Nelson Mandela Dies at 95

On December 5th, 2013 Nelson Mandela passed away. He was an anti-Apartheid revolutionary and politician in South Africa. A leader of the African National Congress, the largest opposition movement to the Apartheid regime, Mandela was sentenced to life in prison for conspiring to overthrow the government. He would later become a symbol of the resistance movement, and be released from prison due to international and domestic pressure after 27 years. He would go on to become South Africa’s first democratically-elected president, overseeing the transition from apartheid to true democracy, and is remembered as an icon for freedom and equality.

Syrian Civil War Rages On

The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, continues to this day. The troubled country has been living under the oppressive regime of Bashar Al-Assad, and its citizens revolted as part of the Arab Spring Movement, which has led to changes around the Arab world. Assad has repressed the resistance violently, violating international bans on chemical weapons, and Syria has degenerated into complete civil war. The resistance movement is heterogeneous, and many extremist groups have taken advantage of this chaos to promote their own agendas. The question of whether or not a government transition in Syria would be best remains a matter of debate around the world.
Malala Yousafzai Delivers Speech to UN General Assembly

The right of Education For Every Child

Dear friends, on 9 October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead. They shot my friends, too. They thought that the bullets would silence us, but they failed. And out of that silence came thousands of voices. The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions. But nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage were born. I am the same Malala. My ambitions are the same. My hopes are the same. And my dreams are the same. Dear sisters and brothers, I am not against anyone. Neither am I here to speak in terms of personal revenge against the Taliban or any other terrorist group. I am here to speak for the right of education for every child. I want education for the sons and daughters of the Taliban and all the terrorists and extremists.

Even if there was a gun in my hand and he was standing in front of me, I would not shoot him. This is the compassion I have learned from Mohamed, the prophet of mercy, Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha. This is the legacy of change I have inherited from Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. This is the philosophy of nonviolence that I have learned from Gandhi, Bacha Khan and Mother Teresa. And this is the forgiveness that I have learned from my father and from my mother. This is what my soul is telling me: be peaceful and love everyone.

Dear sisters and brothers, we realise the importance of light when we see darkness. We realise the importance of our voice when we are silenced. In the same way, we realised the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns. The wise saying, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” It is true. The extremists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. The power of the voice of women frightens them (...) And I remember that there was a boy in our school who was asked by a journalist: “Why are the Taliban against education?” He answered very simply by pointing to his book, he said: “A Talib doesn’t know what is written inside this book.”

http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/
Equal Civil Rights For All Americans

50 years on, Nation Pauses to Remember John F. Kennedy's Death

John Fitzgerald Kennedy served as the president of the United States from January 20th, 1961 until his assassination on November 22nd, 1963. One of America’s most popular presidents, he is remembered for his work on the Apollo Space Program, his service during the Cold War, and his work on civil rights. He supported Martin Luther King.

2013 sees the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King’s famous “I have a dream” speech delivered in 1963.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation (...)

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood (...)

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today! (...)

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. (...)

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. (...)

...when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: “Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”
Can Security and Civil Liberties Be Reconciled?

Edward Snowden Reveals United States Spying

A former contractor for the American National Security Agency, Edward Snowden, began revealing secret details about American government spying on June 5th, 2013. The government had been covertly collecting phone and e-mail data from all Americans, which most people believe to be a violation of the American Constitution’s guarantees of privacy. Not only this, but the government spied on many people internationally as well, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, which elicited an apology from Barack Obama. Snowden is currently a political refugee and has been living in Russia for some time. The American government has accused him of treason and has demanded that Russia hand him over, but the latter has refused. Many people view Snowden as a hero, and there are others who view him as a villain. His revelations have raised the discussion of the tradeoff between privacy and security: at what point should we stop sacrificing privacy in the interest of security? How far is too far?

The Tyranny of Freedom

Even absolute power is sometimes a bit limited!

90% of the American people support universal background checks that make it harder for a dangerous person to buy a gun. But 90 percent of Republicans in the Senate in Washington voted against that idea on April the 17th, 2013.
Opinions of the Editors

Florian CHENE
I’m happy to be in Boston today to talk to you.
- Martin Luther King was a fighter for freedom for black people throughout his life.
- A world where disabled and non-disabled can work together.
- I dream of a world where women are equal to men.
- A world where women are paid the same as men.
- A world where a woman is the president of the US.

Arthur LE GOANVEC
I want to talk about dictatorship in the world, in particular in China and North Korea. There is no freedom; the citizens are detained in their own countries! This is tyranny! The freedom of expression is banned!

Maxence BERNARD
I’m going to talk about racism, poverty and discrimination. I want a world without poverty, without racism, without discrimination. We must fight against racism, poverty and discrimination in the world. I’d like to change the world or eradicate racism that is present in many countries, but how? I do not understand why racism exists, as we all live on the same land and we must be equal!

Clément SORIN
I have a dream that there will not be any racism in the future.

I want racism to no longer exist. I would like it if discrimination no longer existed between people. I want peace in the world.

Firstly I want no racism against people of colour. I have a dream that people of all colours will be more integrated in society.

Secondly, I want no discrimination based on a person’s weight. I have a dream that there will be no insults towards skinny people or overweight people, that there will be more respect.

Finally, I want more help for the poor people. I have a dream that poor people will have housing. In conclusion; I want liberty, equality and brotherhood.
Opinions of the Editors

Amaury FANOUILLERE
-I have a dream that society will better protect the vulnerable.
-I have a dream that people will not use physical or psychological violence.
-I have a dream that the disabled will have equal access.
-I have a dream that there won’t be any discrimination between men and women at work.
-I have a dream that poor people will have housing.

I have a dream that there will be no poverty. I want racism to no longer exist. I would like it if discrimination no longer existed between people. I want peace in the world.

Arthur GRAILLOT
I want to talk about racism. I think that racism is still present in a large number of countries. We must fight against racism in the world so that all men have the same rights and the same freedoms. Racism is a serious act against a person. I think that every man whether he has white or black skin has the right to the same respect. Even though apartheid ended, racism is still present; for example the “Front National” in France. In conclusion, I think that it is necessary to put an end to racism in the world one way or another.

 Violentating basic human rights in the name of security

Maxence GANACHEAU
I think that, in this world, a lot of people are not respected in prison; they are mistreated and they are abused. For example, in Guantanamo, prisoners are battered by guards, and the guards fight and shoot the prisoners, but the prisoners are fighting back with knives and other weapons. I think that Guantanamo should close because it is a place of violence and I want peace in the world. Also, I think that prisoners with life sentences should be more respected.

Nathan PALMER, Boston, USA
I feel that the prison at Guantanamo Bay is unjust and I hope that it will one day be closed. In America, torture and imprisonment without a fair trial are both illegal, yet both of these things are allowed to happen at Guantanamo Bay because it is located outside of American territory. The government of the United States argues that this prison allows it to better fight terrorism and to keep its people safer, which may be true to a certain extent, but that does not justify the violation of one's own laws of basic human rights. In my opinion, there can be no justification for that; the United States should under no circumstances have the right to do beyond its borders that which is illegal within them. It is for these reasons that I think that the prison at Guantanamo Bay should be closed.

Nathan is our English Language Assistant at the Michelet Vocational School of Nantes.