

Elaine Elinson 1968–1969, 1974–1976

The scene was straight from *My Fair Lady*, if the play had been set in the 1960s. I was standing in the union meeting hall in Covent Garden Market in the center of London. Outside, trucks were coming and going with tulips from Holland, tangerines from Portugal, figs from Turkey, and leafy green produce from all over the British Isles. It was 7 a.m. on a winter morning and it was foggy and cold outside the steamy windows. Most of the market workers in the room had been at work for several hours already. This was their lunch hour, and time for a union meeting.

The meeting was being led by W. A. Punt, the fruit and vegetable markets section officer of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). The TGWU is the largest union in Great Britain and one of the largest in Europe. Its members work in the docks, the British Rail, the London Underground, trucking, auto plants, and markets. That November morning in 1968, I was the guest speaker—a representative of the United Farm Workers of America, who had come to talk about the grape strike and boycott.

I was 21 and sported a chartreuse miniskirt, a tan wool coat, and a head scarf decorated with the red-and-black union eagle. My big plastic Marks & Spencer's shopping bag was stuffed with leaflets, copies of newspaper articles, and—my proudest possession—a letter from Cesar Chavez asking our European trade union brothers and sisters to extend any courtesy to me, the European UFW boycott representative.

My audience was all men, in thick market aprons and heavy boots. They smelled of garlic, onions, and oranges and spoke in impenetrable Cockney accents. They wrapped their cold hands around cups of steaming tea, and listened attentively as I talked about the farmworkers' struggle.

At first they couldn't believe that there was such poverty in the United States, a land most of them knew only from television and movies. I told them that according to a U.S. Senate report, most migrant farmworkers in California lived in grower-controlled, squalid labor camps, infested with rats and other vermin. I explained that the rate of TB was more than 250 percent above the national average and the life expectancy of a farmworker was only 49 years of age.

They were shocked when they learned that a quarter of the 2.5 million farmworkers were children, that it was still legal for kids as young as five to work in the fields. I showed them photos in *El Malcriado* of children carrying heavy boxes of grapes in the fields. They said it reminded them of *The Grapes of Wrath*.

They were sure there must be laws against this kind of exploitation, but I explained that farmworkers were the only group of workers not covered by the National Labor Relations Act, or any federal labor laws.

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That did it. The Covent Garden market porters were convinced. Brother Punt asked for a motion from the floor. A burly man in a plaid cloth cap proposed that they send a resolution to the TGWU Headquarters, to the Trades Union Congress (the TUC is the British equivalent of the AFL-CIO), and—just for good measure—to the American Embassy seeking support for the UFW strike and boycott. Then they passed the hat. They put in shillings and hard-earned pound notes to support the strike fund in Delano. They took leaflets and made me promise to keep them informed about any new developments. They told me to tell my fellow UFW members that they were standing with them. And then they insisted I have a pint with them at the pub downstairs. It was their usual post-meeting ritual, but since it was only 9 a.m., I politely refused and headed for the Covent Garden underground station.

I took the tube back to my flat in North London. I was living on the third floor of an old row house on Tollington Road, sharing a flat with three graduate students at the University of London. The place was rundown and damp; when it rained, the kitchen floor was crowded with buckets and bowls to catch the leaks, and the whole flat was heated by a rickety gas stove that had to be constantly fed shillings. I was always cold. The only phone was a pay phone in the hallway on the bottom floor of the house. It was right outside the door of a gypsy family, Madame Ruby and her four sons, with whom I had to compete to make long-distance calls.

In the mornings, I would wrap up in a coat, scarves, and mittens, grab a handful of six-penny coins and my notebook, and head for the pay phone on the first floor. I remember my first phone call to Delano on that phone, with boycott coordinators Jerry and Juanita Brown. (The Browns had first recruited me as a UFW volunteer at college that spring. I had traveled to London to go to graduate school, but decided I wanted to come back to the States and work fulltime for the union.) “Cesar wants you to stay there and talk to the unions about boycotting the grapes,” said Jerry. “The growers are sending twice as many grapes to England and Sweden as they have in previous years to try to get around the boycott that has been so successful in the U.S. and Canada. We’ll send you leaflets and background materials, and how about \$200 for expenses? That should cover the typewriter rental, bus fare, and phone calls. See if you can get the printing donated. You can take your \$5 a week from that!”

Since that first phone conversation, I made many calls from that grimy hallway to newspaper reporters, solidarity groups, and union officials. I talked to a columnist from the *London Times* at great length, and received an invitation from a Labour Member of Parliament to have lunch in Westminster. I eventually even spoke with Jack Jones, the esteemed general secretary of Britain’s largest union on that phone. I wondered if they knew I was standing in the freezing hallway of a North London flat, balancing my notebook in my mittened hands, and fighting off the impatient foot tapping of one of Madame Ruby’s sons.

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First Connections: The London Phone Book

I started with the London phone book and my housemates' contacts. My housemates set me up with meetings of local Labour Party branches, student organizations, and socialist conferences. These led to appearances at universities, regional meetings, and labor solidarity events in London's famous Red Lion Square to speak about the farmworkers in the United States and call for support for the grape boycott.

Initially, I tried to contact the AFL-CIO headquarters in Geneva: the European representative was Irving Brown and the international labor director was Jay Lovestone. It was both a practical and a political move. Practical, because I didn't know anything about the European unions and I thought that the AFL-CIO, being the UFW "parent" organization, would at least give me a list of addresses and contacts. Political, because most of the British and Scandinavian unions that I contacted knew nothing or little about the UFW and wanted to make sure we were legitimate. They had longstanding relations with the AFL-CIO and wanted a letter from them before they would see or work with me.

I tried many times to reach the AFL-CIO by letter, telegram, and long-distance telephone, but neither Brown, Lovestone, nor anyone else ever responded. In my biweekly phone calls to Delano, I would ask Jerry what to do—and he, of course, told me to persist. Their silence was getting very frustrating and becoming an impediment to my work—some union officials would not see me without an official introduction from Irving Brown. Finally, Jerry told me that Cesar advised me to go ahead with the contacts I was making—if the AFL-CIO didn't answer, we should just ignore them.

I took Cesar's advice and, lacking the AFL-CIO endorsements or connections, just turned to trade union listings in the London phone book, targeting the Agricultural Workers Union and the headquarters of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU). In this way I met Freddy Silberman, who worked in the research department of the TGWU. After hearing about the UFW struggle, Freddy was anxious to help in any way. He convinced the editor of the TGWU newspaper, *The Record*, to run an article about our campaign, which led to invitations to speak at branch and regional meetings. He also helped get me in the door of British trade union officialdom, a door that was difficult to open at first for this fledgling international campaign without the blessing of the AFL-CIO European office.

Learning from the experience of the boycotters in U.S. cities, I also used the phone book to contact the newspapers. Some of the labor reporters were intrigued, and there were soon articles in the major British papers, the *Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, and *Telegraph*, about the UFW campaign. Unfortunately, most of these articles focused not on the campaign for the international grape boycott but on the young American girl who was organizing the campaign, like this one in the *Times*:

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“A number of trade union leaders in London have been intrigued but somewhat embarrassed during the past few days by a visit from a 21-year-old American brunette named Elaine Elinson ... Officials of the TUC and British unions would like to help because the migrant workers are said to be the most exploited workers in the United States. But they are cautious because they’re used to more formal approaches from unions in other countries.”

I suspect this was a combination of the lack of knowledge about poverty and union struggles in the United States, the sexism of the era, and reporters’ perennial search for a hook for their story. But at least it got the word out. That, combined with Freddy taking me around Transport House, helped provide me with entry to the upper echelons of the unions, where the key decisions were made. So when I made my tenth or twentieth call to the TGWU executive office, there was a glimmer of recognition.

There was a great deal of support at the student and political meetings. This was a time when many of the former European colonies—Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia, Mozambique, and Angola—were fighting for liberation, and the height of the Vietnam War. British workers and students were anxious to learn about the UFW struggle and to take action to help.

Although they had never heard about Cesar Chavez, the farmworkers’ strike, or the grape boycott, they knew about union solidarity and what it takes to fight for union recognition. When they heard about the UFW’s efforts to ban child labor, establish a fair minimum wage, provide safety and pesticide controls, and most important, establish their own institutions, such as the credit union, Agbayani Village, and a free clinic, they were ready to act on behalf of their American brothers and sisters.

Support came from many quarters. A group called the Poster Collective made multicolor silkscreen posters that read, “If your employer didn’t recognize your union, would you buy his products? Boycott Californian grapes!” An expatriate American author, Ella Winter, who had been married to Lincoln Steffens, fed me on a regular basis with delicious Sunday lunches where she reminisced about covering Filipino farmworker strikes in the 1930s for *The New Republic*. Sheila Oakes of the British Peace Council offered me free office space in the council’s building on St. James Street, where political activists from Malaysia, India, and South Africa would stop in for afternoon tea. Peggy Seeger and Ewan McCall put on a benefit concert, bringing the audience to tears with their rendition of Woody Guthrie’s “Deportees.” And a street theater group named Belt and Braces, inspired by El Teatro Campesino, performed a skit about the UFW with an original song called “Blood on the Vines.”

Action on the Docks

But the most crucial support came from the powerful British trade unions. From meetings with individuals, locals, and branches, I gradually got to know key activists in the Transport

and General Workers Union. Terry Barrett, a dockworker, invited me to speak at a political rally on the Isle of Dogs, a docks stronghold on the Thames River. There, in front of hundreds of transport workers, he pledged, “The scab California grapes would be blacked by the British unions—and we’re going to start here and now!”

Terry, a grassroots trade union activist, introduced me to dockworkers at West India, Millwall, and Tilbury docks. Eventually, I met Brian Nicholson, the head of the London docks and a member of the executive board of the TGWU. Going to union meetings with Brian gave me newfound legitimacy and the imprimatur of the TGWU.

However, we were still at a disadvantage in stopping the grapes, because we didn’t know when or how they would be coming into the country.

We did not have the time or resources to educate the British public for a widespread, effective consumer boycott. We knew that we would have to stop them with an industrial action, such as dockworkers refusing to unload the grapes. But England is an island country with scores of deep water ports and thousands of dockworkers. There was no way we could reach them all, and we didn’t know where the cargo ships would be heading. This was solved with a few phone calls to Delano—some from that freezing hallway on Tollington Park Road, and some from the warm well-equipped offices of Transport House. Boycott coordinator Jerry Brown made the connection to Don Watts and Lou Perlin of the ILWU. The longshoremen in California, staunch allies of the UFW, were prohibited from refusing to load the grapes in the ships by the oppressive secondary boycott restrictions of the National Labor Relations Act. However, they could share the information about the grapes with no penalties.

Soon I started receiving manifests from the ships that were leaving the West Coast ports laden with grapes bound for Europe. The manifests had exact information as to what hold the grapes were in, what ports they were bound for, and approximately when they were going to arrive in London, Liverpool, Stockholm, and Oslo.

With the bill of lading in hand, I went down to the London docks with Brian Nicholson. We would approach the team of dockworkers working on that particular ship and that particular hold. The workers would put down their ominous looking dockers’ hooks (a pointed piece of iron attached to a strong wooden grip, used to pull cargo off ships used before containerization), and gather round this odd pair. Brian Nicholson, a third-generation dockworker, 6’3”, in a thick sheepskin coat and cloth cap, orange sideburns, and a booming Cockney voice, would introduce me. I came up to his shoulder, had a ponytail and big mod glasses. They could hardly understand my American accent. We both wore red-and-black UFW buttons on our jackets.

We’d tell the crews about the UFW strike and boycott, Brian would explain the TGWU endorsement, and then we’d pull out the ship’s manifest, locating the grapes in the refrigerated hold. With these effective, small meetings, we stopped the unloading of the

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grapes at the London docks. The dockers would always want to toast these actions of international solidarity with a pint at the local pub. I still wasn't used to the beer, so they let me get away with a steak-and-kidney pie and glass of shandy—heavy on the lemonade!

Trouble from the U.S. Embassy

One morning I heard the persistent ring of the pay phone downstairs. I ran down the three flights of stairs, and heard an official-sounding American voice ask for me. It was the secretary of the Labour attaché at the U.S. Embassy. He wondered if I could come in for a chat.

The plush, warm, and well-furnished salon of the U.S. Embassy on Grovesnor Square was a contrast to my usual meeting places in union halls, pubs, and working-class living rooms. The Labour attaché offered me coffee (not tea or beer!), and asked me to describe my work. He wanted to know if Jay Lovestone approved of what I was doing and if I had a letter of endorsement from the AFL-CIO. He was cordial but obviously had an agenda.

He then pulled out a letter typed on TGWU/Fruit and Vegetable Markets Section stationery and asked me to read it. It was from W. A. Punt, and this is what he wrote (capital letters in the original):

“I am the Secretary of the London Fruit and Vegetable Markets Committee, which covers Brentford, Borough Spitalfield, Stratford, Kings Cross, and Covent Garden. A UFW representative addressed our Market Committee members and gave us the history of the Agricultural Industry of America with part reference to the situation in California.

“The Revelation that a system of bond slavery should exist was so shocking as to spontaneously spark off a decision to completely ban American produce in the London Market. However, I have prevailed upon them to permit me to make overtures to your department.

“Our delegates are appalled that in this year of 1968, when your country is contemplating putting men on the Moon, sections of the community are denied the elementary rights as contained in the United Nations Charter, and the millions of dollars which are expended to portray America as the bastion of democracy caused some delegates so to make an analogy of the late Dr. Goebels and Adolph Hitler's Germany in respect of these workers. Whilst these analogies may be incorrect, I mention them to illustrate the feelings and conclude by requesting your Department to use its good offices to prevail upon the parties concerned to settle their differences in a civilized way. Also to recognize that the workers have a universal right to organize to protect their industrial interests and the employer has duty and obligation to treat the organization as a fundamental right.”

I smiled to myself. The Covent Garden market workers had made good on their promise. But I gasped when I read Brother Punt's closing line:

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“In anticipation of your co-operation and in the hope that the members of our organization are not *obliged to use their industrial strength* to assist their American brothers and sisters.”

I wondered if TGWU General Secretary Jack Jones knew that the market workers were threatening to “use their industrial strength” to assist the UFW boycott.

We didn’t have too much time to contemplate the niceties of the situation with the embassy or the International Office of the AFL-CIO, however, because Brian, Terry, and the other dockworkers soon found out that the grapes that were “blackened” in Tilbury were heading for Scandinavia.

The Boycott in Scandinavia

I called Delano from that pay phone in our flat, and Jerry Brown told me to get to Sweden as soon as possible. Our ILWU allies would Telex the ships’ manifests to the agricultural workers union there, which, like the UFW, was a member of IFPAAW, the international agricultural labor federation.

I threw my warmest socks and sweaters in a bag, bundled up a big batch of UFW literature, and bought a pocket Swedish dictionary and a second-class ticket to Stockholm. The trip by bus, train, and ferry took 48 hours. It was January and a heavy snow blanketed the Swedish landscape. I was invited to stay in the home of an American war resister and his Swedish girlfriend who taught labor history at the university. I slept on the couch in their living room, and a floor-to-ceiling ceramic furnace kept us warm when the daily temperatures outside fell way below zero.

The Swedish unions were even more anxious to help—if that is possible—than the British ones. The Swedish economy was much more prosperous, and the unions had won contracts for health care, pensions, education funds, and job security that were the envy of Europe. The trade unions had tremendous resources and took international solidarity—whether for peace in Vietnam, ending apartheid in South Africa, or the California striking farmworkers—very seriously. The campaign in England had taken months to get off the ground, but now we didn’t have the luxury of time: we only had a few weeks before the grapes were to arrive.

The Swedish unions quickly organized support for the boycott. The national labor federation hosted a press conference announcing that they were going to boycott the grapes, and the Transport Workers Union sent me on an official tour of the main ports, accompanied by a trade union officer and a translator.

The first shipment was due in the southern port of Malmo, and I immediately took the train there (wearing a brand-new pair of reindeer skin boots, courtesy of the Svenska

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Lantarbetareförbundet, the Swedish farmworkers' union). A shop steward at Malmo took me to the dock where the ship with the grapes had arrived. He introduced me and I spoke in faltering Swedish to a crowd of dockworkers (although I couldn't tell you the time or ask for a loaf of bread in Swedish, I knew the words for "farmworkers," "strike," "boycott," and "solidarity.") The lading crew said that they would not unload the grapes. Someone called the local press, and soon the harbor was filled with trade unionists, port officials, reporters, and TV cameras.

The captain of the ship stood on the bow of his ship and announced that there were no grapes in the hold; he claimed they had all been unloaded in London. We knew that wasn't true, but how could we prove it? The shop steward took the manifest and told the captain (and the reporters): "We know the grapes are in this hold, in these refrigerated containers." The captain again denied it. The shop steward said, "Well, then we are going on the ship and you are going to show us there are no grapes in there."

According to their union contract, the captain could not refuse the shop steward access to the vessel, but he wouldn't allow me on with him. The dockworkers grew angry and said that if I was not allowed on the ship, they would boycott the whole cargo, not just the grapes. It was a showdown, and the media was covering it live.

We milled about for hours, the sky darkened, and it began to snow. The dockworkers' families brought out steaming coffee and hot bread. The newscasts began to cut in footage from a Swedish film about the UFW that had been shot a few years before in Delano. The film showed the squalid condition of the labor camps, contrasted with the vibrant flags, songs, and "Huelga" cries on the picket lines in Delano. Finally, late that night, under the scrutiny of the television cameras, the captain allowed us all on the ship. With the manifesto from the ILWU in hand, and the Swedish dockworkers' knowledge of the ship's layout, we immediately found the grapes.

The ship was supposed to sail to Norway after Malmo, but we received a telegram from the Norwegian dockworkers saying that they had seen the news reports about the boycott and what happened in Malmo, and they too were not going to unload the grapes. The ship finally sailed on to Hamburg, Germany, grapes still in the hold and growing more rotten by the day. The TV news that night showed a cheering crowd of Swedish trade unionists, and the captain hiding his face from the cameras as he embarked on his cargo vessel.

I was still being ignored by the European office of the AFL-CIO; however, when I was in Sweden I got unsolicited support from another branch of the U.S. labor movement. After the successful boycott action in Malmo, I planned to stay in Sweden for a few weeks to do some speaking and fundraising because the incident had generated a great deal of interest in the UFW. One day, I got a telegram from Victor Reuther, the brother of United Auto Workers founder Walter Reuther. He was going to be at an international labor conference in Denmark, and he wanted me to come. He even sent me a plane ticket. Reuther thought I should have a little training in the background of the U.S. labor trade union movement.

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He was a wonderful teacher. White-haired and bearded, he had a patch over one eye, an eye he had lost to a policeman's gunshot at the great General Motors strike at Flint, Michigan in 1936. He tutored me in American labor history and introduced me to union representatives from all over the world. Reuther had been the CIO representative in Europe for many years and knew the founders of many of the post-World War II trade unions. He was a great admirer of the UFW, and told me when I got back to Delano that I should give his best regards to Cesar.

Finally, I got the call to come back to Delano. The shipping season was over and a lot of the boycotters were coming back to organize strike committees in Coachella and the Imperial Valley in preparation for a big grape strike there. Brian Nicholson and Freddy Silberman kept my UFW literature and promised me that we could always call on their support. Freddy dedicated a drawer in the filing cabinet of the TGWU research department for our materials, which came in handy when UFW volunteers Vivian Levine and Donna Haber took up the European boycott a few years later!

Friday Night at Filipino Hall

I flew back to the States and took the Greyhound bus to Bakersfield. UFW vice president Larry Itliong met me at the bus station and drove me through the vineyards and cotton fields, pointing out the Voice of America radio transmitter as we approached the union headquarters. When we arrived at Forty Acres, he took me to the *El Malcriado* office, where I met editor David Fishlow, Rudy Reyes, and Doug Adair. Rudy and his girlfriend, Mary Bernier, were in the garden behind the newspaper office, weeding a lush plot of squash, bitter melon, and string beans. I was surprised that they knew who I was. Larry introduced me as the boycott representative from Europe. Then I realized that Jerry and Juanita had been sharing all my reports with the folks in Delano.

Larry took me to Cesar's office and I was thrilled to meet Cesar, his wife, Helen, and Marian Moses. They welcomed me warmly, even though Cesar was in intense pain at that time because of his chronic back condition and could not move around very easily. Larry set me up at a desk in the boycott office at the Pink House and introduced me to Irene and Roy Terrazas, Philip Vera Cruz, and Gil Padilla. I reunited with my "contacts," Juanita and Jerry. It was here that I met Dolores Huerta for the first time. She greeted me with a bright smile, a warm hug, a few curious questions, and a long list of things to do ... that night! I had only just read about Dolores' bravery and chutzpah, her deep faith in the farmworkers, and her tough bargaining stance with the growers. I was dazzled when I met her, but she soon put me at ease, even asking me to help her pick out an outfit for her to wear to an international trade union conference in London. (We later chose an elegant houndstooth suit from Rachel's Boutique in "Macy's"—the room in an empty warehouse at Forty Acres where the best fashions were to be found among the piles of used clothing donated to the UFW.) Dolores has been a role model and an inspiration for me ever since.

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I was introduced to the inhabitants of the legal department: Jerry Cohen, David Averbuck, and Gloria Rodriguez.

After these whirlwind introductions, Gloria took me back to the house we were to share. She and her husband, David Perlin, lived downstairs and I had a little room upstairs. The yard was full of trees—walnuts, plums, green and black figs, kumquats, and apricots.

That night I was to make a presentation at the Friday night meeting in Filipino Hall. The *El Malcriado* staff took me under their wing and I sat at a long table with them, eating fresh tortillas and rice and beans flavored with hot salsa. They introduced me to Chris Hartmire, Jim Drake, and some of the elderly manongs, including the friendly, avuncular Mariano Santiago, who greeted us at the dining room entrance. I was so excited to be there, but my stage fright increased as farmworkers streamed into the hall from Earlimart, Visalia, Madera, and Merced. There were also caravans of supporters from the ILWU in San Francisco and San Pedro, Brown Berets from Los Angeles, the carpenters union from Oakland, and the AFSC from Fresno.

By the time Cesar introduced me, my hands were sweating and I was shaking. He asked the crowd to greet me with the farmworker “clap,” and cries of “*Viva la Huelga*.” I told the story of how the British dockworkers and market porters refused to handle the grapes because there was “blood on the vines.” I explained how the Swedish longshoremen stayed out in the snow all night, waiting to inspect the hold of the ship so they could support the UFW strike. I told about the newspaper stories that were written in Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish, the money that was collected to add to the strike fund, the messages of solidarity that were sent in telegrams, resolutions, and resounding speeches. My short talk was punctuated with spontaneous cries of “*Viva la Causa!*” and “*Viva El Boicoteo Internacional!*”

And as I stood there before this huge, curious, and open-hearted crowd, I realized I was one of the luckiest people in the world. I had been the link between the courageous, tenacious, spirited farmworkers of the UFW and the committed, internationally minded transport workers of Britain and Scandinavia. Though they didn’t know each other, they were ready to fight together for *La Causa*. Together, they had pulled off an amazing feat of solidarity. The cheers that I heard in the Filipino Hall mixed with the cheers I had heard on the docks at Tilbury, Malmo, Birmingham, and Liverpool. So this is what they mean by “Workers of the World Unite!”

As I was thanking everyone for inviting me to speak, Agustin Lira and other members of the Teatro Campesino strolled to the front of the hall, guitars in hand, and started singing “*Solidaridad Pa’ Siempre*.” Soon the entire crowd was singing, and I think that those voices resounded in Covent Garden, the docks of Tilbury, and the trade union halls of Stockholm.

Postscript

I stayed on in Delano for a year as part of the boycott team. I was lucky enough to be trained by Fred Ross, who took me on a week-long journey up Highway 99 to set up boycott committees among farmworkers who worked in crops other than grapes in the small San Joaquin Valley towns. At the first meeting in Tulare, Fred, who was, of course, well known to all the UFW, just introduced me. At the second meeting outside of Fresno, Fred asked me to translate his presentation. At the third meeting in Madera, I had to make part of the presentation, and by the time we got to Merced, I was running the whole meeting while he sat quietly in the back of the room and smiled encouragement. On the long drive, I think in an old tan Chevy sedan, he told me stories about the CSO, training Cesar and Dolores, and the history of labor organizing in California. He, too, was an unforgettable mentor.

I also got to participate in the historic march to Calexico (where I learned all the words to “*Gavino Barrera*”) and the Coachella grape strike. I woke before dawn to picket the vineyards under the cheerful eye of Pete Velasco, and made the trip to Safeway headquarters in Oakland, where hundreds of farmworkers brought flags, banners, and union songs to the homes of Safeway corporate executives in Marin County and Pacific Heights.

When the Teamsters tried to smash the union in 1974, Richard Chavez asked me to go back to England and Sweden and seek support. I did, and our friends had remained true. Brian Nicholson, who was now the president of the Transport and General Workers Union, and Freddy Silberman, who was the director of research there, helped set up the docks boycott again and also organized a trip to Ireland via the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and Trades Union Congress.

This time was more difficult in some ways, because the Teamsters were part of the same international as the TGWU. However, the British trade unionists easily saw through their strikebreaking thuggery. As the British Sunday *Times* noted: “The TGWU executive met and formally deplored the Teamster tactics against the small United Farm Workers union. Practical support for the UFW will mean the blacking of grape imports into Britain, which last happened in 1968-1970.”

“Although the Industrial Relations Act makes that harder to do now, Central Markets Committee, representing thousands of workers in London’s main fruit and vegetable market, reaffirmed decision that no grapes would be handled,” said the *Times*.

“We all have our troubles with other unions, but we don’t go around breaking up picket lines, killing workers, and working hand-in-glove with the bosses,” said Brian Nicholson, a London docker and member of the TGWU executive board. “We’ll be calling on the international Union Movement to give its backing to the farmworkers.”

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In 1975, Brian and I were married in Red Lion Square—our invitation had the UFW logo on it and said *Viva la Union!* I stayed in England for five years. We spent our honeymoon at the UFW convention in Fresno. (We may be the only couple to marry in London and honeymoon in Fresno!) There, he was greeted with shouts of solidarity, which he gratefully accepted on behalf of all the trade unionists in Britain and Europe who had stood up on behalf of their brothers and sisters in the UFW.

When our son, Matthew Emiliano Nicholson Elinson was 11, I took him to Delano for the 25th anniversary celebrations. He met Cesar, Dolores, Richard, and others who had shaped his life before he was even born. And he proudly joined hands with other sons and daughters of the UFW and sang all the words to “Solidarity Forever!”