

They're all at it. The monarchy, the Tories, the tabloids and every two bit reactionary this country has managed to produce over the last fifty years. All sing praises to Nelson Mandela, all ring out condemnations of the wicked apartheid system. All tearfully celebrate the saintly life of the magnanimous one. It seems we're all rainbow democrats now. It makes you wonder how apartheid managed to last a day let alone fifty years.

But it was not always thus. Many of those now mourning the father of the rainbow nation were not that long ago branding him a vile, communist loving terrorist. You know who I mean. The one with the handbag. That close friend of the murderous Chilean dictator who also just happened to be apartheid's greatest foreign friend. The one that allowed the white South African rugby team to tour the UK. The one that tried to criminalise those that sought to oppose apartheid and its political and economic backers. That's right, the recently deceased Margaret Thatcher. And the British colonial minded establishment lined right up behind her. By their friends shall we know them.

And with all this tearfulness and heartfelt tributes, those hundreds of other leaders within South Africa that fought the apartheid regime, Steve Biko, Chris Hani and Winnie Mandela to name but a few, have all but been airbrushed out of history. No mention of course of Umkhonto we Sizwe and the decade's long armed struggle. Little or no mention of the heroic part played by the South African Communist Party and its trade union affiliates. And absolutely no mention of the role played by the Cuban and Angolan troops at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale. All that revolutionary history had to be jettisoned to make the story fit and proper for Daily Mail readers.

Just listening to Cameron effuse over this freshly sanitised life of Mandela turns the stomach. Mandela went to jail for planting bombs against the murderous apartheid system. The system of governance he opposed was not some misguided but well-meaning form of government. No Mr Cameron, it was a fascist government carrying out a clearly defined fascist ideology. This was not a government which you might care to sit on the fence about. You either condemned it wholeheartedly or you aided and abetted it. Apartheid was, in essence, the last shout of European fascism, and I'm afraid Mr Cameron, your beloved Mrs Thatcher consistently backed the wrong side. So did that nice little old lady and the rest of the parasitic Windsor family currently holed up in the state funded palaces dotted around Britain. All of them backed the wrong side because all of them have, when push comes to shove, have racist and fascist sympathies. Remember Edward VIII?

Oh, and I nearly forgot, Dennis, Mrs Thatcher's dear husband had considerable business interests in apartheid South Africa. What a surprise.

And don't all our freshly converted rainbow democrats just love the Truth and Reconciliation councils. Yes, this process did have some obvious merits and it may just have prevented a post- apartheid protracted civil war, but to be honest, I can't help feeling that some

Nuremburg type trials would have been more appropriate. Given the magnitude of their crimes, at the very least the leading proponents of apartheid should have been put on trial for crimes against humanity, and then summarily executed. Perhaps then there would have been time and place for mutual reconciliation. But to equate the murderous violence committed by apartheid with the legitimate armed struggle against that barbaric regime is simply wrong.

And when it comes to hypocrisy, the reactionary right-wing establishment in Britain and the US does not have a total monopoly. There are certain ANC leaders today who, busy, busy with their own glowing tributes to Mandela, must have sanctioned the recent shooting dead of striking miners by predominantly black police. Known as the Marikana massacre, this bloody affair was just the tip of a wave of strikes in the South African mining sector. Whether you are shot by Afrikana apartheid troops or black police sanctioned by black ANC official you are equally dead. And we should note that the predominately white owned platinum and gold mines are still making obscene profits from the near slave labour of the black South African miners. Some plain speaking by the ANC

leadership would be greatly welcomed if the legacy of Mandela is to have any substantial meaning. Real politics is always messy, but shooting your own striking citizens in the back cannot be what Mandela envisaged for his country.

Mandela's funeral is a chance for some recognition of past crimes and misdemeanours by all parties, but I'm fairly sure there won't be much of it around.

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