

Summary and transcript of interview of Mahmood Ahmed by Chris Thomas, 2007 (803/01A)

Approximate timings given in minutes and seconds in various places.

Summary

Subjects include (transcript paragraph numbers given in brackets): working conditions in Grunwick (4-6); management's anger at the start of the strike (12-16); persuasion of some strikers to return to work (18); formation and operation of the strike committee (30-34); support from Cricklewood postal workers (36-38, 61-64); fundraising visits to workplaces in Scotland, Kent and elsewhere (40, 92-96; mass pickets (40-44); aggressive policing (46-52); arrest and conviction of Ahmed and others for obstructing the police (54-58); pressure from Labour government and union leaders to restrain militants and resolve the dispute (66-70, 82); powerful right-wing support for George Ward (72-74); differences in attitude between the strikers and APEX (84-86); support for dispute and for involvement of women from Asian community (91-92); failure of TUC to mobilise support from other unions (98-100); strikers' hunger strike outside Congress House (101-104); formal ending of the dispute at APEX meeting (106-108).

Transcript

1. **CT:** Let's just start at the beginning: tell us the story about how you started working at Grunwick.
2. **MA:** Just the – basically, came out of college and doing a few jobs here [and] there, and, you know, just happened to go to Grunwick's and got a job there. And soon after, we went on strike, and that's where it started.
3. **CT:** What was it actually like working there?
4. **MA:** We used to sit in a row, very tightly packed. Films used to be brought to us, we used to sort them out, you know. Very tense. We had, like, a factory where up on the top floor there was like a big giant window where the managers used to stand and watch you below working, and, you know, just –
5. **CT:** Was it oppressive?
6. **MA:** Well, you had to go through [a] certain amount of work every day. You know, the more that came you had to finish it. And there was hardly any time for lunch or tea, there was no canteen facilities. Basically, you just either went out to get something or just stayed in and working, and that's how it was for everybody: very tight.
7. **CT:** Right. How did the strike start?
8. **MA:** [The] strike basically started at not the place where I was, on the other side. I think it was basically some people had a problem with management over some kind of, basically, conditions and wages and that, and they sort of had some arguments, and some of them came out. And we didn't hear about it until the next day because some of them came over to the main factory where we were and then they told us and we all sort of said "all right, we'll support you," and nearly all of us came out and didn't go into work the next day. And that's how it started.
9. **CT:** So it wasn't actually your conditions of work that started the strike, was it?

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10. **MA:** Well, it was basically the same for all of them, whether it was the other factory or this, but when, you know, when some of them took a step to do something about it, obviously everybody thought, you know, “all right, yeah, that’s what’s happening, and then we’ll support.”
11. **CT:** And how did the management respond to that?
12. **MA:** Oh God, some of them were really angry, they were, you know, they didn’t like what was going on. They were threatening some of the strikers, and all sorts.
13. **CT:** Was there any chance of reasoning with them? I mean, did they want a dialogue?
14. **MA:** No, there was no chance. They were the bosses and you either did what they told you or you [were] out, and that’s how they treated everybody.
15. **CT:** And was this the actual management, or was it George Ward¹ himself?
16. **MA:** I think all of them; it wasn’t just George Ward. There was another guy called Pearson who was, like, his partner, and even some of the, like, managers. I mean, George Ward was always there, he was always up in that room in the attic, kind of thing, you know, with the big window where he was always watching. And he was furious because, you know, some of these old ladies and young lads were all, sort of like, out on strike, and he was losing money, and he didn’t like it.
17. **CT:** And what was the attitude – I mean, how arrogant were they, and how confident were they that they could run their factory without you?
18. **MA:** They were very, I mean, arrogant in the sense that they didn’t think anything of the workers. They didn’t care whether if you had gone, they’d say “right,” they said they could employ more people in and do the job. And some of the workers actually who came out originally, some of them went back a few days back because they convinced them, you know, and that’s where the split happened between some of the strikers and some of the people that went back to work. And I think they had that in court as well when they were trying to prove unfair dismissal, but they couldn’t actually prove who was out in the first because by then there was no union involved. We were just out there, we weren’t member[s] of any union, and, you know, they persuaded some of them to go back to do the work, and they thought they could carry on without us. [5:33]
19. **CT:** Right. So what happened after you walked out?
20. **MA:** Well, we were outside the factory, and some of them said “well, we can’t just stand round here do[ing] nothing. We might as well find out something about unions and see if they can help us.” And there used to be a law centre round the corner on, I think it was Church Road in Dollis Hill, and we went there, some of us, and asked them, and, you know, they approached some union, we didn’t even know who or how, because we didn’t know nothing about it. And they came up with a union

¹ Owner of Grunwick.

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that was called APEX because they thought that we were all clerical workers. And that's how, you know, the rep came and sort of like signed us on and said that they would negotiate on our behalf with the management. And we all, you know, joined the union, and that's how it got going.

21. **CT:** In terms of the employers, I mean, how conscious were they of your vulnerable position? You know: newly arrived in the country, wages at the bottom of the scale, desperate for work. How much did that affect their attitude towards you?
22. **MA:** Well, I think that they thought that if we, like sort of, you know, take the attitude that "we don't care about you," and that, you know, "you will never get another job." And you used to get all sorts of threats and that, you would probably come back and, you know, and [e]specially with [a] lot of these little Indian ladies, you know, not speaking English and that and couldn't get a job anywhere else, so they thought that they could get them back. And they were, like, obviously confident in the sense that they thought that they could, you know, force them or threaten them, or whatever, to come back.
23. **CT:** When you walked out, had you any anticipation that this could be quite a big struggle?
24. **MA:** No, never thought in our life that this would get to that position, because we were out there, you know, we thought "oh, don't know, maybe it won't last a few weeks and then everybody will disappear and, you know, they'll all go away, or some of them will get other jobs and that." But once we joined the union, and we sat and we talked and, you know, started arranging pickets and this and that. You know, things like that, we never knew what to do because we didn't know anything about it. And we were told to do this, that and the other, and that's how we sort of got confident that we were going to fight for our rights and fight for our jobs. **[8:33]**
25. **CT:** Just talk a little bit more about that. I mean, clearly a union was a new thing; I mean, it was nice to have the support of the union, but how did the self-confidence grow in terms of your right to struggle and believe in the struggle?
26. **MA:** Mainly through support from other people. [A] lot of local factories, when they heard about it, they used to come and support. The union itself, you know, supported, told us what to do, how to organise picket lines. And we got support from some other people there, like lorry-drivers that used to come and deliver, we used to find out that they were members of other unions who could tell them that we got in dispute they wouldn't cross the picket line and that. All those kind of little things, [a] little bit at a time, you know, brought our confidence.
27. **CT:** When you were told you would have to picket the – and stand outside, what was the response? Because that must felt like quite a strange thing to do.
28. **MA:** Well, it did a bit to start with but we got used to it. You know, we said, like, "if we're going to try to stop people going in we'd have to stand outside and explain to them why we are out there," and, you know, it just happened.

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29. **CT:** Now, talk about the formation of the strike committee. How did that come about, and how were decisions made?
30. **MA:** It was basically from the law centre. Jack Dromey², who was the trade union rep working at the law centre, also got involved and basically said “look, you know, you’ve got to have a committee who decides things, and you’ve got to have a chairman, you’ve got to have a secretary and, you know, a few committee members who make decisions about things like printing leaflets or posters or going out and explaining to people and that kind of thing.” So, you know, we had a big meeting of all the strikers in the trade union hall, and that’s when we elected some of the people. Originally I wasn’t the secretary; it was – I’m not sure his name, Sunil, I think, Mrs Desai’s son, who was the original secretary, but he left after a while and then they elected me, and until the end of the strike I was the strike committee secretary. [11:10]
31. **CT:** How were decisions made on the strike committee?
32. **MA:** Just basically, we all met and whichever things needed doing we decided on [the] majority of the people who agreed with whatever the thing needed doing.
33. **CT:** Was it a comfortable strike committee?
34. **MA:** Yeah, it was. Everybody was OK.
35. **CT:** And how did the dispute progress? What happened in the first six months?
36. **MA:** Not a lot happened in the first six months, but basically we was just trying to stop deliveries, we were trying to stop people going in, trying to explain to them. We got some of the other unions involved: there was the Post Office workers that got involved. Because the company had [a] lot of their work coming through by mail, we approached the Cricklewood Post Office workers, where the mail used to come in, if they would not deliver. And, you know, we had a very good response from them and they said they wouldn’t, and then that stopped [a] lot of the work, and that’s how [it] really progressed.
37. **CT:** Were you surprised that the postmen took that action?
38. **MA:** We were a bit, because we were told that the Post Office workers had a legal obligation to deliver the mail and that they would be breaking the law if they did that. But they did support us, and I think the strike really took off from that time. And then the more publicity, you know.
39. **CT:** Now, just going back to – how did the decision come about to call for a mass picket? And what happened?

² Secretary of Brent Trades Council.

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40. **MA:** I think it was just basically we was getting to a situation where the strike was going on and on and on, and there was [a] lot of support. [A] lot of us were travelling around raising funds. You know, we went to Scotland, we went to Kent, you know, Scottish miners, Kent miners; we went to the shipyards in Scotland, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Kilmarnock, Paisley; we went down south to Kent, we went to other places, and [a] lot of engineering factories, and everybody was supporting. And people were, you know, coming to the picket lines on [a] regular basis, just for [a] few hours and that. And then it was, like, decided that we [would] have one day of a mass picket where we would invite everybody to come down and, you know, show their support, because, you know, basically, the employers weren't listening, they weren't talking, and we thought if we put some pressure by having [a] lot of people there they might listen. And that's how we organised the first mass picket. **[14:15]**
41. **CT:** And what happened? Because that wasn't the really big mass picket; it built up to that, didn't it? It started in May. Do you remember what happened, actually, when you called for that first day of picketing?
42. **MA:** We had – oh, my God, there was thousands and thousands of people turned up, and we didn't believe it would be like that. The whole of Willesden Green was shut down; every street was closed, there was, like, thousands of police, you know, when we went there in the morning, and, I mean, I went there and I saw that all the streets were blocked by police. And it was people everywhere; I mean, you could, from Willesden High Road all the way to the other side of Dollis Hill Station, and everywhere down there, all the streets were closed, there was people everywhere, more and more people were coming, coachloads of people, and, you know, there was miners, all sorts of people, and –
43. **CT:** No, I was just thinking that before that big day there was, I think, you know, just a few hundred people came when the call for a mass picket.
44. **MA:** Yeah, the very first mass picket was like a few hundred, about three, four hundred people came, but there was [a] lot of trouble with the police; police came and they pushed everybody round, arrested [a] lot of them. I remember being arrested and taken to Wembley police station, and there was some of us, like, about eight and ten to a cell. And we were being charged with obstruction, and all these little petty little, you know, charges what the police were charging us with. And because of that, it was shown on TV, and I think, there was, like, a lot of people saw that, and then more and more people started coming. And there's where it, you know, really the mass picket took off, and then we had that big final, big day when they started shifting the employees on the buses, and that was the big day.
45. **CT:** How would you describe the policing of the picket?
46. **MA:** They were very rough-handed. You know, they could've just not taken sides, but they decided, obviously, to support the employer, or the establishment, you could say that. And we were just some, you know, about a hundred or so Asian people just striking. And they started using all sorts of laws about: you couldn't stand here, or if you were standing you had to move about, or you couldn't

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carry this, and they were sort of like just picking on people and arresting them and charging them. You know, just basically, it was like a – scaring them, isn't it? That's what they were doing.

47. **CT:** And what about the level of violence?

48. **MA:** There was – I don't know, I mean, there wasn't any violence, really, that we knew of. It was mainly caused by the police –

49. **CT:** Yeah, that's what I mean: the violence of the police and the Special Patrol Group.

50. **MA:** Yes, using the very heavy tactics of, you know, keeping just – hundreds of police would turn out, they were all linked their arms and [were] holding people back and closing the streets and, you know, just using pushing and shoving, and arresting people and, you know, and that kind of thing.

51. **CT:** Were you aware of the events on November the seventh – which was when there was a kind of final last go at picketing, you know, to get the TUC moving, and there was quite a vicious attack by the Special Patrol Group – were you aware of that? And did you see it?

52. **MA:** Yeah, I was actually one of them who was arrested on that day. They used this Special Patrol Group, they used [to] call it in those days, and they were, like, coming with batons and all sorts and they, you know, they attacked, they just, literally like, you know, in a riot situation. They just went in and just started beating people up and throwing, you know. People were just running everywhere and, you know; I mean, there was no need for it; nobody was doing anything, nobody was in danger. I mean, we were only there to picket and show support.

53. **CT:** How were you arrested? [19:00]

54. **MA:** Basically, I was, what was happening was, like, I was – at the back of the factory there was a gate there where there was a police, and I was one of these stewards, and I was talking to one of the inspectors, and he knew me, because, you know, that I was a strike committee member, and there was [a] lot of pushing and shoving with the police, and they basically just decided to grab me as well and, you know, they had big coaches parked along the back of the factory where they used to take you until they filled the coaches up, and they were shifting you to Wembley police station.

55. **CT:** And what were you charged with, and what happened?

56. **MA:** We were charged with threatening behaviour and obstruction of the highway, but [a] lot of us got off the obstruction bit, which was the main [charge], and charged with threatening behaviour. I think nearly everybody got done for that because they couldn't prove the main [charge], which was the obstruction, or obstructing the police in course of their duty or something, they was like they added on to get a conviction, it was just to get a conviction. Because if you are standing there and a policeman comes up to you and says "move" and you don't move, they arrest you. That's obstructing the police, and that's what they were using, and everybody was being done for that.

57. **CT:** And what was happening in the court?

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58. **MA:** [The] courts were basically the same. I mean [a] lot of the time they couldn't prove any of the charges, but whenever they couldn't prove they added this extra charge of obstructing the police. So they were dropping all the other charges and just saying "guilty" on this, so we all got convictions.
59. **CT:** When did you think you were going to win? Or was there a time when you thought you could win the dispute?
60. **MA:** There was a time when we thought we could win, like, when some of the, you know, government ministers got involved and questions got raised in parliament. We thought, you know, the employer might be reasonable and listen, you know, [?probably] change his mind.
61. **CT:** Were you aware what was happening to the postmen at the time? How what was happening, because they initially supported you at Cricklewood, and then what happened after that?
62. **MA:** I think [a] lot of them were threatened with the law to say if they carried out this action that they would be prosecuted. I think the branch secretary at Cricklewood and the chairman were – I don't know whether they were charged or they were going to be charged.
63. **CT:** It was their own union that got worried.
64. **MA:** Yeah, the union itself said – Maurice Styles, I think, was the general secretary of the post workers' union in those days, I'm not sure now – and he, head office, sent them a letter saying that if they supported the strikers or took any action that they would be prosecuted. And that's when they – well, I think in a way, they still carried on supporting us, but not openly. [22:30]
65. **CT:** Why do you think that pressure was coming down from their own union to call off?
66. **MA:** I think [a] lot of pressure was coming from the government, basically. [A] Labour government was in power, and the strike had got to a situation where there was a national issue. Some of the big miners' leaders – like Scottish miners, Mick McGahey³, Arthur Scargill⁴, Jack [indistinct] engineering workers' union – government ministers coming down, members of parliament coming down to the picket line. And it was becoming such a national issue that it was starting to affect the Labour Party in government, and I think the Labour Party government was putting pressure on the union leaders to, you know, control their members.
67. **CT:** What do you think the government was frightened of?
68. **MA:** I think, basically, they were frightened of, you know, losing the general election, because [the] strike was showing how strong the unions were and how they could support one another, and even

³ President of the Scottish Area of the National Union of Mineworkers.

⁴ President of the Yorkshire Area of the National Union of Mineworkers.

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the trade union leaders were afraid, and they were, like, forcing some of their members, member unions, to tell their, you know, members to cool it down.

69. **CT:** And this, you think, was coming from the government?

70. **MA:** Yeah, I'm sure it was.

71. **CT:** What about the forces that were supported George Ward, how familiar were you with them?

72. **MA:** We weren't very familiar with those. We had heard of the organisation, National Association for Freedom; basically, we'd heard that, you know, it was an organisation that supported employers. It was funded by some of the rich people in the country, basically just to do similar sort of things: fight the trade unions. And it was only afterwards – I saw it on the news, on the TV programme, where some of the government ministers in the Tory Party were involved in shifting the post from the Cricklewood post office through, I think they called it 'Pony Express', where they used to take the post from here on lorries and bring it and, you know, and that's how they supported the management, by trying to get their work into the factories.

73. **CT:** Did it worry you that you suddenly realised that George Ward had some quite powerful friends?

74. **MA:** Yeah, very worried. All of a sudden one day, we went to the picket line and inside was standing George Ward with some of the other managers, and there was one guy there, you know, with [a] suit and that, and somebody told us that that's the guy from the National Association for Freedom. I can't remember what his name was, but, you know, not a very nice looking fellow. And, you know, and then suddenly things started to happen and we realised that, you know, he was being supported by some big power organisation.

75. **CT:** Right. What were you calling for in trying to resolve the dispute?

76. **MA:** We were just basically asking for a decent wage, you know, decent working conditions, and, you know, those of us who were outside should be taken back to work.

77. **CT:** And the recognition of your union.

78. **MA:** Oh yeah, obviously, because by then we had joined the union and we wanted our union recognised to represent us in the workplace.

79. **CT:** And, but I was thinking, as the dispute wore on – because we're now, the picketing, mass picketing has been and gone – it seems to be in the air, there's no resolution apparent, promises from the TUC but not a lot of action. What was the mood of the strike committee at that time?

80. **MA:** We were in a situation where we wanted to carry on, but I think our union started to backtrack. They wanted us to –

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81. **CT:** Could I just ask the question again? Sorry, I think I just heard a voice off. I'll just ask – what was the mood of the strike committee as the strike moved into its second year? [27:22]
82. **CT:** Our union was getting [a] bit worried that the strike had gone on for so long and there was no end to it. And basically they wanted to wind it up, and sort of look for a day when they could call it [to] an end, mainly because our union general secretary and the chairman, who was a member of parliament, were also getting from the Labour Party itself directions that this has gone on long enough and it should, you know, end. And we wanted to carry on, but, at the end of the day, I think our union decided that they'd had enough.
83. **CT:** Looking back, how did you view the behaviour? I mean, what APEX did. I mean, talk a little bit about your views towards APEX over that period.
84. **MA:** APEX wasn't the right union for us to start with – realising now, not knowing then – because it was a very conservative, right-wing, a kind of professional, middle-class people's union, where members were all, you know, in higher executive jobs and things like that, and we were just plain labourers. And their attitude to things like picketing and, you know, especially secondary picketing and anything like mass picketing, you know, all that, wasn't very strong. They were completely opposite to somebody like the miners or the engineers.
85. **CT:** Did that produce tensions in your meetings?
86. **MA:** Yeah, sometime[s] we used to have, you know, we would say "right, we want to do this," and the union rep would say "no, no, you can't do this because, you know, this is against the law, or this is –" And we were saying "look, it doesn't matter whether it's against the law, we're fighting, are fighting, basically, laws, and unless we break some laws we're not going to get anywhere." That's where mass picketing came in, that's where we followed the company lorries to the airport and tried to block the stuff coming in from overseas. We went to, you know, other unions like the Post Office workers asking them to break the law for us, and [a] lot of things like that.
87. **CT:** Nevertheless, despite it being, as you say, a very conservative or cautious union with not a lot of history of sort of militant direct action trade unionism, they stumped up the money.
88. **MA:** Yeah, they supported us with sort of strike pay, which wasn't a lot, really, but it was enough for us to survive.
89. **CT:** What was going on in the community in terms of families hearing about the dispute, seeing it on the television? Was there a concern that this isn't something you should be involved with?
90. **MA:** No, not really. We had a lot of support from Asian people, you know. They were surprised sometimes, actually, that we were doing what we were doing. They'd never heard of Asian people going on strike before. You know, they thought that unions were something for the English people and not the Asians, so to see Asian people on the news every day with thousands of people supporting them, it was something different, and they all supported. We got, like, letters and money from all over.

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91. **CT:** Was there an issue for women, in that for women in the Asian community standing on the street, visiting factories? Did that have to be resolved as something that had to be done?
92. **MA:** We had a bit of a problem because sometimes the Asian women weren't, you know, allowed to go on picket lines, or they [weren't] allowed to go – say, like, if we were going to Scotland fundraising, or – but we resolved that. We went and talked with their families, you know, explained to them. I mean, I remember we [went] to Scotland and it was decided that two women would go and two men would go, and I was one of them and Mrs Desai⁵ was another and there was two other people. And we went to meetings and I think we went to Norway, we were invited to Norway once to attend a meeting there and fundraise. A lot of the people had heard about the strike over there. And everywhere we went we always got the women involved, and if their families had a problem we went and talked to them and said, you know, and a lot of the time I think they agreed and let them go along.
93. **CT:** Can you talk through? I mean, it must have been quite an amazing thing, especially when you did it for the first time, going into these huge factories. Have you got one to mind? What happened and who received you and what did you have to do?
94. **MA:** Not particularly. We went to Scotland, and we went to the Govan shipyard and, you know, we were received by the convenor there and the general secretary, and all those. I mean, they was people who represented thousands of workers. And, you know, we talked in their canteen, you know, explained to them and that. And the support they gave, money they raised and, you know, funds that came that kept the strike going. It was just amazing. [33:45]
95. **CT:** It must have been quite moving, actually.
96. **MA:** Yeah, very. I mean, I remember attending a meeting in a place called Digbeth in Birmingham – can't remember on my life what it was about – but I was there at that meeting to talk about the strike. And the hall was like – there must have been about eight, ten thousand people there, and when they called me to speak about the strike everybody just got up and cheered, shouting for so long, they just kept on shouting and shouting, and it finally died [and I] explained, you know, what happened there. And the support we had was brilliant; never imagined it that we'd get that kind of support.
97. **CT:** Terrific, terrific. Did you have any discussions with the TUC in terms of tactics and any demands that you had? Because at the time there were demands to cut off the essential services. It was thought that that was the only way George Ward would actually see reason.
98. **MA:** We had actually decided in the strike committee that we would ask the water workers, the postal workers and some of the other unions that, you know, supplied, if they would cut off the water, cut off the supplies and that. And I think there was a meeting of the Trade[s] Union

⁵ Jayaben Desai, treasure of the strike committee.

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Congress, and we said, you know, could [the] TUC ask some of these unions to support us, and I don't think we got a response from that. Had we got that response we might have won, I don't know, but –

99. **CT:** What was your feeling about that?

100. **MA:** We were [a] bit disappointed but a lot of the time the TUC didn't want to get involved. They were saying, like, "we don't want to rock the boat," you know, "don't do this, don't do that." And we were saying "well, if we didn't do this and we didn't do that we won't get anywhere." And, you know, [a] lot of the time the TUC – I think Len Murray was the general secretary in those days – and we didn't really get very good support from them. They were more like our own union, really. They didn't have the leadership that could give guidance. They were always trying to hold you back. There was unions that were willing to support us, but they were being told not to.

101. **CT:** As the strike was sort of going, about eighteen months in now – November nineteen, or December, I think it was, 1977 – there was a decision to have a hunger strike outside the TUC. Can you talk through how that was discussed and how that decision was made in the strike committee?

102. **MA:** I think it was raised in the strike committee that we must do something to force the TUC, who weren't taking any initiative, not helping, basically trying to, like I said, hold us back, and we wanted the TUC to support us by asking other unions to support, and they weren't doing that. So to get the TUC to support us we decided that we would have a hunger strike outside the TUC building, on the main entrance, so that let them think that, you know, they are responsible and that they're not doing anything and we wanted them to do something. And it was at the strike committee decided that certain people, I think it was two ladies and two lads who would hunger strike outside, I think it was for about a week, before the actual annual general meeting of the TUC, where some of the unions who supported us had put resolutions basically asking the TUC to support us in the way we wanted. And the hunger strike was there so that they would see that, you know, if they had any effect, but nothing happened, nothing came out of it. There was a couple of resolutions and they weren't passed because of legal technicalities or the law said this or this and that.

103. **CT:** Was there pressure on you not to have that hunger strike?

104. **MA:** Yeah, our own union didn't want us to have the hunger strike outside the TUC. They were saying, you know, that we were going to give the – basically, I don't know – the other side ammunition to say that "look," you know, "they're fighting against their own unions" and it wouldn't be very nice trying to, sort of like, try to put a finger on the TUC, and saying, you know, "they're not doing anything to help us" and that.

105. **CT:** When did you decide that it was over, and what happened?

106. **MA:** I think we never actually decided it was over; it was our union who had a mass meeting – I think it was Wembley Conference Centre – where we were told that we have to tell all the people that came there. I think they set a date and announced that would be the end of the strike. We

Summary and transcript of interview of Mahmood Ahmed by Chris Thomas, 2007 (803/01A)

Approximate timings given in minutes and seconds in various places.

didn't want to do it, but lots – five, six hundred people – came to that meeting, and it was the union who announced that, you know, they were calling it a day.

107. **CT:** How did the feelings run at that meeting?

108. **MA:** We were disappointed, but we couldn't do anything without the support of the union, we couldn't do anything. Our own union was backing out, and we could see that, you know, with no help from [the] TUC, and even, you know, after all the government ministers and everybody supported and nothing was coming out of it, we had to accept.

109. **CT:** Let me just stop the cassette –