



TRUMP GETS AGGRESSIVE PUSH-BACK

Hardly had he assumed office than America's new president, Donald Trump, began threatening all and sundry. His decision to change the name of The Gulf of Mexico to The Gulf of America was promptly implemented by Google Maps, but roundly ridiculed by the rest of the world. Also, greeted with anger and outrage was his suggestion that Canada should submit to becoming a US state; that America should forcibly assume control of the Panama Canal; and that Denmark should agree to the sale of Greenland to America. He bizarrely suggested that Gaza be cleared of Gazans, and be converted into a Riviera-type resort. He threatened to cut American aid to South Africa because the ANC-led government "was confiscating land and treating certain classes of people (read white farm owners) very badly."

He really trod on toes when he openly threatened punitive tariffs on America's trading partners and allies; this ignited the proverbial "shit storm." Below is an X-entry attributed to Mexico's president, Claudia Sheinbaum which was doing the rounds on X.

Whether or not it is fake we could not confirm, but nevertheless thought it a good idea to publish, as it so effectively expresses the feelings of most sane and decent people around the world.

Sheinbaum to Trump

X: 5 January 2025

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum addressing Trump:



So, you voted to build a wall... Well, dear Americans, even if you don't understand much about geography, since America to you is your country, not a continent, it's important that you discover, before the first brick is laid, that there is, beyond that wall: 7 billion people.

But since you don't really know the term "people" we gonna call them "consumers." There are 7 billion consumers ready to replace their iPhones with Samsung or Huawei devices in less than 42 hours. They can also replace Levi's with Zara or Massimo Dutti.

In less than six months, we can easily stop buying Ford or Chevrolet cars and replace them with Toyota, KIA, Mazda, Honda, Hyundai, Volvo, Subaru,

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Renault or BMW, which are technically better than the cars they produce.

Those 7 billion people can also stop subscribing to Direct TV, and we don't want to, but we can stop watching Hollywood movies and start watching more Latin American or European productions that have better quality, message, cinematic techniques and content.

While it may sound incredible, we can skip Disney and go to Xcaret resort in Cancun, Mexico, Canada, or Europe: there are other excellent destinations in South, East America, and Europe. And even if you don't believe it, even in Mexico, there are better burgers than McDonald's and have better nutritional content.

Anyone seen pyramids in the US? In Egypt, Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Sudan, and other countries, there are pyramids with incredible cultures.

Discover where the wonders of the ancient and modern world are.,, None of them in the US... Shame on Trump, he would have bought and sold it!

We know Adidas exists not just Nike and we can start wearing Mexican tennis shoes like Panam. We know more than you think.

We know, for example, that if these 7 billion consumers don't buy their products, there will be unemployment and their economy will collapse (within the racist wall) so much that they will be begging us to break down the ugly wall. We didn't want to but.. You want a wall, you get a wall. With Sincere Appreciation. »

The (Impending?) Collapse of Neo-liberalism

While it is obviously premature to read the last rites over the grave of neoliberalism, it is clear, that for this obnoxious system of global working class exploitation, things are falling apart – the centre (that is, Western Capitalism) cannot hold much longer.

Clear signs include (but are not limited to) the following:

The 2008 financial crisis which rampaged through a highly integrated, fragile world banking system. For want of lucrative investment opportunities, capitalist speculators created a bubble in the American housing industry which led to a global economic

recession rivalling that of 1929.

The leading neoliberal economy, that of America, has reached a point where their salvation lies in land-grabs and asset plundering, hence the active support for Israel's genocidal war on Palestine, and hence president Trump's attempt to colonise Canada and Greenland, and to take control of the Panama Canal. In addition, he has let the Ukrainian rulers know that his continued support for them in their war effort against Russia will be contingent on their signing over some \$500 billion of their rare earth mineral wealth to America.

America is also openly pushing an anti-China agenda, since the latter is outperforming it on virtually every front, not least economic.

Across the western world, we are seeing the rise of right-wing politics, if not outright neo-fascism. This is another indicator that the neoliberalists are desperate to remove any barriers (such as democracy and socialist values) which stand in the way of growth, and hence of profit-making.

Ominously, there is now a drive to ramp up fossil fuel production, against all the science screaming out against it. Insane but true: capitalism would rather destroy the planet than forego profit opportunities. In our previous issue (see January 2025 Worker number 122) we discussed the question of "asset-stranding."

... for the fossil fuel industry to halt in its tracks means self-destruction. Not only will it mean foregoing present profits, but also, it will mean leaving considerable wealth in the form of yet-unmined assets in the ground. For the class of investors who have already committed billions, this means voluntarily giving up their claims to future wealth. It is known as "asset stranding."

We must avoid the following simplistic assumptions: that capitalism will self-destruct, therefore we don't actually have to wage struggle against it. And, when capitalism collapses, into its place will (automatically) step socialism.

The growth of fascism around the world today is an indication that capitalism will attempt to morph into another version of itself. Thus, the challenge facing the worldwide anti-capitalist movement is urgently to find innovative ways of resistance. In a nutshell, it's about global unity of the working class masses (urban and rural) and the building of grassroots organisations committed to the struggle for genuine socialism.

CLASS STRUGGLE FROM ABOVE – A CURRENT EXAMPLE

We are witnessing a resurgence in class struggle *from above*, with the new US administration wasting no time in showing its teeth. With Donald Trump and Elon Musk in the forefront of an anti-working class war on all fronts, the effects and potential effects are becoming immediately clear.

World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) has run an article by Benjamin Mateus on 25 February in which it exposes the impact on America's health services.

Trump has appointed an array of quacks and enemies of public health to fill the top positions in the Department of Health and Human Services, including anti-vaccine demagogue Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to head the agency, television doctor Mehmet Oz to head the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and COVID-19 denialist Jay Bhattacharya to head the National Institutes of Health.

In deliberately wrecking the public health system, the Trump administration is counting on the ensuing rise in death rates to reduce the overall expenses of the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds, thereby freeing up money for Trump's priorities of military spending and tax cuts for the wealthy.

Mateus quotes from an authoritative study to show that in Trump's first term in office, the American Social Security System "saved" \$300 billion as a result of avoidable COVID deaths, especially among the elderly.

So, the strategy is a simple and horrific one:

starve ordinary Americans of essential social benefits, and in the process, "save billions" which can be diverted to areas promoting ruling class interests. As Mateus observes, "let it rip" was the approach to the COVID pandemic from the beginning.

Those over 65 have accounted for the vast majority of those needlessly killed under a deliberate policy of social murder. The financial oligarchs regard the retired, who do not contribute to surplus value and profit, as a drain on their wealth.

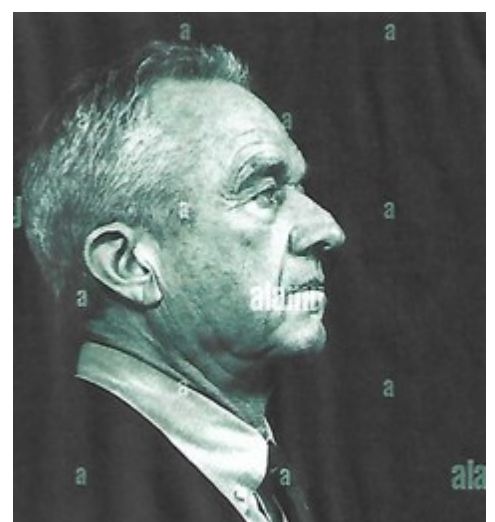
The implementation of a policy that accepts and even promotes mass death among a physically vulnerable section of the population has no modern precedent in a country claiming to be democratic. The dismantling of serious and systematic public health measures to stop the spread of COVID is viewed by powerful sections of the ruling class as an effective means of reducing the societal 'burden' of caring for large numbers of elderly people."

We must be under no illusions. There is no such thing as a "benign capitalism." The system's eternal mantra is "ownership, growth, profits." At any cost.



**Anti- Vaccine denialist
Dr. Jay Bhattacharya,**

Wreckers of the health system. Secretary for Health Robert F Kennedy and Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, Head of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).



Secretary for Health Robert F Kennedy

THE WATER CRISIS: EXACERBATED!

The Government of National Unity (GNU), led by the ANC has as one of its priorities, the resolution of the water crisis in the country. This includes plans to construct new dams and upgrade existing water systems to ensure reliable access to water for the nation.

By not heeding the warnings of impending water shortages and not planning to supplement the dammed-up river water by timeously searching for alternative water sources, are as good as denying people access to water.

Worker No. 122

KwaZulu Natal has always been beset by torrential rains, at times flash floods and of course regular river floods. The previous regime as well as the present rulers have done very little to improve the conditions of the poor, the working class in these areas. Loss of life and mudslides have become a regular feature in these areas. According to the SABCTV on 25/02/2025, six persons are “missing”, presumed washed away by stormwater after heavy rains.

Why have no dams or waterways been built in these areas to not only harness rainwater but also counter mudslides and save human lives?

The Gauteng area has now had heavy rains for seven consecutive days (17 – 23 February). What has been done about rain harvesting? This is the easiest form of supplementing the natural water supply in a water-scarce country such as South Africa. SA is the 30th driest country in the world. With SA’s population on the increase and a total average rainfall of 500mm compared with the world average of 860mm, and with climate change being imminent, SA is definitely heading for a disaster if a dramatic change does not take place.

Rainfall in SA is unpredictable and periods of drought are often experienced. The need for water security in SA in the face of global climatic changes as well as pollution of the underground water reserves because of mining activities and injudicious care of the ecosystems limits access to clean drinking water.

Tshwane, the capital city has been plagued by a water crisis for two decades. As of January 2025, residents of Hammanskraal have supposedly had access to safe drinking water from taps. This is due to a water purification project that involved extensive testing. The mayor of Tshwane apparently drank a glass of tap water. According to an Interviewee on News 24, four days after the mayor’s visit, the water was turbid and unsuitable for human consumption.

The Hammanskraal situation was due to the problems experienced at the Temba Water Treatment plant. Raw water received from the Apies River was contaminated by effluent from the Rooiwal Plant. This affected the whole system. The water crisis is now saddled by tempo-

rary interruptions and turbidity in the drinking water.

Despite assurances by the executive mayor of Tshwane that the water is suitable for consumption, residents remain sceptical. When News24 visited the area, there were three water trucks parked in the area indicating that all was not well with water from the taps.

The Eastern Cape region of South Africa has faced a severe water crisis since 2015 due to drought, poor water management, and climate change. Makhanda, Komani, the former Transkei and Ciskei areas, Cradock, Middelburg and various areas within the Enoch Mgijima local municipality experience frequent water outages and a lack of reliable water supply. The main cause being the ageing infrastructure and very poor management.



Eastern Cape’s R657m Xonxa dam is 100% full — and provides no water

Typical of poor management is the management of the Xonxa Dam (photo above) near Komani in the Eastern Cape. The dam is currently at 100% capacity, yet it has only supplied water to the town of Komani for six months, from December 2020 to May 2021. The Dam built at a cost of R657 million – R187 million over the initial quotation cost does not provide a drop of water to the Komani (formerly known as Queenstown) residents. Taps in Komani Strangely (or not) enough, the village of Xonxa, where the dam is situated, has no water on tap.

Rapid urbanisation and the search for employment opportunities and an increase in demand for freshwater for households are driving factors for water shortages. The solution to all these problems lies in the construction of dams and reservoirs, rainwater harvesting especially in areas such as Gauteng, the building of aqueducts and desalination plants, the recycling of water and of course water conservation.

However, with SA being in an unending financial crisis it seems highly improbable that what has now become crisis management will be able to be realised. SA is servicing an annual debt of approximately R400 billion. This translated to a bit more than R1 billion a day. This, amongst other considerations, has hamstrung the financial resources of government. Cabinet has thus delayed the 2025 budget speech for further deliberations. This does not augur well for the poor and vulnerable in our society; neither does it do much for water conservation and construction of additional or new infrastructure.

p.s. In 1994 when SA's first "democratic" government came to power as part of the Kempton Park horse deal it was agreed that the "new" government would assume responsibility for the apartheid debt.

In 1994, South Africa's economy was struggling with high inflation, a large government deficit, and low domestic savings. SA's debt was calculated at US\$ 29.7 billion or R. 106 billion—today's value would be approximately R6.4 trillion.

As of February 2024, South Africa's debt was around R5.2 trillion, or 74% of the country's GDP. This debt is expected to increase to R6.3 trillion by 2027.



Instead of being at school these kids in Komani have to fetch water in the mornings.

Poem rousingly performed by poet Siphokazi Jonas at the Pro-Palestinian rally held in Sea Point, Cape Town, on Sunday 23 February 2025.

WE FLOCK TOGETHER TO SPEAK OF YOU

By Siphokazi Jonas

My people compose praise poems
to honour kings
to welcome soldiers back from war
to immortalise the departed
in their passage from the living;
sitytyimbe, sityatyadule
ngezaci namaqhalo
sibathuthe sibabonge.
praise poets seal courageous feats
into history with their words

But how can we write praise poems
in times of genocide
when death shadows children
out of their dreams
through the ghost of a classroom
into streets once paved with laughter
and the void where home used to be?
there are no imaginary friends
or lullabies in the rubble
only lost love and duas for Jannah.

Mothers are forced to be superheroes
facing bullets and baking bread for resistance
with the same ferocity
daughters are made activists in song
sons fight for father's memory
those displaced around the world
are denied the right to return.

From Sudan, to Congo, to Palestine –
the land is sick with blood.
Isisu somhambi asingakanani
singangenso yenyoni:
the stomach of a traveler is not that large
it is the size of a bird's kidney
so say AmaZulu,
providing for a visitor
does not deplete you

We flock together to speak of you here
refusing to forget you



Siphokazi Jonas

those who exchanged breath
for our own freedom
those who still cannot breathe
under a colonial thumb

past and present.
in my mother's tongue we say,
intaka yakha ngoboya benye –
a bird lines its nest
with the feathers of another.

So, we pluck our voices
our songs, our dances, our poems
like feathers for you
alongside you
to make a soft nesting place
for the grief wearing your faces
the stories which we will never
surrender to history and amnesia.

We set our praise poems down
to pick up lament and defiance
where there is silence
we dare even the rocks to resist
to replenish reserves of hope
until there your freedom is our freedom



Siphokazi Jonas is the author of *Weeping Becomes a River* published by Penguin Random House South Africa. The debut poetry collection was awarded The Book Lounge Book of the Year in 2024 and listed among the 100 Notable African Books of 2024. www.siphokazijonas.com

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