The 'washing-up' dispute at BL's Cowley plant may seem like a petty squabble over a few minutes each day; but it strikes at the very heart of trade union freedom in Britain. It makes clear that in the eyes of the employing class we are not workers but wage slaves.

BL management, the Tory Party and the media adopt the joint attitude that once you've sold your labour power to an employer, you are his to order in any way that he chooses; you cease to have any rights whatsoever.

This is what capitalism exploitation is all about. But it doesn't mean that working people have got to accept it. Since the birth of the trade union movement, they have only submitted to the big stick under duress.

That duress has been evident this week in the 'sick or be sacked' threat from Harold MacGregor, Chairman of Austin Morris. The threat was witheld for 48 hours earlier this week but may well have been reinstated by Mr MacGregor further action in the autumn - or as a threat to the workers.

Mr MacGregor further alluded to 'the personal' - presumably - trying to impose a veto over BL management decisions. They are trying to put a stop to the work day by the victims of the strike.

The Austin Morris chairman is trying to turn the clock back to the days of the 19th century - or at the very least to forty years ago, when 'washing-up time' was established.

But his words imply that there is some sort of current democratic consensus in BL, over which the unions are trying to impose their dictatorship. There isn't.

What Mr MacGregor means is that he's all in favour of dictatorship as long as he's the one representing it. He considers himself perfectly justified in literally removing a 'privity' that his employers are 'enjoyed' for forty years.

The AEF chairman is saying that the arrangement intended to bring in 'APS' to Austin Morris in any case and higher earnings were by no means guaranteed.

Can any form of cash payment compensate for a justified absence from the work bench?

After all, cash can always be taken away by inflation - particularly if it's the sort of zero award BL likes handing out - and wages have to be fought for continually.

Once benefits like tea breaks, increased holidays, a shorter working week or 'washing-up time' are abolished, inflation can do nothing to take them away. The only way it can be removed is by arbitrary action like that of Mr MacGregor.

SIMPLE ISSUE

MacGregor claims that his action aimed at saving the £1 million per week that Cowley loses in production through 'washing-up time'. Why doesn't he add the amount lost through tea breaks, meal breaks or by not having his employees work a 16-hour day?

By the time you read this, the dispute will have come to a head. The stand will finally be made by BL after months of petty and not-so-petty attacks on their working conditions may have been broken.

They may be standing firm against this thin end of a very thick wedge. For, if management claim the right to dictate every second of your working day, what's to stop them doubling the speed of the lines?

The employers don't own us. They don't take us on as a personal favour; it's for their own benefit, and there's no reason to act as cheerful, long- suffering, forelock-tugging serfs.

Employers expect you to get dirty working for them. The least you can expect is to clean off that dirt in 'their' time. The issue is as simple as that.

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THE REAL FACE OF IMMIGRANT SORROW

Ron Worker Correspondents

NEWPORT, Gwent, April 19.

Home Office officials have threatened South African born Newport woman Mrs Jabbar and her three children with imminent deportation. Her case stands in sharp contrast to the recent most-favoured treatment afforded to Czech-Polish emigrants.

South Wales Anti-Apartheid supporters, who point out that the deportation order is both unjust and unfair, presented a 5,000-name petition against the order to Under-secretary of State for Wales Straddling, Thomas MP in Crumlin this week.

Mrs Jabbar has been in this country considerably longer than the recent Czech emigrants who have received much media coverage. She arrived with her husband and their three children on her husband's work permit, but he left two years ago.

She was served with a deportation order last month after her husband, who had left the country earlier, had obtained a divorce in Mexico. There has been no official suggestion but it is not the case, that this was a marriage of convenience.

The only avenue now open to Mrs Jabbar is an appeal to the 'discretion of the Home Office.

The Thatcher clique, however, are far more understanding and sympathetic to refugees from socialism- whatever their technical legal status - than they are to the victims of apartheid South Africa.

The Government has maintained hard-nosed and unyielding stand on the issue, but Anti-Apartheid have had considerable success in building support in the locality. At 6.45, 5,000 signatures were achieved in less than a month in and around Newport, and supporters report tremendous backing and help for Mrs Jabbar from Gwent County Council.

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NEW WORKER INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY CELEBRATION

2pm - 11pm

Saturday, 30 April

Poplar Civic Hall,
Row Road, E3

FUND

Our monthly fund grew by £124.65 this week, which brings our total to £2,323.53. It is as if the 'washed-up' workers at BL are already contributing towards the fund.

We are still £2,305 short of our target of £2,511.

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NEW COMMONIST PARTY KARL MARX CENTENARY CELEBRATION

2pm - 5pm

& 7pm - 10pm

Wednesday, 27 April

Thursday, 23 May

Friday, 29 April

Caxton Community Centre

Archerway, London

Admission 50p per lecture

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BEIRUT BLAST PUTS REAGAN ON THE SPOT

By Our Arab Affairs Correspondent

Destruction of the US Embassy in Beirut has placed US President Reagan firmly on the spot. Apart from the minimally estimated 47 dead and 120 injured, including a senior CIA official, the act symbolized US imperialism in the country it seeks to dominate.

Western press opinion that the explosion was the work of a free- man suicide squad using a car bomb is given little credence by Arab observers.

A Lebanese official of fundamentalist group called Al Jihad al-Islami (Islamic Holy War) has claimed responsibility for the blast.

It would be consistent with Al Jihad's demand for immediate withdrawal of Israeli, US, French, Italian and British forces from Lebanon as stated in its 1983 document. Al Jihad's call echoed a pro- posal from US Senator and former presidential candidate Barry Goldwater, whose call for an American evacuation from Beirut was rebuffed by President Reagan.

President Reagan's pledge to maintain the US presence, coupled with optimistic State Department comments about Lebanon-Israeli talks, show that official thinking remains basically unchanged.

The talks exclude all other nations and have brought no credit to President Reagan either at home or in the Arab world.