

Conspiracy of silence on Diana's murder

by Jeffrey Steinberg

For the past two months, the British and French media, under heavy pressure from the British monarchy and the French Socialist government, have been engaged in a near-total blackout of the murders of Princess Diana, Dodi Fayed, and Henri Paul. The shift from a campaign of continuous disinformation, aimed at boosting the official French police claim that the deaths were the result of drunk driving by Henri Paul, to the sudden blackout, was triggered by a series of revelations that threatened to blow apart the entire cover-up effort.

The most significant of the revelations was the interview by Mohamed Al Fayed, which appeared in mid-February in the London *Mirror*. Al Fayed stated that he was "99.9% certain" that the deaths of Princess Diana, his son Dodi, and Henri Paul, in the Aug. 31, 1997 Paris car crash in the Place de l'Alma tunnel, were the result of a conspiracy.

As a civil party to the case, he is privy to the entire investigative file of Magistrate Hervé Stephan, the French official in charge of the ongoing probe. According to sources close to the investigation, many of the details contained in the thousands of pages of raw police investigative reports strongly point to vehicular homicide. Magistrate Stephan himself stated, in a rare public comment on the case, that he will not consider the investigation closed until police have located the missing Fiat Uno that collided with the Mercedes carrying Princess Diana and Dodi Fayed, and then sped out of the tunnel and vanished.

In March, the *Mirror* ran another exclusive interview, this time with Trevor Rees-Jones, the bodyguard of Dodi Fayed, who was the sole survivor of the crash. Rees-Jones was severely injured in the crash, and has only recently begun to recover his memory of the events. In his interview with the *Mirror*, Rees-Jones confirmed that Princess Diana was still alive, and conscious, after the crash. He also recounted that the Mercedes was being chased from the moment it left the rear of the Ritz Hotel, by at least two cars and a motorcycle. This conforms to the testimony of a dozen eyewitnesses, who told police and reporters that the Mercedes was being chased by a number of vehicles as it entered the Place de l'Alma tunnel.

Rees-Jones's interview also revived another controversy surrounding the fatal crash. French emergency rescue units

took nearly two hours to get the Princess to a hospital, although timely emergency surgery could likely have saved her life. Doctors at the scene in the tunnel had correctly diagnosed that the Princess was bleeding internally. The only life-saving course of action would have been to rush to surgery, where the damaged veins or arteries could have been repaired. Instead, the rescue team spent one hour getting her into the ambulance, and took 43 minutes to drive her four miles to the Pitié Salpêtrière Hospital.

The inexplicable failure of the emergency medical team was a prominent feature of a third important exposé of the crash, the book *Death of a Princess*, by *Time* magazine bureau chief Thomas Sancton and Middle East correspondent Scott McLeod. The book, which was released in early February, generated a brief flurry of media attention on the failures of the French doctors, and focussed an international spotlight on several of the other unanswered questions about the deaths. However, as this writer reported in a review of the book (*EIR*, March 13), the authors sidestepped the fundamental question: Were Diana and Dodi the targets of an assassination plot? In a documentary report published on Nov. 21, 1997, *EIR* had already come out with compelling evidence that the couple had been assassinated.

'Bloodsport' against Al Fayed

Sources close to the official investigation have confirmed *EIR*'s own assessment: that the disinformation campaign by French authorities and the British monarchy, run through all-too-willing media in both countries, was being successfully undermined by the Al Fayed interview and the other revelations. In early March, Mohamed Al Fayed held a several-hour private meeting with Magistrate Stephan. Afterwards, Al Fayed described the conference as "magnificent." Contrary to media smears that attempted to portray the meeting as a confrontation between the two men, with the magistrate denouncing Al Fayed's public statements about a "murder conspiracy," sources close to the French probe say that the two men discussed many of the inconsistencies in the case, and several possibly fruitful areas of further investigation.

It was in this context that Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*, in early March, announced that the "British establishment" had declared all-out war against Mohamed Al Fayed, aimed at driving him out of England and France altogether. What Murdoch's gloating pronouncement about the monarchy's "bloodsport" against Al Fayed failed to note, however, was the fact that the vast majority of Britons and Frenchmen are still convinced that Diana was murdered. The latest effort to use a media blackout to bury the evidence that the Aug. 31 crash was a premeditated vehicular assassination shows, if anything, just how vulnerable the British monarchy and their French Socialist allies are, in the face of the unanswered questions, and the ongoing probe by Magistrate Stephan.