



A Tribute to the Warrior Queen

By Wangui wa Goro



*"Kweli itashinda kesho, kama leo haitoshi."
~ Shaaban Roberts*

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, you have left us, but you will be immortalised forever in history as one of the greatest leaders of the 20th and early 21st Centuries. Courageous, revolutionary, intelligent, loyal, beautiful, loving and dignified is how you are now epitomised. You defied all stereotypes through a sharp revolutionary, intellectual and political stance for which you paid a high price. This personal reflective celebratory expose commemorates your life in the inside of politics. It reviews the public and private space and imagination as epitomised by your extraordinary life Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The feminist saying that the personal is political is truly reflected in your interpretation and negotiation of life. Referred to as "Woman" and "Mother" in the poetics of the politics of national liberation, you have become the symbol of freedom and future through so many innovations and commitments. We remember the price of courage of "staying true" by redefining and reimagining yourself through the struggles, our compass, our true North, and its significance for becoming and future.

"You did not die, but multiplied!"

May you continue to grace the universe and our lives in your splendour and may your life and sacrifice not be in vain!

Many across the world, and more so black women and feminists are deeply thankful. We are greatly indebted that you led by shining example, and we will never forget you and how you refashioned our imagination of who we are and how we could be, and become.

May your indomitable spirit continue to give us courage, to guide us!

Warrior Queen Winnie Madikizela-Mandela! We know that if you were man or white, you would have won numerous Nobel Prizes for peace, equality and justice, for that is what your life was about, the best exemplar, our heroine. We pray that this is yet to come! You are, would have been, and will be decorated with medals of honour, courage and valour from the tallest ceiling to the floor. You are a hero many times over, whose indomitable spirit will be commemorated with emblems, buildings, institutions, documents, documentaries and monuments that will remind us who you were, what you did, and for what you stood!

They will remind us that you were here!

Oh, I wish you were here to see and hear the tributes that should have flowed before. But you knew, you were loved and revered. You must know! People continue to testify of your courage during the time that you lived and now that you have gone to join the ancestors.

Oh! Indomitable One! It is hard to believe that you are gone, if only just away. You were here!

"She did not die, she multiplied!" is ringing all over the world and it is being heard!

This multiplying has been welling: a rallying call and has now burst everywhere like spring, sprouting! Inspiring so many people, young and old. Women, particularly black women, as we watched you, inspired; the iconic vision of our freedom. We grew strong and bold! We saw you, as we marched in exile, or stood nights at Trafalgar Square, followed your tribulations with sorrow and hope, praying that one distant day Apartheid would fall! And the day came in our life-times because of you and so many others like you.

You stood bold in the ANC, the ANC Women's League, in African people's struggles, in women's struggles, in the struggles of the oppressed and dispossessed, symbol not just in South Africa but the globe, the "Mother" of the nation, the voice of Nelson Mandela in his absence, the voice of reason for a liberated South Africa, leader in the ANC, of the Mkonto we Sizwe, the head of your family, mother to brave Zenani and Zinzi and so many more, and the Queen of ethical transgressive justice for us, for others, for yourself, to the very last, O Beautiful One!

In our eyes, you triumphed.

Beautiful, Powerful Revolutionary Queen! We hail you!

It was a very tall order, if we think about it very carefully. Living in the global public glare in the eye of the Apartheid storm and a fierce and vicious enemy that targeted you, in the eye of racial and African patriarchal storm, in the eye of a nation still struggling to find equitable justice, a nation struggling to recover restorative justice for itself, dignity and peace for its people. In the eye of the ANC storms, the tough party of freedom and Government, in the eye of Mkonto we Sizwe, in the eye of the family, in the eye of your own heart, mind and soul.

O Valiant Warrior Queen!

O! how you paid

Without bowing to the powerful enemy

*who came in all shades, shapes, sizes and hues
and who did not and still will not STOP
trying to crush your spirit...
for it is that, which they sought and seek to destroy
as the battle for the freedom
for equality
for justice
for peace
for restorative justice
for land
for equitable distribution
of resources
for dignity
for humanity
for hearts, minds and souls
and love
continues.*

Amandla!

There needed to be a very strong person. And you answered the call of history: Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. You! You never shied away!

We shall never forget!

We shall never forget what you stood for facing the father of all battles against Apartheid, for principled peace, land, justice, restorative justice, dignity, redistribution and equality when Africa's children needed and continue to need you most. You understood the protracted and ongoing nature to dismantle the evil wrought by Apartheid systems and their trails. We will continue to lean on your courage, your vision, your wisdom, your intelligence, and your insight, your vigilance, your example and hope.

O Exemplary Political Visionary!

You stood, in the darkest hours and throughout your life on the right side of history. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. You loved your land and became the icon of freedom, with your fist always defiantly raised to the very end, unbowed, symbolising that the struggle continues. The day of freedom continues to come and become. Your children Zinzi and Zenani are many and many more are multiplying by the day! And the day will come!

You did not die, but multiplied.

You stood! Stood so tall in so many places at once, and in the place of so many.

Stayed.

Stayed the course. You, who with others loved Africa so much, who loved Africa's children, who loved your own children and family so much that you were willing to pay and paid multiple high prices! From being incarcerated, exiled, banished, separated from your loved ones, beaten, tortured, disenfranchised! But you kept going! While so many others fell by the wayside, colluded, grew weary, while others perished, and others paid and continue to pay with their livelihoods and suffering, while others have paid the ultimate price! How could we forget the monster of Apartheid and what it did and continues to do to the children of Africa and the world?

We celebrate you! We pour libation as the heavens open with thunder and lightning at your farewell and we are thankful to the Gods and ancestors.

Even the heavens join in weeping, celebrating your greatness!

We will forever commemorate you in deed and thought and you will forever remain in our hearts.

History will remember you the Great Leader Queen Madikizela-Mandela, the Great One of Africa! Amandla! Amandla! Amandla!

Lala Salama Mama Mzalendo Wetu! Lala Ngoxolo. Rest in Peace! Hamba Kahle.

Mayibuye i-Africa!

Channelling the spirits who manifested while I was writing in no particular order:

The 1956 Women's March, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Nelson Mandela, Zenani Mandela-Dlamini, Zinzi Mandela, Lebogang Mashile, Graca Marcel, Pitika Ntuli, Dumile Conco and family, Bhekiziwe (Bek), Abdilatif Abdallah, Diane Abbot, Nelson Mandela, Dedan Kimathi, Claudia Jones, Ranjana Ash, Sojourner Truth, Micere Mugo, Wangari Maathai, Lilian Ngoyi, Albertina Sisulu, Ruth First, Pio Gama Pinto, Those who fought for Kenya's land and freedom particularly Dedan Kimathi, Desiree Lewis, Keiko Miyamoto, Harry Thuku and the women who came to free him in the "Riot" of 1922, Mekatilili wa Mwanje, Carole Boyce Davis, Wandia Njoya, Muthoni Wanyeki, Muthoni Likimani, Queen Amina of Zaria, Ayi Kwei Armah, Ama Ata Aidoo, Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru, Anumbai Patel, Mbuya Nehanda, Muraa wa Ngiti, Mmatsilo Tumei Motsei, Gcina Mhlope, Angela Davies, Fatimah Kelleher, Maya Angelou, The Berlin Crew, The Bayreuth Posse, Phoebe Boswell, Wanjiru Kihoro, Nish Matenjwa, Audre Lorde, Miriam Makeba, Toni Morrison, Pumla Gqola, Njabulo Ndebele, Mbulelo Mzamane, Vusi Mchunu, Amrit Wilson, Diana Ferrus, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Miriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Steve Biko, Jessica Horn, Bumi Matlayane Sexuale, Sibongile Ndashe, all the Weavers; Umoja; All African Feminists, Black Feminists, Women and feminist movements world-wide, All African Freedom Movements, Black Lives Matter, The Feminist Forum, particularly the dearly departed; The brave people of South Africa, particularly all those who fought for, and those who died for freedom; The brave feminists & women of Kenya and Africa who continue to defy all kinds of odds. The brave people of Africa and the Africana world. The brave people everywhere who continue to fight for a free, equitable and just world. And remembering all those who perished for Africa's freedom.

Kweli itashinda kesho...

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