

Nelson Mandela and His Legacy

Nelson Mandela is undoubtedly one of the most inspirational leaders of the late 20th century.

With a strength and endurance similar to those of Mahatma Ghandi, Mandela struggled against the oppression, injustice, and racism of South Africa's apartheid and refused to compromise with the evil he saw, even at the cost of his own personal freedom.

Facing a stiff¹ prison term for his anti-government activities, in 1964 Mandela made the following statement before the court: "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 cherished² the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

Mandela was forced to live out 27 years of his life as a political prisoner in a South African island prison. He and his cellmates occupied a cramped³ unsanitary prison cell where Mandela eventually contracted tuberculosis.

While the struggle of the *African National Congress* (ANC) and world opinion against South Africa continued on the outside, Mandela remained an international cause and symbol of the fight against apartheid. Equally remarkable was Nelson Mandela's astonishing ability to forgive his enemies and bring his country together to heal the racial rift.⁴ When his people overcame the injustice of white minority rule, Nelson Mandela worked for reconciliation to unite South Africa's multi-racial society.

He literally went 'from prison to President' and presided over a peaceful transition to black majority rule in South Africa.

Finally, Nelson Mandela was one of the very few African leaders who relinquished⁵ power voluntarily. After a successful term as President, in 1999 Mandela decided to retire from political life and he died in Johannesburg, on December 5th 2013.

Today Nelson Mandela's inspirational legacy makes him a true citizen of the world and a symbol of peace and reconciliation in a continent that has a sad history of the opposite.



Glossary

1 hard – 2 loved – 3 crowded – 4 barrier – 5 gave up

activities



↓ WRITING

Summarize the text above.