

## Driven to death by political cult?

**INVESTIGATION** A student died after a cult meeting in 2003. A connection is under investigation

Berlin *taz* More than twelve years after the death of British student Jeremiah Duggan near Wiesbaden, the investigators are about to revise their original diagnosis of a suicide. As the responsible Public Prosecutor's Office said upon request, investigations are under way against a 40-year-old German and a 36-year-old supposed French citizen in connection with the mysterious death. Both are alleged to be members of the LaRouche cult. According to information available to the *taz*, the German was previously allegedly a bodyguard of the US cult leader Lyndon LaRouche.

Duggan, who was 22 at the time, had participated in March 2003, in the course of the Iraq War, in a conference of the Schiller Institute, a kind of think tank of the rightist political cult. He was apparently not aware of the connection to the LaRouche movement, which is known for its crude conspiracy theories and an extreme leadership cult. The German branch is Bürgerrechtsbewegung Solidarität (BüSo), headed by LaRouche's wife Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

In the night of his death, Duggan had phoned his mother and told her that he was in "big trouble." Shortly thereafter, he was hit by two cars on the B 455. The police conducted a superficial investigation, refrained from having a post mortem performed and from investigating in the circles in which Duggan had spent time before. After two and a half months, they closed the file.

Duggan's parents, however, did not believe in the theory of suicide. It is thanks to their tenacious dedication that the Wiesbaden Public Prosecutor's Office had to take up investigations again in December 2012 – following an order of the Oberlandesgericht (OLG) Frankfurt am Main, which sees an initial suspicion for bodily harm resulting in death.

According to Berlin attorney Serdar Kaya, who represents the Duggan family, about a dozen witnesses have been interviewed since then. For the first time, the drivers whose cars Duggan ran in front of were questioned; statements by conference attendees were recorded as well. An accused had also been interviewed.

In late March, a Coroner's Court in London examined the case. In the brief verdict, the judge wrote that Duggan's body had shown "a number of unexplained injuries" that cannot have resulted from the collision with the cars. Witnesses had also said that Duggan had been beaten and chased onto the road, said Kaya. To him, the following is clear: "The theory of suicide has been rejected. Nothing speaks for it, but much against it." He forwarded the verdict to Wiesbaden, together with the "suggestion to investigate within the LaRouche movement."

The London judge wrote that Duggan had perhaps been viewed as "a risk to members of the organization." In fact, Duggan fulfilled criteria that may have caused LaRouche adherents to suspect that he was a spy. Duggan had revealed that he was a British Jew – both being characteristics that signify particular power, according to the LaRouche doctrine.

Previous treatment in the London Tavistock Clinic could also have become Duggan's undoing. The cult suspects that the clinic conducts brainwashing. All this might have resulted in "paranoid delusions" on the part of the LaRouche members, says Kaya.

Whether the investigations will be intensified in this direction is questionable, however. The same police officer is assigned to the case as twelve years ago.

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