MEMBER-SUBMITTED ARTICLE: ANALYSIS OF RISKS FOR YOUR COOP—THE ISRAEL BOYCOTT

April 14, 2026



Illustration by Olexa Hewryk

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By Joe Holtz

The boycott vote could happen shortly. Please sign-up to attend the GM online.

International Cooperative Principle #1:

“Voluntary and Open Membership: Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.”

Analysis: Our Coop was able to hold together during boycotts of South Africa, Chile etc. because all had about 100% support. But the boycott of Israel has thousands of members/owners on each side. The middle ground is: each member/owner makes their own shopping decisions. Banning Israeli products will be perceived as discrimination per International Coop Principle #1. Many members will give up their Coop membership because a policy for the entire organization that they object to will speak for them if they remain member/owners. Many future would-be members will never join. Many members enjoy our Coop's diversity—interacting with members from a wide variety of races, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations. Political tolerance and diversity is difficult. Embracing all types of diversity is what coops worldwide have found to be what is needed for Cooperative success. Our Coop is an amazing place but we shouldn't be overconfident about our ability to maintain the number of members we need to stay financially viable.

Excerpt from our Mission Statement:

"We are committed to diversity and equality. We oppose discrimination in any form. We strive to make the Coop welcoming and accessible to all and to respect the opinions, needs and concerns of every member."

Analysis: This excerpt from our Mission Statement is our Coop's version of International Principle #1.

Respecting the wisdom of the International Principles of Cooperation and our Mission Statement will hopefully give members pause, regardless of their views on Israel/-Palestine, before supporting a Coop boycott that is sure to divide us. If you must vote for a boycott, please respect the super-majority and vote to keep that. It is the Cooperative thing to do. The 75% supermajority aligns more with our historical support for boycotts.

The damage that will come our way from outside if we boycott Israel is significant. The Heritage Foundation's "Project Esther" is a roadmap for the Trump administra-

tion’s plan to attack groups/organizations that are anti-Israel and/or pro-Palestine. (follow this link then click on “Read Full Report”). We will be perceived as a group that should be attacked. The Project Esther report call-to-action includes attacking groups via “Critical vulnerabilities exploited”.

Analysis: We’re in the world’s media capital. The administration in Washington has great attention to retribution (Columbia, Harvard etc.) and follows the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025 in many instances. We should expect to be attacked by the administration’s bureaucracy if we boycott Israel. Our Coop isn’t just regulated by NY State or NYC. National agencies regulate us. We should be terrified of possible consequences and worried about our ability to exist. We should not take our little Coop’s existence for granted. We will be a target.

Joe Holtz is the former General Manager, and *Co-founder, of the Park Slope Food Coop*.