

'Can you imagine having to study 79 photos of your son lying dead or dying in a pool of blood in the road?'

For seven years, Erica Duggan has disputed the suicide verdict on her son's violent death in Germany. Now she has finally been granted a fresh inquest. Here, in her own words, she tells her story...

ON MAY 20, when I heard the words from Judge Elias in the High Court, "In the service of justice, I think there should be a fresh inquest", I felt I could believe in the world again.

That key phrase – "In the service of justice..." – held out to me the promise that all that I had treasured and loved in my son Jeremiah, would now be valued and not discarded like an unwanted shoe.

The Barnet Press has stood at my side for seven years, fearless in reporting our struggle for justice, and it is The Barnet Press that has honoured the life of my son by asking me what it has been like after all this time to have been granted, at long last, a fresh inquest into his death.

It has not been easy to sum up all that I feel, and forgive me if there are too many words for too much disappointment, for too much injustice.

But yes, at last it has come – what for years we have wanted – a public inquest into the violent death of my son Jeremiah, who died in Germany in March 2003 aged just 22.

As I sit surrounded by a room full of files, dossiers and books, I feel a huge relief that after working day and night seven days a week, perhaps now we may get to the truth. But I fear even to begin to hope. My emotions have for so long been stifled and my grief drowned, so in truth I'm not sure I can really feel anything. But yet my love for Jeremiah and his love for life inspire me always to go on, despite the obstacles, and to try to learn what happened to him.

We are to have a new coroner, Andrew Walker, and he enjoys the highest of reputations as someone who has courage to speak his mind – someone who values justice.

I do, now, have faith in justice being better served. But I am still haunted by concerns.

In Germany, the authorities, I believe deliberately, delay things in order to deprive us of justice. So far they have refused to investigate and there is a time limit of ten years, after which they do not have to investigate. Time will never run out for me and neither will it ever run out for Jeremiah's friends.

We all count on having the support of the British police, International Mutual Assistance and the knowledge that the British public will want to see justice being done.

I comfort myself by thinking that Jeremiah loved life and people so much that out of his terrible end something good will be achieved. We will expose the danger for others. That is something that Jeremiah would be proud to have achieved.

But there are painful things still. For seven years all I have had are doors slammed in my face, and what is so hard is to have learnt that this has been the same for many other families round the world who have suffered because of the LaRouche organisation.

The German authorities refuse to listen to me and appear to be hoping I will be broken down or just wither away.



Mystery: Jeremiah died in suspicious circumstances



It seems that the death of a British Jew in modern-day Germany while in the company of an international organisation, accused of anti-British, anti-Jewish conspiracies, is something best brushed under the carpet than exposed for examination. All the right things are said: they do not tolerate anti-Semitism in Germany. While all the wrong things are done.

LaRouche still draws young people from all over the world to Germany to be trained in its youth schools and imbued with its views, and nobody seems to care to do anything about it. It is not even monitored.

All that is shocking indeed. But who would believe me if I told them about my other experiences during the past seven years? Can you imagine having to attempt to be the investigator of your own child's death? Can you imagine having to study the 79 photographs of your son's body lying dead or dying in a pool of blood on the road? What it is like to have to seek out the pathologist who performed the post mortem on your son and ask him whether or not he was run over by a car?

I have tried telling people about the heartless way the remains of my beloved son were dealt with when arriving in this country, treated like no more than cargo to be stored in a warehouse and cut up for no purpose, but only The Barnet Press has ever been prepared to report about Finchley Mortuary.

I sometimes think that the rights of prisoners are better respected than those that lie dead in a mortuary. I have learnt that your rights to a proper investigation die when you die. My battle for justice has proved to me that the authorities in Britain and Germany wished to brush the whole thing under the carpet.

But now, perhaps, that will change. Let us wait and see – and hope.