



# Get Back The Honey!

African Feminist Essays On  
Decolonisation, Neoliberalism  
& Capitalism





# About this anthology

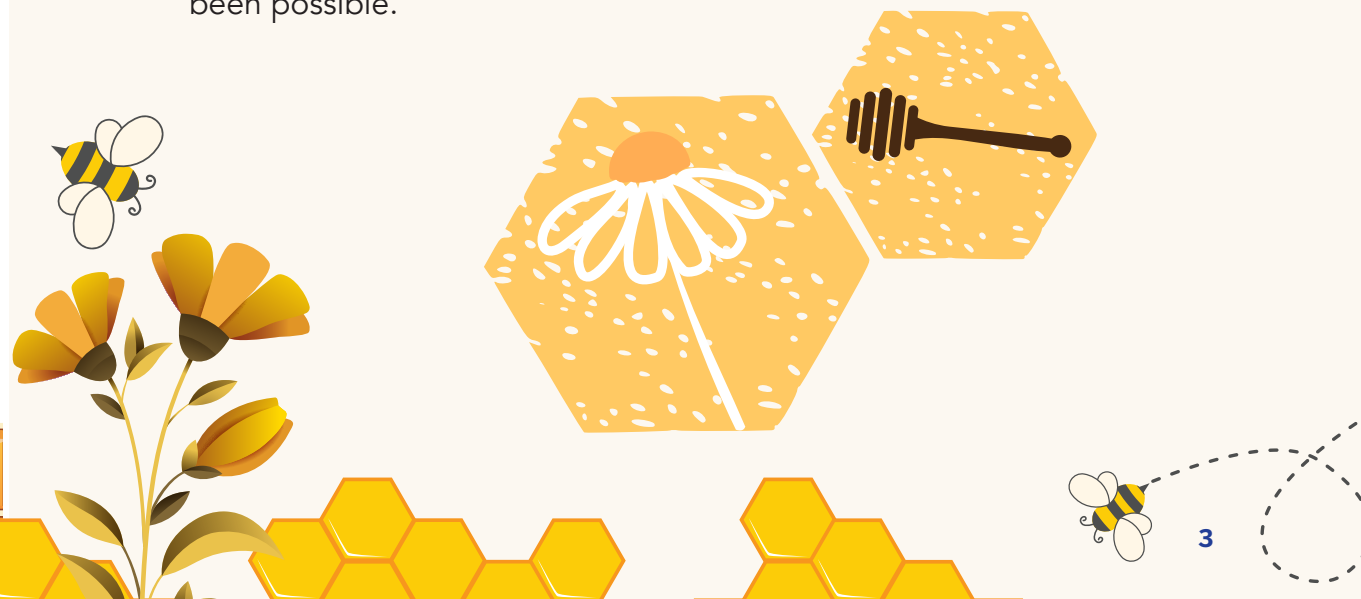
This anthology offers an in-depth analysis of *Nyuki*, a political comic published by Akina Mama wa Afrika. *Nyuki*—Swahili for “bee”—is a powerful allegory that follows the lives of bees, symbolising collective labour, resilience, and communal strength. The comic explores the enduring legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy through striking visuals and rich symbolism, revealing how these forces have shaped today’s global wealth inequalities. Told from a Pan-African feminist perspective, *Nyuki* challenges dominant economic narratives and reimagines taxation as a pathway to justice, equity, and Ubuntu. It calls on readers to confront historical power structures and recognise fair taxation as a critical tool in dismantling entrenched privilege. read the whole comic on the Akina Mama wa Afrika website at [akinamamawaafrika.org](http://akinamamawaafrika.org) or scan the QR code to access. **The Bee Story: A Metaphorical Tale of Wealth Disparity and the Need to Tax the Rich.**



The top of the page is decorated with a large, stylized honeycomb structure in shades of yellow and orange. Several bees are flying around the honeycomb, leaving dashed lines behind them. The bees have yellow and black stripes and white wings.

# Acknowledgement

Heartfelt thanks to the authors—**Trudy Asiima, Lisa Charity Nabuchabo, Mbabazi Joanita Komungaro, Freddie Kagino, Hawa N. Kimbugwe, and Hilda Evelyn Nakyondwa**—whose contributions brought this work to life. Deep appreciation also goes to graphics designer Samson Mwaka, without whom this project would not have been possible.






# New names, New Faces

By Hawa N. Kimbugwe


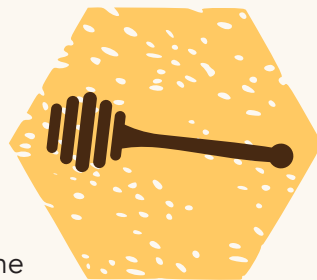




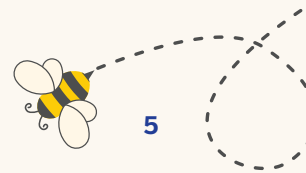
Silence drips from rafters like rain in deserted houses  
It coats tongues, thick and still  
They have seen what happens  
To those who speak with open throats and full chests  
To those whose words rattle the air like broken chains

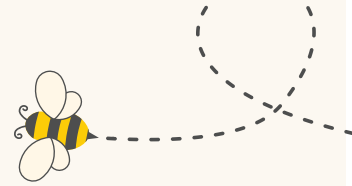
Some sit in shadows, not by choice  
Light has burned them before  
Others gather around the glow of detachment,  
Warmed by the quiet,  
Too tired to feel the complicity.

Eyes glance, but do not linger.  
Hands twitch, but do not rise.  
The crowd nods to the rhythm of staying out of it.  
And I watch them all.  
Wide-eyed with a hunger for something I cannot name



New names, new faces  
Same games, same places  
Yet silence holds the same shape



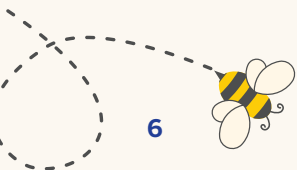


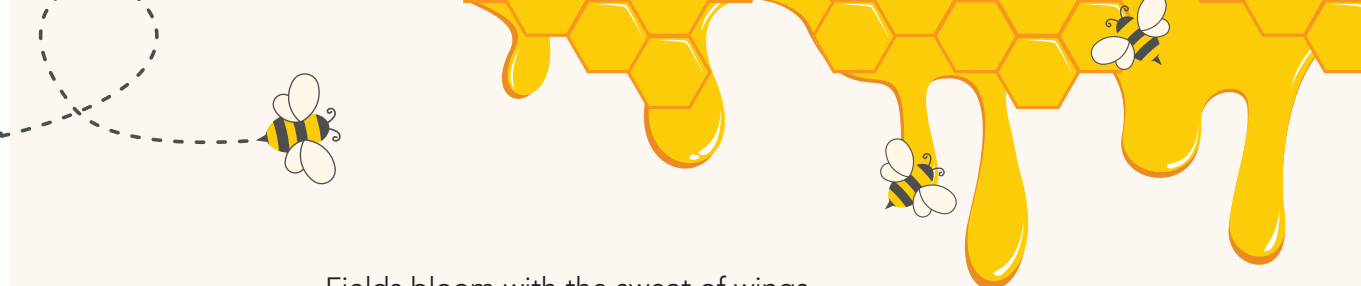
I envy the weightless ignorance,  
The feathered sleep of the untouched.  
How peaceful it must be  
To float above the fray  
To sip from the river and never ask where it begins.  
I do not know that peace  
I have known the bees and their burden.

The bees burn through their hours.  
Bent backs glinting in dawn's light  
Passing sweetness from wing to wing.  
Stacking life against winter.

While beetles rest beneath shaded stones,  
Feigning frailty with practiced grace.  
Their shells polished with lies  
Their steps were choreographed to mislead.

They drag gold from the hive in daylight,  
Slip it into silk-lined pockets.  
They return at dusk, offering crumbs wrapped in flags.  
They kneel beside the bees, whispering orders as prayers.



A decorative header featuring a yellow honeycomb pattern at the top. Three bees are flying: one on the left with a dashed line trail, one in the center, and one on the right. Yellow honey is dripping from the bottom of the honeycomb.

Fields bloom with the sweat of wings,  
But the harvest rolls uphill.  
Scales tip in favor of those who never sowed  
Their hands stay clean, their names engraved in brass.



New names, new faces  
Same games, same places  
The patterns return like floods in spring

And still,  
They say nothing  
They watch  
Empathy curled in the corners of their mouths  
Never quite reaching their hands

But I  
I feel the sting beneath the silence  
I see the outline of what could be  
If we dared to move

Death waits, yes – quiet; certain,  
But so does fire /  
and joy /  
and justice,  
If we let our voices rise before we fall.





So, I gather mine, even if it shakes.  
I speak, even if it draws blood  
Let the beetles scuttle behind cloaks  
Let them choke on their honeyed lies.  
Let the names change while the games stay the same  
Let the faces change while the places stay the same  
I will not!

I will live with my hands open, not clenched  
I will leave behind more than echoes.  
If dust awaits us all, let me arrive burning.

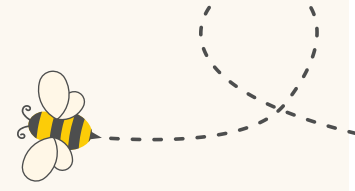


## About the Author

Renowned poet and social justice advocate Hawa N. Kimbugwe inspires transformative impact through innovative artistic expression and strategic leadership, empowering youth, girls, women and fostering inclusive communities.



# Oppressor, Resistor, Or Enabler: Who Are You In The Neoliberal Capitalist System?


By  
Lisa Charity Nabuchabo




**NYUKI:** *The Bee Story* presents a powerful allegory of modern-day neocolonialism. Bees and their hive represent the African continent, people, and the oppressive systems they live under. Each character in the story mirrors real-life societal roles, imploring readers to question and consciously witness their own place within oppressive structures.

**The Bees** represent the everyday African people; resilient, communal, industrious, yet trapped within systems exploiting their labour and resources. Just as bees work tirelessly to build and sustain their hive, so too have Africans toiled under colonial and now neo-colonial systems that extract wealth while offering little in return. Their wax and honey, like Africa's natural riches, gold, oil, cocoa, cobalt etc, are looted by outsiders, leaving them with mere crumbs of what rightfully belongs to them. The hive reflects a continent rich in potential but destabilised by foreign interference, systemic inequality, and internal/native traitors.

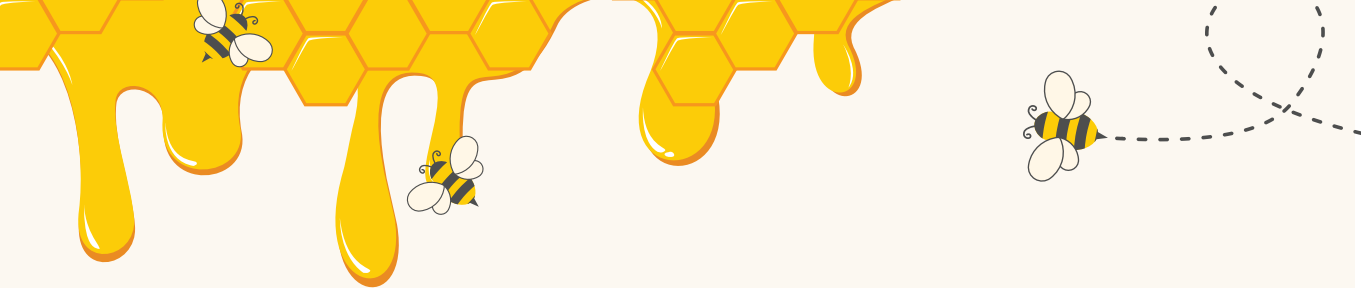
**The Hive Beetles**, described as explorers, clearly personify the European colonialists who arrived in Africa during the "**Scramble for Africa**" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, under the guise of exploration, trade, and "civilising missions," only to occupy, divide, and plunder violently. Today, they are mirrored by international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund, multinational corporations, and donor governments that still maintain economic dominance over African states through debt traps, resource extraction, and policy manipulation.



**The Queen Bee** symbolises the possibility of feminist, community-centred leadership, contrasting sharply with the autocratic, extractive rule of *MFLAME*, leader of the Hive Beetles, who represents the modern-day capitalist elite and former colonial powers who continue to control African economies through debt, asymmetric trade dependencies, and exploitative corporations. She describes an alternative leadership model rooted in care, equity, and collective well-being that counters patriarchal colonial governance's violent legacy, leading with empathy and community focus. This role, later restored by Xxora, within the colony, challenges the extractive systems left behind by colonial powers, suggesting that true liberation requires a return to indigenous, feminist governance that values the people over profit.

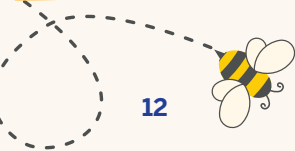


Xxora, the hive's elder and ancestral memory keeper, represents freedom fighters who remind us of the roots of our oppression and the need for collective resistance. She embodies the enduring spirit of resistance rooted in lived memory, much like anti-colonial educators and revolutionaries who used historical truth as a weapon against colonial amnesia. In colonial times, women like her were the griots, the underground teachers, and the mobilizers.

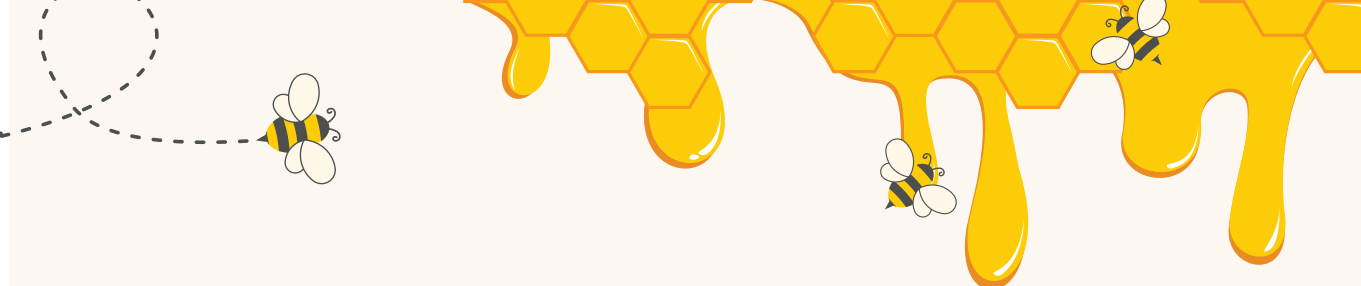


In today's context, she reflects the work of grassroots organisers, elders, and radical historians who help young people connect their present struggles to the historical and structural forces that shaped them. Her role highlights how reclaiming history is an act of revolution that dismantles the myths told by the empire, nurturing collective consciousness and action.

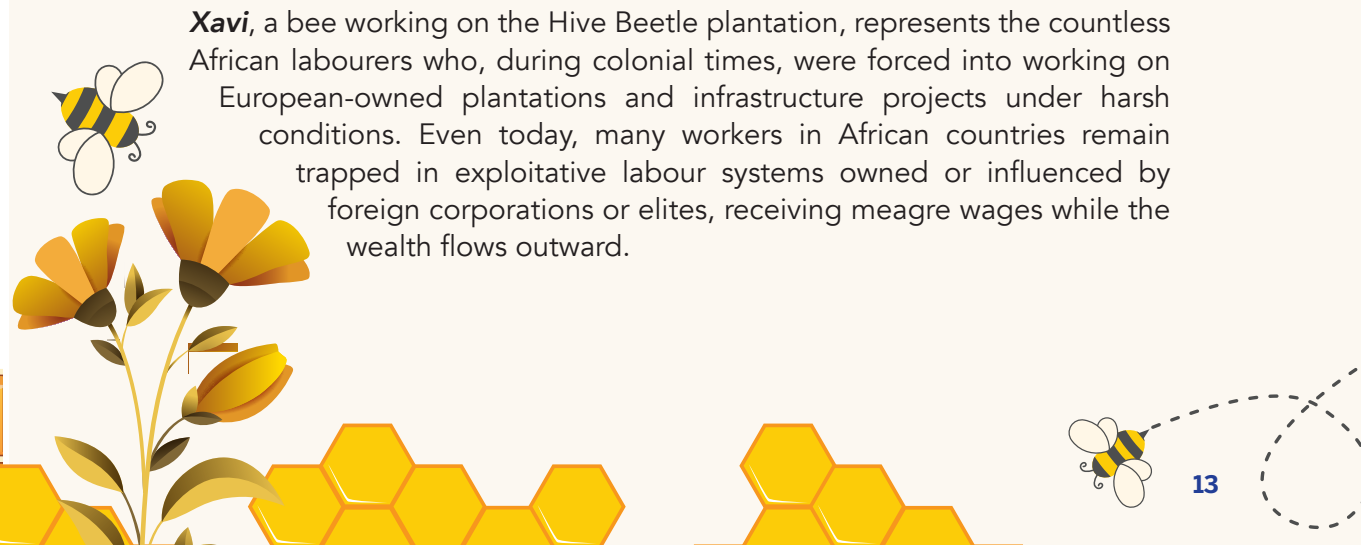
**Xoe**, her granddaughter, represents the new wave of African activists and truth-tellers, many of whom, like journalists or student leaders across the continent, are routinely arrested or silenced for speaking out against state-sanctioned injustice. She embodies resistance passed down through generations, and truth tellers who risk everything to expose injustice. In colonial times, she mirrors the defiant voices who led liberation movements despite brutal crackdowns. At the same time, today, she reflects the courage of young Africans who challenge authoritarian regimes, economic exploitation, and social inequality. Her arrest for "spreading propaganda" highlights how speaking truth to power is still criminalised, showing that though colonialism has evolved into neo-colonial control, the silencing of dissent remains a persistent tactic of domination.






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**Xona**, her father, reflects the many ordinary citizens who, out of fear or exhaustion, choose silence and survival over resistance, mirroring the countless parents who tell their children to “stay quiet” to stay safe under repressive regimes. He embodies the trauma passed down through generations who have lived under both colonial and neo-colonial repression. Having watched his wife die in prison, punished simply for dissent, he becomes a symbol of the silenced survivor, scarred by state violence and haunted by the cost of resistance. His silence isn’t born of apathy but of grief and fear, much like many Africans during colonial rule who, after witnessing brutal crackdowns on protests or uprisings, chose to protect their families through quiet endurance. In today’s world, Xona reflects those who internalise oppression, prioritising survival in systems that have taught them that speaking up leads only to loss.

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**Xavi**, a bee working on the Hive Beetle plantation, represents the countless African labourers who, during colonial times, were forced into working on European-owned plantations and infrastructure projects under harsh conditions. Even today, many workers in African countries remain trapped in exploitative labour systems owned or influenced by foreign corporations or elites, receiving meagre wages while the wealth flows outward.



**Xinti**, his son who has risen to the position of supervisor and is desperate to please the Hive Beetles, symbolizes the colonial era intermediaries like the “headmen” or “overseers” in British colonies, or “évolués” in French territories; Africans who were given minor privileges to manage and police their people on behalf of the colonizers. In modern contexts, Xinti echoes the figures within post-independence African governments or corporations who continue to enforce exploitative policies for foreign benefit, believing their loyalty and obedience will earn them advancement. They are the border agents, tax collectors, and local administrators who implement IMF austerity measures, evict communities for foreign mining companies, or greenlight exploitative trade deals, often at the expense of their people.

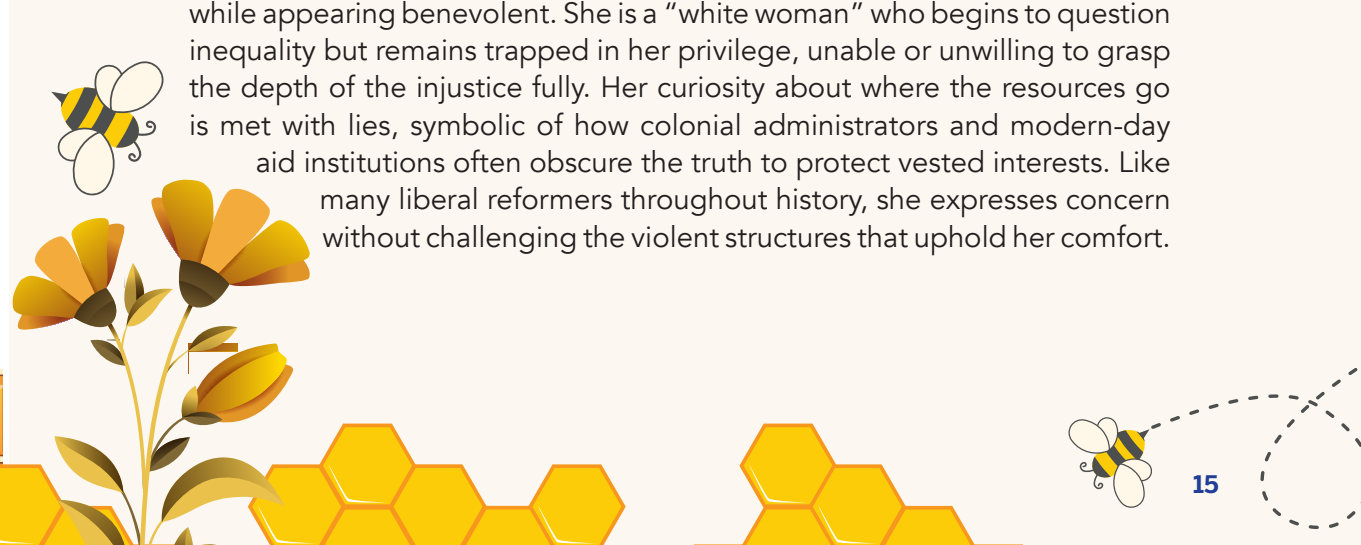
**Xavi** and his son **Xinti** ultimately represent the collaborators, those who enforce colonial systems for their benefit, similar to post-independence bureaucrats and militarised police who protect corrupt elites while brutalising their people.

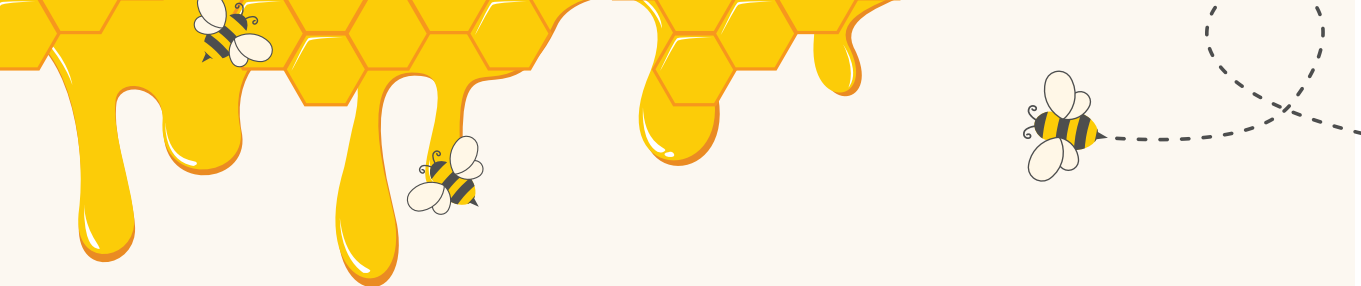
**MFLAME** represents the charismatic face of authoritarianism and imperialism; white supremacist, or shall I say, “hive beetle supremacy”, controlling, extractive, and manipulative. Like colonial governors or modern corporate-backed leaders, he masks exploitation with charm, silencing dissent and maintaining dominance. His rule critiques how power often hides behind performance to sustain injustice.



**Aethina**, the chief advisor to the Hive Beetles, represents the architects and strategists of imperialism; the likes of Cecil Rhodes and Lord Lugard in the past, who crafted the ideologies and systems of divide and rule, racial superiority, and exploitative governance. In a modern sense, Aethina could be likened to think tanks, consultants, or economic advisors aligned with global capitalism, who continue to draft structural adjustment programs or promote neoliberal reforms that devastate public sectors in the Global South while enriching foreign investors.

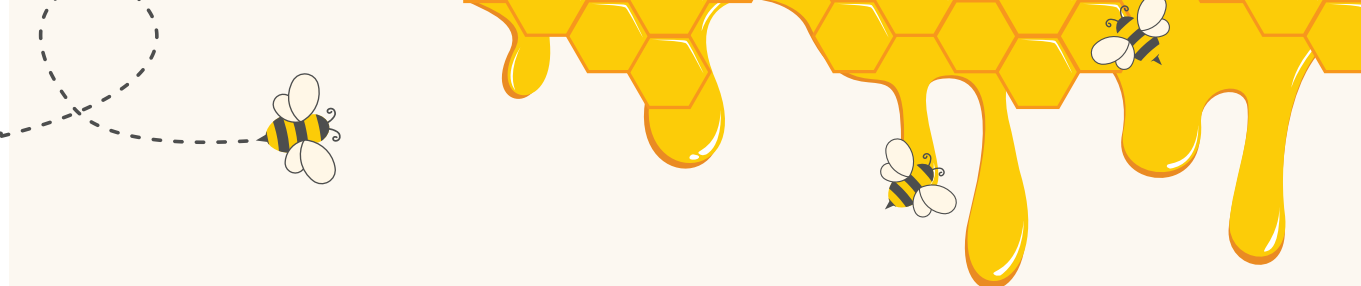
**Princess Fara**, the daughter of *MFLAME*, is a critique of white femininity and saviourism, which often masks complicity, much like colonial figures such as wives of missionaries and slave owners, or today's celebrity "humanitarians" who speak of justice without surrendering power or calling out imperial systems. She wields inherited power under the guise of innocence, much like aid workers and philanthropists who unknowingly reinforce white supremacy while appearing benevolent. She is a "white woman" who begins to question inequality but remains trapped in her privilege, unable or unwilling to grasp the depth of the injustice fully. Her curiosity about where the resources go is met with lies, symbolic of how colonial administrators and modern-day aid institutions often obscure the truth to protect vested interests. Like many liberal reformers throughout history, she expresses concern without challenging the violent structures that uphold her comfort.






The two generals serving **MFLAME** with unquestioning loyalty epitomise the militarised enforcers of colonial rule; commanders of colonial armies whose work was to suppress African uprisings and enforce European rule. In the post-independence era, these figures are mirrored by security forces trained and funded by foreign governments or corporations, deployed to protect extractive interests and suppress dissent. From soldiers guarding oil pipelines in the Niger Delta, police brutalizing protesters demanding land reform, or military regimes propped up by international alliances, these generals show how violence remains central to the maintenance of global inequality.

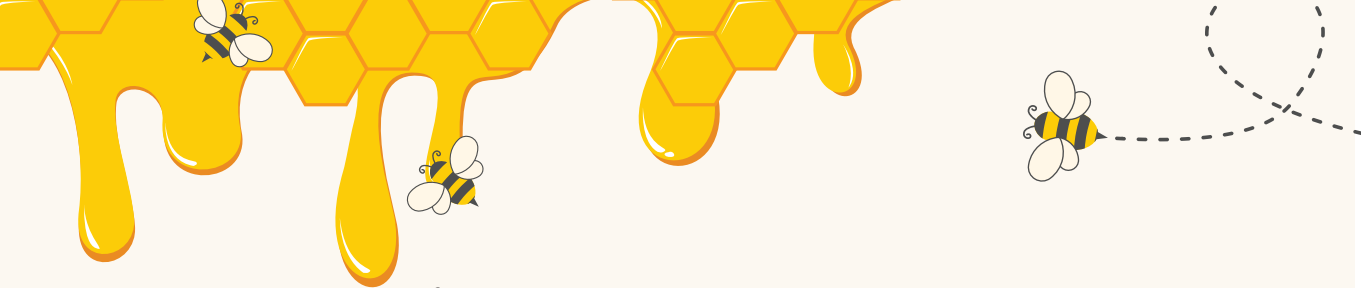
Through these characters, *NYUKI* paints a layered portrait of how colonial structures are not relics of the past but living systems still upheld by real people with real motivations: ambition, fear, greed, and survival. It forces us to reckon with how even seemingly small roles contribute to the machinery of oppression.

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One thing was clear: this story masterfully unpacks how colonialism and capitalism restructured African societies, particularly through the lens of labour and gender. As in pre-colonial times, at the beginning of the story, the hive thrived on abundance, communal sharing, and mutual care, mirroring traditional African economies rooted in collective prosperity. This drastically shifts under the rule of the Hive Beetles, where land dispossession and forced labour reflect historical events like the enclosure of communal lands and the rise of slavery and wage labour in colonial Africa.

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The comic emulates how the burden of survival increasingly falls on the bees; Africans, especially women and caregivers, whose unpaid labour, tending to gardens, ensuring food is brought to the table, nurturing the sick, holding families together, sustains a system that exploits them. The demand for multiple shifts and strict quotas represents the extractive nature of modern capitalism, where the working class is expected to do more for less. At the same time, elites like MFLAME and Fara perform oversight without understanding or acknowledging the toll.



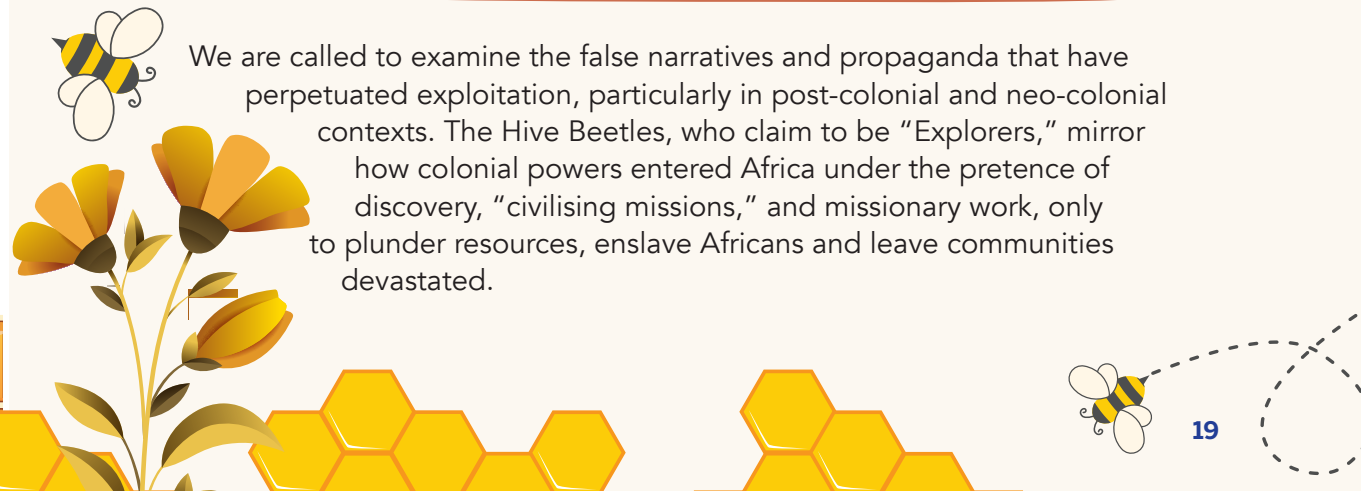
The “enhanced” flowers that make bees sick symbolise how industrial agriculture and profit-driven innovation ignore ecological balance and ancestral knowledge, driving climate destruction that disproportionately affects the working poor. In this way, the comic critiques how capitalism commodifies both labour and nature, highlighting how our everyday roles, whether as workers, consumers, or bystanders, can reinforce or resist these systems of oppression.

The bees’ deteriorating health and overwork reflect how capitalism externalises costs onto the most vulnerable, from rural African women to informal sector workers globally. Their forced dependency on harmful technologies and unsustainable methods mirrors how corporate-driven development erodes traditional, self-sufficient livelihoods. Even the act of growing food becomes politicised labour under surveillance, stripping communities of autonomy and binding them to cycles of exploitation. The storyline also reveals how ecological degradation becomes another tool of control, where poisoned flowers symbolise polluted environments that disproportionately harm the poor.

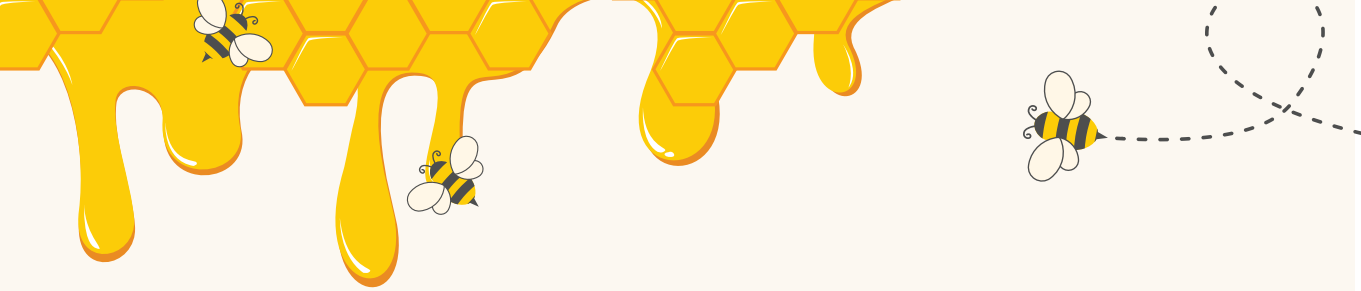


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As bees are pushed into survival mode, care work and community support are not seen as valuable, but as invisible burdens. Meanwhile, the Hive Beetles continue to thrive off the crisis, using scarcity and the myths of it to tighten their grip on the hive. *NYUKI* challenges us to rethink the value of labour, and to closely witness how neo-colonial capitalism relies on both environmental destruction and gendered exploitation. It calls on readers to question systems that reward hoarding and punish nurturing, and to imagine an economy where care, community, and sustainability take centre stage.

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We are called to examine the false narratives and propaganda that have perpetuated exploitation, particularly in post-colonial and neo-colonial contexts. The Hive Beetles, who claim to be “Explorers,” mirror how colonial powers entered Africa under the pretence of discovery, “civilising missions,” and missionary work, only to plunder resources, enslave Africans and leave communities devastated.



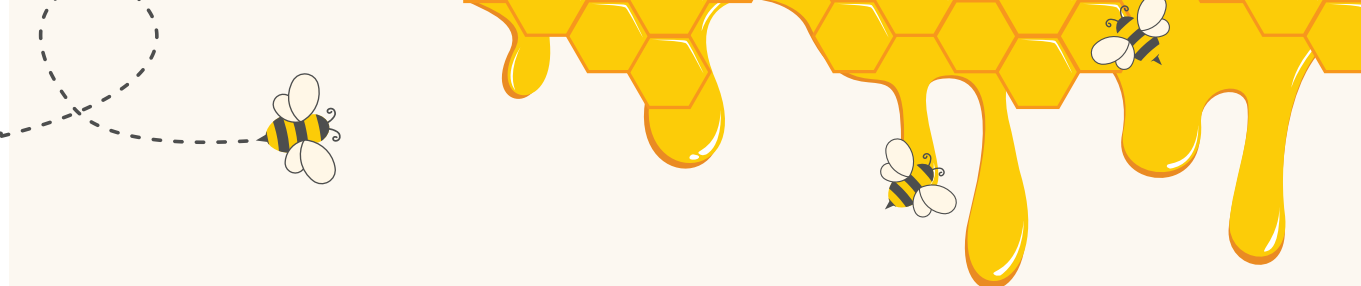
Xoe at one point asks, “What schools?...what hospitals?”. The false promises of progress, such as the establishment of schools and hospitals, reflect how multinational institutions like the IMF and World Bank sell reforms that only deepen inequality, with debts crippling nations while benefiting a select few. The lie of meritocracy is laid bare in Xoe’s counterargument; despite hard work, there is no absolute upward mobility for the oppressed, only further exploitation.

The myth of “partnership” is also echoed in *MFLAME*’s dismissive comments about the supposed benefits of these colonial relationships, masking the reality of their wealth extraction and the lack of support for the bees. He claims that the riches from *Aethina*’s investments are enough to support the community, ignoring that these funds only enrich the elite, leaving the majority of bees in poverty. These false narratives function as tools to maintain the status quo, silencing dissent and preserving exploitation.

Even when the bees fight back, the false promise of independence is shattered as the Hive Beetles continue to siphon resources under new guises, much like how neo-colonial economic policies exploit former colonies. *The bees’* newfound “independence,” symbolised by the waving of a new flag, initially represents hope for a brighter future free from Hive Beetle rule. The

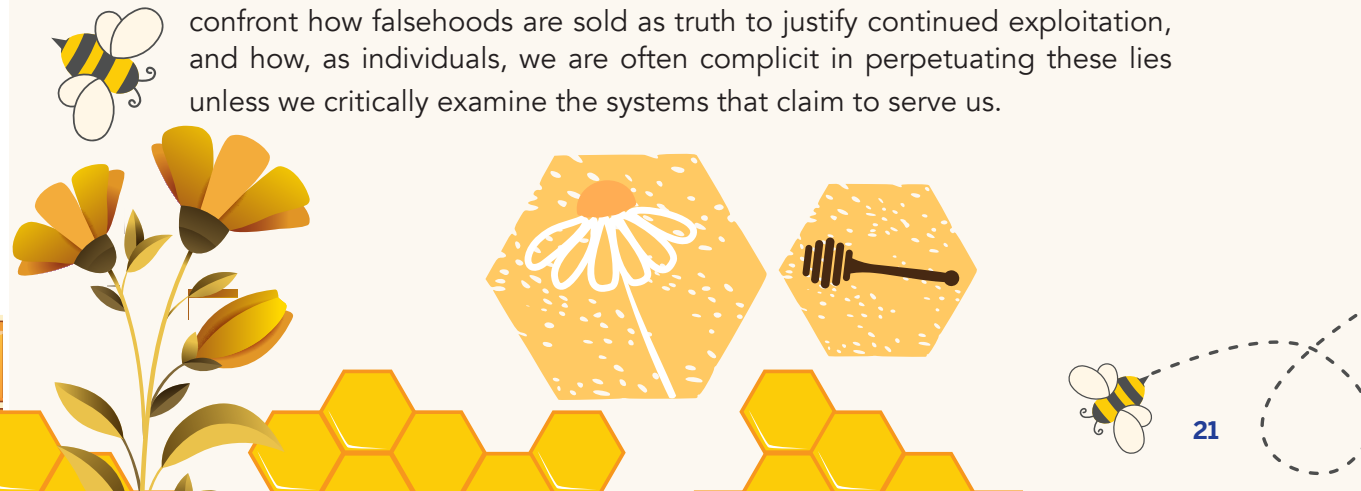




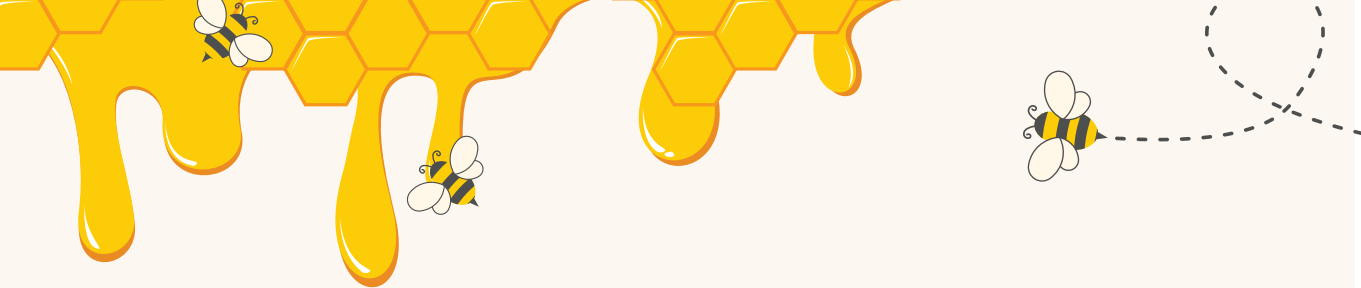
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subsequent invasion by investors and multilateral lenders becomes a stark reminder that independence is often undermined by hidden forces that maintain neo-colonial power dynamics in modern society.

The myth of “honourable” collaboration is highlighted, where workers like Xoe are told their service to the Hive Beetles is noble, as they supposedly provide schools and hospitals in return. However, as Xoe points out, these institutions are merely a façade, with the communities remaining in despair. Another lie is the promise of upward mobility within the capitalist system, where the idea of meritocracy is sold to the bees like the carrot on a stick, suggesting that hard work will lead to rewards. In reality, the system is designed to keep them oppressed. Xavi says, “Don’t worry, Xoe, someday you may get a promotion too.”

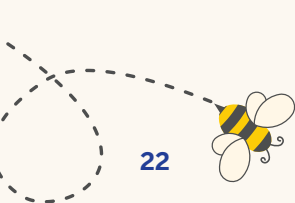
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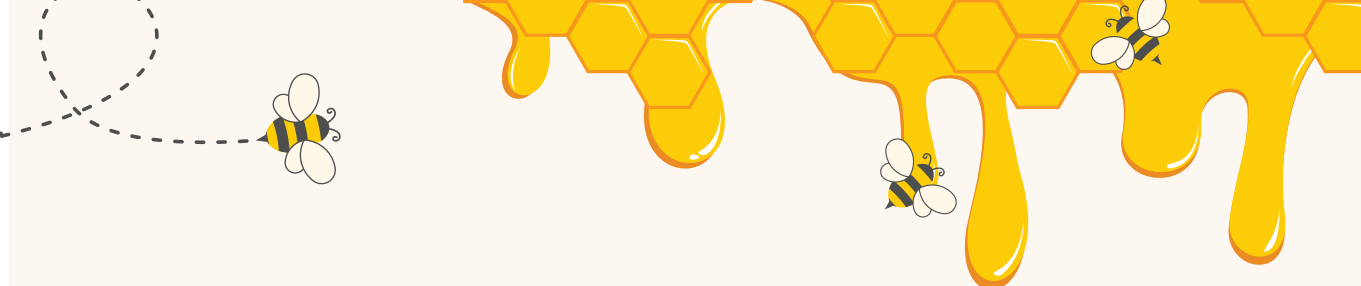
Through these characters and their narratives, the comic forces readers to confront how falsehoods are sold as truth to justify continued exploitation, and how, as individuals, we are often complicit in perpetuating these lies unless we critically examine the systems that claim to serve us.



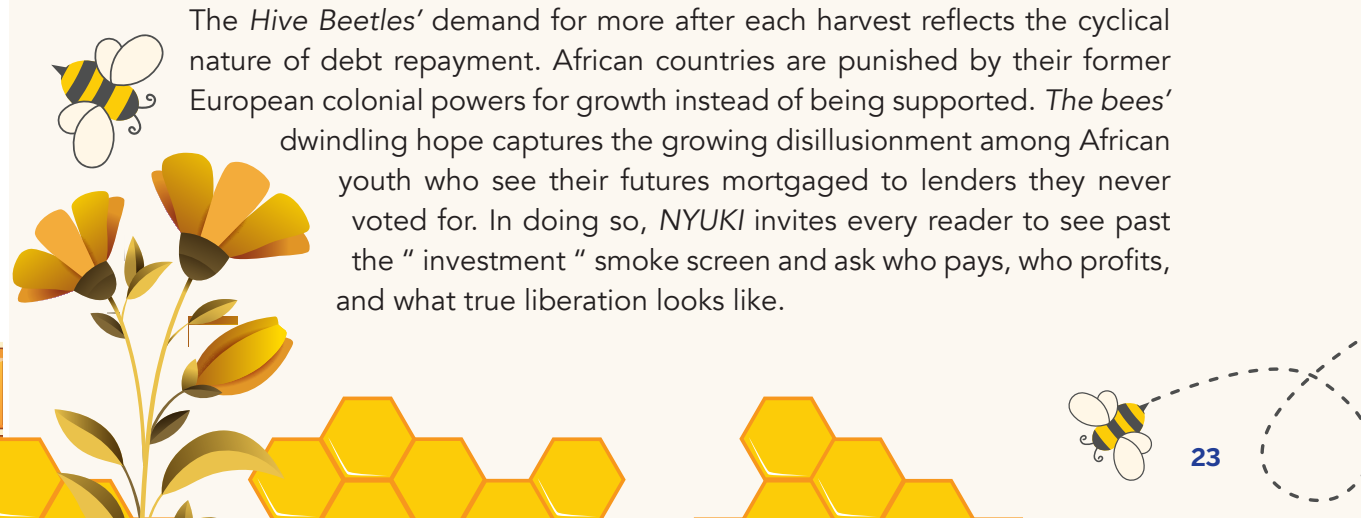
This story also powerfully critiques the illusion of progress sold to post-colonial African nations through neo-liberal reforms and foreign investment. The Hive Beetles' return, this time disguised as investors and multilateral lenders, mirrors how global financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank re-enter African territories under the banner of "development," only to enforce debt traps, structural adjustment programs, and exploitative trade agreements. *Aethina's*, *MFLAME's*, and the *Hive Beetle's* tax loopholes and shady treaties reflect real-world tax policies and double taxation agreements that allow multinational corporations to extract wealth while contributing nothing back.

*The bees*, left to shoulder the burden, reflect the ordinary citizens who bear the brunt of austerity measures, rising taxes, and crumbling public services, while elites collaborate with foreign powers. This story urges us to question who truly benefits from foreign investment, how we are seduced by promises of growth, and how we, too, whether through silence, compliance, or comfort, may be enabling systems of exploitation. It demands a reckoning with our economic sovereignty, reimagining policies that serve the people, and a long overdue conversation on reparations and justice.

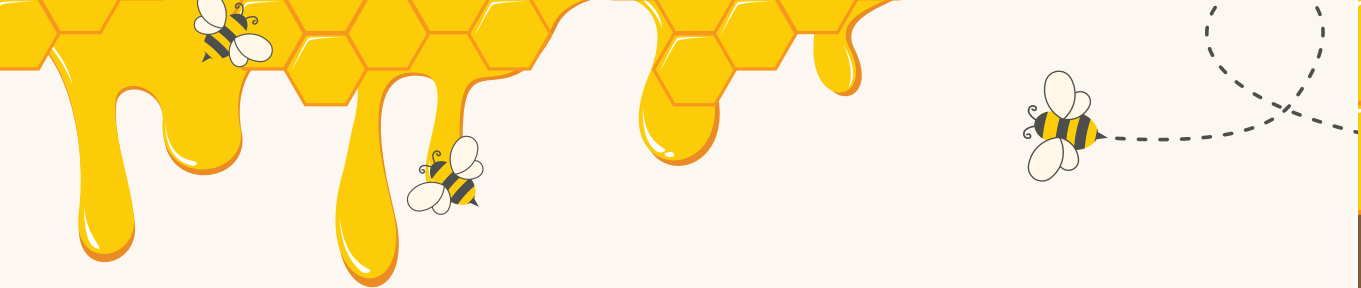


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It also exposes how leadership, often celebrated for securing “deals,” is complicit in auctioning national resources for short-term gain and enrichment of the elite. The bees’ declining quality of life reflects the real consequences of privatisation and deregulation: schools without books, hospitals without medicine, and workers without protections. Through satire, the comic reminds us that exploitation doesn’t always arrive with guns; sometimes it comes dressed in suits, holding contracts and smiling for photo ops.

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The *Hive Beetles*’ demand for more after each harvest reflects the cyclical nature of debt repayment. African countries are punished by their former European colonial powers for growth instead of being supported. *The bees*’ dwindling hope captures the growing disillusionment among African youth who see their futures mortgaged to lenders they never voted for. In doing so, *NYUKI* invites every reader to see past the “investment” smoke screen and ask who pays, who profits, and what true liberation looks like.



The comic's resolution, where Xxora takes leadership and promises to redistribute wealth and rebuild systems, mirrors the urgent global call for progressive taxation and economic justice. In this, *NYUKI* becomes more than a story; it is a powerful reflection urging us to think on our roles, whether we are silent, complicit, resistant, or transformative, and to ask what we can do to help dismantle the systems that continue to harm our communities.

## About the Author

Lisa Charity Nabuchabo is a Feminist thinker, writer and organiser rooted in decolonial praxis, with a strong track record in SRHR advocacy, movement-building, and transformative communications.



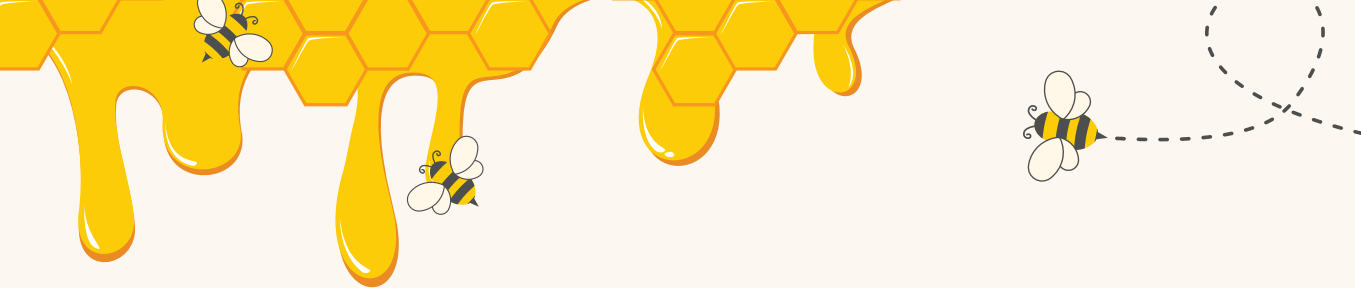


# The Glorification of Work in Capitalist Economies

A Decolonial Feminist Reading of Nyuki

By Asiima Trudy



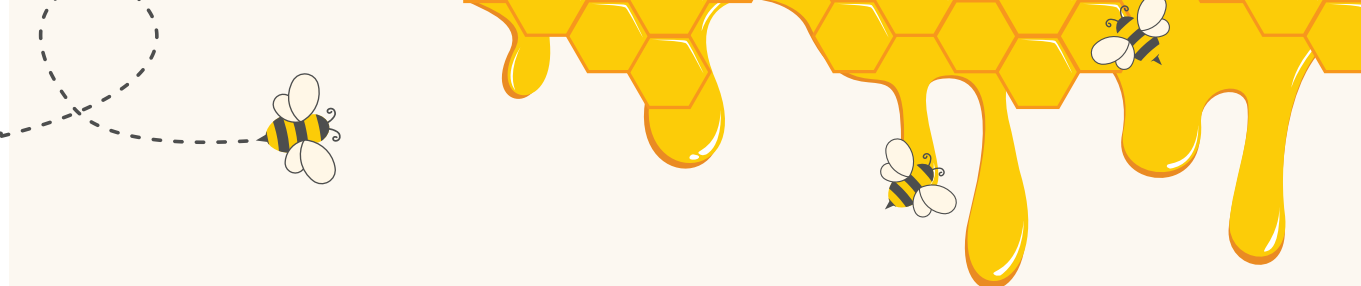


Under capitalism, work often resembles a never-ending stream of routines, deadlines, meetings that could have been emails, and bosses who demand reports that seem to serve only themselves. It could be the sleepless nights of the low-income earners who sleep by the roadside as they await the daybreak to sell fruits, socks etc. to get a hold of any kind of money.

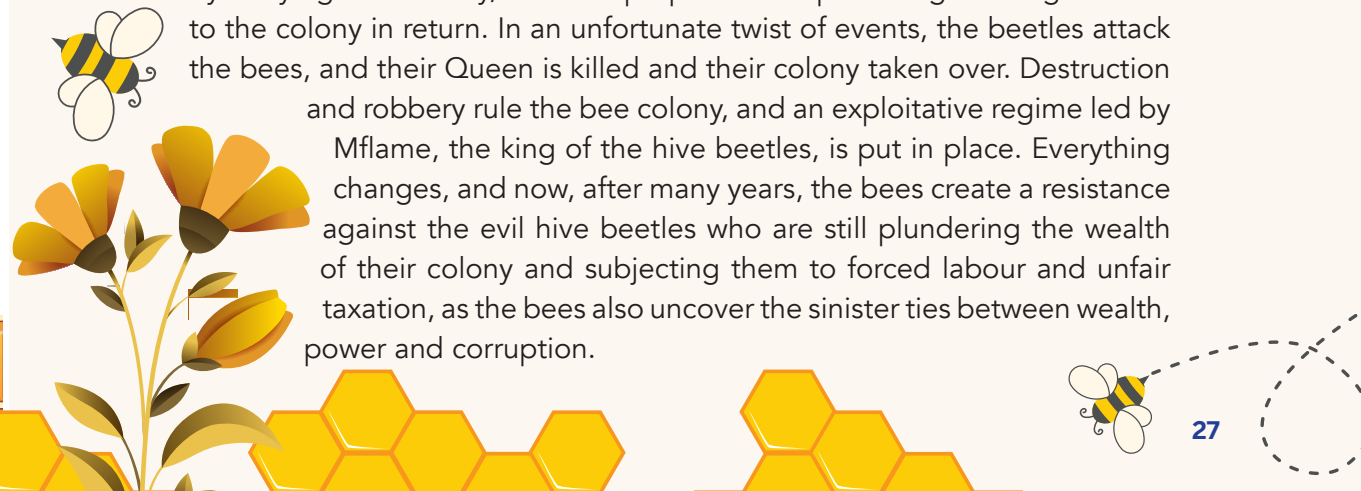
It's a system where efficiency is prized, yet inefficiency thrives. Wasteful practices and endless cycles of consumption fill the air. Workers are alienated from their labour and reduced to commodities whose value is determined by the hours they can sell.

The humour in this bleak reality lies in its absurdity. Imagine a young professional, weary from endless Zoom calls, staring out the window wistfully as they whisper, "I should have been at the club." Perhaps the irony of "touching grass" is a revolutionary act in a world where leisure is rationed like a scarce resource.




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Even humour itself becomes a coping mechanism. We laugh at the futility of it all because what else can we do? The system demands productivity while robbing us of joy. This system has also robbed so much from the people, especially Africans, that even hopeful dreams of a brighter future and a more equal society are held on to because that is the only thing that keeps us going.

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Akina Mama wa Africa (AMWA), a Ugandan feminist organisation, recently launched a comic book *Nyuki the Bee Story* that uses the allegory of bees to represent Africans. The story follows the life of a colony of bees, which is symbolic of the African people. Being hard working and living happily under the leadership of the Queen Bee, the arrival of unexpected guests-hive beetles, who are colonizers under the guise of “explorers”, changes their lives forever as these guests manipulate the generosity of their hosts by carrying their honey, wax and propolis while promising to bring wisdom to the colony in return. In an unfortunate twist of events, the beetles attack the bees, and their Queen is killed and their colony taken over. Destruction and robbery rule the bee colony, and an exploitative regime led by Mflame, the king of the hive beetles, is put in place. Everything changes, and now, after many years, the bees create a resistance against the evil hive beetles who are still plundering the wealth of their colony and subjecting them to forced labour and unfair taxation, as the bees also uncover the sinister ties between wealth, power and corruption.

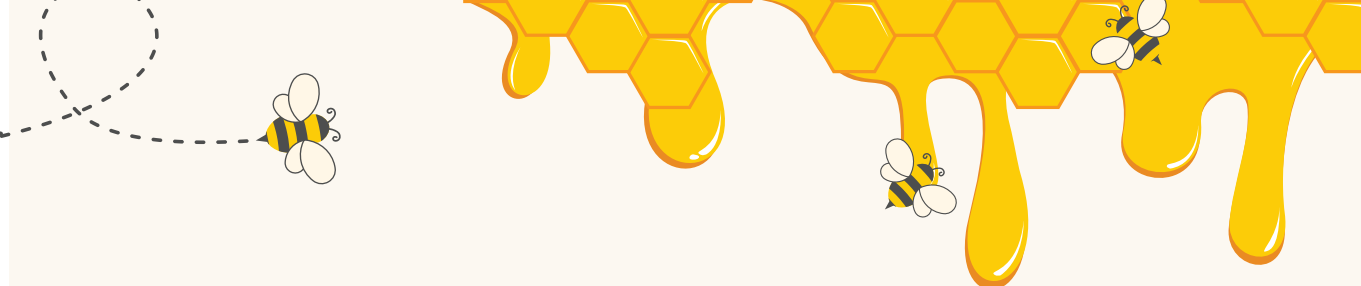


*Nyuki The Bee Story* is a comic that portrays the current atmosphere surrounding the state of African economies by ridiculing the unjust economic systems where the wealthy exploit African countries and hoard wealth at the expense of the helpless working class in these nations. Neo-colonial economists ignore the importance of basic human needs and prioritise individual gain over the collective well-being. This is wonderfully captured and depicted in this comic, symbolising the pre-colonial state of Africa and her economic liberty.

This comic further portrays the wealth disparity during and after colonial times, where wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few instead of the people who laboured for it. It also advocates for taxing the rich to curb wealth inequalities and promote economic growth.

This comic also addresses the idea that taxing the wealthy will help the working class rebuild a fairer society. It also challenges readers to think about their role in society and how they contribute to the work of Decolonial and Marxist feminists in fighting for economic justice on a continent whose values used to be fair communal distribution of resources.






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Like the bees in the story, the working-class citizens toil daily to death to earn a living. The little they earn is squandered through taxes on electricity, rent, and paying for things they don't need to pay for. As Ugandans humorously say, "The last person to leave Uganda should switch off the lights." This shows the disillusionment of the people in their motherland. They use humour to cope because nothing is left to do other than silently looking on.

While work is glorified under capitalism, some of the most vulnerable people in society are overlooked. Neurodivergent people are often required to have uniformity and relentless productivity. Capitalism needs workers to conform to rigid schedules, social norms, and efficiency standards that many neurodivergent individuals struggle with due to differences in attention, sensory processing, social interaction, and motor coordination. This system often forces neurodivergent people to work tirelessly or mask their differences to fit in, despite workplaces being poorly adapted to their needs.





Capitalism glorifies endless labour as a moral and social ideal but masks the exploitation and alienation inherent in the system. This glorification of work serves to justify the oppression of workers. Despite the promise of progress and prosperity, the capitalist work ethic demands productivity daily at the expense of the well-being and autonomy of these workers.

As people who deserve better, we must ask ourselves if we can imagine any alternatives that value human dignity beyond mere labour output. We need to work together and question these oppressive systems to be able to break the shackles of capitalism. We need to step away from our privilege and think about others other than ourselves, and we need to stop feeding these systems and prioritise fairness and equity over profit.

## About the Author

Asiima Trudy is a 24 year old doing her M.A in Literature.



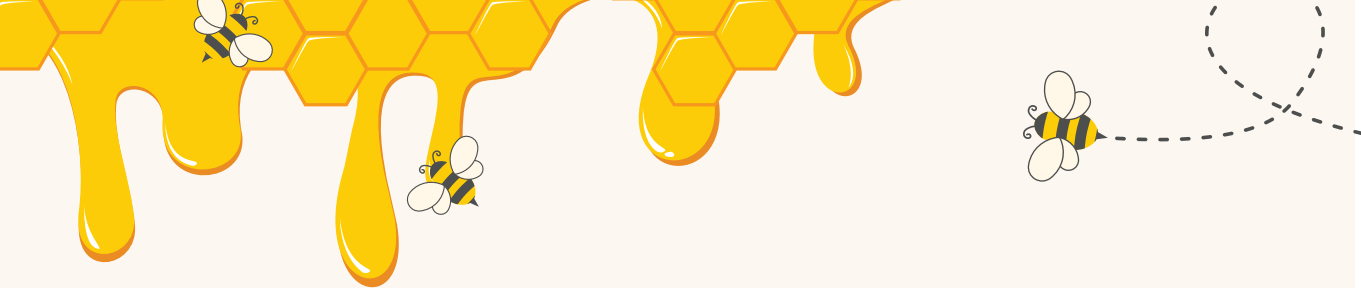


# Manufactured Misery

## How Neoliberalism Engineers Poverty in Africa

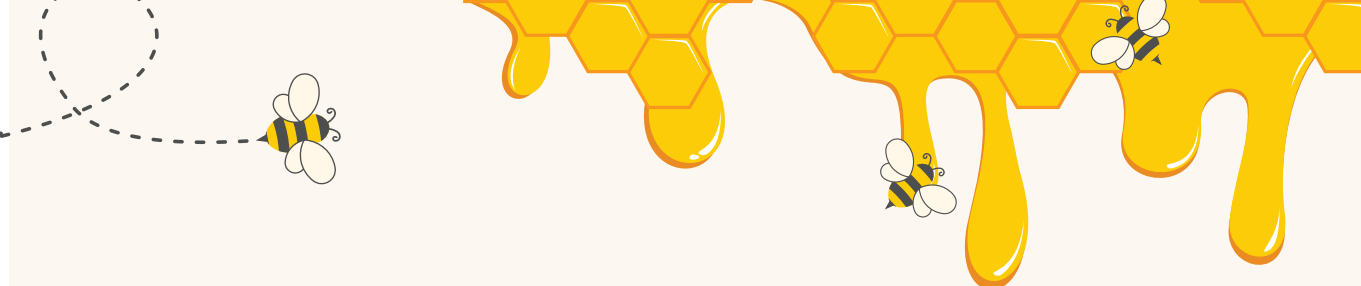
By Hilda Evelyn Nakyondwa






In many ways, resource scarcity is a manufactured concept. I recently read a comic titled *Nyuki*, developed by Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA), which powerfully illustrated this point. *Nyuki* is a story about bees that explores how colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy facilitate wealth disparity and underscore the need to tax the rich. The bees lived in abundance until hive beetles arrived: first disguised as explorers, and later as investors and multilateral lenders, once the first mask could no longer conceal their true intentions. These so-called investors imposed taxes on all the bees and decreed that they should earn less and lower their expectations of the government. Similarly, financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, under the guise of providing loans to accelerate development in low-income countries, impose Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and reforms that manufacture scarcity by reducing public expenditure and increasing taxation.

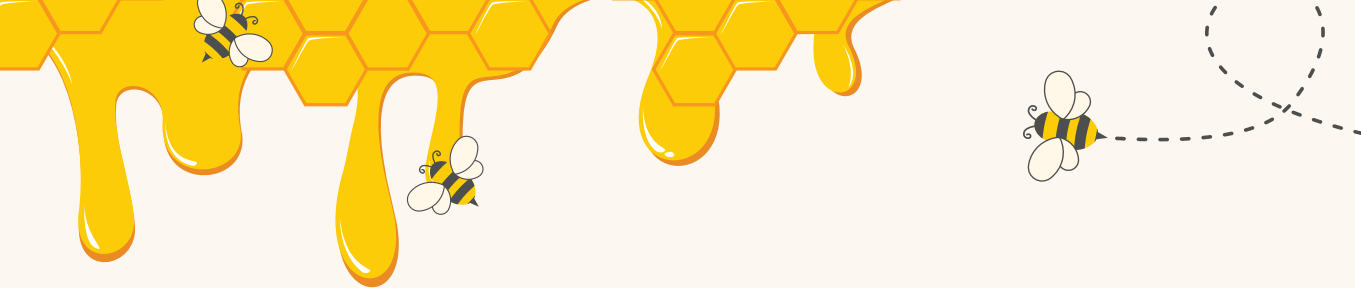


The top of the page features a decorative border. On the left, a dashed line forms a circle with a small bee flying along it. On the right, a large, stylized honeycomb structure is shown with yellow honey dripping down from its edges. Three bees are depicted: one near the top right honeycomb, one in the center dripping honey, and one near the top left dashed line.

For these financial institutions to specify that government institutions should reduce the amount of money allotted to the provision of public services implies that they understand that the low-income countries they keep pumping with debt, cannot afford to pay back these loans. If it is not to divert this government expenditure into loan payments, how do public service cuts translate into economic growth for low-income countries? In context, money that could have been used for health care provision, education, technical skills development, building green value chains, and generating desperately needed tax revenues, which can bring about said economic growth, is redirected to loan payments.

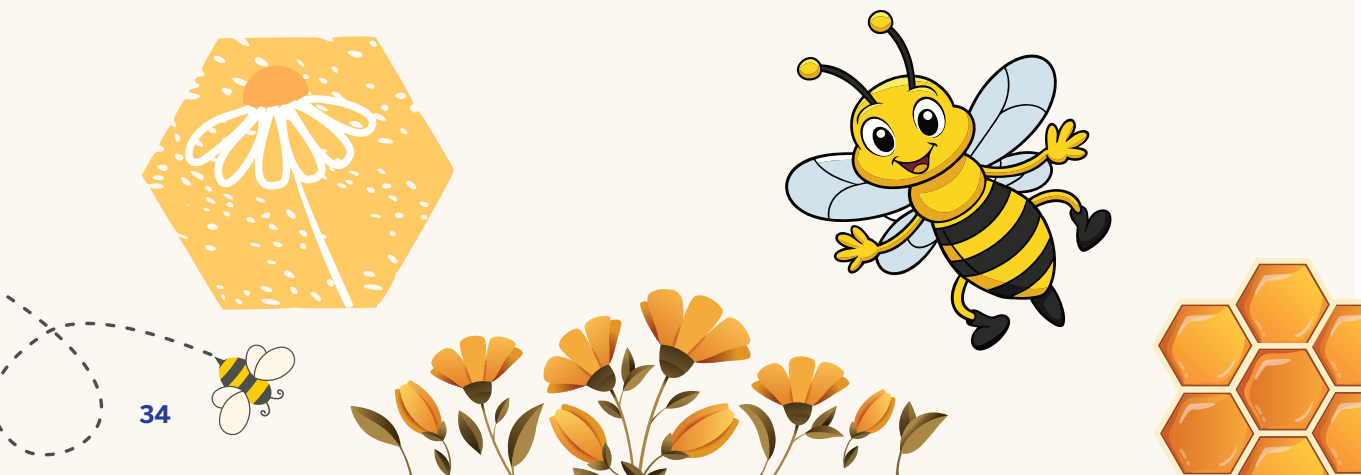
The bottom of the page features a decorative border. On the left, there is a stylized plant with yellow and orange flowers and green leaves. On the right, a dashed line forms a circle with a small bee flying along it. The background is filled with yellow honeycomb patterns.

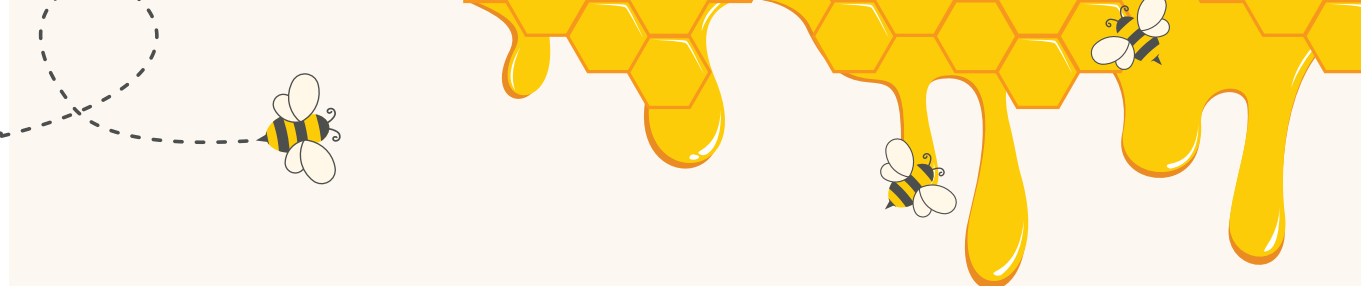
These policy reforms mandate that underdeveloped countries create free trade zones and offer investors tax exemptions/tax shelters, leading to what Xoe in Nyuki calls freeloading guests. The governments in these indebted countries shift the debt burden to the local people, hence the increased taxation. With day-to-day expenditures on transportation, food, water, and care work falling on individuals due to these reforms, taxation increases lead to increased vulnerability and poverty among the people, especially women, who often shoulder the provision of these basic needs.



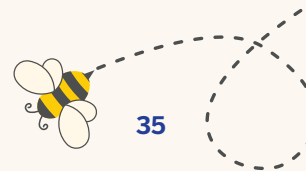
World Bank reforms on wages and flexible labour markets also led to the lowering of wages, job insecurities and reduced employment protections, furthering poverty among the people in the indebted countries.

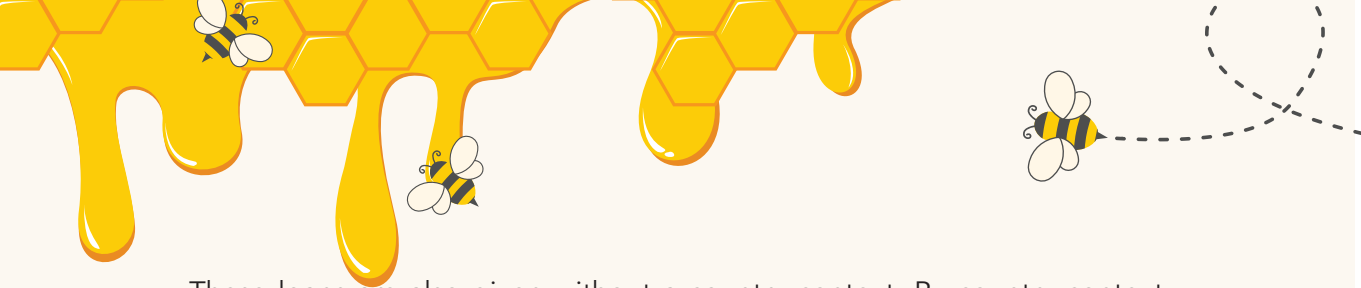
The multilateral lenders then use this state of vulnerability to offer loans to individuals, especially women, in the name of women's empowerment through microfinancing to establish or expand microenterprises and self-employment ventures. This makes poor women even more vulnerable as they are permanently indebted to these institutions. Hence, most money goes to loan payments instead of livelihood improvement. In cases where these women are unable to pay back the loans, these institutions take more than what's equivalent to the debt, for example, family land. Land dispossession deprives families of their means of subsistence, undermining their ability to sustain and reproduce their livelihoods, trapping them in wage dependence and hence the cycles of poverty and debt continue.



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Interestingly, on the surface, these exploitative schemes always look like opportunities, especially to the untrained or ignorant eye, which is the state most of us are strategically put into by the education systems and news propaganda. Just like the Bees in Nyuki believed that opportunity was knocking on their doorsteps when their leaders signed contracts and MOUs with investors and multilateral lenders (the Hive Beetles), they instead ended up paying more taxes, earning less, and having to expect less from the government. Call this austerity; call it SAPs.





These loans are also given without a country context. By country context, I mean financial institutions do not take into consideration the kind of development needed in a specific country based on the country's geographical location, income levels of the people, human needs, the impacts privatisation would have on the local people, and the effects of the investments on the ecosystems. The same policies are applied to all client countries, with the only consideration being a return on investment. As a friend of mine said, the words investment, donors, creditors, investors, experts, expatriates, developers, loans, grants, philanthropy, researchers, and all the other new names the neocolonialists are wearing these days should be trigger words for us as Africans.

If you would like to do a deep dive into the comic I have so heavily referenced in this essay, you can find it here; **The Nyuki Comic Book**.

## About the Author

Hilda Evelyn Nakyondwa is a decolonial feminist and Electrical Engineer with a focus on sustainable energy and climate finance. She also crotchets (and knits sometimes) so check out her work on IG @nakyos\_creations. Here, you are about to experience her in her capacity as a writer, enjoy!



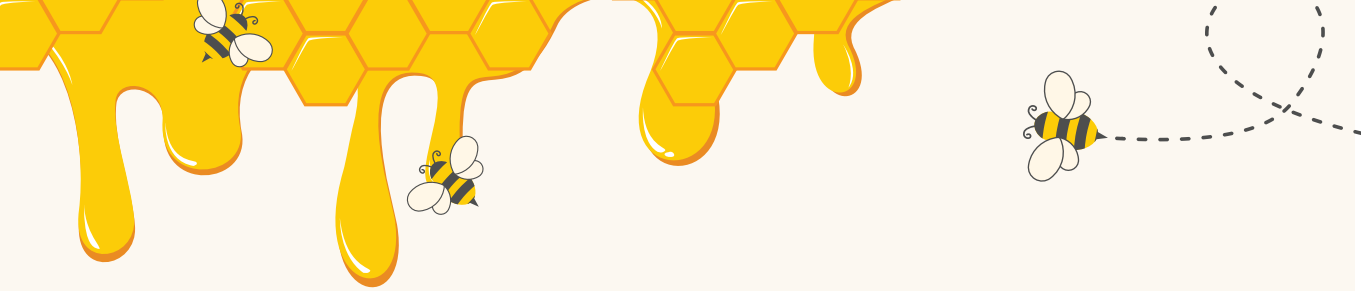




# Land Dispossession as a Tool of Capitalism

By Freddie Kagino






The Nyuki comic is an allegory for the violent process of colonisation that happened in many Indigenous communities across the world, from Africa to the Americas, Asia and Australia.

The story follows a hive of bees that hospitably receives a group of hive beetles into their colony, shows them the inner workings of the hive, and even shares some of their honey. The hive beetles later return and violently take over the hive in much the same way that Europeans, who were initially welcomed by indigenous Africans, took over indigenous lands and colonised them. This essay, in particular, will examine land dispossession on the African continent as an inextricable part of colonialism and ultimately as a tool of capitalism.

Colonialism is the act of attaining full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. Colonialism and Capitalism are inextricably linked because the biggest motivator for colonial expansion was the search for raw materials, markets, and labour to feed the growing industrial revolution in Europe.



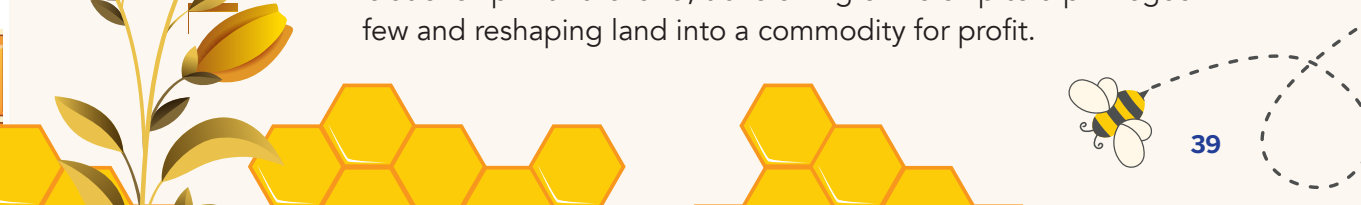


Capitalism emerged as a modern world economic system in the 1400s with European colonial expansion. The Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English, and other nations invaded foreign territories and seized their land. Africa was and still is resource-rich, and European countries eyed the various resources on the continent, from gold and diamonds to copper, rubber, coffee, gum, and cotton.


In a historical event called the Berlin Conference, European countries scrambled for African territory. They partitioned it amongst themselves with no regard for the indigenous Africans who lived on the continent.

Dispossession is a common phenomenon where colonisation occurred in many parts of the world. This is because, by design, it entailed taking over land owned by natives and passing this over to the colonisers and their vassals.

Dispossession is central to settler colonialism's functioning. At the most basic level, in order to claim the land to settle on, settlers must first take control of it and declare it their own.



Capitalism is deeply tied to the ownership and control of land, as land is a primary means of production and a source of capital. Wealth is extracted and concentrated by exploiting natural resources such as minerals, cash crops, and livestock. Historically, capitalism emerged through the violent dispossession of the majority from their direct relationship with the land, transferring ownership to a privileged few and reshaping land into a commodity for profit.



In many parts of the African continent, especially where settler colonies were established, indigenous people were forced off the land, and it was placed in the ownership of European settlers to facilitate the extraction and exploitation of the natural resources.


They did so despite the fact that Africans owned the land individually or communally and derived their livelihood from it.

In order to justify what was, in effect, theft, European settlers had to undermine the social structures set up by the indigenous people they intended to rob by claiming that they were not legitimate or valid enough to warrant respect. The presumption was that the colonised had no rights to land, either as individuals or as groups.

This narrative was fuelled by racist ideas about the legitimacy of African civilisations, which underpinned colonialism and the concept of the 'white man's burden.' This idea suggested that white colonisers had a duty to 'civilise' the African continent and bring light to an otherwise dark continent.

Many proponents of this ideology operated under the assumption that Africans lived like savage brutes, with no form of social organisation or civilisation to speak of, and that, without the intervention of imperialist colonial Europeans, Africa would still be in the dark ages.

It is no surprise, then, that they believed that any claims to ownership by indigenous peoples were deemed subordinate to European claims. This is most clearly exemplified by the Doctrine of Discovery.


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This was a principle used by European colonisers starting in the 1400s to stake a claim to lands beyond the European continent. The doctrine gave them the right to claim 'vacant' land for their nation.

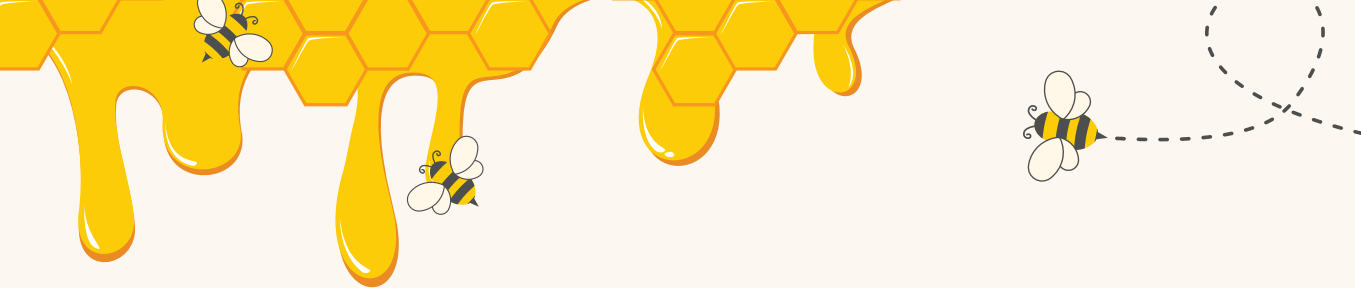
The term for vacant land was 'Terra Nullius,' which means 'no body's land.' In a legal context, the term is often used to describe territory considered unoccupied or uninhabited and, therefore, available for acquisition by a state or individual.

Often, the land claimed as "terra nullius" had been inhabited for generations by indigenous people who had robust, albeit unwritten, systems of government, law and culture.

Regardless, the land was still said to have been 'discovered,' a word suggesting that Europeans were the first humans to become aware of its existence. The Spanish, Portuguese, English, and their European counterparts used this doctrine to justify the colonisation of Africa.

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Because of racist ideas of African civilisation and social organisation as inferior, indigenous ownership and sovereignty over the land were deemed irrelevant because it did not conform to European legal systems of land ownership.



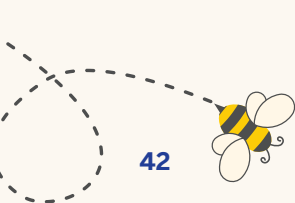
It was claimed that the presence of Indigenous Peoples on land did not prevent it from being terra nullius by arguing that the Indigenous communities occupied the lands. Still, they did not own them by European definitions of ownership.

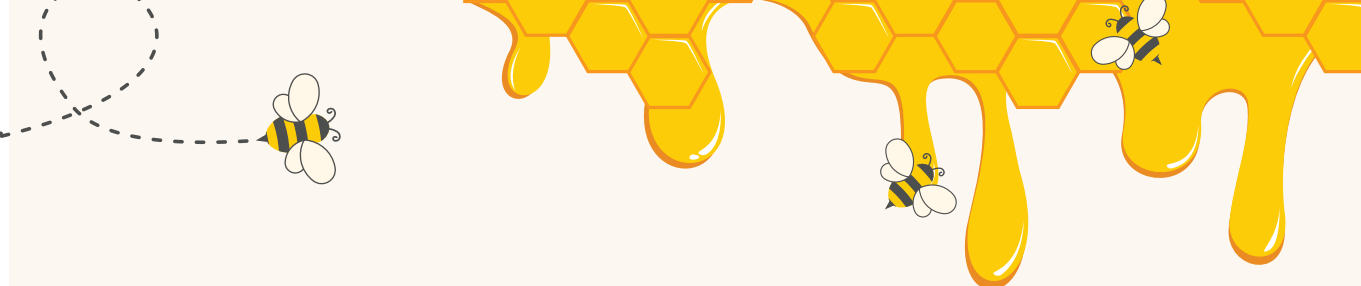
These principles of terra nullius were adopted to varying degrees into the legal frameworks of colonised countries across the world and continue to impact the rights of Indigenous Peoples around the globe.

Across the continent, this cultural and legal imperialism abounded to the extent that colonial powers transplanted their legal systems into the territories which they governed and passed laws which legitimised what was essentially theft, looting and plunder of African land and resources.

In Kenya, the Crown Land Ordinances of 1902, 1915, and 1926 brought all land under the authority of the colonial governor, institutionalising European land tenure systems.


Roughly 6 million hectares of land were taken from the Pastoralist Maasai people, but the post-independence Kenyan government did not return this land to them. Instead, it upheld colonial land legislation and enacted more laws prioritising individual land ownership, a system that could not support the Maasai's pastoralist lifestyle.



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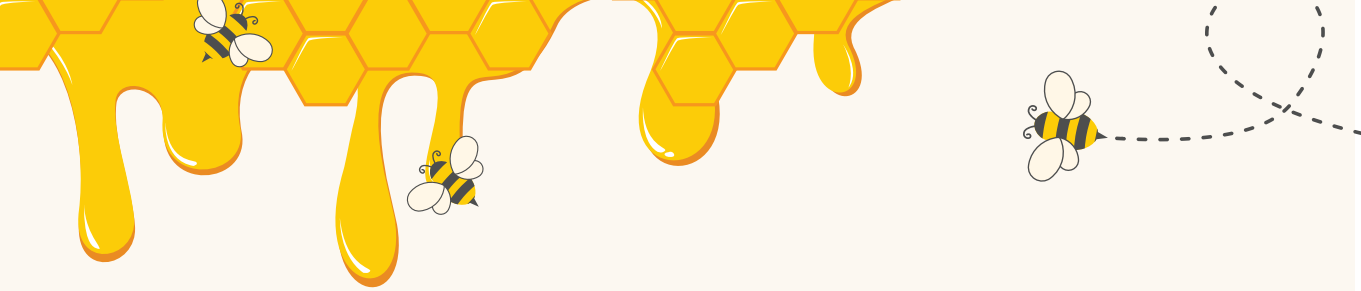
In present-day Zimbabwe, the colonial administration enacted the Land Apportionment Act of 1930, which enabled white settlers to expropriate land for commercial farming. Over half of the total Rhodesian land area was allocated to the white settler population. By 1935, they held 35 million acres, while the indigenous Africans, who outnumbered the settlers, were only allocated 25 million acres in designated areas known as 'native reserves.'

According to scholars Mupfuvi and Thompson, in 1930, an estimated population of nearly 1.2 million Africans received only 30 per cent of the land, while the LAA awarded just about 50,000 European settlers 51 per cent of the land in Zimbabwe.

On the left side of the page, there is a cartoon bee flying upwards. Below it, there are several stylized yellow and orange flowers with green leaves.

It was common for choice swathes of land to be set aside for European settlers with allowances for potential expansion. At the same time, Africans were relegated to designated areas of land known as 'native reserves.' In the comic Nyuki, following the brutal takeover, we see that the bees were pushed into sticky swamps. These swamps are analogous to the ghettos and Bantustans where indigenous communities were placed after their land had been grabbed by settlers.

Many black farmers who had previously owned or rented land in what had been designated "white areas" were forced to become labourers on white-owned farms that had previously belonged to them. They had to move to "reserves" that the state had set aside.



Indigenous Africans were pushed to stay in overcrowded areas unsuitable for human settlement or cultivation, while Europeans concentrated their settlements in places with fertile soil which received high rainfall.

Poor soils, tsetse fly, mosquito infestations, and natural disasters such as famine, droughts, and floods often characterised African reserves. To this day, many indigenous Africans still live in those same areas.

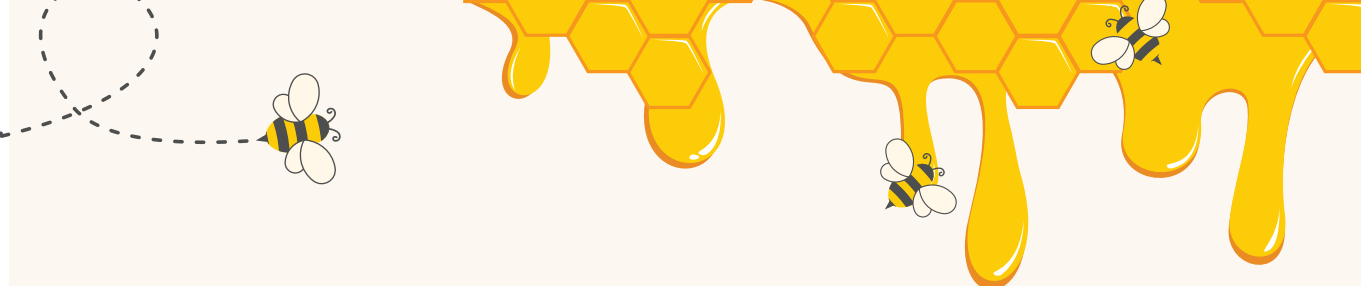
In South Africa, the Native Land Act of 1913 restricted Black land ownership to just 7.3% of the country's land area, reserving 93% of the land for white owners who made up a minority of the country's population. By 1925, about 90 per cent of present-day South Africa was owned and controlled by the settlers, leaving a mere 10 per cent to local populations who were not only the real owners of the land but also outnumbered the settlers.

This theft and robbery of wealth was regularised through laws that conferred the loot on settlers. The land was even sold to new settlers as the European population increased and the demand for land rose.

Europeans claimed to have entered into agreements with illiterate chiefs and kings who could not read and write in English and likely did not fully understand the implications of what they were signing.





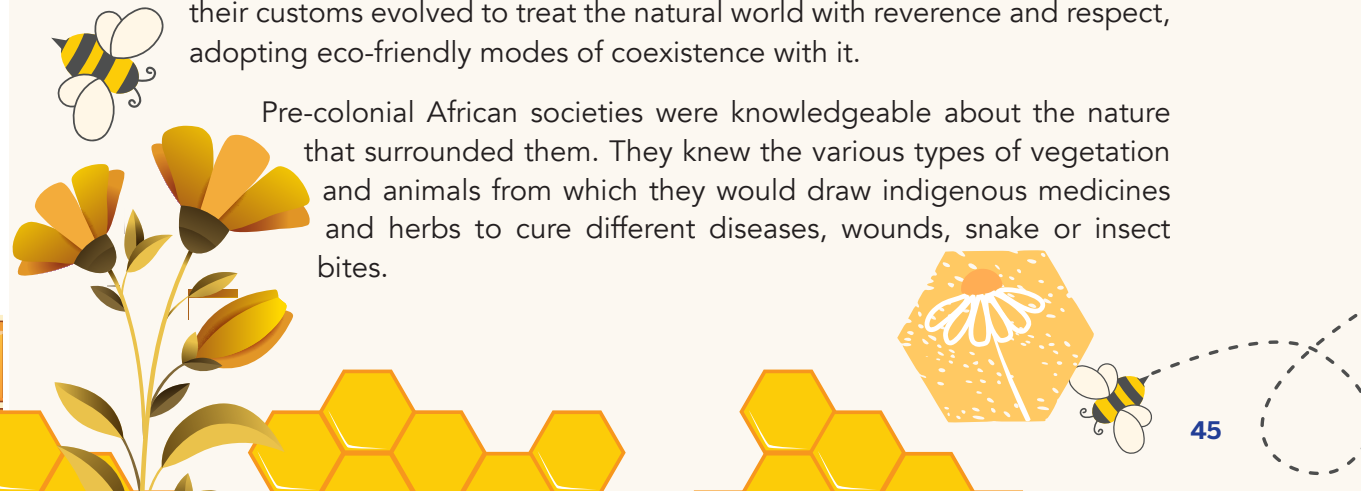
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Treaties like the Lippert Concession, signed in present-day Zimbabwe, were used to justify the occupation of most of the Mashonaland areas in 1890, by granting the settlers the right to take over land rights from the indigenous people.

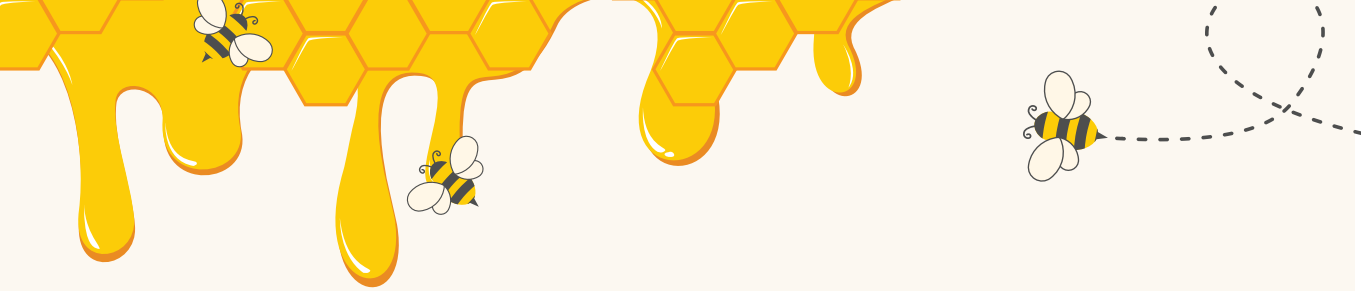
The injustice of dispossession goes beyond the material loss, which was undoubtedly significant. Still, it also touched on the very identity of African communities tied to the land through ancestral land ownership systems.

For many Africans, their culture, tradition and spirituality are tied to the land, so much so that specific communities bury a baby's umbilical cord in the soil.

Land is often a defining feature of their spiritual practices, which compelled these communities to preserve nature. They held beliefs that their gods resided in or were embodied by forests, lakes, and rivers. Consequently, their customs evolved to treat the natural world with reverence and respect, adopting eco-friendly modes of coexistence with it.

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Pre-colonial African societies were knowledgeable about the nature that surrounded them. They knew the various types of vegetation and animals from which they would draw indigenous medicines and herbs to cure different diseases, wounds, snake or insect bites.

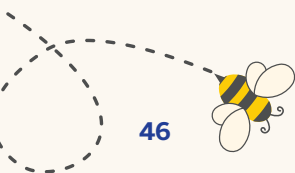


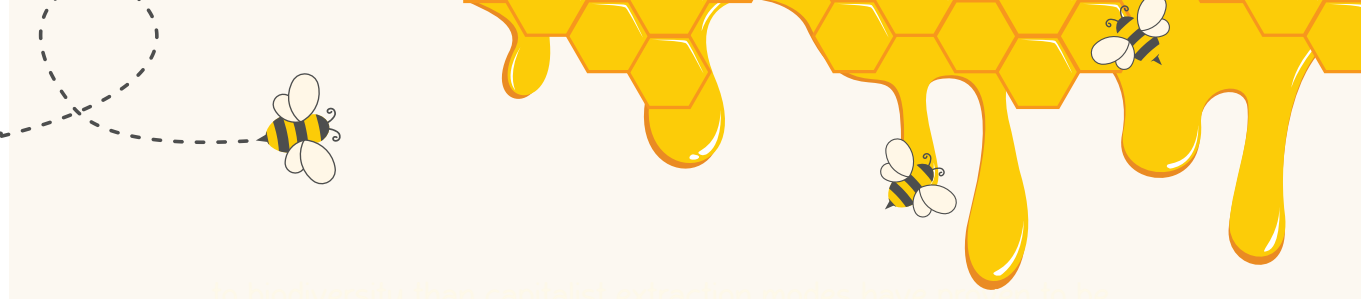
Different ecological zones have different types of vegetation, which implies that all this knowledge became much less useful once they were deprived of their land and sent to unfamiliar places.

African practices of cropping and livestock rearing, steeped in indigenous knowledge, were destroyed and vanquished. As a result of overcrowding, overstocking, and land shortages, destructive farming methods were adopted, which further led to the deterioration of the soils and compounded the fate of Africans.

Another prominent mode of land dispossession was European conservationist efforts based on the fortress conservation model. This model suggested that biodiversity protection is best achieved by creating protected areas where ecosystems function in isolation from human activities.

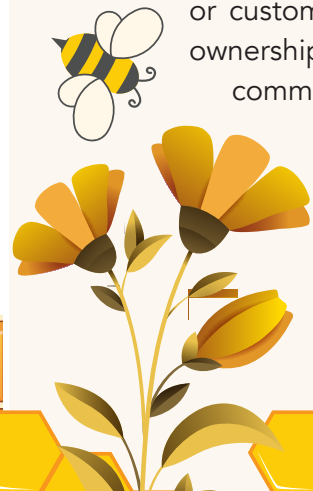
As a result, many Indigenous communities were evicted from their ancestral lands to make room for nature reserves. This was ironic because these communities had historically co-existed with the natural world and were doing so in ways significantly less detrimental.





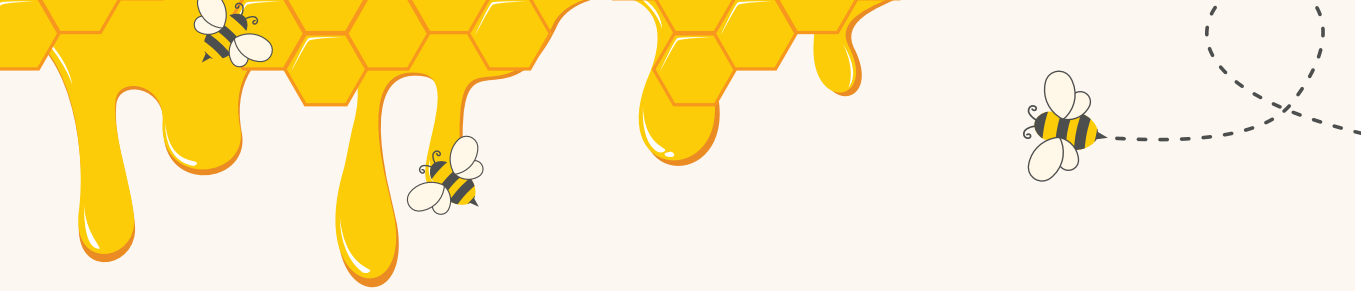
Colonial conservation policies, touted to ensure efficient use of natural resources and prevent “abuse” or “misuse” by African communities, were instead used as tools to exert control over African communities and the resources on the land for the economic benefit of the state and its agencies.

Beyond merely aiding settler colonialism, land dispossession was also central to the development of capitalism within African societies. It fundamentally changed how African societies operated at a cultural and institutional level by creating a series of conditions which accelerated the shift from communal societies to capitalist ones.



Under colonialism, the Europeans transplanted European land tenure systems and implemented them in their colonies, which resulted in a transformation of land relations. The land tenure systems shifted to one where communally or customarily owned land was privatised and commercialised, and land ownership rights were bestowed on individuals at the expense of local communities.

Not only was the land taken, but it was parcelled up and sold to other settlers, further complicating matters for those Africans who hoped to return to the land that once belonged to them.



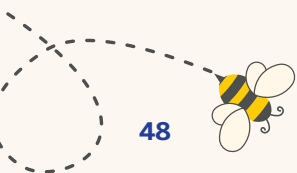
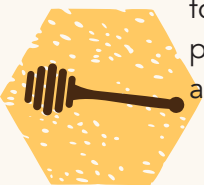
As the value of land in the reserves appreciated, land became inaccessible to the poor.

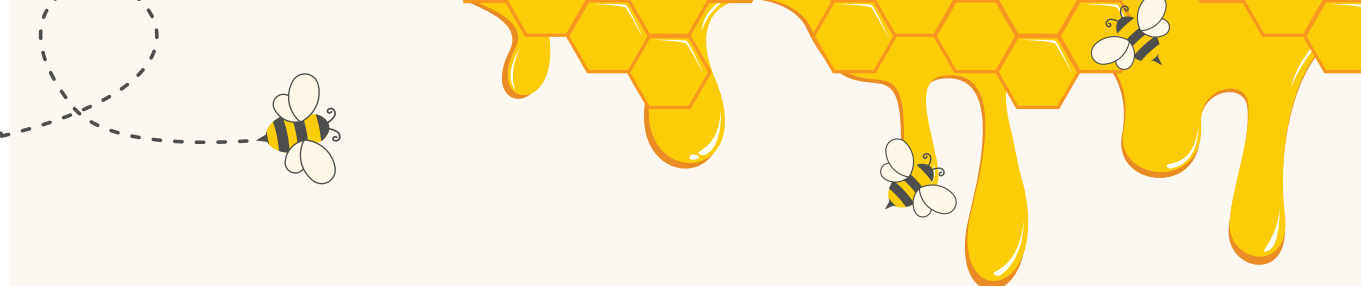
Pre-colonial societies lived off the land because they grew their food and fed their animals off the land. This allowed them to live a lifestyle that was impervious to the demands of capitalist society. Land dispossession, therefore, represented a loss of resources that people depended on for their livelihoods.

This transformation from landowner to labourer was a deliberate policy aimed at turning non-white landowners into a source of cheap labour in a process known as proletarianization.

Proletarianization is the process of separating people from the land and any other “means of production” so that they have to sell their labour power on the market for a wage to survive.

Marx argued that force and theft were necessary to establish the conditions for capital accumulation. When peasants had access to their means of production, there was little compulsion to work for wages for a capitalist, and the capitalists had little economic leverage to force them to do so.

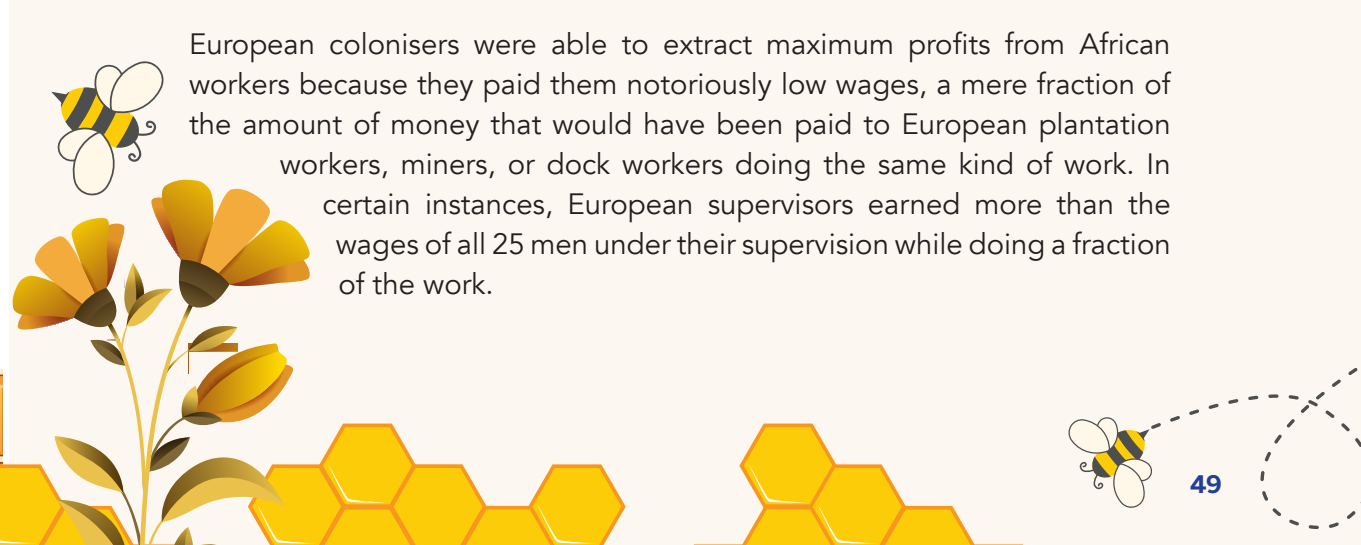


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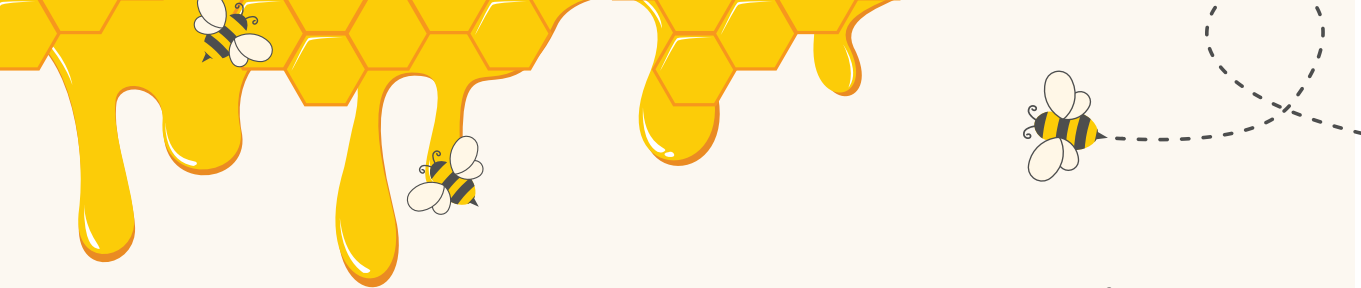
Instead, the forceful expropriation of land was required to separate peasants from their land and create the economic compulsion for them to work as proletarians for the capitalists. Without land, things like food, water, accommodation and even medicine could only be purchased with money. To earn money, the sale of their labour to earn a wage became the only survival mode.

Marx argued that proletarianization created a massive working class to exploit. This was key because wage labour is a key source of profits.

When the colonial government seized native lands, it satisfied its own citizens, who wanted mining concessions and farming land. It also created conditions whereby landless natives had to work not just to pay taxes but also to survive.

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European colonisers were able to extract maximum profits from African workers because they paid them notoriously low wages, a mere fraction of the amount of money that would have been paid to European plantation workers, miners, or dock workers doing the same kind of work. In certain instances, European supervisors earned more than the wages of all 25 men under their supervision while doing a fraction of the work.



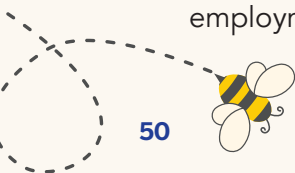
According to Walter Rodney in 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa,' African labourers were paid so low wages and worked in conditions so dire that if European labourers had been made to work in similar conditions, they would have taken collective action against their employers by striking.

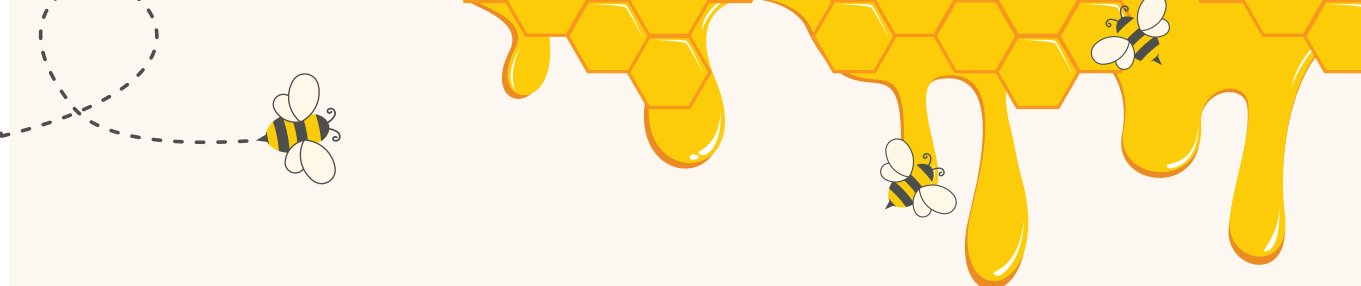
It is no wonder that Europeans subjected Africans to stringent regulations on their movements and gatherings within and between the native reserves. There were laws that restricted gatherings of Africans beyond certain numbers (five), and indigenous Africans were required to carry passbooks and seek permission before being allowed to move between the different settlement areas.

Land dispossession also played a crucial role in manufacturing desperation. Without land ownership's security, labourers could be compelled to accept poor working conditions and low wages. Workers with no other means of subsistence were "free to work or to starve."

The common law contract of employment, transplanted from colonial legal systems, carried with it notions of subordination and control derived from medieval master-servant relationships.

Legally, a control test would be used to determine whether or not a worker could be classified as an employee. This test stipulates that if a master has control over when, how, and with what tools a servant works, there is an employment relationship.



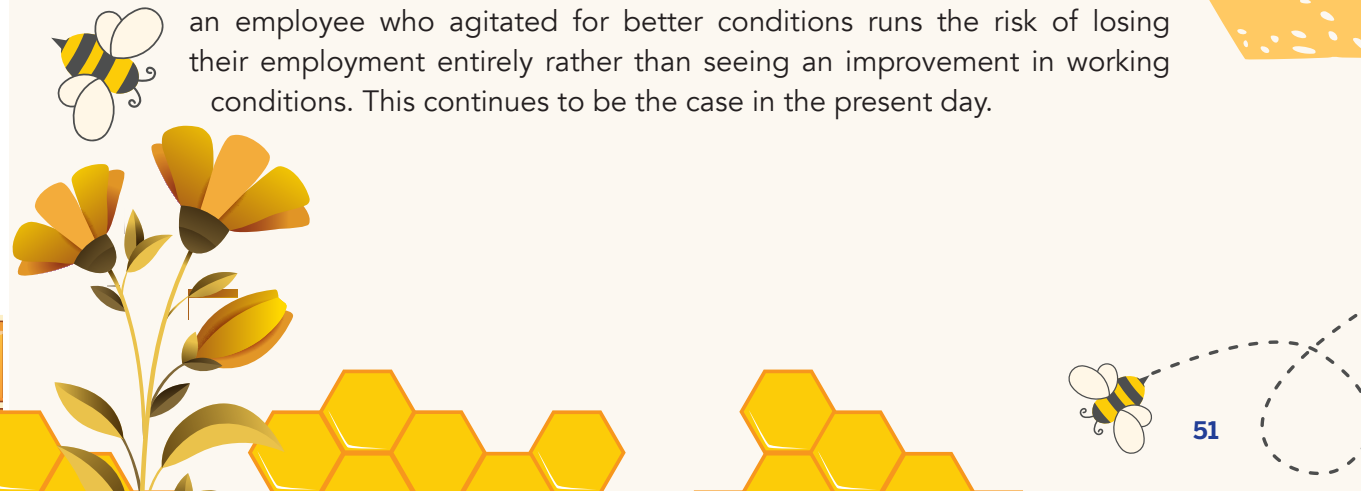

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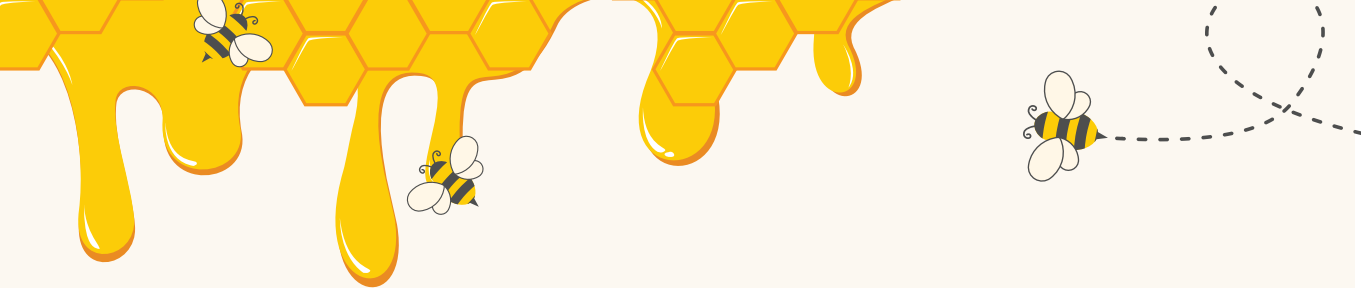
This relationship was typically governed by an employment contract, which provided a veneer of contractual equality to what was, in reality, a deeply unequal power dynamic in which the worker had limited power to bargain and often had to accept terms dictated by an employer.

The phenomenon of land dispossession also led to the creation of a class of people known as the unemployed, who had failed to be absorbed into the capitalist structure. They were left with no alternatives to fend for themselves, being forcibly transformed into beggars and relegated to a life of poverty.

The looming threat of unemployment also skewed the power dynamics in favour of employers because employees often did not have the leverage to bargain for better pay or working conditions.

The large mass of desperate unemployed meant that someone was always willing to work for less, and in more stringent conditions. As such, an employee who agitated for better conditions runs the risk of losing their employment entirely rather than seeing an improvement in working conditions. This continues to be the case in the present day.

The bottom of the page features a yellow flower with orange petals on the left. A bee is flying near it. On the right, there is a yellow hexagon with a white flower design. At the bottom right, a bee is flying with a dashed line trail. The page number '51' is located at the bottom right.



## REPARATIONS

Whenever talk of reparations is raised, the descendants of those who were dispossessed are often presented as lazy individuals who only want to take advantage of wealth they did not work for, without taking into account the continued effects that flow from those initial acts of dispossession.

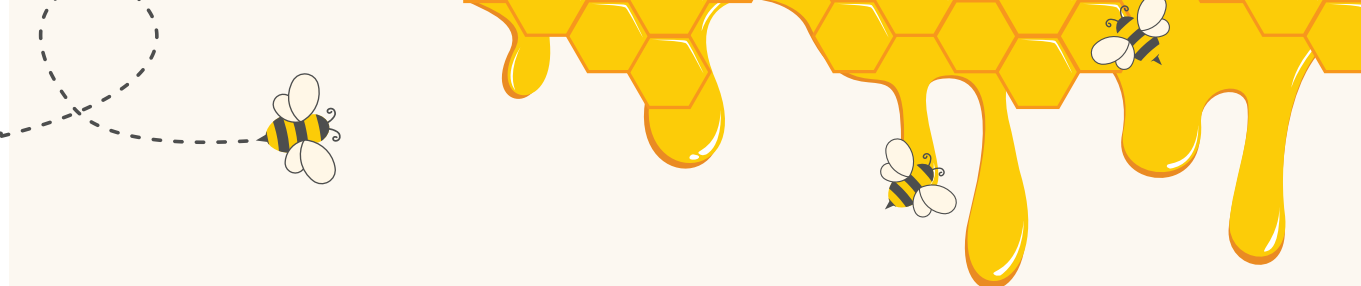
The argument that so much time has passed, and therefore, Africans and other indigenous people should let go of the past so that society can move forward, is very common. However, the idea that the passage of time is sufficient to validate current ownership, obtained through dispossession, basically theft, is preposterous.

The legacy of land dispossession under colonialism has far-reaching consequences to this day. Land remains a crucial determinant of economic wealth in African countries; the availability of land is essential for both individual and national development. Poverty is inextricably linked with dispossession from past land injustices.

Dispossession is an ongoing process, not a thing of the past, and it is increasingly central to the functioning of capitalism under neoliberalism. Without the unjust extraction of resources from Africa, the capitalist machine cannot function.






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Capitalism has facilitated the naked transfer of wealth from the global south to the global north through the conversion of collective property rights into exclusive private property rights, neo-colonial extraction of natural resources and the exploitation of workers for profit.

The nations of the Global South are rich in resources, but the poor do not control the wealth generated from those resources.

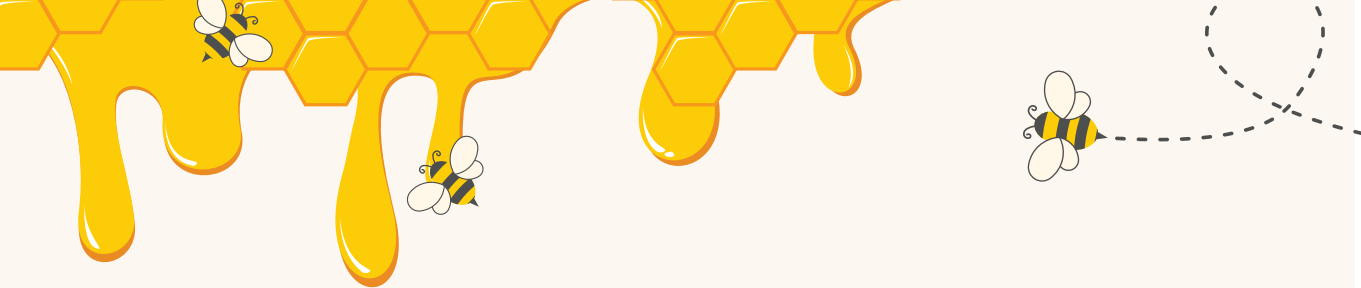
Just as Europeans have built generational wealth off land that their ancestors stole, many Africans have been saddled with generational poverty, which started from the loss of their land and livestock.

Poverty is responsible for the highest number of deaths on the African continent and around the world. It is also directly tied to the unjust system of capitalism, which prioritises profit over people in pursuing unbridled, eternal growth.

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The descendants of indigenous landowners are still suffering the consequences of their land loss, whereas the descendants of Europeans who settled on land previously owned by disposing Africans are reaping the benefits to this day.

Many have inherited sprawling farms and large plantations on which they employ those whose very ancestors owned that land. At the same time, the descendants of Africans still live in the townships, slums and ghettos where their ancestors were sequestered after their land was stolen.



Present-day capitalist society relies on the lie that the land and wealth that certain capitalists possess are their birthright, borne of the hard work of their ancestors rather than being the fruits of theft, plunder, and systematic exploitation.

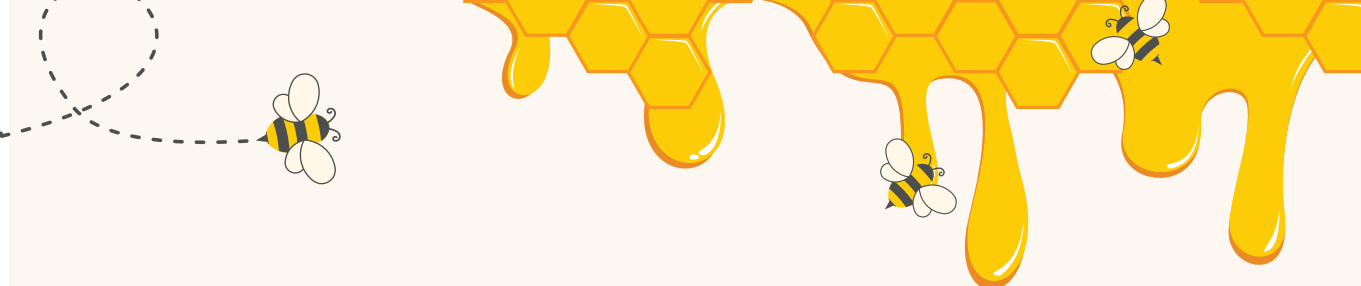
The opposition to 'land-back' movements across the globe requires the history of colonial violence and dispossession to be sanitised to retain legitimacy.

One such example is the narrative that Africa is better off for having been colonised and that without it, the continent would still be in the Dark Ages. This idea has its roots in the belief that pre-colonial African societies were not organised and had no culture to speak of.

This belief formed the basis of the idea that Europeans had a duty to colonise Africans and other indigenous people to bring the light of Christianity and European ways of life to an otherwise uncivilised continent. It was argued that these invasions were necessary to improve and 'tame' the wild, dangerous and diseased Africans and introduce modern methods of agriculture, infrastructure and education.

These arguments conveniently gloss over the fact that African societies had robust political, legal and social systems around which they structured their lives. These systems may have differed from European ones, but they were no less valid.






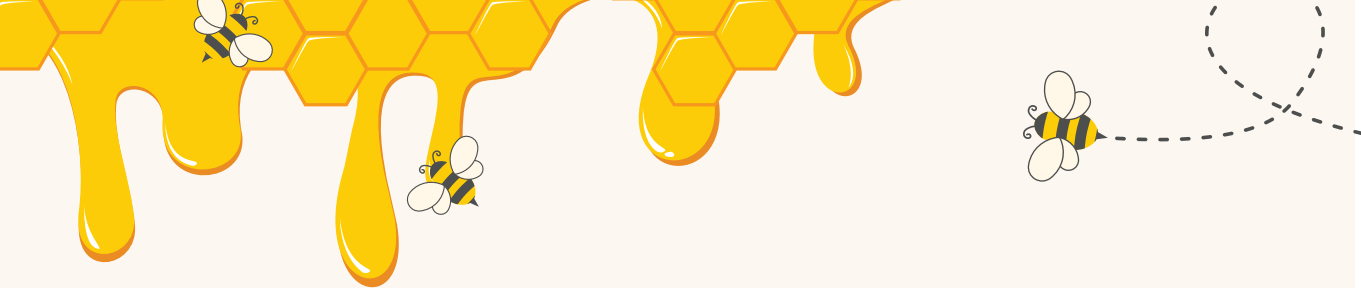
The infrastructure that was built during colonialism is also regularly highlighted as evidence of the good that it did, often discounting the natives who were dispossessed to make that land available, and the almost free (slave) labour of Africans that was used to build the roads, houses, railways and bridges.

The effects of historical injustices do not simply fade away with time. Land dispossession and the exploitation of labour were not isolated events, but part of a systematic process that reshaped African society. Undoing this legacy requires equally systematic and sustained efforts.

The failure to rectify these historical injustices is a ticking time bomb for racial and class relations in Africa. We must fundamentally re-examine the power structures that form the foundation of our societies and economic systems to foster justice and reconciliation.

This would entail establishing mutually respectful relationships between settlers and indigenous people. For this to occur, there must be awareness of the past, acknowledgement and atonement for the harm inflicted.



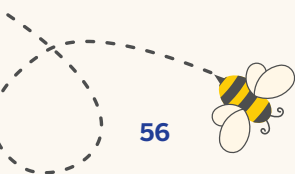


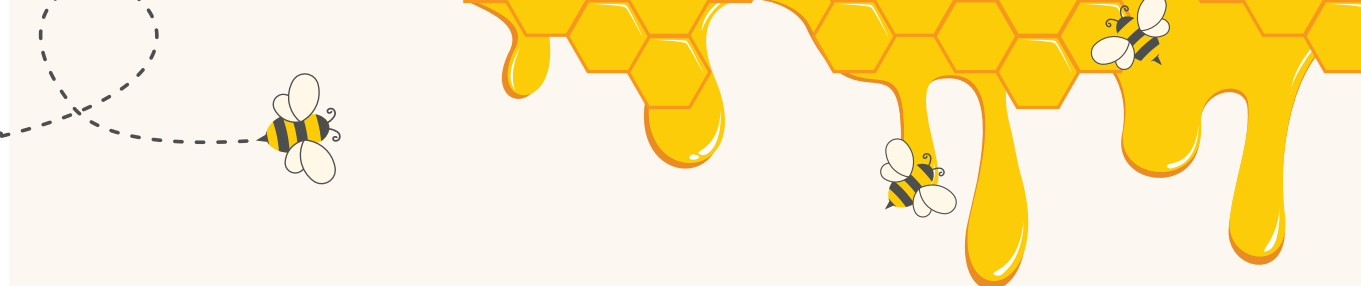
One of the most crucial steps would ensure this history is widely taught. Like the beetle princess Fara, many of the descendants of colonisers who stole land from indigenous communities are not aware of their ancestors' history.

Educational initiatives to raise awareness about the historical context of current socio-economic conditions would foster greater understanding and empathy across society. Next, those who have benefited from dispossession must acknowledge that the land on which they sit was taken from, and rightly belongs to indigenous African communities.

Following acknowledgement, apology is non-negotiable. Such an apology must go beyond mere lip service and land acknowledgements. Instead, it should entail restitution of the land to its rightful owners by restoring land rights where possible and supporting sustainable land use.

Where this restitution is not possible, it should result in financial compensation to those adversely impacted by this land dispossession. This would address both the economic and emotional aspects of historical dispossession.



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And finally, there should be a commitment that dispossession will be a thing of the past; this must be accompanied by structural and institutional mechanisms to enforce those commitments and safeguard indigenous populations.

It will also be crucial to evaluate existing labour laws to ensure they promote genuine equality and fair labour practices, and address the precarious nature of work for many Africans, where the legacies of racial discrimination are still acutely felt.

In conclusion, the Nyuki comic clearly illustrates the colonial processes of land dispossession. In real life, the separation of indigenous Africans from their land accelerated the spread of capitalism on the African continent as people were forced to sell their labour to survive.



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## About the Author

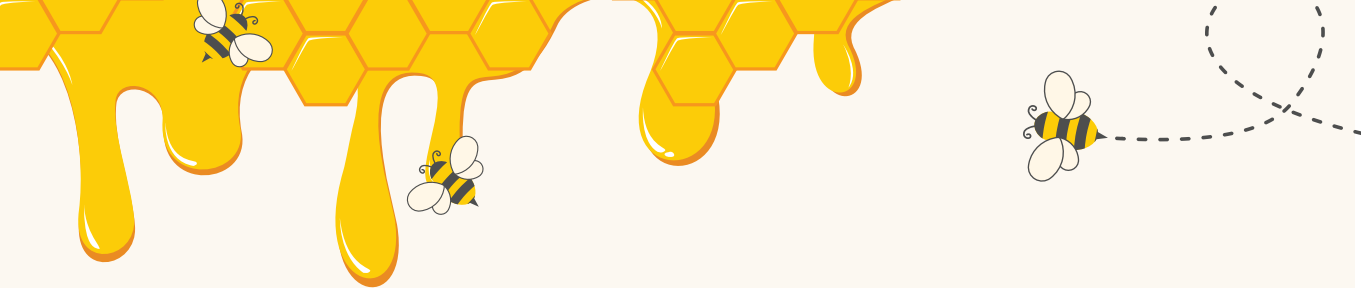
Freddie is a non-binary Ugandan writer and lawyer living and working in Kampala. They are interested in subversive storytelling and media that challenges dominant societal and cultural narratives.



# Letter to Nyuki from Post-Colonial Aethina

By Komungaro Joan Mbabazi

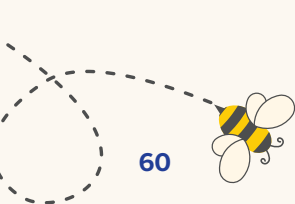




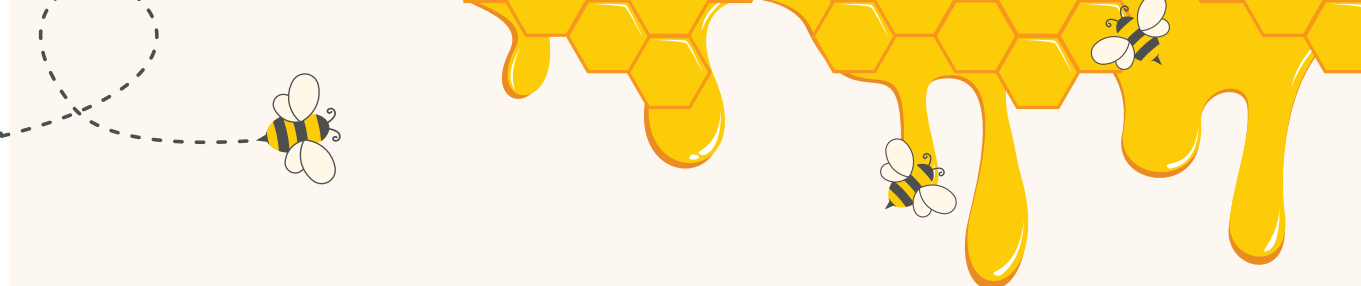
Aethina's birth was commemorated by a majestic flag flapping in the wind, signalling the end of an era and the promise of a new future of autonomy and self-determination.

Nyuki, did you know that our newfound freedom, dreams, and hopes will be thwarted when our colonisers oversee the construction of a new prison, its walls transparent, its form fragile and destructible yet hauntingly eternal in presence?

Inside the precinct of this prison, our leaders are the prison guards. Our colonisers have puppeteered them to extract every bit of labour from us to keep this machine running. They have also been instructed to keep us in a state of social deracination, chronic unemployment, and wage theft to whip us into submission. Our fate is in the hands of private entities and multilateral lenders who have huge stakes in our education, food and nutrition, health, transport, housing, industrial development etcetera. The inequality gorge that has been created by these conditions is insurmountable. It has launched us into a space brimming with fragmentation along ethnic, gender, class and racial lines, used to paint crime. Some crimes are black, brown or white. These colours are further used to determine the nature and duration of punishment, which has coincidentally targeted majorly black and brown

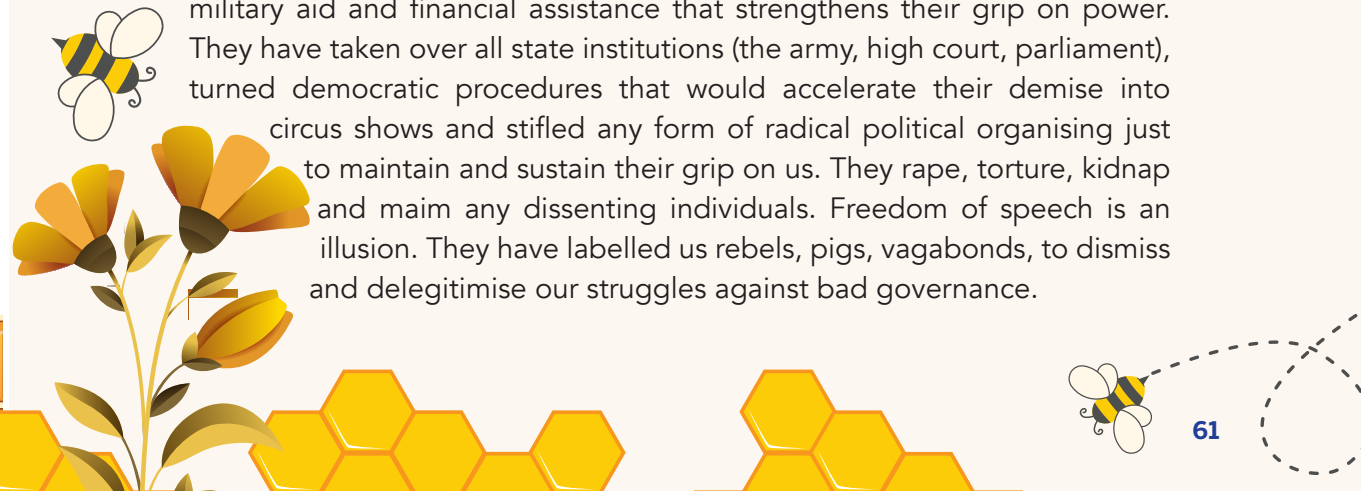


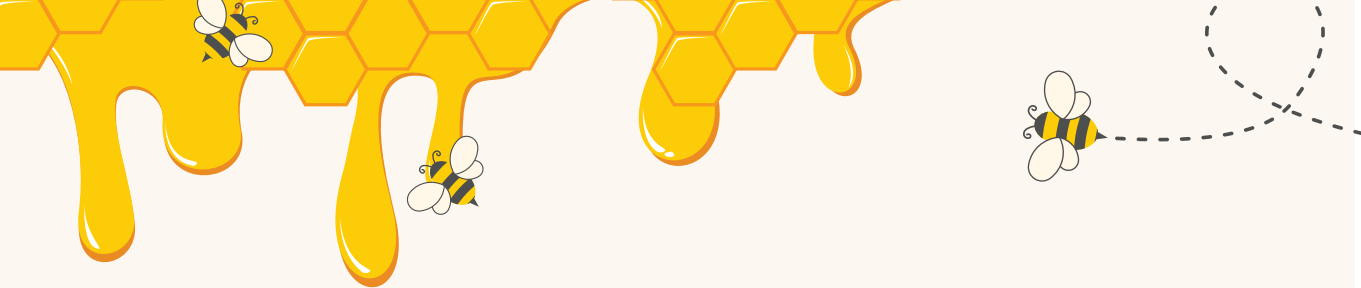




bodies in the periphery and the imperial core. We have become spectators of our existence. We are trapped in a cycle where our labour is the only currency. We toil endlessly to create and produce, at the expense of our own lives, but the fruits of our labour remain out of reach, locked behind walls of unaffordable prices. The choice to stop, rest and reclaim our time is a life sentence to years of generational destitution.

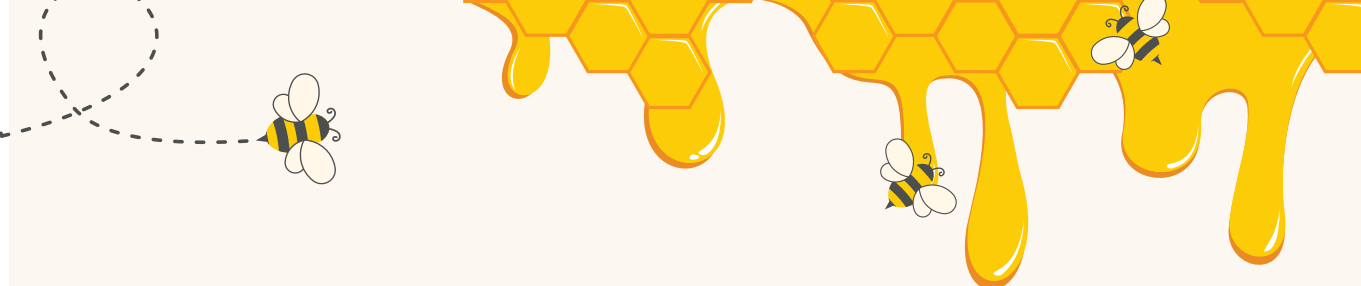
The neocolonial stooges, our prison guards, installed by our colonisers, have gained immense wealth from our exploitation. They share the profits from selling our labour and resources with their masters, in exchange for keeping this machine running! They have been propped up by our colonisers and international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund(IMF) and World Bank, giving them access to power and international legitimacy. In exchange for supporting systems that exploit us to the bone, they receive military aid and financial assistance that strengthens their grip on power. They have taken over all state institutions (the army, high court, parliament), turned democratic procedures that would accelerate their demise into circus shows and stifled any form of radical political organising just to maintain and sustain their grip on us. They rape, torture, kidnap and maim any dissenting individuals. Freedom of speech is an illusion. They have labelled us rebels, pigs, vagabonds, to dismiss and delegitimise our struggles against bad governance.







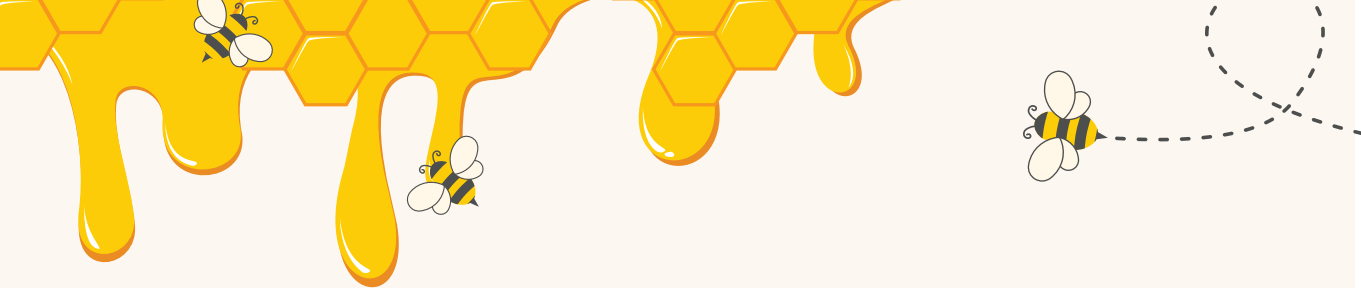
They have fancy names for their crimes. Corruption, bureaucracy, nepotism, negligence that only earn them a slap on the wrist instead of prison sentences, and in some instances, bigger positions. They write proposals for loans and grants in our name but spend the money funding their lavish lifestyles. They buy cars whose prices do not match our logistical realities. They take their kids to elite schools abroad while letting the schools back home fall into utter dilapidation. They pretend to promote science but don't even have the decency to pay medical interns or deploy them in areas with a low doctor-to-patient ratio, which is the entire country. They deploy state machinery to serve the interests of the wealthy elites and their masters; foreign corporations enforce infrastructural apartheid by displacing and dispossessing marginalised communities and pushing them into ghettos and slums. They distract us with morality codes by proposing and passing draconian laws under the guise of maintaining cultural purity, all while alienating huge factions of our people who existed before our colonisers reigned from social, economic and political participation.



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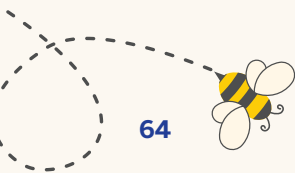
There is a cresting wave of fear, anxiety, despondency, utter hopelessness and defeat sweeping through the masses. The machine is crumbling and down with the rest of us who did not ask to participate. Even though we are aware of its fragility, trembles at a small rock cast upon its shadow, it has successfully managed to sterilise our imagination. We are all exhausted, oscillating between being useful and being used up; we barely have time to nourish our souls, rest, recuperate, organise, re-strategise, and remind ourselves of our humanity. Our creative capabilities are slowly declining and regressing. We have failed to manage beyond the rebellious strategies that our ancestors used. In preparation for its inevitable demise, we have been unable to adjust our resistance tactics to match the machine's surveillance mechanism, sharp fangs and pent-up aggression. While resistance is a sure way to our freedom, we must imagine new ways of living, restructuring our society, and representing the masses' political subjectivities beyond electoral politics, peaceful protests, and signing digital petitions. The empire has opted all of these to further its expansion. It is no wonder its existence feels natural and everlasting.

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## About the Author

Komungaro is a feminist scholar who draws experiences from ghetto communities to inform her writing.







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