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ANDREW BOLT

The dark side of Nelson Mandela

Andrew Bolt, HeraldSun

December 9, 2013 12:00am



MUCH of the sanctimonious grieving for Nelson Mandela is not just a sin against history - but a danger.

It is true Mandela rose to greatness. Freed after 27 years in a South African jail, the anti-apartheid fighter emerged not bent on vengeance but healing.

He negotiated a peaceful end to apartheid, and as the first president of democratic South Africa, preached - and practised - reconciliation. In this he was great. A healer. An inspiration.

For many whites abroad, he seems even Christ-like - someone who'd suffered for the sins of white guilt, and absolved those who believed in him of the sin of racism.

But Mandela was no Christ nor even Gandhi nor Martin Luther King. He was for decades a man of violence. In 1961, he broke with African National Congress colleagues who preached non-violence, creating a terrorist wing.

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Current president Jacob Zuma until recently still publicly sang the anti-apartheid song, *Shoob the Boer*, in a still-divided country where many white farmers have been shot.

Mandela's support for other leaders of violence is even less forgivable. He maintained close ties to Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and backed Palestinian terrorist leader Yasser Arafat. As president in 1997, he gave his country's highest award for a foreigner to Libya's dictator, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, who'd donated \$10 million to the ANC. He gave the same award to the corrupt Indonesian president Suharto, who he said had donated \$60 million.

He supported Nigerian coup leader Sani Abacha, refusing to say a word publicly to stop the 1995 hanging of activist Ken Saro-Wiwa.

I repeat, Mandela did great things. But many of his more radical supporters in the West now use that greatness to wash clean his record of political violence - and his support for dictators who'd used it.

That is dangerous.

