

A comrade in Mandela

Abdullah Öcalan

From his solitary prison on a Turkish island, where he has been held for 15 years already, the Kurdish leader paid this tribute to President Mandela, who also carried the heavy weight of long imprisonment before walking free.

The tears that are being shed worldwide for Nelson Mandela, the stories that are being shared about him, and the wisdom that he bequeathed to all other freedom movements shows us what an outstanding individual he was.

The history of the peoples of the world is mostly shaped through the callous insolence of those trying to hold the masses in their grip. This insolence at times appears because the whole world sees this oppression but turns a blind eye to it, at times through the evil of totalitarianism and the banality by which it is fed. While the perpetrators of evil constantly bow their knees in shame and beg forgiveness or become a dark chapter in the book of history, the struggle against the banality of evil and rising totalitarianism appears in the only thing soaking all the soils of the world at the same time: the tears of the oppressed human being.

Mandela and the struggle for democracy and freedom that he pioneered are the very basis of what defines the concept of struggle for those who have adopted the principle of free and equal life. We cannot talk about people like Mandela in terms of the past. For individuals who have won their place in the hearts of the peoples such as he did bear the fate of playing the role of Prometheus. Neither the day they decide to carry the fire nor the way they carry it is coincidental. It is a struggle to honourably oppose the destruction caused by the capitalist modernist system which the rulers impose in the course of history.

To tear apart the pages of history written by the rulers and to intervene against what is considered history, considered fate,

proves that the fire of the South African people and Mandela has kindled the oppressed of the entire world. In this era of uprisings when they wanted to create a ‘terrorist’, ‘despot’ and ‘traitor’ from the oppressed, Mandela through his wise, joyful and courageous attitude remained full of hope even in the most difficult times of imprisonment. He completed his struggle, this political period that became his life, as a free human being respected by the whole world, freely and as a source of inspiration.

The other side of the grief that we are feeling today is the joy in the faces of his people who gained freedom together, and the blow that this people dealt to the rulers. The fist that rose in South Africa – we see this even today – became the fist of all oppressed people, whose hopes were to be crushed in the prisons, and instead struck fear in the hearts of those who imprison them. Prison bars are cold and rusty, like the hearts of those who are cowardly enough to put courageous human beings behind bars, but the great legacy that Mandela left to all of us is never to surrender, not in prison, not even in the most difficult moments.

Mandela, whom I was travelling to meet in order to consult him because of his experience, before I was abducted in an international act of piracy, will continue to live as a part of our big family, together with me, the Kurdish people and the vast majority of those in the squares and mountains of the whole world who laugh in defiance of grim faced rulers.

We had mutual, heartfelt dedication and friendship with him. His sensitivity and dedication to the Kurdish people in turn fostered deep respect and dedication in our hearts for him. He was a shining star that enlightened the peoples of Africa. We are determined to have that star shine on the people of the Middle East.

Our big family should not bow its head as we say farewell to one of our wisest, one who never bowed his head. Friendly greetings to the people of South Africa and all oppressed who see a comrade in Mandela!

We hope that we all will live and die as free citizens in free countries, in honour and peace, just like Nelson Mandela ...

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