

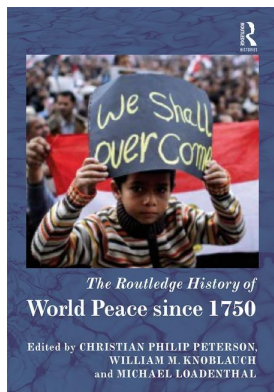
This article was downloaded by: 10.2.97.136

On: 27 Sep 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *CRC Press*

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London SW1P 1WG, UK



## **The Routledge History of World Peace Since 1750**

Christian Philip Peterson, William M. Knoblach, Michael Loadenthal

### **Nelson Mandela and the Decolonial Paradigm of Peace**

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315157344-12>

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni

**Published online on: 04 Sep 2018**

**How to cite :-** Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni. 04 Sep 2018, *Nelson Mandela and the Decolonial Paradigm of Peace from: The Routledge History of World Peace Since 1750* CRC Press

Accessed on: 27 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315157344-12>

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# NELSON MANDELA AND THE DECOLONIAL PARADIGM OF PEACE

*Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni*

## **Introduction**

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (1918–2013) attained worldwide recognition through dedicating his life to the decolonial struggle for freedom and peace. His life of struggle and legacy reflect a deep commitment to nationalist decolonial humanism as an antidote to racist/imperial/colonial/apartheid dehumanization. Mandela's politics and philosophy of liberation manifested the desire for a world governed by what the Caribbean scholar Eduardo Mendieta depicted as "politics of life with others and for others."<sup>1</sup> What drove this type of politics is "the will to live" rather than the "will to power."<sup>2</sup>

What distinguished Mandela from other leading African nationalists (such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, for instance), was his vehement opposition to the politics informed by "the will to power" and the paradigm of war. That he emerged from 27 years of incarceration without bitterness and continued to reject colonialism distinguished Mandela as a true soldier of peace and harmony. Others, such as Mugabe, seemed to have undergone "monsterization" to the extent of embracing colonial logics of violent "conquest of conquest," dispossession and even reverse racism.<sup>3</sup> Uniquely, as early as the 1960s, Mandela expressed his preparedness to die for the cause of democracy and human rights long before these values were globally accepted as part of the post-Cold War international normative order.

True to his liberatory vision, Mandela's leadership during the transition from apartheid to democracy inaugurated a paradigm shift for scholars of peace. Before Mandela, the Nuremberg paradigm of justice predominated. This paradigm focuses on prosecuting perpetrators of violence and other crimes. Rejecting this, Mandela's paradigm privileged political reform and social transformation of South Africa to end oppression and apartheid. Mandela's success in promoting this vision of peace depended on the total buy-in of both perpetrators and victims of apartheid. Thus, when he became the first black president of a democratic South Africa in May 1994, Mandela made important overtures to the erstwhile white racists; in doing so, he aimed to persuade them to abandon apartheid thinking and to travel with him to the new, inclusive, non-racial, democratic, and "pluriversal" society known as the "rainbow nation."<sup>4</sup>

## **Mandela and the politics of life**

The will to live was at the center of Mandela's paradigm of peace. He opposed the paradigm of war even though the intransigency and brutality of apartheid forced him to embrace

violence and war to protect those who were victims of the apartheid system. A paradigm of war defines a “a way of conceiving humanity, knowledge, and social relations that privileges conflict or *polemos*.”<sup>5</sup>

“The will to power” as articulated by Friedrich Nietzsche, and the “paradigm of war” as defined by the leading decolonial theorist Nelson Maldonado-Torres, are constitutive of what the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano termed “coloniality.”<sup>6</sup> Coloniality identifies an enduring global asymmetrical power structure that cascaded from the emergence of Euro-North American-centric modernity, and it has survived even the dismantling of direct colonialism and juridical apartheid. The rise of Euro-North American-centric modernity enabled the birth of a modern subjectivity mediated by race as an organizing principle. A unique modernist consciousness that manifested itself in terms of a radical ontological unevenness between Euro-North Americans and non-Europeans emerged. What was born was a world system that the Sociologist and decolonial theorist Ramon Grosfoguel characterized as racially hierarchized, patriarchal, sexist, hetero-normative, Euro-North American-centric, Christian-centric, capitalist, imperial, colonial and modern.<sup>7</sup>

At the center on this Euro-North American-centric world is what Maldonado-Torres articulated as imperial Manichean Misanthropic Skepticism, which was naturalized by Western epistemology to the extent of producing scientific racism in the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> As elaborated by Maldonado-Torres: “Manichean misanthropic skepticism is not skeptical about the existence of the world or the normative status of logics and mathematics. It is rather a form of questioning the very humanity of colonized peoples.” Constitutively, racism feeds the paradigm of war and is inextricably tied to “a peculiar death ethic that renders massacre and different forms of genocide as natural.”<sup>9</sup>

“The will to power” and “the paradigm of war” underpinned the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid. Thus, those who opposed enslavement, imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid became advocates of the paradigm of peace. This paradigm is traceable to such people as the ex-slave Ottobah Cugoano who wrote *Thoughts on the Evils of Slavery and Other Writings* where he expressed his dismay at how Europeans who claimed to be Christians had embarked on the slave trade.<sup>10</sup> Cugoano’s writings date back to the late eighteenth century, so clearly Mandela was not the first leader of the Global South to embrace and articulate the paradigm of peace as the foundation of a new politics of life. Many previous figures including Mahatma Gandhi and the first President of Zambia Kenneth Kaunda, among others, opposed the paradigm of war.<sup>11</sup> While the former president Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal articulated humanism in terms of negritude and socialism, the former president of Tanzania Julius Nyerere advocated for a form of humanism predicated on African socialism, which he tried to implement in the form of *Ujamaa villages* (a collection of peasant villages engaged in self-reliant economic production under government support).<sup>12</sup> Even Kwame Nkrumah advocated for a new harmonious African society born out of a synthesis of Islamic, Euro-Christian, and African values in what he described as “Consciencism.”<sup>13</sup> Mandela understood humanism as *Ubuntu* (a human being is a human being because of others and this is a name for African conception of humanity that emphasized communality, interdependence and co-humanness) as a foundation for a rainbow nation.

The paradigm of peace is here traced to the struggles of those people who have been subjected to the violence of enslavement, colonialism, apartheid, and neo-colonialism, which in totality constitute what is known as decoloniality. The foundation for these decolonial struggles is the Haitian Revolution of 1804 which was spearheaded by the enslaved black people and produced the first black republic of Haiti. It is therefore paradigmatic in

the enunciation of the “decolonial turn.”<sup>14</sup> The black American sociologist and leading pan-Africanist William E. B. Dubois in 1903 announced the decolonial turn as a rebellion against what he termed the “color line” that was constitutive of the core problems of the twentieth century. Broadly, the decolonial turn embodies a critical decolonial ethics of liberation, one that “posits the primacy of ethics as an antidote to problems with Western conceptions of freedom, autonomy, and equality, as well as the necessity of politics to forge a world where ethical relations become the norm rather than the exception. The decolonial turn highlights the epistemic relevance of the enslaved and colonized search for humanity.”<sup>15</sup>

The noted Kenyan author and advocate for decolonization Ngugi wa Thiong’o expressed the decolonial turn in terms of “moving the center” (from Eurocentrism/Europhonism to a plurality of cultures) towards “re-memembering Africa” (addressing Africa’s fragmentation that was imposed by imperialism and colonialism, and restoring African cultural identity).<sup>16</sup> It, therefore, becomes clear that the decolonial turn is rooted in struggles against racism, the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, and apartheid. But, as noted by Maldonado-Torres, the decolonial turn “began to take a definitive form after the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the wars for liberation of many colonised countries soon after.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, in terms of horizon, decoloniality seeks to attain a decolonized and deimperialized world in which a new pluriversal (a world within which many worlds fit harmoniously and coexist peacefully) humanity is possible. Decoloniality gestures towards pluriversality.

### **Mandela’s decolonial humanism**

Mandela’s push for *ubuntu* and “rainbow nation” is part of the planetary decoloniality. Mandela’s life of struggle and his legacy embody a consistent and active search for peace and harmony. In his autobiography, Mandela stated that:

I always know that deep down in every human heart, there was mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to assure me and keep me going. Man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.<sup>18</sup>

In a typical decolonial ethics of liberation, Mandela interpreted the anti-colonial/anti-apartheid struggle as a humanistic movement for restoration of human life. This is how he put it: “This then is what the ANC [African National Congress] is fighting for. Their struggle is a truly national one. It is a struggle of the African people, inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. *It is a struggle for the right to live.*”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, what one gleans from *Long Walk to Freedom* is that, in the face of apartheid’s officially institutionalized racism, brutality, and intolerance for dissent, Mandela emerged as the leading advocate of decolonization and the face of new non-racial inclusive humanism. Mandela did not easily dismiss the Euro-North American modernist project of emancipation; instead, he fought for the realization of those positive aspects of it (human rights, democracy) that were denied to Africans but were enjoyed in Europe and North America. Here was an

African located in the “zone of non-being” claiming entitlement to the fruits of Euro-North American-centric modernity on the basis of being a human being with equal capacity to those residing in Europe and the white colonialists residing in Africa.<sup>20</sup>

The leading European philosopher Slavoj Žižek credited Mandela for providing a model of how to liberate a country from apartheid colonialism “without succumbing to the temptation of dictatorial power and anti-capitalist posturing.” He elaborated that “Mandela was not Mugabe” as he maintained South Africa as a multi-party democracy, ensuring that the vibrancy of the national economy was insulated from “hasty socialist experiments.”<sup>21</sup> Mandela was worried more about denial of democracy rather than its Euro-North American genealogy and articulation. For example, Mandela expressed a deep appreciation of the British parliamentary democracy to the extent of depicting himself as “an Anglophile” and stating openly that:

From the reading of Marxist literature and from conversations with Marxists, I have gained the impression that communists regard the parliamentary system of the West as undemocratic and reactionary. But, on the contrary, I am an admirer of such a system. The Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights and the Bill of Rights are documents which are held in veneration by democrats throughout the world. I have great respect for British political institutions, and for the country’s system of justice. I regard the British Parliament as the most democratic institution in the world, and the independence and impartiality of its judiciary never fail to arouse my admiration. The American Congress, the country’s doctrine of separation of powers, as well as the independence of its judiciary, arouse in me similar sentiments.<sup>22</sup>

It would seem to Mandela that democracy and freedom were simple positive human values that should be enjoyed by every human being irrespective of race and location.

But Mandela was not an uncritical black Anglophile. He frequently credited his own South African ethnic identity (the Xhosa people) and their traditional mode of governance, which he described as “democracy in its purest form” because all those involved, irrespective of societal rank, were allowed space to “voice their opinions and were equal in their value as citizens.”<sup>23</sup>

### **Mandela and the armed struggle**

Mandela was instrumental in the formation of “*uMkhonto We Sizwe*” (Spear of the Nation) and became its commander-in-chief. This was the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). The fighting forces had to adhere to a strict ethical conduct of only engaging in destabilization (attacking particular installations that represented the apartheid government such as the SASO Oil Refinery) and not in killing ordinary people. Even when Mandela was being tried for treason, he continued to tower above the apartheid system’s provocations, brutality, and violence. He even invited the architects of apartheid to return to humanity in a moving speech delivered during the Rivonia Trials (1963–1964):

During my lifetime, I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to

live for and to see realized. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.<sup>24</sup>

Mandela also articulated that the continued use of brutality and violence by the apartheid regime against unarmed anti-apartheid freedom fighters left them with no choice but “to hit back by all means in our power in defense of our people, our future and our freedom.”<sup>25</sup>

Mandela committed his life to the liberation from the scourge of racial oppression of those who inhabited the “zones of non-being.” He aimed to liberate both the oppressed and the oppressors from the cul-de-sac of racialism and coloniality in the truly Freireian spirit (Brazilian philosopher Paul Freire) of liberating both the oppressor and oppressed peoples. Embracing this theory of liberation, Mandela wrote:

It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I know anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man’s freedom is a prisoner of hatred; he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else’s freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.<sup>26</sup>

### **Mandela at CODESA**

At the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) Mandela pushed for political justice rather than the old-fashioned Nuremberg template of justice. The essential prerequisite for CODESA’s paradigm of justice was first, for warring South Africans to first of all find each other across the political divides, and second, for all South Africans to agree that Apartheid was a crime against humanity. The third condition was to agree to build a better political society. Mahmood Mamdani, a leading admirer of the CODESA paradigm of justice, argued that such a political justice must emerge from a particular understanding of mass violence as political rather than criminal.<sup>27</sup> The expected outcome of such a political justice system is a reconstruction of political society through political reform as a lasting solution.<sup>28</sup> In this context, both perpetrators and victims are redefined as “survivors” in an attempt to find a way to transcend the paradigm of war and as part of the invention of new humanism.<sup>29</sup> To achieve his goals, Mandela worked with other stalwarts of the anti-apartheid struggle such as Joe Slovo (a leading South African communist who belonged to the South African Communist Party). Both men were fully committed to trying something new in the domain of transitional justice, and both identified that South Africa’s political stalemate required political innovation and creativity to unblock. The celebrated Ugandan political scientist Mahmood Mamdani based at both Makerere University and Columbia University captured this situation as follows: “neither revolution (for liberation movements) nor military victory (for the apartheid regime) was on the cards.”<sup>30</sup> Mandela led the ANC into CODESA fully aware that it was another “theatre of struggle, subject to advances and reverses as any other struggle.”<sup>31</sup>

Working in Mandela’s favor: History was not on the side of the apartheid regime, which had far outlived its life as a form of colonialism. If it survived the decolonial period of the 1960s and 1970s, it could not survive the post-Cold War “Third Wave” of democracy and

human rights. Arguably, the 1990s dispensation was more favorable to Mandela's initiatives, but the ANC had also lost its major ally in the form of the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>32</sup>

The anti-apartheid activist-cum-scholar Frank B. Wilderson reinforced these points in 2010 when he argued that it took major tectonic shifts in the global paradigmatic arrangement of white power. Examples include the fall of the Soviet Union, which was the major backer of the ANC; the return of 40,000 black bourgeoisie exiles from Western capitals; and perhaps most notably, a crumbling global economy. According to Wilderson these factors played a crucial role "for there to be synergistic meeting of Mandela's moral fiber and the aspirations of white economic power."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, imperatives and interests of white capitalists who were experiencing the biting effects of sanctions and popular unrest at home played an important role in influencing the negotiators. Apartheid South Africa was, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, essentially ungovernable—an anachronistic and dysfunctional system incompatible with capitalism. A way out of the crisis had to be found.

Clearly, what Mandela demanded from the apartheid regime was the dismantlement of apartheid and commitment to a non-racial, democratic and free society. He sought to achieve these goals through the following strategy: "To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and that enemy becomes your partner."<sup>34</sup> On the ashes of juridical apartheid, the ANC and Mandela envisaged a new post-racial and "pluriversal" political community founded on new humanism and inclusive citizenship. But the ghost of apartheid had to be exorcised. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was the chosen mechanism of "laying ghosts of the dark past to rest with neither retributive justice nor promotion of a culture of impunity."<sup>35</sup> Mamdani credited the TRC for transcending the Nuremberg trap "by displacing the logic of crime and punishment with that of crime and confession."<sup>36</sup>

Mamdani also distilled how the Nuremberg template of justice still influenced the TRC, particularly in its definition of a victim and a perpetrator. In the first place, victimhood was individualized as the responsibility of the perpetrator—an assumption that had two immediate implications. The first was that a human rights violation could be narrowly defined "as an action that violated the bodily integrity of an individual."<sup>37</sup> The second implication was "obscuring the fact that the violence of apartheid was mainly that of the state, not individual operatives."<sup>38</sup>

ANC stalwart Joel Netshitenzhe explained the logic of the negotiations and the settlement from his organization's perspective:

At the risk of oversimplification, it can be argued that a critical element of that settlement, from the point of view of the ANC, was the logic of capturing a bridgehead: to codify basic rights and use these as the basis for more thoroughgoing transformation of South African society.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps a strong confidence in the morality of decolonial humanism made the ANC, and Mandela even, naïve on the how long the process of economic reconciliation could take. But Netshitenzhe reinforced the argument that decolonial humanism influenced Mandela's imagined post-apartheid South Africa. For him:

The articulation of the ANC mission by some of its more visionary leaders suggests an approach that, in time, should transcend the detail of statistical bean counting and emphasis on race and explicitly incorporate *the desire to contribute to the*

*evolution of human civilization. At the foundation of this should be democracy with a social content, excellence in the acquisition of knowledge and the utilization of science and a profound humanism.*<sup>40</sup>

Mandela was a child of this ANC decolonial humanism, but concretely speaking, 1994 marked not only the end of administrative apartheid but more importantly the beginning of a difficult process of nation-building tempered by a delicate balance, one between allaying white fears and attending to black expectations and demands. This reality became a major test of Mandela's political life.

### **The Mandela presidency**

At a practical level Mandela's politics of life focused on ending the cycle of diminishing citizens' dignity. Thus, when he became the first black president of South Africa in 1994, Mandela practically implemented a decolonial humanist vision of a post-racial pluriversal society. At the core of this vision was a rejection of racism and a deeper appreciation of difference. In this vision, difference is not interpreted in terms of superior and inferior races; instead, it is interpreted in terms of pluriversality and rainbow. Maldonado-Torres has argued that the appreciation of human difference is informed by a humanistic "interest in restoring authentic and critical sociality beyond the colour-line." The leading philosopher of Africana existentialism Lewis R. Gordon agreed, positing that "the road out of misanthropy is a road that leads to the appreciation of the importance of difference."<sup>41</sup> Apartheid was a worse form of misanthropy founded on "bad faith" and had to be transcended both symbolically and substantively.

This is why Mandela's presidency embraced a symbolic pedagogical nationalism towards the disenfranchisement of erstwhile racists in his forging of a new South Africa. Mandela's presidency practiced nation-building through the use of symbolic gestures such as sporting events or public appearances. For example, he visited the 94-year old widow of Hendrik Verwoerd, an ideologue of apartheid and its architect. Mandela even agreed to the erection of a statue in remembrance of Verwoerd. He also visited Percy Yutar, a prosecutor during the Rivonia Trial that sentenced Mandela to life imprisonment. He even visited ex-apartheid President P. W. Botha. In response, he was criticized in some quarters of bending too much to placate whites, but his idea was to ensure that indeed the erstwhile "settlers"/"citizens" and the erstwhile "natives"/"subjects" were afforded enough room to be re-born politically into consenting citizens living in a new political society where racism was not tolerated.<sup>42</sup>

### **Mandela's contribution to world peace**

Mandela articulated his ideas for a new world in a 1993 article that appeared in *Foreign Affairs*. In it, he laid out the six pillars of South Africa's envisaged foreign policy:

- Issues of human rights are central to international relations and an understanding that they extend beyond the political, embracing the economic, social and environmental.
- Just and lasting solutions to the problems of human kind can only come through the promotion of democracy worldwide.
- Considerations of justice and respect for international law should guide the relations between nations.



- Peace is the goal which all nations should strive for, and where this breaks down, internationally agreed and non-violent mechanisms, including effective arms control, must be employed.
- The concerns and interests of the continent of Africa should be reflected in our foreign policy choices.
- Economic development depends on growing regional and international economic cooperation in an interdependent world.<sup>43</sup>

As an advocate of a decolonial paradigm of peace, Mandela put protection of human rights and promotion of democracy at the center of his articulation of South Africa foreign policy. This is how he put it:

Because the world is a more dangerous place, the international community dare not relinquish its commitment to human rights. The appeal also has a special significance for South Africa. The anti-apartheid campaign was the most important human rights crusade of the post-World War II. Its success was a demonstration, in my opinion, of the oneness of our common humanity: in these troubled times, its passion should not be lost. Consequently, South Africa will not be indifferent to the rights of others. Human rights will be the light that guides our foreign affairs. Only true democracy can guarantee rights.<sup>44</sup>

Mandela recognized the problem of asymmetrical global power relations and the need for restructuring and democratization of this configuration of power that allowed a few powerful nations to dominate the United Nations Organization (UNO). He was also aware that this asymmetrical global power structure has been sustained by a paradigm of war that enabled accumulation of weapons of mass destruction; hence he called for “commitment to a general and complete disarmament under effective international law.” Mandela also emphasized the need to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor across the world: “If there is to be global harmony, the international community will have to discover mechanisms to bridge the divide between its rich and its poor.” He also raised strong concerns about a world engulfed by narrow nationalism that was Balkanizing states and invoking “ancient and long-dormant animosities.”<sup>45</sup>

The international relations scholar James Barber captured the complexities of “Mandela’s World” when he wrote that post-apartheid South Africa emerged in an uncertain world, one marked by contradictory tendencies and impulses of “the grim prospect of a retribalization of large swaths of humankind by war and bloodshed” as well as “a busy portrait of onrushing economic, technological and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity.”<sup>46</sup> Parochial nationalism and xenophobia led to the Rwandan Genocide at the same time that South Africa celebrated the demise of administrative apartheid.

Mandela saw human rights as central aspects of any foreign policy. He strongly believed in a pluriversal world in which political differences, ethnic differences, racial differences, and gender differences were not to be tolerated across the human globe. For these strong beliefs he was deemed to be a naïve idealist by such dictators as General Sani Abacha of Nigeria. Mandela’s commitment to the promotion of what the South African scholar James Barber terms “good causes” left him with egg on his face simply because the world was still stuck in pursuit of “bad causes.”<sup>47</sup> For example, when Nigeria’s military dictator Sani Abacha executed ten Ogoni activists led by the novelist and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa,

Mandela saw this act as an infringement of human rights; he worked actively to mobilize the world to isolate Nigeria diplomatically and impose sanctions to send a strong message of condemnation. He even recalled the South African High Commissioner to Nigeria as part of protesting Abacha's human rights violations. As detailed by Barber:

His efforts produced nothing. The west continued to buy oil, and the African states had no appetite for confrontation. They saw Nigeria not as an abuser of human rights, but a continental leader, which had supported other liberation struggles and was a major contributor to the OAU. They accused Mandela of breaking African unity. Indignantly, Liberia claimed that the "campaign against Nigeria is very shocking," and called on others "not to allow South Africa to be used in undermining of African solidarity." The Nigerians themselves described Mandela's attitude as "horrific and terrible," and spoke of South Africa as "a white state with a black head." Even at home Mandela gained little support. After it was pointed out that Nigeria had given substantial financial support to the ANC's electoral chest, the government started back-pedaling. Mbeki told parliament that South Africa must act not alone but in concert.<sup>48</sup>

Mandela's stand against human rights violations in Nigeria forced nations of the world to reexamine their condoning violations of human rights. Just like in the 1960s when Mandela was ahead of the world in being prepared to die for democracy and human rights, in the 1990s he was again ahead of other leaders in his commitment to the protection of human rights and promotion of democracy across the world. Whatever criticisms have been levelled against him for promoting a paradigm of peace, for advocating for reconciliation, for protecting human rights, and calling for genuine democracy, Mandela left a dignified legacy from which we can continue the decolonial humanist struggle. True to his principles, he actively mediated conflicts in countries such as Burundi and condemned the United States and its allies for invading Iraq. He even offered to go to Iraq as act as a human shield to protect victims of American imperialist wars that were legitimized through the noble discourses of the "responsibility to protect" (R2P) and the crusade to export democracy and human rights through violent regime changes in the Global South.

### **Conclusion**

Mandela was a committed fighter for world peace. His politics was opposed to the "the will to power," which is always accompanied by the paradigm of war. Mandela's life of struggle and legacy embodied a politics founded on "the will to live," the politics of life, and the paradigm of peace. What made Mandela an icon of peace was his unrivaled commitment to justice, peace, and freedom combined with his promotion of a politics of life in a modern world that was bereft of humanness, goodness and love, peace and humility, trust and optimism, and forgiveness. Mandela provided an antidote to the paradigm of war. A profound humanism moved Mandela, and his life signified what Thandika Mkandawire termed a "sane relationship to power," a rare commitment to democracy and rule of law to the extent that "In a sense . . . normalized the idea of democracy in Africa." Troublingly, most of Mandela's critics still follow the paradigm of war and its eye-for-an-eye politics. They forget the existential conditions that hindered the negotiations of South Africa's transition, one in which the balance of forces did not allow Mandela enough room to maneuver because he

was dealing with an undefeated enemy. Mandela had to pursue a middle road through and through in the hope that in the future white hegemony would be dismantled. His vision of a post-racial pluriversal world remains powerful in a modern world that is trapped in a paradigm of war and a narrow Nuremberg paradigm of justice replicated by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The South African historian Paul Maylam rightfully argues that Mandela “stands out among world leaders of the last century as a person not obsessed with power, not entangled in the politics of manipulation and spin, not enticed into conspicuous consumption, but forever humble, honest and human.”<sup>49</sup> One wonders what would Mandela say about the rise of Donald Trump (Trumpism that is pivoted on the notion of “America First”) and such events as Brexit that seem to be fueled by the resurgence of narrow territorial nationalism and xenophobia during the age of globalization.

### Notes

- 1 Eduardo Mendieta, “Foreword: The Liberation of Politics: Alterity, Solidarity, Liberation,” in *Twenty Theses on Politics*, ed. Enrique Dussel, trans. George Ciccariello-Maher (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008), vii–xiii.
- 2 Enrique Dussel, *Twenty Theses on Politics: Translated by George Ciccariello-Maher* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 13.
- 3 Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *The Decolonial Mandela: Peace, Justice and the Politics of Life* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016), 63–68.
- 4 The term “pluriversality” comes from Latin American Modernity/Coloniality thinkers; it gestures towards a new world in which many worlds fit. It is an advancement from the term “universality” which invokes ideas of one world. The concept of a “rainbow nation,” introduced by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, also speaks to a new world in which diversity is celebrated.
- 5 Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: View from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 3.
- 6 On the concept of “will to power” see Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage, 1968); on the concept of “paradigm of war” see Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*; and on the concept of “coloniality” see Anibal Quijano, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 533–579.
- 7 Ramon Grosfoguel, “The Epistemic Decolonial Turn: Beyond Political-Economy Paradigms,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (March/May, 2007): 211–223; see also Ramon Grosfoguel, “Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and the Paradigm of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality,” *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1–39.
- 8 Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being: Contributions to the Development of a Concept,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (March/May, 2007): 240–270.
- 9 Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being,” 245.
- 10 Autobah Cugoano, *Thoughts on the Evils of Slavery and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).
- 11 While Gandhi became well known for his concept of peaceful resistance, Kaunda became known for his philosophy of humanism.
- 12 Leopold Sedar Senghor, “Socialism Is a Humanism” in Eric Fromm, ed., *Socialist Humanism: An International Symposium* (London: Allen Lane, 1967), 50–62; for Nyerere see Julius Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).
- 13 Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (London: Panaf, 1964).
- 14 “Decolonial turn” as defined by Nelson Maldonado-Torres is an encapsulation of a family of thought that identify “coloniality” as a major problem and they (in diverse ways) seek to move beyond coloniality into a new humanism and new world in which “colonial difference” won’t be a major issue in human relations, power relations and articulations of knowledge. See Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “Decoloniality at Large: Towards a Tran-America and Global Transmodernity Paradigm,” *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, Spring, (2012): 1–10.

- 15 Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, 7.
- 16 Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* (Oxford, UK: James Currey, 1993); see also Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Re-membering Africa* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2009).
- 17 Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, 7.
- 18 Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (London: Little Brown, 1994), 609.
- 19 Emphasis mine. *Ibid.*, 352.
- 20 The concept of "zone of non-being" is borrowed from Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968).
- 21 Slavoj Žižek, "Mandela's Socialist Failure." *New York Times*, December, 6, 2013.
- 22 Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 351.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 351.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 352.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 78.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 611.
- 27 Mahmood Mamdani, "The Logic of Nuremberg." *London Review of Books*, 7 November, (2013): 33–34.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 33–34.
- 29 Mahmood Mamdani, "Beyond Nuremberg: The Historical Significance of the Post-Apartheid Transition in South Africa." (Unpublished Inaugural Lecture, Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection, University Witwatersrand, March 18, 2013).
- 30 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 31 Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 577.
- 32 Mampela Ramphela, *Laying Ghosts to Rest: Dilemmas of the Transformation in South Africa* (Cape Town: Talfberg, 2008), 45.
- 33 Frederick B. Wilderson, "Obama and Mandela: The Parallels and the Differences," (Unpublished Paper Presented at the Concerned Citizens of Laguna Woods Village, February 2, 2010), 5.
- 34 Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 598.
- 35 Ramphela, *Laying the Ghosts to Rest*, 46.
- 36 Mamdani, "Beyond Nuremberg," 13.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 39 Joel Netshitenzhe, "Second Keynote Address: A Continuing Search for Identity: Carrying The Burden of History," in *One Hundred Years of the ANC: Debating Liberation Histories Today*, ed. Arianna Lissoni, Jon Soske, Natasha Erlank, Noor Nieftagodien, and Omar Badsha (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012), 16.
- 40 Netshitenzhe, "Second Keynote Address," 27 (emphasis added by author).
- 41 Lewis R. Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiracist Racism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995), 154.
- 42 Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). Mandela emphasized in his autobiography that there was no human being who was born hating other human beings. Racial hatred was a product of apartheid socialization and it was possible to "dissocialize" those who had fallen to the politics of hate into a new politics of love.
- 43 Nelson Mandela, "South Africa's Future Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (1993): 2.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 3–5.
- 46 James Barber, *Mandela's World: The International Dimensions of South Africa's Political Revolution, 1990–1999* (Oxford, UK: James Currey, 2004), 5.
- 47 James Barber, "The New South Africa's Foreign Policy: Principles and Practice," *International Affairs* 81, no. 5 (2005): 1082.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 1084.
- 49 Paul Maylam, "Archetypal Hero or Living Saint? The Veneration of Nelson Mandela," *Historia* 54, no. 2 (November, 2009): 31.