 4,000.²¹ Food for the Muyukwayukwa refugees was mostly purchased from the local community, which unfortunately in turn triggered off local food shortages. That partially explained why during the course of the year the refugee population in the settlement dropped to 3,000.

The local community identified their hardships arising from food shortages with the presence of their host refugee

community at Mayukwayukwa Settlement. Tension between the two communities built up. Some of the refugees logically saw emigration as the lasting solution to the tension. Hence the observable reduction in the population of the Mayukwayukwa refugees. According to official UNHCR sources, the foregoing development arose because the refugees found a way to fend for themselves elsewhere in Zambia.²² Petterman was more specific and observed that actually the refugees drifted from Mayukwayukwa to Lusaka, indicating that the rural to urban migration common in Africa in general and in Zambia in particular was also relevant to refugees.²³

The rural to urban migration among refugees has been recorded elsewhere in Africa. In 1968 in Burundi for example, a population of organised rural settlements declined by 20 per cent because many went to the city in Bujumbura.²⁴ The causes of the rural to urban refugee migrations were similar to the causes of youth desertions from rural land development programmes in Zambia as shown by Kalapula's study. The study noted that traumatic upheavals and stress caused by involuntary migration to a strange environment explained massive desertions of youths away from rural land development projects.²⁵ Similarly, Mayukwayukwa was a strange environment to the refugees and it presented serious problems to them. These included the poor agricultural land and compulsory communal farming. Thus urban life seemed a lasting solution.

The above were some of the problems faced by the

refugees which made the future of Mayukwayukwa Settlement uncertain. Acting on the recommendations contained in the 1969 FAO report, the government abolished the much resented compulsory communal farming among the refugees, in favour of individual farming in 1970.²⁶ Further, the government reduced the refugee population in the settlement to correspond with the agricultural carrying capacity of the land in the settlement.²⁷ Mayukwayukwa Settlement, with a total refugee population of 3,400 in June 1970 had nearly 2,000 of the refugees comprising Angolans and some Namibians moved to Meheba in the course of the following year.²⁸ Since the refugees in both the settlements were essentially an agricultural population, the question of land tenure was the most crucial single factor to their social-economic life. This called for a deliberate and cautious government policy on the issue of the conditions of land tenure among the refugees. However, the government proved to be insensitive to the grievances of the refugees on the land issue. In fact, the acreage of land per refugee at Lwatembo Settlement was virtually non-existent while prior to 1970, at Mayukwayukwa Settlement only an insignificant patch for growing cash crops like tobacco and cotton was allotted to individual refugees, leaving the bulk of the land on which to grow food crops to communal farming.

It is plausible that government was initially reluctant to change its rural refugee land policy because of the fear that individual land holding among refugees

would raise jealousies and animosity between refugees and the host indigenous villagers. Secondly, government policy prior to 1970 considered the presence of refugees in the country as temporary, and the allotment of farmland to individual refugees would have been contrary to this policy as it would have entailed encouraging the refugees to stay on in the country indefinitely. The change of government policy towards refugees in the country in 1970 showed in the following years that rural refugees in organised settlements were over time, economically not different from the host population. The refugees were capable of working hard on the land and producing surplus for sale as well as organising themselves in fairly complex social organisations.

Notes

1. See J.D.B. Eerdmans, "An inventory of Settlement Schemes in Zambia," (Ministry of Rural Development, Land Division, February, 1974).
2. Art Hansen, "Once the Running Stops: The Socio-economic Resettlement of Angolan Refugees, 1966 - 72 in Zambia Border Villages", (Ph.D thesis, Cornell University, 1977), p.92.
3. Louis Holborn, Refuges: A problem of our Time, The work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press INC., 1975) 2. p 302
4. M.C. Banda, "Meheba Refugee Settlement to be Expanded and the Role of the Catholic Secretariat", The Voice of the Refugees, 22, (June 1987), p.36.
5. Hansen, "Once the Running Stops", p.32.
6. Note that statistics on the deaths of refugees at Lwatembo and Mayukwayukwa settlements could not be obtained by this author because the MHA at the time of compiling the data for the present study had not yet deposited any files at the National Archives of Zambia.

See also Methodology of this study on page 18
7. Luise W. Holborn, Refugees: A Problem of Our Time, p.1303.
8. Compare this policy with that followed by the Tanzanian government to settle its nationals in Ujamaa Villages.

See Lionel Cliffe and Griffiths L. Cunningham, "Ideology and the Settlement Experience in Tanzania", in Lionel Cliff (ed.) Socialism in Tanzania; an interdisciplinary reader Dar-es-Salaam: East Africa Publishing House, 1973.
9. Shamilupa E. Kalapula, "Rural and Land Resettlement Programmes in Zambia: Problems, Lessons and Prospects," A Paper presented at International Conference to mark the 50th Anniversary of IAS. Mulungushi International Conference Centre, Lusaka, Zambia, (19-22 June, 1989), p.20.
10. Kalapula, "Rural and land Resettlement Programmes," p.22
11. W.T.S Gould, "Refugees in Tropical Africa", Journal of Refugee Studies 8, 3 (Fall 1974), p.422.

12. Jacques Cuenod, "The Problem of Rwandese and Sudanese Refugees", in Sven Hamrell (ed.), Refugee Problems in Africa (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1967) p. 49.
13. Mekuria Bulcha, Flight and Integration: Causes of Mass Exodus from Ethiopia and Problems of Integration in the Sudan (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies), p.49.
14. Holborn, Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1303.
15. Holborn, Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1304.
16. As cited by Holborn in Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1304.
17. Holborn, Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1305.
18. Holborn, Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1305.
19. Please refer to endnote 6 for an explanation for the absence of statistics on the deaths of refugees at Mayukwayukwa Settlement.
20. Interview Paul Katemo, Sawyer, Aged 45, Road 4: Solwezi, Meheba Settlement, (19th December, 1995).
21. Holborn, Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1305.
22. See UNHCR, UNHCR Programme for 1970, A/AC.96/412 (Geneva: UNHCR, September, 1969).
23. Shelly Petterman, "A Comparative Survey of Two Decades of International Assistance to Refugees in Africa", Africa Today 31, 1 (1984), p.44.
24. UNHCR, UNHCR Operations in 1968 A/AC.96/407 (Geneva: UNHCR June 1969) as quoted by Petterman in "A Comparative Study", p.43.
25. E.S. Kalapula, "Agricultural Land Settlement Schemes for Youth and The Role of Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development in Zambia", in Kwaku Osei-Hwedie and Muna Ndulo (eds.) Youth Development: A Reader.
26. See the last paragraph under the subheading **Lwatembo Refugee Settlement, 1966 - 1971** in this Chapter, on pages 58-59

27. The carrying capacity of land is defined as the maximum population of humans and livestock the particular land can sustain without being subjected to the agents of soil degradation.
See Allan William, Studies in Land-Use in Northern Rhodesia (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).
28. Holborn, Refugees A Problem of Our Time, p.1307.

CHAPTER THREE

REFUGEE PARTICIPATION IN MEHEBA SETTLEMENT, 1971-1994

Refugees at Meheba effectively participated in the formal social organisations of settlement life when the authorities permitted them to. The refugees ran fairly complex administrative organisations after the initial advice from experts. However, paternalism towards the refugees and conflict between the authorities in the settlement inhibited the participation of refugees in the social and economic life of the settlement.

Preparatory work at Meheba site started in early 1971. The first 50 refugees from Lwatembo Settlement assisted in the clearing of roads and building sites, and in the construction of reception centres, a first aid post and temporary staff accommodation. At the beginning of the rains in November 1971 more refugees from Mayukwayukwa Settlement arrived in Meheba Settlement. By the end of the year some ninety kilometres of internal settlement roads were constructed. Also, the boundaries of about 1,300 plots of land were marked, each family unit being allotted five acres to enable ample room for adequate soil resting. Meheba Refugee Settlement consisted of a total of some 90,000 acres.

During the early years of the settlement, Angolan refugees who began farming and building more permanent homes were harassed by others who felt that it signified deserting their homeland. It was not until it became

obvious to most of the refugees that it would take a long time before a lasting solution to the problems in their home country would be resolved that they began to work towards realising self-sufficiency in food production. During the first two years of their stay in the settlement the refugees received on a diminishing scale seeds, fertilisers and basic tools free of charge. The refugees were encouraged and assisted to clear their plots and plant enough food for their own consumption and also for sale on the local markets in order to be able to support themselves.

Attempts at Refugee Participation, 1972-1992

In 1972 the refugee population in Meheba Settlement was 8,000. For administrative purposes the settlement was divided into three sections: Meheba 'A', 'B' and 'C'. However, there was no clear guide on how the three sections were to be administered. The influx of the refugee population into the settlement in the successive years rendered this administrative organisation of the refugee community inadequate. For example, after Angola's attainment of political independence, a civil war in that country broke out and displaced many. Thousands of these displaced Angolans fled and settled in Meheba in mid-1978. In the same period about 2,000 refugees from Zaire settled in Meheba Settlement with some Rhodesian, Namibian and South African refugees bringing the total refugee population in the settlement to 12,000.¹ It was apparent

that to effectively control such a large refugee population, there was need to evolve a more elaborate administrative system despite the initial cooperation demonstrated by the refugees with the NGOs carrying out development projects in the settlement.

The refugees contributed towards upgrading the roads in the settlement. In May 1979 they laid pipes under the main road to improve drainage. The refugees also assisted to grade the main road and repaired the bridge which had collapsed on the same road in the previous rain season. A new bridge was constructed on Road 8.² Work to replace the existing wooden structures with concrete pipes on the bridges in the settlement begun at the end of the 1980 rain season. The refugees rehabilitated one bridge over the Shikundwe stream on voluntary basis. After gaining some experience the Meheba refugees upgraded the rest of the bridges in the settlement the following year.

The total refugee population in the settlement reduced to 10,000 in 1980 because some Angolans and most Zaireans left for their home countries. Even then, the principle implementing agent in the settlement, the LWF/ZCRS found the existing refugee organisation wanting because it did not involve mass refugee participation in the administration of the settlement. The social organisation of refugees at Meheba Refugee Settlement called for a fairly more advanced system to be established as the refugee population increased, resulting in the formation of

a complex community comprising individuals from different countries.

In order to encourage refugee participation in the running of the settlement the LWF/ZCRS in 1980 introduced a formal refugee representation system centred on seven chiefs. As can be seen in diagram 1, the settlement was divided into seven units or villages, each headed by a democratically elected chief. Under each chief was a committee with one representative from each of the roads in the unit. Five of the seven village chiefs had been traditional rulers in Angola and the remaining two were elected into office for administrative convenience. The major function of the chiefs in the settlement was to act as a conduit for conveying information and directives from the refugee officers to their villagers. It was hoped that the new village units would encourage the refugees to administer their own affairs and facilitate them towards becoming self-sufficient.³

After the establishment of the Chiefs-System and the election of village committee members, the members of each village were asked to prepare a one hectare demonstration plot. The purpose of the plot was to call the farmers of each village together and show them improved agricultural practices for the growing of maize, groundnuts, cotton, beans and sunflower. Any farmer who wanted a loan to enable him cultivate his own crops was obliged to attend the demonstration classes, which included intercropping, spacing and the applying of fertilisers. All the inputs on

village plots were supplied free to each village chief, and the harvests were donated to the handicapped in the respective villages.

The chiefs in practical terms, did not command any authority in the settlement. That was vested in the refugee section of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). It was the Senior Refugee Officer and his two Zambian assistants representing the MHA who commanded authority in the settlement. These were responsible for screening and registering new arrivals, supervising the allocation of plots and in charge of the maintenance of law and order. The village chiefs in Meheba Settlement sent a delegation to the UNHCR Lusaka branch to complain about their insignificant role in the running of the settlement in 1985. The Chiefs wanted to be more involved in the planning and running of day to day activities in the settlement. The chiefs' delegation, however, achieved little. The overall input by refugees including chiefs in the management of the settlement and the development of projects continued to be fairly minimal. The Chiefs-System was inadequate for not allowing representation for the non-Angolans in the settlement because all the seven chiefs were Angolans.

On 31st March 1982 Meheba Refugee Settlement was officially handed over by the UNHCR to the Zambian government. The LWF/ZCRS remained a consultant to the government up to 31st December. The MHA took over the role of the main implementing agency. The different agencies

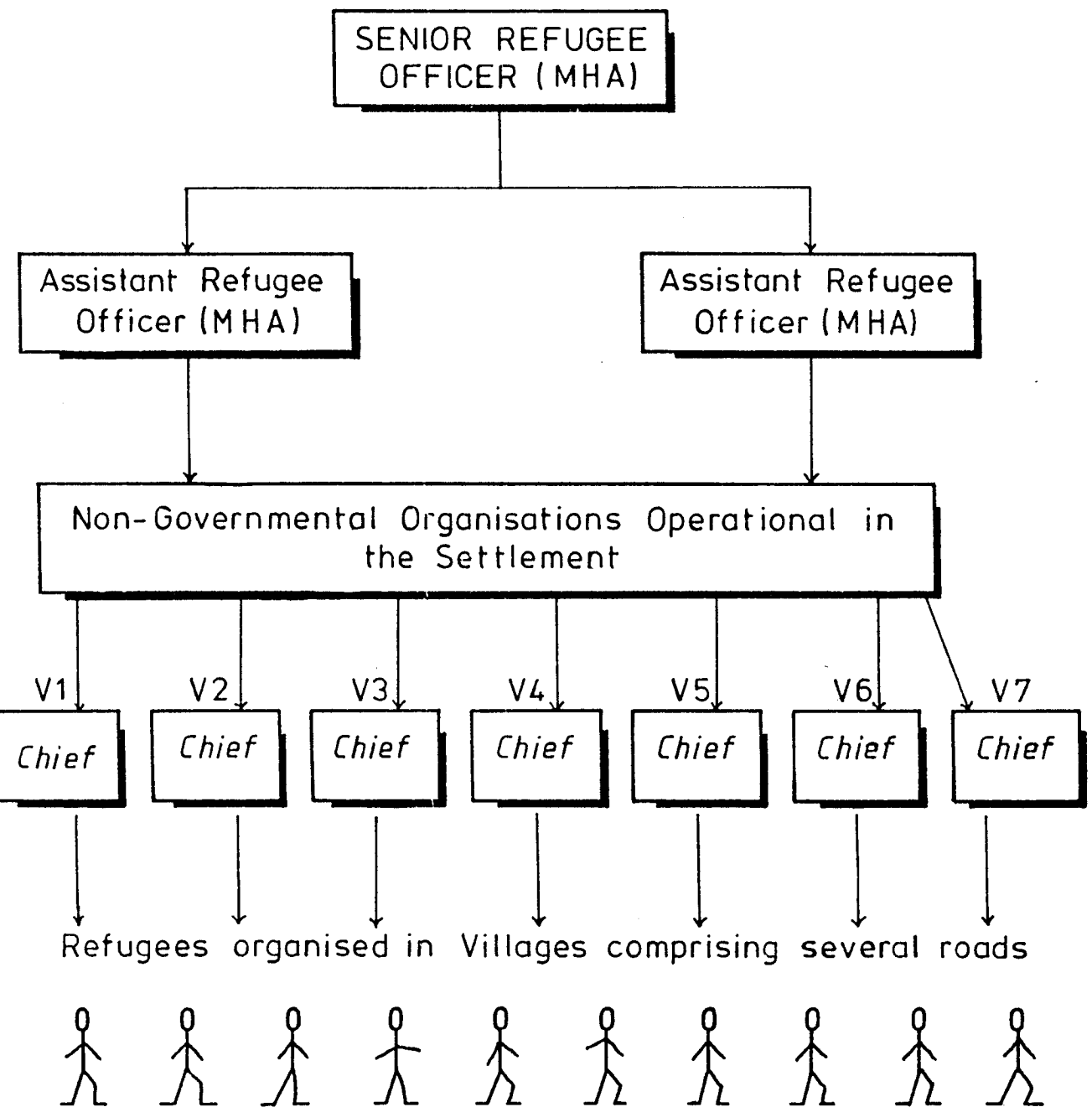
then operating in the settlement were Oxfam (UK), the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), the Catholic Secretariat of Zambia (CSZ), the International Catholic Migration Committee (ICMC) and the Association to Aid Refugees (AAR).

The CSZ assumed the position of lead project implementing agency in the new extension area of Meheba Settlement in 1987.⁴ The CSZ had a different conception from the one upheld by its predecessors on the roles of the village chiefs in the settlement. The arguments advanced by the CSZ for their stance were legal. The organisation considered it illegal that the Angolan chiefs in Meheba Refugee Settlement should continue to perform the functions of a chief in Zambia, a country of asylum. They argued that:

... Angolan chiefs were chiefs in Angola not in Zambia. We realised that a vacuum in the internal administration of Meheba would be created when the chiefs repatriated to Angola ... inheritance could not be institutionalised in an asylum country.⁵

Therefore, the CSZ phased out the Chiefs-System towards the end of 1988 and elevated the functions of the Road Chairpersons to take up the vacuum left by the chiefs.

Diagram 1: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF MEHEBA REFUGEE SETTLEMENT 1980-1985



Under the new system refugee residents along each road in the settlement voted for an executive committee headed by a chairperson. Each of the roads in the settlement was under an elected chairperson: Old Meheba consisting of Roads 1 to 28 and New Meheba Extension consisting of Roads 29 to 75. Each of the Mehebas, the old and the new extension had an Overall Chairperson, also referred to as the Chairperson General.

The chiefs ceased to be involved in the running of the settlement because now refugees tabled their disputes before the Road Chairpersons. The problems frequently brought to the attention of Road Chairpersons by refugees included cases of adultery, theft, witchcraft and those of pigs or goats trespassing into a neighbour's field and eating the crop. The last problem was a contributing factor to the small number of domesticated animals in the settlement. For example, in February 1993 the total Population of livestock in Meheba Refugee Settlement only consisted of 54 cattle, 600 goats and 669 pigs.

Those cases which could not be settled by the Road Chairperson and his executive committee were transferred to the Overall Chairperson. In turn, the cases which the Overall Chairperson failed to resolve were transferred to the Refugee Officer. It was on the question of repatriation that the role of the chiefs was considered

cardinal and the chiefs commanded some respect. That was because the authority of the chiefs as custodians of tradition cut across political barriers among refugees in the settlement. That spirit of oneness represented by the leadership of traditional chiefs was essential among the refugees returning to Angola to avoid fresh fighting along political affiliations from breaking out.

Care International continued administering the settlement with the assistance of Road chairpersons when they replaced CSZ as the lead implementing agency in April 1992. The Road chairpersons supplied Care International with the necessary bio-data of road residents to enable the organisation distribute food to new arrivals, the unaccompanied minors, the handicapped and the aged. A new feature under the administration of Care International was the inclusion of females in the roads representation. That was because the period of Care administration coincided with the period gender issues were topical not only in Zambia, but also on the world scene.

The UNHCR encouraged the Zambian government in 1985 to phase out donations to refugees, arguing that the donations were defeating UNHCR efforts to make the refugees self-reliant. The UNHCR Representative to Zambia, Abadallah Saied observed that:

... a new system for displaced people was being worked out to reduce Zambia's burden on looking after the refugees because of the economic crisis the country was going through ... The aim of the UNHCR was to build infrastructure such as schools, health centres, roads and wells; and tractors

and inputs, and demarcate plots on which the refugees were expected to grow cash crops for sale ... Meheba Settlement [was] ... being turned into a model ... for the new system of looking after refugees.⁷

However, the development programme designed by the UNHCR for refugees in Meheba Settlement was slowed down because the organisation did not have a permanent officer resident in the settlement. Instead, the organisation sent its staff to visit the settlement once or twice a month. That in effect meant that the UNHCR supervised the Meheba Refugee Settlement project from the branch offices in Lusaka without consulting the beneficiaries of the project. An official of Oxfam (UK) in Lusaka attacked the UNHCR conduct of the development programme for Meheba when he said:

In our view this is nonsense; what is needed is encouragement for the refugees to think critically about what they need, and how they themselves might solve their problems.⁸

The absence of refugee input contributed to the settlement registering problems with assistance projects that reflected the priorities of non-refugees and designs that were imported from outside, and which were inappropriate to the settlement context. There was evidence indicating that the first UNHCR and government partner agency at Meheba settlement, the LWF/ZCRS pumped into the settlement a lot of money without considering any provision for future recurrents. For instance, the mechanical workshop in the settlement by 1985 had many broken down vehicles, including

thirteen motorcycles but there were no spares to repair them. The only vehicles still on the road were one truck, two tractors and a motorcycle. In the meantime, there were six full time mechanics to service them.⁹ In addition, the CSZ dished out so many free commodities to the new and old arrivals alike, that they even posted some personnel to work full time for the purpose in the settlement, with UNHCR approval.¹⁰

The present study observed that the attitude of dependency among refugees at Meheba settlement was not an inherent phenomenon but a learnt behaviour from how the refugees were treated during the various stages of their stay in the country of asylum. One reason some refugees at Meheba Settlement acquired some traits of dependency was inaccurate information they received at the reception centres in border areas. Some officials promised the refugees that they would get everything free and their problems would end upon their arrival in Meheba. When the refugees were moved into the settlement, they sometimes stayed for more than the stipulated two weeks at the Reception Centre on Road 38 before modalities were completed and the refugees settled on their respective plots. Meanwhile, the refugees, especially the men were deprived of their roles as heads of their family units and providers of food and discipline because all these were assumed by the settlement authorities. The position of women was more humane because they were kept occupied by looking after the children and cooking. The provision of

WFP food rations and other free goods for two years without due consideration of individual economic abilities conditioned some refugees to be less assertive and depend more and more on outside assistance. Those refugees who had stayed at Lusaka Refugee Transit Centre for as long as two years or more before being moved to Meheba tended to be particularly more prone to dependency than those who spent less time on transit to the settlement.

It was basically in order to undertake a project which would create critical awareness and develop in the refugee the ability to lead a full and independent life that Oxfam/VSO signed a Tripartite Agreement with the government of the Republic of Zambia and the UNHCR in July 1985.¹¹ The project was funded by the UNHCR. It consisted of two main components: to revitalise the Multipurpose Cooperative Society in the Settlement; and to enhance community development work which emphasised the creation of viable refugee representation and management structures. Community development was to be concerned with fostering the Meheba refugees to actively participate in the improvement of their socio-economic and cultural basic needs like health, education and water as well as the development of productive activities including agriculture and the crafts industry.

In 1985 refugees in Meheba Settlement under the guide of Oxfam/VSO formed a care taker committee with the purpose of increasing refugee participation in both the administration and implementation of projects in the

settlement. It was the care-taker committee that formulated the structure and membership of the Meheba Refugee Settlement Management Committee (hereafter simply referred to as the Management Committee).

The Executive Committee of the Management Committee first met on 19th July, 1986 while all the leaders in the settlement met a week later. The leaders comprised fourteen Committee Members, seven chiefs and five specialists working in the settlement: a teacher, a nurse, a medical assistant and two Oxfam/VSO project animators. According to the minutes of the leaders' meeting, some Village Committees under the supervision of chiefs had scored a number of successes in their areas. For example, some Village Committees were advising their people to grow sweet potatoes as a substitute for bread. Another attribute of Village Committees was the making of cooking oil from locally grown sunflower seeds, especially around Meheba 'C'.

There were suspicions, however, between the chiefs and the rest of the members of the Management Committee as was echoed by a representative of one of the chiefs at a meeting:

Chiefs have power, that is why there is progress [in the Settlement] ... But there is a problem with you (meaning the Management Committee). When cutting the tree we are together, but when enjoying the fruits only a few people. You cheat us. You eat on our heads ...¹²

These suspicions between the chiefs and the younger members of the Management Committee in Meheba Settlement may be

likened to those suspicions obtaining in most African countries between the usually older and less educated traditional rulers and the often educated younger politicians. These suspicions were a hindrance to effective refugee participation in solving some of the problems besetting the settlement.

As can be seen in Diagram 2 the existing Chiefs-System was retained while the representation of the various nationalities and that of the majority of the Angolan population was considered. The total membership of the Management Committee was seventeen, distributed as follows: fifteen refugee representatives, subdivided into nine Angolans (including two of the village chiefs), three Zaireans and three Namibians. The remaining two were Zambian community development personnel resident in the settlement. In addition, the two Oxfam/VSO community development workers resident in the settlement were *ex-officio*. That is, although these *ex-officio* members participated in the deliberations of the meetings, they did not have the right to vote. Only the refugee members of the Management Committee in turn elected seven of their members to serve as the Executive Committee. Finally, it was the Executive Committee that elected the Chairperson of the Management Committee.

Five members of the Management Committee were assigned to be in charge of different development sectors in Meheba Settlement, viz: education, agriculture, health, social and home economics, and crafts. These different

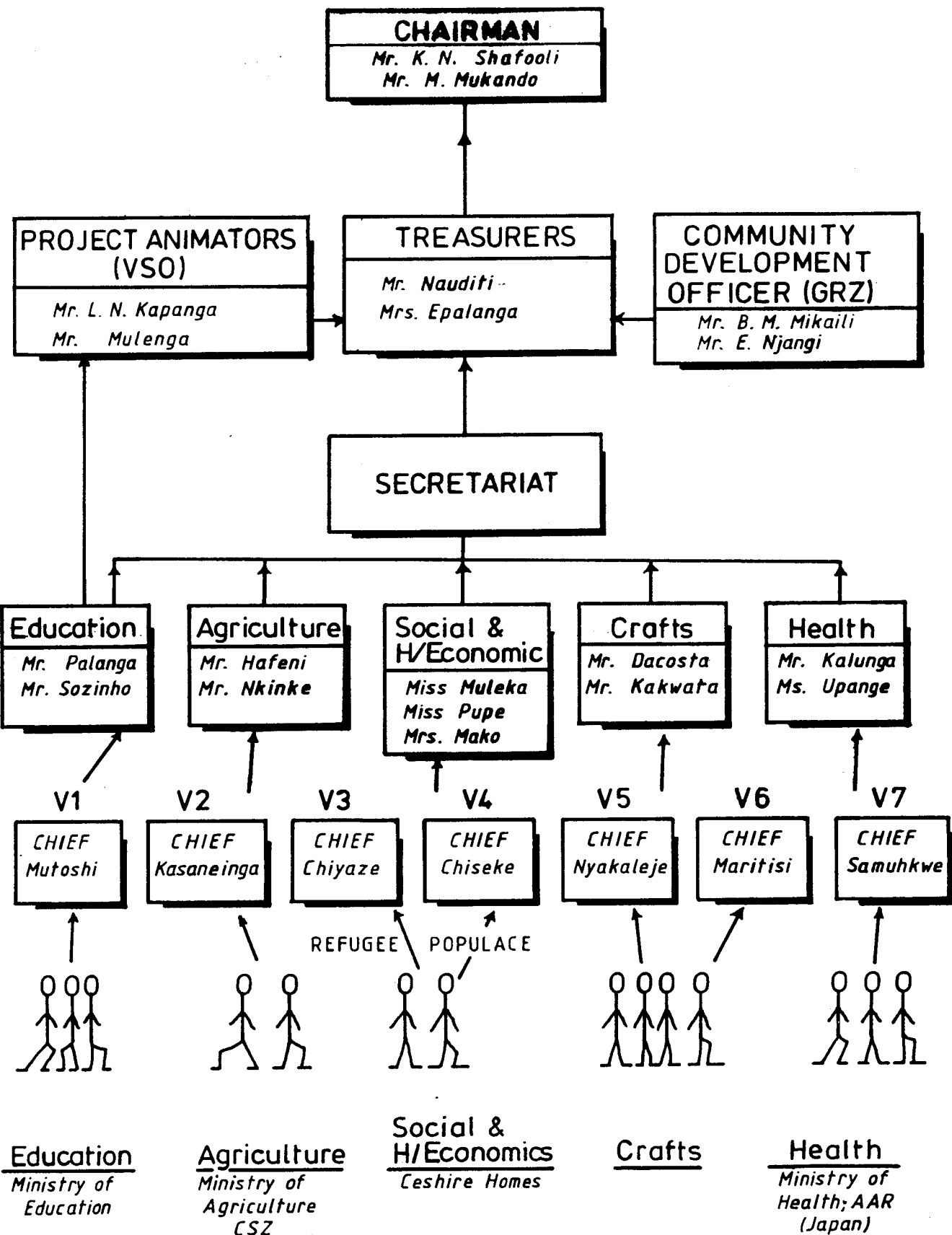
development sectors were sub-committees of the Management Committee. Each agency or organisation working in the settlement was linked to a sub-committee as shown at the bottom of Diagram 2.

The Management Committee was formally constituted in July 1986.¹³ The term of office was two years. However, the selection of the first Management Committee was not based on popular democratic principles involving direct choice by the residents of Meheba Settlement. The first Chairperson of the Committee, K.N. Shafooli argued that it was necessary to first put a structure in place and to fill it with motivated and well-intentioned individuals before going through the turmoil that general elections would have involved.

The chain of command followed the following pattern: refugees brought up problems to the village committees. At village level, the problems and solutions would be discussed. In the event of the village-level failing to solve the problems, the Village Committee reported the problems to a relevant sub-committee. At the Sub-Committee level the problems and possible solutions would be discussed at the same forum with relevant agencies. Basically, that was to ensure that before inviting outside assistance, all attempts by agencies in the settlement to resolve the problems under consideration were exhausted.

Diagram 2. MEHEBA REFUGEE SETTLEMENT PLANNING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WORKING STRUCTURE



If solutions to the problems were not forthcoming from the sub-committee sitting with the relevant agencies, then it would be the duty of the Management Committee to apply for assistance outside the settlement.

The Management Committee in Meheba Settlement increasingly became an effective vehicle for refugee contribution in the planning and implementation of assistance projects. Part of the Committee's duty was to collaborate with the agencies and organisations carrying out development projects in the settlement. The Committee identified specific refugee needs and advised project implementing agencies on the design of the projects to suit the priority areas of the beneficiaries in the settlement. That way effort and scarce resources were not wasted but channelled where they were needed, unlike in the past when some external agents expended resources on assistance that was of little relevance to the refugees in Meheba Settlement.

For example, in September 1985 a prominent visiting member of the Japanese government donated biscuits worth thousands of kwacha to Meheba residents, while two classrooms at Meheba 'B' Primary School had no roof and the rain was about to start.¹⁴ In addition, clinics in the settlement were in dire need of drugs. The biscuits were of little benefit to the refugees. The resources to purchase and transport the biscuits to the settlement were wasted.

Two Zambians were recruited by Oxfam/VSO to develop community service in the settlement. Noah Kapanga was recruited in July 1985 while Lewis Mulenga begun work in the same year in December. The two worked closely with the Management Committee to activate the refugee community participate in the development of the settlement. The Management Committee provided a broader view of refugee needs than those given by the chiefs. Finally, the Committee also demonstrated a better understanding of the technical issues involved than the chiefs who were much older and mostly illiterate.

The technical competence of the Management Committee enabled its officers to effectively involve themselves in solving some difficult problems that beset the refugee community at Meheba Settlement. For example, the 1987 long dry season made the refugees living far from streams to experience water shortages. A team of experts drawn from community workers and the Association to Aid Refugees (AAR) recommended that 17 wells be dug at various points to alleviate the water problem in the settlement.¹⁵ The Management Committee supported the foregoing project by funding it.

Complaints by some refugees that wells dug by AAR had dirty drinking water were found wanting in 1987 by a team of inspectors drawn from health workers, a representative from AAR and community workers. It was found that the main problem was lack of education on the use of the facilities by the refugees. The Management Committee was actively

involved in sensitising the refugee community on the findings of the inspectors on the water situation of the settlement. For the type of wells called tripot dug by the Japanese, refugee families were advised to construct shelters to prevent dust and leaves from falling in. Those refugees using handpump wells were instructed to dig trenches to avoid water settling near the wells and sipping right back into the wells. The families were also advised to boil their water if they depended on the water from the wells dug by themselves.

From the above, it can be argued that the Management Committee was no more representative than the Chiefs-System introduced in 1980. The organ, though administratively more effective, was less representative than the Chiefs-System. While almost 95 per cent of the 12,000 residents of Meheba Settlement in 1986 were Angolans, they had only nine of the total seventeen positions on the Committee. In contrast, the only 140 Namibians had three representatives on the Committee. The first members serving on the Committee did not obtain their mandate to lead the settlement community through democratic elections because no elections took place. The chiefs' leadership may be justified because these were mostly genuine traditional leaders even before they crossed into Zambia from Angola. Hence the Committee leaders were simply contrived from above.

Demise of Oxfam/VSO Meheba Community Development Project, 1986 -1988

The approach advocated by Oxfam/VSO, that of empowering the various levels of the refugee community, starting from the Village Committee to the Executive Committee of the Management Committee to participate in finding solutions to their problems before outside assistance was sought, entailed that it was unlikely for the system to show quick results. A lot of time was needed for discussions before solutions could be arrived at by the refugees. As the main implementing partner of the Meheba Community Development Project, Oxfam/VSO spent a lot of time getting the project workers recruited, and the Management Committee selected and working. In addition, to get the attitude of dependency adopted by some refugees moderated, before the refugees could effectively make their own decisions about development needed a lot of time.

By December 1986 the Meheba Management Committee was increasingly taking hold on programme management control. It soon became clear that there were major differences between the UNHCR and Oxfam/VSO on the approach to carrying out assistance to refugees in Meheba Refugee Settlement. The UNHCR saw assistance to refugees in the settlement as largely an infrastructural one concentrating on buildings, roads, wells and other physical infrastructure as opposed to the emphasis on community development.¹⁶ These differences in approach affected the relations between the UNHCR and Oxfam/VSO personnel. The former exerted pressure

for quick results in terms of structural buildings.

Relations between the Management Committee and the Refugee Officers, in the settlement were not good either. In mid 1986 the Committee opened a project account at a bank in Solwezi. Whenever required, Oxfam transferred funds from its Lusaka account to the Solwezi project account. Prior to the formation of the Management Committee the funds for the Meheba project were handled by the MHA. The competition over the control of funds marred the relations between the MHA and the Management Committee because each party regarded itself as the rightful controller of the funds for development projects in the settlement.

Another source of conflict between the Refugee Officers and the Management Committee was over the control of vehicles in the settlement. Tractors and a lorry were under the charge of the Committee. This was in conformity with Oxfam's principle not only to enable the refugees participate in identifying and directing the project, but also in making decisions concerning development in the settlement. Earlier, project vehicles in the settlement were under the control of the Refugee Officer and his two assistants.

Relations deteriorated further between Oxfam/VSO workers in the settlement and officials at the UNHCR Lusaka Branch, and so did the relations between Oxfam/VSO workers and the government, after a new Refugee Officer was posted to Meheba Settlement in 1987. Soon after that, the

government forced Kailly Shafooli to resign as Chairperson of the Meheba Management Committee in November 1987. The official explanation by the government was that he was involved in activities reactionary and subversive to national security. The underlying reason, however, was government opposition, spearheaded by the new Refugee Officer at Meheba Settlement to any genuinely participatory work among refugees. A climate of fear and suspicion developed in the settlement, following the government's hand in the resignation of Kailly Shafooli as Chairperson of the Management Committee.

Michael Edwards, Oxfam's Regional Representative on 23rd December, 1987 wrote to the Permanent Secretary, MHA in Lusaka announcing the decision by his organisation to withdraw from the joint agreement with the Government of the Republic of Zambia, UNHCR and Oxfam/VSO on Community Development Programme at Meheba Settlement with effect from 1st January, 1988.¹⁷ Cited as the reason for withdrawing from the joint agreement was that every attempt by oxfam to sustain a viable programme in Meheba Settlement was not met with any enthusiasm by UNHCR or government.

The Coordinating Committee, 1986 - 1994

Another important organ in the settlement (and mentioned above) was the Coordinating Committee. Because of the plurality of refugee agencies working in Meheba, the Coordinating Committee was formed in 1986 to facilitate effective interaction among the organisations working in

the settlement. The Committee was a forum on which government officials, voluntary agency staff, and refugees planned and worked together in assistance efforts in the settlement. Refugee representation on the Coordinating Committee consisted of the Management Committee Chairperson and one of the ordinary refugees.

The history of Meheba Settlement up to 1994 had many attempts to reactivate the Coordinating Committee under new membership affiliations but maintaining the same aims. During some years the Committee was strong but it repeatedly died out. Lack of continuity was the committee's major problem.

The major lesson learned from the abortive Meheba Refugee Settlement participation project by Oxfam/VSO was that unless government agreed to and approved the approach adopted by the implementing partners, government would deliberately frustrate such a project from operating effectively.¹⁸ That was particularly the case in Southern Africa during the period under discussion, given the deteriorating security climate and the rising tension all around in the face of threats of destabilisation by South Africa and her proxies. In such atmosphere, strengthening refugee organisation could easily be misinterpreted as propagating political opposition in the host country. That was what came of the Meheba Community Development Project.

Further, some of the foregoing observations applied to the UNHCR, which tended to "drag its feet" when refugee participation was interpreted as threatening the hegemony

of the High Commissioner for Refugees. Failure in the settlement was not only limited to the community development project but it also applied to the multipurpose cooperative society. The following chapter attempts to provide an historical account for the failure of the cooperative society to develop to a viable economic project.

Notes

1. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report", (Lusaka: 1979), p.10.
2. Refer to Map 2 on page 3
3. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report", (Lusaka: 1979), p.9.
4. Mathias Banda, "Meheba Expansion - The Latest", The Voice of the Refugees, (25th June, 1991), p.18.
5. Interview, (Mr. Oliver Masaku, aged about 40, Road 36, Former Project Coordinator Border Areas under CSZ from 1987 to March 1992. Again, Project Coordinator under Care from April, 1992 to December 1995: Solwezi, Meheba Settlement: 15th December, 1995).
6. Care International Zambia, "Monthly Report", (Solwezi:February,1993), p.4.
7. Times of Zambia, (9th September, 1985).
8. Oxfam, Zam/N-PJ, Vol. 1, Meheba Refugees Settlement, (16th May, 1985).
9. Mike Edwards, "Tour Report: Meheba Refugee Settlement 20/3/85 to 21/3/85", (Lusaka: 1985) p.1.
10. A letter by Ann Lloyd-Williams, Oxfam Field Director for Southern Africa to Lucy Muyoyeta, (dated 17th January, 1986).
11. UNHCR, Lusaka Branch, "Agreement for Project 85/AP/Zam/LS/5/A," (LU/85/1802) (14th October, 1985), p.9.
12. Minutes of Meheba Refugee Settlement Development Planning Management Committee Leaders' Meeting (held on 19th July, 1986), p.3.
13. Lance Clark, "Refugee Participation Case Study: The Meheba Settlement in Zambia," (Refugee Policy Group, November, 1987), p.15.
14. Times of Zambia, (9th September, 1985).
15. Oxfam, Zam 108, Vol. 3 N.L. Kapanga, "Meheba Community project: workers report July 1987 to September 1987" (Solwezi: 1987), p.2
16. Oxfam, Zam/APPLS, Vol. 1, Meheba Refugee Settlement, (24th July, 1985).

17. Oxfam, Zam 108, Vol. 3, A Letter to the Permanent Secretary from Oxfam Regional Representative, (dated 23rd December, 1987).
18. Hostility to refugee participation by some host governments was observed at the, "Workshop on Refugee Participation and Social Services in camps and settlements in Africa," (17-21 November, 1986 Nairobi: Kenya), p.5.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEHEBA MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY, 1979-1994

The multipurpose cooperative society at Meheba bordered on economic collapse during most of its existence. The society was potentially a viable means of enabling the refugees generate income and improve their standard of living. The concentration of the refugee population in the settlement, abundant land, good soils and reliable rains suggested that the society could attract the biggest membership and become the most successful cooperative society in the province. Unfortunately, the society was riddled with serious internal administrative problems, and so was its provincial affiliate, the North-Western Cooperative Union. Nevertheless, the society did provide some important services to its members and non-members resident in the settlement during those few years it was economically buoyant.

A cooperative is a business organisation formed by ten or more persons usually with limited resources which they pool to form capital for business.¹ The business is controlled democratically by the members. An Interim Board of Directors was selected for the Meheba Multipurpose Cooperative Society (MMCS) by the initial 75 refugee members of the society on 17th May, 1979.²

Six months later an application for the registration of MMCS was submitted to the Registrar of Societies. It was hoped that the society would assist the resident refugees in taking over many of the projects and activities

in the settlement which were being run by LWF/ZCRS. That way, Meheba refugees would become more involved in the administration of their own affairs. It was also hoped that each village unit in the settlement would have among other things, its own cooperative.

The MMCS was finally registered on 27th August, 1980 under the Zambia Societies Act of 1970 as an affiliate to the North-Western Cooperative Union (NWCU) and the Zambia Cooperative Federation (ZCF).³ The Decision making structure of the MMCS was organised in the following manner: the members elected seven members of the Board of Directors and officers comprising the Chairperson and his vice, the Treasurer and his vice and one Committee Member. Officers ran the day to day activities of the society and these were the society manager, the bookkeeper and shopkeepers.

A Cooperative Officer from the Department of Marketing and Cooperatives in Solwezi was assigned to oversee the activities of the society in the settlement. His role was to provide technical expertise and advice to both the board and management. Overall, the MMCS appeared democratic. It should be noted that the most successful farmers were often elected to the board.

Operations of MMCS in the Settlement, 1979-1985

The first manager of the MMCS was employed in 1979, well before the organisation was registered. The idea was to speed up the development of the cooperative into a

viable business society. Upon assuming office, the manager started retailing in cigarettes and essential commodities: soap, mealie meal, cooking-oil and salt. The availability of essentials in the settlement saved many refugees from the inconvenience of losing many man-hours on long trips to Solwezi town. An application for a trading licence was made in 1980 through the Department of Cooperatives in Solwezi.⁴ Towards the end of the year the cooperative erected the buildings for three of the five grinding mills purchased the previous year.

The operational priority of LWF/ZCRS in 1981 was to bring the settlement to the appropriate stage in preparation for the planned handover to the Zambian government after the end of the year.⁵ As such, LWF/ZCRS sought to strengthen MMCS both financially and in man-power needs, in readiness for the organisation to take over the functions of the lead operating partner (LWF/ZCRS) in the settlement. After the handover, the cooperative society was expected to erect its store and offices as well as to make progress on the construction of community centres in each administrative unit. LWF/ZCRS expected the multipurpose cooperative society not only to continue upgrading the main road in the settlement, but also to spearhead the improvement of the poor water system at Road 18 headquarters area, and to encourage residents who had wells to put concrete covers on them. The MMCS was also expected to take up the responsibility of collecting the surplus harvest for commercialisation and ensuring prompt

payment to the refugee farmers. However, Members as well as management of the MMCS had neither the necessary experience nor the capacity to take charge of the complexities involved in administering a settlement of the magnitude of Meheba Refugee Settlement Scheme.

LWF/ZCRS involvement in Meheba Settlement did not cease with the formal handover ceremony that took place in the settlement on 31st March 1982. The LWF/ZCRS accepted the Zambian government's request to provide a consultant in the settlement until December 31st 1982. The major concern of the consultant was to improve the already established MMCS by developing it to a self-reliant and viable organisation. The MMCS was by the time of the planting season able to give loans of nearly \$18,000 to the refugee farmers for the purchase of seeds, fertilizers and other requisites. According to LWF/ZCRS sources, by the end of 1982 there was an observable improvement in the quality of various vegetables and other agricultural produce taken to the Copperbelt market because the refugee farmers in the settlement had benefited from their membership of the MMCS which put the services of agricultural assistants at their disposal.⁶

An independent scrutiny by the Meheba Planning Management Committee, at the operations and books of accounts of the MMCS, however, revealed that the cooperative had a history of losses. That included the period LWF/ZCRS was the lead implementing agency and the period preceding and following Oxfam/VSO involvement in the

cooperative.⁷ For example, in 1982 the cooperative society made an overall loss of K5,000 and accounts for the 1983/4 recorded substantive losses as well. Three successive managers in 1985 were fired, for embezzling the cooperative's funds: two of these were Zambians and one Angolan.

Perhaps a more detailed account of the operations of the MMCS must be provided to show the magnitude of the inefficiency of the organisation. When the MMCS submitted its accounts to the ZCF for auditing in 1983, the report by auditors from Lusaka which was ready in March 1984, outrightly rejected the accounts because the accounts did not reflect a true picture of the financial operations of the organisation.⁸ The internal control system on which the financial report of the MMCS was based was insufficient to safeguard the assets of the organisation and to ensure the accuracy of the records. When payments and receipts were compared, payments exceeded by K2,176.54 which was taken as unrecorded income.

In addition, certain advances were made but no specifications were provided for auditors to ascertain whether or not those were assets. The report by the auditors stated that the MMCS allowed laymen to evaluate the livestock of the society. The society failed to provide a share certificate for the investment in the NWCU to which the MMCS was affiliated, for the auditors to examine. Accounts payable amounting to K3,125 could not be confirmed by the auditors because there were no

supporting documents or details for expert scrutiny.

Further, the auditors were not happy with a capital grants figure because it was given by laymen evaluators. No details concerning grants were made available to the auditors. As a result, the auditors had to rely on verbal confirmation from the Department of Marketing and Cooperatives in Solwezi through their internal auditors. Because of shoddy preparation of the accounts, the auditors from Lusaka decided that the accounts of the organisation were inadequate. There was need for more explanation on the accounts. Even when they were given ample time, the MMCS failed to produce reliable accounts which could explain all the business transactions of the cooperative.

These problems were not peculiar to the MMCS. This study found country-wide evidence suggesting that other cooperative societies experienced similar inadequacies. As early as October, 1972 the then Minister of State for Rural Development, Matthew Nkoloma, pointed out that cooperatives in Zambia faced the problem of proper accounting.⁹ The problem continued through the 1980s up to 1994. Lack of a good accounting system in any organisation deprived management of factual information on which to base decisions. Another contributing factor to the shoddy performance of many cooperative societies in the country, to which the MMCS was not an exception, was lack of education and information by members on the existing situation related to their organisations. Members who were ignorant of their responsibilities in cooperatives merely

swelled up statistical membership records and often withdrew their membership.

The difficulties of the multipurpose cooperative at Meheba Settlement may be best understood in the light of the problems faced by the mother body at the provincial level. The NWCU was rocked with a history of poor management. For example, in December, 1981 the entire board of NWCU was dissolved and an interim one appointed after a report by auditors revealed glaring irregularities and gross financial mismanagement in the running of the union.¹⁰ Two years later a committee of inquiry probed the NWCU and revealed that the organisation was riddled with serious financial irregularities, mismanagement and favouritism.¹¹ It was apparent by 1984 that the overall performance of the NWCU was shoddy and that the provincial cooperative union had failed to serve the interests of the farming community in the province, including Meheba Settlement.

Furthermore, in February 1985 the operations of the NWCU were so corrupt that four of its senior officials were suspended in connection with a cash racket in which the institution had been swindled out of thousands of Kwacha.¹² The officials misused farmers' money for the produce sold to the union during the previous marketing season. Also, money for stocks, fertilisers and feeds which were sold at various depots including the one at Meheba Settlement could not be accounted for. The irregularities came to a head on 29th March, 1985 when the NWCU General Manager Kenneth

Namutulo whose organisation had been at the centre of controversy for the previous four years was sent on an indefinite forced leave with immediate effect.¹³ Namutulo, however, rejected the forced leave and instead resigned from his post.

Farmers in Meheba Settlement took their agricultural produce to a central point on Road 6 at the local NWCMU depot. At the depot the details of each farmer's produce were recorded in a register. The details included: name of crop, quantity and worth in Kwacha. A produce receipt was issued to the farmer. Because the MMCS did not have its own reliable transport during most of its life-span, the NWCMU marketed and distributed agricultural produce on behalf of the farmer. It acted as a marketing board for the farmer. When the sales by the union were complete, the cash was transferred to the MMCS which in turn paid its members. That was not a permanent arrangement because the MMCS was expected to conduct these services on its own in due course.

The main agricultural crops grown by members of the MMCS were maize, soya beans, sun flower and vegetables. Most of the produce was sold to the NWCMU which also provided seeds, fertilisers and seasonal loans with which to purchase them. Between July and September, 1984 the cooperative society sold 2,500 ninety kilogramme bags of maize, 1,100 bags of sunflower and 50 bags of rice to the union.¹⁴ Soya beans were bought by Lint Company (Lintco).

The cooperative society at Meheba was also engaged in piggery and poultry. The meat was sold to the residents in the settlement. Other income generating activities of the society included a consumer's shop dealing in groceries and five grinding-mills. The grinding-mills offered an essential service because maize was an important food crop in the settlement. Cassava was another important food crop for the Angolan refugees.

Lack of transport was a major problem faced by the cooperative society. Out of three trucks, the settlement remained with only a single running truck. The truck hauled the produce by members of the MMCS to the local NWCMU depot and distributed inputs. Quite often vegetable produce rotted before reaching the market in Solwezi or the Copperbelt towns. Consequently, many refugee farmers were discouraged from growing a lot of vegetable crops. The problem of transport was a common one in many cooperatives in the country. For instance, Mwanje Multipurpose Cooperative Society in Mporokoso District was in 1984 unable to sell its 100 tonnes of vegetables because of lack of transport.¹⁵

The multipurpose cooperative society in the settlement was potentially a viable means of enabling the refugees to generate income, and improve their material standard of living and lessen dependence on handouts. But the society's history of mismanagement, corruption and inefficiency discouraged many from becoming members. The problem of perpetual losses resulted in the cooperative

facing liquidity problems. The shortage of cash led to the society's inability to assist its members. That limited the value of cooperative membership.

From the foregoing weaknesses of the MMCS, it is no wonder that the society was gripped with inertia from its earliest times of its establishment to 1986. The example of the seven communal shelters initiated by LWF/ZCRS in 1980 is an ideal one. By 1986 not even one of these shelters had been roofed. They could therefore, not be put to any use.¹⁶ LWF/ZCRS observed in 1991 that:

... construction of community centres for each unit was slow as the people not only expected all building materials to be provided free but that the construction of the buildings should be done for them.¹⁷

When pulling out of the settlement in 1982 LWF/ZCRS had emphasised that the MMCS takes charge of the completion of the construction of the shelters. The society did not pursue the issue of communal shelters. By 1986 the operations of the MMCS could best be described as collapsing rapidly. The management of the society was to a large extent ignorant of their roles and responsibilities in the cooperative movement. Membership participation was almost coming down to zero. And sources obtained from the Department of Marketing and Cooperatives showed that the MMCS was headed towards bankruptcy.

The Agriculture Finance Company (AFC, later renamed Lima Bank) almost sued the MMCS for failing to honour the organisation a sum of over K36,000.¹⁸ The MMCS was equally heavily indebted to the NWCU through cooperative credit

scheme and other loans. The composition of the cooperative society failed to involve the poorest 60 per cent target of the refugee population in the settlement.¹⁹

The government attempted to revitalise the financial standing and functional aspects of the MMCS by seconding a Zambian officer from the Department of Cooperatives in Solwezi to work full time in the settlement in 1985. The officer was expected to provide advise on management and accounting to the society. However, the presence of one government cooperative advisor in the midst of a debt ridden and run down organisation showed little signs of improvement in its books of accounts. Continued inconsistencies in the operations of the MMCS through 1986 were indicative that extra skilled manpower was needed in the Meheba cooperative if at all the organisation was to improve its technical efficiency and broaden its membership.

However, the growing animosity between Zambian workers and Angolan refugees in the settlement over the handling of the MMCS funds complicated the issue.²⁰ In the past money for Angolan refugees was allegedly embezzled by Zambian officers in the cooperative society. Consequently, there was no trust between the two nationalities on money matters. For that reason, Angolan refugees strongly felt that Zambian experts in cooperative work should not take up the position of Technical Advisor to the MMCS. At the same time, the refugees felt that there was no refugee in the settlement competent to adequately execute the job.²¹ Two

Government Social Development Assistants were already working in the settlement. Oxfam management claimed that while the refugees resident in Meheba Settlement would tolerate Zambians in the role of community development, the same could not be said about a Zambian assuming the role of Technical Advisor to the MMCS.²²

Technical Assistance to the MMCS, 1986 - 1988

When Oxfam/VSO was contracted by UNHCR and the government in 1985 to implement community development programme in Meheba settlement, including the task of transforming the MMCS to a viable cooperative society, Oxfam/VSO saw the need to employ a volunteer expatriate who was neutral from the wrangles based on nationality obtaining in the settlement for the post of Technical Advisor to the MMCS. The expatriate sought was a person who was knowledgeable in accounting and marketing. That resulted in the recruitment of one Racheal Vaas, a university graduate in Business Studies from the United Kingdom. The Cooperative Advisor took her posting in Meheba Refugee settlement in October, 1986.

The New Cooperative Advisor immediately set to work in the settlement. First, Vass conducted a series of one day courses in cooperatives for the members. The programme included expounding on what the members conceived of the services of the cooperatives and what they could contribute to those services. Non payment of loans by members was one of the factors hampering the development of

the MMCS, particularly those loans incurred to the AFC. Defaulting members were through education made aware that they were retarding the growth of the society.

The second short course designed by the New Technical Advisor to the MMCS was for the Board of Directors. The course covered basic accounting principles and some elementary marketing techniques to enable the refugees in the Settlement analyze financial statements. In short, the Cooperative Advisor embarked on providing cooperative education to all the sections of the MMCS.

In 1987 an Agricultural Officer on secondment to the settlement from the government, L. Nkinke and the MMCS advisor introduced an elaborate credit scheme proposal to cater for those farmers in the settlement who had been unable to obtain credit because their refugee status did not allow it. Such farmers could only obtain credit through the MMCS which unfortunately was not possible because it had outstanding debts which disqualified it to secure credit from financial lending institutions. Credit was strictly open to only members of the MMCS.

The Management Committee was instrumental in the inclusion of the poorest farmers in Meheba Settlement.²³ Credit was given through the village structure.²⁴ The chiefs ensured the credibility of the applicants of the credits and they ascertained that such farmers were really too poor to stand on their own. The role of the Agricultural Extension Officers in the foregoing credit facility was that of ensuring that the loans were made

available to only those refugee farmers in the settlement that had cleared the land, ready for cultivation. Further, the officers advised which farmers were best capable, and taught those interested refugee farmers about the credit facility. The Agricultural Extension Officers continued going round providing advice to the farmers until harvest time.

The credit scheme started in Old Meheba and later it was extended to the New Meheba Extension, following the new arrivals' clearing of the land and settling down. The basic land size to be cleared by each refugee farmer in order to be considered for the credit facility was two lima. Through this facility many farmers who ordinarily could not be assisted were provided with some credit. That provided an opportunity for some of the poorest refugee farmers in the settlement to move towards self-sufficiency in food production.

The new Board of Directors and the Manager for the MMCS elected after the expatriate advisor had taken up her appointment in the settlement confirmed their commitment by taking on responsibilities for investigating the areas of potential growth for the MMCS. They considered the following ideas: how to improve efficiency and make available more commodities for the Cooperative Shop - a stock control system was set up for the purpose; consideration of the feasibility to set up another poultry farm using the existing buildings; and the introduction of the sales of Mosi lager in the Cooperative Shop which

proved an instant source of steady profit for the society.

A survey made by the Department of Veterinary and Tsetse Control in 1982 showed that tsetse flies had reduced significantly in Meheba and cattle could be kept safely in some parts of the settlement. The MMCS bought a few plough-oxen. A member who wished to use the oxen to plough his field paid a minimal fee to the society. Between 1985 to December 1987 the MMCS introduced another unique service to the settlement by offering postal mail services not only to its members but to non member residents in the settlement as well.²⁵ The mail service was based at the office block on Road.²⁶

Following the deterioration in relations between Oxfam/VSO (the employers of Vaas) and the Government of the Republic of Zambia, Oxfam/VSO withdrew its service as the community development project implementing agency in Meheba Settlement. That prompted Rachael Vaas to tender in her resignation in January, 1988. Her contract was to expire ten months later. Shortly after her resignation Rachael Vaas wrote the following:

The Society has now finished paying off its debts and seems to be more confidently managing its activities and being accountable to its members. There is already an officer-in-charge, from the Ministry who together with the District Officer will carry on the training and monitoring of the Society.²⁷

Thus, by January, 1988 most of the problems that had beset the MMCS for many years were solved. The Society was clearly set on a path towards success. Ahead lay the task

to increase the membership of the organisation and to expand its operations. Events in the subsequent years, however, would prove to the contrary.

Decline of MMCS 1982-94

The MMCS obtained a loan amounting to K10,259.60 for its members from the mother body in Solwezi in readiness for the 1989/90 farming season. Members of the MMCS were only 196 out of some 23,000 resident refugees in the settlement. Members who obtained loans were reminded to repay the loans in time so that the MMCS could in turn repay the loan it had obtained from the mother body in Solwezi. Government announcement of the liberalisation of maize sales in 1990 made it difficult for the MMCS to collect the money from the members who were owing to the Society.²⁸ The liberalization of maize sales literally meant the loss of the monopoly in the marketing of the crop enjoyed for a long time by the NWCU and other provincial unions in the country. That caused a great problem for the cooperatives to recover the loans because farmers could sell their produce directly to the millers instead of through the cooperatives who they owed money.

Most farmers in the country, including those in Meheba Settlement evaded paying their loans by opting to sell their produce to alternative agencies. The K10,259.60 the MMCS owed the NWCU was part of the more than K5 million the mother body was owed by farmers in the province. The NWCU found it very difficult to recover the money from the farmers.

Because of defaulters, the MMCS was in 1990 asked to pay a commission of K10,000 on loans obtained from NWCU.²⁹ That financial drain precipitated the liquidity problems of the society in the subsequent years. The share capital reduced from K80,042.00 at the beginning of the year to K407.00 in July 1990. The low share capital was due to many withdrawals of cash by defaulters, those who had lost confidence in the society's ability to generate funds, miscellaneous expenditures as well as payment of wages of the Society Manager, a buyer and seven board members. The organisation was running without a bookkeeper because he had been fired earlier in the year following the disappearance of some funds for the MMCS.

By 1990 all the hammer-mills purchased and run by the MMCS had broken down. That significantly reduced the source of steady income for the society. Some of the problems faced by the MMCS could have been readily addressed if members were directly represented at the provincial level in Solwezi. That was not possible because as the laws stood only Zambian citizens could be members of the mother body at the provincial level. Hence the MMCS, unlike other cooperatives in the province did not have representation at the provincial level. Continued internal management problems and the competition for markets ushered in by the government policy of free market-economy made survival for the MMCS in the early 1990s difficult.

The operations of the MMCS could with authority be said to have rapidly declined starting from 1992.³⁰ In that

year a number of Angolan refugees in Meheba Settlement, including some members of the MMCS returned to their country of origin. Most of the assets of the MMCS were sold to the board members and officers of the society and the funds raised were given to those members returning to Angola. Thus, the five hammer-mills which were reported broken down were sold to the Refugee Officer, board members and officers of the organisation and so was the only running motorbike for the society. Interestingly, the hammer-mills started working immediately they went into private hands. The oxen were sold to individuals while the pigs were slaughtered and the pork was sold to the residents in the settlement. The piggery shelter was stripped of its roofing and side iron sheets, doors and their frames, were equally sold.³¹

Thereafter, the membership of the MMCS and its general operations drastically declined. The District Marketing and Cooperative Officer in Solwezi said the following concerning the collapse of MMCS:

...for effective membership, efforts were made by conducting a member training programme from late 1993 to early 1994 lasting four weeks but the results were negative. The Education Committee members at the board [of MMCS] were not committed to the cause of the programme. Further, we did conduct board members' course from 12-7-93 to 23-7-93... Only three of them [from Meheba] attended.. the society is dormant due to poor leadership.³²

By 1994 the MMCS was in existence in name only. The buildings that had once served as offices of the society were empty, the once profitable piggery shelter was

stripped down to its foundation. The house once occupied by the society manager was being used by a government employee, the warehouse was since 1992 taken over by the carpentry training unit of Care International. Ever since the tractor and a truck that belonged to the society broke down in 1980, no effort was made to buy spares and put them on the road. One typewriter for the society was available and it was in proper working condition but there was no one to use it because the MMCS literally had no membership and no business.

The reasons for the failure of the MMCS were varied and complex. Government negligence played a major contributing role. Although the government was aware of the problem of lack of accounting in the MMCS and other cooperatives in the country, it overlooked to provide a lasting solution to the problem. Apart from enabling the trainers to draw subsistence and other allowances, training programmes conducted by the various provincial bodies served little purpose to their affiliates - the accounting system for cooperatives remained shoddy. Meanwhile, government continued pouring money into the cooperative movement in the form of grants and loans. The MMCS failed because it failed to honour its loan obligations, following the stripping of its assets by some of its members. The failure of the MMCS leads to an exploration of how the refugees fared in food production, and the examination of the nature of relations that existed between the Angolan refugees at Meheba Settlement and their Zambian neighbours.

NOTES

1. See Ziyesa Kamanga, "Cooperative Development, Ideals and Practices," A Seminar Paper on Inter-Agency Organisation Workshop on Community Services Delivery Systems Held at Meheba Care International Offices on (16th -18th June, 1993) pp. 18-21.
2. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report," (Lusaka:1979), p.14
3. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report", (Lusaka:1980), p.9.
4. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report", (Lusaka:1980), p.9.
5. Zambia Christian Refugees Service, "Annual Report", (Lusaka:1981), p.2.
6. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report", (Lusaka:1982)p.3.
7. Meheba Refugee Development Planning Management Committee Leaders' minutes of the meeting held on (19th July,1986), p.3
8. Times of Zambia, (14th March, 1984).
9. Times of Zambia, (31st October, 1972).
10. Times of Zambia, (24th December, 1981).
11. See Times of Zambia, (29th October, 1981); Times of Zambia (30th May, 1983).
12. Times of Zambia, (3rd February, 1985).
13. Times of Zambia, (30th March, 1985).
14. Mike Edwards, "Tour report: Meheba Refugee Settlement conducted between 20th March, 1985 to 21st March, 1985" (Lusaka:1985), p.2.
15. Times of Zambia, (12th July, 1984).
16. See the Minutes of Meheba Refugee Development Planning Management Committee Meeting Held on 19th July, 1986.
17. Zambia Christian Refugee Service, "Annual Report," (Lusaka:1981), p. 6.
18. Oxfam, MCNW/S/191, Vol.3, A letter from the Director of the North-Western Province, Department of Marketing and Cooperative to Ms Racheal Vaas, Technical Advisor to the MMCS, 18th January, 1988.

19. Oxfam, ZAM/N-PJ/2 MRR, Vol.1, Memorandum from Mike Edwards to Ann-Lloyd Williams, 17th April, 1985.
20. Oxfam, Zam/APPLS, Vol. 1, Meheba Refuge Settlement, 24th July, 1985.
21. Interview, (Benjamin Bernado, Aged 53, Basketry Instructor for the Association to Aid Refugees: Solwezi, Road 22/107 Meheba Settlement:16th December, 1995).
22. Oxfam, Zam/APPLS, Vol.1 Meheba Refugee Settlement, 24th July, 1985.
23. See page 80-86 of this dissertation for an in depth explanation of the composition and functions of the Management Committee, page 67 - 69, and consult diagrams 1 and 2 on pages 74 and 83.
24. See page 71-72 of this dissertation for the description and functions of the village structure.
25. Interview, Roberto Miyutu, Aged 28, Clerk for Care International in charge of cooperatives: Solwezi, Road 36. Meheba Settlement: (21st December, 1995).
26. For a detailed account of the deteriorating relations between Oxfam/VSO on one hand and on the other, the Zambian government and UNHCR see pages 87-89 of this dissertation.
27. Oxfam, Vol.3, A letter from Rachael Vaas to Lance Clark, 5th January, 1988.
28. See Times of Zambia, (3rd November, 1990).
29. Annual Meeting of Meheba Multipurpose Cooperative Society Held at Meheba 'B' Cooperative HQ at 10:00 hours, chaired by Mr. Tiego Tickey", (6th July, 1990), p.2.
30. Interview, Brighton C. Kapulu, Aged 29, Trainee Carpenter under Care International: Solwezi, Road 2 Meheba Settlement, (14th December, 1995).
31. Interview Roberto Miyutu, Aged 28 Clerk for Care International and in charge of cooperatives: Solwezi, Road 36 Meheba Settlement: (21st December, 1995).
32. A letter by Mr. S. Mushoke, District Marketing and Cooperative Officer, Solwezi to Mr. Musonda Ndelefa. The cooperative Officer Care International, Meheba Refugee Settlement, 7th March, 1995.

CHAPTER FIVE

FOOD ADEQUACY AND IMPACT OF MEHEBA SETTLEMENT ON ZAMBIAN VILLAGES, 1971-1994

The farmers in Meheba Settlement sold their surplus food on the local markets in Solwezi, on the Copperbelt and Lusaka markets. In some years food production was low and many of the refugees survived on WFP food rations and food grown outside the province. By 1994 strong social and economic ties developed between the Angolan refugees in the settlement and their neighbouring Zambian villagers. That signified that the Meheba refugees were integrated in the host community. They were not an economic burden because they were incorporated into Zambia and contributed towards the country's food requirements.

Adequacy of Food, 1971-1994

UNHCR terminated the issuance of food rations to those refugees who had stayed in a refugee settlement for two years. Such refugees were considered to have attained self-sufficiency in food production. Many refugees at Meheba Settlement attained self-sufficiency in food production within the UNHCR recommended period. For example, at a time of crucial food shortages in Zambia in 1977, farmers in the settlement provided an important food surplus.¹ By 1979 the settlement had become the main supplier of vegetables at the Solwezi market, and the largest producer of maize in the province.² The marketing of food surplus signified that the farmers in the settlement were economically integrated in the community.

In 1987 the settlement participated in both the Ndola Trade Fair and Lusaka Agricultural and Commercial Shows. Their presence at the shows proved that the Meheba farmers were capable of competing with farmers from the rest of the country. The shows boosted the morale of the refugee farmers and acted as extra markets for their produce.

Cassava remained the most important food crop in the settlement in the 1970s and the 1980s. WFP maize rations did not induce most Angolan refugees to switch to maize as their staple food crop. The refugee farmers initially grew maize as a supplementary food crop or as a cash crop along with sweet potatoes.

Farmers in Meheba Settlement in 1979 sold 1,016 ninety kilogramme bags of maize to the National Marketing Board (NAMBOARD) at K10,262.³ Vegetable production was good in the year. Some 101 tones of vegetables valued at K16,833 were sold. In March and April nine tonnes of Irish potatoes were sent to the market, and one farmer made a profit of K1,000 on the crop. That indicated that economic differentiation did exist among the Meheba farmers. The farmers were not a homogenous lot. Some of them accumulated more than others and had the necessary capital for relatively large investments on their plots, resulting in fairly large profits. During April to August nine lorry loads of sugar-cane were transported to Solwezi and Kitwe.

Food production increased significantly in 1980. A major factor in the increase in maize production in particular was the advice given to the farmers to plant

before 30th November, especially when using fertilizers.⁴ Vegetable production registered a sharp increase by 112 per cent, largely because of a ready market at a refugee camp called G.Z. Moyo, providing refuge to Zimbabweans in the Western Province. In 1980 farmers in Meheba Settlement took a total of 548,362 kilo grammes of crops to the market and realised an income of US\$120,410. Crop sales and income increased the following year to 859,575 kilo grammes and US\$159,304 respectively. The cash earnings improved the refugee farmers quality of life in the settlement.

A pest known as cassava mealy bug appeared in Meheba Settlement in the mid-1980s. The appearance of the pest significantly altered the established food pattern of Angolan refugees. Between 1985 and 1986 the bug laid waste the cassava plant in the settlement, reducing the crop's production.⁷ As a result, the settlement experienced critical food shortages beginning in 1986.⁶ The food shortages affected the new arrivals as well because WFP stocks for rations had run out in October the previous year. That made new arrivals offer their labour to established refugee farmers in the settlement or local farmers near the settlement in exchange for food.

The Senior Clinical Officer running Meheba 'A' Clinic confirmed that cases of malnutrition in the settlement reached dangerous proportions in 1986.⁷ The refugee leadership in the settlement wrongly attributed the problem to the fact that "mothers were ignorant ... regarding the right way to prepare food for the family ... the settlement being the leading food

producer in the district".⁸ The refugee leadership failed to realise that the devastation of cassava by the mealy bug was the source of the inadequacy of food and its related complications such as malnutrition in the settlement.

Unlike cereal crops that are planted using seeds, new cassava plants are started by stem cuttings from healthy adult plants. When the mealy bug pest killed most of the cassava plants it also deprived the farmers of planting stems to start new fields. Because cassava in this part of Zambia took between two to three years to grow large enough to be harvested, many refugees did not have enough mature cassava to be self-reliant soon. The Catholic Secretariat of Zambia played a significant role on the issue of food in the settlement.

In 1987 CSZ was asked by UNHCR and the Zambian government, under a tripartite agreement to expand Meheba Refugee Settlement.⁹ That was because the intensification of the conflict between the Angolan government and UNITA led to a new influx of displaced persons crossing into the North-Western Province districts of Mwinilunga, Zambezi and Kabompo.¹⁰ All Angolan displaced persons who arrived in Zambia from December 1985 were considered new arrivals by the government. It was estimated that there were about 18,000 new arrivals in the North-Western Province.¹¹ The CSZ expansion programme of Meheba Settlement included moving between 10,000 - 15,000 Angolan new arrivals from border villages to the new extension in Meheba Settlement. By June 1991 12,000 refugees were settled in the new

extension.¹² The movement was slow because refugees were persuaded, not forced to move. There were also logistical problems such as bad roads and inadequate transport. As can be seen in Table 5 by July 1993 the total Angolan refugee population in Meheba Settlement reached 22,000 (Both Old Meheba and the new extension). The refugees in the new extension were allotted 2.5^{acres} of farm land per family while the plots for those refugees settled in Old Meheba were twice as big.

A WFP/UNHCR assessment of the food situation in Meheba in 1989 brought to light major discrepancies between the official CSZ figures showing commodities received, against those distributed. More than 100 tonnes of maize recorded in the commodity-report could not be accounted for in the distribution records.¹³ That made accurate assessment difficult. Some Angolan refugees testified that considerable amounts of food meant for refugees in the settlement, especially maize, was illegally diverted to neighbouring Zaire by some CSZ workers.¹⁴ During this time, cross-border smuggling of maize, sugar, cooking oil and other essential commodities into Zaire was rife and it fetched high profits for those who were not caught by the Zambian security forces.

Because smuggling became a lucrative business, some people such as the personnel for the CSZ used their positions to obtain large quantities of essential commodities including mealie-meal for the illegal trade with neighbouring Zaire.¹⁵ Some of those involved in the

trade violently resisted against the attempts by the
Zambian authorities to curb the trade. For example, on
their way to Zaire, armed mealie-meal smugglers on several
occasions shot at customs personnel in the bush between
Ndola and Mufulira.¹⁶ In return Zambian security forces
increasingly intercepted vehicles laden with mealie-meal
and arrested the occupants, who often did not have valid
export documents.¹⁷

Food production in general and maize production in
particular in the 1991/92 season was negatively affected by
several factors. Firstly, the Angolan government in May
1991 sent a delegation headed by that country's Minister of
State for Social Affairs, Rodethy dos Santos to inform the
refugees in Meheba that they would be repatriated to Angola
by 23rd October, 1991.¹⁸ Earlier in the year, officials from
the Angolan Embassy in Lusaka had visited Meheba Settlement
and assured the refugees that they could return to Angola
because the civil war was over in that country.¹⁹

Table 5
ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN MEHEBA - 31ST JULY 1993
POPULATION

Location & Gender	No. of Refugees 31/5/93	No. of Refugees 30/6/93	Births	New Arrivals (Spontaneous/Relocated)	Deaths	No. of Refugees 31/7/93
OLD MAHEBA						
Male Adults	3071	3071	14	0	0	3085
Female Adults	3233	3233	0	0	0	3233
Male Children	2812	2817	0	0	1	2816
Female Children	2773	2782	0	0	0	2782
Subtotal	11890	11903	0	0	1	11916
NEW EXTENSION						
Male Adults	2436	2445	0	46	0	2491
Female Adults	2681	2686	0	42	0	2728
Male Children	2538	2559	19	36	1	2613
Female Children	2538	2566	15	32	0	2613
SUBTOTAL	10193	10256	34	156	1	10445
TOTAL	22083	22159	48	156	2	22361

Source: Care International (Z) Annual Report (July 1993), Appendix

In view of the above assurances, some refugees abandoned their fields at various crucial stages in the agricultural calendar. The anticipated repatriation did not come, resulting in those farmers who had abandoned their fields being in want of food. Secondly, the 1991/2 harvest was, especially for those who planted maize, affected by the partial drought that affected the entire Southern Africa. Because the rains were insufficient, maize yields were too low to meet the subsistence needs of the whole refugee population in the settlement. Another contributing factor to the foregoing poor maize yield was limited loan facilities to meet farmer demand. The MMCS which should have, through the NWCU, procured loan facilities for its members was unable to because the normal operations of the society were plagued with serious financial and administrative constraints. The foregoing factors led to widespread hunger in the settlement. By April, 1992 12,401 refugees were receiving WFP food rations.²⁰ It is significant to note that the above refugee population was half the population of the entire Meheba Settlement.

A few farmers in Meheba Settlement grew some sweet potatoes in 1992. Because of the general scarcity of food the farmers had a ready market and a good profit. That year trucks drove into the settlement from the Copperbelt towns, Lusaka and Botswana to buy the sweet potatoes. That motivated other refugees to expand their fields and plant a lot of sweet potatoes in the 1992/3 farming season.

According to Powlez:

...the problem was that the Angolans in Maheba were not the only ones who had thought were onto a good thing with potatoes, Zambians throughout the Copperbelt and North-Western Provinces were also growing them. The market was flooded.²¹

Many refugees had relied on getting cash income from the anticipated potato sales to feed themselves for the second half of the year. The Angolan refugees in Meheba Settlement did not consider sweet potatoes as a substitute for nsima. Sweet potatoes were a supplementary food eaten as a snack. There were some families which had already run out of their stocks of cultivated maize by July 1993 and the next harvest was seven months away.²² Hunger was widespread in the settlement.

During 1993 twenty-five Angolan refugees fled the settlement because of starvation. The hunger situation was so serious that two Angola chiefs in the settlement asked the settlement authorities to return them to their country of origin despite the civil war going on there. Those farmers who had produced soya beans were stuck with the crop, following the collapse of Lintco in 1993, the sole buyer of the crop.²³

Amidst the general low production of maize in the settlement, a few farmers managed to grow some surplus food which they marketed. A total of K90 million was realised by the refugee farmers from the sales of agricultural produce. The produce included maize, sugar beans and vegetables.²⁴ Meanwhile the rest of the country recorded a

maize bumper harvest in 1993. The quantity of maize grown by farmers in the whole country was estimated at 18 million 90 kilogramme bags.²⁵

The government introduced promissory notes as guarantee for the maize bought by appointed agents in the 1993 maize marketing season. In essence, the government disclaimed responsibility for the purchase and storage of crops and left it to private buyers and farmers to find market for themselves. Agents with no capacity to buy and transport maize and without storage facilities moved in and swindled some Meheba farmers on their maize by offering as little as K3,000 for a ninety kilogramme bag and resold the same to millers at K10,000.

As late as May, 1994 some marketing agents had not yet honoured the promissory notes issued to some farmers in Meheba. Consequently, these farmers failed to repay the loans obtained previously. Lending institutions were unwilling to lend Meheba farmers cash or requisites for the 1993/94 agricultural season because they owed the institutions. The foregoing problems made many farmers in the settlement, especially those in the new extension grow more cassava. Those who continued growing maize reduced the hectorage.²⁶

Throughout most of the second half of 1994 about 200 Angolan refugees were entering Zambia each week following escalating clashes between the Angolan government and UNITA forces.²⁷ Most of the refugees complained of hunger in Angola and said they entered Zambian with the hope of

securing some food. Many of these hunger stricken refugees were transported to Meheba Settlement, where they escalated the already worsened food situation. For example, towards the end of November 1994 newly arrived Angolan refugees living at the Reception Centre on Road 68 exhausted their food rations. When the refugees asked for more food rations, the officer in charge refused because the food rations he had supplied to them were meant to last a month.²⁸ The consumption by the refugees in four days of the food meant to last a month signified that the rations were inadequate.

The food situation in Meheba Settlement was worsened by the presence of some Zambian villagers from remote parts of North-Western Province who posed as refugees from Angola. The Lunda Language, commonly spoken by both local Zambian villagers and Angolan refugees enabled the former to infiltrate the latter for the purpose of qualifying to obtain relief assistance.²⁹ Relief assistance included essential commodities, which prior to 1991 were rarely found on the Zambian open market and despite being readily available during the period up to 1994 these essentials were often too costly for many host villagers. These Zambians fled the reception centres in the settlement or those centres established in border areas after obtaining food rations. That showed that there was hunger in some host villages. Poor production of food was not peculiar to the settlement only. And to generalise that the entrenchment of dependency among Meheba farmers was the

cause of the inadequacy of food without analysing the circumstances surrounding each hunger situation in the settlement is wrong.

The foregoing account has demonstrated that Angolan refugees contributed towards the food requirements of the country. Like the neighbouring Zambian village farmers, the farmers in the settlement in some years recorded low yields when their food crops were attacked by a pest or there was partial drought. In addition, some economic ties developed between Angolan refugees at Meheba and their indigenous neighbours. For example, in times of hunger in the settlement, the refugees exchanged their labour for food with established local farmers. That signified lack of major social and economic barriers between the Meheba refugees and their Zambian hosts.

Impact of Settlement on Zambian Villages, 1971-1994

An integrated rural refugee population in a settlement must through interaction effect both physical and conceptual change on the neighbouring host villages. Meheba Refugee Settlement had a positive impact on the local Zambian population. Zambians around the settlement benefited considerably from the infrastructure that was provided for the refugees. The presence of a large refugee population in Meheba had a profound effect on the local Zambian villagers. The refugees provided a market for a wide variety of agricultural products and craft goods, and prices to Zambians for their products rose. The local

expansion in demand stimulated the availability of many goods. Because some refugees needed to sell part of the aid distributed to them, Zambians were also able to obtain items such as cooking oil and clothes at relatively low prices. Labour markets also expanded with many refugees doing casual work for Zambians and vice-versa.

The Meheba Settlement area saw immigration of Zambians from other parts of the province and those retiring from the Copperbelt towns. The area bordering the settlement on the north of the Solwezi-Mwinilunga Road up to Chitole stream was earlier an uninhabited forest area. However, soon after the establishment of Maheba Settlement, the area was rapidly populated by Zambians, giving way to Chawama Section and Kimilombe, Mashowa and Mauchi villages. Fifteen Zambian traditional doctors were attracted to settle in the Maheba area.³⁰ The large refugee population in the settlement and immigrant Zambians to the area provided them with a source of customers and income.

The influx of refugees and more Zambians into the Maheba area led to the growth of responsibilities and status for the Zambian headmen. When there was a serious civil case between a refugee and a local villager the headmen liaised with the Refugee Officer to dispose of the case. Sometimes there were more general community-level conflicts between the refugees and their hosts. In 1992 for example, Zambians accused refugees of over-fishing in the Chitole stream and endangering the life of fish, an important source of protein for both refugees and Zambians.

The leadership of both communities met and resolved the problem.

Pressure on land by Zambians migrating to the Meheba Settlement area emerged by 1991. A study conducted by Maimbolwa-Sinyangwe in that year revealed that 75 per cent of the host respondents in the Meheba area felt that the Angolan refugees had been settled on their land and that made it difficult for them to expand their fields.³¹ Thomas Yavwa, a Zambian who settled in the Meheba Settlement area following his retirement from the civil service had the following to say in 1994:

I am not happy that refugees are given large land, some of which is idle when we the citizens have little land on which to farm. But that is beyond our power to change. It is for government to work on.³²

Many local Zambian villagers waited for the day all the refugees would return to Angola so that they take over the settlement farm land.

Some Zambian villagers said that they learnt a lot from the Angolan refugees at Meheba Settlement, especially in the timber and carpentry business. Others blamed the Zambian government for allowing Angolans to come and cut their timber, collect honey and even take over their fishing sites.³³ Others accused their refugee neighbours of depleting medium and large game in the settlement area. This was a sensitive issue between the refugees and the local villagers. The refugees revealed that the indigenous population participated in game hunting. In the early 1980's the refugees used bows, arrows and traps when

hunting in the settlement area. When the locals tried to free some of the trapped animals, the refugees usually became violent.³⁴ The frequency of Zambian security forces confiscating AK 47 automatic rifles from Angolan refugees entering North-Western Zambia during the late 1980's suggested that displaced Angolans were a major source of rifles used in poaching in the province. For example, a total of twenty-four AK 47 automatic rifles were confiscated between an unspecified date to September 1988.³⁵ And a door to door arms search campaign conducted by the National Parks and Wildlife Services in Meheba Settlement in 1994 uncovered four rifles.³⁶

There were some intermarriages between refugees and Zambians. It was cheaper to marry a refugee woman than a Zambian for who a man by 1994 could pay a cow or three goats or four sheep while for an Angolan refugee woman bride wealth was anything between K4,500 - K8,000.³⁷ Some marital regulations in the settlement undermined the established customs of both refugees and Zambians. A local Zambian man who married a refugee woman was not allowed to live at her parents' home, as was the custom in the area. Instead, the woman was no longer classified as a refugee and was expected to leave the settlement for the husband's home. In contrast, a refugee man who married a Zambian woman was obliged to bring her to his home, contrary to the 'tribal' custom. The settlement regulations did not permit the man to leave the settlement without obtaining permission, and his wife and children were refugees by

virtue of marriage. One attempt by the settlement then was to maintain the refugees' identity and increase the likelihood of repatriation once peace was secured in Angola.³⁸

There were several factors that contributed to the harmonious relationship between the refugees at Meheba Settlement and the local community. These factors fostered the process of refugee integration between 1971 and 1994. This feature partly stemmed from the ethnic links which many of the refugees had with the local community. The mutual intelligibility of the languages spoken by the refugees and the host communities for example, facilitated the integration of the Meheba refugees. In addition, the low population density of the indigenous people led to little competition over resources with the refugees at Meheba Settlement. As such, no major conflict developed between the host and the refugee populations largely because the settlement was situated in formerly unsettled and little used area.

The foregoing argument must be considered with caution because the increasing refugee population over the years led to a gradual development of competition over economic resources, particularly on relish provision activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering between the refugee and indigenous populations. The competition was manifest during the drought years such as 1992 when the land carrying capacity of the rural economy led to pressure on economic resources. Therefore, drought culminated in a

serious economic impact because of refugees' use of gathering resources which the locals sought to use.

The presence of refugees at Meheba Settlement helped to ease the adverse effects of famine on the local population during drought years because the NGOs engaged in distributing relief food to the refugees often included the local population on the programme. This was in conformity with the observation by participants at the 1979 conference on the African refugee problem in Arusha, Tanzania. It was stressed at the conference that to encourage integration of refugees in host communities, assistance should not be directed solely to refugees, but to refugee affected communities.³⁹ That was particularly appropriate, considering the decline in funds which host governments like Zambia experienced for the development programmes of their citizens. In the case of Meheba Settlement, the process of integration could potentially be disrupted if refugees were singled out for the provision of food, considering that the effects of drought equally affected the host populations.

Religion enhanced the integration of refugees at Meheba Settlement. Religion drew support from different ethnic groups consisting of refugees and the local community. Some refugees attended some religious gatherings outside the settlement area while some indigenous people attended religious gatherings in the settlement, resulting in the integration of refugees.

The refugee population at Meheba Settlement helped to "tame" this formerly uninhabited and tsetse fly infested forest area. The refugees cleared the thick forest and put up villages and farms in areas formerly feared by travellers. Partly because of effort by refugees, the Meheba area was opened up for the construction of socio-economic infrastructure such as schools, clinics, markets, shops and roads, which were agents of integration.

Contrary to the advocates of the theory of refugee dependency, the findings of this study have demonstrated that the Angolan refugees at Meheba Settlement were hard working on the land and produced food surplus for marketing. While it is acknowledged that hunger was experienced in the settlement during some years, the available evidence show that the main causes of each of these hunger situations were not centred on refugee dependence. Further, the refugees at Meheba interacted with their host villagers both socially and economically.

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CONCLUSION

Meheba Refugee Settlement demonstrated both failures and successes. The failures included an attempt to establish a formal refugee administrative system to sustain the social and economic projects introduced soon after the establishment of the settlement in 1971. The attempts culminated in the short lived refugee community participation project established in 1986. The project implemented by Oxfam/VSO sought to empower and stimulate the refugee community to participate in finding solutions to the problems affecting their community under a refugee organisation called the Meheba Refugee Settlement Development Planning Management Committee. The project collapsed two years after its establishment because its funders, the UNHCR, saw development as the construction of physical infrastructure like roads and buildings as opposed to the community development approach perceived by the project implementors. Moreover, government frustrated the project because in the prevailing unstable security climate in Southern Africa championed by racist South Africa, the Zambian government feared that strengthening refugee organisation was propagating political opposition in the country.

The Meheba Multipurpose Cooperative Society founded in 1979 was another failure in the settlement. The society provided some important services including the provision of credit and post-office facilities to the refugees in the settlement during the years it was administratively and

financially sound. However, the society was stifled by serious internal administrative constraints. Government failure to provide lasting solutions led to the demise of the society by 1992.

The most profound successes experienced by the refugees at Meheba Settlement were those related to their social and economic integration achieved by many of them by 1994. Common origins, similar languages, customs and traditions between most refugees in the settlement and the host population in the area played a significant role towards the successful integration of the refugees at Meheba. The Meheba refugees on the social sphere intermarried with their host villagers and consulted the same traditional health practitioners residing in or near the settlement. Refugee and host shared the same religious, modern education and health facilities in the settlement. In addition, refugees shared the local economic resources such as timber, game, honey and fish with their indigenous neighbours. Above all, many of the refugees were economically self-sufficient, leading the entire province in the production of maize, soya beans and vegetables.

Economic differentiation did exist among the Meheba farmers. Some of them accumulated more than others and had the necessary capital for relatively large investments on their plots, resulting in fairly large crop yields. That empowered the refugees to ably compete on the local and national markets with Zambian farmers. Thus the Meheba

refugees contributed towards national development and used their proceeds on income generating ventures including fishing, carpentry, beer-brewing, basketry and crop sales to better themselves. The refugee settlement became the centre of social and economic development in this remote, previously underpopulated and underdeveloped part of Zambia.

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