

Prayers for

a CRUEL BLESSED WORLD



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a CRUEL BLESSED WORLD

This is a project of the Nawi Afrifem Collective.

The materials in this anthology were collected and collaged by Agazit Abate and Nebila Abdulmelik and designed by Nzilani Simu with the support of Agazit and Nebila.

A central character in the creation of this anthology is Crystal Simeoni. A magic maker, she asks, "what is your dream?" and then she gives you what you need to give it life. Crys, you are a blessing.

We are thankful for the people we've known who've inspired the coming pages and for all of the people we've met and the works we've encountered during this time.

We would like to thank Post-Colonialisms Today for sharing their archives with us and for leading us to The Freedom Archives whose collection is reflected in this anthology. Thank you to The Freedom Archives. We also send gratitude and respect to all those who archive on and offline, making our stories more accessible to us, including our sister colleagues, Elizabeth Maina and Fatimah Kelleher, who run the Nawi repository. Thank you to all of the people whose work and words we've included in this anthology. We are grateful for your work and the permission to reproduce it.

Notes for the materials collected in this anthology are detailed at the end of the book.

November 2022



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FOR US



INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a trip to the market, of the cost of bread and of budgets scribbled on pieces of paper, of inflation and of revolutions in the kitchen. This is the story of oha ndi nyiom.

There are so many stories.

This is the story of the biggest thieves, of providence and of dancing women. This is the story of palm leaves and neurotic conditions. "Death is standing before us." This is the story of fire and wind, sun and water and land. Red clay and design, cut trees and disappearing soil. This is a story you've heard before.

You see, there are so many stories.

"Was it bad what we were?" she asks. This is the story of our dreams. Of building homes and falling in love and drinking tea with friends, of health and of peace. This is the story of "our recklessness and creativity and curiosity." This is an everyday love story.

This is the story of an old, large dark-skinned woman. Of creation and of healing. This is the story of aunties and mothers and friends and lovers. This is the story spoken by ancestors.

But, there are so many stories.

This is a story heavily edited in our favor. Of the languages we know, of what we saw and what we wanted to see. Of what moved us. It is stories, stories in a sea of stories.

Agazit Abate, September 2022



"How are you?"

"Thank God, I am ok."

"How are you?"

"Thank God. I am ok."

"Your children?"

"They are good. Yours?"

"Thank God, they are good."

"The garlic looks good today."

"It's good, but it's 100 birr now."

"Eh? How is it 100 birr?"

"My sister, you haven't heard? They discovered it's medicine for disease."

"Medicine? We know it's medicine, but what does that have to do with it doubling in price?"

"They also said that the dollar has gone up."

"But garlic is grown in this country!"

"I was surprised too. The man who brings it to me doubled the price."

"We're not dying fast enough for them."

"That is the problem."

"Give me half a kilo."



*Kaddu Beykat,
Safi Faye
1975*



Mrs. Karanja had her monthly budget down pat, she could tell you before the Central Bank of Kenya when inflation was threatening based on her monthly shopping.

South B's Finest,
Makena Maganjo

My mother knew, down to the cent, what every scrap of food in our house cost. After every trip to the grocery store, she would sit at the kitchen table and pore over the receipts, highlighting numbers and making lists.

Transcendent Kingdom, Yaa Gyasi

Handwritten receipts and notes:

- Handwritten list of items and prices (partially obscured):
 - BAKING powder 5x21=120
 - 7x45=90
 - 10x19=190
 - 1x120=120
 - 6x430=2580
 - 1x390=390
 - 30x29=1450
 - 6x285=1710
 - 16x640=7680
 - 1x170=170
 - 2x280=560
 - 1x260=260
 - 2x15=30
 - AMERICAN garden 2x140=280
 - 10x8=80
 - 4x40=160
 - 1x550=550
 - 19,006**
- Handwritten list of items and prices:
 - 5
 - 5x25 = 125
 - 5x15 = 75
 - 5x10 = 50
 - 1x20 = 20
 - 1x90 = 90
 - 1x90 = 90
 - 1x25 = 25
 - 1x15 = 15
 - 1x20 = 20
 - 645**
 - 265**
 - 910**
- Handwritten list of items and prices:
 - Teff 5,300
 - (Sih) 2,700
 - meal 1,800
 - milk (Gureya/Samia) 700
 - veg 400
 - egg 200
 - LPG 2,300
 - Fuel 1,000
- Handwritten calculations:
 - $15.0 \times 2.70 = 40.5$
 - $3.50 + 2.60 + 1.20$
 - $1.60 \times 2.70 = 4.32$
 - $90 \times 2.00 = 180$
- Handwritten list of items and prices:
 - 1. next oil 160
 - 2. kerosine 350
 - 3. Fuel 800
 - 4. work 600
 - 5. Coal 450
 - 6. veg 400



Photo by Nebila Abdulmelik



Bekelech
Abebe

"In your country, the descendants of the biggest thieves, are they not the ones making the decisions? Your House of Lords. Who made them so? Was it not by oppressing the poor, by swallowing the land? Today, we are calling them 'My Lord,' calling them 'Honorable.' Your banks built on the slave trade, Lloyds, have they returned any compensation?"

"You're saying the British judiciary of today should pursue centuries old crimes?"

"What of the ones today? Where does all the stolen money in Africa go? Your being here is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. And because the pot is bigger, more powerful, better armed, it can talk anyhow to the kettle. But one day, in my lifetime, I can assure you,

**there
will
be a
revolution
in the
kitchen."**

Welcome to Lagos, Chibundu Onuzo

NATIVE UNREST IN NIGERIA

EUROPEANS ASSAULTED
(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT)

ABA, DEC. 12

Much unrest has developed in some parts of South-Eastern Nigeria. Trouble broke out in a village about 15 miles distant from Opobo, where a political



officer was attacked, a native Court burnt down, and telegraphic communications were temporarily destroyed. A large force of police is now in the area.

Minor troubles in the nature of demonstrations have occurred at Umuahia and other places in the neighbourhood. On Tuesday demonstrations by several hundreds of native women took place in Aba itself, and they were repeated yesterday. Europeans were assaulted, the offices of Barclays Bank were rushed, two European stores were forced and partially looted, and the District Officer's headquarters were attacked. Reinforcements of police were obtained and a small detachment of troops arrived this morning. The situation is well in hand.

NIGERIA.

It's

SESSIONAL PAPER

in

No. 28 of 1930.

the

Paper laid on the Table of the Legislative Council.

documentation

SUBJECT:

Report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed to inquire into the Disturbances in the Calabar and Owerri Provinces, December, 1929.

To His Excellency

SIR GRAEME THOMSON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief

of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. By an instrument (1) under your hand and the Public Seal of Nigeria dated the 7th February, 1930, Your Excellency appointed us to be a Commission of Inquiry within the meaning of the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance with the following terms of reference:—

Appointment of Commission.

(a) To inquire into the origin and causes of and responsibility for the recent disturbances in the Calabar and Owerri Provinces and the measures taken to restore order and to make such recommendations as may seem fit.

(b) To inquire into the responsibility (if any) of any person or persons for failing to take in anticipation of such disturbances adequate measures to safeguard life and property.

2. Pursuant to that appointment we met at Aba on the 8th March, 1930, and formally opened our proceedings at that place on the 10th March when the Commission was read and our Chairman made an opening statement in which he called upon all persons, both men and women, who could throw light upon either the disturbances themselves or upon their origin or causes to come forward and give their evidence. We held public sittings on thirty-eight days:—nine at Umudike, four at Owerri, and twelve at Aba in the Owerri Province; and seven at Opobo and five at Ikot Ekpene in the Calabar Province; and one at Lagos. We heard in all 485 witnesses, and one of the features of our sittings was the eagerness of the people in the Owerri Province to give evidence before us and the intense interest with which our proceedings there were followed. The halls in which we met held well over three hundred people and were invariably filled to overflowing, while the crowd outside frequently numbered several thousands, mostly women. In contrast with this our sittings evoked comparatively little interest in the Calabar Province. At Opobo the people appeared at first to be somewhat cowed, and at Ikot Ekpene uninterested, but at both places they came forward in good numbers before we had finished. Owing to invalidings and the absence of leave we were not able to call before us all the European Government officials whom we would have liked to hear and in many cases we had to take witnesses out of their most convenient sequence in order to enable them to proceed on leave or to meet other exigencies.

Sittings.
Witnesses and attitude of the people.

(1) Appendix I.

from my town attended that meeting. At that meeting they resolved that no notice should be taken of counts that had already taken place, that they should wait to see what would happen in future, and that if any woman was approached to give the number of women and livestock in her house she should raise alarm to call other women."

Again IKODIA (female) OF UGBERILE (OLOKO) testified:—

"We heard that women were being counted by their chiefs. Women became annoyed at this and decided to ask who gave the order, as they did not wish to accept it. As we went to various markets we asked other women whether they too had heard the rumour about the counting of women. They replied that they had heard it. We heard also that Oloko Chiefs had counted their respective women. We, women, therefore held a large meeting at which we decided to wait until we heard definitely from one person that women were to be taxed, in which case we would make trouble, as we did not mind to be killed for doing so. We went to the houses of all chiefs and each admitted counting his people."

Further NWAKAJI (female) OF ERWELI (OLOKO) said:—

"Before Okugo's incident we had heard that chiefs were counting women. We wondered why women were being counted. We went to the house of Chief Oleka of Oloko and asked why women should be counted. He said that he did so in accordance with the District Officer's instructions that women should be counted. We asked him, 'Why are you counting women?' He replied that the District Officer had said that women should pay tax and that, if we like to do so, we could go to Chief Ezima of Ndeoru and ask him about it. We went to Ezima and he told us that he too had counted women and that he was not satisfied that women should pay tax while men were paying. We were also told to go to Chief Oboro's house at Omosu. We did so. He too said that the order that women should pay tax came from the District Officer. Oboro said that we should go to Ngadi's house and tell him about it. We went to him and asked him whether he had heard about this rumour. He replied that he had heard about it and that the District Officer had said that women should pay tax. We were very much surprised at this. We said, 'How could women who have no means themselves to buy food or clothing afford to pay tax?' We then held a meeting and decided, before taking any action, to wait until one person dared to come to us and say 'Pay your tax'."

The evidence of ULOIGBO (female) OF AWON UKU (OLOKO) is also important:—

"Why we made demonstrations and why we held meetings was because chiefs counted women. First of all Oleka of Okwe did the counting. Then Ezima of Ndeoru also counted the people, and the chiefs of Ahaba and Oguru also did the same. Ngadi also counted. We women went to them and asked them why they were counting us. They said we were going to pay tax. We said 'How are we going to pay tax? We depend upon our husbands, we cannot buy food or cloth ourselves: how shall we get money to pay tax?' That was why we met and made demonstration, to find out the person who had suggested we should pay tax. . . . They counted us in the same manner as the men were counted and afterwards were made to pay tax. We said: 'You are now counting us. If any chief dares to say that women are to pay tax, we women will go to his house and make demonstration.'"

35. It is clear therefore that from the middle of October the women in the Oloko Native Court area were suspicious, if not convinced, that the new census was merely a preliminary to the taxation of women. This

As one of
their most
intelligent
spokeswomen said,
it was
"an act of
Providence"
that brought
the women out.



They called themselves 'Oha Ndi Nyion: (Ohandun), which appears to have an abstract meaning and may be rendered in English "women's world" or "the spirit of womanhood," and their demeanor on this occasion tended to show that they believed that they were possessed of the spirit of womanhood and were inviolable.

*It is not by
our own power that we are
doing this. God has
sent us to do this thing.
Women cannot
be
killed.*

They were becoming fanatical, and were singing mournful dirges as they are accustomed to do when a serious calamity befalls the country. Death is "standing before us." They were carrying okpoto sticks (wild sugar cane) and tying palm leaves round their heads as a sign of national mourning.

Reference may here be made to the argument adduced in the Secretary, Southern Province's Memorandum (2) that at the beginning of the dry season women are in a more neurotic condition than at other seasons and consequently are more liable to break out into disorder. It is true perhaps that after the harvest is gathered and before the planting season begins women have more leisure than at other times, and it is only natural that harvest celebrations should on occasion lead to excesses, but we have had no evidence to show that women are more neurotic at the beginning of the dry season, and we hesitate to subscribe to that theory.

"It has been suggested here that men encouraged women to move about. I deny that statement. We acted according to our own consciences. The matter did not concern men."

In some measure, the movement may be likened to that for women's suffrage in England where militant feminism committed breaches of the law with a view to drawing the widest possible attention to what they believed to be the inherent justice of their cause.





“The true position of Nigerian women had to be judged from the women who carried babies on their backs and farmed from sunrise to sunset, not women who used tea, sugar, and flour for breakfast”.

- Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti

... As the ALC became more feminist and political, Funmilayo saw that the women’s movement could not succeed without the majority of women. So in 1944, the ALC changed its name to the Abeokuta Women’s Union (AWU), with Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti as its first president. Next up? A cultural glow-up. To make the union more inclusive, the union adopted Yoruba as the language of conversation and dressed in Yoruba attire.

One of the AWU’s first movements took things to the market. As a result of World War II, women were in a particularly precarious position. As a British colony, Nigeria also suffered economic consequences, and women suddenly found themselves having to contend with food quotas and price controls from the colonial administration and extortion from local authorities, who frequently confiscated their rice. So the women’s union took action, in an Instagram-live worthy showdown which Fela (her son), described, saying:

“These women went straight to see the District Officer of Abeokuta who was a young white boy. The District Officer must have said something in a disdainful voice, like: ‘Go on back home.’

To which my mother exploded: ‘You bastard, rude little rat...!’[-]Imagine insulting the highest motherfucking representative of the British imperial crown in Abeokuta, Ohhhhhhhh, man! I was proud.”

Mrs. Ransome-Kuti wasn’t here to play, thank you very much.

Another major accomplishment the AWU achieved under Ransome-Kuti’s presidency was in 1947, when they fought against sexist tax laws. The colonial government paid the Alake (traditional leader) of Abeokuta to enforce a tax that charged women more than men. Sadly for him, the AWU was having none of it.

In November 1947, Ransome-Kuti led thousands of women to the Alake’s palace, singing and dancing in protest. They demanded an end to the taxation, and also used petitions and letters to argue their case. Tensions continued to escalate until 1948, when the women’s efforts led to the suspension of the tax on women. Funmilayo’s efforts in the revolt earned her the nickname “Lioness of Lisabi”.

Simi Segun

South African women were similarly organizing to resist the apartheid regime. In August 1956, thousands of South African women — ranging from various backgrounds and cultures staged a march on the Union Buildings of Pretoria in one of the largest demonstrations in South African history, to protest against the abusive pass laws designed to segregate black South African women and limit their movements. One of the forces behind this resistance was Charlotte Manye Maxeke. She founded the Barotsi Women's League to protest the pass laws, and led a group of women to burn their passes in front of municipal offices, stage protest marches, and fight with the police. 1956 Women's March, Pretoria

Particularly in West Africa, women mobilized in several ways to resist against unjust behaviours, actions or policies. Resistance included the use of force, strikes, boycotts, and nudging as protest. Igbo women resisted by "making war". They would assemble in a public space, dressed in war attire and paint their faces in ashes. From there, they would move to the oppressor's house where they would aggressively protest, and in some cases, destroy the house. It was this tactic that was employed in the Igbo Women's War of 1929 to protest unfair taxation, unjust interference in their economic activities by the British colonial government and extortion by the warrant chiefs and Native Court members.

With the advent of colonialism, African women will show admirable bravery and an unfaltering resolve to resist oppression and the injustice of colonialism. Mekatilili wa Menza, a Kenyan woman leader, who will lead the Giriama people to rebel against British Colonial Administration and policies in 1913 and successfully hinder British attempts at free African labour and overtaxing Kenyans to Huda Sha'rawi, who helped lead the first women's street demonstration, the 'March of Veiled Women', in Cairo to protest British colonial rule and later founded the Egyptian Feminist Forum in 1923.

Post-independence Uganda, Edith Mary Bataringaya, Joseph Kalema and Theresa Mbiwera started the Uganda Council of Women to press for legal reforms to grant all women the right to own property & retain custody of their children if their marriages ended. The council passed a resolution urging that laws regarding marriage, divorce, and inheritance should be recorded in written form and publicized nationwide. Their work led to change in Ugandan Divorce Laws, leading to the written codification of the Divorce Act that gives men and women equal opportunities for divorce.

Africa's Feminist Roots:
Chronicle of Feminist Heritages
Since Pre-colonial Period
Written by Fatima B. Deby





Situating Fireside Knowledge in Development Feminist Academy

Mary Njeri Kinyanjui

...Some studies on women operating in the informal economy view their participation as a limitation and the reason why they are not part of the patriarchal global capitalist development. Chant and Pedwell (2008) argue that the failure of governments to create jobs explains why women are in the informal economy. They also argue that men push women to low value activities of the informal economy and that the 'feminization of informal labour has served to exacerbate gendered, sexualized, racialized and classed inequalities' (Chant and Pedwell, 2008: 13). In their view, informal jobs are not decent.

Had they looked at the informal economy in the eyes of women, they would have learned that the informal economy concept was a masculine creation by Keith Hart, who viewed non-western traders and craftspeople as informal. They would have appreciated that African women in particular have been traders and artisans

since time immemorial. Their persistence into the 20th century could be viewed as a form of resistance to incorporation and conscription into global capitalist production chains. Chant and Pedwell (2008) would have interrogated the meaning of decent jobs. It is not clear in whose eye decency is constructed. What is indecent in sitting in a marketplace trading in groundnuts? How is decency measured or observed? What is the difference between a market trader and a clinical assistant doing double shifts in the American health system? Knowledge from a fireside perspective would have illuminated why women are in the informal economy, the methods they use to survive, and the alliances, commons and solidarities they form to advance humanity rather than endorse a patriarchal capitalist system.

The name *Wanjiku* in Kenya is used figuratively to represent ordinary low-income women who derive livelihood in trade, peasant and artisan work. I push the

debate of existing majority of ordinary African women from poverty by interrogating how Wanjiku articulates herself in the global economy by monetizing transactions in the household as well as creating institutions that regulate self and group in peasant, trade and artisan activities. She juggles with money between gifting, reciprocity, sharing, accumulation and investing as she fulfills her roles and mission in the world involving nurturing and care. She makes and configures households as sites of monetized production and reproduction transactions in her everyday livelihood negotiations on the farm, market or at the artisan site. She makes money, accumulates, invests it or uses it in realizing the wellbeing of self, offspring or parents to reproduce and connect communities in time and space. Through intense processes of socialization and orature, she crafts a model of economy that ensures survival, transfer to the next generation and connectedness to the divine, local family and community and personal realm.

Maintaining command at the household is key and many women strive to maintain this at all costs. This influences the way they monetize transactions in the household, family and community as well as make peasant, artisan and trade activities centers of self and group market regulation. Understanding this process, the logic and desires of wellbeing and wealth will go a long way in explaining the survival of peasants, artisans and traders into the 21st Century.



Asusu savings pots are used by women's Adashe savings groups in Northern Nigeria. In Hausa, Adashe means contribution. The savings approach is a common one across Africa and in other parts of the world, where each member of the group makes a periodic financial contribution. When the pot is full, it is broken for distribution. It can either be given to one member on a rotational basis with everyone getting a turn or shared at once. Sometimes it can also be broken before it is full or outside of the agreed rotation to help one or more members fulfill an urgent need ranging from preparing for a child's wedding to unexpected hospital bills or funeral arrangements. When the pot is broken, a new one is made or bought and the contributions start anew.

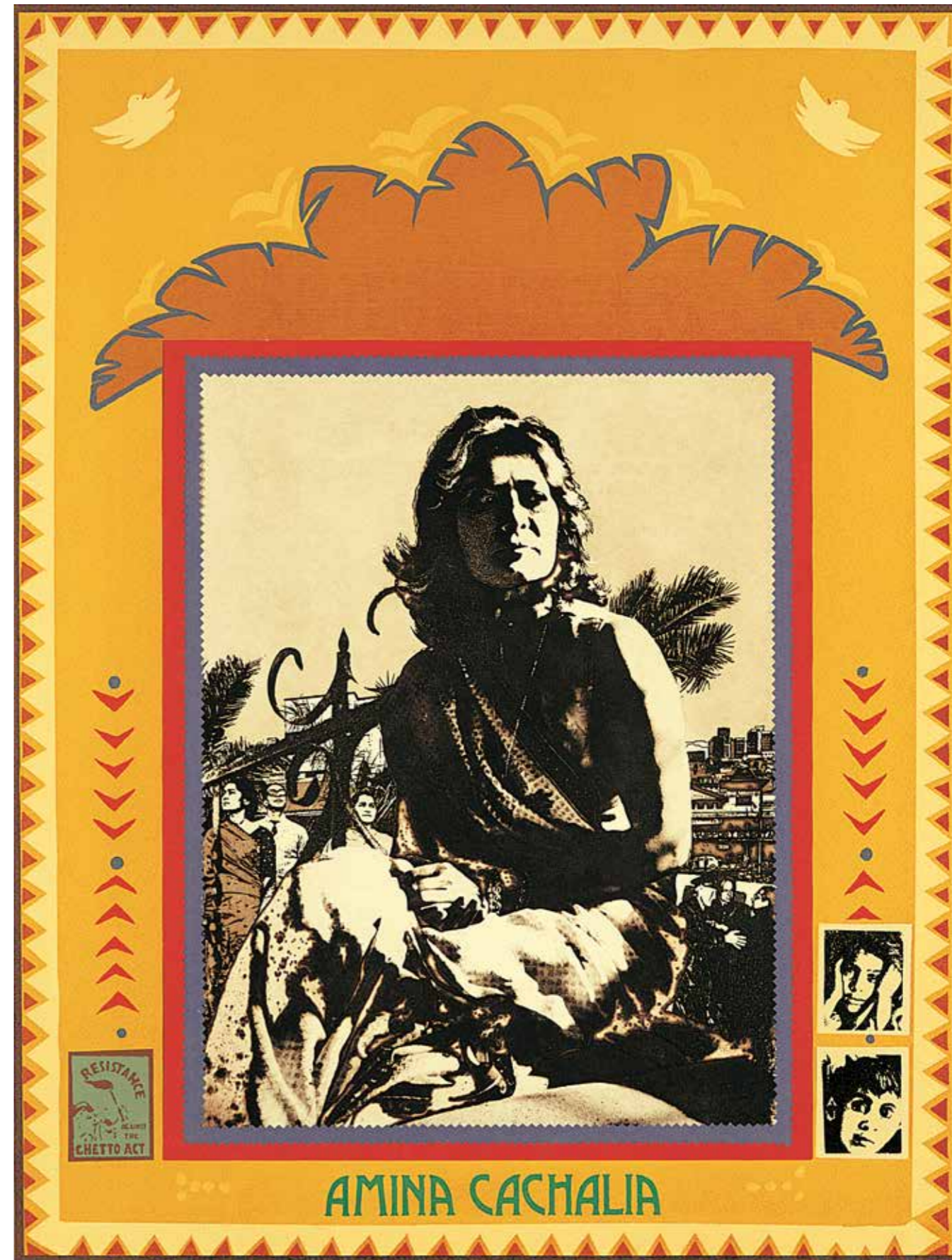
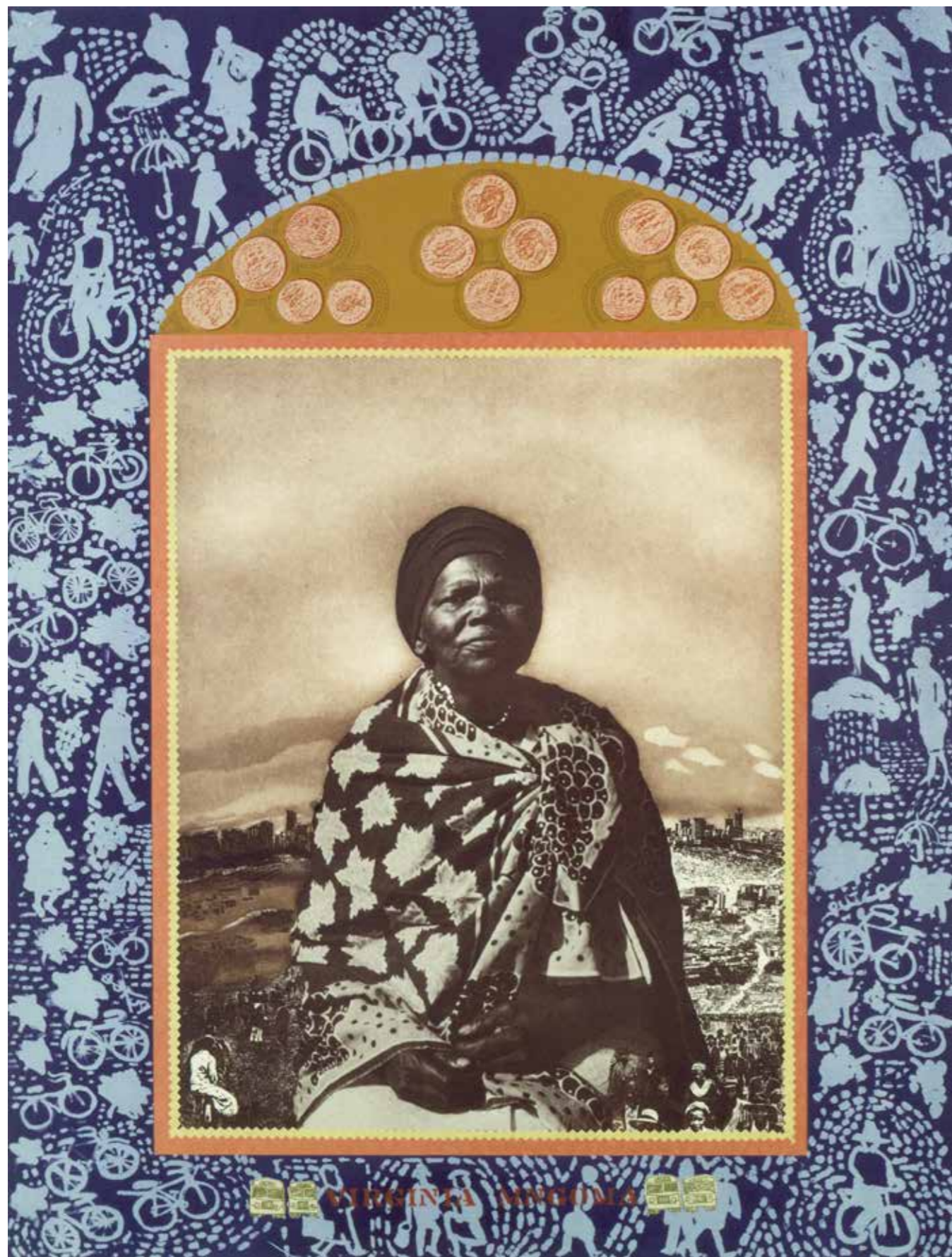
Ultimately the asusu represents a system of women collectively using their financial means to support one another to create wealth as well as provide safety nets in the event of a crisis. It is one of the most traditional examples of social solidarity economics.

From all around the Third World,
You hear the same story;
Rulers
Asleep to all things at
All times -
Conscious only of
Riches, which they gather in a
Coma -
Intravenously

So that
You wouldn't know they were
Feeding if it was not for the
Occasional
Tell-tale trickle somewhere
Around the mouth.
And when they are jolted awake,
They stare about them with
Unseeing eyes, just
Sleepwalkers in a nightmare.

Our Sister Killjoy,
Ama Ata Aido





A Few South Africans, Sue Williamson



WOMEN WORKERS!

UNITE & FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS

6 MONTHS PAID MATERNITY LEAVE

WOMEN WORKERS!

UNITE & FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS

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UNITE & FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS

6 MONTHS PAID MATERNITY LEAVE



1985-1995
Ten years of workers' unity and struggle

COSATU
10th Anniversary

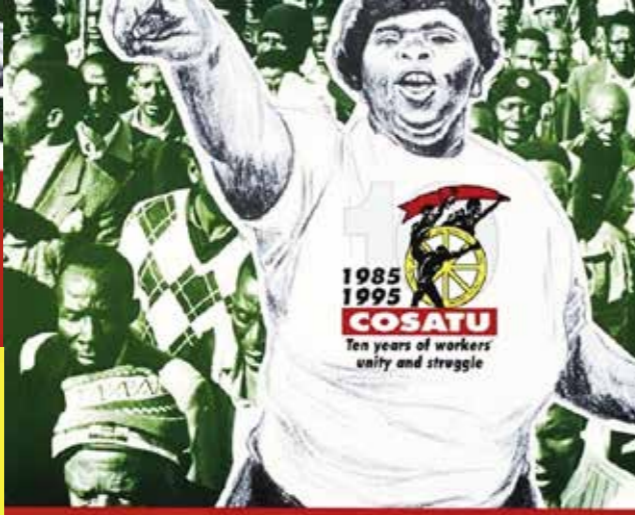


1985-1995
Ten years of workers' unity and struggle

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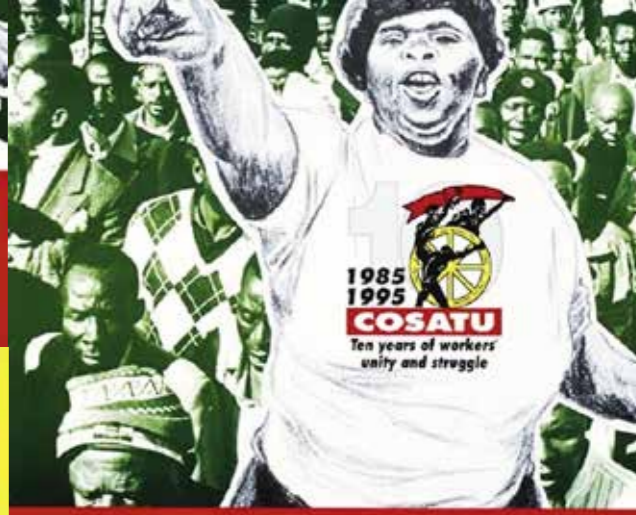


1985-1995
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COSATU
10th Anniversary



1985-1995



1985-1995
Ten years of workers' unity and struggle

COSATU
10th Anniversary



1985-1995
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COSATU
10th Anniversary



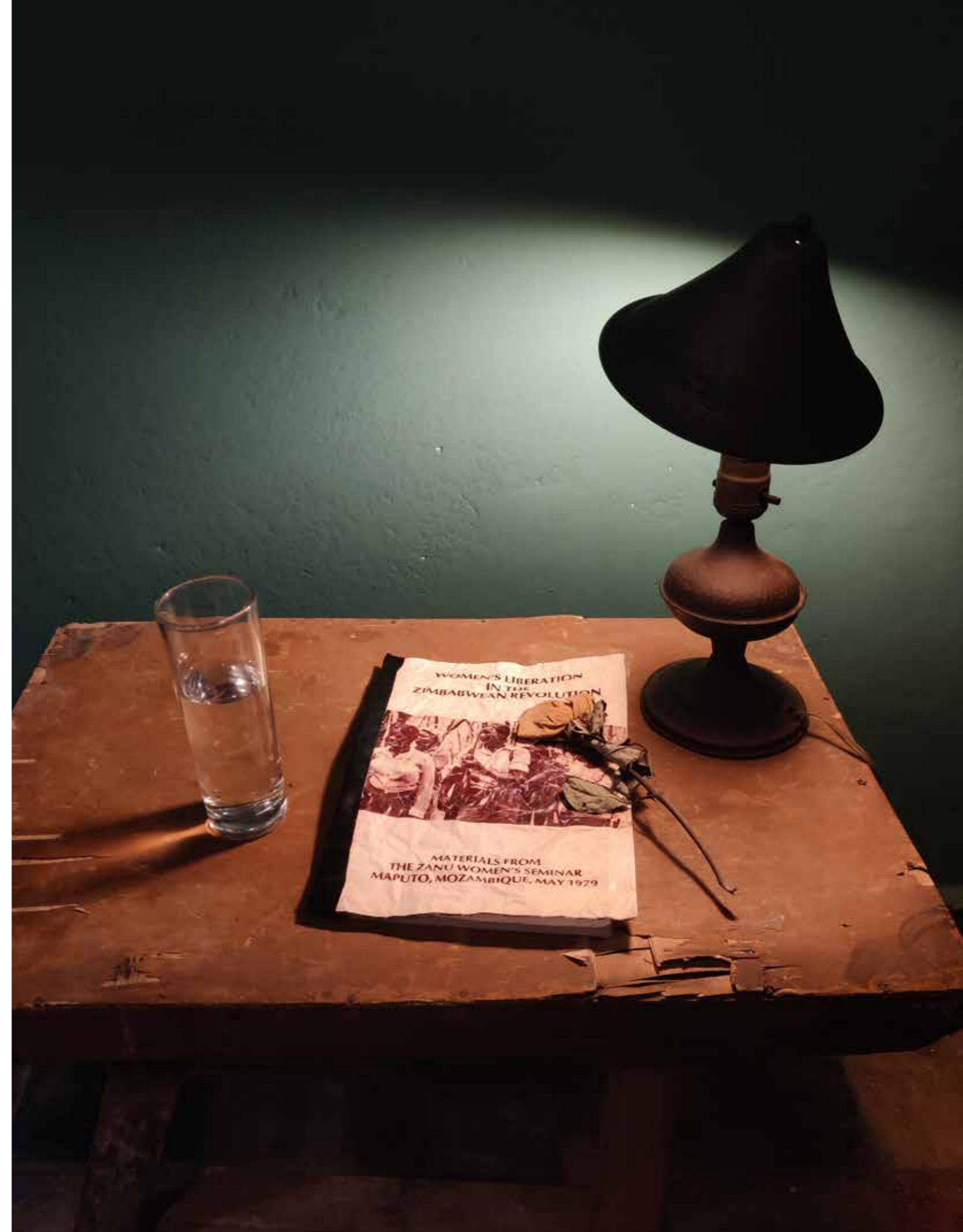
"Was it bad what we were?
Is it what makes me do bad things?"
Kirabo asks.

"No, it was not bad at all,"
replies Nsuuta.

"In fact, it was wonderful for us.
We were not squeezed inside,
we were huge, strong, bold, loud,
proud, brave, independent.
But it was too much for the world
and they got rid of it. However,
occasionally that state is reborn
in a girl like you.

But in all cases it is suppressed.
In your case the first woman
flies out of your body because
it does not relate to the way
this society is."

The First Woman,
Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi





**INTERVIEW
WITH
NAOMI NHIWATIWA**

*Interview by Breakthrough,
Political Journal of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee
July 1979*

Is there collective childcare in Zimbabwe now? Do men share in caring for the children?

That was one of the major things that we looked into. Right now it is very difficult. We are supposed to have nursery schools, both men and women are supposed to help within the nursery schools and share in the responsibility of attending to the needs of children. However, because of the nature of the struggle, it has been very difficult to open nursery schools. We had nursery schools near Chimoio, and they became targets of Ian Smith. He dropped bombs at schools where the children were supposed to be learning. So they stopped putting children in one spot so they don't all get killed.

As it is, most of the women share responsibility with men. There are men who are not taking a major role in the struggle. They spend the time with the children, together with women who are not taking an active role in the struggle. There was something I observed that to me was very, very fascinating. The war has helped people to really unite, so that the practice of collectivity was very encouraging in terms of allowing women to develop yet without feeling that they are neglecting their other responsibilities. For example, when a woman wants to get pregnant she can get pregnant, she can have a baby, and if she still wants to go back to the war, which many women do—there is usually someone else who will be very glad to take care of the child. Right now that is the setup that we have—both men and women who are not active attend to the needs of the children—in separate places because they cannot be grouped in one place. We indeed plan to have nursery schools and to involve both men and women.

Naomi Nhiwatiwa credit: *Breakthrough*



We Demand Free Childcare



Victory is Ours



Free Childcare is Victory



We Demand Free Childcare



Victory is Ours



Free Childcare is Victory



We Demand Free Childcare



Victory is Ours



Free Childcare is Victory





Bitter had no interest in the revolution.

She was seventeen, and she thought it was ridiculous that adults wanted young people to be the ones saving the world, as if her generation was the one that had broken everything in the first place. It wasn't her business. She was supposed to have had a childhood, a whole world waiting for her when she grew up, but instead kids her age were the ones on the front lines, the ones turned into martyrs and symbols that the adults praised publicly but never listened to because their greed was always louder and it was easier to perform solidarity than to actually do the things needed for change.

The world was supposed to have gotten better, not become even more violent, rank with more death. It was no wonder the people took to the streets, masses swallowing the roads and sidewalks, because in a world that wanted you dead, you had to scream and fight for your aliveness.

- *Bitter*, Akwaeke Emezi

You either believe that expenditure
on social services is important for
human well-being or you don't.

That is a political belief.

As a feminist.

As a socialist.

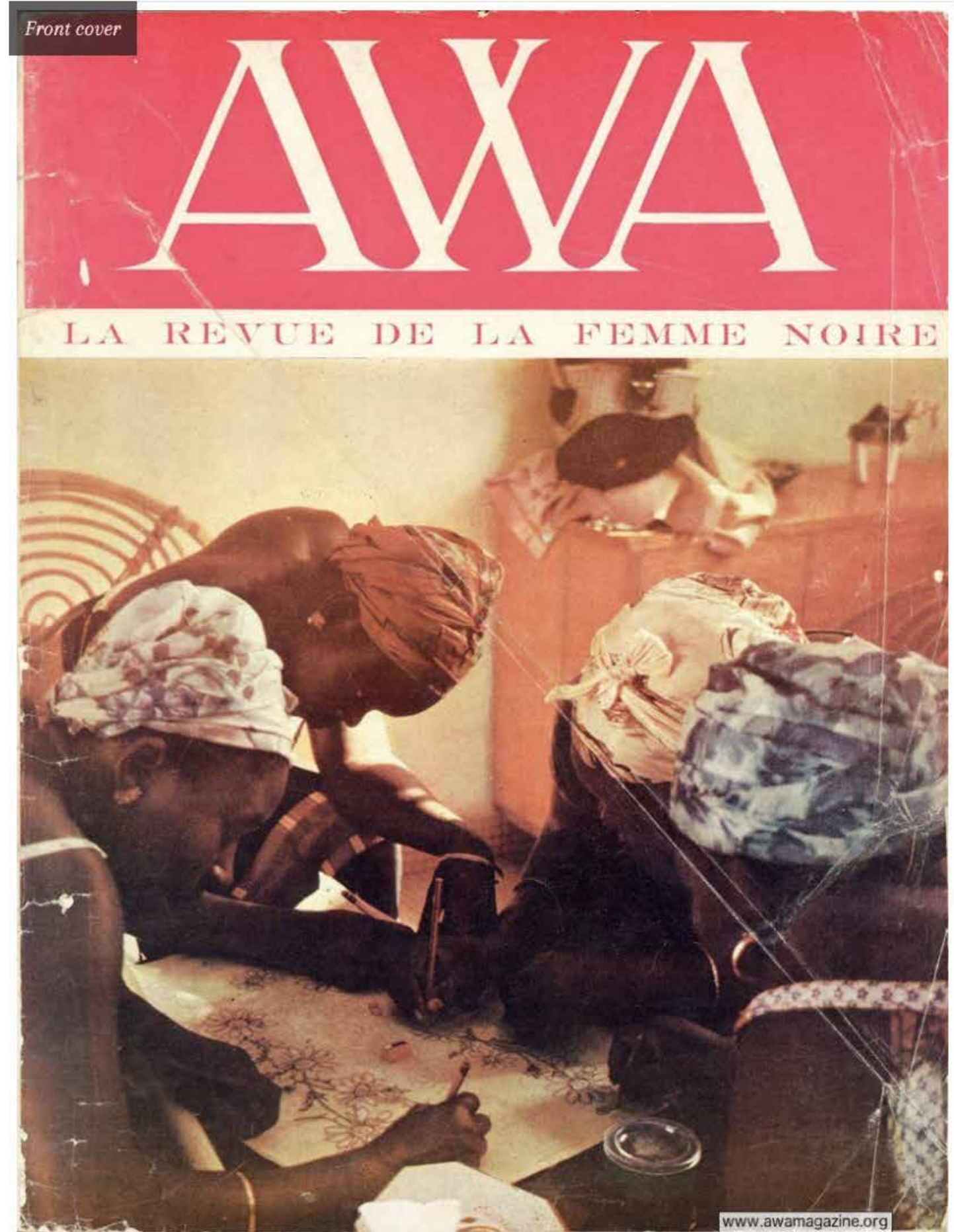
I was exposed to things
that developed my reasoning's
around this.

Different identity factors create
your politics around this.

So much of our political activism should
come from the personal,
from our experiences and impressions.

Fatimah Kelleher

Front cover



I strongly oppose the idea that Africa's key characteristic is her poverty. She is more the victim of her riches... Today a sick woman in a village risks dying because the nurse who has the medicine won't treat her because she can't pay. That is what it has come to, what we've learned from the system...

Bamako,
Aminata Dramane Traore



Mr. Wolfensohn,

I am Yassine Fall, an economist from Senegal. I am a member of the Executive Committee and the Executive Secretary of the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD). The Economic Justice Caucus is pleased that you are here and that you will be having a more in depth meeting later today with some feminist activists. We hope this marks the beginning of a strong personal commitment to women on your part and a genuine process of transformation within the Bank.

Since you were not among the 40,000 women in Haurou or the thousands here at the official conference, I would like to convey to you that one of the clearest and strongest outcomes of our meetings is our collective determination to see that the Bank undergoes its own internal "structural adjustment" programme.

Many of us are wearing white today, the ~~the~~ colour of mourning in China, to symbolize our grieving for the damage to our planet and people's lives -- lost or diminished in the rush of global commercialization ~~fostered~~ fostered by economic restructuring along purely free market lines.

We call upon you to re-structure Bank operations and to transform the economic model which is guiding its policies because we see a glaring contradiction between the Bank's mandate and its day-to-day operations. We do not agree with the Bank's fundamental premise that "trickle-down economics" works in the long-run. We want the World Bank to make its rhetoric real. To truly make the elimination of poverty its first goal -- ~~not~~. We do not agree with the model that says first you deal with inflation rates, balance of payment deficits, budget deficits, the money supply, prices, privatization, currency devaluation, and trade policies. We disagree with the Bank's operating assumption that first you must

"get prices right" and open markets freely to international competition, then poverty will be reduced. This growth and competition-driven model works only to enrich the elites in all of our countries.

We don't accept the Bank's common retort that our governments have not tried hard enough to make reforms, or that you can't statistically prove causality between increasing impoverishment and certain economic policies. We know in our heads, our hearts, and our bodies that pure free market policies are wrong. We know that individual country economies need transformation. But one thing you didn't attempt ~~to change~~ at all to change global distortions -- power and resource imbalances in international economic relationships. In fact, the reforms supported by the Bank and our governments serve to reinforce existing inequalities in power and resources. While Bank officials tell us that we can't prove we would be better off without radical free market reforms, we say if this is how our lives are with them -- we do not want them. Stop mortgaging women's lives! Start listening to the voices within and outside the Bank who have alternative ideas. We have different models and policies to offer -- at the grass-roots, national and international levels.

The underlying economic philosophy of the Bank employs a bankrupt model of development. While it reinforces existing class inequalities it also exacerbates gender inequalities. Economic reforms by whatever name have relied on women's bodies -- our unpaid work in home and community, our sexuality and health, as well as our attempts to bring in income through informal and formal sector work, to function as well as they have. We have been the social shock absorbers. At times this has meant that we even have been subjected to physical violence, or witnessed our children and families victimized by violence, as survival pressures mount within our households and communities.

At its best, the Bank currently sees women as economic inputs --

efficient workers, more reliable creditors and resilient managers of poverty. The Bank heralds its loans to microentrepreneurs as a commitment to women. At best, though, the loans enable women to help families keep their heads slightly above water. However, at the same time, you are altering macro policies that create typhoons that threaten to drown them. We hear Bank officials use economic efficiency language like "investing in women is good economics" and "inefficiencies caused by gender inequalities hamper growth." While this may convince some neo-classical economists in the Bank to pay attention to women, it indicates that the Bank has yet to get the message that the goal of your economic policies should be to promote the full humanity of women and men -- not to better exploit women to make economies run better.

In calling for structural adjustment within the Bank, we are seeking policy and institutional changes. I would like to present to you petitions signed by about a thousand women from around the globe that make some specific demands. They fall into four areas -- greater participation of women's groups in the Bank's policy formulation, implementation and review; strengthening and institutionalizing a gender perspective in the Bank; increasing the resources the Bank devotes to women's needs; raising the number of women in senior level management. I would also like to give you a list of concrete proposals related to these demands which were developed by a team of women here in order to help you take first steps in implementing the Platform for Action.

We want the Bank to commit itself to work with us to create a better institution which works for global economic, gender and racial justice; an institution which genuinely strives to reflect the values of participation, diversity and ecological integrity in its policies and practices.

We are planning a campaign to educate and mobilize women's

organizations around the world on the International Financial Institutions and the Platform for Action. We invite you to commit yourself personally, and the Bank corporately, to engage in the process of bringing Beijing home. To this end, we want to establish a process and timetable by which women's NGOs at all levels and from all countries can work with high level Bank staff on implementation.

I would like to end by asking you a few questions.

1. We have heard the Bank say that it was going to lend a certain amount of money to women's programs. Do you think this will contribute significantly in fighting women's poverty and bringing gender equality?
2. Does the positive net transfer of funds received by the Bank in recent years from LDCs reflect the Bank's realization in fighting the marginalization of women?
3. Does the Bank see greater results in shifting its loan portfolio from the LDCs to economies in transition? And how do you think this will affect women?
4. How do the lessons taken from your past policy-based lending experience in Africa contribute to your new lending approach to Eastern and Central Europe and how does this affect women?
5. Does the Bank feel accountable to women in developing countries especially to African women given the failure of the economic reforms it was advocating and their contribution in the development of poverty?
6. What are the next steps you are willing to take regarding implementation of our concerns?

2022
- 1995

27
years

How
many
of
our
ministers
of
finance
[or members of any government ministry]
are
former
IMF/World Bank
employees?

It's
a
question
that
we
need
to
ask.

Crystal Simeoni

Formerly colonized people can't breathe. And the IMF and World Bank are to blame.

Felogene Anumo
Open Democracy
1 October 2020

“Who the hell cuts a health budget in the middle of a pandemic?”

woefully expressed a fellow comrade upon learning of the Nigerian government's decision to slash the national health expenditure budget by almost half.

While appalling, the Nigerian health budget cut is not particularly surprising, following the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announcement that its plans to disburse the second largest Covid-19 emergency financing for Nigeria have been delayed due to disagreements over desired reforms contingent to the loan.

The case of Nigeria is only the most recent example of how the two leading International Financial Institutions (IFIs) – the World Bank and the IMF have for decades been part of a well-orchestrated scheme to keep previously-colonized countries in a never-ending cycle of debt, misuse of funds, and large-scale plunder of Global South wealth, keeping those countries perpetually yoked to conditional loans. The truth is, previously-colonized people cannot breathe. Whether locked under the knees of homicidal police officers in Minnesota or labouring under the stronghold of the Washington Consensus, we cannot breathe...

The Rise Of Corporate Power

This debt system is intimately linked to the growing power of corporations, where IFIs make decisions in the service of the economic elite. Caught in a situation between life and debt, an Argentinian Finance Minister dared to default on the country's debt and took the decision to freeze the prices of privatized utilities such as gas, electricity, telephones and water indefinitely during the 2001 financial crisis. What followed was an onslaught of lawsuits by transnational corporations for profit losses.

Analysis by TNI shows that so far the investment arbitration system heavily favors corporate interests over states. Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) states have been made to pay transnational corporations up to USD 20.6 billion while African states have been hit with an unprecedented number of claims in recent years by foreign companies – something that is likely to set them back USD 4.6 billions.

States have recently adopted progressive stances to mobilize public funding towards strengthening social protection and public health systems in their emergency Covid-19 responses. If the past serves as a reasonable guide to the future, transnational corporations are probably preparing for a flood of lawsuits against governments for these decisions, actions that are likely to make the debt distress a lot worse for the most impoverished and vulnerable in our societies in the long term.

Increasing debt distress has a direct correlation to increased labor exploitation in moments of crisis. IFIs aggressively push neoliberal policies through the conditionality attached to their loans. These conditionalities often prescribe the privatization of critical sectors like healthcare and education, and the so-called “flexibilisation” of the labor market, which dismantles workers' rights. As a result, social protections systems in the majority of Global South countries are in a shambles, and sectors with high female workforce participation become increasingly more precarious, with women, trans and gender diverse people often bearing the greatest burden.

A recent report by Action Aid and Public Services International (PSI) shows that “the IMF continues to tell countries [already] facing health worker shortages to cut public employment funding – sometimes with deadly consequences.” These prescriptive measures are evidently constraining governments' efforts to adequately respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The debt cycle is chillingly linked to resource exploitation and environmental plunder. According to Global Witness research, 2019 was the deadliest year yet for land and environmental defenders. These include Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) who are not only protecting their land and territories from corporations, financiers and the state but are often targeted for gender-specific attacks.

IFIs, development banks and financiers have been implicated for driving and financing a model of economic development that is fueling the climate crisis – on one hand through the focus on large-scale infrastructure “mega” projects and on the other through direct investment in fossil fuels. These actions result in extensive land and resource grabbing, pollution, environmental degradation and human rights abuses against peasant farmers, indigenous women and WHRDs, and continue to fan the flames of the climate emergency and widen inequalities.

In this never-ending debt cycle dynamic, these very same financiers step in to offer “loans” as debt relief when climate disasters strike. A catastrophe that begets a catastrophe.

Decades of inaccurate diagnosis

A health pandemic lesson we know all too well by now, is how an incorrect or delayed diagnosis can have disastrous consequences for a patient's care, research and policy. Accurate history-taking is crucial for correct diagnosis, we are told. In fact, according to Improving Diagnosis in Health Care, diagnostic errors continue to harm an unacceptable number of patients.

For years, feminists have accurately diagnosed that IFI maxims such as “taxing for growth” have only resulted in massive inequalities and the rise of the 1%. The unequal distribution of power in governance structures as well as policy options

that result in an unjust distribution of resources continue to wreak havoc on lives around the world.

African feminist economic experts advance that conditionalities surrounding financial assistance must be rejected by governments, and secondly, debt cancellation must be a priority. In fact, if there is any justice in the world, these grants would be "reparations" from years of looting and exploitation.

It's time for a #FeministBailout

The global movement calling for debt write-off is growing in the face of Covid-19.

UNCTAD estimates that the public external debt for Global South countries will increase to between USD 2.6 trillion and USD 3.4 trillion due the coronavirus pandemic. This signals a necessary re-thinking of the global debt system that accounts for historical injustices and rejects oppressive debt-laden conditionalities that undermine states' sovereignty and policy self-determination.

As the world goes through a moment of "re-awakening", what was once politically unimaginable seems now possible. A #FeministBailout rejects incremental models of structural reforms that do little to address IFIs' systemic failures and continual harm to people and the environment. People's rights and sovereignty, restorative justice and harm-reduction are some of the discourses that must shape our post-pandemic economies.

The feminist worlds we need will only thrive when international systems are based on people and care-centered economies, inherent value for the ecosystem of life, autonomy and solidarity. Economies that are based not on profit maximization, but on equitable rights.



cancel the debt

Wealth does not trickle down to the poor.

Oxfam knows this
the IMF knows this
the World Bank knows this.
Poor people have always known this.

Winnie Byanyima



Poor
people
have
always
known
this...

The word *thief* summed up the common enemy. Why there was no supper the previous night; why their children were not on their way to school.

Thief was the president who arrived two and a half decades ago waving "democracy" at them, who had recently laughed,

"Did I actually say democracy?"

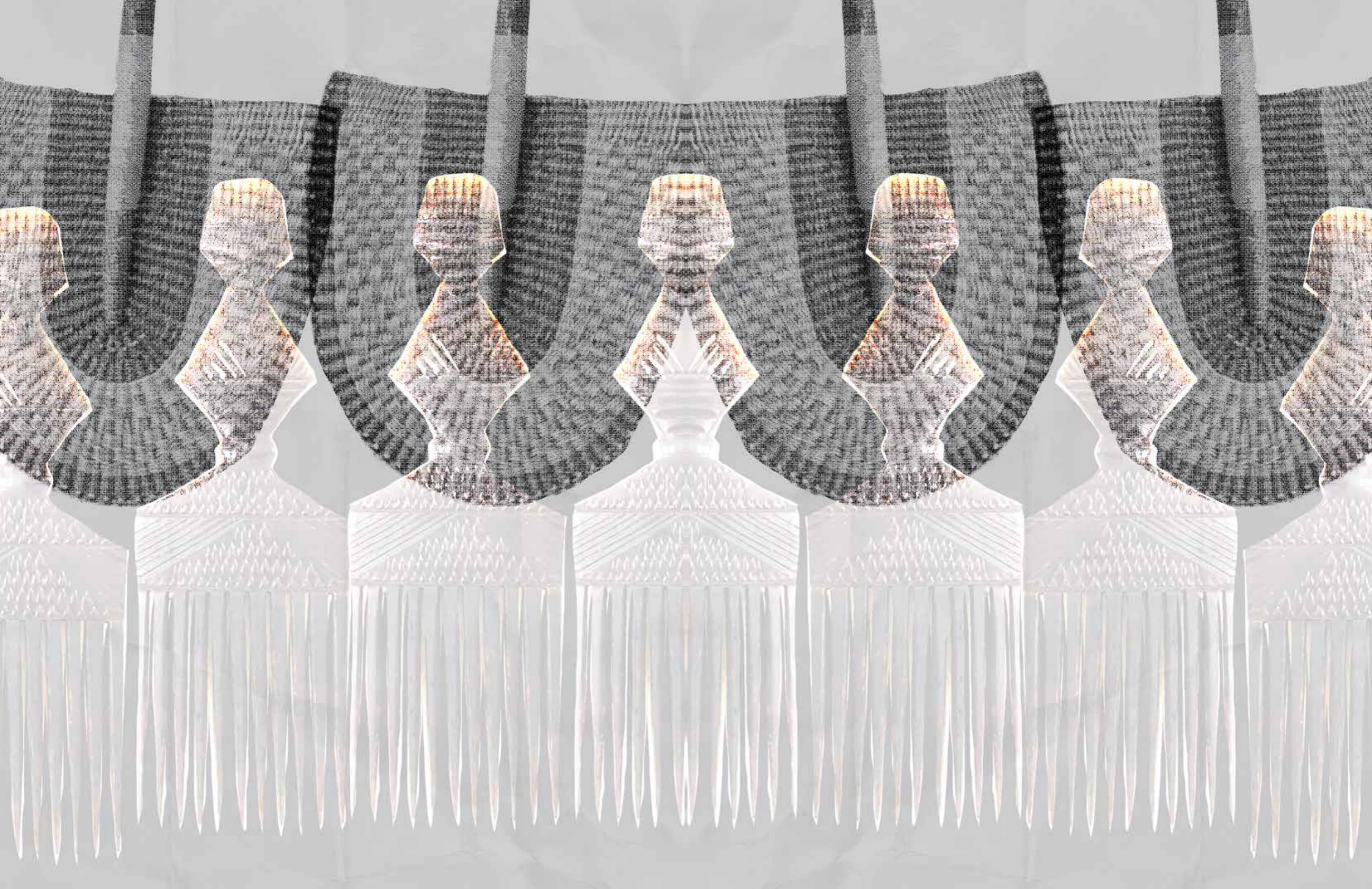
I was so naive then."

Thief was tax collectors taking their money to redistribute it to the rich.

Thief was God poised with a can of aerosol *Africancide*, his finger pressing hard on the button.

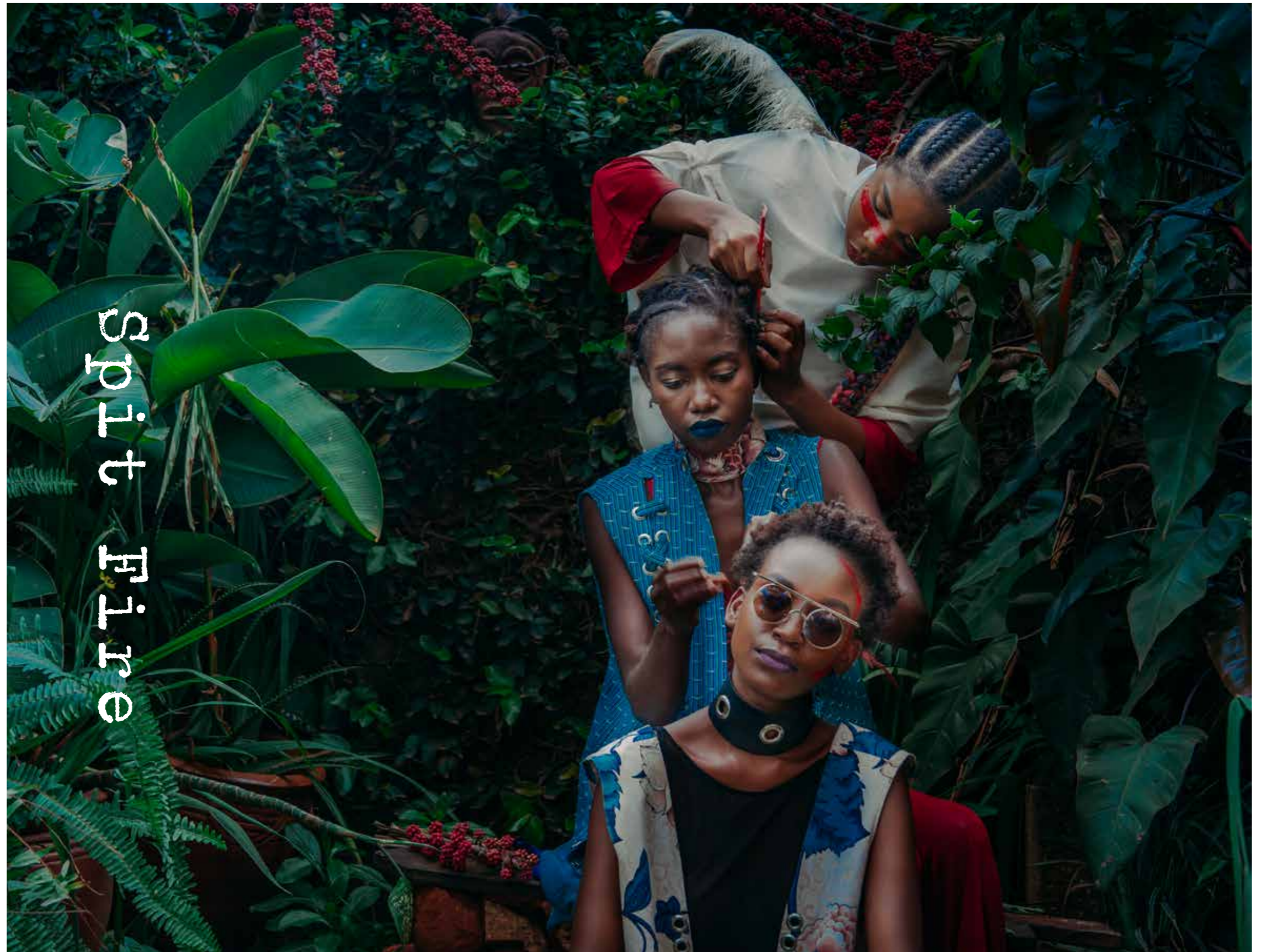
Kintu,

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi



My feminism is about fire and there are things that I just want to set ablaze because there are some things that should be put to fire, to be put to ashes to gain retribution. Imagine living in a world where a public thing like having a disease is not worthy of attention unless it comes from a private body, unless it comes with class. If sickness and disease is public and healthcare is private, something is wrong with that equation.

Scheaffer Okore



The Salooni Project: Darlyne Komukama



ویرگی

@alaaSatir



They moved from different places. She went looking for a flat at Rosebell. They stayed there for something like five years. Then the place was renovated and they moved them to Chelsea Court. Chelsea is a nice building and it is cheap. Chelsea was a hotel where sex workers worked and it was renovated too.

- Photo taken by Kefiloe as part of the Volume 44 project. Text taken from the Volume 44 publication.

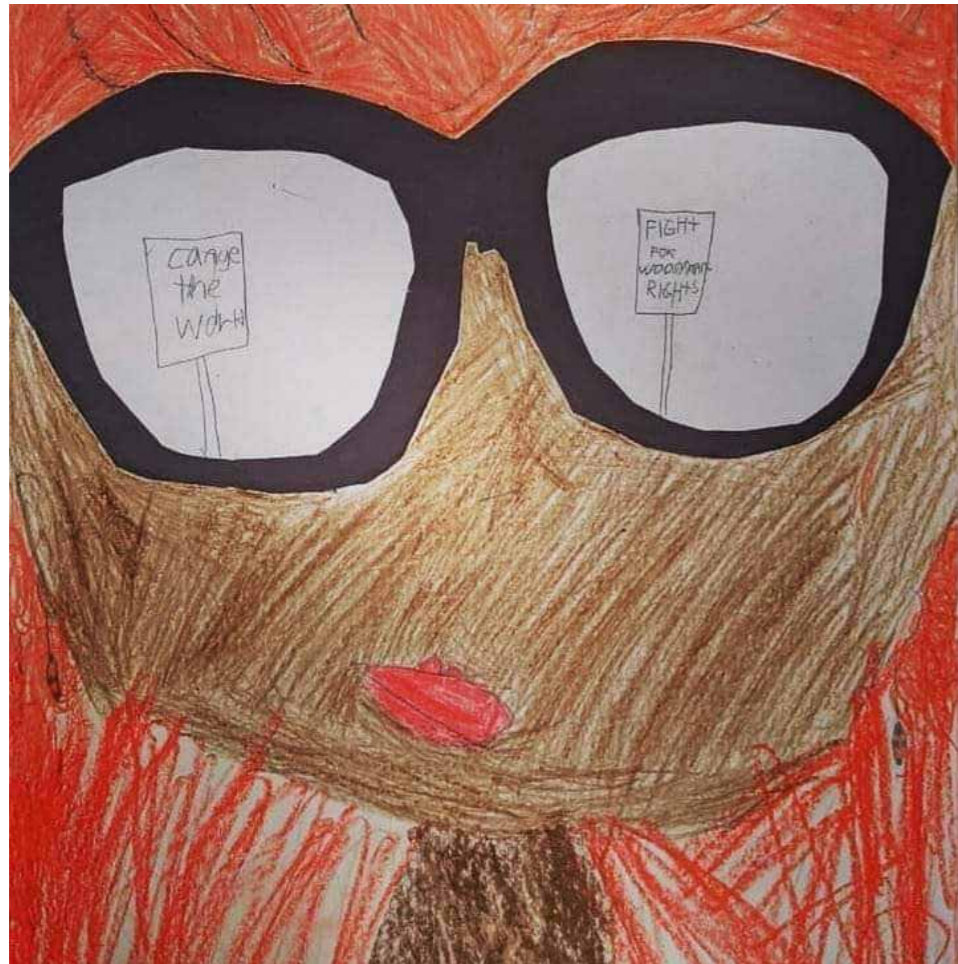
When talking about the privatization of public services from the sex workers perspective, we should focus on availability, affordability and accessibility. We are talking here about a criminalized community. The stigma attached to the community means facing violence when trying to access public services. We can advocate and push our governments; even though it's challenging, we have the tools to do that. It becomes much harder to do so when these services are outsourced to private companies. It hurts our advocacy capacities because private companies don't care about the needs or rights of our community.

- Phelister Abdallah

Here's to the security guards who maybe had a degree in another land. Here's to the manicurist who had to leave her family to come here, painting the nails, scrubbing the feet of strangers. Here's to the janitors who don't understand English yet work hard despite it all. Here's to the fast food workers who work hard to see their family smile. Here's to the laundry man at the Marriott who told me with the sparkle in his eyes how he was an engineer in Peru. Here's to the bus driver, the Turkish Sufi who almost danced when I quoted Rumi. Here's to the harvesters who live in fear of being deported for coming here to open the road for their future generation. Here's to the taxi drivers from Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt and India who gossip amongst themselves. Here is to them waking up at 4am, calling home to hear the voices of their loved ones. Here is to their children, to the children who despite it all become artists, writers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, activists and rebels. Here's to international money transfer. For never forgetting home. Here's to their children who carry the heartbeats of their motherland and even in sleep, speak with pride about their fathers. Keep on.

Questions for Ada,
Ijeoma Umebinyu





Created by Nia Kellow

I dream of building my mother a house
Made of red brick,
Not of mud,
A house she owns,
A house no one can take away from her.
It has a ceiling to protect her from summer's heat
And winter's cold,
A bathroom with running water
And an electric lamp.

Zeina,
Nawal El Saadawi



Photos from
the exhibit,
When Space Tells Time

Mouna Jemal Siala

She says
that
clothes
will dry
only
when the
sun wills
it.

December 5, 2019



Dear African Heads of States,

We hope this letter finds you all well and in the best of health. We are also doing well, tired, but we will speak to that later on in this letter.

We, African women working in women's rights organizations, attended the Global Gender Summit in Kigali from November 25-27, 2019, organized by the African Development Bank Group. We write this letter to share with you our thoughts on the summit. We were originally going to write this letter to the AfDB, which makes sense, as it was the organizer of the summit. But banks, with their prickly preoccupations around generating profit, were not and could not be the focus of our fury. In fact, the real problem is centering banks in any discussion on women's rights or "women's empowerment," a slogan that we heard throughout the summit. So, we decided to write to you, heads of states, because even if it has not been manifested, there is the foundational ideal, the hope, the unfulfilled promise of the social contract between a state and its citizens.

Let us start at the beginning. We were invited as representatives of women's rights organizations in Africa sponsored by UN Women. FEMNET, a pan African feminist women's rights organization, gave our names after they found out about the summit online and were told that the bank would be happy to have them present on a panel, for a negotiable fee. A fee, for a women's rights organization to speak about "women's empowerment" at a global gender summit organized by banks.

We received the program about a week and half before the start of the summit, a program that a friend said was created, "in a neo-liberal paradise." "Global Gender Summit" it read, "Unpacking constraints to gender equality." The summit, according to the program, was organized by the African Development Bank Group and the Government of Rwanda; the co-organizers were the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the European Investment Bank, the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group, the Islamic Development Bank, and the Inter-American Investment Corporation; the key partners included Invest2Impact, Care International, the African Union, the African Peer Review Mechanism, McKinsey & Company, the ONE campaign, the African Export-Import Bank, ECOWAS, and the 50 Million African Women Speak Project. All of the multilateral development banks that we have ever heard of and more, a consultancy company, international NGOs, and regional intergovernmental organizations. No women's rights organizations, not one. So, in a way, we figured that at least the organizers were consistent. We knew before we arrived in Kigali that this was not our space.

"The African Development Bank is putting its capital at risk for women. And women are a sure bet! Women are clearly bankable, as they pay back 98% of their loans. Given that women pay back their loans, it is clear that collateralized lending is not what is needed for women. Rather, we need non-collateralized financing systems, since many of them do not own land or have secure property rights." This quote from Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, the president of the AfDB, was taken from a keynote speech given in 2018. He repeated similar lines at the opening ceremony of the summit, building on the idea that women are good business and that "women's empowerment" will happen at the hands of banking systems that will ensure that they are financed for liberation. At the opening ceremony, Dr. Adesina went further to say that changing banking systems in order to provide women with loans is not only good for women, but also good for society, as "women spend 90% of their income on their families... including their husbands." That is, women spend 90% of their income on food, healthcare, education, childcare and other household needs.

This statistic was repeated throughout the summit as a nod to the heroines of our societies and as proof that, "investing in women is investing in society." We all know that to be true, but in the three days of the summit, we didn't hear once a questioning or critique of why women have to spend 90% of their income on social services that should be provided by the state. As women's rights advocates, this is a question that we ask, a reality that we work to change. Of course, that answer can't come from the banks. The solutions that they provided for gender equality was to de-risk women's financing and entrepreneurship women out of poverty and into empowerment.

We wrote earlier that we are tired.

Let us take you through what we heard during the summit. After first hearing about the 90% of women's incomes going to their families (including their husbands), we also heard that women are mother, sister, daughter, and wife, that they are hard workers who are neglected by banking systems who don't recognize their particular forms of assets and collateral, that they are more honorable, more reliable than men. We heard that there is a gender divide between men and women in terms of how productive they are on agricultural land with men producing far more than women because of women's unpaid care work (rearing their kids, fetching water, taking care of the sick), but also that women's work on sustainable land management can mitigate climate change. We heard of possible solutions including providing finance to women farmers, getting women in the value chain, providing access to markets, using technology to support connectivity, and changing land ownership legislation to favor women among other interventions. We heard a panel of various multilateral development bank representatives speak about infrastructure for women's empowerment, that infrastructure needs to respond to the needs of women. For example, research showed in one area that women make more stops on public transportation, so the design of public transportation should take that into account. We heard about the toll that conflict wages on women's bodies and livelihoods and the necessary role of women in peace negotiations.

What we understood was that women should continue to rear their children, fetch water, nurse the sick, pay school fees, provide social safety nets for their families and their communities, that they should do this for free; that they should work the land aided by loans and smartphones and sustainable land management techniques and favorable land tenure legislation, because

these interventions will help them be more productive, will nurture the land, and will feed their communities; that they should continue spending 70% of their income on food and school and healthcare and childcare and their husbands and create an extra budget to pay back the loans; that they should gain financial literacy to ensure that they don't become one of the 2% who falter - we know so many women who go into debt, who go into depression under the pressure, so many who leave banks poorer than when they came -; that when they take the trains from home to the banks to pay their debt, to the markets to buy food, to their children's schools to pay fees, that they should be thankful that the infrastructure engineers took into account their need for multiple stops; and that in their spare time, they should fix the wars that men create.

The question is, when shall we sleep? And of course, while we are feeding our families, nursing the sick, rearing the children, working the land, saving the world from climate change and wars, what, our beloved leaders, will you be doing?

Did you know that women perform 76.2% of total hours of unpaid care work? Are you tired yet? We are.

Our beloved leaders, we write this letter to you because you are implicated in the burden put on women, in our everyday lives, you are implicated in the time spent fetching water, rearing children, working the land, you are implicated in the burden of women's rights organizations going to meetings only to be told that the solution lies in working harder. You may not believe this, but one presenter actually said that, "women should be more rebellious, should push harder... to create a better balance so that the other side takes you more seriously." You probably can believe this. Do you believe this?

Now, there were some interesting talking points, including those who spoke, albeit briefly, about unpaid care work, including Rwanda's experience instituting community health insurance and training community health workers to reduce unpaid care, gender responsive budgeting, and community driven land management to mitigate climate change. We heard from inspiring women like Former President Joyce Banda and President Sahle Workle Lewde, and we heard the experiences of women peace negotiators and entrepreneurs.

Actually, on the topic of entrepreneurship, let us say this. Because we tend to compare ourselves with the West and because we tend to focus on the ending without understanding processes, we must be reminded that the entrepreneurship driven innovations with the greatest success, in terms of profit, were supported through investments by the state, by public institutions. This includes in aviation, nuclear energy, computers, nanotechnology, biotechnology and the Internet. So, even while we believe deeply, because evidence and data tells us so, that entrepreneurship will not drive us out of poverty, will not provide women's rights, will not save us, we must also say in the same breath, that if you want to talk about entrepreneurship as a development practice, pay up.

Our beloveds, we write this to you, again, because our quarrel is not with banks, but with you who are subsidized by our labor and paid by our tax dollars.

And so, this is what it is to work in a women's rights organization and go to meetings on women's empowerment where investment in women is spoken about by banks and not states; where

investment in women means loans for business and not changing budgets to prioritize social services; where a rights perspective is swapped for a "win-win" business deal; where the redistribution and reimagining's of care economies is overlooked; where structures like patriarchy, capitalism, neo-colonialism and neoliberalism are not only not critiqued or mentioned by name, but are also seen, in one way or another, as the solution; where the solution is for women to work harder and go into debt while still spending 70% of their income on their families (including their husbands) and working everyday, hours upon hours in unpaid care work.

Yes, we are tired.

We say this again and again to remind you, but to also remind ourselves. You may not know this, but it's almost looked down upon for women, particularly those in women's rights movements, to admit fatigue. Because women are of course supposed to do it all, everyday, without fail. "A man could never handle the work that women do," people say. Of course men can, they just don't have to.

There is a story about a woman who weaved baskets. She averaged three baskets a week. One day Peace Corps volunteers came to her and asked if she would be interested in using a machine instead of weaving the baskets by hand. She said she would be interested. They left her with the machine and said they would come back in a month to see how she was doing. One month later, they came to her home. They asked her if the machine was useful to her and she responded that it was. When they asked her how many baskets she was weaving a week, she told them three. Confused they said, "but I thought that the machine was useful to you. You are still making only three baskets a week?" She responded, "Yes, but I am making them faster and now have more time to spend with my family and friends."

Our beloved leaders, perhaps this is what we are working towards as women's organizations working on economic justice. We are fighting for redistribution, while at the same time fighting for a woman's right to leisure. The summit made it quite clear to us that if something doesn't change, the banks and international NGOs, with you at their side, will take what little sleep we have left and call it women's empowerment. And so, we fight for economic justice. We are not looking for women's empowerment because empowerment suggests that power is being given, when we know power is always taken. Along the same lines, we know that ideas around empowerment are very often not configured around changing power structures and power dynamics. Yes, we are not working for empowerment, but for justice. That is, we are not speaking about charity or vertical hierarchical engagements with women, but about what we are owed. 10-37% of GDP in unpaid care work alone. In the words of banking institutions, we are coming to collect your debt.

If you have any questions about where to get the money or how to redistribute budget lines, please do let us know. We would be happy to guide you towards the research of feminist economists and specific work done around care economies, tax justice and illicit financial flows.

Sincerely, your constituency





Talia Ramkilawan

A Worker's Day Wish for African Women

Jessica Horn

A human rights activist friend once commented that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is far more interesting if read backwards. And indeed if you do so, then six articles in you arrive at this beauty of a legal standard:

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.
– Article 24, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On 1 May every year the world commemorates International Workers Day with parades and speeches celebrating wage labourers. Interestingly, this exuberant focus on sweat and exertion eclipses the very genesis of the day itself as a date proposed by trade unionists in the late 1800s to mark the recognition of the right to an eight hour work day. Put differently, International Workers Day commemorates the demand and eventual victory of workers in securing the right to rest.

In the African regional context women's labour is an obsessive focus of orthodox development and international business alike. Rather than proposing the gendered transformation of economic systems or indeed of strengthening provisions for labour rights, the target of these efforts tends to be on bolstering individual entrepreneurship and women's income generating potential. Armed with the mantra 'higher GDP or bust', these instrumentalist initiatives bemoan the over-population of African women in informal economies where their contributions are hard to count, and encourage women to opt-in to formality via bank accounts and debt-based financing of their entrepreneurial efforts.

The irony of course is that work, in itself, has never been African women's problem. In fact, as feminist economists have long argued, patriarchal exigencies see the majority of African women working multiple shifts; earning money in paid employment or self-employment, finding ways to generate additional informal income where possible, and then taking on the private sphere labour of childcare, food production, housework, and providing sexual labour to their men partners. This reality is replicated in batiks and drawings across the continent glorifying "the African woman" with a child on her back, goods for sale on her head, and food she has just harvested in baskets clutched by her hard-working hands.

There is, without a doubt, a need for radical transformation in these labour regimes. For economic justice we need to see African women's work fairly remunerated, for African women to have unhindered rights to collective organising in all domains of work and for labour movements and trades unions to also advocate unequivocally for this. Fundamentally, economic justice for African women also requires economic policies and trade agreements that strengthen rather than hinder gendered economic equality, that advance the redistribution of economic opportunity within and between countries, that offer transformative approaches to informal economies, and that respect African women's intellectual property and labour, and defend food sovereignty.

Still though, in all of our justified demands for economic justice, our focus always lands incessantly on work. The truth is that in this calculus of work-based honour placed on African women, there is no possibility for unscripted and unburdened time, for leisurely meandering, for a holiday.

This Worker's Day, my wish for African women workers everywhere is simple: the internationally recognised right to rest, to fun, and for someone else to pick up the bill for annual leave.



"... there's no such thing as microwave love. Love needs time. It's like haaris. Haaris is not a dish you rush. Do you remember when your mother used to make it? How she would leave it overnight on the stove? And then in the morning, stir and stir till her arms hurt? Blisters would form on her hands! We'd all take turns with the wooden spoon and under her keen supervision (here aba stops and smiles at the memory, blinking tears away), make sure the meat was well meshed with the grains. That's love Huubi. I pray that you will be fortunate, like I was, to meet someone you can make haaris with."

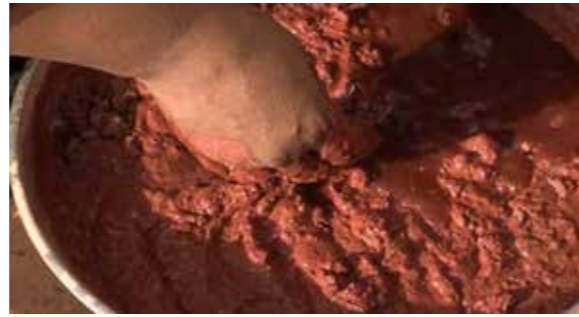
He pauses for a while to catch his breath. Lately, talk exhausts him.

"To love is your nature Huubi. To be loved is your birthright. It's no accident that we named you Huub and your brother Hamdi. Your mother and I thought deeply about what we wanted for you and what you would carry around with you all your lives. We wanted the two words you hear the most to be powerful. Love and gratitude are the greatest things this life has to offer — and that we can offer back —to the Creator, to our fellow human beings, to the earth. Without either, life is not worth living. With both, life can be so beautiful."

"Which is more important?" Hamdi asks from across the room.

Aba chuckles. "Love is the grains and gratitude is the meat. You can't have haaris without either. The meat is good on its own, but it's so much sweeter when surrounded by the grains. The grains can also be eaten alone but it's the flavour of the meat infused into the grains that makes haaris what it is. Love without gratitude is incomplete."

I'll Spare you Spinsterhood
Nabila Abdulmelik



there is the baby bird,
the little ear,
the shoulders,
the belly,
the book,
the "five,"
there is Azeiba, the little
virgin,
there is the bride,
and the hips



Here in Oualata, women paint them. There is a lot of decency behind these paintings. When there is a celebration to come, the end of Ramadan for example, we decorate houses with tarkhas. We also decorate it when someone is coming back.

Awaiting for Men, Katy Léna N'diaye



The supreme goddess, Nana Buluku is an old, large, dark skinned woman. Older than creation itself for she is the creator of the universe. Some say she is not a woman at all, not a man either. Nana Buluku is everything.

Nana Buluku is said to have created the universe and given birth to twins known as the divine spirits Mawu and Lisa. Mawu is the moon and Lisa is the sun. It is said that Nana Buluku retired and left the world in the hands of her twin children.

Nana Buluku, the creator, the ancestral deity, is a protector and a healer. She is known to be able to identify and heal illnesses, to protect and save the world.

SIMMER DOWN - Medicine for an
anxious mind-----

Ingredients	A handful of Tulsi leaves
	A handful of Artemisia or Mugwort leaves
1 1/2 cups Hibiscus flowers	1 teaspoon whole cloves
1 cup Tamarind pods	Cinnamon sticks to taste
2 teaspoons Fennel seeds	2 teaspoons grated ginger
	2 cups fermented Coconut water

-Bring the hibiscus flowers, tamarind pods, cinnamon and cloves to a
boil in about one litre of water. After turning off heat, stir in the
remainder of the spices above and cover the mix to cool down. Once
cool, mix in the coconut water, fennel and grated ginger and add in
preferred sweetener. Store in the fridge and drink whenever stressed.

BRAND NU!!

Ingredients	A few sprigs of Lavender
	2 drops Frankincense essential oil
Pennyroyal/Lemon Balm/ Lemon	2 drops Eucalyptus essential oil
Verbena leaves	2 drops Cloves essential oil
A few sprigs of Rosemary	2 capfuls Florida Water (optional)

- Put your herbs in a mortar and pestle and lightly crush them to release
the fragrance and oils. Put your herbs in a re-usable pouch/small mesh bag
to avoid a messy tub. Draw a bath (so Victorian!) add in your herbs and
essential oils (during this process invite in the intentions for calm and
peace)

- Take a bath and try to suspend your worries...At the end of your bath,
continue winding down: e.g. journal, drink a glass of water, and thank
yourself for holding space for yourself and indulging in a little joy and
pleasure for restoration.

- Medicine Woman
Elizabeth Maina

Remedies for everyday ailments passed down
from our grandmothers, who learned from
their mothers, and their mother's mothers.

Black seed

For stomach aches, take a
teaspoon of the seeds, chew
and swallow with a glass
of water.

For coughs and flu symptoms,
take a teaspoon of black seed
oil. For colds, rub some black
seed oil under your nose, or
put a teaspoon of black seeds
into thin material, rubbing
the seeds and absorbing
the smell.

For headaches, rub black seed
oil on your temples and under
your nose.

Flax seed

For ulcers - boil flax seeds
with water, add honey for
taste if desired, as well
as for its anti-bacterial
properties. Put in fridge to
cool before drinking.

Alternatively, roast and
grind the seeds, mix in the
powder with milk or water,
add honey for taste. Taste is
enhanced if cool.

Garden cress seed

For stomach aches, upsets,
diarrhea - soak raw garden
cress seeds in half a cup of
black tea. Leave it to soak for
about 20-30 minutes, till it
thickens. Stir before drinking
in one go. Will stop diarrhea.

Fenugreek

To gain weight, energy, to
help with breast milk, for
back pain, and/or to cleanse
your blood, whip ground raw
fenugreek - with a blender if
possible, with milk or water
or a combination of both,
adding honey or sugar for
taste. Drink a glass every
morning as needed.

Lemon

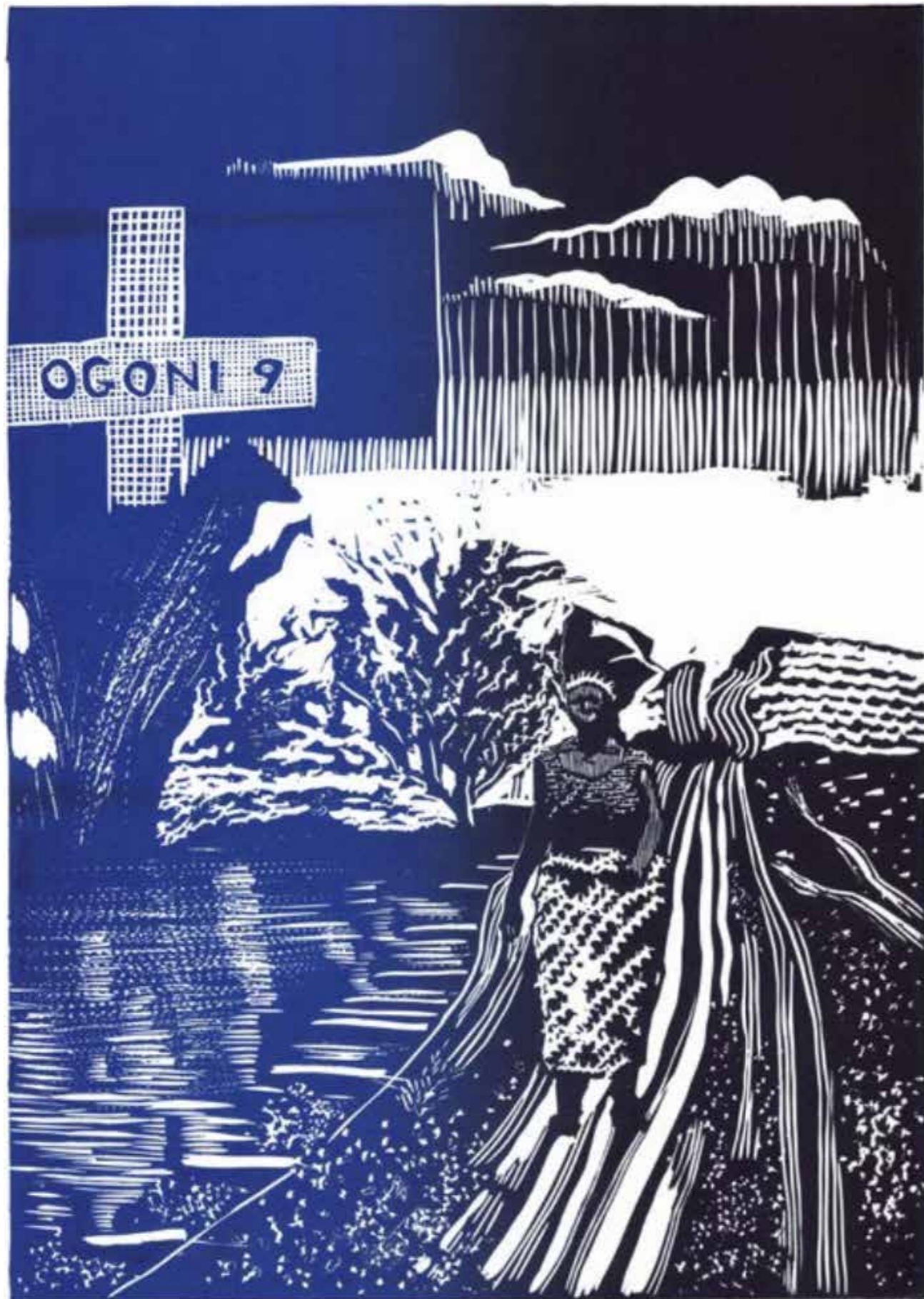
To lower blood pressure, part your
hair down the middle and squeeze
lemon juice over your exposed
scalp

I understood that the same thing
that made humans great
- our recklessness and creativity and curiosity -
was also the thing that hampered the lives of everything
around us. Because we were the animal
daring enough to take boats out to sea,
even when we thought the world
was flat and that our boats
would fall off the edge, we discovered new land,
different people, roundness.
The cost of this discovery
was the destruction of that new land,
those different people.
Without us oceans wouldn't be turning to acid,
frogs and bats and bees
and reefs wouldn't be heading for extinction.
Without me,
the limping mouse wouldn't limp;
he would never
have succumbed to addiction.
I grew up being taught that
God gave us dominion over the animals,
without ever being taught that I myself was an animal.

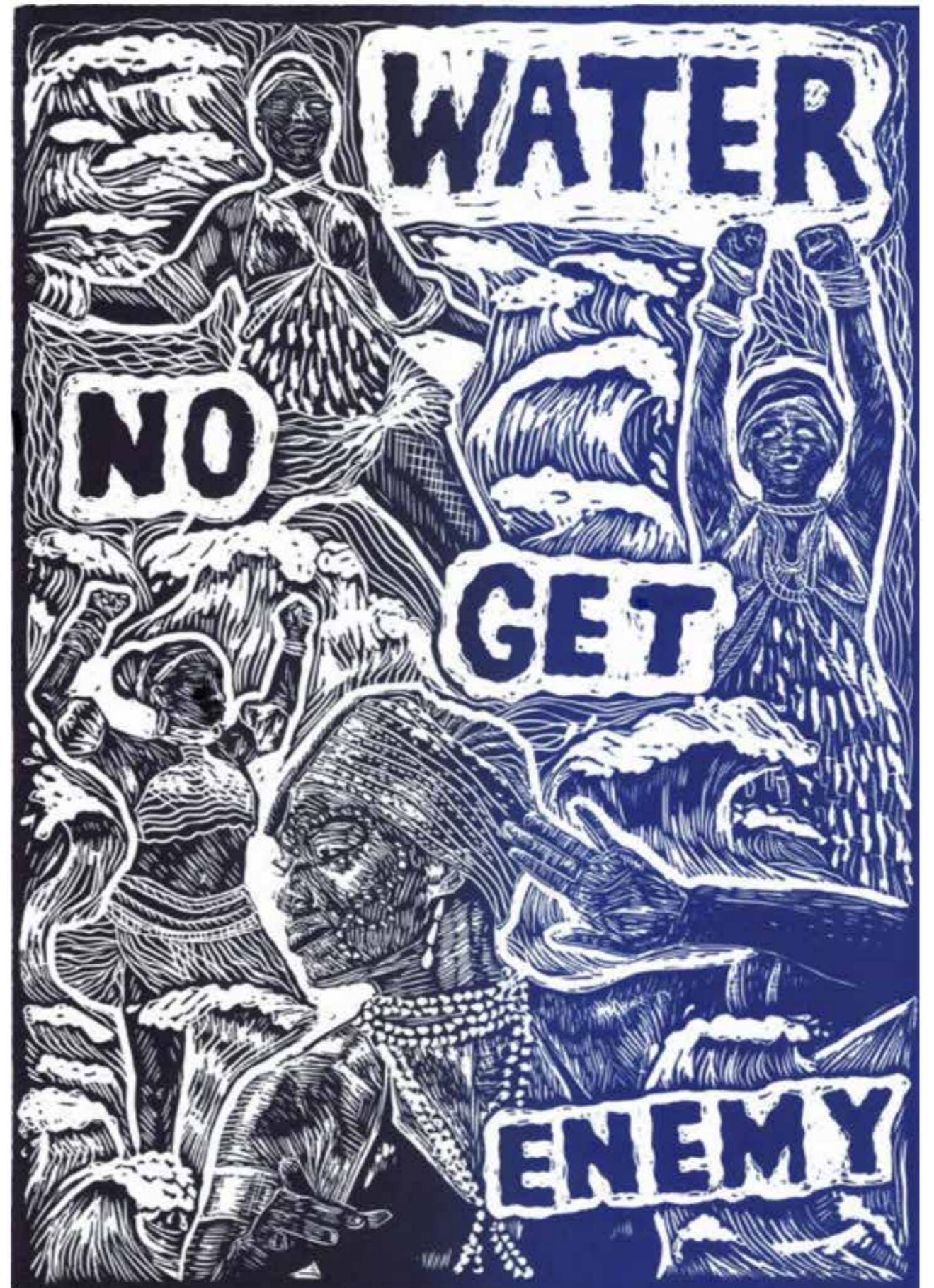
Transcendent Kingdom,
Yaa Gyasi

...if something is done badly to that earth
it is being done to me also.
I'm hurt when I see the earth being hurt:
a tree being cut, the soil disappearing.
This work makes you feel very close to
the elements.
You become aware that
whether you are alive or dead, you
are still part of it.
Again, talking about the spirituality of
our people,
the Kikuyu, those who died did not go to a place
known as heaven; their spirits were still with us.
And that was very important for the people,
because they felt the ground was where their
relatives were.
They were in the forest or on the mountain.
That made them feel as though
they were part of the past and the future.
You couldn't destroy the land
because you were destroying your ancestors,
and if you did you'd have nowhere to go when
you died
or no place to be born into.
Your whole being revolved around the land..

Wangari Maathai



Linocut: Hlavutelo Ngobeni



Linocut: Leila Khan

We might not live to see the day Kosawa
or our country comes out of its darkness into light,
but we'll forge forward believing,
because there's no other way to live.

Money will do what it can,
but what we want isn't just to be left alone.
What we want is to own our lives and strut
like the sons and daughters of leopards that we are.

How Beautiful We Were,
Imbolo Mbue



Liberty, Dream and Soul, Naomi Mukadi

NOTES & SOURCES

(in the order of appearance)

[Nesanel] **Cover Photo:** I took this picture of Tigist Getu beneath my father's mango tree in Gonder, Ethiopia. We were gathering flowers for an informal cyanotype workshop with the neighborhood kids. Flowers had become a big part of my relationship with Tigist and her sister Tsion. They would "borrow" flowers from the neighbors' gardens and create a beautiful display for the bunna ceremony, and bring a beautiful bouquet to my room every morning. This act of care was a balm during a very difficult time in my life. Without ever expressing my challenges to them, they intuitively knew that I needed to be surrounded by beauty. The way that women throughout time and space have always known. I embroidered the flowers that Tigist is carrying so I will always remember that beauty will help us find our way back to ourselves and one another.

[Agazit] I was skimming through some of my books, one of my favorite things to do, and came across Shel Silverstein's *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Re-reading the invitation, "If you are a dreamer, come in..." But before the invitation are the admin pages - the repeat of the title page, the copyright page, and less of an admin page, the dedication page. "For Ursula" it reads, with the text inside a balloon on a string. Beautiful. I took a picture and sent it over to Nzilani for inspiration and she created this beauty. **For Us.**

[Agazit] A few years ago, my aunt (she's not really my aunt, but this is not the space to be recounting relations from my family tree), Bekelech Abebe, came home and told me quite incredulously that **garlic has gone up in price** and when she asked the market woman why, she was told that the dollar has gone up and that garlic has now been discovered to be medicine. In the real conversation, she was actually told, "ኢሳይያስ ካጠፋውህ? የታደገ ጠፋሪካት ሆኖ ተገኘ" which translates to "Mother, haven't you heard? They discovered that it is medicine for HIV." Page 2

[Agazit] **Kaddu Beykat**, also known as *Letter from My Village* and *Lettre paysanne*, is a 1975 Senegalese film directed by Safi Faye. It was the first feature film made by a Sub-Saharan African woman to be commercially distributed. We don't remember how we came across it, but it's available, the whole thing, on YouTube. It is gorgeous. These are some stills. Page 3

[Nebila] For as long as I can remember, my mom would write down her **daily expenses** - sometimes in notebooks, sometimes on scraps of paper, on the back of receipts, whatever she could find. To date, she has notebook after notebook of these expenditures, sometimes categorized by day, others weekly, others monthly. The **quote from the 2020 novel *Transcendent Kingdom***, by Ghanaian author Yaa Gyasi, reminded me so much of her. Three of the images of the detailed expenses are actually hers, in her own handwriting. Agi created the collage. She really likes masking tape. Page 4

[Nebila] I took this image on the streets of Addis some years back. It felt like it went perfectly with Makena Maganjo's **quote from her debut 2019 novel *South B's Finest***. Page 5

[Agazit] "The only thing that has gotten cheaper is us." This is a saying that has been on people's lips in Addis Ababa for some time now. The first time I heard it, I was reminded of **Nawal el Saadawi's** quote in *Zeina*. I remembered the quote because it struck me so the first time I read it. This ongoing process of becoming cheaper. Pages 6-7

[Agazit] I'm a horrible picture taker. I took this picture years ago, again of **Bekelech Abebe**, while I was laying on the grass in my grandparent's yard. Bekelech, or Beku, as almost everybody calls her, was gathering wood to bake bread. She doesn't love being photographed, but she loves photos of herself. This was, again, because I'm not a good picture taker, technically not at all a good picture. The original was too dark and too bright, but isn't she a beauty? Nzilani makes magic. Nebila is a beautiful photographer and she wanted me to retake the image, but I didn't want to, and she acquiesced. Page 8

[Nebila] This quote from **Chibundu Onuzo's** 2017 novel, *Welcome to Lagos* spoke loudly to me. I don't remember where I was when I was reading it, only that so much of that book resonated with what I was seeing around me. Even though this was years ago, it still does. Page 9

[Agazit] I didn't know about the **1929 Aba Women's War** before starting this project. Crystal Simeoni told us about it in passing. When I looked it up, I found this newspaper extract. What's more, a scan of a **colonial report** published in 1930 from the Commission of Inquiry that was set up to investigate the Aba Women's War. Thank you Open Source Guinea! <http://www.opensourceguinea.org/2014/10/nigeria-report-of-commission-of-inquiry.html> Pages 10-13

I had a great time creating **collages** from the report and from the image of **Nwanyeruwa**, one of the organizers of the protests. That's another thing that this anthology has given me. The return of my love for collages. Doing the embroidery on Nwanyeruwa was also special for me. A few iterations in and this is where we ended. The story of Nwanyeruwa goes like this. When the Warrant Chief of Oloko, Okugo, sent an agent to Nwanyeruwa's house to count livestock and family members, she, along with the women in her community, took it as a sign that they would be taxed. According to many of the recountings, there was an argument, some say, a physical fight (the agent attacked her after she yelled at him). What is known for sure is that she went to the women in her community and recounted what happened. She, along with her fellow sisters, sent palm leaves out as a sign that there was trouble coming and that they needed to organize. Pages 14-15

You should read the report. Find out about these women. Reading it, we were struck by the curiosity with which colonial administrators investigated the "incidents" that took place. As they said, they were trying to figure out how these women were able, "to collect together in such vast numbers in so short a time and their leaders to exercise such complete discipline and control." Listen, at the very least, these people knew that they were among equals, but most likely, as evidenced by their words, they knew they were amongst women who had a power inaccessible to them. Also, and we keep coming back to this, what is it about women's leisure that disturbs these men so? Pages 16-17

[Agazit] Nebila knew about **Funmilayo Kuti**, I did not. All I knew was that she was killed on account of Fela's power. I knew about her death, nothing about her life. And what a life! We found the image online. It is attributed as having been borrowed from the family archives. The excerpt text is from an article written by Simi Segun and originally published on the *Tempest.co*, under the title, [Meet Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, one of Nigeria's Badass Suffragettes](#) on February 10, 2021. Pages 18-19

[Agazit] This was another fun piece, **collage and embroidery and fabrics on paper**. I love the flower fabric. I loved doing the twirly embroidery and the French knots. I wonder why it's called French knots... circles and intertwining histories. The excerpts are taken from an article written by Fatima B. Derby and published on August 19, 2019 by Makeda PR entitled, [Africa's Feminist Roots: Chronicling Feminist Herstories Since Precolonial Period](#). Pages 20-21

[Nebila] I took this image of these **two Sudanese women in their stall**, at the botanical garden in Khartoum during a flower festival in November 2017, where I was accompanied by Agi and other sisters of ours, Wala and Bobbie. I keep coming back to it - something about seeing the women through the mesh, with their crafts all around them, reminds me of my aunts and mom gathered around my grandma, their bodies just like that woman's, their feet outstretched, their backs resting, with baskets on the walls behind them. Pages 22-23

[Nebila] This excerpt was taken from the article [Situating Fireside Knowledge in Development Feminist Academy](#), written by Dr Mary Njeri Kinyanjui. It was originally published in the *Journal of Language, Technology & Entrepreneurship in Africa* Vol 10 No 2 on December 31, 2019. Pages 24-25

[Agazit] Fatimah Kelleher, a Nawi sister, provided us with an image of the **Asusu savings pot** and accompanying text. As she explains, "This is drawn from the matrilineal knowledge and wisdom of my mother, Hadjiya Maimuna Salihu Kelleher, and the northern Nigerian lineage of the pot and her-story." The multiple, everyday ways that we save each other. Also, how beautiful is the pot? The function is clear, the beauty is connected. Nebila was really sad at the thought that they break the pot when it's time to distribute the money. Pages 26-27

[Agazit] Ama Ata Aidoo has so many beautiful words. "Ova where? Is it ova?" You remember that interview? I've watched it often since I first came across it years ago. Mostly for a laugh. This quote is taken from **Ama Ata Aidoo's** debut novel, *Our Sister Killjoy*, first published in 1977. Page 28

[Nebila] We found the image of the **women protesting pass laws** on Public Services International, the Global Union Federation of Workers in Public Services article, [National Women's Day South Africa, Celebrating Women in Struggle](#), published on August 9, 2019. As they explain on the site, "On the 9th of August 1956, 20,000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, South Africa to protest the proposed amendments to the Urban Areas Act that would see women carrying apartheid-era style passbooks known as the 'dompas.' The march was organised by FEDSAW, the Federation of South African Women, whose membership of over 230,000 women nationally included several women from the trade union." The original image is black and white, Nzilani created the beautiful contrast. Page 29

[Nebila] I came across **Sue Williamson's 'A Few South Africans'**, a series of image collages of South African women who resisted, agitated and organized for freedom, and were punished for doing so (which woman isn't?). We only featured two of the sixteen women in that collection, which include Miriam Makeba, Winnie Mandela, Albertina Sisulu and Charlotte Maxeke. One of the two we feature is Thokozile Virginia Mngoma. She joined the African National Congress at a very young age, and was banned in 1953 for a year. She helped organize the 1957 Alexandra (Johannesburg) bus boycott which was in place due to a proposed hike in bus fares. For months, people walked or rode bicycles as an alternative to the buses. The boycott was successful - fares did not go up! The second woman we feature is Amina Cachalia, one of the leaders of the Federation of South African Women, who organized the protests against pass laws - this may sound familiar, as it is what is the focus of the previous page in the anthology. We were shook at the thought that Amina was banned for 15 years, and though her sister lived next door, was unable to speak with her. The entire 1980s collection was made during apartheid and distributed widely as postcards at the time. It is available at <https://www.sue-williamson.com/a-few-south-africans>. Make sure to check it out. May we know them. May we always say their names. Pages 30-31

[Agazit] I feel like revolutions tend to have really good design aesthetics, which makes me think that it's a step in the right direction, that it portends well for the future. However, history has proven the theory false.. In any case, the next two full page layouts are collages of two very beautiful **posters produced by the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU)**. The first one, the women worker posters, was created in 1987 to encourage women workers to fight for their rights, as part of COSATU's campaign for a living wage and paid maternity leave for women. The 10th Anniversary COSATU posters were produced in 1995 to mark a decade of COSATU, by which time it represented more than 1.5 million workers. We found the first on the [South Africa History Archive \(SAHA\)](#) site. We found the second one online, but we understand it's part of the Mayibuye Archive Collection hosted by the Robben Island Museum and the University of Western Cape (RIM-UWC). Pages 32-35

[Agazit] Thank you Post-Colonialisms Today for guiding us to this poster! Isn't she beautiful. **7 April 1977, Mozambican Women's Day**: let's study. let's increase production. let's build socialism! You can find it in the [Northwestern Libraries Digital archives](#). Pages 36-37

[Agazit] The full **1970 Draft Constitution of the Swapo Women's Council** can be found online on [The Freedom Archives](#), a great source for "historical audio, video and print materials documenting progressive movements and culture from the 1960s to the 1990s." It's a 15-page document detailing aims and goals, organizational structure and functions, and procedures. I am just now, as I am writing this, wondering, if this is the draft, where is the final? Is there a final? I'm not going to look for it now. Maybe something that interests you? We have included here, the cover, preamble, aims and objectives only. It is in its original form. Pages 38-39

[Nebila] The quote is taken from the 2019 novel *The First Woman*, by Ugandan writer Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi. You may also know this book as A Girl is a Body of Water depending on where you got your copy. It's a beautiful book. Read it if you can. Page 40

[Agazit] I had an idea for this image, but again, no real photo taking skills. Post-Colonialisms Today guided us to what you see on the table, **Women's Liberation in the Zimbabwean Revolution**, materials

from the Zanu Women's Seminar in Maputo, Mozambique, May 1979. The document can be found at [The Freedom Archives](#). The table belonged to my grandparents, the dried yellow rose an offering from Abenezer, the lamp given to me by my sister friend Nesanet Abegaze and the glass of water my own. Nzilani had to guide me, through whatsapp messages, to get the right lighting. Page 41

[Agazit] The next full page layout features one of the inside pieces from the report referenced above, an interview with **Naomi Nhiwatiwa**. Again, the full report of the Zanu Women's Seminar can be found at [The Freedom Archives](#). Pages 42-43

[Nebila] I came across this image of **Albertina Sisulu** and comrades in 1984 in Johannesburg holding up placards '**Victory is Ours**', '**We Demand Free Childcare**! I found the image beautiful and powerful, but like so much else, striking and perhaps even depressing that what we think are progressive demands made today were made so long ago by our foremothers, and remain largely unfulfilled. The image was taken by Paul Weinberg and sourced from the UCT Libraries, but can also be found online. Pages 44-45

[Nzilani] The images are from **protests in South Africa, Sudan, and Tunisia** against privatization, the high costs of basic goods and public services including food, water and education. The image of protesters holding up a sign that says, 'Education is not a privilege' was taken by Mike Hutchins of Reuters. The image of women holding up a banner that says 'Coalition Against Water Privatization, Women and Water Campaign' was taken from the Anti-Privatization Forum's site, under the article titled [Women for Water March](#) on 9th February 2009. We did this collage about seven times or more - experimenting with different styles and mediums. Eventually a digital collage playing around with the transparency and overlays seemed to work. Nebila then added in a sobering quote from Akwaeke Emezi's '**Bitter**' to frame the context. Pages 46-47

[Agazit] **Fatimah** spoke the words quoted here at the African Feminist Macroeconomics Academy (AFMA) held in 2019 in Accra, Ghana. Fatimah was one of the facilitators and guided us to the basics of macroeconomic workings including macroeconomic alternatives. Page 48

[Agazit] This was one of those situations where one thing leads to another. I can't tell you what I searched or which click came before this one. The road to AWA is unclear, but here we are. The **AWA Magazine, AWA: la revue de la femme noire** is one of the earliest independent African women's magazines and was produced in Dakar, Senegal by a network of African women between 1964 and 1973. www.awamagazine.org is an online archive of past editions. This cover is the 15th edition, published in January 1966. Page 49

[Agazit] We knew the words here could be a part of this anthology and Nebila thought they should be a part of the anthology, I just couldn't figure out how. The words are taken from another Nawi project entitled, In a Time Not So Far Away. After playing some, here is what it has become. I wrote the words over and over again, like a prayer. The dried flowers are from a chrysanthemum and adei ababa's, bright yellow signs, pollen in the air for a new year. **Is it fair? Is it just? Is it kind?** Pages 50-51

[Agazit] I saw Abderrahmane Sissako's 2006 film, *Bamako* when I was a university student. I wrote my master's thesis on it. It's not worth reading, but the film certainly is worth watching! Aminatta's quote and image were taken when she was testifying in a community trial against the IMF and the World Bank. Much of the film is unscripted and the testifying was done, not by actors, but by people with something to say. Pages 52-53

[Agazit] **Yassine Fall's presentation to James Wolfensohn**, president of The World Bank at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China on Friday, September 15, 1995. I first heard of this presentation at a FEMNET workshop a couple of years ago. As with so much of what we have found during this process, it is quite sad how relevant the points here still are. In one of the final iterations of the anthology, Nebila suggested that I write the speech by hand, so I did and it felt good to do so. Typing became a primary way to write for me much later in life. Actually, I'm remembering that Nebila was always amazed when we were in university together and I would write my papers by hand first, before typing it out. "You're doing extra work," she would say. Things have changed since then, but still, writing by hand, looking at a piece of paper and not a screen is all together something else. It feels good. And the numbers? Yassine spoke these words in 1995. 27 years ago according to my long subtraction. 27 years. Too familiar indeed. Pages 54-58

[Agazit] **Crystal Simeoni** spoke these words at the African Feminist Macroeconomics Academy (AFMA) held in 2019. Sorry again Crys! Your patience with this anthology gives Dalai Lama vibes. Page 59

[Nebila] We came across a 2020 Action Aid report, 'Who Cares for the Future, finance gender responsive public services' (available at <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/who-cares-future-finance-gender-responsive-public-services>) that details the ludicrous nature of IMF and World Bank prescriptions, calling on countries to cut their public service budgets and expenditures, particularly their wages to public sector workers, and freezing public sector employment, even despite shortages and public health crises. Felogene Anumo's piece, **Formerly colonized people can't breathe. And the World Bank and IMF are to blame** discusses the impact of these austerity measures and prescriptions, and refers to the report. We thought it best to hear from an African woman, rather than an international NGO. Her article was originally published in Open Democracy on October 2020. Pages 60-62

[Agazit] The words, "**The harvest must always be mutual**" also come from In a Time Not So Far Away. That piece was an imagining of what the world could be, or what a community could be, if the priorities of those that govern are aligned to life. It is a dream of what we can be, how we can be changed. I did a quick collage for the words. The background image is one taken from an Ethiopian government publication called Our Land, published in 1963. Page 63

[Nebila] We found the image of Wangari Maathai during a '**Cancel the Debt**' protest on the Zinned Project website (<https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/wangari-maathai/>). The **accompanying quote from Winnie** spoke so loudly, we had to repeat part of it on the next page. Pages 64-66

[Nebila] This anthology has taken quite some time. During that time, we've been voraciously consuming the works of African women writers. Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi is one of our favorites! This **quote comes from her 2014 novel, Kintu**. Page 67

[Nzilani] When we began creating this anthology we all took pictures of interesting items around us so that we could have some original images to use in the collages. The pieces in this collage are favourite things that hang in my living room - a beautiful **wooden comb from Ethiopia and a Ghanian Bolgatanga fan** I bought from a Kenyan market. Pages 68-69

[Agazit] Like Fatimah and Crystal's words in the previous pages, **Scheaffer Okore's quote** also comes from the African Feminist Macroeconomics Academy in 2019. It was a really great workshop now that I think about it. We even got to watch parts of Pretty Woman in order to understand financialization. Thank you Basani Baloyi! Page 70

[Nebila] I first came across **Darlyne Komukama's work** at the 2018 edition of Addis Foto Fest. If I remember correctly, it was this very image. I remember that I was struck by its beauty, the way in which Darlyne had managed to capture an everyday experience for so many African women. Getting my hair braided was a ritual when I was young, something done on the Sunday before school on Monday, the unbraiding done on Friday or Saturday, with the cycle repeated every week. If I didn't wear the hijab, or cut my hair short, I'd like to think it would always be in braids. I found it again when searching for African women photographers for this project on a site by the same name (africanwomeninphotography.org). Agi loved the fierce look on the women, especially the one in sunnies and thought it would be a beautiful accompaniment to Schaeffer's quote, spit fire! Page 71

[Nebila] **Alaa Satir** is an incredible Sudanese artist. We love her! Have you come across her work? She makes gorgeous images, and her images are featured on scarves, furniture and even cushions! She did a lot of street art during the Sudanese uprisings - much of her art are on walls across Khartoum. This is one of them. The writing says, 'revolutionary'. Pages 72-73

[Agazit] I really love this page. "**My cocoa is between my legs**" as wallpaper. What a great title, yes? We found the article on the Nawi Repository and it's actually a chapter from a book entitled, Women's Labor in the Global Economy: Speaking in Multiple Voices published in 2007 by Rutgers University Press. Pages 74-75

[Agazit] Again, with this one, the road to the find is unclear. Shoes, so many stories could be told with shoes. **Volume 44** is a participatory photography project done in collaboration with the African Centre for Migration & Society, Market Photo Workshop, and Sisonke Sex Worker Movement. This image was taken by Kefiloe, one of the 19 sex workers who worked on the project. Page 76

[Agazit] The accompanying quote by **Phelister Abdalla**, the National Coordinator of the Kenyan Sex Workers Alliance, came from the first time we met at the 2019 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). I was in a couple of sessions with her and she was sharp in her critique and kind in her imaginings. I met her colleague some months later I believe, Carolyn Njoroge, also of the Kenyan Sex Workers Alliance. We were at a workshop together and there was a dinner party arranged with musicians playing on stage. At the end of the night, as we were getting ready to leave, Carolyn gave the musicians money. She looked at me and said, "Service has to be paid. They worked, we must pay." Page 77

[Nebila] What would this anthology be without poetry? The **quote is from Nigerian poet Ijeoma Umebinyuo's** 2015 poetry anthology, Questions for Ada. It's a must read. And then, there is Tigist, paying tribute to all of those people with an offering of flowers. We love the image so much! Again, the photo was taken by **Nesanet Abegaze** and the young woman pictured is **Tigist Getu**. Pages 78-79

[Nebila] The **drawing of a girl/woman** in whose glasses are reflected two placards, one that says 'Change the world' and the other 'Fight for woman's rights' (excuse the typos!) was done by my niece **Nia**, then 6 years old, now 10. My heart did a dance when she showed it to me for the first time. The accompanying **quote is from the 2008 novel Zeina** by Egyptian writer Nawal el Saadawi. It seemed befitting to place them side by side. Pages 80-81

[Agazit] I came across these **photographs from Mouna Jemal Siala** in the 2016 Addis Foto Fest catalogue. If I could describe what I felt when I saw them, I would say quiet, the photo's feel like a whisper, a faint sound in the wind. Even writing this, I feel I am doing so in a hushed tone. Mouna, when writing about this series, explains that they were taken after the death of her grandmother. She describes it as "an open invitation to visit, to discover the intimate interior of a family dwelling, typical of the city of Sfax, situated in the south of Sfax." Page 82

[Agazit] The words across the page, **only when the sun wills it**, are mine. Written because we couldn't really find anything else to go with the photos. Page 83

[Agazit] I wrote this **mock letter to African Heads of State** after attending the Global Gender Summit in Kigali in November 2019. I was there to document the Summit for FEMNET. It was amazing in that it felt like a parody, a skit of what the development world prescribes for African women. Alas, they were being serious. The joke is on us. Pages 84-87

[Nebila] I took this image of a **seta shay (tea lady)** on Tuti Island, in Khartoum, where the Blue and White Niles meet. It's striking, although somewhat a norm, is it not? The woman works, and the man enjoys his rest. It seemed to go well with the mock letter Agazit wrote. More work for women! Pages 88-89

[Nebila] I came across this piece of a woman at leisure by Talia Ramkilawan. She's a South African artist and was kind enough to allow us to include this untitled piece from 2019 in the anthology. She used **wool and cloth on hessian**. Isn't it beautiful? Page 90

[Agazit] Another find from the Nawi Repository. **Jessica Horn's article A Worker's Day Wish for African Women** was originally written on May 1, 2018 and published on her medium blog site. Oh Lord, create the world anew so that women can rest. Amen. Page 91

[Nzilani] Agazit asked for **Jacaranda flowers** to remind her of the blooms she missed this season in Addis. The tree in her yard never bloomed. Jacaranda flowers have always been some of my favorites too - so I looked up to the skies for inspiration cause our Nairobi Jacarandas - albeit fewer due to urban deforestation - were radiant. And what an honor to have them bloom alongside Nebila's beautiful love story. Page 92

[Nebila] The accompanying story is an excerpt from a short story I wrote titled **Let me Spare You Spinsterhood**, alternatively titled Huub, to be published by Rwanda's Huza Press. An ode to my Hareri heritage, and a Hareri delicacy, haaris. Page 93

[Agazit] I first saw Katy Lena N'diaye's 2007 documentary **Awaiting for Men**, at the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) probably the same year or maybe the year after it was released. I was amazed at the beauty of the film, the simplicity, the sensuality and the candor of the women featured. These stills from the film are only a small taste of what it offers. Set in Mauritania, these women and the images they create, stun. Pages 94-95

[Agazit] The **black cat** is unnamed. She responds to woowooquto, but that doesn't really pass as a name, as I've been told. I'm waiting for her to tell me who she is. I think she's already done so, but I haven't been listening. I think that once this anthology is done, I'll get it. She's been living with us for about five months and I adore her. She's wild and free and hangs out with me in the room where I write and craft and dry herbs and try out tonics and hang with friends. Also, she's a he. It's hard to tell in the first few months! I assumed he was she for some reason... I'm just realizing in a final edit of this sources section that I have been writing about him as her. Page 96

[Agazit] After reading Braiding Sweetgrass, a beautiful book by Robin Wall Kimmerer, and the story she retells about Skywoman, I couldn't stop thinking about origin stories. If you haven't read the book, you should, or at the least, see about Skywoman. I began asking about origin stories and came across **Nana Buluku**, a supreme goddess in some west African cosmologies. I read and read some more and then I summarized. Page 97

[Nebila] Health is wealth is it not? How can we complete this anthology without **home remedies**? Our Nawi sister, Elizabeth Maina gave us some – the rest are collected from Oma (my grandma) who always has a natural cure for any ailment off the top of her head. Pages 98-99

[Nebila] Remember we told you we've been reading a lot? Have you read Homegoing? Wasn't it unlike anything you've ever read? I don't know how Yaa Gyasi managed to introduce new characters in every chapter and still managed to somehow sustain the story line. Here's a quote from her second book, **Transcendent Kingdom**. Page 100

[Agazit] This is the second time we're hearing from **Wangari**. The spirit of the ancestor was strong with this one during this collection time. This quote. Such a simple way of putting a truly central truth. Page 101

[Agazit] We came across the **Ogoni 9** and **Water No Get Enemy** posters on the Nawi newsletter. If you're not subscribed, subscribe! You'll find goodies too. The images are part of a poster series created by The African Ecofeminist Collective and The Alternative World Water Forum. Pages 102-103

[Agazit] The third and final time, Wangari. **When you revere, you do not plunder; you protect**. There's not much else to say here. Pages 104-105

[Nebila] **How Beautiful We Were** by Imbolo Mbue from Cameroon is another recent read. In it, she tells a story we know too well. A community ravaged by its riches, devoured by vultures who will milk it dry, to reap maximum profits, at any cost. I highly recommend it. We thought it was an apt way to end this anthology – grounded, but also hopeful. Page 106

[Agazit] The image. This image! Nzilani designed this page, double up, framed with what I thought were pieces of cloth, but really are cutouts from one of Nebila's photos - a croton with added splashes of purple. **Naomi Mukadi**. Liberty, Dream and Soul. It's almost aspirational. I want to be where these women are. Cool like love. Page 107

