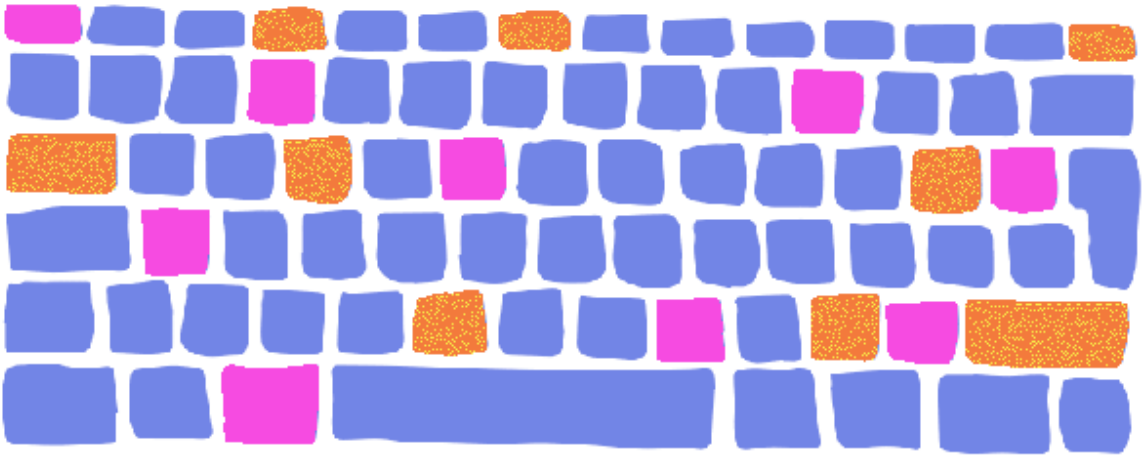
MARCH 11, 2025

March 11, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES; MAKING IT THROUGH AIRPORT SECURITY ISN’T ONE

To the Editor,

Today at LaGuardia, I accidentally handed the TSA guy the other white plastic card in my wallet—my Coop ID.

“Uh, do you have a driver’s license?” he asked really nicely. I laughed at my blunder. As I passed through, he grinned and said, “Thanks for being a member.”

Sasha Aslanian

A NUMBERS GAME

To the Editor:

We wanted to share with the membership a quirky and educational game we play as a family after a PSFC shop. We save the receipt and take turns quizzing each other about purchased items and their attributes. The game almost always starts with asking everyone at the dinner table to guess the most expensive item, followed by the least expensive item from that particular receipt. From there, we often shift to “most expensive per pound” and “least expensive per pound.” Eventually the game ends up being “how much were the raspberries?” “how much were the walnuts?” followed by guesses and the receipt-holder indicating to guess higher or lower.

We have found that the kids really get into this game and its lighthearted competitive nature. Plus it’s a fun way to introduce kids to economics and give them an understanding of grocery costs. We thought that other members and their kids might enjoy the receipt game too!

Suggested Questions for the Receipt Game:

- Most expensive item (and second most expensive item)

• Least expensive item (and second least expensive item)
• Heaviest weighable item
• Lightest weighable item
• Most expensive per pound
• Least expensive per pound
• Total number of items
• Total cost of the shop
• How much is X?

Matt Knapp and Rachel Natov

PLASTICS REDUCTION

Greetings:

Our family's plastic waste stream includes a lot of plastic containers that held various berries purchased at the Coop. At some of the Farmers Markets, berries are sold in paperboard containers instead.

Perhaps the Coop buyer of berries could explore switching to a paperboard container with our vendors and see if that's feasible. If the lack of the cover is an issue, I note that we sell Physalis berries from Colombia with a plastic film cover secured by a rubber-band. It is a separate piece from the plastic box.

In Cooperation,
Stewart Pravda

THIS IS FOR ALL THE CLUELESS PEOPLE

To the Editor,

On Thursday, I ventured to the Coop looking for dietary items required for the next few days prior to a specific medical exam. The Coop usually brings some peace to my day.

Turning down the bulk aisle, my journey came to a stop due to a large U-boat in the middle of the aisle. I made my way around to find on the other side a volunteer busily texting. I hoped the person they were texting was rushing over to move the cart out of my way. As I continued looking for white and colorless food without fiber, which is the opposite to my normal cravings, I was blocked again. I politely asked this shopper to make room for me, but they didn't respond. Then I realized that they had earbuds in their ears and were probably listening to some Brahms music which was more important than others needing clear passage.

I made it out and started having a snack of my last fiber-laden apple before my exam, and a person a little older than I decided to tie their dog up to the bench right next to mine without even saying pardon or, "Is it ok to leave my dog here?" I am very pro--dog and love my own monsters, but this one who was tied up immediately started sniffing at my food, and I had to physically move the animal away from me to continue with my apple treat.

My moment of peace finally came upon arriving home to tell my dogs about the hungry one that was tied up at the bench, which I believe was put there for humans to sit on, not for dogs to drool over fellow members' laps.

Obstructedly yours,
Mark Paperno

GOODBYE TO A COOP JOB I LOVED

To the Editor:

I’m no Joe Holtz, but the Jeteresque farewell tour of the “Soul of Coop” has got me, on the brink of coop retirement myself, wondering whether I might earn a tiny asterisk in PSFC history.

Since joining, I have had only one job: walker. I love it, largely because you don’t have to be inside the Coop but I also really enjoy the brief conversations, and in a few cases, the fact that they are brief. Until spring 2020, I had the same shift my entire coop career. I was planning to keep it forever. My question to the *Gazette*: Is having just one job for a whole career common? Unique? Noteworthy? Who Cares?

Even if I get the asterisk, it will have its own asterisk since, due to the global pandemic I didn’t have the exact same shift my entire career. After work slots resumed, I couldn’t get my Wed C week 8 a.m. shift back, took the closest thing I could get (Friday E week) and will finish my career in that slot.

Is it weird that with a US government determined to destroy the US government, global warming definitely gonna get much worse, friends terrified of deportation, and [fill in your preferred reasons for rage/fear], I’m feeling a little wistful about my walking shifts (though not wistful enough to keep doing them when I don’t have to)?

I’m not trying to steal Joe’s thunder. He’s a hero. I guess what I want to say is that working at the Coop has been a privilege, and shopping without working will be even better.

If awarded, the asterisk can be left for me in the office.

Thank you,
Kenny Bruno

VOTING VIA ZOOM ON GM

Good morning,

My name is Patricia López. I am an active Coop member.

I am writing because I want to ask for a hybrid GM vote. Because of my work schedule, I can never make it on time and have the opportunity to vote. I assume many fellow Coop members are in the same position.

Improving the accessibility to voting online makes it democratic.

Thank you.
Patricia López

IN SUPPORT OF HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Fellow Coop Members,

I write today in support of hybrid General Meetings. It is disheartening to me that the Agenda Committee and General Coordinators have stalled in bringing this popular proposal to a vote, after over a year since it was first brought to the Agenda Committee**.**

As a Coop member of nearly two decades**,** I know that our democratic processes are part of what makes the Coop so much more than just another grocery store. I have attended many general meetings over the years, including Zoom meetings that happened during the pandemic. These have been important moments for me to learn firsthand about Coop members' priorities and concerns, participate in the nuts and bolts of Coop governance,and to weigh in on topics from plastic bag use to markups, confirming new committee members and BDS. Casting my vote at the GM is the primary way for me to help shape a Coop that reflects my values.

At an institution that purports to value inclusion, obstructing a vote on hybrid GMs stands out as an antidemocratic and exclusive power move. I am expecting my first child this spring. I would like to be able to continue to stay connected with my Coop community and participate in decisions affecting the PSFC's future. That feels especially important during this transitional moment, with Joe Holtz's imminent retirement. It is high time that hybrid meetings were brought to a vote.

In cooperation,
Jean Rohe

HYBRID GENERAL MEETINGS

Dear Editor,

I am writing to advocate for the implementation of hybrid General Meetings at the Park Slope Food Coop. As a long-time member committed to our cooperative's principles of inclusivity and democratic decision-making, I believe that adopting a hybrid format for our monthly meetings would significantly enhance member participation and equity.

Currently, our in-person General Meetings face several limitations:

- Limited capacity: The Prospect Park Picnic House, where meetings are held, can only accommodate 240 people, representing a mere 1.5% of our membership.
- Accessibility barriers: Many members face challenges attending in-person meetings due to work schedules, childcare responsibilities or mobility issues.
- Reduced engagement: Our Coop has experienced a 9% decrease in membership since in-person meetings were suspended.

Implementing hybrid meetings would address these issues by:

- Increasing participation: Virtual attendance options would allow more members to engage in crucial discussions and votes on Coop matters.
- Enhancing accessibility: Members unable to attend in person could still contribute their voices and votes from home.
- Strengthening our cooperative spirit: By embracing technology to include more members, we reinforce our commitment to collective ownership and decision-making.

While concerns about technical challenges have been raised, many organizations have successfully adopted hybrid meeting models. With proper planning and investment in appropriate technology, we can overcome these hurdles.

As I write, we approach our next General Meeting on February 25, 2025, I urge the Board and General Coordinators to seriously consider implementing a hybrid format. This change would align with our Coop's values of inclusivity and shared responsibility, ensuring that all members have the opportunity to participate in shaping our community's future.

Sincerely,
William Clark

IF ICE COMES KNOCKING

Greetings:

If ICE comes knocking, will the General Coordinators open the doors?

That's been on my mind ever since the latest Coordinators' Corner published on February 18. They name that by "engaging in boycotts or divestments against Israel," the Coop would be exposed to "legal, financial or other harm" from Project 2025 and Project Esther. For the unaware, those are Trump's MAGA manifestos. But if you're reading this, you're most likely uber aware that Project 2025 targets everything under the sun.

I am deeply troubled by the significant risk the General Coordinators would put us, the member-owners, and our community, by capitulating to the fascists that follow those manifestos. This government is denying trans people their documents and healthcare, it is threatening the sanctuary status of cities, it is repealing OSHA guidebooks and dissolving NLRB regional offices. It has let go thousands of national park workers just this past week.

So, if ICE knocks on the doors of the Coop, will we turn over a neighbor, for fear of the legal, financial or other harm they can bring to the Coop?

These are questions that are no longer far-off hypotheticals. My community has spent the last month making rapid response plans, and we actually have to use them. It will be four more years of planning, responding and surviving. Maybe you are insulated in your privilege of being a cliché Coop member, and you think you are not in community with anyone on the frontlines, facing direct threats every day. But you are a New Yorker, so that means you are definitely in proximity. Now is the time to do the work and be in community. That means showing up to the General Meetings, and exercis-

ing your power, so the Coop does not bend the knee to MAGA.

Lin Mo

THE ROAD TO HELL IS PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS

Dear Coop members:

Some fellow members think an Israeli boycott aligns with Coop values. Does it? The devil is in the details, and members should ask several key questions:

Is it ethical to boycott an entire nation? Why Israel?

Israel has its fair share of challenges, but were Israel as awful as BDS states, should we not boycott all products from problematic countries, including China, Turkey, Vietnam and even the states of FL & TX? Were it legal, should all citizens from those countries be banned at the Coop?

How will this work?

There is a reason the Arab boycott of Israel ultimately failed: We live in a globalized economy. There are inputs from many places in most of the products that we consume. Should all cell phones be banned from entering our premises? Do we implement a very costly & unreliable system to try to track the inputs of all the products we buy? How do we factor dual citizenship when defining Israeli ownership?

Will it help?

This is not about our economic power: The Coop only carries about ten products from Israel at any one time. Resolving conflicts requires dialogue. How does aligning with a

group which boycotts academics and all forms of exchange help develop trust on the ground, a prerequisite for a negotiated settlement? If this conflict is so important to members, why not start a dialogue group?

What will be the impact on the Coop?

It has already had a negative impact on the culture and the community. For the dire economic and legal impact, please read the Coordinator's Corner articles on the subject!

The Coop is an amazing model which does a lot of good in our community. Let's not mess it up with a misguided support of BDS.

Bruno Grandsard

THE LIE OF A NEUTRAL POSITION

Greetings:

The 75% threshold was introduced in 2016 specifically to impede a BDS vote; that is the sole purpose of this policy which does not apply to any other aspect of Coop governance. In the midst of a genocide that is inextricably connected to food, water, land and agriculture, the coordinators choose to publish not one but THREE unprecedented, thinly veiled, fear-mongering texts full of wild speculations in an attempt to discourage members from voting their consciousness.

I am deeply disappointed that this is deemed acceptable. Threatening people with unsubstantiated predictions of price increases and cutbacks, playing on people's economic fears to push their agenda. How shameful. The Coop establishment can only see "divisiveness" as something that comes from others, but not from their own ac-

tions and policies. Why are these inflammatory texts from coordinators not “divisive”? Why is erecting outrageous bureaucratic roadblocks to hybrid voting not “divisive”?

The Coop is indeed at risk, not because of some organizing, but because of its willingness to undercut itself and compromise its integrity in order to prevent what is clearly a popular measure from even being voted on. If the proboycott camp is so marginal, then why impede the vote? If it is so popular, then why are we constantly being addressed as agitators that the Coop needs to be protected from?

The answer should be obvious: Whether they realize it or not, the establishment’s claim of political neutrality is simply untrue. The constant hand-wringing over the safety and comfort of Coop members clearly does not include us. None of this discourse includes us. Just a total disregard for thousands of members; their will, their politics, their discomforts. There is absolutely an insidious racism at play here. The Coop establishment needs to wake up and include ALL of us in the body politic.

Tiffany Malakooti

YOU CAN’T WITCH HUNT THE BOSS

Dear Coop members:

Making decisions together as a diverse community can be strenuous. We must negotiate differences in our values and perspectives. Leaders of democratic organizations must host difficult conversations and facilitate decisions with multiple perspectives. It is a dereliction of duty and gross overstepping on the part of General Coordinators to inhibit agenda items they disagree with (as they are currently doing).

A recent letter (“The General Coordinators Are Not the Enemy”) accuses PSFC Members for Palestine of conducting a “witch hunt” against the GCs. This group advocates

a broadly supported democratic vote on a boycott of Israeli goods, and has come against obstructions, delays and opaque processes, exposing the limitations of our democratic governance. These months and years of obstructions are detailed in the GC's explicit opposition to fulfilling a basic mandate of their jobs: improving member democracy through hybrid GMs and enabling voting on a boycott of products from an apartheid state.

As I was addressed as a pro-Palestine Board member in the aforementioned letter, I want to respond. Let's remember the power dynamics and leadership structures implicit in the Salem witch trials and other crusades against women and other dispossessed people throughout history. Actual witch hunts are how those with power repress peoples' movements, criminalize otherness and create scapegoats to distract from actual sources of crisis and tension. GCs are hired by members like us and charged with running the Coop. As American democracy faces unprecedented challenges (from powerful people who describe conflicts with political opponents as "witch hunts" to victimize themselves while wielding bully pulpits to crush dissent), I hope we embrace the fruitful challenges of diversity and democracy. Land and food justice movements have always proved that local liberation is bound up with global liberation. We need the Coop more than ever to prove there are functional alternatives to authoritarianism, constant war and austerity.

Tess Brown-Lavoie
Board Member
Park Slope Food Coop

WANT FOR OTHERS WHAT YOU WANT FOR YOURSELVES

Dear Coop Members,

Do we support injustice? It is not just to support a government that oppresses the Palestinian people by killing them, stealing from them, wrongly imprisoning them, calling them animals, etc. The world sees the documented footage and evidence of this continuous abuse and is calling it out. Coop members have a right and a duty to speak about our Coop participating in this horror. Do the Coop coordinators believe that Palestinians don't deserve the same human rights as themselves?

With justice comes peace. Coop members seeking a boycott of Israeli products want to see the Coop stand for human rights for all people, not just a select few. Practicing free speech, organizing peacefully and refusing to benefit from Palestinian people's oppression should not be considered threatening.

Thank you,
Shahidah Tawwab

LET'S GO, HYBRID MEETINGS!

Hi,

My name is Alex Pyle, I have been a member of the PSFC for 6 years, and I would like there to be hybrid voting available for general meetings.

Thank you,
Alex Pyle

STOP DELAYING THE VOTE ON HYBRID MEETINGS

Hi there,

I find it quite bothersome that the GCs continue to delay the vote on hybrid GMs. It's clearly a very popular proposal; virtually every other community group I belong to provide hybrid meeting options, and it makes participating in meeting way easier for people (particularly for parents with young children like myself who don't have the time they used to to travel for meetings).

It also makes one wonder if the GCs are resorting to antidemocratic sabotage, perhaps intentionally delaying the hybrid policy because they know it would finally lead to us making the morally correct and long overdue decision to ban the sale of products from Israel.

I love the Coop—it seems like the only institution that isn't completely dysfunctional these days—and want to be able to attend GMs to participate in Coop business decisions. Please stop delaying the vote on hybrid GMs and make sure a vote finally happens on Tuesday, April 29.

Sincerely,
Alejandro Silva

THE PROPOSED BOYCOTT OF ISRAELI GOODS

Greetings:

This suggestion to boycott Israeli goods has come up before. When it came up previously it led to the most divisive general meeting in the Coop's history.

While I do not support Israeli actions in Gaza and the West Bank, a boycott of a few Israeli products is not an effective way forward for a FOOD store. As a food store our boycott of products that may contain glyphosate is much more straightforward. If you are concerned about Israeli attacks on Palestinians, contact your representatives and senators. For a food store, the stocking of Palestinian products is a more successful approach, and probably does more for Palestinians than a boycott of Israeli products by PSFC could.

In cooperation,
Adam Segal-Isaacson

COORDINATORS' CORNER: SAFEGUARDING THE COOP'S FUTURE

March 11, 2025

COORDINATORS' CORNER


ILLUSTRATION BY ERIK SCHURINK

February 18, 2025

By The General Coordinator Team

This is our third Coordinators' Corner of 2025, addressing concerns and highlighting the risks associated with a campaign led by members from PSFC Members for Palestine, who aim to have the Coop join a BDS-targeted boycott of Israeli goods.

THE COOP'S BOYCOTT HISTORY

The Coop has a long tradition of participating in boycotts. Since 1989 we've joined a number of boycotts, with an impressive 97% of members voting in favor across all boycott votes. This overwhelming support reflects the Coop's commitment to building consensus and aligns with the International Cooperative Alliance's Seven Cooperative Principles, which promote unity while embracing diversity.

SUCH SCRUTINY COULD RESULT IN COSTLY LEGAL BATTLES, GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS AND MAJOR DISRUPTIONS TO THE COOP'S OPERATIONS AND STABILITY.

PSFC Members for Palestine are proposing to repeal the Coop's 75% supermajority requirement for General Meeting (GM) votes on boycotts and replace it with a simple majority to make it easier to approve a Coop boycott of Israeli goods**.** A boycott without broad member support undermines the Principles of Cooperation, weakens the Coop's cohesion and threatens its stability, as outlined in a previous Coordinators' Corner. Maintaining the 75% supermajority is a reasonable minimum, especially given that boycott votes have historically averaged 97% in favor. This threshold ensures that boycotts are only advanced with sufficient member support to preserve Coop unity and protect it from harmful risk.

PSFC BOYCOTT HISTORY (1989–PRESENT)

Date	Boycott	Yes Votes	No Votes	Approval %
January 1989	Chile, S. Africa, non-UFW grapes	19	0	100%
July 1989	All tuna fish	9	0	100%
December 1990	Bumble Bee Tuna	15	1	94%
August 1991	Non-UFW Grapes	30	7	81%
February 1993	Colorado	37	8	82%
May 1997	Garden Burger	36	1	97%
January 2001	Domino Sugar	38	0	100%
2004–2018	Coca Cola products	1,959*	41*	98%

Date	Boycott	Yes Votes	No Votes	Approval %
November 2010	Flaum Appetizing	165	3	98%
August 2018	CamelBak products	175	5	97%

*Aggregate of annual votes

POLITICAL AND LEGAL RISKS TO JOINING BDS

We believe the Coop faces significant external risks by aligning with the BDS movement. Politically motivated initiatives such as Project 2025 and Project Esther explicitly target organizations engaging in boycotts or divestments against Israel. These efforts promote policies and legislation that could expose the Coop to legal, financial or other harm. Aligning with BDS could bring scrutiny under laws such as the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) or the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), as outlined in Project Esther. Such scrutiny could result in costly legal battles, government investigations and major disruptions to the Coop's operations and stability.

Our concerns are not unfounded. The broader goal of PSFC Members for Palestine is to connect the Coop to the global BDS movement, as outlined on their website:

*The BDS framework offers us clarity around the particularities of our boycott demands, and **connects us to a global movement** while otherwise enabling us to work autonomously and independently to address our specific context here at the Coop. In committing to BDS, we follow the lead of Palestinian trade unions, which have unanimously declared their support to the movement. If we believe Palestinians are agents in their own liberation and that we should support them, then we should take up their call to endorse BDS.*

We maintain that aligning with the BDS movement exposes the Coop to significant political, legal and financial risks that could jeopardize its operations and stability.

THE GENERAL COORDINATORS' ROLE

Some members have asked why the General Coordinators (GCs) are speaking out on this topic. The answer lies in the GCs' responsibilities, as outlined by the Coop's by-laws, governance and history. As Chief Administrative Officers, GCs are obligated to act in the Coop's best interest. Our duties include overseeing daily operations, financial management, long-term planning, sustainability and risk management. Protecting the Coop by anticipating and mitigating risks is central to our role.

The GCs have been accused of fear-mongering for identifying these risks. We firmly reject this characterization. Assessing risks and providing honest evaluations is not fear-mongering—it is fundamental to our role as Chief Administrative Officers. By openly sharing information about potential challenges, we offer a perspective grounded in the Coop's operations and financial sustainability, ensuring that members have the knowledge to make informed decisions in the Coop's best interest.

Our duty is to keep the Coop strong and resilient, now and for the future.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Since our founding in 1973, Coop members have collectively worked over 4 million shifts. Each shift represents a vote for cooperation and the Coop's unique member--worker model. While political initiatives and boycotts have played a role in our history—accounting for just over 2,500 member votes on boycott related matters—they are a much smaller part of our identity compared to the millions of shifts worked to sustain the Coop's daily operations. It's evident that the Coop's strength lies in the collective work and dedication of its members to our participatory model, not in pursuing measures that lack broad support, and fail to build consensus.

The risks tied to the BDS proposal—whether legal, operational or otherwise—are too significant to ignore. Boycotting Israel could divert attention and resources away from the Coop's day to day work: ensuring smooth operations, financial stability and maintaining the cohesiveness of our diverse membership. Cooperation is at the heart of

our Coop, and unity among members is essential to its success.

> OUR DUTY IS TO KEEP THE COOP STRONG AND RESILIENT, NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE.

The General Coordinators emphasize that the Coop's longevity depends on our longstanding commitment to collaboration and our shared efforts. When proposals arise that jeopardize the Coop's stability, it is our responsibility to speak out. Our primary duty is to safeguard the Coop's ability to thrive, ensuring it continues to serve as a successful member-worker model for current and future members, and as an inspiration for others seeking to establish new member-labor food cooperatives.

We urge all members to act to protect our Coop:

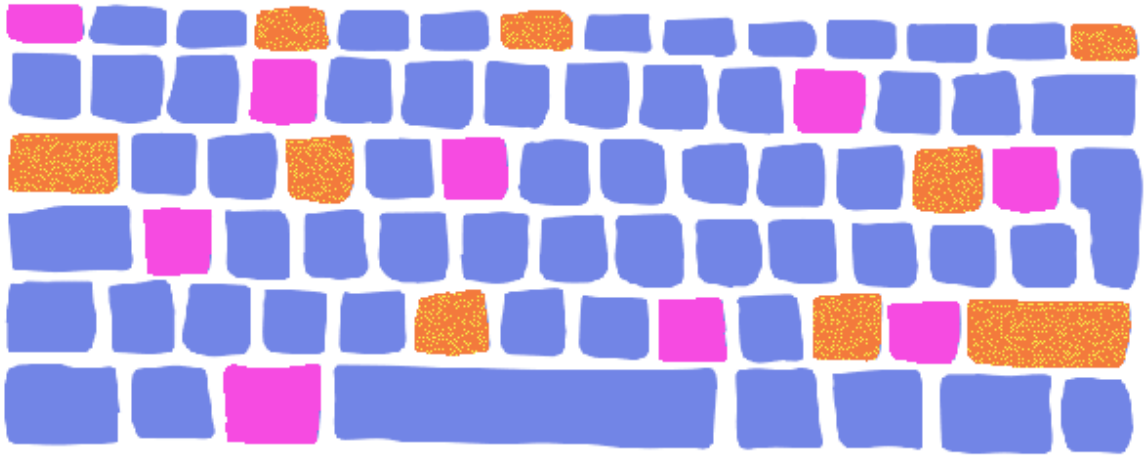
- Attend General Meetings to voice your concerns.
- Vote against lowering the 75% supermajority boycott threshold.
- Engage in respectful dialogue with fellow members about these issues.
- Write to the Gazette to share your perspective.

The General Coordinator Team

FEBRUARY 18, 2025

March 11, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



FINDING THE COOP ABROAD

Dear Coop Members:

This is in the “What are the odds? department.

I am in Southern Mexico—Ciudad of Oaxaca. On a van trip to see and make paper,

and to see the work of artist Francisco Toledo I found myself in a group of 11 other ex-pats. Of the 11 of us seven of us were from Park Slope and five are Coop members! (Another revealed former Coop membership.)

Surprise!

Riva Rosenfield

EVIL ON BOTH SIDES

Greetings:

Having been a member since 1980, I have witnessed many conflicts in the Coop. A short letter regarding boycott of Israeli products. This whole issue is toxic for liberal and left organizations, creating divisions that interfere with other vital concerns. I find evil on both sides of the Hamas-Israel war.

Bill Miller

FEWER THAN TEN ITEMS AT THE COOP ARE ISRAELI

Dear Gazette Editor,

Coop members calling themselves psfc4palestine want us to boycott certain products from Israel, based on the “BDS targeted list” to “materially enforce economic pressure on Israeli companies complicit with apartheid.”

On January 7, 2025 the Coordinators said, “The Coop currently carries less than ten

items from Israel.” GM Joe Holtz gave me this list on January 22, gathered from July 2024 sales data:

Product	**Average weekly unit sales**
Ecolove (assorted)	14.84
Seed & Mill Tahini	6.17
Soom Tahini	13.0
Al Arz Tahini (assorted)	54.67
Osem Bamba	258.33
Total	347.01

Joe estimates that the Coop sells “over 400,000 units” of product per week.

Joe said, “Occasionally a fresh produce item comes from Israel. None at present. The BDS targeted list includes SodaStream, Sabra, and Israeli produce such as peppers, carrots, and clementines.”

“Sabra is now 100% owned by PepsiCo and is manufactured in the United States,” he said. “They want us to boycott SodaStream. SodaStream is no longer carried by the Coop.”

As of July 11, the Coop carried ZERO items from Israel that BDS is targeting, though sometimes we sell produce they’re focusing on.

The boycott ignores products we always sell! This makes no sense and so I question the entire boycott premise.

Could a boycott mainly represent a position statement?

If the Coop thought that Israel was treating the Palestinian people badly, now and throughout history, rather than joining a flawed boycott, let's think for ourselves and make a declaration, e.g.:

"We unequivocally support the right of Palestinians to live with freedom and dignity and the dismantling of all systems that propagate and empower discriminatory treatment of these people."

Some psfc4palestine supporters propose changing longstanding Coop boycott voting rules just for them, such that a simple "majority vote" activates their boycott. I object.

Andy Feldman

NO TO BDS

Dear *Gazette* Submissions:

I wholly concur with *The Linewaiters' Gazette* article, entitled "Stop Forcing Me To Shop, Vote, And Think Like You." Its closing sentence, "BDS needs the Coop. Not the other way around," is spot on. Our Coop has nothing to gain and everything to lose by linking itself to the BDS movement. I can't help but think of the BDS movement against the Israeli company, Soda Stream, that had been located in the West Bank, and employed hundreds of West Bank Palestinians, and then in the face of intense international pressure, moved its operations inside Israel proper; and with that move, the jobs of many of those West Bank Palestinians were lost. So yes BDS was successful in Soda Stream leaving the West Bank, but did so without care or regard for those Palestinian workers harmed by them. So too at our Coop, adopting hybrid meetings could potentially lead to the Coop adopting BDS. This would likely lead to loss of members (myself—a 23-year member included), loss of revenue, potential legal action,

etc. And then the bad press (and ethics issue) of having our Coop, via BDS, take the side of Hamas, a terrorist group that sanctioned the rape, murder and kidnapping of Israelis and foreign nationals.

I love the Coop, I love Israel (though not its current government), I support a peaceful, independent Palestinian State; but as seen in the Soda Stream example, BDS works against all of these entities.

Let's unify our Coop and get back to the business of being a Coop and not a platform for those who seek to divide us.

Murray Lantner

PS: I love that we have some really tasty shade grown coffee in the Coop, it tastes good and its good for biodiversity.

OUR GENERAL COORDINATORS ARE FALLING SHORT

Coop Members,

I was taken aback to read the GC's January 7 inflammatory, fear-mongering opinion piece "Our Coop At Risk," that opposed both a referendum on boycotting Israeli products and hybrid GMs. Their January 28 follow-up on preserving the 75% supermajority for boycotts simply reiterated those points rather than responding to new concerns.

My own opinion, while in favor of a boycott, is nuanced. It is straightforward to not stock Israeli-made products such as Sabra Hummus, but from working produce receiving and processing, I can see practical challenges in screening out produce deliveries at receiving, as they are variably sourced at the distributors' discretion. Those same challenges arise for any boycott, yet boycotts are in the tradition and history of the

Coop. I think it's worth exploring, planning, discussing and voting, to balance the commitment to preserving human life and rights with the effective functioning of the store.

In both articles, the GCs fall short of the Coop's founding principles of "respecting the opinions, needs, and concerns of every member" and seeking "to maximize participation at every level, from policy making to running the store." Why should a boycott alone require a 75% supermajority unlike all other potentially divisive issues? The only reason I can see is the GC's blind spot on this one topic. However, the most critical democratic advance is hybrid GMs. Boycott-opposed members would also benefit from hybrid GMs.

How is it respectful and participatory to exclude members from GMs given a lack of evening childcare? It is highly unlikely that a referendum at a hybrid GM would lead to a mass exodus of thousands of members as threatened by these articles; what factual basis is there for that assumption? Some might leave if the boycott motion passed. There are many would-be members to join.

In Cooperation,
Eve Goodman

THE GENERAL COORDINATORS ARE NOT THE ENEMY

Dear Coop Members,

I'm writing because there are concerning developments at the Coop that may not be widely known. Unless you attend General Meetings (GM) or carefully follow the *Gazette*, you might be unaware that there is a group of members actively working against the General Coordinators (GC). In fact, I would call it a witch hunt.

These members, two of whom are on the Board, are making false accusations at GMs, sowing seeds of distrust and creating “gotcha” moments to cast the GCs in the worst possible light. Example one: An Agenda Committee member missed the deadline to place a new member recruitment ad in the *Gazette*; believing mistakenly it had been placed, GC Ann Herpel said as much at a GM. Though this was a simple human error, individuals have repeatedly used this negligible incident to publicly shame and embarrass the GCs. They’ve wasted valuable staff time by rehashing this and dragging the GCs through the mud. Example two: At the January GM, one of these Board members made bogus claims about labor violations against the Coop. This is just two of many similar incidents.

Why are they doing this? Maybe it is retribution because the GCs haven’t supported their political agenda. They want you to believe that the GCs are the enemy. In reality the GCs are doing exactly what we hired them to do. They work tirelessly to make sure our Coop continues to thrive, to get us the best food for less money, and to be a good employer. They are succeeding.

These people want you to lose faith in our GCs. Don’t fall for it. Please pay attention. The Board of Directors elections are just around the corner. It’s up to us to protect what we have built together. If you want to know more, just ask me.

Sincerely,
Karen Mancuso
Membership Coordinator

YES, WE’RE POLITICAL… BUT ALSO A COOP WHERE PEOPLE SHOULD CO-OPERATE!

Greetings:

Some Boycott, Divest, Sanction (“BDS”) opponents argue that introducing politics into the Coop is a bad idea, while some advocates defend their activity on the basis that the Coop is political with a history of boycotts. I think this discussion misses the mark.

If organizing a local community, with its own detailed rules & regulations, voting system, taxation (i.e. working requirements!) and support for local farmers, is not political… I don’t know what is! So yes, the Coop is a political organization, and that is fine.

If political advocacy is part of the Coop’s DNA, it is also a Cooperative run according to participatory principals which place open-minded cooperation at the center of our activity. Those who think all issues should be settled by voting perhaps believe that the Coop is a republic, where majority rules, damned be minority rights. But the Mission Statement is clear: “We strive to make the Coop welcoming and accessible to all and to respect the opinions, needs and concerns of every member. We seek to maximize participation at every level, from policy making to running the store.” Past boycotts have been narrow in scope/impact, consensual, supported by the General Coordinators and did not personally impact many members.

BDS fails to be in compliance with our mission statement on several accounts: first, the organization is secretive, exclusionary and refuses to engage with opponents—not exactly cooperative behavior. Second, it is not consensual, and fosters tremendous divisiveness. Third, it is discriminatory against one country/group, and does not respect the rights of a substantial group of members; the atmosphere it fosters at the Coop may actually violate Title VII. And finally, it clearly jeopardizes the future of the Coop.

In Cooperation,
Bruno Grandsard

ENOUGH HIDING BEHIND “DEMOCRACY”

Hello,

Amazing quote from a letter-writer in the last issue of the *Gazette*. It was also refreshing:

“If there are Coop members who are against the principles of our Coop’s democracy, and would leave based on a strong majority of membership voting on any proposal, then they should not be Coop members.”

It’s astonishing for those people pushing BDS to hide behind “democracy” when it was clearly stated by the General Coordinators how every initiative the BDS people are pushing are far from “democratic.” It’s nice though to finally see how the pro-BDS members feel about us. They don’t want us there so it was good to hear someone - come out and say it.

We are not going anywhere and we will fight BDS until the end and call you out every step of the way.

Jonathan Tobias

THE LIE BEHIND “HYBRID” VOTING

Hello Coop,

The first time hybrid voting (online and in person) was floated as a feature of Coop governance was some months ago at a General Meeting. Joe Holtz was explaining to a BDS supporter why we can’t just adopt hybrid, that we need to change the by-laws. Their immediate response was, ‘How do we change the by-laws?’

People, people, people. Hybrid voting is not, never was, and never will be, about democracy, working families or the immunocompromised. Those buzzwords were trotted out later to sweeten the Big Lie.

BDS is merely a 'non-violent' arm of Hamas (who claims to represent Palestinians), a very violent militant extremist movement that terrifies and oppresses Palestinians, uses 'slave' to label those of African descent, caricatures African Americans as birthing monkeys, is itching to forcibly displace 6,000,000 Jews of Middle Eastern and European descent (genocide, anyone?) and is part of the Muslim Brotherhood who wants to colonize the world under a Caliphate. BDS itself champions Hamas, including the rape and kidnapping and infanticide of October 7, and wants to kick you out of the Coop if you disagree. BDS is nothing more than slogans spouted by the reckless. From the very start, a vote for hybrid has been a vote to open the door to voting for all of the above and it takes little effort to find it in their own words.

Don't be fooled into thinking this is a debate about democracy. Voting against the hybrid model is voting against a BDS faction who support everything you find repellent, including genocide. Drop everything. Show up to the General Meetings. Keep our Coop a cooperative.

BDS needs the Coop. Not the other way around.

Jesse Rosenfeld

THE GENERAL COORDINATORS' PATRONIZING TONE

Dear Coop Members,

In addition to my many substantive disagreements with the Coordinators' Corner column in the January 7 issue, I was offended by the patronizing tone taken by the GCs,

who wrote: “The broader membership may not fully understand the narrow perspective of this group [PSFC4Palestine] or the risks their actions pose to the Coop.”

First of all, why assume naiveté on the part of the “broader membership?” And second, what does it mean to frame as “narrow” the efforts of Coop members to help call a halt to Israel’s killing spree and the colonial occupation that gave rise to it? How is it “narrow” for Coop members who are themselves Palestinian, and/or Muslim, and/or Arab, to call out our Coop’s complicity with these horrors? How is it “narrow” for anti-Zionist Jewish Coop members to reject the cynical use of identity politics to shield Israel and its US partner in crime? How is it “narrow” for members who lack some obvious personal connection to the issue to nonetheless feel responsible for correcting blatant injustice that’s bankrolled and armed using our tax dollars?

In the January 28 *Gazette* issue, the GCs double down on their patronizing approach, admonishing the membership that the 75% supermajority requirement for approving a boycott must not be repealed, as this would “divide the Coop.” I would like them to explain what is “non-divisive” about allowing a small minority of voting members to block a boycott that is desired by a majority of up to 74%? Is that because, in the GCs’ eyes, those who desire a boycott are “narrow” by definition? Does each “narrow” opinion in favor of a boycott count as a mere fraction of each opinion against? Is that what the GCs are saying? Is this their vision of democratic decision-making?

In cooperation,
Jan Clausen

I LOVE THE COOP BUT…

Fellow Members,

A friend and I were talking about the recent Coordinators’ Corner piece. They asked

me how I felt about it. “Furious,” I replied. “I love the Coop but it keeps wronging me.”

Over and over I have expected our Coop to operate as it is described in its mission and in the documents that detail policies and procedures. I expect even-handed leadership and fairness. But over and over—just like the recent article, and the 2019 union busting antics—I have seen upper management using a heavy-handed, “we know what is best,” top-down style of leadership.

Of late, our General Coordinators have been openly anti-democratic. It seems they only support member participation in governance if it will bring about outcomes they approve of, and that they will stop at nothing to suppress proposals they disagree with. They’ve told us that hybrid meetings could result in a boycott of Israeli products (which they don’t want) so they also are unsupportive of hybrid meetings. If only they could take a broader view: hybrid meetings could create openings for participation for a wide range of Coop members, on myriad topics.

If this is truly a cooperative, then where are the General Coordinators’ efforts to cooperate—instead of dictate? Where is evidence of General Coordinators listening to members who do not agree with them. What I see in their article is open hostility—not cooperation.

Everyone who knows me knows I love the Coop, and cooperative models of engagement. Going into my 20th year of membership, I want more for and from the Coop than the limited perspectives imposed by management.

In Cooperation,
HanaKyle Moranz

SUPPRESSION OF FREE SPEECH

Dear Fellow Members:

I joined the Park Slope Food Coop more than 50 years ago and I was primarily attracted to it not only because it provides the community with good food at good prices, but also because of its willingness to take stands on numerous moral issues.

This latter tradition has prevailed for decades, until recently. The current actions of the Coop General Coordinators are not only at variance with our long history of support for moral issues, they constitute an effort to suppress free speech and must be strongly opposed.

Pressuring Israel, peacefully, to change its policies regarding the Palestinians is a moral imperative that none should shrink from…especially the Coop membership.

While some members may leave the Coop because of the BDS boycott effort, a larger number of people are likely to join.

John McGettrick

CAN THE COOP GOVERNING STRUCTURE EVOLVE?

To the editors,

I was disheartened to read the statement of the General Coordinators (“Our Coop at Risk”) in the January 7, 2025 *Gazette* claiming, essentially, that the boycott of Israeli products would lead to the collapse of the Coop. I am not surprised by this support of the Israeli destruction of Palestine. The General Managers have done that before.

In the *Gazette* of March 8, 2012, Joe Holtz wrote that a vote against having a Coop-wide referendum about boycotting Israeli products would be a vote for the Coop. This tactic was and is, to spread fear among Coop members. The GCs now say if we oppose Israel's genocidal attack on the Palestinian people, we will destroy our Coop.

The GCs are our employees. They direct our paid staff. As the Coop has grown to more than 16,000 members, our decision-making process has placed more authority in the hands of the GCs. They have to keep the Coop functioning and they do it very well. But the governing structure of the Coop has not evolved with its burgeoning membership. We are still subject to a few decisions made by fewer than five percent of the members at monthly General Meetings. And the GCs make many other decisions for us.

That's why hybrid General Meetings are a better option.

Many members can't do more here than their work shifts and grocery shopping. They may rarely think about the political aspects of our Coop. But many members know that oppressive regimes and corporations can be challenged by boycotts.

The century-old war on Palestine continues, culminating now in the murder of tens of thousands of Palestinians. Hybrid meetings might bring greater member participation. It might show us that the vast majority of Coop members support a boycott of Israeli products.

Naomi Brussel

GENERAL COORDINATORS OVERREACH

Dear Editors,

I’m deeply concerned about the irresponsible and fear-mongering editorial posted by the Coop’s General Coordinators in last month’s *Linewaiters’ Gazette*. Given their elevated platform and the placement of this letter, it seems that the general coordinators are using a bully pulpit to make it clear that they are in direct opposition to bringing a potential boycott of Israeli goods to a vote, and they are maligning the good faith efforts brought forth by PSFC for Palestine to bring this essential and timely question to the membership. It’s disingenuous to use low-income members and Coop staff as a wedge and to use the potential of diminished sales to argue against bringing something to a democratic vote. The truth is that nothing at the Coop requires a 75% vote. Even changing the bylaws only requires a two-thirds majority. The general coordinators are “bringing divisiveness to the coop” and spreading misinformation by posting a letter like this one.

Best,
Nancy Mercado

PSFC AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

To the Editor:

With “hybrid” the PSFC would be in compliance with the second Principle of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA): Coops are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting the policies and making decisions. Coop members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote). PSFC did have democratic governance, in compliance with ICA’s second Principle during the Covid--Zoom GM meetings.

ALL members could vote on the agenda items at the monthly GM Zoom meetings.

Mary Buchwald

UMBRAGE AT THE GENERAL COORDINATORS' INCONSISTENCY

Greetings:

I recall attending a General Meeting many years ago where a member spoke up about how the water bladders the coop was stocking were produced by a subsidiary of a corporation that also produced munitions and how there were alternatives available that were not owned by corporations that produced munitions. Maybe he suggested other brands? I then remember a staff thanking the member for the information and saying that they would switch manufacturers. It occurred without comment.

The Coop is a political project. We have values and we stand for things. I wish we stood for more things!! Where our money goes matters.

The Coordinators' Corner pieces of the last two issues proposes that the Coop won't be successful if a boycott of Israeli products passes without near unanimous support—a bar that is not even required to amend our bylaws, the agreement that makes us a cooperative. I think it is fine to *want* that level of agreement but ludicrous to demand it, especially when the vote we are considering is among the impassioned people who are able and choose to attend an in-person general meeting.

Finally, it saddens me that the General Coordinators have felt it necessary to weigh in on hybrid meetings (against) and a boycott of Israeli products (also against) but didn't feel it was necessary to weigh in on the proposal to remove masking at the coop, a policy that would endanger the actual physical health of vulnerable coop members.

Best,
Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones

COORDINATORS' CORNER: WHY WE MUST PRESERVE THE 75% BOYCOTT THRESHOLD

March 11, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIK SCHURINK

By The General Coordinator Team

January 28, 2025

In the Jan. 7, 2025, issue of the *Gazette*, we outlined several significant risks posed if the Coop were to boycott Israeli goods. Today, we turn our attention to a critical concern: a proposed repeal of the 75% supermajority requirement for General Meeting votes on boycotts. Advocates for the Israeli boycott are seeking to reduce this threshold to a simple majority, creating an easier path to approving a boycott of Israeli goods.

We understand that members who favor these changes value the Coop and are acting on their beliefs in alignment with their political values. Members who have expressed a desire for a boycott may not intend to divide the Coop, but their proposals threaten to do just that—alienating members, destabilizing finances and detracting from our core mission of providing affordable, high-quality food to working members. While we respect their right to raise these issues, we must acknowledge the risks their proposals pose to the broader Coop community.

Upholding Cooperative Principles

The 75% threshold is not arbitrary—it is rooted in the International Cooperative Alliance's 7 Cooperative Principles, which promote unity while embracing diversity. Decisions such as a boycott, which have far-reaching implications, should reflect a broad consensus rather than a slim majority. By preserving the 75% threshold, we ensure that boycotts genuinely represent the collective will of the membership and align with the Coop's core values, as demonstrated by our 50-year legacy of inclusivity, shared labor and cooperation.

The Risks of Reducing the Boycott Threshold

Since 1973, boycotts at the Coop have historically received overwhelming support, often near 100%, with none below 80%. This support has been essential to maintaining the cohesion and sustainability of the Coop. Lowering the threshold would undermine this tradition and could result in:

- Divisiveness and distrust among members
- Member departures
- Fewer new members joining
- Financial instability
- Higher prices
- Staff layoffs

For more info on these risks, see our previous Coordinators' Corner here.

Simple Majorities, Super Majorities and Coop Democracy

A simple majority vote for boycotts risks allowing the views of a narrow majority to override the concerns of a substantial minority, eroding the sense of belonging and mutual respect that defines our Coop. Divisive boycotts will alienate many members, causing thousands to feel unrepresented or unwelcome, potentially leading to significant departures.

In addition, requiring a 75% supermajority to approve a boycott is not anti-democratic; democracies often use supermajorities when unity, inclusivity and long-term stability are prioritized, particularly in situations where divisive outcomes could jeopardize the integrity of the institution. By requiring broader consensus for boycotts, the Coop avoids division, polarization and instability, safeguarding its core principles and sustainability, while a simple majority risks alienating members and weakening the community.

The Role of Politics at the Coop

Our shared labor and cooperative culture reflect the Coop's approach to political stances. While broader political considerations and boycotts are a part of the Coop's history, moving forward with a boycott without near unanimous support threatens to erode what unites us: the shared efforts of running a successful, welcoming and sustainable cooperative. By retaining a high threshold for boycotts, we prioritize the principles that bring us together.

Protecting the Coop's Future

The Coop's success is built on its shared labor model and ability to serve a diverse community. Lowering the 75% boycott threshold to a simple majority undermines our Coop.

We urge all members to act to protect our Coop:

- Attend General Meetings to voice your concerns.
- Vote against lowering the boycott threshold and related governance changes.
- Engage in respectful dialogue with fellow members about these issues.
- Write to the *Gazette* to share your perspective.

JANUARY 28, 2025

March 11, 2025

Letters to the Editor



JANUARY 28, 2025

The January 7 edition of "Coordinators' Corner: Our Coop at Risk" elicited a large and emphatic response from Coop members. We received some 60 letters most of which took issue with the general coordinators' positions vis-à-vis the possibility of a boycott of products made in Israel and the possibility of holding hybrid general meetings. The letters below offer a representative sample of these voices. —Letters Editor

Shade Grown Coffee at the Coop—Good for Biodiversity and Yummy

Dear Editor:

I am grateful that the Coop now reliably sells really yummy shade grown coffee from No. Six Depot. The coffee plant evolved as a shade grown species, meaning that it grows in the understory, beneath a diversity of larger trees. More complex habitats, with differing tree heights and different tree species, foster bird diversity. Different bird species are often associated with feeding at different heights in the tree canopy. Shade grown coffee offers this type of habitat structure that fosters bird diversity. However, nowadays, much of the world's coffee has been bred to grow in full sun, and no longer participates in complex habitat structures, resulting in much lower levels of biodiversity when compared to shade grown coffee plantations.

Murray Lantner

The Right Choice

Dear Fellow Members:

I'm not sure who on the staff put Extra Peaceful Olive Oil on the shelf, but it was the right move at the right time. The Park Slope Food Coop is a gem, like all organizations that search for decent social alternatives rather than serve as a center for profit-making or political posturing.

Such organizations face, from time to time, challenges that take one side or perturb its purpose. The label of the olive oil bottle includes the following: "Produced collaboratively by Arab and Jewish women in Israel."

It is not just an alternative to BDS, it is an avoidance to taking a side in the conflict. It posits a sensible path. The world is awash in disappointing leadership. Netanyahu, Trump, Putin and Xi Jinping are not so much leaders as they are perpetrators of perturbation.

This particular product offers a different path—not taking a side in a battle but collaboratively seeking a peaceful solution. It's as simple as that. It's one of the reasons I love the Coop. The world is not working well right now. Some Arab and Jewish women in Israel are.

Rodger Parsons

Where Are the Standards in Letters to the Editor?

To the Editors:

I do not understand how it benefits the Coop for the *Gazette* to continuously publish letters from the same three or four people who make outlandish, unsubstantiated claims about other members' alleged intentions and beliefs. I am getting tired of the right of myself and others to advocate for the boycott of a foreign government that is supported by our tax dollars, a government that consistently denies the human rights of the Palestinian people and wages war on civilians in nearby countries. It is outrageous that our right to free speech is equated with terrorism.

The obvious purpose of these letters is to create confusion and make slanderous statements. Their baseless and unproven accusations violate the *Gazette's* own Fairness Policy and Respect Policy.

It is not up for debate that we are entitled to our rights of freedom of speech and peaceful organizing.

I recommend that the *Gazette* staff review their own policies before they print any further letters, and not publish the same authors continuously.

Thank you,
Amina Ali

No to the Status Quo

My Fellow Coop Members,

I read the Jan. 7 letter from the General Coordinator team with great frustration and concern. Their panicked attempt to discourage the adoption of a hybrid meeting format read, to me, as an abdication of responsibility. To question, in the year 2025, how a hybrid meeting could possibly meet the needs of the membership is naïve. A group of competent people committed to a truly participatory democratic process would eagerly pursue a hybrid meeting structure rather than throwing up roadblocks under the guise of level-headed stewardship.

The General Coordinators seem to be far more interested in preserving the status quo than ensuring that the will of the membership is heard. If this letter is a true reflection of their leadership philosophy, I encourage them to resign.

Amanda Friedman

Coordinators' letter in Jan. 7 issue

To the Linewaiters' Gazette:

My initial reaction to the misleading, fear-mongering letter “Our Coop at Risk” was anger, but it was followed by deep sadness and a sense of betrayal.

I love the Coop because it represents a more just, more democratic way of doing business. The coordinators’ letter undercuts those values. Instead of confronting injustice, it advocates acquiescence; instead of expanding democracy, it seeks to override, even silence, members’ voices.

Let’s not fail our cooperative values, and let’s not fail the great moral test of our time.

Cooperatively,
Linda Ewing

The Hypocrisy of Our General Coordinators

Dear Editor:

I’ve been proud to be a member of the Coop, with all of its history and mission statement and principles of accessibility and community participation, as evidenced by ongoing masked shopping days, for one example. Which is why I am perplexed and, the longer this goes unaddressed, frustrated at the lack of movement on hybrid General Meetings. This has been something many members have supported and has been discussed since late summer last year—why the foot-dragging by leadership to vote on this, or at least continue the discussion? The longer this is ignored, the less it seems an oversight and the more it seems intentional, which raises other questions.

On a related note, the General Coordinators are not helping their case with their letter criticizing members pushing for a boycott of Israeli products. It is disappointing and, frankly, bold for leadership to use their bully pulpit to assign blame to PSFC Members for Palestine for fracturing the community when leadership is equally responsible

for that division. Protecting the status quo is a position, as inconvenient as it may be to acknowledge. It is illiberal to shut down discussion of this as divisive; good leadership fosters communication and looks for common ground. It doesn't vilify good-faith, principled positions.

In order to maintain the trust of membership, it behooves leadership to be responsive with members, be consistent in acting on our community values of accessibility and encouragement of member participation, and hold a vote on hybrid General Meetings. Enough with the games and passive-aggressive power plays. Even members we may disagree with deserve respect and to participate in Coop matters.

Maria Boncyk

Bring the Targeted Boycott of Israeli Goods to a Vote

Dear Editors,

Put up or shut up—bring the targeted boycott of Israeli goods to a vote. Thumbing the scale against the boycott like was so cravenly done in the Jan. 7 2025 *Linewaiters' Gazette* issue betrays a bad faith amongst the General Coordinator team on this matter. We are the Coop, bring this boycott to a vote and let it reflect the will of our body.

Damien Neva

In Defense of Democracy—a Messy and Vital Institution

Dear Fellow Members,

I am alarmed by the anti-cooperative recommendations paid staff are making to our supposedly member-led community.

I joined the Coop because I believe that communities are best served by institutions offering true democratic power and participation. As I've watched thousands of Palestinian civilians killed and starved in a war that I believe threatens the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike, I've pleaded with government officials to follow international law and restrict funding to a government committing war crimes. When it became clear they would not, I turned to local organizing. In an institution like the Coop, I have a voice in where my dollars are spent, and as the leading example of its kind, our collective action as a community has a broader impact.

During General Meetings, I've heard from other members who do not share my beliefs (and from many who do). I have no desire for a boycott to be implemented that does not reflect the support of our collective body. But I am alarmed by the suppressive behavior in the letter from the Coordinator Team, openly stalling a hybrid meeting model because PSFC Members for Palestine's "large email list would have an outsized impact with hybrid meetings in effect." All Coop members are on the email list inviting us to General Meetings; the many of us who have also opted to advocate for a boycott only represent an "outsized" impact to those who wish to minimize our perspective.

I am also appalled by the suggestion that we consider who the incoming presidential administration will "target" when setting Coop policy. In the coming months, independent democratic organizations like ours will be more important than ever. Protecting our messy but vital democratic process is paramount, regardless of whether a boycott is passed.

In Cooperation,
Sofía Campoamor

Calling Out Fundamental Dishonesty

To the editor,

As the matter of BDS is being worked through by members, I am eager for discussion to continue in a democratic and open manner—whatever the outcome.

The piece recently published under the “Coordinators Corner” was not that. It was a fundamentally dishonest piece. It wasn’t meant to educate, inform or argue a point.

It was meant to mislead.

Hard conversations deserve honesty and bravery. These authors offered neither.

There is a real discussion to be had about supporting Israeli industry, but it cannot occur if honesty is optional.

Walter Kaplan

On Hybrid Meetings

Dear Editor:

I attended most of the monthly meetings when they were on Zoom—all about accessibility and nothing to do with BDS (whether it was a topic of discussion or not). Going to the park on a winter Tuesday night is a lot to ask! I have not attended since we stopped Zoom.

I’m disappointed to read our General Coordinators buying into specious paranoid anti-democratic arguments (Coordinators’ Corner: Our Coop at Risk from Jan. 7, 2025).

A rare positive outcome from the pandemic was the updating of our online functions, in member voting and member services.

Lisa Guido

Singling Out Israeli Goods

Dear Coop Members:

We have every right to boycott a country based on civil rights issues, but why are we singling out just one? If we boycott products from one country over civil rights issues then we need to add several more to that list. We sell products from China, Sri Lanka and Egypt to name just a few that are accused of significant civil rights issues by the U.N. and Amnesty International, among other groups.

If the boycott passes, we will need to examine all products we sell that come from countries with poor civil rights records. Otherwise, we will be hypocrites by deeming that only one country is worthy of a boycott, while turning a blind eye to all others. If we choose to do this then it will prove that we are not as liberal, open-minded and progressive as we’d like to think we are.

Michael Katz

Response to Coordinators’ Corner

Good morning,

I’m writing to express my strong discomfort with the recent Coordinators’ Corner. The claims against the boycott campaign are deeply troubling. Not only are they fearmongering, but they also misrepresent the values and goals we are working hard to uphold at the Coop.

More unsettling, however, is the assertion that a hybrid meeting model would harm the Coop’s culture and democratic process. This position ignores the public safety risks we continue to face, going into the sixth year of a deadly pandemic, amidst surges in other contagious illnesses like norovirus and flu A. As someone who has been immunocompromised for over a year, I can attest to how difficult it has been to adjust to this new reality, made even harder by ableist practices like the one proposed by the General Coordinator Team.

The GCs’ position appears to be aimed at undermining a democratic process that should be open, transparent and inclusive of all voices. The boycott and hybrid proposals aren’t about division; they are about making Coop processes more equitable and values-driven, and giving more members the opportunity to engage meaningfully. The GCs’ attempt to shut down this dialogue with misinformation and overreach is unacceptable.

As a proud Coop member, community organizer and third-generation New Yorker, I hope to see the Coop grow in service of the values of democracy, social responsibility, care and cooperation that it claims to uphold.

Solidarity,
Solange Amor

A Grateful Response to Coop Coordinators

Fellow Members,

I want to thank the Coordinators for taking an unequivocal stand against BDS at the Coop. It is my sincerest hope that the letter in the Coordinators' Corner represents an inflection point in this protracted, divisive conflict at the Coop.

Thank you, Coordinators, for calling out the strategic plan of the PSFC Members for Palestine to use hybrid voting to rush through a series of votes that would result in a Coop-damaging boycott.

Due to the ever-shifting nature of antisemitism, Jews suffer from a timing problem: Before good people begin to take action against new manifestations of antisemitism, the Jewish community must absorb and withstand the brunt of harm. We see this in the NYC government report that detailed hate crimes against Jews accounting for 54% of all hate crimes in NYC in 2024. We see this in the replacement of the word "Jews" with "Zionists" in calls to cleanse our public spaces. And we see this in boycotts based on the relentless delegitimization of the one and only Jewish state, Israel.

But we are a resilient people—we love our traditions, each other, our Jewish homeland and our neighbors. That love and pride in our identity has enabled us to weather all that history has thrown at us since the beginnings of our story over 3,000 years ago in the land of Israel.

We survived many attempts to destroy us and delegitimize us in the past, and we will survive the efforts of the PSFC Members for Palestine, too.

So, thank you again to the good people of the Coop—my Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors alike—who are currently taking a moral stand against a movement driven by hate that does no good for anyone.

Jonathan Aranov

Response to Coordinators' Corner

Dear Coop Members,

I was already disappointed that, for over one year, the General Coordinators obstructed our Coop's vote for a popular Hybrid meeting proposal—an issue of democracy. I was then disgusted by the GCs recent denouncement of the Hybrid proposal and PSFC Members for Palestine in the last *Linewaiters' Gazette*. They based their arguments on the fiction that "thousands" of members might leave if a boycott passes. The bogeyman threat that members "might leave" is not a coherent rationale for the Coop Coordinators to undermine the will of our membership. They are deducing this from a handful of emails and letters sent by a vocal minority of members.

While they offer no concrete evidence, here's some data that we do have: PSFC Members for Palestine is the largest campaign of Coop members in the Coop's fifty-year history; its petition has over 3,000 signatories. The candidates it endorsed for the Board of Directors won with more votes than any candidates in Coop history. The board candidates who ran against the boycott—both lost with the most "no" votes ever received by board candidates in any Coop election. If there are Coop members who are against the principles of our Coop's democracy, and would leave based on a strong majority of membership voting on any proposal, then they should not be Coop members: They don't believe in the values stated in our membership manual, namely, the Second Principle of Cooperation—Democratic Member Control. Let actually-cooperative members take their place.

In Cooperation,
Sophie Glickman

Is the PSFC Any Better Than Costco?

Fellow Members,

I was really troubled by the latest “Coordinators’ Corner.” Its attack on PSFC Members for Palestine was disingenuous and manipulative.

One would hope that the Coop would put its considerable talents to designing and implementing a decision-making process grounded in a thoughtful and safe consideration of a boycott. Unfortunately, the opposite has been true; the Coop leadership has worked at every turn to prevent such a process from happening.

One thing I find particularly reprehensible is their repetition (without repudiating it) of the ludicrous slur that PFSC Members for Palestine, many of whom are Jewish, are anti-Semitic. By repeating the slur without repudiating it, the coordinators give it force while pretending it’s not coming from them.

I have felt for a long time that the coordinators, while arguing that the discussion would tear apart the Coop, have in fact been supporting the Israeli occupation.

In the face of 14 months of incessant bombing of hospitals, schools, apartment buildings, of daily images of children killed and neighborhoods in rubble, of unspeakable horrors in the news every day, the coordinators have not even hinted that they might be troubled by the ongoing slaughter and the clear intention—voiced by so many of Israel’s leadership—to completely destroy Palestinian society in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Coop was founded in the 1970s on principles of community built on cooperation, participation, and democracy as an alternative to the corporate food system which was symptomatic of so much that was wrong with our society. If 50 years later, we

can’t even discuss and vote on how to apply those principles because it might affect the bottom line, what are we?

Just a buyers’ club really. Costco with a veneer of environmentalism.

Is that what we want to be?

John Gordon

Virtue Signaling

To the Editor,

Given the editors’ alleged principles, I was shocked (not for the first time) that they would publish a letter including the statement: “I refuse to support a genocide and the occupation of stolen lands” (Jan. 7, 2025 edition). This is an unacceptable, unsubstantiated reduction of one of the most complex international conflicts to a simplistic libel, one that has incited anti-Semitic hatred and violence around the world. It’s but another example of the virtue-signaling that has dominated the Coop’s culture since 2009, with no guardrails against vilification of a state fighting an unquestionable existential battle.

Israel has enough enemies, including Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Houthis (did I leave anyone out?), without the Coop joining the destructive “non-violent” efforts of the BDS movement to delegitimize Israel. Boycotting the few Israeli products carried at the Coop will make absolutely no difference to the outcome of this conflict but members are free to make their own decisions. The fact that it’s repeatedly been made clear how offensive this movement is to many Coop members seems to have no impact on the would-be Hamas-supporting members who wish for the destruction of the one and only Jewish majority state in the world.

Sylvia Lowenthal

Why a Boycott

Dear Gazette:

I'm a Coop member and I write this message to say that our Coop is not at risk. It is misleading to use those words to incite hate against BDS. Boycott is our peaceful way to stop arming the killing machine. I was shot with two dumdum bullets by an Israeli sniper with American guns in 2002. Dumdums are bullets that explode inside the body and leave huge damage. I'm still in pain. Please help us by stopping to fund the army that kills my people.

Warmest,
Khaled Jarrar

BDS & Israeli products

To the editors:

I love the PSFC to which I have belonged for nearly 50 years, like Joe Holtz. I would never wish to do anything that might jeopardize the health and cooperative wealth of the Coop. BDS is a legitimate political tactic and hence it can be legitimately proposed to a cooperative organization like the Coop. The Coop might vote and once the vote is completed it might be announced what the vote was. The Coop members might wish to impose upon us at that time a decision about whether or not we wish to purchase products from Israel. Until such time, each shopper is welcome to pursue their own boycott, or not. If sales of Israeli products plummet, then that is also a suc-

cessful way to create a boycott. Each one of us, in the end, must decide about what we feel about what the U.S. is fueling in Gaza—the destruction of its population with an intent to make the Gaza strip unlivable for the current population—if this not genocide, then, it is, at very least, ethnic cleansing. I cannot imagine that most of us wish to support the targeting of a civilian population, children and noncombatants, and destruction of the health care system and basic sanitation, the targeting of doctors and journalists and children. Our options for effective action are severely limited. Nevertheless, it feels imperative for each one of us to familiarize ourselves with the bombardment of the Gaza strip and to decide how we might wish to respond.

Sincerely,
Karen Malpede

A Demand for Transparency

Dear Editor:

I write to understand more about the Coordinators and who they are. Is a list of the current Coordinators available on the Coop website?

If not, such information should be made available and easily accessible to the members, particularly if such Coordinators use their positions of power and influence to promote anti-democratic processes within the Coop and sabotage proposed reforms like a hybrid general meeting structure (see the latest Coordinator's Corner, which is a shameful and embarrassing use of this platform).

If the Coordinators wish to make their opinions known, they should make their faces known. Say it with your full chest.

Signed,

Christopher Pepe

Editor's Note: Names and photos of general coordinators at the Coop are readily available—and long have been—on a poster in the entrance lobby and on the second floor.

Hybrid Meetings Are Long Overdue

Dear fellow Coop members,

Over the years, I've convinced friends to join the Coop, arguing that it represents a community-led space that resists the otherwise impersonal, inaccessible, top-down structures we encounter in our everyday lives. While I still believe this, I am disappointed by the bad-faith opposition to a shift that would make our Coop vastly more inclusive and democratic: making all General Meetings hybrid. It is even more appalling that some insist on suppressing the membership's democratic workings to tip the scales on one potential future vote, and are willing to accuse fellow members of being dishonest about their legitimate accessibility concerns in the process.

I joined the Coop in 2019 but couldn't attend a GM until the meetings went remote in 2020; my pre-COVID work schedule and commute time to the Picnic House had made it impossible before. Now that we've returned to in-person-only meetings, vital conversations and votes about the future of this place are once again left to a very small minority of members. People who do not have childcare access; whose work schedules are unpredictable; who can't risk another COVID infection; or who face barriers traveling to the Picnic House (among so many other groups) are left without a say in Coop matters. I am still COVID-cautious, both for my own safety and that of others, and the current indoors, mask-optional GM setup asks me to compromise those concerns in order to fully participate in the Coop.

If we really believe in an inclusive, member-led co-op model—or if we, as our mission

statement says, “seek to maximize participation at every level, from policy making to running the store”—we will take this sensible step to make meetings and votes more accessible to all members by going hybrid.

Mai Schotz

We Need Ethical Leadership

Fellow Members,

The Coop has always been a community driven by principles of democracy and ethical actions. Boycotts are a cornerstone of free speech and democracy, and suppressing this form of expression undermines the democratic principles upon which the Coop was built. Embracing hybrid meetings upholds the Coop’s commitment to accessibility and transparency, ensuring every member can voice their perspective and contribute to decision-making. Expanding access strengthens, rather than divides, our collective interest in shaping the Coop’s future.

Lowering the vote threshold from 75% to 50% ensures that the Coop operates as a true democracy, where decisions reflect the will of the majority. A 50% threshold means every voice has equal weight in shaping our collective future, whereas a 75% threshold sets an unreasonably high bar and privileges the status quo over progress.

Claims that a boycott would financially ruin the Coop are rooted in fear, not fact. The Coop’s financial stability relies on our collective participation and shared commitment, not on passive avoidance of contentious issues. Would some members leave? Perhaps. But ethical leadership isn’t about placating everyone; it’s about doing what’s right.

Legally, while anti-BDS legislation exists, it largely targets state entities and is often

legally dubious. Numerous organizations across the U.S. have engaged in BDS campaigns without legal consequences. Framing a principled boycott as “anti-Semitic” conflates criticism of Israeli policies with prejudice against Jewish people—a fear mongering narrative that erases the diversity of Jewish voices supporting BDS.

This is about more than numbers of risk; it’s about who we are. Will we stand on the side of justice and dignity, or will we allow fear to paralyze us? A boycott of Israeli goods is not a threat to the Coop—it’s an opportunity to affirm our values and stand for justice.

Signed,
Leah Susman

Correction to Dec. General Meeting Report

Dear Editor:

I wanted to request a correction in the Dec. GM Report. Specifically, this paragraph:

“[Ann Herpel] also noted that the Agenda Committee had placed a notice about the election in the *Gazette*, on FoodCoop.com and on the Coop Corner bulletin board, as required.”

This entire paragraph is misleading and incorrect. The Agenda Committee did not place a notice in the *Gazette* until after the election. That’s why the election was unfair.

The post on foodcoop.com was not visible on the front page, and also, it was posted in 2021. Follow this link from The Internet Archive to see that it was originally posted in 2021. You can also have a look at the Food Coop website to confirm that there is

no way for a member to find this post. Furthermore, while it's good to post openings in as many places as possible, according to our procedures it's not how members are to be notified. The notification is required in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*.

Members were also not notified of candidate openings at the General Meeting, which the Agenda Committee claimed several times. If you review the meeting minutes, you can see that the announcement for other committee elections were noted, but not that of the Agenda Committee.

Lastly, the post on the Coop Corner bulletin board also happened after the election.

Thank you.

Warmly,
Keyian Vafai

Emotional Blackmail in the Linewaiters' Gazette

Dear Members:

Reading the latest *Linewaiters' Gazette*, I was distressed to see the General Coordinator Team put such a heavy-handed thumb on the scale in the ongoing debate about BDS at the Coop. And I find the emotional blackmail of unwarranted claims that this debate might destroy the Coop particularly reprehensible. Please stop!

Robert Rosen

In the Corner for the Coordinators' Corner

Dear Membership,

We, the undersigned, thank the General Coordinators for taking a principled stand against the campaign to have PSFC boycott Israeli goods. The GC's have correctly identified the financial and legal dangers associated with this destructive campaign.

Aaron Miller

Alan Brown

Alan Salzberg

Amy Potter

Anita Aboulafia

Arkadiy and Aleksandra Malamud

Avishay Mazor

Baila Olidort

Barbara Mazor

Batya Lerner

Bonnie Loewenstein

Bozhena Vistman

Bruno Grandsard

Carina Hueber

Carol Wiener

Catherine Weinstock

Chaim and Shula Scharf

Christina Gantcher

Constantine Kaniklidis

Corrine Lang

Dave Marcus

Diana Maislen

Eddie D.

Elizabeth King

Ellen Simon

Eric E.

Erik Diamond

Fran Hawthorne

Fran Saunders

Frances Weiner

Frumie Lev

Frumie Lichtenstien

Gerald Weider

H. Schweitzer

Hannah Lieberman

Harry Schweitzer

Harvey Lang

Jamie Alexander

Jamie Alexander Principe

Jena Goldman

Jesse Rosenfeld

Jill Levy

Jonathan Hirsh

Jonathan Lief

Jonathan Tobias

Josh Levy

Josh Suskewicz

Judith Foster

Karen Shaw

Larisa Fomovsky

Lauren Rosenblum

Linda Marsanico

Linda Wong

Liora Cobin

Lorin Robyn Goldhirsh

Madeleine Nash

Malcolm Varon

Malkah Spitalny and husband

Maor X.

Marjorie Ordene

Meg Robertson

Mike Gantcher

Mindy Werner

Mirele Rosenberger

Murray Lantner

Naomi Bernstein

Neal Kantor

Noah P.

Nogah Rotstein

Nona Aguilar

Norm Green

Olivia Hughes

Perry Swergold

Ramon Maislen

Rebecca S.

Roberta Arnold

Rodger Parsons

Rosalie Weider

Sarah Eisinger

Sarede Switzer

Saul Raw

Sondra Shaievitz

Steven Berke

Susan Miller and husband

Sylvia Lowenthal

Tali Rasis

Tim Rohde

Yuval Inselberg

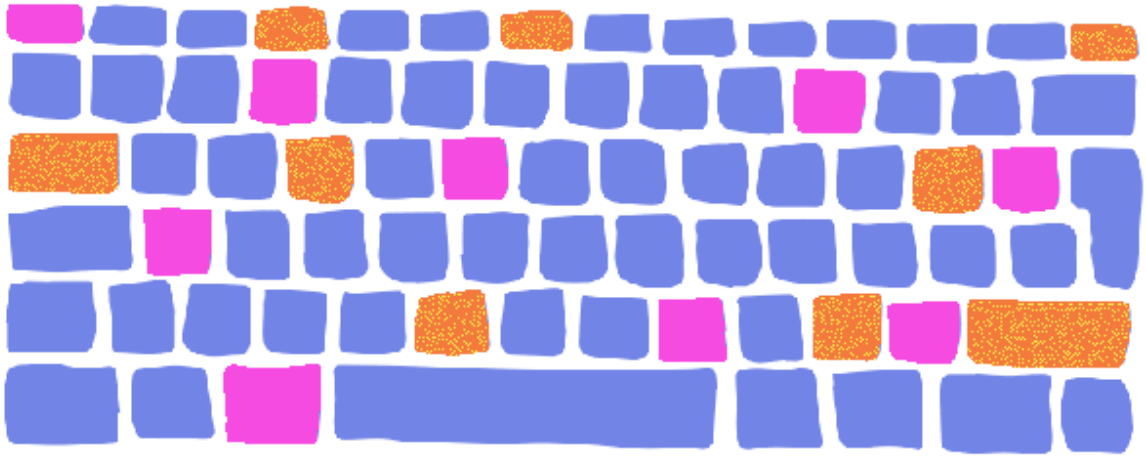
Zachary Konigsberg

Zara W.

JANUARY 7, 2025

March 11, 2025

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Give more TLC to the Food Coop!

Greetings!

The Coop is amazing. For more than 50 years, this neighborhood community has out--competed corporate giants, offering better products at lower prices. But this success is fragile. The existence of this institution is truly miraculous and should not be taken

for granted. Perhaps members have already forgotten our dire financial condition during the pandemic?

Good governance and the pragmatic business approach of the management team have been key to this success. Far from promoting rigidity, the Mission Statement and the Environmental Policy Guidelines are replete with language such as “will strive,” “we prefer,” “we try,” providing flexibility to buyers and GMs to ensure that they do good, without harming the business.

Sourcing of affordable, local and organic produce is prioritized. But there are also nonorganic and imports in our bins, including Mexican blueberries, Belgium endives, Israeli peppers, Peruvian mangoes. Plastic bags are not offered at checkout, but there is a choice of compostable and traditional produce bags, and even spinach in big plastic containers. And yes, we do carry products from multiple undemocratic or deeply flawed countries, and even from states which ban abortion.

A Coop that places ideological purity ahead of its mission statement, adopts nonconsensual policies, tinkers with governance or pursues narrow partisan issues unrelated to its core mission is likely to experience what is typical for such businesses: decline and potential failure (think of X).

We are riding on the shoulders of 50 years of community effort. We should strive to continue improving the Coop, perhaps expanding to more locations, acting as a model to new communities, and thereby supporting our ecological transition while improving the health and pocketbooks of more people. At a minimum, let’s not mess it up!

Bruno Grandsard

Time for a Hybrid Meeting Option

Dear Coop Members,

At the September General Meeting, there was a presentation about moving to hybrid meetings, which would give us the choice of either remote or in-person participation. This would open the way for so many more people to join in vital PSFC discussions and votes. It is an essential accommodation when, for various reasons, many who want to participate are unable to get to the Prospect Park Picnic House on Tuesday nights. (It's telling that at a recent GM I attended, the Picnic House was over capacity, meaning that if members *do* turn out in greater numbers, we don't even have a venue large enough to hold them!).

The presentation on hybrid meetings was clear and very well received. I expected the item to be on the agenda for a decision within a month or two. What happened? Assuming a positive vote, it will still take some time to implement this sensible proposal. Let's move ahead together!

Winston McIntosh

(B)ring in the Fun in 2025

To the editor:

A big thank you to the Fun Committee for the Happy Hour at BierWax on December 5.

They truly lived up to their name. It was just so much fun to be out and with friendly people. It was a wonderful reminder of what the Coop can be. Beyond just a grocery store with good prices.

I'm looking forward to more events from the Fun Committee in 2025.

Barbara Mazor

Help for Coop Members Parenting Small Children

Fellow Members,

As COVID wound down, I was thrilled when our Coop reinstated member labor and returned to more familiar shopping procedures. Unfortunately, childcare, a long-standing support for families with young children, was yet another seemingly permanent casualty. We've been told that the Coop can no longer obtain affordable insurance for it.

If we cannot reinstate childcare, there are other ways to support families with young children, in particular, single-parent families. We can offer them longer than one year of parental leave from required work; I suggest at least three to four years, enough time for free daytime childcare in the form of 3K and Pre-K, to be available. I also suggest that this could be extended on a case-by-case basis, as needed. Perhaps a committee of members who are single parents could help us develop guidelines.

We can also offer an easy means for parents of young children (and so many others) to participate in Coop governance via virtual attendance at our monthly General Meetings. Currently, the only members who can take part in our GMs are those who can get to the Prospect Park Picnic house at 7p.m. on the last Tuesday of each month. For parents of young children (especially single parents), people who live far from the Picnic House, those with mobility issues or other caregiver responsibilities, there is no option to join these meetings, to offer opinions on important Coop matters, to bring proposals to the floor, or to vote on others' proposals.

The Picnic House holds around 200 people, and our Coop has over 15,000 members. If we want to call our Coop a democratically run organization, we need to do much

better in making its democracy more inclusive. Hybrid meetings would be a great start.

Cooperatively,
Alyce Barr

Conflict Resolution, Not Conflict Escalation

To the Editor:

Eight agenda items relate to the campaign to make the Coop part of the Boycott Divestment Sanctions movement.

I sponsored the seventh, item 901, which would "pause any member vote on items relating to a boycott of products associated with Israel pending four mediation sessions within six months from the vote on this item and issuance of a document containing a statement by each side."

The proposal that the Coop declare its allegiance to BDS polarizes the membership. Joe Holtz wrote in the *Linewaiters' Gazette* on February 26, 2024, for the General Coordinators, that the Israel boycott is qualitatively different from other boycotts that have been proposed in the past, and the campaign could result in thousands of members withdrawing. The differences in beliefs about the Israel-Palestine conflict have reached the point of vilification and overt hostility between members. There is no mechanism for resolving member disputes arising out of political identities and other belief systems. The Dispute Resolution Committee is not equipped to deal with such disputes—and there are now multiple cases before the DRC resulting from this conflict. It seems self-evident that an attempt at collective conflict resolution would benefit the Coop.

Agenda Committee guideline number 2 provides that “an item may be placed ahead of others submitted earlier if the item requires more immediate attention or its timely consideration at the GM is beneficial to the efficient running of the Coop.…”

I requested that the Agenda Committee expedite discussion of item 901. The Agenda Committee did not do so, nor has it responded to my question how it applies Guideline 2.

To promote cooperative dispute resolution, I urge that the Agenda Committe schedule discussion of item 901 ahead of earlier pending boycott-related items or explain why Guideline 2 does not apply.

Noah Potter

Mission Statement in Support of Coop Culture

Dear members,

A BDS proponent approached me some weeks ago, asking me to support their proposal. I said it doesn’t align with the Coop mission. “That’s not really true,” she retorted. The word “really” is of interest here.

I’d like to share my POV regarding the BDS boycott proposal, informed by the Coop’s mission statement. One could argue that the following sentences from the statement are relevant to their proposal:

“We seek to avoid products that depend on the exploitation of others.”

However, “exploitation of others” relates to the labor culture at the company and how it treats staff; those companies are presumably independent from the government of

the country they're in.

"We strive to make the Coop welcoming and accessible to all and to respect the opinions, needs and concerns of every member. We seek to maximize participation at every level, from policymaking to running the store."

This applies within the parameters of the aforementioned items in the mission statement, not losing sight of the first line of that last paragraph: "We are committed to diversity and equality. We oppose discrimination in any form."

Yet…if there is a reason to exclude suppliers in Israel, it would be that "We prefer to buy from local…producers." If suppliers in Israel would be excluded for that reason, it would be legit…*and apply to all suppliers in all faraway places, all politics aside.*

If it has to come to a vote, I'd suggest to appeal to Coop members as individuals and as allies of each other by way of Coop mission, no matter their backgrounds. Beyond that, I believe in the power of the individual consumer to forgo a product for whatever reason, political reasons included. It'd be a great thing if we did more of it.

Erik Schurink

Towards a Liberatory Coop

Dear Coop Members,

As we edge closer towards the end of the year, I've been reflecting on the ways in which I show up in community and how the Coop and its values are an extension of my own. I feel an immense amount of gratitude for access to such an abundance of quality food, but also for the potential that the Coop has to become a liberatory space for the people. As a member, I believe that it's critical that we demand that the goods

that we have on our shelves be reflective of our values. It’s a radical act to choose not to purchase food from mega corporations and instead, to support small businesses and regenerative, family-owned farms.

In the same vein, I refuse to support a genocide and the occupation of stolen land. And I feel hopeful knowing that so many other Coop members share my commitment. I look forward to the day when we’ll make it official, following in the footsteps of leaders at Olympia Food Co-Op in Washington state, as well as our neighbors at Greene Hill Food Co-Op. As an expression of their solidarity with Palestine, Greene Hill members voted in October to join the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign, pledging not to stock Israeli products in their store until the end of the occupation.

If we are a collective that believes that the Coop is reflective of our values, then we must continue to decide how the millions of dollars that we spend on food every year will demonstrate what they are. Audre Lorde spoke truth when she wrote:

And I dream of our coming together

encircled driven
not only by love
but by lust for a working tomorrow
the flights of this journey
maples. uncertain
and necessary as water.

Taylor Pate