

Documentary examines unanswered questions about the National Socialist Underground

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15 July 2015

Last week, the German television network 3sat broadcast a film about the many open questions regarding a spate of deaths connected to the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU) organization. The film, *The Struggle for Truth* can be viewed here in German.

The NSU is said to have consisted of only three members, the two dead neo-Nazis Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt, and Beate Zschäpe, who is currently on trial in Munich. Among the NSU's alleged crimes are the murders of nine immigrants and a female police officer, racist bomb attacks and raids on several banks. The documentary, by Katja and Clemens Riha, confirms that there are considerable doubts regarding this official version.

It has since been proven that 25 informers working for the secret services and police were active in the periphery of the NSU. The security authorities therefore have an interest in suppressing the truth about the NSU. *The Struggle for Truth* confirms this on the basis of what is already publicly known in addition to new findings. The filmmakers examine three issues: the mysterious death of the witness Florian Heilig in 2013; the death of the police officer Michèle Kiesewetter in 2007, and the deaths of Mundlos and Böhnhardt on 4 November 2011, as the NSU flew apart.

Florian Heilig

Florian Heilig's body was found burned in his car in Stuttgart on September 16, 2013. As a teenager, Heilig had been active for some time in the Heilbronn neo-Nazi scene and had declared in his family circle that he knew who had killed Kiesewetter.

According to the statement of his father, he had mentioned the NSU already in June 2011, five months before the public found out about it.

Florian Heilig died just before the police were to interrogate him a second time about the NSU. According to his family, he had been beaten several times and his car tampered with before his death. One time, the brakes were tampered with, another time the wheel nuts loosened. On the eve of his death, he received a telephone call to which he responded very worriedly. He had given a photo of a green sports car to his father without comment. The film raises the possibility that he was being followed by the car.

According to statements, the police, who informed the family about Florian's death after several hours, gave the cause of death as suicide and the reason stated was poor school grades. When it became apparent that he was a good student, the police then cited love sickness as the reason. But here too, the parents knew nothing about it.

According to the film, an investigator who was one of those to tell the family of Florian's death, was close to the neo-Nazi scene and concluded a sort of internship with the fire department on the day of Heilig's death. This neo-Nazi also knew the murder victim Michèle Kiesewetter's police platoon leader, who in turn had contacts with the Baden Württemberg branch of the racist Ku Klux Klan. This group had been founded by the undercover agent "Corelli", who was close to the NSU and who also died under mysterious circumstances.

Just one day after Florian's death, according to the film, the police wanted to scrap his burnt-out car. His siblings prevented this. The car stood in a junkyard for one-and-a-half years. The family, who became suspicious as a result of contradictions in the investigation file, found keys, a laptop, weapons, a machete and tablets in the vehicle, which the police neither took into evidence nor investigated. The family handed over these things to the Baden Württemberg state parliament committee carrying out an official investigation into the NSU.

The inquiry committee also interviewed Florian's former girlfriend, Melissa, and his sister Tatiana, who out of fear testified in a secret session. Shortly afterwards, Melissa had a minor motorcycle accident. On her knee was a slightly reddened spot, no bigger than a Euro coin, as a picture she sent Florian's sister shows. Five days later she died of a pulmonary embolism, supposedly caused by the knee injury, according to the official report.

The journalist Thomas Moser, who has been intensely involved in looking into the murder of police officer Kiesewetter, doubts this was her true cause of death. In the film, he asks the chairman of the Baden Württemberg committee of inquiry, Wolfgang Drexler (SPD), whether the second thorough autopsy report was available. Eight weeks after the death of the young woman Moser received the "ghostly" answer—Drexler did not know. The Stuttgart committee of inquiry, set up in November last year, had initially revealed several inconsistencies and initiated new investigations. The investigative committee found out nothing new.

The deaths of Böhnhardt and Mundlos

The documentary deals in the most detail with the circumstances of the deaths of Böhnhardt and Mundlos and the breakup of the NSU on 4 November 2011. It is based on extensive NSU investigation files, which the blogger "fatalist" has put online. "Fatalist" belongs to the "NSU Working Group", which is part of

the right-wing and extreme right-wing spectrum.

While representatives of state authorities and the parliamentary control commission have refused to confirm that the files are genuine, the filmmakers believe they are real.

There are also other sources confirming that the official version put out by the State Attorney's Office, according to which the two had shot themselves in their burning mobile home following a bank robbery in Eisenach, is more than questionable.

In its final report, the first parliamentary committee of inquiry of the Thuringia state assembly wrote: "The fact both victims had not inhaled any soot or smoke before their deaths raises the question of whether the fire was started after their deaths, and was started by a third party who would thus come into consideration as a perpetrator."

The film also confirmed a further aspect which the Thuringia investigative committee had already found, that the two had enough time to escape. Why they instead drove their mobile home into the Eisenach area of Stregda, waited there for two hours and then killed themselves without a fight when two police officers approached, remains inexplicable.

The journalist Andreas Förster also questions this in the film. Considering that nobody was looking for an mobile home, the question arises why the two did not simply drive onto the nearby motorway and flee.

There are numerous contradictions between the official version of events and the documents leaked by "fatalist". For example, a crime scene photo shows neither blood nor brain matter behind Mundlos' body, although he had been killed with a shot-gun blast to the head. The weapon also revealed no fingerprints, although in the photo Mundlos was not wearing gloves.

There are also serious contradictions between the statements of the firefighters who put out the fire in the burning mobile home, the police officers who were first at the scene, and the official version.

The firefighters were first questioned by the second committee of inquiry in Thuringia. They reported that immediately after the incident they had been instructed to remain silent. They had wanted to enter the burning mobile home immediately, but were prevented from doing this by the police. After the fire was extinguished they said they had seen two people in the mobile home lying in different positions from those shown in the police photos of the crime scene. There had also been no fire debris on the bodies, as in the pictures in the investigation file.

The firefighters who were first to attend the mobile home reported that they had seen no weapons in it. They had also taken pictures, but then had to hand over their memory cards. These were returned later, but the contents had been deleted. According to the prosecutor's office, several weapons were found in the mobile home, including the service weapon of the murdered police officer Michèle Kiesewetter and that of her colleague who was also shot.

The burned out mobile home was not taken to the police pound, but to a towing yard, and was left unguarded. The filmmakers ask why; they question when the photos were taken of the weapons, as well as the two bodies of Mundlos and Bönnhardt.

The apartment in Zwickau

There are also many unanswered questions about the explosion and fire in an apartment in Zwickau, in which the three NSU members had lived for several years. Zschäpe is accused of being responsible for the fire.

The first images by photographer Ralf Köhler, who has documented the area for almost four years, do not fit in with the official version of the events leading up to the fire. And here too, all traces were at once destroyed. Just a few hours after the fire was extinguished, firefighters tore down the burned apartment using demolition machinery. The front part of the apartment was completely gone, and debris lay in front of the building when, the following morning, the police found the weapon with which officer Kiesewetter had been murdered.

The crime scene was cordoned off by a simple fence and one police guard. The front door was open. It would therefore have been easy to tamper with evidence.

Only four days later, when Zschäpe handed herself over to the police on 8 December 2011, did numerous police officers begin to search the rubble. They found several weapons, including the Ceska pistol with which the nine migrants were allegedly murdered. Oddly, the custody chain does not record who found these weapons. There are also no photos of the guns at the crime scene. Three weeks later, the house was completely demolished under the eyes of the Federal Criminal Police (BKA).

The film also speaks to members of the Thuringia NSU Commission of Inquiry. Its chair, Dorothea Marx (SPD), asks about the systematic deviation from police routines: "Who wrote the script here? Who determined that the police did things very differently here?" Katharina König (Left Party) fears that "they" will "ride it out", that the state will stonewall and the truth will not make its way to the public.

That the secret services can act in such a way is the responsibility of the political parties in Berlin and the mainstream media. No one is challenging the secret services. The parties at federal and state level knuckle under and remain silent. The investigative journalists and major media have no fundamental interest in exposing the machinations of the secret services.



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