

Tekst 4

Diana's unwelcome legacy



THREE YEARS after the death of Diana, everything has changed – changed utterly.

The saintly character, the icon (that great cliché of modern journalism) is no more. She was, we are now told, a mixed-up, undistinguished sort of person, remarkable only for her physical beauty.

What has not changed is the press. It was the press – and the TV for that matter – who three years ago helped to

create the great Diana myth and at the same time foster an unhealthy atmosphere of hysteria. For the only time in life I got a whiff of what it was like to live under a fascist system. That was because one was made to feel like an outsider for not joining in with the artificially-created grief. Many people were literally afraid to speak their mind then.

To prove that little has changed, the same sort of thing has been happening, albeit on a lesser scale, in the wake of the murder of Sarah Payne, whose funeral last week inspired yet more pages of solemn nonsense, not only in the tabloid press. As with Diana, the message was that the whole nation was sharing in the grief of Sarah's family – an obvious

and easily provable falsehood.

It is not only the *News of the World* that is responsible for the dire events that have ensued since the Payne murder, notably the witch-hunt against suspected paedophiles that is continuing and which no senior politician has had the courage to deplore.

And as with Diana, when sentimental nonsense becomes a substitute for reporting, the real story goes untold. Three years ago it was the responsibility of the Fayeds and their employees like chauffeur Henri Paul for the fatal crash. Today it is the fact that Sarah Payne's killer is still at large and so may strike again.

'The Observer'

Tekst 4 Diana's unwelcome legacy

- 1p 4 □ Citeer de eerste twee en de laatste twee woorden van de zin waarin de schrijver de kern van zijn verwijt aan de pers verwoordt.