

Germany: More links revealed between secret service and NSU terror gang

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New facts have come to light revealing the close links between the far-right terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU), the secret service and police authorities. The NSU is charged with killing nine immigrants and a police officer between 2000 and 2006. Where the activities of the state end and those of the far-right terrorists begin is increasingly murky, with no clear dividing line.

This has been confirmed by new evidence from the NSU Committee of Inquiry of the Baden-Württemberg state parliament. The inquiry concerns the death of an important witness to the murder of female police officer, Michèle Kiesewetter, in Heilbronn.

According to the online edition of *Die Welt*, witness Florian Heilig knew “who shot police officer Michèle Kiesewetter”. He testified to this effect in 2011, i.e., prior to the uncovering of the NSU in November of the same year. He was preparing to provide details of the murder and the involvement of the police with the neo-Nazi scene to the State Criminal Police in Stuttgart. Eight hours before his planned testimony he was found dead.

According to the official version, on the morning of September 16, 2013, Heilig was found burnt to death in his car in Stuttgart, allegedly due to a “broken heart”. There was no suicide note. The investigators claim they found this out from “family circles”. But his family and all those who knew Heilig have consistently denied he committed suicide. His girlfriend was never questioned by the police.

While the claim of suicide as a result of a broken heart was implausible at the time, now it can be seen as a deliberate falsehood. The files regarding Heilig’s death, reviewed by the Committee of Inquiry, show that no serious investigation was carried out.

One witness who approached the police has now spoken to *Junge Welt*, claiming he saw a man near Heilig’s car before it caught fire. He was not questioned and his evidence was not recorded in the files. The mobile phone, laptop and video camera belonging to Heilig were not taken into evidence but were left in the burnt-out car. A car key, or bunch of keys, belonging to Heilig were not found.

The then 21-year old Heilig had quit the neo-Nazi scene two years earlier. When he was active, he is alleged to have met the NSU terrorist Beate Zschäpe, among others. In mid-2011, he entered a programme for those seeking to leave the far-right scene, and gave evidence about the murder of Kiesewetter. He named two

people who have still not been investigated.

His father and sister have provided testimony to the Committee of Inquiry in Stuttgart. According to the broadcaster *Südwest-Rundfunk*, the sister reported that “her brother told her about a right-wing group of officers in the Heilbronn police. During an attack on a kebab shop, someone had ensured that no police were in the vicinity.”

This fits the picture of what is already known. It has been proved that at least two members of the 10-person police unit to which Kiesewetter belonged, including the unit leader, were members of the German wing of the Ku Klux Klan. This was itself a formation under the control of the Baden-Württemberg state secret service. Half of the organisation’s membership was undercover operatives.

Further evidence from Heilig’s sister raises important questions. Heilig was regarded as a “traitor” by his former comrades. At the end of 2011, he was stabbed by neo-Nazis in Heilbronn. He is supposed to have told his parents, “They’ll always find me, wherever I am.”

Heilig’s sister reported that her brother was always getting new mobile phone numbers, at least five in a short period of time. But the neo-Nazis always knew the numbers. Heilig suspected that the authorities were behind this. He reportedly said, “As soon as my number is registered ... a week later I get a call from the right-wingers.”

Regarding the murder of Kiesewetter, Heilig supposedly told his family, “It’s quite something, there are big-wigs involved. You wouldn’t believe it”. He did not want to provide more concrete details, in order not to endanger his family.

Three weeks ago in the *Welt am Sonntag*, a team of writers led by Stefan Aust revealed the involvement of the Hesse state secret service in the murder of Halit Yozgat. Aust and his fellow writers based their claims on hitherto unknown recordings of phone calls by the police, who had been bugging the phone of secret service operative Andreas Temme for some time.

When the April 6, 2006, murder of 21-year-old Halit Yozgat took place, Temme was sitting in the Internet café that was the scene of the crime. In August last year, evidence of two police officers indicated that Temme had knowledge of the culprit or culprits; in other words, he must have been involved in the murder.

The transcripts of the wiretaps on which *Die Welt* based its report, as well as other previously unknown details, were part of several evidential applications made by the lawyers of Yozgat’s family in the NSU trial before the Munich Higher Regional Court.

The co-plaintiffs are seeking to prove that secret service agent Temme was not at the scene of the crime accidentally, but was present even before the murder took place, and “had concrete knowledge of the planned crime, the time it would take place, the victim and the culprits.” The co-plaintiffs want “to prove that the Hesse state secret service knew of this and did everything to hinder and divert the police investigation”, writes *Die Welt*.

The most important piece of evidence was a telephone call between Temme and his secret service handler, Hess, who is alleged to have told him, “I tell everyone that if they know something like that is going down, don’t drive by.”

The evidential request by the lawyers states, “There is a consensus between those speaking on the phone that Temme already knew about the crime” and that “something like that is going down”. But despite Hess’s instructions, Temme had still “driven by”. Hess’s testimony has not been disputed by Temme.

Hess then gave his colleague Temme some good advice: “Stick as closely to the truth as possible.” But don’t say the whole truth. Finally, he prepared him for questioning by investigators. He should “consider” when it was that he found out about the series of NSU murders.

Another colleague from the secret service assured Temme, “With everything that’s going on, I can’t really tell you about it; it’s not good to talk on the phone. And also because of the other stuff that’s happening, which no one outside should find out anything about.”

What are Temme and the secret service keeping under wraps? From the investigation files, which could only now be evaluated by the co-plaintiffs, it seems that Temme’s undercover contact was very close to the NSU murders. This contact in the far-right scene was a skinhead named Benjamin Gärtner. He was in touch with neo-Nazis in East Germany, in Dortmund, Kassel and Heilbronn.

On the day Halit Yozgat was murdered, Temme telephoned Gärtner twice, the last time just one hour before the murder, a fact Temme withheld from the police in 2006. Gärtner had no alibi for the time of the crime. On the basis of Temme’s diary and telephone data, the investigators established that he had also telephoned Gärtner on two other days when murders occurred: on June 9, 2005 in Nuremberg and six days later in Munich.

On these days, ?smail Ya?ar and Theodoros Boulgarides died. As in Kassel, Gärtner was in the city on both days the crimes occurred. On the day Halit Yozgat was murdered, a comrade of Gärtner’s, Sven Wendl, was in Kassel. He parked his car just five minutes by foot away from the scene of the crime. This is on the record, since he received a parking ticket.

At the end of 2001, when the attorney general sent the authorities a list containing 38 names of people on the periphery of the NSU, the names of Gärtner and his comrade Wendl were on it. It also contained the three suspected NSU members Böhnhardt, Mundlos and Zschäpe, the accused in the Munich trial, and undercover contacts including Tino Brandt, who had established the Thuringia Homeland Security from which the NSU emerged.

When the Federal Criminal Office was finally able to question Gärtner in 2012, he was accompanied by a secret service lawyer. However, he refused to answer most of the questions, saying he

did not have clearance to do so. The Hesse state interior minister at the time, Volker Bouffier, was responsible for this. Today he is the Hesse state premier.

The lawyers of the murder victims are now petitioning for Bouffier to provide testimony as a witness in the NSU trial, saying he acted to support Temme and to hinder police investigations.

Yozgat family lawyer Alexander Kienzle has evaluated a map of Kassel that was found in an NSU flat in Zwickau, believed to have been set on fire by Zschäpe. All, bar one, of the handwritten notes it contains correspond to the daily routes travelled by Temme.

The burnt-out apartment also contained a sketch of the Internet cafe owned by Yozgat, the back of the sketch bearing the street and building number, as well as seven rows of encoded figures. These were the radio channels of the North Hesse police and the control centres of various emergency services in Kassel and nearby. One row of figures in particular raises several questions. It is not the publicly known channel belonging to the Hesse state interior ministry, but rather that of the interior minister.

The new evidence in the Kassel murder points clearly to the involvement of the secret services. This is the likely reason why the federal attorney has been so vehemently opposed in the NSU trial to the applications of the co-plaintiffs’ lawyers.

“If the evidential applications are correct, then this was organized by the state”, commented the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Everything points precisely in this direction. It is known that at least 25 undercover operatives were active around the NSU, and that the Thuringia Homeland Security, like the Baden Wurtemberg Ku Klux Klan outfit, was founded and financed by the secret service.

The report of the Thuringia State Assembly Committee of Inquiry into the series of NSU murders established that the behaviour of the authorities involved in the NSU investigation in Thuringia gave rise to a ‘suspicion of deliberate sabotage’. The question arises whether Beate Zschäpe herself was operating as a contact of the secret services.



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