

Summary and transcript of interview of Gary Fabien by Chris Thomas, 2007 (803/06)

Approximate timings given in minutes and seconds in various places.

Summary

Subjects include (transcript paragraph numbers given in brackets): his industrial and political education during his early working life (2-4); financial and practical assistance given by the Rolls Royce workers to the Grunwick strikers (5-20); policing of the picket (21-26, 31, 32); boycott of Grunwick by Cricklewood Post Office workers (27-28); role of Labour governments in industrial relations (30); successful industrial action in 1977 by Rolls Royce workers against government pay norms (30); pressure on Trades Union Congress to achieve a settlement (33-34); reasons for defeat of strike, including failure of trade union movement to use its full power because of differences in outlook between shop-floor workers and leaders (35-40).

Transcript

1. **CT:** OK, you're talking to me, Gary, that's absolutely fine. Everything's looking really good. We're going to start at the beginning: how did you first hear about the Grunwick dispute?
2. **GF:** Well, if we're starting at the beginning I'd really like to paint the picture of where it was and what it was about. At the time I was quite a young shop steward, at least I like to think I was a young shop steward. I lived in Willesden as a young man; I was brought up at a very important time, I think. Industrially it was a time of absolutely full employment. I left school not with the best of educations and went into an apprenticeship as most young people did, and that's where my education began, that's when my political education began. I mixed with people that had been in the war, I mixed with people that were in the trade union movement, and then began to learn firstly that there was only one real way forward, and that was through the trade union movement. That was the only way you really progressed issues. I worked in the motor car industry. People may think it was quite a comfortable place to work in; the reality was it wasn't. It was a kind of a spit and [indistinct] – can't say it, can you cut that?
3. **CT:** Pick it up from the beginning, "I worked in". Yeah, go on.
4. **GF:** I worked in the motor car industry at the time. It was not what people think; it wasn't the best of surroundings; it was dirty, it was grubby. Quite often we would complain about things like broken windows because that's where the cold come in. I learnt very early that not only were the workplaces where you change political things and industrial things, it's where you also change international things, and you developed international ideas, and I suppose I've become somewhat of an internationalist. I also learnt very early that there was a lot of prejudice, some of it in the workplace but most of it by employers. Where I worked there wasn't a single black face when I started working in 1960. I wasn't aware of that at the time. In fact it was only a couple of years later that I become aware of that because the company wanted to employ black labour, and, would you believe, managers opposed that and some so-called trade unionists opposed that too. Now, we defeated that position at a mass meeting, and that's when I learnt that mass meetings is where you operate. Mass meetings is where you actually create ideas, it's where you develop campaigns. And so that was a good understanding for me. [2:43]
5. When we talk about the dispute at Grunwick's, that had an interesting beginning because I worked in a shop that built Corniche motor cars, Rolls Royce cars. Now, they cost at the time in excess of a

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hundred thousand pounds. Now, that didn't reflect in our wage packet, and as I said before it didn't reflect in our working conditions. So we were constantly challenging the employer over better wages and conditions, and at the time of the Grunwick's dispute we were about to go into dispute ourselves, which we did later. Where Grunwick's come into it is that they had two plants, one in Cobbold Road and the other one near Dollis Hill station. The Dollis Hill station place they had, by the way, was where I went for my school dinners, as a young child when I went to Dudden Hill. The one in Cobbold Road was adjacent, as I said, to where we worked. What the Grunwick's workers did is pass our shop every day, and they used to look in at what we produced, and they looked with some interest. And so a conversation began between us and them. Inevitably that turned to the question of wages. They said, "you must be earning fortunes doing what you do", and when we told them they thought it was fortunes. So we said, "what you earning?", and they told us. They then went on to say that comes Friday they get a cheque and they can't even cash the cheque in works time. So I remember telling them about the Truck Acts. The Truck Acts were quite clear: you are allowed to be paid by the coin of the realm, and you can be paid during works time. That was just one little kind of thing we discussed. So every day, we'd meet them every day, we'd discuss with them what was happening and they'd tell us how things weren't going well and how bad the conditions were. And the answer from me and the people I worked with was always the same: "join a union. Join a union; not only does it make you strong, it delivers things." And they were very sceptical, and if you like I suppose you could say that they were quite frightened. And they didn't do it for what seemed to me to be a lifetime. Finally, on the day the strike broke out they come running into the shop where I worked and said "we're out, we're on strike. We're not having it. We want better conditions and we want better pay." And so immediately we gathered round them and said "get yourself down to Brent Trades Council and join the union," and off they did. [5:19]

6. And we didn't see anybody for a few days. After a few days we saw a couple of them trying, attempting to mount a picket at the Cobbold Road site. Within a week or so of them doing that – it was probably less than that – they were moved from outside of the factory right down to the entrance of the estate. And they were moved by the police because George Ward, that very famous employer, decided to take out a court injunction. Now, our advice to them was "challenge that and challenge that immediately." And I remember the day that they actually won the challenge and was allowed to move back [outside] the premises where they worked. Now for me, my day started off every morning by going and talking to the pickets before I started work. That extended very quickly because, despite what I think we like to kid ourselves, support for Grunwick's didn't jump immediately, it took some time to build up. So what I then did, and people I worked with did: spend some time with them in the mornings, spend some time with them lunchtime, spend time with them in the evening. And then, in the first instance, we spent a couple of Saturdays with them. And I remember one in particular: it was a very, very cold Saturday, and there were six pickets outside the factory, there was no one about, and there was six of us. And we spent the day with them. In fact I think we bought them sandwiches, stayed with them all day, just exchanging views on what was going to happen, where they were going to go with it, what they could do. And I remember keep saying to them, "it's not going to be like this, you're going to get more support than you're getting now, it's going to build and you're going to win." I wasn't sure of that but I felt that was the thing to say. [7:15]

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7. We then developed the whole situation within the place where I worked. And can I say now I worked for a very unique establishment in my view. It was a coach-building company as I said. It was one hundred per cent organised. It was organised on the basis that a number of unions operated within the plant. There was the NUVB¹, which became the Transport and General Workers' Union, there was my union, which was the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers, Coppersmiths, Heating and Domestic Engineers, there was the AEU², there was FTAT³. And we had our own autonomy, but by the same token we had a works committee. And the works committee met every two weeks, and as a steward I had a position on the works committee. And we discussed the issues of the day, and the issues of the day inevitably turned round to the question of Grunwick's, and how we could support Grunwick's. Now, what we did - and I don't believe it's done now - every member our union not only paid his union subs he paid into what was called a shop fund. And from every union's shop fund they paid tuppence a week to the central fund, and the central fund was solely designed to help workers who were in struggle. So subsequently, every two weeks that we met as a works committee we talked about how much we would donate financially to the Grunwick strikers, and any other strike that was taking place, there were lots of them in that period of the so-called Winter of Discontent⁴. There was lots of disputes, there was the Grand Metropole⁵ dispute, there was all kinds of disputes, there was lots of engineering disputes, including the one that we was eventually involved in, and I'll go into that if I may. [9:09]
8. So we assisted them financially. What we then did is look at the idea of picketing with them during the working day, and as the dispute rolled on, and more pickets began to come from different parts of the country, we then decided that we would picket for them and with them regularly. And one of the roles that I had was the 'picket-master', and what I would do - and it led to a major problem between me and one of the managers - I would then work out who was going to picket with them for what period of the working day. And it would be a two-hour stint for ten people here, a two-hour stint from another ten people from another shop, and things of that nature. On one particular occasion the production manager kind of tried to corner me in a changing-room and accused me of destroying the production programme at Rolls Royce motors in order that I could send people out to picket. Now, I didn't destroy it but it was certainly effected. There wasn't during that period as many Rolls Royces produced as there could have been and the company said should have been. That was just another example of what I call traditional working-class solidarity. But what I think I need to establish is that none of those things were achievable without absolute open dialogue - we didn't use those phrases then - between the stewards and the members. It was important - particularly with a dispute of that nature, where there was nothing to be gained from the people who went out and picketed with them - it was important that they understood what the struggle

¹ National Union of Vehicle Builders, which merged with the Transport and General Workers' Union in 1972.

² Refers to the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

³ Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union.

⁴ Strictly speaking the winter of 1978-1979, which was after the end of the Grunwick dispute.

⁵ Probably refers to strike at London Metropole Hotel.

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was about, and how important that struggle was, just like an international struggle. So, certainly it was something that we would raise at what we called shop meetings, which we held once a quarter, and every union did that. And certainly it was something that we would raise at mass meetings, and prior to every big dispute we had some kind of mass meeting, and we said “this is what we’re going to do, this is why we’re going to do it, we’re looking for your help to do it.” And we were involved in every mass picket that there was, and we sent people out there, we stopped the factory, I think for one afternoon on one of them, because what the march did was walk by and, although I was on the march with other stewards, we sent word ahead that when the Grunwick marchers went by no one worked. And so they all come to the gates and they greeted them. And that in my view is the proper thing to do. Can’t be done any more because of the anti-trade union laws. [12:04]

9. **CT:** Could I just ask a few, pick up on a few interesting points that came up there? Firstly, just how well did you get to know the strikers when they were talking to you before they walked out on strike? And what sort of things were you telling them, and then how well did you get to know them afterwards. And who were the principal people?
10. **GF:** I mean, to be honest, it was never on a name basis. What it was, on a kind of a worker-to-worker relationship. As I said, they stood in admiration at what we were able to do, and from my point of view particularly I talked to them and I admired . . . my heart when out to them when they told me about their wages and conditions. And the time when I was able to speak to them was always about joining a trade union: “get yourself in a union; things will change and change then.” Now, I can remember the faces but I can’t frankly remember the names. Even if we go on to the latter period, when we was on strike ourselves for nineteen weeks, we shared the facilities of Brent Trades Council. And when we finished – and again I picked up, one of the roles I picked up was picket-master – when we finished our picket we would go in there and we would sit with them and we would have our meetings, they would have their meetings and we would carry on talking to them and things like that. Whilst I knew most of the faces, including the one or two T and G members involved, frankly [in] the mists of time the names have escaped me.
11. **CT:** Just talking about the picket: you were helping them picket, was that right? Did I understand that rightly?
12. **GF:** You understood it absolutely right. It was a question of solidarity, secondary picketing, as it would be called now.
13. **CT:** So how did you work that one out? You would talk to the strike committee. Just sort of develop the argument about explaining to them what picketing was and effective picketing and what their rights were to picket.
14. **GF:** Right, the situation was very different then because it was before the anti-trade union laws. So you had a right to peacefully picket in whatever numbers you want[ed]. What we very simply did was go out and stand with them and talk to them. And particularly on the weekends that I mentioned, we were able to give them confidence when there was no one else there to do it, by standing with them and by just saying, “well look, as far as we’re concerned it’s your right to picket, and if anybody tries to go by you then just explain to them what your case is.” And we did much

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more of that as time went on. When they were trying to push people past them, and they were stopping them, before the days of the mass picket, then we were saying, "look, if you belong to a trade union, or you ever want to go anywhere else, then don't cross that picket line." So we were able to do that kind of stuff. As I say, we done a lot of that [at] weekends when no one else was about, really, to support them and help them. [15:04]

15. **CT:** Terrific . . . right. Were other trade unions involved? I mean, how was it developing at that time? Was it just yourselves from the Rolls Royce plant?
16. **GF:** For the period of time that I think I'm talking about now, there wasn't a lot of activity. What there was in the early days is a lot of activity from the Brent Trades Council, and what they were bringing on the picket line was a number of pensioners. And pensioners that were trade unionists come on the picket line on a daily basis to assist with picketing and things of that nature. And I recall, again in the early days, quite early days, one particular pensioner that was a life-time member of a trade union, been on the picket line and been knocked about by the Old Bill. And that's when I realised then, this is how this one's going to go. And things did develop quite badly in that sense from then on.
17. **CT:** Just . . . were you involved . . . the strikers eventually were to start to visit workplaces to explain the need for support.
18. **GF:** Yes.
19. **CT:** Were you involved with any of those?
20. **GF:** What I think we did at the time, in fact I know we did, we gave them lots and lots of addresses through our shop stewards' contacts of where to go. In fact, we kept books and things of that nature which we'd used in other disputes that we'd been involved in, because the motor industry was an industry that was always in dispute. And so, when you're able to hand over lots and lots of contacts where we knew they could go and we knew that they would get a bit of financial support as well as moral support. From our point of view there was absolutely no need to bring them into our plant because we'd done that work anyway. And all of our members knew on a weekly, monthly or whatever basis exactly what the dispute was. So that was, if you like, unnecessary for us. [17:03]
21. **CT:** How was the picket policed?
22. **GF:** In the early days it wasn't policed hardly at all. As we got over that kind of period it was policed in two ways: it was policed officially by the police dressed as police, and it was policed by the police that were in plain clothes. And I remember at the Chapter Road entrance on one particular day standing there next to someone who was dressed in kind of ordinary clothes but rather smart, and there was a couple together, a man and a woman, and they had very small placards that you could see they'd written that morning. And as things heated up as the morning progressed, they were looking round somewhat nervously, and I at that point moved away from them, and the person who was standing next to them was pushed by one of them in front of the police and arrested. And that

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was the role of the unofficial police, that's what they did. They were working as a plan, as a system, to get people arrested.

23. **CT:** Now, eventually the SPG⁶ was to get involved on the police. Now, what was the SPG and what was the consequences of them getting. . .
24. **GF:** Well, the consequences of them getting involved was it become much more violent. Where there was, as I described to you, some pushing and pulling before, the pushing and pulling was soon set aside for violent behaviour by the police. And, I mean, I come away with a number of bruises through the picketing that I did.
25. **CT:** Were you there on November the seventh?
26. **GF:** I was there on every major day. I was there on the day that we left the site and marched to Willesden Green police station. And I'm not quite sure why we did that, but we did that, and there seemed to me to be thousands of us that marched up there. And I think we were marching up to protest about police behaviour or whatever. And as we got towards the police station, in front of us there was two hundred police, and I remember turning and looking behind and there was as many behind. And after we'd been standing there and realised we couldn't get any further, that's when the police moved in on us. And one particular copper got his cosh round my throat and pushed as hard as he could. Now, I am a decent citizen but I tried to resist as much as I could. I wasn't prepared to accept that; it was brutality, it was absolute brutality. If you like, the satisfying day, in terms of the way the police were stood down, was the big day when we massed at Dudden Hill, just by the school I used to go to. And we massed there early in the morning, and that's when the NUM⁷ were there in big numbers, that's when everybody that was anybody was there in big numbers: people from ASLEF⁸, people from all the other trade unions. And there was around fifty of us from our plant, and we occupied what I called the 'bus stop' and we had our own plan of what we were going to do. We knew we going to look after ourselves, we knew what we were going to do to support others. And as the morning sort of went on, and we kind of become assembled, I remember us deciding we were going to go to the top end of the picket, and we did. And then, we then decided, because there were some police on horses at the top of the hill, we would then link arms, which we did. And I remember looking at the ground for a few minutes and then looking up to see a horse that far from my nose [holds hand in front of face] and looking the other side of the horse and just seeing a mass of horses and police and coppers, call them what you will, as far as the eye could see, right up the brow of the hill, Dudden Hill, and thinking, "this is a problem." I looked round behind me and I could see pickets, trade unionists, for as far back as I could see that way. So I thought, "well, I might be in the front line but there's sort of plenty more behind me, so they ain't going to win today, they will not win." And they didn't, they didn't. In fact we won the day. [21:38]

⁶ Metropolitan Police Special Patrol Group.

⁷ National Union of Mineworkers

⁸ Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

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27. **CT:** Could you talk a little bit about what you know of the role the Cricklewood postmen took during the dispute?
28. **GF:** The role . . . everybody was able to do different things, and the role that they played was magnificent. Again, it's something that can't be repeated now because of the anti-trade union laws. It was on the basis of them looking at what they could do to assist. And a weak link for George Ward and his people was the fact that films came into Grunwick by post. Perfect. It comes in by post and you don't move the post. The same as the miners wouldn't move the coal if it'd been that kind of dispute. And that's exactly what they did, they didn't move the post. And what they did was walk by the plant on a daily basis, refuse to take any post in, and they would be heralded by the pickets: mass applause. And, I mean, that was great in two ways because it give confidence to the Grunwick strikers, it give confidence to the people on the picket line, and of course it made sure that George Ward didn't get his films to process. And I think, you know, that they played a wonderful role. The sad part about it is that, through their own democracy, they finally decided that they would shift the post. Obviously it was through a lot of pressure, but that was their decision. At the time I respected their decision and so did others. But they played a magnificent role, absolutely magnificent role. On the days when we done mass picketing there would be postmen – because there weren't many postwomen about [at] that particular time – they would come off duty and come on the picket line. And so their role was excellent, absolutely excellent.
29. **CT:** Now, there was pressure being brought to bear here, we've got to remember. What do you think the significance was that there was a Labour government in power?
30. **GF:** I . . . it's significant in as much as we come to expect far more from a Labour government than we ever ever get. Doesn't matter what point in history you go back to, you go back to a disappointment. Ramsay Macdonald, you know, all those times. At the end of the Second World War it was going to be a land fit for heroes, there was going to be full employment, there was going to be all these kinds of things. Some of those consequences come naturally, there was major disappointments along the way. So when we got to the period of the seventies, and it was a special period, and we got a Labour government, Harold Wilson government, I'm bound to say we did make real progress. We made real progress in things like the right to time off work for trade union studies. We made progress in things like health and safety. You know, for the first time we could have, under legislation, a health and safety representative. Initially the employer picked who that was going to be; within I think about a year we had legislation that changed that and said we could be, trade unionists could be the health and safety rep. So that changed a lot in industry. Politically, the disappointment was on all the things that happened in that period: the Winter of Discontent, which was in that period, where a Labour government imposed wage restraint, absolutely imposed wage restraint, on the people that had elected it. They said quite clearly that wages would be capped, there would be a norm, and that norm would not be broken for any reason. Now, if you like that's where the Rolls Royce dispute was absolutely significant. And I mentioned earlier, and I'd like to get this on film if I may, because it's extremely important: when 1977 hit us, we were in a period where we felt our wages were nowhere near what they should be to compensate for the skills that we had and what we produced, and the profits the employers made. We earned at that time seventy-seven pounds a week; now that was massively better than what the Grunwick's had. We

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felt our true value was over a hundred pounds a week. But what griped us more than that is as craft workers, as skilled workers, we didn't even get full holiday pay. Our holiday pay was about half of what it should have been, and we certainly didn't get full sick pay. So, in 1977 in September, when the negotiations with the employer broke down, we actually went into dispute ourselves. And we was able to give a lot more help with Grunwick's at the time, by the way. Immediately we went into dispute, the employer said, "I'd like to give you more, but the government won't let me." The senior convenor and the senior stewards were called to a government department, and they were told that under no circumstances would the government allow the employer to yield to a demand for a thirty pound a week increase, for full sick pay and full holiday pay. And more than that, we would have, as workers, a press embargo put upon us, so we couldn't get any helpful publicity anywhere. Now, I'm bound to say that didn't deter us, and we carried on. Now, after nineteen weeks in dispute, we went back on a hundred and four pound a week, an increasing of sick pay and a promise by the employer that the whole question of holiday pay would be looked at, and within twelve months we were on full holiday pay. Now, that was despite a Labour government who said quite clearly we could only have the government norm, which I think at the time was eight pound a week increase.

31. **CT:** But could I just bring you back to the Grunwick dispute. We had a Home Secretary who was in charge of policing; was he influencing the policing? We had MPs being arrested, we had general secretaries and presidents of trade unions being elected [arrested]. Was that just random or why was that going on?
32. **GF:** It wasn't random in the sense that on that day they suddenly decided to do it. It was random in the sense that people who turned up on that day would face the consequences of the police, and there was a clear mandate to make that as rough and tough as possible on whoever was on the picket line. Shirley Williams, who you rightly referred to, was once a member of the Labour Party, turned up on the picket line and was subsequently arrested. Arthur Scargill was subsequently arrested, and they weren't the only two, there was lots more. There was a clear desire, in my view, from the establishment, which is much more than one minister, to quell this dispute as fast as practically possible, using violence if necessary. Because the consequences of that dispute was very different; it wasn't about a pay increase for the people that were on the picket line, it was about social justice for the people that worked for Grunwick's, and a pay increase for those people. And the vast majority of people that turned up on a daily basis had nothing to gain for themselves. So that's why it had to be dealt with in the way that it was by the establishment.
33. **CT:** Just a second . . . right. But, and then how did this influence . . . ? Well, talk through what pressure you think the Labour Party might have applied to the TUC⁹ during this time. [29:39]
34. **GF:** Well, if you look at every dispute that the TUC is involved in, if you go back to 1926, the TUC called off the dispute, the national strike, almost before it started, irrespective of the run-up to that and all that took place in that. If you look at every other dispute that's taken place that the TUC has managed to get involved in – and I'm not disputing they should, I'm not disputing that in any way because they should do – they've always had government pressure to bear, particularly from a

⁹ Trades Union Congress

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Labour government: how do you wind the dispute up quickly? How do you resolve it? What's the compromise? How quickly can we get to a compromise? And that period was no different. The pressure on the TUC then must have been phenomenal, and I'm sure that every General Council had a clear debate on, how do you wind the dispute up? Others in that debate, other progressives in that debate – like the general secretary of this union, for example, the general secretary from my union, George Guy – would have been, how do we maximise support? So there has, history tells us, there's always doves and hawks, and I suppose I'm a hawk. And that pressure must have been phenomenal at that period of time. And subsequently, as we read when we read the history, the kind of pressure to do things legally, the pressure to do things officially, come to the forefront, and there was the Scarman Enquiry, and all the stuff that come out of that. And in the end, if you like, that's what brought the dispute to the conclusion that it had. [31:27]

35. **CT:** So just to be specific, why was the dispute lost?

36. **GF:** I don't accept the analysis the dispute was lost. I accept the criticism that the members never got their jobs back, so it was lost in that sense. It was won in the sense that history has shown us that working people from different unions, all round this country, picketed with them, lived with them in that sense, for all of their dispute, and that history lives on. So, 'lost' isn't the kind of word I'd use. I accept if they use it because they didn't get their jobs back, they didn't get an increase. Why that come about, and perhaps I'm repeating what I've just said, it become scary, it become scary. Certainly, history as I understand it in the past twenty, thirty years, there was never a dispute of that magnitude, where it went across racial boundaries, went across racial divides, went across trade union divides, and brought everybody together to a common purpose. If that dispute had been won, and they would have won their jobs back, won the right wages and conditions, that would have led to far more disputes. What it did do is lead to some more defeats, and we saw that defeat, if you like, in 84-85 with the miners, when the lessons had been learnt, the mass picketing lessons had been learnt, they learnt how to bash workers a little bit harder, and they did, and that was all built around that particular time. So the stakes that we never understood were extremely high in my view.

37. **CT:** Some people have said that the trades union movement was boxing below its weight and that's why it lost ultimately.

38. **GF:** I think that's a criticism that's right and it's wrong. The trade union movement has always boxed below its weight, because the trade union movement has never understood its full potential, never understood it. It's got massive, massive potential. It's got the potential to not only organise but educate while it agitates, and it doesn't do that to the extent that it could do and should do. It boxed below its weight at that particular dispute because we didn't turn enough people out in the pickets; we could have turned more out, we could have turned them out for a more sustained period, because we didn't have the legal restraints we got now. That's because the trade union movement lets itself down in terms of the way that it doesn't debate issues inwardly. I said earlier that I would never get involved in an issue like that, as a steward, unless I went through it with my members first. And that's why I explained to my members regularly what the dispute was about, how it was proceeding and how it wasn't. I don't think other people share that view. I don't think unions reported it back at a shop-floor level in the way that it could have been done and should

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have been done. So, if we're going to accept the criticism of 'punch below its weight' then that's the reason it didn't. It didn't work hard enough at mobilising enough people and explaining what the issues were. [35:00]

39. **CT:** Is there a tension, though, between the shop floor, and shop-floor trade unionism, and the leadership? I mean, obviously leadership is very important, you know, that is the strength and power and the co-ordination of a trade union, but sometimes there are tensions between the two in terms of action to take. And in this case, you know, we could look at the role of the leadership of the Post Office workers, pressure applied to them, the guys on the shop floor doing the right thing that was putting the pressure on George Ward and could have brought that dispute to a victory, most of the strikers think. And yet they were open to being pressurised from [?the government] to say, "look, we can't have this, call it off." And so there is an internal tension, if you like, between the democracy of workers supporting each other and the leadership, who are possibly more in contact with government and the establishment than their members.
40. **GF:** I think there's an analysis there that is clearly right. There was all kinds of pressure. There would be, in most unions, internal pressure. If the union hadn't debated the whole issue properly, then members, quite rightly, would say to their leadership, "why are you putting these resources in? How is it going to benefit me? Where does it benefit me in terms of my next wage-rate?" By the same token, union leaders have always felt the need to compromise, and sometimes we think they compromise too early. And sometimes we think they shouldn't have compromised at all; we think that everything that is on the table belongs to us. So, at that period in time – and again that period of the seventies, sixties run into the seventies run into the eighties, was incredibly special, because workers had an anticipation, there was much more there for us. And so I think at that point in time there was this feeling at shop-floor level that their unions were delivering, but not delivering enough. On the question of hours, for example, there was campaigns running through engineering for a shorter working week. There was a feeling that we should be taking employers on, and progressively during that period we took the employers on three times, and won a reduction in the working week. Now, to achieve that campaign we first of all had to have a real ruck and row with the leaders of a number of trade unions, and I would say at the time it was the AEU was one of them. So there is always that difference, and it's how you box it and it's how you cox it and where you kind of compromise. The difference isn't so much there, I would say, in this period of time, because a lot of the, if you like, the shop-floor feeling, the togetherness isn't there because you can't relate to people in the way you used to.
41. **CT:** I mean . . . just swap the cassette round . . .