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WFTU-TUI-PS&A MANDELA DAY MESSAGE

18 July 2020

Today, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)-Trade Union International-Public Service & Allied (TUI-PS&A) joins humanity in remembering the contributions and sacrifices of a man who dedicated his whole life to the course of building a more humane world, Comrade Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. Nelson Mandela embodied more than just the spirit of narrow volunteerism and philanthropy: he was a revolutionary. His life reminds all the progressive forces in the world of the value of human solidarity, collective action and working-class internationalism in the struggle to build a peaceful and a just world. As we remember him, many of the challenges confronting humanity against which he stood still prevail; racism, patriarchy, xenophobia, greed, colonial occupation and economic domination are still a reality in today's capitalist dominated world. We must remember him by continuing the struggle for the ideals for which he fought.

The sacrifices and achievements of Mandela must be understood within the broader context of the collective struggles of the people of South Africa and their international friends against racial oppression, colonialism and imperialism. The revolutionary icon that the world has come to love and revere so much, like so many other iconic revolutionaries produced by the international struggle against injustice, was moulded in the struggle against not only the racist policies of the apartheid regime but also the economic exclusion and domination of Africans that such policies sought to achieve. He was but one among many men and women who held up the light of humanity during a period of darkness in Apartheid South Africa; a racist and autocratic imperialist outpost on the Southern tip of Africa during the cold war.

Mandela and his generation fulfilled their historical mission in the struggle against oppression of men by men and injustice, it is now up to the current generation of revolutionaries and progressive forces to take forward that struggle by confronting those who live by exploitation, discrimination, division and war. Poverty, inequality, unemployment and hunger are not inevitable social conditions; these social scourges are generated by the capitalist market based economic system that value wealth accumulation for the few more than the sustenance and reproduction of life itself. The greed that is spawned and sustained by capitalism generates the wars, hunger, poverty, inequality, poor public health systems and the general human suffering that confronts the world today. While charity and philanthropy may alleviate the suffering of the underclasses and those at the periphery of society, but it does not end it, nor does it address the underlying causes of such human suffering. Equally; aid does not end the suffering and economic devastation that results from the illegal imperialist sanctions, trade

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wars and wars of regime change unleashed on countries that are deemed as a threat to the economic interests of imperialist countries.

After years of neoliberal policy driven cuts on social spending in health, education, transport etc., the public infrastructure, and the state, in many countries is unable to meet the social demands placed on it by prevailing conditions. The current global COVID19 pandemic that is causing death and economic devastation in the world is causing so much damage precisely because public health systems have been weakened by understaffing, underfunding and privatisation of public health in favour of profiteering. In many countries, after years of neglect and underfunding, public hospitals are struggling to cope with the volume of coronavirus patients because of limited bed space and too few lifesaving devices such as ventilators. Frontline workers are made to pay the price by having to work long hours while they have to fight to be provided with safety equipment and clothing to protect themselves. As the world remembers Mandela, it must take a stand and pronounce itself on these matters by condemning those who seek to profit from diseases, sickness and human suffering. On this special occasion, the world must also salute Cuba for sending its medical brigades to fight COVID 19 throughout the world. It's the only medical contingent providing global response to the pandemic

Those who understand Mandela and the circumstances that moulded him must "take action and inspire change, and make everyday a Mandela Day" by condemning the illegal US sanctions on Cuba that results in avoidable hardships on the people of Cuba. In the name of Mandela and his legacy we must denounce the violent imperialist backed Israel occupation of Palestine and the daily murder and mayhem that sustains it. Those who know Mandela must speak out against the subversion of democracy in Bolivia and the US attempts to undermine the will of the people in Venezuela. The world must call for an end to the wars of regime change and condemn the imperialist countries, and their proxies, responsible for the human suffering in Libya, Syria, and Yemen. The world must call for freedom for the people of Western Sahara from the yoke of Moroccan occupation. Nelson Mandela was not a philanthropist nor a volunteer, he was a dedicated activist and revolutionary and part of an internationalist revolutionary movement that stands for true human emancipation and freedom.

The working class and its formations must not be confused or deceived by the symbolic spirit of "volunteerism" and "generosity" of capital and the world ruling elite during this period. The human suffering they purport to alleviate during Mandela day is caused by their greed that drives them to exploit the proletariat and destroy its livelihood in pursuit of profit. The poverty and inequality that necessitates Mandela day is a product of the neoliberal policies advocated by the free market fundamentalist masquerading as advocates for "democracy" and "human rights". The environmental awareness campaigns they fund cannot undo the damage caused daily by the destruction of natural ecosystems and the pollution of rivers and oceans resulting from their irresponsible commercial activities. The only true volunteers are the millions of underpaid and exploited workers throughout the world who look after the health of humanity, clothe us, build our houses, produce our food, transport us and bear the cost of reproducing future workers – it is among them that the spirit of Mandela lives.

Remember Nelson Mandela by building a just world and defeating imperialism to end all human suffering in every corner of the globe!!!

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Long Live Working Class Internationalism!!!

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