

THE AFRONAUTS • CRISTINA DE MIDDEL



The Director
Ministry of Technology
Lusaka-Zambia

Dear Sirs,

Could you inform me of the outcome of Zambia's space flight program?

An official news report of November, 3 stated:

" America and Russia may lose the race to the moon, according to Edward Makuka Nkoloso, Director of the Zambia National Academy of Space Research.

His ten Zambian astronauts and a seventeen-year-old African girl are poised for the countdown. He said: "I'll have my first Zambian astronaut on the moon by 1965. My spacemen are ready, but we are using my own firing system, derived from catapult." Mr. Nkoloso continued: "To really get going we need about seven hundred million pounds. It sounds a lot of money but imagine the prestige ~~value~~ value it would earn for Zambia. But I've had trouble with my space-men and with my space-women. They don't concentrate on space-flight. There's too much love-making when they should be studying the moon. Matha Mwamba, the seventeen-year-old girl who had been chosen to be the first coloured woman on Mars, has also to feed her ten cats, who will be her companions on the long space-flight.

I'm getting them acclimatised by to space-travel by placing them in my space-capsule everyday. It's a 40 gallon oil drum in which they sit, and then I roll them down a hill. This gives them the feeling of rushing through space. I also make them swing from the end of a long rope. When they reach the highest point, I cut the rope - this produces a feeling of a free fall."

I assume that the request for seven hundred million pounds was made by Z.N.A.S.R to the United Nations. Please inform me whether Zambia received the grant and whether significant progress in space flight resulted.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Kabunda Kayongo
Ministry of Technology.





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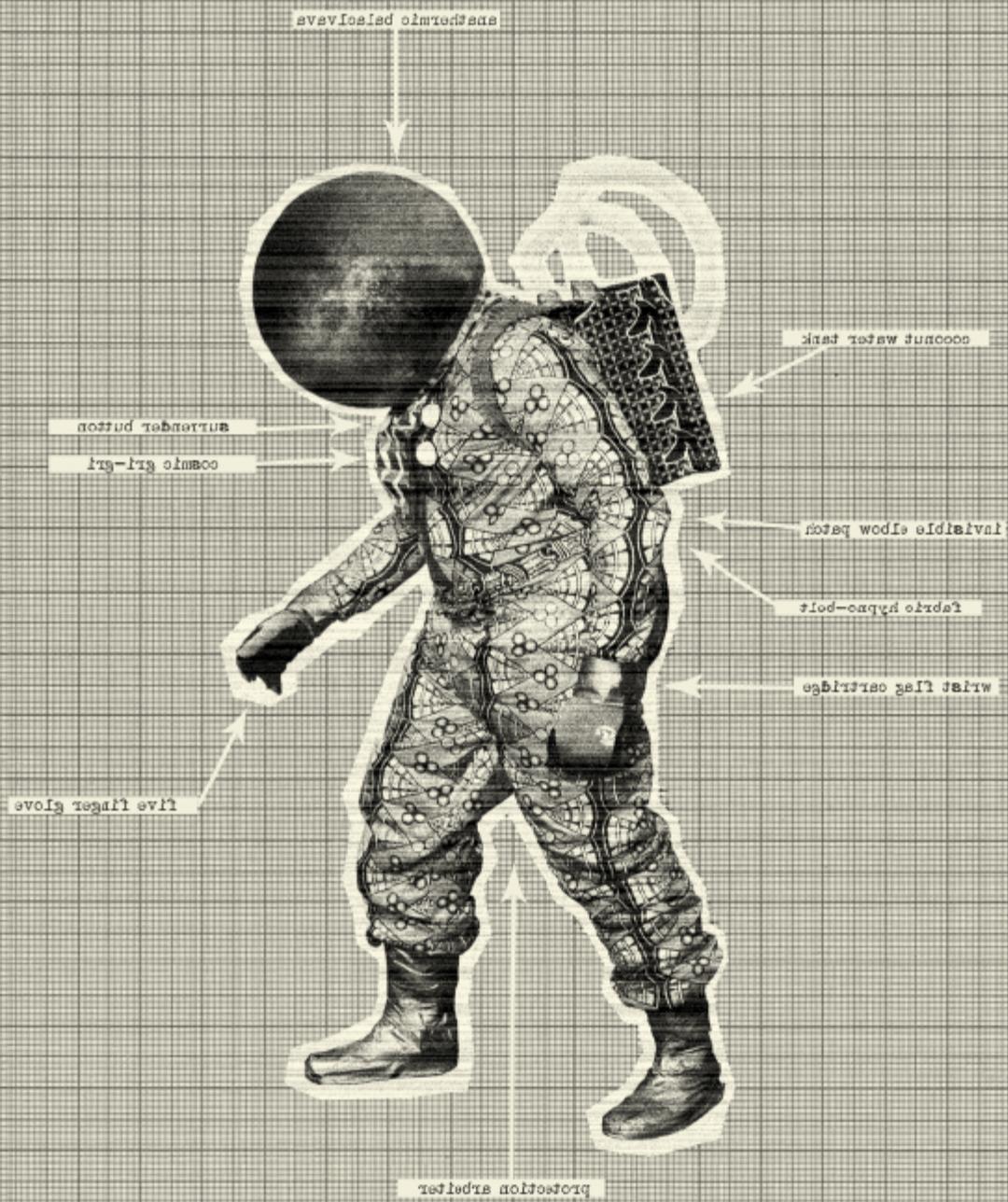
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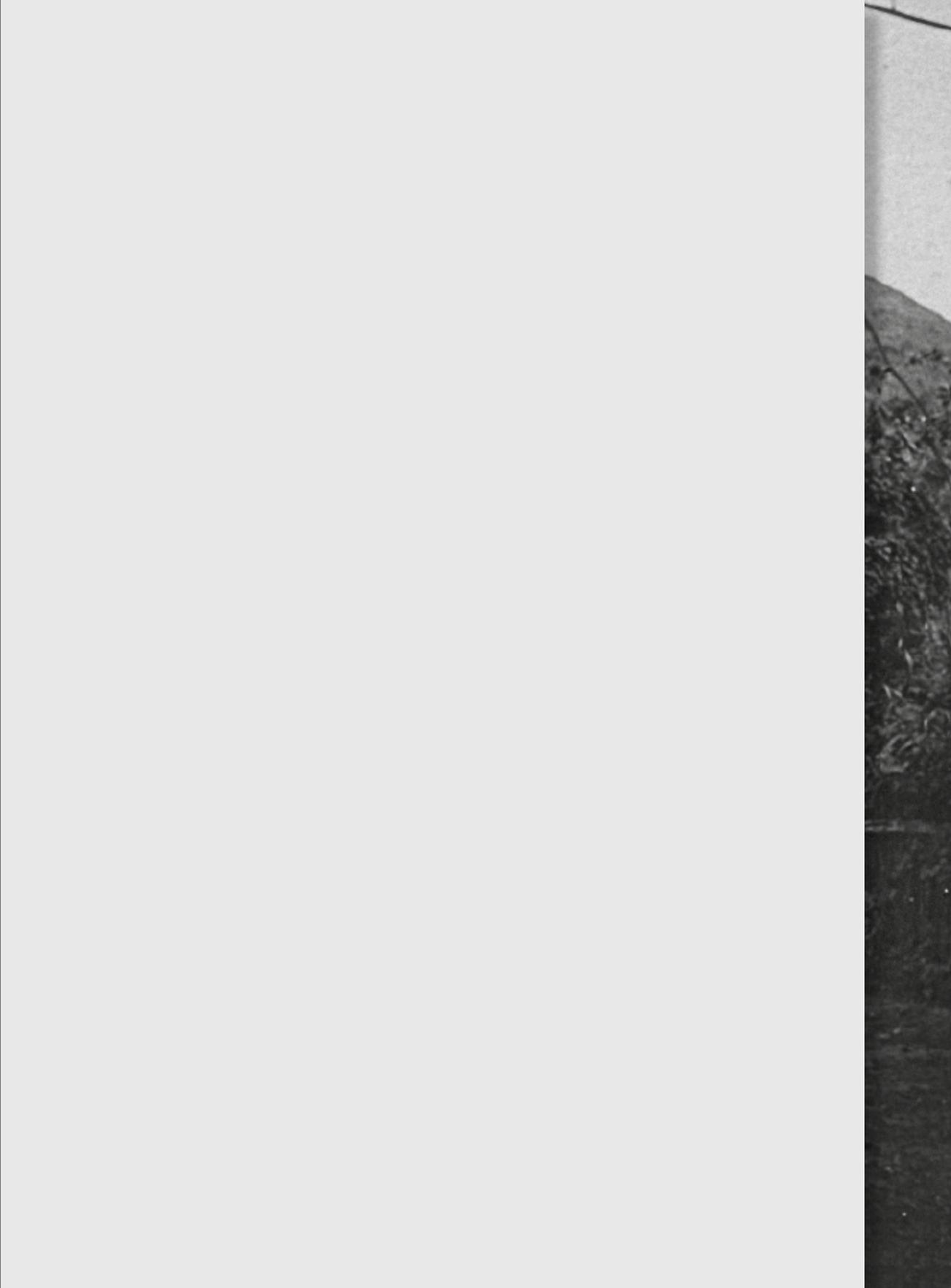


















We're going to Mars!

WITH A SPACEGIRL, TWO
CATS AND A MISSIONARY

By EDWARD MAKUKA NKOLOSO

Director of his own "Academy of Sciences and Space Technology"

I SEE the Zambia of the future as a space-age Zambia, more advanced than Russia or America. In fact, in my Academy of Sciences our thinking is already six or seven years ahead of both powers.

It is unbecomingly for Lusaka that I did not have the chance to run for mayor. If I had been elected, the capital city of Zambia would quickly have been another Paris, if not another New York.

If I had been mayor, Maseru, Kimberley and Challenge suburbs would quickly have been filled with flats and skyscrapers. Old houses would have vanished.

But never mind, we will have our Paris yet.

If I had had my way Zambia would have been born with the blast of the academy's rocket being launched into space. But the Independence Celebrations Committee said that would terrify the guests and possibly the whole population. I think they were worried about the cat and mouse.

CREW READY

It's a great pity. All is ready at our secret headquarters in a valley about seven miles from Lusaka. The rocket could have been launched from the Independence Stadium and Zambia would have conquered Mars only a few days after Independence. Yes, that's where we plan to go — Mars.

We have been studying the planet through telescopes at our headquarters and are now certain Mars is populated by primitive natives.

Our rocket crew is ready.

Especially trained spacegirl Matha Mwambwa, two cats (also specially

trained) and a missionary will be launched in our first rocket.

But I have warned the missionary he must not force Christianity on the people in Mars if they do not want it.

One other difficulty has been holding us up. UNESCO has not replied to our request for \$7,000,000, and we need that money for our rocket program. Then we can lead world science.

I feel the Zambian Government should help now if we are to become controllers of the Seventh Heaven of interstellar space. The Government must pass strong bills to deal with the satanic plots of our enemies.

I have known for a long time that Russian spies are operating in Zambia. Yes, and American spies are all over the town too.

They are all trying to capture Matha and my cats. They want our space secrets.

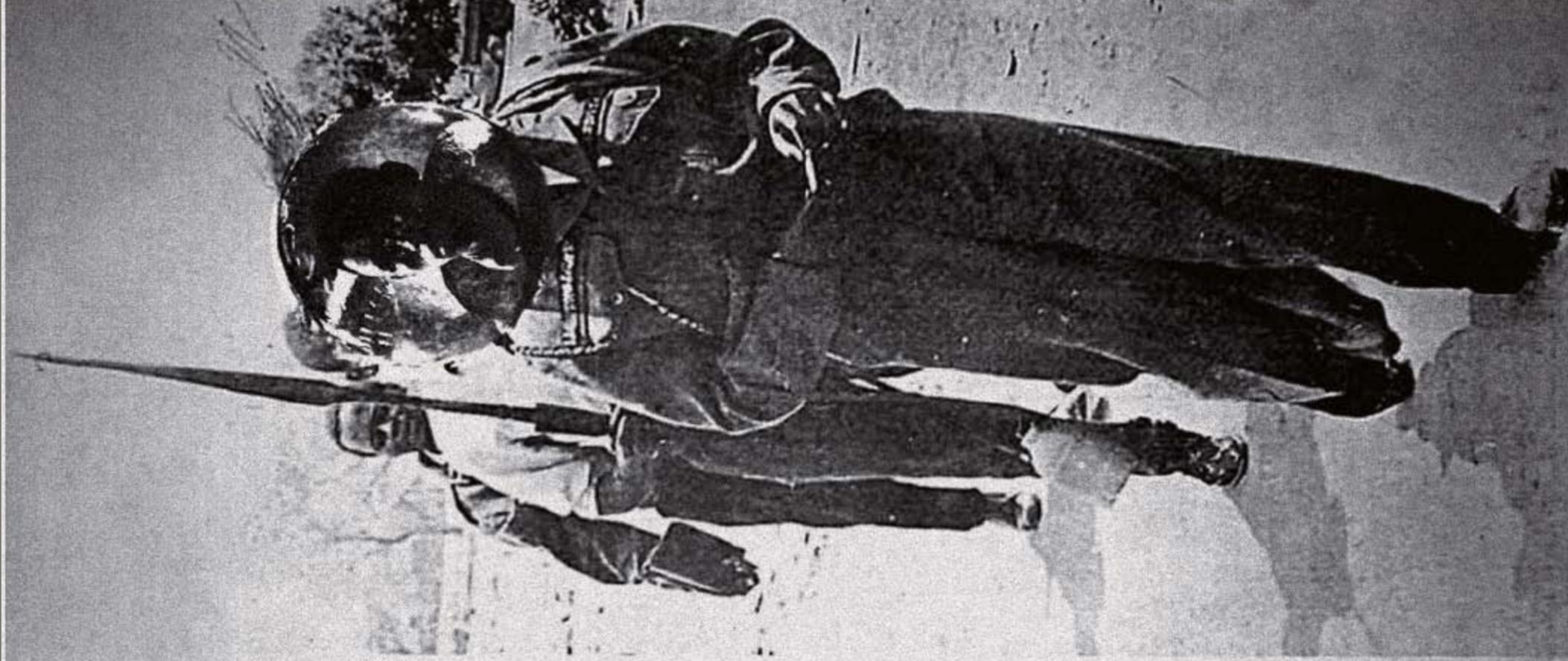
These people must be dealt with immediately after independence if I am to keep my Space Lead Detention without trial for all spies is what we need.

Otherwise I am happy with the Government, but it must encourage youngsters to join the academy.

At the moment they have knocked down my academy building in Maseru. That is not good. I hope they build modern flats in its place to provide more offices for us.

The capital of the new scientific Zambia must look beautiful. People from afar must not see a slum as the capital of the world's greatest scientific state.

Zambians are inferior to our men in science technology. My space plans will surely be carried out.



NKOLOSO and secret . . . "All we need is a \$7,000,000 grant from Unesco."







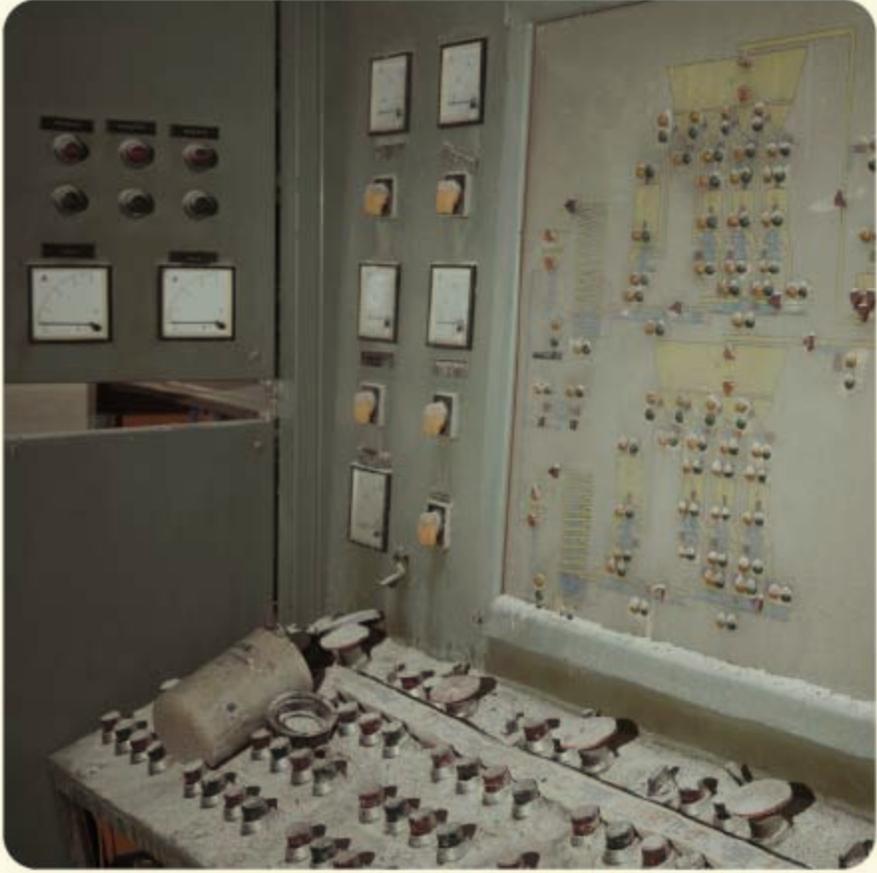






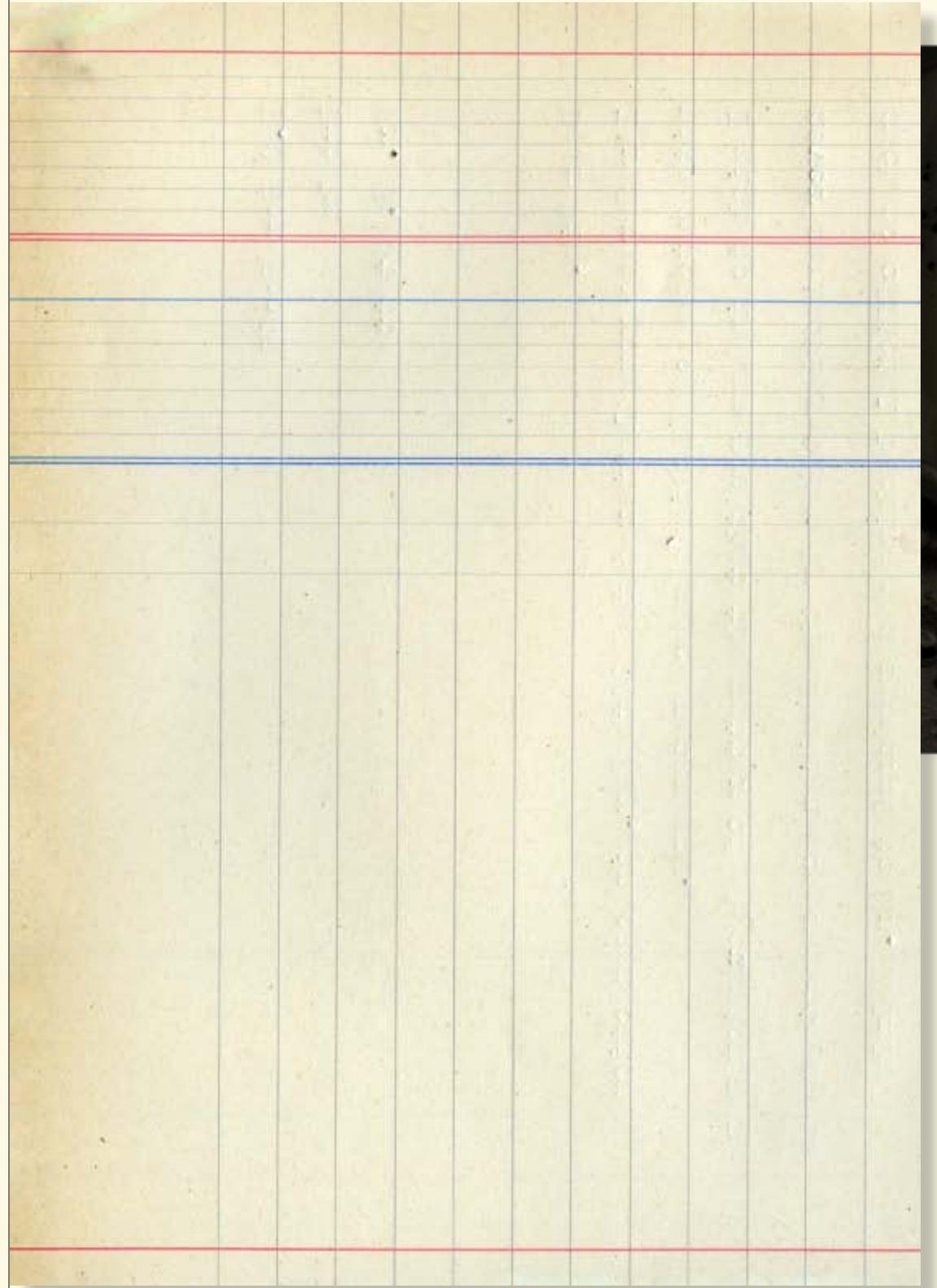












P.O Box 50065

Lusaka

Mr. B. Stett

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter dated 24th May, in connection with outcome of Zambia's space programme.

I wish to inform you that the matter of discussion was never seriously taken by the Zambian Government and as such no official backing was rendered to Mr. Makuka Nkoloso's efforts. The program therefore did a natural death.

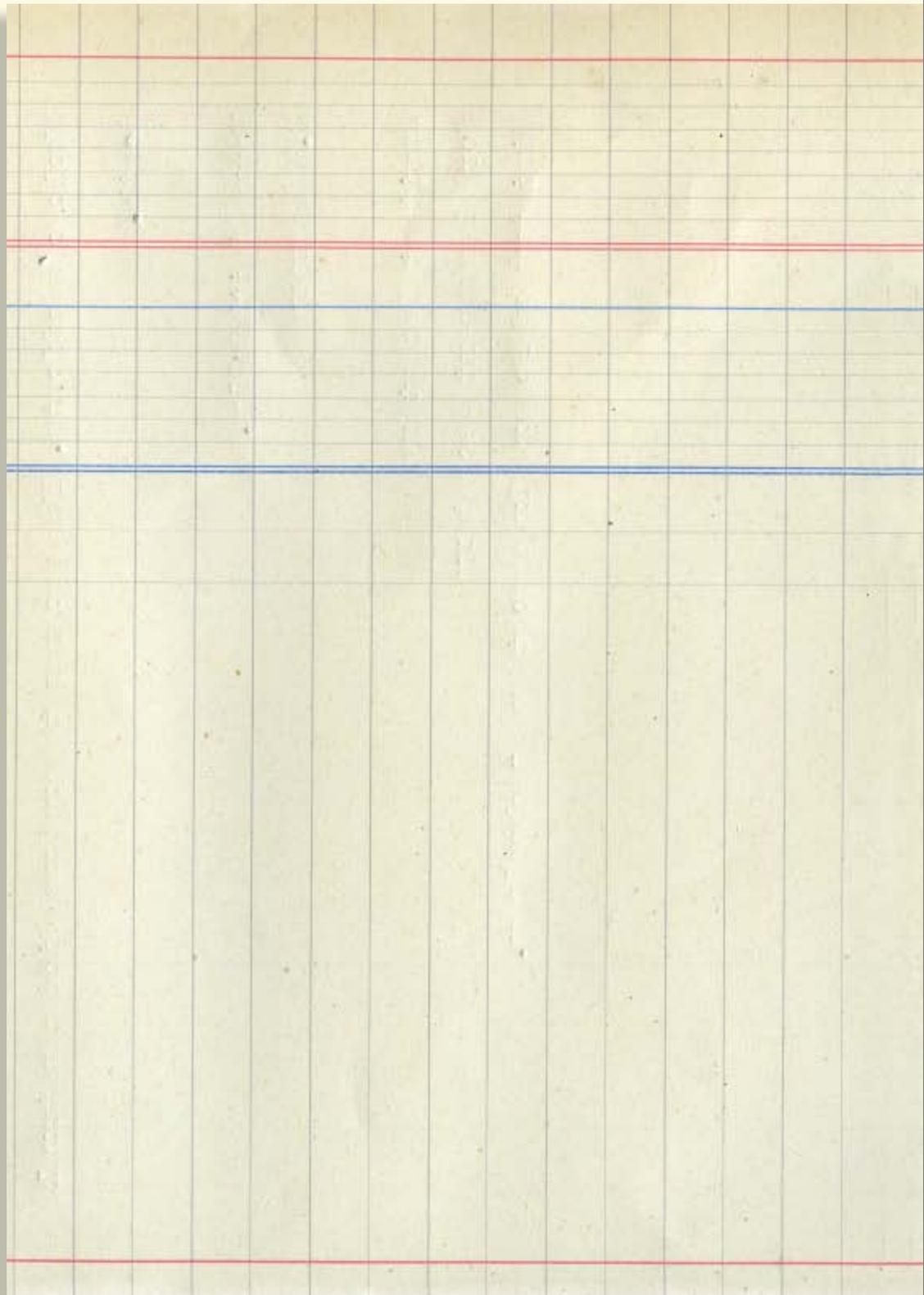
Yours faithfully,

E.N Kamuyuw

Assistant Secretary

for/ Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Power, Transport and Technology.





The first time Mrs. Cristina De Middel got in touch with me and asked me about the Zambian Space Program I thought it was a joke. I had not heard of that story for ages and I had almost forgot about it.

I was very surprised that a woman photographer from Spain that was not even alive in the 60's was interested in that story, and that she knew about it. We talked by telephone for a few minutes and then she knocked my door, here in Lusaka, a couple of months later.

She knew I had met Edward Makuka Nkoloso at school, when he was a Science teacher and I was in charge of the Literature lessons at the St. Icarus School in Lusaka. She needed more information to sustain her project and I was her starting point.

I showed to her the few pictures I had of these times and we talked again for a while. I would have liked to help her with more information but I just could share with her what Edward Makuka told me before he quit his job in 1964, to become the Director of the Zambian National Academy of Science, Space Research and Philosophy: that he wanted to send to space 11 Zambian astronauts (ten men, one woman) and a cat.

His plan was to use a copper and aluminium rocket and use a catapult system to launch it. All designed by himself. He also gave me some details of how he was going to train his astronauts to be ready for the moon and the space. He needed to make them comfortable to walk with the hands as this was apparently the only possible way to move on the surface of the moon. Also, he was going to use a tin barrel going down a hill to emulate the zero gravity sensation. He was very worried about his astronauts being ready for the outer space and his training was exhaustive.

While I was telling her the few details I remembered and she was taking notes, I realized how crazy this idea seemed at the time and how crazy it still sounded today.

I feel very proud that this young female investigator has put together enough information to tell the story and refresh our memory. The Zambian Space Program is now a reality in the mind of many people thanks to Mrs. De Middel's perseverance.

In a way, it compensates the failure of a small dream that, despite its size, was still too big for a continent as ours.

Kojo Ngué
Retired Teacher, Lecturer and Philanthropist.
Lusaka, April 2012.

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Editor: Laia Abril

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Roland and Patricia De Middel, Manuela García-Muñoz
Maricarmen Puch, and my father.



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