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Sabatho Nyamsenda

“Only One Thing: Socialism”

Rosa Luxemburg’s unlikely
re-emergence in neoliberal
Tanzania

**ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG**

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SABATHO NYAMSENDA

“ONLY ONE THING: SOCIALISM”

ROSA LUXEMBURG’S UNLIKELY RE-EMERGENCE IN NEOLIBERAL TANZANIA

The name Rosa Luxemburg enjoys a special place in the struggles of the Tanzanian Left, secretly reuniting its fragments and later rejuvenating it when it was in retreat. The former happened during the era of radical nationalism (1960s and 1970s), and the latter during the era of neoliberal capitalist crisis (from 2007 onwards). Globally, the 1960s and 1970s were heady years for the Left. The Soviet Union was a superpower that challenged imperialism and provided a breathing space for anti-imperialist countries. The Chinese Revolution was consolidating under the Cultural Revolution. US imperialism had been defeated on the battle field by the courageous Vietnamese and Cubans, and vilified at home and abroad by the anti-war movement. Africa had largely thrown off the old colonial empire through violent revolutions, as in Algeria, or “peaceful” mass mobilizations as in Tanzania, while liberation struggles to uproot the remaining colonial powers (including the apartheid state in South Africa) were ongoing across Southern Africa.

Tanzania was also impacted by these developments, functioning as a hotbed of revolutionary activity and the headquarters of Southern African liberation movements. In 1967, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere pushed his party, the Tanganyika African National Union, to adopt the “Arusha Declaration” — the country’s roadmap to building a socialist and self-reliant nation. The Declaration became a beacon of hope for the masses and spurred the development of radical socialist scholarship at the University of Dar es Salaam.

The Tanzanian Left was divided. Those holding state power, like Nyerere, were opposed to Marxism. Nyerere argued that Marxism was being presented as a religious dogma without regard for the circumstances of the country—and as such lost its scientific rigour. Equating class struggle with violence, he was also opposed to the emphasis on “guns”, without which one would not be seen as charting out a socialist alternative.¹ Nyerere therefore engineered his own version of socialism, which he called *Ujamaa*. Although not Marxist, he nevertheless admitted that all versions of socialism, whether Marxist or not, shared the basic principles of equity, social justice, and freedom.²

Nyerere’s critics were Marxist intellectuals based at the University of Dar es Salaam. While the government had nationalized the commanding heights of the economy, his critics pointed to the fact that it had not socialized them, and as such capitalist relations of production remained intact. Moreover, although the Arusha Declaration emphasized national self-reliance, Tanzania’s economy continued to be subjected to the economic logic of imperialism.

At times the ideological debates between these two versions of socialism grew confrontational, with the state flexing its muscles to restrict freedom of expression. The USARF, a Marxist student organisation, and its mouthpiece *Cheche* were banned in the early 1970s.

While the name of Karl Marx divided the Left, that of Rosa Luxemburg covertly united it. Like his radical critics, Nyerere was a secret admirer of Rosa Luxemburg. Going through his archives 2012 and 2013, I found a note written to Nyerere by Joan Wicken (a British Fabian socialist and Nyerere’s long-time comrade and personal assistant). Wicken told Nyerere that she stumbled on a used book: a biography of the socialist Nyerere admired most. And who was this socialist? Rosa Luxemburg, of course.

Luxemburg also had a special place among Nyerere’s critics at the University of Dar es Salaam. When the radical students graduated and entered family life, many named their children after revolutionaries like Inessa Armand and Amilcar Cabral. Karim Hirji and his wife Farida named their first daughter after Rosa Luxemburg. The child’s naming itself was an act of struggle within the family:

Farida and I like the name Rosa, the first name of the heroic German socialist, Rosa Luxemburg. But my mother does not approve. She says it is a European name. She wants a name that reflects our traditions. At the baptismal event in the Ismaili prayer house that evening, she puts an Ismaili name, “Rozemin,” on the birth form.

Farida is not aware. When I see it, I am livid. The first thing I do in the morning is to go to the Registrar of Births, have the form nullified, and a new form filled with the name changed. I say that there was a misunderstanding, and as the father, I

1 Julius K. Nyerere, *UJAMAA: Essays on Socialism*, (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 11.

2 Julius Kambarage Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism: A Selection from Writings and Speeches, 1965–1967* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968), 16.

have the final word. Yet to our mother, our baby is “Rozemin” for about a year. Eventually, she relents and fondly begins to call her Rosa. It is a sign of the culture wars of that era, a clash between provincialism and humanistic cosmopolitanism.³

Nyerere died in 1999 without writing his memoirs, and Joan Wicken’s notes on Nyerere have been locked away until 2034. We thus do not know what exactly endeared Rosa Luxemburg to Nyerere. But we know that he admired Mao Zedong and paid several visits to China to witness how the Communist revolution was transforming an essentially backward economy into a modern industrial socialist economy. If China was a model of a Southern nation liberating itself from the wretchedness imposed by imperialism and feudalism, then Rosa Luxemburg was a model of a Northern revolutionary intellectual who not only grasped the problem of the South but also actively fought to bring it to an end.

THE “SOUTHERN” REVOLUTIONARY INTELLECTUAL

Rosa Luxemburg hailed from Poland, which Nyerere considered a peripheral nation within Europe. She was among the few women who completed a doctorate, doing so at the young age of 26. As a woman, she was not the type to be nagged by the male comrades and regularly criticized them without fear. She therefore corresponded to Nyerere’s notion of women who refused to be made chickens when they were “actually eagles”. Nyerere urged women to “straighten your wings and fly; do not be content with chicken feed”.⁴ It was Lenin who, distinguishing between two types of Communists—chickens and eagles—first said that Rosa Luxemburg “was—and remains for us—an eagle. And not only will Communists all over the world cherish her memory but her biography and complete works... will serve as useful manuals for training many generations of Communists all over the world.”⁵

Luxemburg was an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist working-class revolutionary who was brutally murdered by the reactionary forces in Germany—the country where her revolutionary activity was based. Had she not been assassinated as a Communist, she could just as easily have been murdered for being a Jew.

The cruelty of the capitalist state machinery that took her life was not new to Africa and Tanzania in particular. King Leopold and the Belgian capitalists slaughtered 12 million Africans in the Congo over three decades—twice the number of Jews murdered by the Nazis—and amputated millions of others as part of the occupation’s forced-labour regime. The German colonial state in Namibia annihilated the Herero and Nama people and massacred hundreds of thousands in what is now mainland Tanzania as a way of forcing them to surrender to colonial occupation and capital accumulation. No wonder the German colonial agent Karl Peters was notoriously called *Mkono wa Damu* (“a man with blood-stained hands”) by Tanzanians. In short, as Aimé Césaire aptly put it, fascism had first been practiced by the West on the Rest through colonialism.⁶

Africa suffered four centuries of stolen resources and labour, not to mention physical destruction and humiliation of all sorts under the Atlantic slave trade. The major change brought by colonialism was that it stopped transporting Africans to the New World, enslaving them on their own continent instead. Capitalist plunder of natural resources, extreme labour exploitation, racist oppression and dehumanization, military cruelty, political subjugation—all this and more were the order of the day under colonialism.

As Rosa Luxemburg reminds us in her magnum opus, *The Accumulation of Capital*, these brutal methods were not an end in itself but a means to an end: facilitating the accumulation of capital in imperialist countries. Luxemburg was not the first intellectual to theorize the brutality with which the bourgeoisie accumulated capital; Karl Marx was. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx referred to this mode of accumulation as “primitive”. Primitive accumulation, he argued, “forms the pre-history of capital, and of the mode of production corresponding to capital.” It served the purpose of accumulating initial capital as well as creating “a mass of free proletarians”.⁷ For Marx, capitalism stops relying on coercion as it matures and instead deploys accumulation via extended reproduction. In the latter, accumulation takes place through the production of surplus value, which is in turn embedded in commodities. Surplus value is produced by making labourers work longer hours than are socially necessary to reproduce the workers themselves. The appropriated surplus is reinvested to generate even more surplus.

Rosa Luxemburg disagreed. She criticized Marx for relegating primitive accumulation to the prehistory of capital and portraying capitalism as a self-contained system at its mature phase:

3 Karim Hirji, *The Travails of a Tanzanian Teacher* (Montreal: Daraja Press, 2018), 95.

4 Julius K. Nyerere, *Women’s Freedom: Women are Eagles, Not Chickens* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2013).

5 V.I. Lenin, “Notes of a Publicist,” in *Collected Works*, Vol. 33 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965).

6 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkhan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 36.

7 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Volume I, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967).

Marx's diagram of enlarged reproduction thus does not conform to the conditions of an accumulation in actual progress. Progressive accumulation cannot be reduced to static inter-relations and inter-dependence between two great departments of social production (the departments of producer and consumer goods), as the diagram would have it. Accumulation is more than an internal relationship between the branches of capitalist economy; it is primarily a relationship between capital and non-capitalist environment.⁸

Luxemburg emphasized that primitive accumulation is a permanent feature of capitalism, governing relations between capitalist and non-capitalist countries. "Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process".⁹ For Luxemburg, capitalist accumulation uses both market as well as extra-economic means. More important is her emphasis on the internationalization of capital—capitalism should be seen as a global system under which Northern countries exploit Southern countries.

While her theory of accumulation was criticized by her contemporaries and many leftist scholars in the Global North, it was embraced by most progressive scholars in the Global South who advocated for delinking from the global capitalist system in order to bring about articulated development in the South. Others, like Nyerere, saw the possibility of pushing for reforms within the global capitalist system in order to give Southern countries more clout and benefit—hence his struggle for the New International Economic Order (NIEO).

"We are members of the world society", Nyerere thundered in 1974. "We want to receive the same justice which a worker rightly demands within a [capitalist] nation" because "the small and poor nations of the world are, internationally, in the same position as workers within a capitalist nation."¹⁰ Nyerere and his fellow leaders from radical Third World nations continued to push for NIEO until this demand was officially buried by Ronald Reagan at the North-South summit held in Cancun, Mexico in 1981¹¹. The years that followed saw extreme pressure exerted on Southern countries through both bilateral and multilateral channels to pursue neoliberal reforms.

Nyerere voluntarily stepped down from the presidency in 1985. A year later, Ali Hassan Mwinyi's new government reached an agreement with the IMF officially accepting the conditions Nyerere had resisted for so long. The country's economy was opened to predatory foreign capital, arriving under the banner of foreign direct investment and privatization. The country's right to self-determination was trampled as the government accepted policy prescriptions from imperialist nations and their evangelizing institutions: the IMF, World Bank and WTO. Social justice was abandoned as the government rolled back social expenditures and commodified basic social services. In short, neoliberalism constituted a war on the nation and the lower classes.

While ordinary people complained and protested the neoliberal project, those in power praised it and violently suppressed demonstrations. After the neoliberal capitalist system imploded in crisis in 2008, renewed protests against neoliberalism broke out from all sectors of Tanzanian society. Under directives from the US and other imperialist governments, the government of Jakaya Kikwete further opened up the agricultural sector, allowing multinational corporations to grab land and develop input markets among smallholder farmers.¹²

It was during this period that Rosa Luxemburg made a comeback in Tanzania. Her theory of the permanence of primitive accumulation was used to explain the neoliberal accumulation regime. David Harvey popularised it in his 2003 book, *The New Imperialism*. "Since it seems peculiar to call an ongoing process 'primitive' or 'original'", Harvey argued, he went further to "substitute these terms by the concept of 'accumulation by dispossession'" in his analysis of the neoliberal system.¹³

Taking his cue from Harvey, the Tanzanian Marxist intellectual Issa Shivji acknowledged that Karl Marx "did not have a full-blown theory of imperialism" and credited Rosa Luxemburg "for deploy[ing] the concept of primitive accumulation to explain imperialism".¹⁴ Contextualizing Harvey's *accumulation by dispossession* in "an African periphery", Shivji summed up the characteristics of neoliberal capitalism as commodification and privatization of public assets and social services, predatory and speculative financialization, militarization, as well as extreme inequality and labour precarity, all of which have produced a plundered and disarticulated form of accumulation within the periphery. Due to the crisis of neoliberal capitalism, "we are now approaching the end of [the] road [to neoliberalism]. It is time for intellectuals to rethink, reassess, and chart out a new, alternative path for African

8 Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, (London and New York: Routledge 1951), 398

9 Ibid, 433

10 Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and A New World Economic Order*, (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2–3.

11 Vijay Prashad, *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South*, (London: Verso, 2012), 78–82.

12 Giuliano Martiniello and Sabatho Nyamsenda, "Agrarian Movements in the Neoliberal Era: The Case of MVIWATA in Tanzania," *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy* 7 no. 2 (2018): 162; Sabatho Nyamsenda, "Bulldozing like a Fascist? Authoritarian Populism and Rural Activism in Tanzania" (paper presented at the Emancipatory Rural Politics Initiative (ERPI) 2018 International Conference, International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, Netherlands, 17-18 March, 2018), 4.

13 David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 144.

14 Issa Shivji, *Accumulation in an African Periphery: A Theoretical Framework*, (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2009), 27-8.

development, a path that will never again marginalise African masses under the spurious rule of elites in collusion with imperialism.”¹⁵

When his book was published in 2009, Shivji held the newly-established Mwalimu Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan-African Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam and used the opportunity to rekindle debates on imperialism, pan-Africanism, and autonomous and egalitarian paths to development. The Chair’s intellectual events and publications promoted one conclusion: the “crisis of capitalism” cannot be ended, for it is inherent in the system itself. We must “end capitalism in crisis” and build socialism. Incidentally, this also happened to be the argument put forward by Samir Amin when he gave the second Nyerere Lecture in 2010 at the University of Dar es Salaam¹⁶.

ENCOUNTERING ROSA LUXEMBURG

I joined the University of Dar es Salaam in September 2008 to pursue a degree in political science and language studies. Two months later, the university was closed down after students staged protests against the commodification of higher education through the loans system. In fact, seven public universities were closed down for the same reason.

During the demonstrations we sang the rallying song *Kama sio juhudi zako Nyerere na amani ingetoka wapi?* (Where would this country’s peace come from if it were not for your efforts, Nyerere?).

The six years between 2008 and 2014 were marked by intense anti-neoliberal riots and protests from all sectors of society. Yet protest remained localized and issue-based, and the state’s response was mainly violence. The people’s demands could be hijacked, distorted and de-radicalised by politicians and donor-funded activists.

It was for that reason that a student organisation called Sauti ya Vijana Tanzania started a weekly ideological class to equip its members with the “weapon of theory” to better understand the system they opposed. The classes would start with Nyerere’s Arusha Declaration as a founding text and move on to the writings of other revolutionaries. It was through Issa Shivji’s *Accumulation in an African Periphery and the Chemchemi* bulletins produced by the Mwalimu Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan-African Studies that we came across the name Rosa Luxemburg. I personally ordered her two of her books, *Accumulation of Capital* and *Revolution or Reform?*, from Canada in 2011 while in the third year of my undergraduate degree. Luckily, the mother of one comrade who operated a small bookshop in Canada sent us a number of revolutionary books, including Luxemburg’s, for free.

ROSA LUXEMBURG IN IDEOLOGICAL DEBATES AMONG THE YOUTH

In 2016 we decided to establish *Jukwaa la Wajamaa Tanzania*, or JULAWATA (“Tanzania Socialist Forum”). This was after we organized a conference to celebrate the revolutionary life of Fidel Castro, following his death in November of the same year. The conference was attended by roughly 500 participants in Dar es Salaam. JULAWATA kicked off as an ideological class to introduce its members to Marxist theory and the ideology of Pan-Africanism.

Three sets of debate emerged in the ideological class, as well as in the WhatsApp group we created. One was on the question of socialism, the second on working people’s consciousness, and the third on the question of women.

With regard to socialism there were three positions. Participants from the Mwalimu Nyerere Ideals Clubs¹⁷ talked about “African Socialism” as the only viable option for Africa. Other socialisms were irrelevant and foreign. They argued that Maoism was for the Chinese, Castroism for Cubans, Marxism for Europeans, “Ho-Chi-Min-ism” for the Vietnamese, while African Socialism was for Africans.

Some comrades who had joined the newly-established political party ACT-Wazalendo talked about “revised socialism”, *ujamaa uliohuishwa*. They also called it *Unyerere* (“Nyerereism”) and *Ujamaa wa Kidemokrasia* (democratic socialism). Whatever name they attached to it, their argument was that times had changed, and it was prudent and inevitable to revise the basic principles of socialism and auction it on the political market.

¹⁵ Ibid, 85.

¹⁶ Samir Amin, *Long Road to Socialism*, (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2011).

¹⁷ The Mwalimu Nyerere Ideals Clubs were established by Prof Penina Mlama, who succeeded Prof Issa Shivji as the incumbent of the Mwalimu Nyerere Professorial Chair in Pan-African Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam.

The third position stood for scientific socialism. There were differences even on this position, one of which being the question of class consciousness.

We read the Arusha Declaration alongside ACT-Wazalendo's ideological road map, the Tabora Declaration. Claiming to "revitalize the Arusha Declaration" in line with the current conjuncture, the Tabora Declaration removed all the socialist pillars of the Arusha Declaration and replaced them with capitalist ones. It criticizes the Arusha Declaration for its intention to restrict private capitalists but does not touch on class composition or the existing social relations of production. It talks about building an "inclusive economy" — a miracle that has never happened anywhere in the world! Even though it points to Scandinavian welfare states as a model, it does not mention that such a model relies on unequal exchange, military imperialism (including arms sales to conflict ridden countries), and imperialist plunder of natural resources exercised by giant Scandinavian corporations against Third World countries including Tanzania.

The Arusha Declaration made it clear that socialism cannot be built without democracy. The policy articles written by Nyerere, especially "*Uhuru na Maendeleo*" (Freedom and Development), "*Ujamaa Vijijini*" as well as the 1971 TANU Guidelines conceive democracy in terms of workers' and peasants' control of the means and process of production along with *direct* participation in decision making. Such a concept of radical democracy is not found in the Tabora Declaration.

The Arusha Declaration's leadership code prevented political leaders and top- and mid-level civil servants from engaging in private wealth accumulation — the aim being to ensure that leadership is for service, not self-advancement, and that the ruling party and government remain in the hands of workers and peasants.

The Tabora Declaration does not call for reinstating the leadership code of the Arusha declaration. By searching for a pragmatic path that might accommodate the current trend of elite private wealth accumulation, the Tabora Declaration is but a restatement of the Zanzibar Declaration, passed by the ruling party's national executive committee in 1991. When President Mwinyi was asked whether he had killed the Arusha Declaration, he quipped: *hatujaliua, tumelizimua* ("we have not killed it, we have just revamped it").¹⁸ Luckily, Nyerere was still alive to tell the working people that his party had betrayed them by doing away with the Arusha Declaration.

The ideological class concluded that it was impossible to forge a harmonious relationship between antagonistic classes. To our understanding, finding ways to foster inclusiveness and harmony between antagonistic classes is part of a strategy of denial that either excludes external and internal exploitative relations, or illustrates a lack of vision and strategies, approaches and instruments to develop an alternative — which, by the way, is not only a characteristic feature of ACT-Wazalendo but of many leftist movements globally.

The debate between Nyerereists and Marxists was concluded by a closer reading of Nyerere's writings before and after 1967 as well as the writings of scientific socialists. The report of the ideological course held on 2 September 2017 stated:

Even though the debate on which type of socialism we are to follow is ongoing, there are a number of points that we have come to a common agreement after reading [Abudlrahman] Babu's book [*African Socialism or Socialist Africa?*]:

(1) The basic principles of socialism do not contradict or differ. When we read Nyerere's writings from 1967 onwards and those of scientific socialists, we find principles that do not contradict. Thus, we should take these principles, without diluting them, and make them the foundation of building a new socialist society.

(2) In order to get a deeper understanding of the current system so that we can demolish it, we need theoretical tools. These tools are historical and dialectical materialism, which have been used by scientific socialists. These tools require us to make a concrete analysis of a place, its people, [and] their productive forces with the final goal of using this analysis in the struggle to demolish the capitalist system.¹⁹

JULAWATA currently identifies itself as a Marxist organization whose members — including those who came from Nyerere Ideal Clubs and those from Rastafarian and hip-hop movements — have also embraced Marxism. To be sure, the Arusha Declaration remains a classical text for the ideological class, and Nyerere remains one of the towering figures of socialism.

JULAWATA's ideological position, particularly its analysis and theoretical grounding of its argumentation, is influenced by, among others, Rosa Luxemburg, the Spartacus League, and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD). When the likes of Eduard Bernstein urged the working class to abandon revolutionary strategy because capitalism was adaptive, improving the lot of workers and granting their parties seats in parliament, the

18 "Mzee Mwinyi Asema Serikali haikufuta Azimio la Arusha," *Mwananchi*, August 21, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/Kitaifa/Mzee-Mwinyi-asema-Serikali-haikufuta-Azimio-la-Arusha/1597296-2426010-2ohnil/index.html>

19 "Wajukuu wa A.M. Babu na Tafakari ya Ujamaa Katika Afrika!" *Sauti ya Ujamaa*, September 3, 2017. Retrieved from <https://sautiyaujamaa.wordpress.com/2017/09/03/wajukuu-wa-a-m-babu-na-tafakari-ya-ujamaa-afrika/>

Spartacus League comrades did not agree with such deception. As Luxemburg writes in *Reform or Revolution?*, Bernstein's reformist arguments were theoretically flawed, empirically unsupported, practically impossible, and politically reactionary. She called on the working class to stick to the original revolutionary path, as the capitalist beast can never be tamed through reforms without coming back to swallow the working class. Time proved her correct: capitalist crises did not go away, and after a short honeymoon of welfare policies in the West the capitalist beast came to pounce on the working class again, swallowing all the reformist concessions it had made. Thus, JULAWATA comrades echo Rosa Luxemburg in rejection of revisionism: "We know nothing of minimal and maximal programmes; we know, only, one thing, socialism; this is the minimum we are going to secure."²⁰

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN TANZANIA

The second debate was on class consciousness. This was an intra-Marxist debate, in which some comrades argued that working people in Tanzania were not conscious of their class interests and thus could neither support nor carry out the struggle for socialism. Accordingly, socialists should wait until capitalism has fully developed and the contradictions are manifested, when the system will collapse on its own.

Others argued that because of its peripheral status in the global capitalist system, Tanzania cannot develop a fully-fledged capitalism. Yet this did not mean that the working people were not conscious of their situation, nor that they could not assert their class interests. After all, they are the agents of revolutionary change. We are in a period of global capitalist crisis, and if we do not seize the moment to unite the different sections of working people in pursuit of the socialist cause, then right-wing demagogues masquerading as socialists will.

Both debates took place in the classroom at the University of Dar es Salaam. As the university became increasingly policed, restricting entry of motorcycle taxi drivers (*boda boda*) and other ordinary people under the pretext of "security", one of the members of the ideological class was harassed by the auxiliary police suspecting him of theft. He was a mason and had shortened his workday in order to attend the class. His intervention into the debate was twofold, arguing firstly that we should find another space outside the university premises to conduct the class—a space where ordinary people like him could come without feeling strange and without being harassed. Secondly, theoretical knowledge was not enough: we must go to the working people in order to learn from their experiences and actively participate in their struggles, rather than speak on their behalf.

Thanks to the intervention from a member who belongs to the precarious and impoverished segment of the working people, our ideological class moved off campus to an adult education centre built of iron sheets but with good tree shade. Furthermore, JULAWATA began going to the working people in order to learn from their experience. We went to learn from the working people as students, not as teachers directing them what to do. The first organization we visited was the Bus Drivers' Association at Ubungo Bus Terminal. We found that they spoke the language of class struggle and were aware of who their real enemy was. They even gave us a mathematics class, calculating how much profit a bus owner gets vis-à-vis what the driver is paid, who cannot even make ends meet.

The bus drivers engaged in a series of strikes in 2015 to force the state to intervene on their behalf, but the odds were against them. The state sided with the bus owners. They thus concluded that workers could only benefit from their labour through cooperative ownership of the means of production. They are now considering establishing a bus cooperative, but as precarious workers they are unable to raise enough money to buy the buses they would need²¹.

The bus drivers asked us about how they could benefit from our learning from them: were we simply going to extract information from them to discuss in our ideological course, or were we going to take part in their struggle?

Prompted by the bus drivers, JULAWATA established a department dealing with grassroots links and action. Learning from the working people is not enough: we must take part in their struggles and connect disparate pockets of resistance into a single working people's movement whose ultimate purpose is to overthrow the oppressive capitalist system. Thus, building on the connection with the bus drivers, JULAWATA established links with several organizations including student organizations, Rastafarian movements, hip-hop movements, land movements, and women's credit associations to name only a few.

20 Rosa Luxemburg, "On the Spartacus Programme," December 31, 1918. Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1918/12/30.htm>

21 Abdallah S. Lubala, "Mabasi ya Ushirika: Nguzo Pekee ya Kuondoa Unyonyaji Sekta ya Usafiri," *Raia Mwema*, December 10-11, 2018.

Normally, relationships formed between JULAWATA and grassroots movements lead to broader alliances of different sections of the working people in a particular locality. Take the example of the Amboni area in Tanga Region, where more than 2,000 acres of land are being taken away from mainly smallholder and middle-scale producers and sold to large investment companies and middle-class buyers. The dispossession has been forceful, entailing the destruction of buildings and crops as well as the imprisonment of leading activists. JULAWATA's solidarity with the dispossessed of Amboni has opened doors for different sections of the Amboni working people (precarious factory workers, young motorcycle drivers, unemployed youth, women in credit associations, and small-scale dairy farmer cooperatives) to come together to push for egalitarian and socially just reforms.

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN?

There was also a debate in the ideological class about socialism and gender. Do socialists advocate for reforms that advance women's rights? Some comrades were of the view that we should deal with class issues alone, as the inclusion of gender as part of our struggles would not only distract us from "important" class issues but also draw us closer to liberals. However, from the writings of Rosa Luxemburg alongside her comrades Clara Zetkin in Germany and Alexandra Kollontai in Russia, we learned that the women question was part and parcel of class struggle. Luxemburg, Zetkin, and Kollontai reiterated the distinction between bourgeois and socialist feminism, the former involving upper-class women who want the material and political status of their husbands or relatives, the latter being waged by working-class women who struggle alongside male proletarians to topple the capitalist system and other oppressive systems that feed into it, including patriarchy. Currently, bourgeois feminism manifests itself in different variants including the fading liberal feminism which advocates for legal and institutional reforms to include more opportunities for women at work and study places, and the rising neoliberal feminism which encourages women to look for individual solutions in the marketplace to problems which are essentially socio-economic.²² Bourgeois feminism in whatever variant leaves the capitalist foundation intact and even reinforces it. We therefore agreed that gender equality should be part of our struggle and we should not divorce the fight against patriarchy from the fight against capitalism. It is on this basis that the women's conference organized by JULAWATA and held on 8 April 2018 had the position of women in the liberation of the working people as its main agenda.

OUR GUIDING STAR

The practical experience of the working class has had a massive effect on young people's search for a socialist alternative in neoliberal Tanzania. So has the theoretical guidance from revolutionary intellectuals like Rosa Luxemburg.

As long as capitalism and imperialism continue to exist, Rosa Luxemburg will always be a guiding star of revolutionary activity. Even after the victory of socialism, she will continue to be the compass that guides the construction of a new egalitarian society. Her belief in the power of working people, her total devotion to their struggle, her contribution to the advancement of socialist theory, her revolutionary courage and stamina are among the things that will always be treasured.

May revolutionary struggles continue to produce more souls like Rosa Luxemburg!

22 Alexi Lubomirski "How Neoliberalism Colonised Feminism – and What You Can Do About It," *The Conversation*, May 23, 2018. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/how-neoliberalism-colonised-feminism-and-what-you-can-do-about-it-94856>; Lea Sitkin, "It's Up to You: Why Neoliberal Feminism Isn't Feminism at All," *Open Democracy*, July 18, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/lea-sitkin/neoliberal-feminism>