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Carmel Cacopardo pg 12-13

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Mole allegation brings chaos within Labour's inner circle

Fear of a confrontation with MLP deputy leader Michael Falzon possibly avoided after concern over backlash

LABOUR IS in a quandary over what action to take over a suspected mole who allegedly leaked to the Nationalist press a controversial meeting between four building contractors and an MLP delegation at the party HQ – conscious of the advantage it would give to the Nationalist campaign.

That's because Labour leader Alfred Sant told insiders he planned to reveal the name of the suspect, but it now appears the plan may be scuttled, fearing it would lead to confrontation with deputy leader Michael Falzon.

The alleged mole is said to be a close collaborator of Falzon. But although Sant loyalists do not believe Falzon to be behind the damaging leakage, the false move

is seen as an opportunity to trim the deputy leader's sails.

PN journalists have been told to stay off the case, with Nationalist party strategists actually stonewalling the reports themselves, sensing a golden opportunity to strengthen Alfred Sant's position – who in their view remains an asset for winning the next general election.

Nathalie Attard, a former PBS journalist who is a personal assistant to MEP John Attard Montalto and also a staff member in Falzon's office, is the person alleged to have been involved in the leak according to Sant loyalists.

But it seems she has not been informed of any proceedings even though last week sister newspaper

illum reported Alfred Sant telling a closed meeting that he had irrefutable proof of the "snake", and would disclose her name to the party executive for action to be taken.

24 telephone attempts to contact Natalie Attard on Friday and Saturday proved futile.

MaltaToday has asked Sant loyalists for evidence but none was forthcoming. Labour activists close to Michael Falzon have said the deputy leader was "saddened" by the events, fearing it would weaken the party and open up new opportunities for the PN campaign.

Falzon also told ▶ page 8

Alfred Sant and Michael Falzon



Transport chief's country lane without MEPA permit

James Debono

THE HEAD of the Malta Transport Authority has developed a passageway around his farmhouse without planning permission, in a bid to seal off a pathway running right through his property, which for centuries has been used by farmers.

Gianfranco Selvaggi started to de-

velop the passageway despite lacking MEPA permission, as an alternative route for farmers who used the original one passing through his property.

The new passageway circles his farmhouse, located right in the middle of the picturesque Wied ta' l-Armla, just metres away from Chadwick lakes. The farmhouse

was originally two small agricultural rooms which Selvaggi developed into his country home, and later applied for sanctioning by the authorities.

MEPA had already turned down a similar application by the previous owner, to develop the two rooms, back in 1999.

MEPA at first turned down Sel-

vaggi's application, but it was finally approved after he provided proof that the two rooms had been inhabited in the past – although this newspaper is informed that the

place lacks any water and electricity supplies. Farmers are now asking MEPA to revoke this permit as they contend that the place was never inhabited. ▶ page 8

Red Cross Society defrauded of Lm23,000 by former accountant

James Debono

THE RED Cross Society will be instituting a civil case against former employee Ruth Saliba to recover a still undetermined sum of money misappropriated from the society, the president of the Red Cross, Prof. Lino Cutajar has confirmed.

On 30 October, Saliba was found guilty and given a two-year suspended prison sentence after admitting to misappropriating more

than Lm1,000 in Red Cross funds.

Cutajar would not state the amount which the Red Cross will seek to recover from Saliba, but the society's former accountant Tony Formosa contends the sum in question could amount to more than Lm23,000.

The case raises serious questions on the society's accounting system during the seven years during which Saliba was responsible for handling the Society's incoming funds. She

was also responsible for issuing fiscal receipts on the amounts received.

Saliba's wrongdoing only came to light in March 2006 when accountant Tony Formosa noticed that deposit slips for January 2006 did not include any cash received by the Red Cross.

Formosa was employed as a part-time accountant with the society from January to September, when he resigned claiming ▶ page 4

Gonzi snubs former PN official

PRIME MINISTER Lawrence Gonzi has unceremoniously turned down an invitation by the outspoken former well-known PN official Carmel Cacopardo to write the introduction for his new book on eco-taxation, prompting him to turn to Green Party leader Harry Vassallo instead.

In an interview with MaltaToday, the architect who served for 20 years with the PN and who now works at the MEPA Audit Office, reveals how

he was rebuffed by Gonzi when he asked him to write the introduction to his green manifesto just published, Time for Radical Change.

"I was honest with the Prime Minister," Cacopardo says. "I told him that my book criticises the way the eco-contribution was introduced in 2004. He replied telling me that in the present circumstances, he preferred to decline the invitation."

One of the main findings in his research was that no environmental

impact study was conducted prior to the introduction of the eco-contribution in 2004 and that Environment Minister George Pullicino had misled parliament in to believing that such a study had been conducted.

"The minister's honest answer in parliament should have been that no studies had been conducted on the impact of the eco tax. Instead of doing so, the minister gave an incorrect answer to parliament," Cacopardo said on Pullicino.

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