

Socialist Challenge

We break silence on the slush fund

Why we print

LEYLAND CONSPIRACY REVEALED

'SOMEONE is desperately anxious that you should not see any of these documents from British Leyland.'

These were the words of William Howard QC as he summed up on behalf of his client, Graham Barton, at the Lord Ryder letter forgery trial which ended at the Old Bailey this week.

Howard's observation was, if anything, an understatement. For the past 15 months, and possibly a lot longer, leaders of the political, commercial and legal establishments in this country have rushed from Parliament to Leyland House, from police stations to the High Court, in an effort to stop the truth about the Leyland slush fund becoming public knowledge.

THREATS

Because of legal threats against this newspaper, *Socialist Challenge* has been part of the silence. With the end of Barton's trial some, although not all, of these legal threats have been removed.

During our investigations there have been many — and this includes Labour MPs and Leyland shop stewards — who have suggested it is better to forget the whole thing; that after all, bribery wins jobs.

But slushing cannot create jobs because it does not generate production. Bribery may lubricate the transactions and point trade in a particular direction, but it cannot create business.

Those who think that these payments create jobs use the same reasoning as those who argue for import controls — basically a way of exporting unemployment. Bribery is thus justified as a way of helping British industry against its foreign competitors.

ACCOUNTANTS

'Ah', comes the reply, 'But everyone does it.' That's true, but it still does not create jobs. There is a world crisis of overproduction (particularly in the motor industry). More than a few backhanders is needed to get rid of that.

The only jobs created through the Northrop, Boeing and Lockheed bribery scandals put together were for accountants (and possibly lawyers).

Leyland, remember, is a nationalised firm. The Labour Government could have won enormous prestige for itself and socialism by pledging to eradicate bribery, that wasteful and corrupt practice of international capitalism.

It did nothing of the sort. Instead those Ministers responsible conspired with others to hush up the whole affair; to hide from working people the corruption and dirty dealings of the capitalist world. In so doing they became part of those dealings.

To say they are doing this to save jobs at Leyland is a further piece of hypocrisy. The Government itself has 'nodded

through' the loss of thousands of jobs at Leyland in the last year — including the closure of the Speke plant.

We accept no preaching on saving jobs from a Government whose policies have created the largest dole queue since the war.

Those in the labour movement who turn a blind eye to bribery claim there is no alternative. They are wrong.

The first thing is to establish the principle of the abolition of business secrets, making Leyland's books open to the workforce. We are convinced that that will reveal a horrible picture of incompetence, vindictiveness and corruption.

Contrary to what the capitalist press says, this is not because Leyland is nationalised. Quite the reverse; it's because it is a nationalised company run along capitalist lines.

VETO

We don't think that Leyland, or any other single company, can be transformed into an island of socialism. But it is possible to fight for a workers' veto over management decisions, to establish that we will decide who is paid what.

This would be in marked contrast to the present 'participation' set-up. Already, over South Africa, Leyland management has pointed out that Leyland International is not covered by the Participation Agreement.

Under the present system management could carry out any action — however criminal — without reference to the workers. The union leaderships in Leyland have happily gone along with, and even encouraged, this state of affairs.

One further objection needs to be answered. Unlike others who have the documents we now print, *Socialist Challenge* has no qualms about naming those who received Leyland's 'special commissions'.

MORALISTS

But, say the self-proclaimed moralists of Fleet Street, the gentlemen concerned may face severe punishment if their names are publicised.

Somehow it is all right to hound leaders of strikes, to print the addresses of anti-fascists, to 'expose' gays and drive them from employment, but not to name people who have benefited from payments of up to £700,000 as a consequence of knowing the right people.

If these gentlemen chose to rob Leyland workers and the citizens of their own country of hundreds of thousands of pounds, then the labour movement should offer them no protection.

It is their rules of their jungle they chose to operate by. Let them suffer the consequences.

'How the cover up worked

'The documents they suppressed

'The names they tried to hide



ATTORNEY-GENERAL SILKIN



INDUSTRY SECRETARY VARLEY



EX-INDUSTRY SECRETARY BENN

What role did these men play?

INSIDE: Geoff Bell investigates



THE COVER UP

Stage one: diversion

Details of the Leyland slush fund first became public knowledge on 19 May 1977. It was then that the *Daily Mail* published the first of three articles based on three reports drawn up by Leyland financial director Graham Barton and on accompanying documents.

The story was sensational and Leyland reacted with horror. But by the following day admissions that bribery was part and parcel of Leyland's international business operations were starting to flow.

Former Leyland sales director Lester Suffield was quoted as saying, 'Inducements are necessary in the form of repayment for services rendered, which enable you to do business that you would not otherwise have done'.

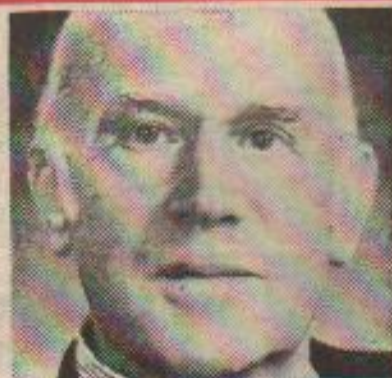
CLOUD-CUCKOO

Another former Leyland executive told *The Times*: 'In the ideal business world dross, slush money — call it what you will — would not exist. But Leyland does not operate in that sort of cloud-cuckoo land.'

By 21 May, Leyland had confirmed the authenticity of the Barton reports, and Sir Fred Catherwood, chairperson of the British Overseas Trade Board, had confirmed the wide use by British industry of slushing. He said, 'In one third of our markets... bribery is a way of life'.

It seemed that all the sordid details of Leyland's slush fund would soon follow, but then Leyland had an extraordinary piece of luck. Graham Barton 'confessed' that two documents were forged.

One was a letter from the Bank of



RYDER: 'didn't prove anything'

England, the other and more important was a letter purporting to come from Lord Ryder, head of the National Enterprise Board, which owns 95 per cent of Leyland's shares.

This letter was said to be addressed to Alex Park, Leyland's chief executive; and the Secretary of State for Industry, Eric Varley, featured prominently in the letter's content.

The forgery confession — which Barton was to retract at his trial — allowed Leyland to avoid the wider issues in the *Mail* story. Although only two of the 60 pages of documents which the *Mail* had were questioned, Leyland and then Varley acted as though the entire story had been discredited.

Thus Sir Richard Dobson, then chairperson of Leyland, said on 25 May:

'It is not and has not been the policy of this company to secure business by corrupt means. Although certain key

ON 30 OCTOBER 1977, the *Observer* carried an article entitled, 'Leyland: An executive speaks his mind'. The article was sub-titled, 'A middle manager at British Leyland explodes some of the popular myths and points an accusing finger at top management'.

The article was unsigned — not surprisingly, considering it was a frontal assault on the top bosses at Leyland, blaming them for the company's problems.

A couple of days after the story was printed, a journalist at the *Observer* who had associations with Leyland received a phone call. It was from a detective sergeant at Scotland Yard.

Who, the journalist was asked, was the author of the article. The journalist didn't know.

Could the name be supplied, asked the detective. If it could, there would be 'something in it' for the journalist.

The bribe was declined.

In a sense this episode is incidental to the story of the Leyland slush fund and the cover-up which followed. What it does illustrate is the extraordinary co-operation which exists between the police and British Leyland.

In the case of the Leyland slush fund, this co-operation had the purpose of preventing at all costs the

emergence of the truth about how Leyland conducted its international business.

And the intrigue and dirty-dealing involved more than the police and the bosses at Leyland. It involved leading personalities on the state-owned National Enterprise Board and Government ministers. It is a story of capitalism in our time.

Year	Country	Beneficiary	Rate	Value	Product	Company	Location	Notes	Value
1974	USA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1975	USA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1976	USA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1977	USA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

documents on which this charge was based have proved to be false the company's name has been damaged.

'So far we have no evidence to suggest that any payments have been made other than to the company's accredited agents or representatives, and we confidently expect to be cleared of the charges and innuendoes which have been levelled against us...'

'I can say we have found no evidence of bribery or corruption.'

Such protestations of innocence were absent in Dobson's less public moments — for example, his reference to the 'perfectly respectable fact' that Leyland was 'bribing wogs' in his speech to the Twenties Club exposed by *Socialist Challenge* in October 1977.

But the pattern of the cover-up was set by Dobson's 25 May statement. Eric Varley echoed him the following day when he said, 'I cannot condemn too strongly the recent attempts to undermine the confidence of the company's management'.

Thus although Leyland had admitted the authenticity of the Barton reports, which spoke freely of slushing, Dobson and Varley put over the impression that all the allegations in the *Mail* story were based on a lie.

Socialist Challenge
WE'VE BEEN CENSORED!
LEYLAND BRIBES SCANDAL
 We report Dobson's speech...



VARLEY: Ryder report is 'sub judice'

Stage two: the accused try the accused



PARK: 'investigate themselves'

Before Graham Barton had 'confessed' to the forgeries, Leyland had been forced to agree to an inquiry into the Mail allegations. The potential embarrassment of this inquiry remained.

What would it say about the mass of evidence on the slush fund? Would it indict Leyland or National Enterprise Board executives of condoning bribery?

These questions were solved quite simply. First, the inquiry was not to be in public; second, the inquiry team was appointed by Varley; third, the team was headed by Ryder.

As Graham Barton's defence lawyer William Howard put it in a rather incredulous tone at Barton's trial, 'The minister appoints you to investigate allegations which include allegations against you?'

To which Ryder replied: 'Yes, and allegations against the minister.'

At the Barton trial details of how this inquiry was conducted were prised from Ryder and Alex Park by William Howard. It was described as a 'joint NEB-Leyland investigation', and in addition to Ryder the inquiry was conducted by a senior official from the NEB and one from Leyland.

The three set their own terms of reference. They ruled out any investigation into the issues raised by the alleged forgeries, and they ruled out any investigation of the payment of bribes to those other than public officials.

The serious work of the team began on 23 May when five executives were interviewed. These were Dobson, Park, Clive Strouger — who had commissioned the Barton reports — David Andrews, and Fred Wright.

In the witness box at the trial, Ryder claimed that through the interviews 'we were determined to unearth every single thing we could' and that the witnesses were subject to 'intensive cross-examination'.

But when Alex Park was questioned at the Barton trial a different impression of this meeting of 23 May was given. It was described much less dramatically by Park as quite simply 'a meeting'.

Park also revealed that throughout the entire day the five 'witnesses' were 'questioned' together; a most

remarkable way of eliciting the truth, considering that all five witnesses could thereby know what each other said and not contradict them.

According to Ryder, at the end of this meeting the five executives were 'asked...to go away and put certain things in writing. We gave them a brief to answer a very wide range of questions'.

Again Alex Park was somewhat more precise about this aspect of the inquiry in the witness box. Park testified that what in fact was asked of the executives was that they themselves should carry out further investigations and then submit reports.

In other words, the top management at Leyland was meant to examine objectively allegations about how their company was run. Their reports found no evidence of bribery and neither did Ryder's final report, which was based on the 'evidence' of the five executives.

On this point, William Howard — Barton's lawyer — concluded at the trial: 'What it boils down to, Lord Ryder, is that you accepted their (the executives') word without further investigation.'

Ryder objected to this interpretation, but he agreed that he had not interviewed one single person responsible for the payments detailed in the Barton reports.

When William Howard asked Ryder if he did not think it was 'vital' to interview such witnesses to discover what the payments were for, Ryder replied: 'That is calling on hindsight'.

Howard also asked Ryder to explain the 'contradiction' between the first statement by Clive Strouger, that Barton's reports were 'conducted with great thoroughness and discretion', and his later, post-Mail story view that Barton could not 'substantiate' his reports — a view Ryder shared.

Ryder was unable to explain the 'contradiction'. Did he ask Strouger to explain it, quizzed Howard. Ryder admitted that he had not, and agreed, 'I think with hindsight we should have asked the question'.

All of which drove Howard to remark, 'You didn't prove anything, did you, Lord Ryder?'



DOBSON: 'bribing wogs'



SILKIN: SC documents 'sub judge'



BENN: saw 1974 report

Stage three: call in the law

The Ryder report landed on Eric Varley's desk in June. The following month, Varley answered a question in Parliament on the report. He said that 'it would not be published because of the proceedings against Graham Barton'.

This sub judge excuse was to surface in a different context six months later when *Socialist Challenge* received through the post the documents relating to the slush fund.

We handed these documents to a national newspaper with an agreement for joint publication. The newspaper showed the documents to Leyland and asked them to comment.

An hour before the deadline set by the paper ran out, it and *Socialist Challenge* were contacted by Bob 'Tug' Wilson of Scotland Yard.

The documents, said Wilson, were exhibits in Barton's trial, and there was a strong probability of contempt of court if they were published. Clearly, Leyland had immediately contacted Scotland Yard on seeing the documents and Wilson dutifully stepped in to prevent publication.

The argument over whether either the Ryder Report or the documents were contempt of court was never resolved. *Socialist Challenge* did not have the resources to fight the case and face a possible fine.

We can also now reveal that we had subsequent discussions with Graham Barton, who asked us not to publish.

At the trial Barton's defence did indeed argue the relevance of the Ryder Report and the documents to the trial. What is interesting is how Judge Alan King Hamilton and the prosecution reacted.

When Barton's counsel asked for the Ryder Report and other Leyland documents to be produced in court, the prosecution resisted. In an attempt to avoid the documents and the report surfacing, the prosecution lawyer Henry Pownall went so far as to say that he was willing to accept that Barton had 'honestly believed' that bribery existed.

He was willing to make this concession and, therefore, he was conveniently able to argue that the documentary evidence to prove that Barton 'honestly believed' it was not necessary.

The judge also attempted to persuade Howard not to insist on the documents and report. On one occasion he said it did not matter 'two hoots' if Leyland paid bribes; on another he said that the slush fund was a 'side issue'.

Defence counsel Howard resisted these pressures. 'Never in my many years of legal practice', he said, 'have I experienced such an attitude from the Crown'.

But the prosecution moved only a fraction. They agreed to show Howard a copy of the Ryder inquiry report, but none of the other documents he had requested.

When summing up, Howard was careful to point out that this refusal to comply with his request was not made by the prosecution counsel. Rather, it would have been British Leyland and the Attorney General's office who would have been involved in such a decision.

But when the Ryder Report was eventually presented to the court, the prosecution raised a further objection. It was, they said, 'highly confidential'. This meant it would not be quoted in court, only referred to when quoting its main author, Lord Ryder.

Once again the authorities were arguing that the public had no right of access to the secrets of Leyland slushing.

In June 1977 Varley had argued that the Ryder Report was sub judge — relevant to the Barton trial. In January, the police, and later Attorney General Sam Silkin (in answer to an inquiry from Tom Litterick MP), had argued that *Socialist Challenge's* Leyland documents were sub judge — relevant to Barton's trial.

At the trial itself, the prosecution, which acts with the police in assembling evidence and under the authority of the Attorney General, had argued against the production in court of the Ryder Report and other documents because they were irrelevant to the trial.

Then, when the Ryder Report was produced, the prosecution argued it was 'highly confidential' — something Eric Varley had not even suggested in June 1977.

Whichever reason was offered, at whichever time, the consequence was the same — to stop details of the whole slush fund story from ever seeing the light of day.

Perhaps the most flagrant of all the manoeuvres was British Leyland's bid to prevent two crucial witnesses from appearing in court at Barton's trial. These were Leyland sales executives Culliford and Grout.

It was they who were responsible for many of the payments detailed in Barton's reports. Towards the end of

the trial the defence summoned these gentlemen to appear as witnesses, so that the truth about the payments could be ascertained.

Leyland reacted with something akin to panic. They took out a counter summons to be heard at the High Court to prevent the witnesses from being questioned in court.

The matter was never resolved; Barton's defence decided that if this was Leyland's attitude then even if the executives did appear in court they were not likely to be cooperative.

TELEVISION

And the authorities may not yet have run out of excuses for silence. When the Barton trial began, *Socialist Challenge* was approached by BBC television news. They were thinking of flashing the documents in our possession on the TV screen.

A couple of days later we received a phone call from the BBC. They had changed their mind about televising the documents. They had been told that to do so would be contempt of court.

The court case in question this time was the libel suits Varley and Ryder had taken out against the *Daily Mail*.

The person at the BBC told us that in their opinion neither Varley nor Ryder would pursue the cases. But while they were on the books, documents could not be made public for two years.

The attitude of Government ministers to the whole process of the cover-up is illustrated by a number of things. First there was the resistance shown by Varley and Silkin to discussing any of the issues involved, using different reasons at different times for their silence.

Second, according to the *Sunday Times* of 5 March 1978, Scotland Yard received specific instructions not to investigate any possible illegalities which might be involved in the facts exposed by the Barton reports; apart, that is, from the alleged forgeries.

1974 REPORT

The inference in the *Sunday Times* story is that these instructions came from the Attorney General's office.

Third is the fact that a chief superintendent was appointed to investigate the 'forgeries'. The policeman in question, 'Tug' Wilson, agreed at the Barton trial that it was unusual for such a high-ranking officer to head such an inquiry.

Graham Barton has said — although Wilson denies this — that the chief superintendent told him he had been asked to 'get to the bottom of the matter' by the Attorney General.

There are many questions which remain unanswered about the Leyland slush fund and its cover-up, questions which can only be answered by a full and open inquiry. One such question is just how far back does this whole story go.

For instance, in 1974 Lord Ryder, in his role of industrial consultant to the Labour Government, conducted a wide ranging inquiry into British Leyland, its structure and finance.

His subsequent report was later published with certain sections omitted because of 'commercial confidence'. These sections included ones on 'purchasing arrangements', 'distribution and relationships with dealers and distributors', and 'management controls'.

Just what did these sections of Ryder's 1974 Report say? One person could answer: the Secretary of State for Industry to whom the report was submitted.

The Industry Secretary at the time was Anthony Wedgwood Benn.

Socialist Challenge

WE'VE BEEN CENSORED!

LEYLAND BRIBES SCANDAL

...and get sat upon!

The real case for prosecution

TWENTY MILLION pounds. That is what Graham Barton says that British Leyland spent last year on its 'market factor'.

'These figures can be confirmed by reference to Leyland documents', said Barton during his trial.

Whatever else can be said about the former Leyland financial executive, Graham Barton can talk with authority about Leyland's 'market factor' — a term he defined as covering 'all non-standard billing arrangements or special commissions'.

For it was Barton, under company instructions, who drew up the three reports which provide the major evidence of the nature and extent of the 'market factor'; reports which refer to widespread bribery and other illegalities.

The reports were commissioned by Barton's superior, Clive Strowger, in September 1976. At the time, Strowger described the reports as being conducted 'with thoroughness and discretion'.

That is a phrase British Leyland may yet live to regret, for their only defence to the wealth of statistics and information contained in the Barton reports was that they were 'unsubstantiated' and accordingly unreliable.

EXPOSURE

That is the first myth which needs to be exposed in the Leyland slush fund affair; an exposure which is not particularly arduous.

When Barton was drawing up the reports, Leyland appeared to have few doubts about his ability.

First he was commissioned to write a report on the 'market factor' for Leyland's cars division. Then he was asked to compile one which covered Leyland's bus and truck division; finally he was commissioned to write one on the company's Scammell division.

It seems odd that, if Barton was as unreliable as a number of Leyland top bosses have said he was, he should have been asked to compile three 'private and confidential' reports, one after the other.

It also seems strange that if, as Leyland claimed to *Socialist Challenge* in January 1977, the 'market factor' consists of 'ordinary business payments', the Leyland documents relating to the 'market factor' should have been circulated only at the very highest levels of Leyland's executive structure.

SHREDDER

Oddest of all, perhaps, is the present whereabouts of Graham Barton's working papers on his report. If Leyland has nothing to hide, why are these papers now deposited in the safe of the company's secretary; or as Barton's lawyer put it,

'if not there, in Leyland's shredder'?

A look at the documents which are available to *Socialist Challenge* provides the answer. In last week's issue we quoted a document circulated within Leyland in August 1975, a document which Leyland executive John Champion has admitted is authentic.

ILLEGALITY

That document warned that, 'there is a risk of acute embarrassment should the details of transactions be exposed'. It also testified that 'the main problems are caused by the illegality of many of these transactions in the territory concerned'.

But if Leyland and their principal shareholders, the National Enterprise Board, still insist that they have nothing to hide, then they will not mind the 'details of the transactions' being exposed.

One mysterious highlight of the trial was the reference in one of Barton's reports to the payment of £700,000 to a single individual made in the financial year 1975/6.

The recipient of this tidy sum was not named at the trial; all that was



made public was that the gentleman in question was the brother-in-law of the commander of the National Guard in the country concerned. We can now reveal that the country was in fact Saudi Arabia, and the individual in question was N Fustok.

At the trial Lord Ryder, former head of the National Enterprise Board, argued that the £700,000 'had nothing to do with the award of the contract...but had ensured that nothing happened in the country to stop the contract once it had been awarded'.

Whether or not Ryder was suggesting that this made the payment legitimate was unclear from his remarks. But the executive responsible for this payment was one of those whom Leyland went to court to prevent from appearing. And

Fustok's money was lodged in the Chase Manhattan Bank in Geneva, which suggests the contrary.

A compatriot of Fustok, a certain G Shaker, is another beneficiary recorded in Barton's cars division report. He received a mere £525,000, paid into the United Overseas Bank in Geneva, account number E18502 V.

Both these payments came from the cars division at Leyland, but the other divisions are also involved. For example, Barton's report on the Scammell division recorded the payment of £560,000 to Shari Alexane, money received as a consequence of a contract with the Egyptian Army and paid into Alexane's account at the Union Bank of Switzerland.

What services Alexane provided for this half a million pounds is not specified, but other payments tabulated by Barton offer obvious conclusions.

ASSISTANCE

For instance, Mustafa Issa received £30,000 for his part in a Land Rover contract with the Iraqi Government. That Issa was an official of the ruling Baath party in Iraq suggests the type of assistance he provided in securing the contract for Leyland.

Most of the payments referred to in Barton's reports went to beneficiaries in the Third World. But Barton himself made this point at his trial:

'It is often said about these arrangements that such practices stem purely from the fact that the population of a country is innately corrupt, that when in Rome...

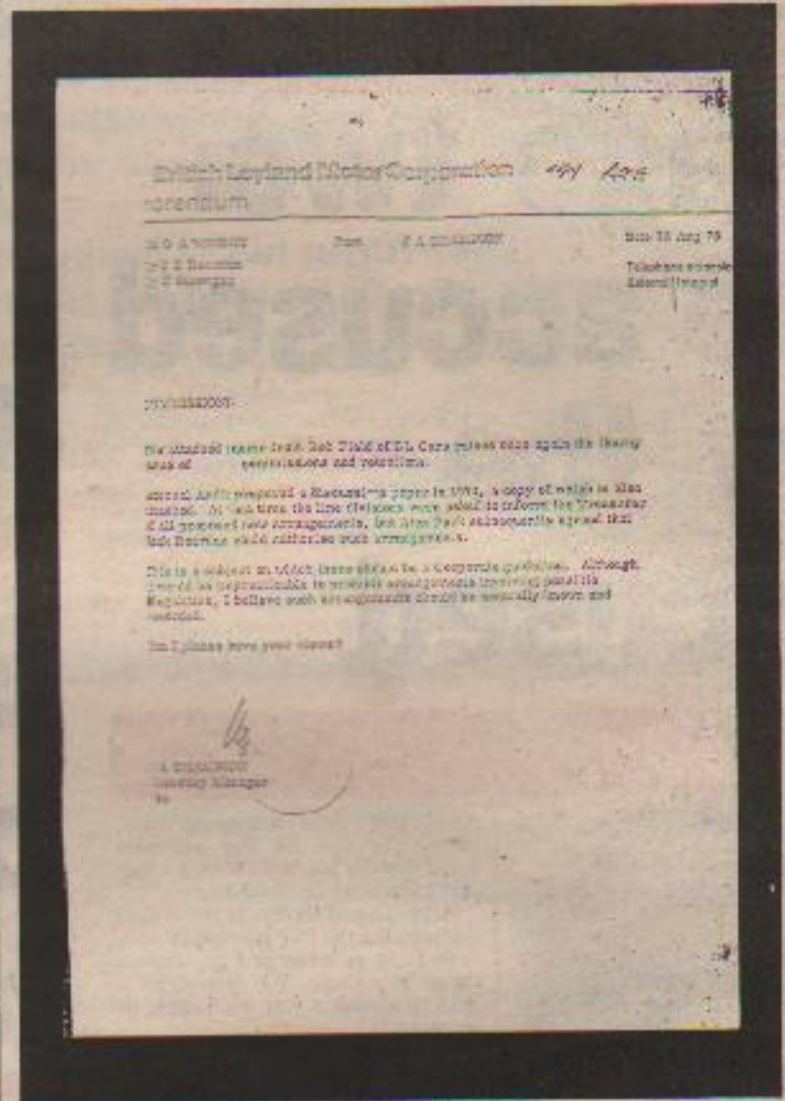
'But there are many cases in the schedules where the people benefiting have direct links with the interests of the UK... and their activities are well known and approved of by the authorities of this country. They are involved in an official capacity in representing this country.'

One individual who fits this description is 67-year-old Joseph Beherman. According to one section of Barton's report, Beherman's 'special commission' during 1975/6 totalled nearly £200,000.

This was in connection with two contracts, one to the Belgian Army and one to the Luxembourg Army. This payment was referred to by Barton a number of times during his trial, and he left little doubt of his opinion of its dubious nature.

Yet Beherman has on a number of occasions officially represented Britain at diplomatic functions. He was also awarded an honorary CBE in 1974. Most interesting of all, Beherman, at the time he received the money, was — and as far as we know still is — head of one of Leyland's Belgian subsidiaries.

There are suggestions that Beherman is not the only individual



with direct associations with Leyland who benefited from the company's 'special commissions'. Leyland executive Clive Strowger agreed at the Barton trial that he had heard rumours that 'company personnel were getting themselves written in through intermediaries by numbered bank accounts'.

Similarly, there is the reference in the memo reproduced in last week's *Socialist Challenge*: 'The use of numbered bank accounts means that on occasions the corporation makes payments to unknown persons who may include its own employees acting irregularly.'

Just what was all this money for? In one of the reports he drew up, Graham Barton does not mince words. 'Large scale slushing' is the phrase he uses. In other words, paying ruling party officials, brothers-in-law of the head of the National Guard, or whoever, to secure contracts for the company.

CONTRAVENTIONS

But Barton himself stressed at his trial that this was not all the 'market factor' covered. He also spoke of 'conscious contraventions of local commercial law', and in a section of one of his reports he referred to Leyland 'assisting distributors to breach local regulations with their commission accounts'.

By this, what is implied is that the beneficiary concerned received his payment into a bank account outside the country of his residence, usually in Switzerland. This avoided the need to pay tax on the money concerned. Not only did this deprive the country of residence of the tax money, it also deprived the country of valuable foreign exchange.

As such countries have a great need for foreign exchange — poor and underdeveloped as they usually are — they impose strict currency and commercial regulations for payments made to their residents. It is these laws which Barton said Leyland were breaking when they lodged their beneficiaries' payments into Swiss bank accounts.

AUTHENTIC

There is little doubt that both these illegalities as well as the straightforward slushing were common knowledge in the top circles of British Leyland. Indeed, it emerged at Barton's trial that the 'evidence' Alex Park submitted to the Ryder 'inquiry' into the *Mall* allegations admitted the breaking of such company regulations.

Further evidence is supplied in a letter from Leyland treasury manager

John Champion — the letter which accompanies the document reproduced in last week's *Socialist Challenge*, and which has been confirmed as authentic. The letter reads:

RETENTIONS

'The attached memo from Bob Field of BI Cars raises again the thorny issue of commissions and retentions.'

'Internal Audit prepared a discussion paper in 1974, a copy of which is also attached. At the time the line divisions were asked to inform the Treasurer of all proposed new arrangements, but Alex Park subsequently agreed that Jack Reardon could authorise such arrangements.'

'This is a subject on which there should be a Corporate guideline. Although it would be impracticable to prohibit arrangements involving possible illegalities, I believe such arrangements should be centrally known and recorded. Can I please have your views?'

The views of British Leyland management on the whole question of slushing and breaking currency regulations are perhaps best summed up in a phrase Graham Barton says he saw in yet another internal Leyland memo. The phrase, said Barton, explained that, 'The time has now come to pay off our friends.'

The evidence of how Leyland paid its 'friends' and who these friends were is quite literally overwhelming. Of course, Graham Barton has at times confused matters.

RIGHT TO KNOW

Apart altogether from the authenticity of the alleged 'Ryder letter', he has voluntarily stated that he 'adulterated' a number of documents he submitted to the *Daily Mail*.

He did this, he said, to protect his source. Nevertheless, even those documents which Leyland has reluctantly admitted are genuine are evidence enough of a wide range of 'illegalities'.

Twenty million pounds may be chickenfeed to some people. It is not chickenfeed to the workers of British Leyland, who have faced widespread redundancies over the last year.

They above all others have a right to know the full facts of how their bosses conduct the affairs of British Leyland, a right to demand the opening of all Leyland's books.

The ending of the Graham Barton trial should not be the end of the slush fund story, rather the start of its more detailed and more honest retelling.

GENERAL INFORMATION		GENERAL INFORMATION		GENERAL INFORMATION	
DATE	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1975/6	...	1975/6	...	1975/6	...
1976/7	...	1976/7	...	1976/7	...
1977/8	...	1977/8	...	1977/8	...