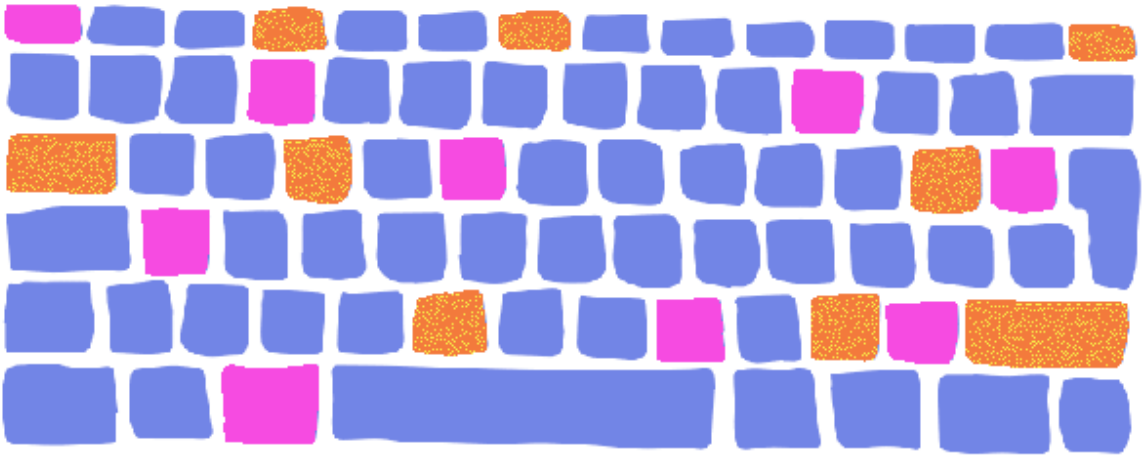
AUGUST 14, 2024

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



PSFC CARD PHONE INTEGRATION IS ALREADY HERE

Dear all,

Hey, I noticed in this July 2 article that the Coop is working on making a phone-based option for displaying a member's barcode, and that right now the barcode is just available via the website.

I wanted to make sure you are aware that as far as Android phones go, it's already possible to add your PSFC membership card to your phone's digital wallet. I have mine added to my Google Wallet, and from there I can bring a barcode up on my screen that readily scans me in to the Coop.

Happy to give some instructions if needed.

Max Miller

THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE RULING AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE COOP

Dear fellow members:

Millions of justice seekers of every ethnicity have had their aspirations heard by the International Court of Justice in the Hague. On July 19th, the ICJ ruled that the illegal settlements in the occupied territories must be evacuated and reparations made to those who lost their land.

This is the strongest opinion ever issued by the ICJ.

The Court found that "the regime of comprehensive restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory constitutes systemic discrimination based on, inter alia, race, religion or ethnic origin."

We are all enjoined not to be complicit in this apartheid scheme. PSFC has a role to

play by adopting the nonviolent boycott, divestment and sanctions principles urged by Palestinian civil society since 2005.

Ann Schneider

PROTECTING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS THROUGH IN-PERSON VOTING

Dear fellow Cooperators,

After attending a few recent General Meetings, I am concerned about the impact that the group PSFC Members 4 Palestine is having on the democratic process of the Coop and how this would look in a world of hybrid voting. While this group preaches democracy and inclusivity, their actions are in direct contradiction of these values.

While I value a diversity of opinions in the Coop community, even when they diverge from my perspective, the tactics this group employs are chipping away at the integrity of the democratic process.

If you haven't attended a recent General Meeting, allow me to fill you in. It is evident that the conversations and decisions of the group are predetermined. The decisions that result from this feel orchestrated rather than organically derived from member input and healthy debate. Debate on agenda items and resolutions is limited because "their" decision has already been made before anyone has even scanned in their membership card to walk into the Picnic House.

It seems that this atmosphere has also led to a loss of decorum. I have observed Coop members wearing PSFC Members 4 Palestine pins uncooperatively sneer, giggle and generally bully anyone who dares to express an opposing viewpoint.

These actions undermine the values of the Coop, where every member should be free

to express their opinions and participate. If we let this behavior continue to fester, our debates will continue to lack the breadth and depth required for a healthy democratic process.

I'm concerned that if we move to online voting, this group would silo into their own side conversations and chat rooms instead of engaging in actual conversation. For this reason, I strongly support preserving the current in-person meeting format. The free and open exchange of ideas is essential for the health of the Coop community.

In cooperation,
Tali Rasis

WHILST DEBATING A BOYCOTT, CONSIDER A DOCUMENTARY'S MESSAGE

Dear Fellow Members:

For all those following world events with profound implications for our Coop, I highly recommend *The Night Won't End*, a searing film about life and death in Gaza under Israeli assault. The film, produced by Laila Al-Arian for the Al Jazeera documentary series *Fault Lines*, is free on YouTube. It eloquently conveys the grief, horror and courage of ordinary Palestinians who have watched their world reduced to rubble. Far worse than any fear for personal safety is the dread of knowing that loved ones, especially young children, are likely to suffer and die. I am haunted by moments such as the sequence during which an ambulance dispatcher remembers the two paramedics who were sent to rescue 6-year-old Hind Rajab: "I won't see heroes like them again. They knew they would be killed, and yet they went."

As the Coop engages in a necessary (and healthy) debate about whether to adopt a boycott of products implicated in Israel's crimes, the discussion can wind up feeling abstract. That's especially the case as U.S. election coverage takes over the head-

lines, crowding out the unbearable reality of unfolding genocide. As we continue to discuss how our Coop might take a small but meaningful step in alignment with the powerful international movement to free Palestine, it's important not to lose sight of what's at stake in human terms. Among other things, Al-Arian's film memorably contextualizes the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of July 19. That opinion clarifies once and for all that Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territory (including the ever-expanding West Bank settlements) is "unlawful" and that "all States are under an obligation" to reject this illegal presence. The online news sites Mondoweiss and Electronic Intifada have good articles about the ICJ opinion.

In cooperation,
Jan Clausen

A RESPONSE TO "FEAR-BASED ACCUSATIONS" REGARDING PSFC MEMBERS FOR PALESTINE

Dear Fellow Members,

A Coop member for over 20 years, I'm writing to share my experience of petitioning in front of the Coop with Park Slope Food Coop Members for Palestine. I'd never canvassed at the Coop, and I was a little nervous at first. So, I was delighted by how many folks were in support of and/or wanted to hear more about our proposal for a targeted boycott of Israeli goods. I had thoughtful conversations with many members. The few who weren't interested simply said "no thank you" or "definitely not" and headed inside.

Given this experience, I was dismayed by the tenor of some of the letters in the July 23 Gazette. Those letters used words like "impose," "blanket ban" and "Coop-wide boycott" as though we are proposing to autocratically deprive fellow members of their right to make their own shopping decisions. These fear-based accusations need

to be corrected. PSFC Members for Palestine proposes a targeted boycott (of Sabra, SodaStream and Israeli produce), and we would like all members to have an opportunity to vote on that idea in a way that is accessible and open to all. It is that simple. To suggest that this is divisive or harmful to Coop unity underestimates our community and the messy but vital democratic experiment that Coop membership entails.

Other letters suggested that we avoid politics or focus more on local issues instead of "geopolitical advocacy." In my view, being a member of the PSFC is an inherently political act. A core Coop principle is to be a "responsible and ethical employer and neighbor," and I'm pretty sure that doesn't simply apply to Union Street and environs. Our neighbors in Palestine deserve our attention and care. Voting on a targeted boycott proposal seems like the bare minimum.

With love,
Nancy Mercado

FROM AN ANTI-ZIONIST JEW

Dear Coop,

Authors of several recent letters published in the *Gazette* have expressed claims to represent the opinions of Jewish Coop members. Editors of the *Gazette* have let these statements stand without note that these are the thoughts of Jewish Coop members in support of the Israeli state, people who are not and never will be authorized to speak on behalf of all Jewish Coop members.

Jews are not monolithic. We are diverse in national/regional origin, religious belief, culture, language, race and political ideology. One need not be Jewish to be a Zionist supporter of the currently configured Israeli state, whereas I, like many Jews in the United States and around the world, oppose Israel for its apartheid government and its ongo-

ing commission of genocide.

I would never attempt to speak for all Jews or all Jewish Coop members and I am deeply disturbed by those who purport to represent my interests or needs as a Jew. I reject the Zionist claim that people who oppose the Israeli state are anti-Semitic or self-hating. I request that if the G*azette* continues to publish letters that explicitly or implicitly speak for all Jews or Jewish Coop members, the editors include a disclaimer that these are the opinions of only one person or one segment of Coop Jews.

Alyce Barr

“DEMOCRACY” AT THE COOP

Dear fellow members:

Part of the definition of democracy includes the following:

“…protected rights that ensure the majority does not abuse its power to violate the rights of the minority.” I would love to know which aspects of the proposed BDS vote adhere to these democratic values?

it’s quite insulting that the pro BDS members of the Coop insist on simply “having the conversation” to adopt a boycott of Israeli goods while presenting the vote as upholding “democracy.” Someone wrote “Regardless of whether you agree with me, we all deserve the chance to weigh in on this crucial topic. Let’s bring this matter to a vote and let the members decide!”

No thank you. You can’t scream “democracy” about a topic that a lot of members see as discriminatory. If the Coop is forced to have this conversation AGAIN as it did TWICE in the past, that will bring legitimacy that my country where I was born and

consider my second home is temporary and disposable.

We also seem to be “having the conversation” quite often at the Coop. Every *Gazette* issue, General Meeting, nearly every day someone is handing out propaganda and lies about “having the conversation.” However, it’s interesting. They seem to only be conversing with each other and no one else. DRC complaints regarding the war have gone up in addition to carts being vandalized. Also, people seem to really love crossing out “Israel” on the couscous box.

It’s getting harder for me to go to the Coop as often as I used to in the past. I now stretch out my visits as far apart as possible. No more lunches or random pop-ins for a quick snack. I want to avoid the place as much as I can as long as the BDS vote hangs over it. So much for democracy.

Jonathan Tobias

Editor’s note: The August 14, 2024 issue of the Linewaiters’ Gazette *ran the above letter titled “‘Democracy’ at the Coop” signed by Jon T, who requested anonymity. The editor granted this request without inquiring about the reason for it, possibly in violation of the LWG letters’ policy. The writer of the letter is Jonathan Tobias.*