**Apartheid Super Spy, Craig Williamson’s**

**Trails of Death and Destruction: The Scandinavian Connection.**

**Responses to recent exposures in Jyllands Posten**

Prithiraj Dullay (Pritz)

It was early in the October 1977 morning that they came. Ironically, they came on the morning of the Hindu festival of lights called Diwali, celebrating justice over injustice, light over darkness and truth over untruth. They stormed into our home in Albesville, Port Shepstone in South Africa. Four burly Security Policemen swarmed in to take me into detention for leading a ‘subversive’ organization of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Little did I know that there was a Danish-Swedish connection to the termination of Biko and the massive crackdown across South Africa on all Black Consciousness organizations, including the one I led. Little did I realise at the time, that less than a year later we would be forced into exile in Denmark, of all places! By that time I had already escaped two assassination attempts on my life and that of my family. I had been beaten up, my telephone tapped and mail routinely checked. I was also placed under surveillance, all of it care of the notorious Security Police, and unbeknown to me at the time, of Craig Williamson and the Switzerland, Geneva based International University Exchange Fund (IUEF).

Just a month earlier on 12 September 1977, Steve Biko, the iconic, charismatic leader and father of Black Consciousness had been murdered by Apartheid Security Police. They had transported Biko to Pretoria over 1000 km away in the back of a Land Rover. He was naked, chained and in a comatose state after they had beaten him severely during repeated torture in the coastal city of Port Elizabeth. He died of brain damage shortly after admission to a state hospital. Biko had been arrested six days earlier at a police roadblock just outside the city. Biko had broken the terms of the Apartheid banning order that restricted him to his hometown of King Williamstown by traveling to Cape Town, where he attended a meeting that planned on smuggling him out to neighbouring Botswana for a meeting with the banned African National Congress (ANC). The purpose of the meeting was to form an alliance of the BCM with the ANC. The possible name of such a alliance that was touted in underground circles at the time was the Azanian Liberation Front (ALF). *Note: Azania is the alternative name for S Africa favoured by the Pan Africanists and the BCM.*

The reason for such an alliance was clear. The ANC from its position in exile, was not capable of launching mass insurrection as the BCM had in the Soweto uprising of 1976-1977, which quickly spread to all the urban areas of the country. An alliance had all the possibility of using the historical expertise of the older ANC and the militant mobilisation made possible by the BCM. It was this that the Apartheid regime feared most viz. a unity of the resistance groups fighting Apartheid.

It must be remembered that the ferocity of the youth resistance and the speed at which it spread to virtually all the black townships in 1976-77 and across the country caught the Apartheid regime on the back foot. It was further alarming that the BCM attracted the militant students and youth from the Indian and Coloured communities. It was this unity and the clear possibility of an alliance of forces that Craig Williamson and the entire Apartheid intelligence community did their utmost to destroy. And much of that he achieved with Danish and Swedish funding through the Geneva based IUEF!

Just how did this happen? Through the 1970s one English speaking white South African was given his brief by the S African Security Police: Infiltrate the English speaking National Union of S African Students (NUSAS), who were seen to oppose the Apartheid government and report on their activities. That young man was Craig Williamson, Agent RS167. Although there were many concerns with his police ‘past’, he lied to cover up and quickly rose through the ranks to become the deputy president of NUSAS. He had learnt the jargon of the student left and was soon at the forefront of white student protests against Apartheid.

Just a few years earlier Biko and other student leaders at the segregated black campuses, who had been members of NUSAS grew disillusioned that the almost totally white NUSAS did not represent black students nor could it articulate their concerns. In 1969 the South African Students’ Organisation (SASO) representing the interests of black students was formed and the break with NUSAS was final. I mention this as many of us who moved over to SASO were previously active in NUSAS and knew the leadership of the organization such as Neville Curtis (whose activist sister, Jeanette and her eight year old daughter, Katryn were killed by a parcel bomb sent by Craig Williams in 1982), Paula Ensor, Paul Pretorious and a host of others with a liberal bent of mind. After graduating as a teacher in Durban at the end of 1970 I began teaching in my hometown, Port Shepstone and became less involved in student politics in favour of direct, local activism.

In all that time, Williamson was filing regular reports to his handler in the notorious Security Police. But the success of his work as a spy for Apartheid was a stepping stone to greater things that awaited him. White student politics was just so much small change. He had been groomed for the dark world of international espionage. His public cover image as an anti-apartheid activist was polished and pushed. As early as 1975, he met with Lars Gunnar Eriksson, the Swedish director of the IUEF. At the time Eriksson was already channeling money to a range of genuine anti-apartheid organizations in S Africa and Latin America. Funds were readily available from the Scandinavian countries and other lands. Denmark was a key donor.

The story hereafter reads as a comic-farce, if it not were for the incredible damage it left in its wake in the whole of Southern Africa and particularly in South Africa. We have good ground to believe that after the Williamson bombing of the ANC office in London in May 1982, the focus shifted to mainland Europe. The killing of ANC representative in France, Dulcie September and the attempted shooting of the representative in Brussels, Motsepe, was carefully orchestrated to hide the collaboration of EU countries in obtaining arms for S Africa in contravention of the United Nations arms embargo. The assassination of Swedish premier and Erikssen’s confidant, Olaf Palmer in Stockholm in 1986 pointed a finger at the S African Security Services. The sheer ineptitude and gross bungling of the Swedish security services let the assassin/s slip away.

Let us get back to the developments in Geneva. Erikssen was so blinded by his ‘luck’ in finding one as committed as Williamson to anti-apartheid work, that he proposed that Williamson become his deputy director at the IUEF, without Williamson having even applied for the advertised post! Even more damnable was Erikssen’s incredible naivety in not running a security check on Williamson. He had already been warned that Williamson had connections to the police in SA in the past. I find the naivety of the man unacceptable for any reason at all. The words of the renowned Danish philosopher and existentialist, Soren Kirkegaard (1813-1855) ring true for Erikssen. Kirkegaard says:

 ***There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what is not true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true.***

As a black S African, I must ask of Erikssen, whether he was more comfortable with a white S African as the head of one of the world’s most powerful anti-apartheid bodies, flush with large amounts of money? Was this some warped kind of racial solidarity? Had he given enough thought to the incredible power he had handed over to Williamson in terms of money and potential? Inevitably, I am forced to ask if Erikssen placed value on the thousands of black lives he negatively impacted upon? Williamson has said that Erikssen was the director in name, but that Williamson ran the day-to-day operations. In other words Erikssen had given Williamson carte blanche to run the IUEF as a one man operation! Were there checks and accountability built into the operational system? The simple answer is: No.

The Apartheid South African Security Services were handed a golden platter of gifts that included:

* Exposing all the key anti-apartheid organizations operating in S Africa and those persons living in exile;
* Luring the same organizations with funding, on condition that the organizations submitted written reports of their operations, which were then redirected immediately to the Security Police in S Africa for whatever action that was necessary to neutralise the organizations and the activists. That included imprisonment, bannings, torture, exiling and even the death of some;
* The provision of almost unlimited funds under the control of Williamson;
* Saving the SA security Services millions in surveillance and payment to informers;
* Undermining the efforts of the resistance inside and outside S Africa;
* Achieving exactly the opposite goals of the purposes that the IUEF was set up for and consequently delaying the liberation of S Africa by several years!
* It was a bonanza for Apartheid and hell for those opposed to it.

How did this impact on me? Outside of the Durban operations, I, together with others, created and led one of the largest BCM centers that was based on the concepts of black self-reliance and self-help. It was designed to counter the terrible negations of Apartheid and liberate the mind of the oppressed: the body could only be liberated if the mind was emptied of all the internalized negations and replaced with one of self-belief and inner confidence. In brief, we defined our reality and ourselves in terms that totally rejected white value systems and valorisations. Biko sums it up when he said: “Black man, you are on your own”. The center focused on education for workers at night classes, classroom building projects, a bursary project, the establishment of a library, a workers’ advice center, a tenants’ association, sports development and discussion groups, all through self-generated funds. The South African Council of Churches (an affiliate of the World Council of Churches) did provide some funds in the last year of our existence. Above all we taught the overthrow of fear, which was the most powerful tool of control of the Apartheid regime. We refused to be cowered down by fear, even of death! If we had to die, then fighting for our freedom was worth the sacrifice. That was the turning point: fear held no more terror.

It was this new freedom that terrified Williamson and the entire white power structure and they sought to destroy it with a vengeance...with the bonanza provided by Scandinavia and the IUEF!

Let us move on to the period of our arrival as refugees in Denmark in 1978. Almost immediately after having being granted refugee status, we became aware that the Danish Refugee Council in Aarhus had one set of unwritten rules for those who were ostensibly fleeing persecution in communist countries (such as the Vietnamese boat people) and those of us who had fled from fascist regimes such as S Africa and Chile. We were housed in blocks of concrete apartments in Grofthojparken, across the road from the offices of Jyllands Posten. It was here that we became aware that Williamson’s surveillance had followed us right into exile with the naive (sinister?) co-operation of the the Danish authorities. Having arrived in exile as a graduate teacher at high school level, I was a good teacher of English, Fine Art and the History of Art and I appealed to be placed into a teaching position. The then head of the Refugee Council, Helga Griffin, would not hear of it (for not a single good reason) and offered me jobs as a gardener, a welder or a brick layer! Of course, I was offered to get a Danish qualification and then possibly in four or so years, apply to teach. I refused. For this refusal, we were punished as a family.

This took several forms. Refugees are re-housed in a matter of six months as a rule. This was withheld from us because, as we were told, that I did not have a job. We knew that this did not apply to the other refugees. Many had no qualification at all, nor were they able to communicate in Danish or in English. Worse still, we were ordered to move SIX times in the period of our stay in Grofthojparken among the three concrete blocks and between floors. The reason for the orders was the preparing of the flat we occupied for newly arrived refugees! Why could the refugees not be moved into the flats that we were told to move into? Nothing made sense. It was just an abuse of power for purposes of punishment. When, by accident, one of the Council officials found us a flat in the city, we prepared to move into it but the chief blocked the move, citing the no job rule. Quietly, the embarrassed official told us that there was no such rule!

From the very first month of our arrival, I began receiving unsolicited packages of materials sent to me by the IUEF in Geneva. My suspicions were aroused immediately. For the safety of my family, I used to go outdoors between the blocks to open the packages just in case it was a parcel bomb. All seemed legitimate. What happened next was startling. As we were moved to the six different apartments, on each and every occasion packages of IUEF books and materials arrived at precisely the correct address where we were moved to! I had not informed IUEF of any new address. There was only one conclusion to draw: the Danish Refugee Council was passing on this information via Danish Intelligence Services (called PET in Danish) to the IUEF. That was a mind-blowing discovery. The Refugee Council denied any passing on of information. But the writing was there for us to see as if it were up in neon lights! Our security was being horrifically compromised by Danish authorities to an unvetted organization in a foreign country! Essentially, that was a breach of the one of the many United Nations conventions on the protection of refugees by host countries.

In 1990 there was a further attempt to assassinate me when the inner side of my car tyre was cut just enough so that it would burst during driving. This happened just before a quick trip to Flensborg in Germany. As luck would have it, I pulled up at a filling station to top my petrol, as it was cheaper to do so in Germany. Seconds after stopping the front left hand tyre exploded. The German mechanics were startled, but rushed to see what had caused the tyre burst. They helped to remove the tyre and found distinct marks of a sharp cutting object such as a dagger to have caused the marks and the cut on the inner side that eventually led to the burst. They believed that whoever carried out the deed, wanted not to puncture my tyre, but to deliberately weaken the cut area so as to cause a burst while the car was moving. I had just been driving at 100 kph on the freeway for two hours! We were shaken.

The final attempted assassination took place in October 1992, shortly after our return to S Africa. Our daughter, Sureka and I walked up to the main entrance of the block of apartments in Durban at 22h00 to say goodbye to visiting family and to wait for the Danish boyfriend of our older daughter, who had gone to a kiosk to buy cigarettes. In the street lighting of the busy street I spotted a short man crossing the road towards us. His dressing and mannerisms alerted something deep inside me. This was an operative from the Security Police and possibly an Apartheid assassin! He passed us and opened his attache’ case. I screamed at my daughter to run. In seconds two shots rang out and embedded themselves in the wall where we had been standing a moment ago. The returning boyfriend, from a distance saw him calmly put something into his case and walk on. Was the hit ordered by Williamson? I had returned to S Africa after 14 years and after having mobilised the Danish public, the Danish Government as well as the Icelandic and Faeroese government through the Anti-Apartheid Movement and influenced the imposition of EU Economic Sanctions. My activism had certainly caused a mountain of difficulties for the Apartheid regime. Williamson must have been fuming. By his own admission, he (Williamson) says that the war of destabilization continued right up to the point when the first democratic elections were held in April 1994, long after the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC and all banned political organizations.

Can Craig Williamson be forgiven?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established by the ANC and heavily influenced by Mandela and Arch Bishop Tutu to begin to reconcile South Africans from 350 years of brutal colonialism and Apartheid. It simply required of the perpetrators of violence from the Apartheid side and from the forces of the resistance to Apartheid to confess and then grant the perpetrators forgiveness and amnesty from prosecution.

I was appalled and was vehemently opposed to the TRC process. At the end of WW2 there was the famous Nuremberg Trials in Germany during which the Nazi war criminals were tried and prosecuted. I appealed for S Africa’s own war crimes tribunal to bring a sense of justice and reconciliation to the people of S Africa. There were great similarities between Nazism and Apartheid, right through from the philosophies of the ‘master race’ underpinning each, and the systematic denial of human rights and its active suppression. The fundamentals that informed both ideologies were based on an unadulterated racism that served to utterly de-humanise people deemed the ‘other’.

It was, and remains my belief that reconciliation had been taken to the point of absurdity in S Africa. The TRC was putting on ‘trial’ people from the resisters of Apartheid on a common platform of judgment with the upholders of the Apartheid Crime Against Humanity (as defined by the UN)! The WW2 equivalent would have been to place all the French, Dutch, Belgian and Jewish Resistance fighters on trial at Nuremberg! How could the families of those murdered, tortured, imprisoned for decades, the disappeared and the displaced reconcile at all, when they knew that the torturers and killers of their loved ones were walking free? Steve Biko’s killers are still free and enjoy state pensions, while his wife, sons and friends still find no closure. Reconciliation processes have been carried out in Rwanda, Guatemala, Chile and other countries to seek a way forward from a traumatic past. But no country other than S Africa has had such a process that involved the right to grant amnesty from prosecution of perpetrators. To date no other state has had this TRC type quasi-judicial power to dispense justice.

Let us return to the TRC and Williamson’s plea to the TRC that he was ‘sorry’ for what he had done; that he was just a ‘soldier’ engaged in a fight in a war zone. Being born just after the end of WW2 in April 1949, just two years after my own birth, Williamson was subjected to the same British newsreels that churned out the horrors of the aftermath of Nazism in all cinemas and newspapers across the world. Even as a black S African, I was very aware of the Nazi atrocities through these same sources right up to the late 1960s. Let us remember that he came from a very English speaking background that must have made him hate the Nazis as much as his cousins in Britain. A year earlier in 1948, the Afrikaner National Party (NP) came to power and ousted the very conservative English speaking United Party (UP) of General Smuts. Almost immediately the NP began to implement the total segregation of S Africa based on the best for the whites and just the miserable crumbs for the black people. Although this was termed Apartheid, it must be understood that blatant discrimination based on race began as soon as the first white colonists landed in 1652. This could not have been new to Williamson. Although just about 11 years old in 1960, he could not have missed the news of the terrible massacre of 69 unarmed black protesters at Sharpeville, outside Johannesburg or the massacre of 11 persons at Langa in the Cape. He could not hide away from the misery of the lives of all people of colour and that the ideology of Apartheid was directly responsible for this abomination.

It is my belief that Williamson, through his own allegiance to white supremacy and the good life that Apartheid held for all white people, nailed his colours to the Apartheid mast. He knew that there were great similarities between Nazism and Apartheid and that he made a carefully calculated choice in the career paths he had chosen. He did not become a just another white collar worker or a businessman, he offered himself to the notorious and dreaded Security Police. He opted to be a part of the Apartheid Crime Against Humanity, fully understanding the consequences of his actions. He was not duped into joining. He was highly articulate, well educated and came from a rich background. He made his choices, fully aware of the implications. So I do not buy the twaddle he peddles that his was a fight against communism.

In fact, he was so persuasive that he disclosed his real spy identity to Ingrid, his Danish wife. What of Ingrid herself? She received her education in Denmark and was aware of the history of Denmark’s role against the Nazis and the democracy that emerged in her home country? Why was she comfortable with what Williamson did? Perhaps the answer is to be found among the 20 000 Danes who lived permanently in S Africa at the time and who uttered not a word against Apartheid. *(*T*hese figures are quoted from the Danish Kirkenes Raceprogram research of the 1970s)*. I believe that no one with a conscience based on a fair morality can so blunt that morality that it blinds the sense of justice. Truth be told, Ingrid was an Apartheid collaborator through her silence and acquiescing to Williamson’s ‘profession’. Had she listened to the higher voice of her conscience and helped to blow Williamson's cover earlier, then a great deal of misery could have been avoided. Through her silence she cast her die as well. Archbishop Tutu articulates it so well when he says:

 *“When one has chosen to remain silent in the face of oppression;*

 *one has chosen the side of the oppressor.”*

Ingrid most certainly did, just as her infamous husband.

The TRC granted Williamson full amnesty for his vile deeds in October 1999 after he claimed to be ‘sorry’ for his actions. For me and millions of South Africans this was a great travesty of justice. Right now, I believe that Craig Williamson has exposed his true self, his intentions and his unrepentantness when he told Danish journalist, Henrik Thomson, “I regret nothing...!”

We believe that if he cannot be charged for crimes against the people of S Africa, inside S Africa, then he should be charged in the International Court of Justice. He should forfeit his freedom just as he helped to forfeit the right to life of so many. He is an Apartheid monster, no less.

 The final aspect of this sordid tale is the role of the Danish Secret Service (PET). Danish journalists and the co-authors of the expose’, Marie Louise Albers and Henrik Thomsen have uncovered that immediately upon the exposure of Williamson as an Apartheid spy, tons of IUEF materials were hastily hauled to Copenhagen and placed into an archive with a embargo period of 80 years! Just what was so secret in the documents that it required this drastic measure? Perhaps more startling is that PET had so-called “unofficial contact” with the Apartheid S African Security Service (SASS) from 1968, right through the blowing the cover of Williamson and the IUEF in 1980 and up to 1985. This covers a period of 17 years! PET’s official bland explanations notwithstanding, I believe that a rational explanation is owed to both the people of Denmark and to the people of S Africa. Too many lives were compromised, destroyed and or altered forever to gloss over a time of great pain and convolutions to millions.

Postscript

To the Danish journalists who have exposed this series of betrayals, you have our gratitude for a job well done. Laying some of the ghosts of the past to rest helps, but there are many more who remain very restless!

*This column is dedicated to the memory of Steve Biko, Jeanette, Katryn and Marius Schoon and the many fighters for freedom in S Africa, who gave their lives in the pursuit of democracy.*

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