LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

November 27, 2023



DISCONTINUED PRODUCTS

To the Editor:

I am sometimes disappointed to find that a favored food has disappeared from our

Coop shelves without explanation, never to reappear. Some time ago, for example, we lost Sesmark Sesame Thins crackers and, more recently, frozen orange juice concentrate of any kind. I think it would be helpful for our buyers to post a brief explanation, perhaps on the website, for each distinctive product discontinued; for example, poor sales, producer violation of labor standards, etc.

In cooperation,
Curtis Skinner

EXTENDED SHOPPING HOURS, PLEASE

Dear *Linewaiters' Gazette*,

Can we get a Coordinators' Corner update from the General Coordinators about extending shopping hours? It looks like there are lots of people waiting to join and existing members clamoring for open work slots. What's the plan?

Thank you,
Lisa Guido

PLURALISM IS A DEMOCRATIC VALUE

Dear Fellow Members:

During the Open Forum at the October General Meeting, a member suggested reconsidering the Coop's joining the Boycott, Divestments and Sanction movement. This suggestion was met with applause. When the Open Forum was closed to allow time

for the business of the meeting to be addressed (note: the meeting still required a resolution to extend 15 minutes to accommodate all agenda items on the slate), several attendees called out “Shame!” and “Undemocratic!”

As should be evident to anyone paying attention, a large number of our fellow members object strenuously to the Coop selling Israeli products. As should also be evident, both by expression of views and by sales volume, a large number of members support the sale of Israeli products.

If we truly aspire to democratic ideals, why is it so hard to allow members to make their own choices? BDS supporters should be welcome to exercise whatever commercial behavior comports with their moral cosmology, and fellow members who have different viewpoints should be able to do the same. Imposing one moral position on an issue that clearly holds a myriad of deeply considered perspectives strikes me as monolithic self-righteousness masquerading as “democratic.” Pluralism, no matter how offensive, is a democratic value. Tyranny, no matter how well-intentioned, is not.

Brian Shuman

BDS REDUX

Dear Members:

In years past, Coop members debated the advisability of joining the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, a nonviolent campaign to secure justice for Palestine. Launched in 2005 at the behest of Palestinian civil society organizations, BDS has proven a powerful tool in the effort to end Israeli apartheid. The Coop as a whole never signed on to BDS, but individual members have long chosen to boycott items produced in Israel or made by companies supportive of the Israeli state (e.g., SodaStream).

As shown by the terrible events of Oct. 7 and later, the BDS campaign is more relevant than ever. As I write, more than 10,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israel's barbaric bombing campaign, combined with a blockade that deprives the civilian population of food, water and medical care. According to CNN, "Children are nearly half of all casualties." In my view, it's an ethical imperative to mourn all the victims, Jewish and Palestinian, while absolutely rejecting Israel's genocidal rampage. (Yes, what we are seeing meets "A Textbook Definition of Genocide" according to Holocaust scholar Raz Segal in an article published by *Jewish Currents* on Oct. 13.)

In keeping with our stated commitment to "avoid products that depend on the exploitation of others," I fervently hope that the Coop will now take steps to join the BDS movement. We stood up to help end South African apartheid. Palestine deserves no less.

Jan Clausen

Please note: the article by Raz Segal referred to in the letter can be accessed at *Jewish Currents*. Statistics from CNN are available at: "Civilian death toll: Israeli and Palestinian fatalities continue to rise amid the war with Hamas" | CNN

UNITY AT THE COOP

Dear Members:

Let's keep each other safe in light of recent events in the Middle East.

If we are to accept photographs and personal accounts of Palestinians on the ground, then we are also to accept photographs and personal accounts of Israelis on the ground. The massacre visited upon Israel on Oct. 7th is real. The destructive follow-up of the Israeli invasion is real. The follow up murder to that of a rabbi in Detroit is real.

The continuous global threats against Jews and Muslims are real. Present horrors will be replaced by fresh horrors.

Ongoing battles around who did what first are only fights about where it all started thousands of years ago. The only winners are the normalizers of hatred for Jews and Muslims. The latest headlines can't capture reality any more than they can about immigration. Therefore this is not a fight that the Coop should step into lest we are seen as supporting violence.

We need different dialogue here to discuss this. In our internet-influenced world of trolling, let's do better. Inside this organization, I invite us all to be Pro Coop. Let's take time to listen to each other, cooperate, even when we disagree. Listening is doing something productive. Blaming isn't. Unity for our membership remains the arc of our Coop's intent.

Concern for group B is not reduced by showing concern for group A. It's not pie.

Jesse Rosenfeld

COMMITTEE REPORT CONFUSION?

Dear Editor,

The Linewaiters' Gazette, like all elements of the "Fourth Estate," provides an important function in Coop governance by shedding light on and informing members about critical and overlooked issues at the Coop. This is why I've been dismayed to find in my brief experience trying to submit a committee report to the *Gazette* that it operates in complete darkness. There is no masthead. To contact the *Gazette*, there is only a single email address and it is anonymous. Questions sent to this email address go unanswered. There is no transparency and seemingly no accountability. It is complete-

ly unacceptable for our newspaper to operate as it does behind a veil of secrecy.

Sincerely,
Avi Fisher

Coordinator's Note: Committee Reports, like all submissions for Gazette *publication or consideration for publication, are sent to a single email address. Content is then distributed to one of four editorial teams. Content that meets standards, which in the case of committee reports includes a limit of 750 words, will advance to publication. When reports require changes, editors generally send feedback to authors if their time permits. It is, however, incumbent upon the writer to adhere to guidelines. Regarding a Gazette masthead: its revival is in the works.*