
A World that Runs Dry

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I acknowledged my ignorance and concern, when late I learned that only 1% of the planet's water is drinkable, and that which may exist in supposed excess always needs some procedure to make it so.

In one way or another, water has generated continuous wars in this world, as evidenced by aggressions, occupations, and continued troop presence in foreign territories, mostly in Africa and the Middle East, mainly by Zionism in areas surrounding Israel, perhaps in an action considered more important than those related to energy sources.

The recent lack of water in Uruguay, for example, coincides with a pronounced outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, where the liquid is essential for its fight, something that can be explained by the lack of resources of the State to protect the environment and sustainable development

This leads to explain the situation of the neighboring Guaraní Aquifer System, which in good hands could alleviate the existence of millions of people.

The situation was used by the World Bank to handle the contributions in this regard, in addition to knowing in detail the location of North American troops in the vicinity of the aquifer for its "protection."

It is such a precious asset that it has necessarily become the subject of political controversy. There are those who fight for it to be considered a social good, a patrimony of all, but they have been defeated by others who defend it to be private.

The fact is that, according to the law of the market, nothing can be more attractive or desired than an essential and scarce resource such as water. In this tension, a phrase was born that arouses fear: "The wars of the 21st century will be over water."

What's worse: that phrase was said by Ismael Serageldin, former director of the World Water Society, an alliance

of international corporations dedicated to this business and promoting the privatization of the public water service in different countries. Serageldin was also a former vice president of the World Bank, another entity closely related to the privatization of water, with unsanctified practices, as it happened with Aguas Argentinas.

The WB website (www.worldbank.org) shows how between 1990 and 2002 there were 276 loans for "water supplies." In a third of them, the bank required the privatization of the sector before disbursing the funds. From that date to now, that has been superior.

Thus a parallel can be drawn with the last war in Iraq and the current seizure by large U.S. oil companies of Iraqi wealth. The writer Norman Mailer added something else: "The George W. Bush administration didn't only go to Iraq just for oil, but for the Euphrates and the Tigris, two mighty rivers in one of the driest areas on the planet."

The second scenario is already happening: it's the privatization of water. In the last 15 years, large corporations, also called the "water barons", have come to control it in much of the world and it's estimated that, in another 15 years, perhaps less, a few private companies will have monopoly control of almost 75% of this vital resource for everyone.

Freshwater scarcity is the guiding principle behind that big business: dams, irrigation canals, purification, and desalination technologies, sewage systems and wastewater treatment, and certainly, according to data from Canada's Polaris Institute, the bottling of water, a business that surpasses the pharmaceutical industry.

The issue has no end and there's a lack of access to more statistics in this regard, but it's still a fact, that everything has been attempted to control water and, in that same line, world life, something that worsens with the presence of colonial governments, like those suffered by our sister Puerto Rican people, let's bring this repeated, but recurring example, which appeared in the weekly Claridad, published on the colleague Habana Radio, which, due to its characteristics, brings both laughter and indignation:

"The point is that right now water stank and they didn't know why, and then a quarter of a million Puerto Ricans ran out of water. Near the river basin (Guaynabo), near Los Filtros plant, there are five industries. The monitoring of these, apparently, is done with the primitive method of smell. If it stinks, something is wrong. So, while they investigate, water can't be drunk or bathe be taken... this time the Board of Environmental Quality found a solution to the mystery. They were not fish, it was methyl ethylketone, hydroxy methyl pentanone, cyclohexanol, and cyclohexanone. The point is that, if there was no one with a good sense of smell, we would have bathed with substances that would have caused irritation... with the privatization, to save a few bucks and earn more, there are now fewer employees and supervisors. Anyone knows there are colorless and odorless pollutants. A bloodhound must be station besides our water faucets.

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