SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

November 10, 2026



November 10, 2026

By Rosie Nisanyan



The September General Meeting was attended by 98 members at the Picnic House and by 170 members virtually. The meeting covered reports from the general coordinators and the International Trade Education Committee; a proposal for an online, asynchronous system for discussion and voting; and a proposal for a new version of the GM participation shift.



Ninety-eight members attended in-person at the Picnic House.

OPEN FORUM

Retired member Marita Downes and member Mina Jones (on Zoom) both expressed frustrations with the technical issues that occurred during the vote about boycotting Israeli goods at the May GM, which prevented some people from voting, and questioned the integrity and security of Zoom voting. Member Flavio Coppola (on Zoom) said that even if everyone online who wasn't able to vote had indeed voted against the boycott, it still would have passed, given the number who voted in favor of it. Additionally, a Point of Information was raised on Zoom stating that the Coop does have registration information for those who vote virtually (Matt Hoagland, General Coordinator of Membership Operations, expanded on this later during the general coordinators' report; see below).

On Zoom, members Barbara Mazor and Julie Kay each commented on the state of member participation during GMs. Mazor argued that hybrid meetings "cut out de-

bate, and democracy counts on debate," while Kay expressed support for expanding means of participation and said, "It's difficult to attend these meetings because of work and caregiving responsibilities."

Member Damien Neva (on Zoom) asked why unsweetened soy milk hasn't been stocked at the Coop in a while. General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky later responded that no distributors had it available for two weeks, but it was once again in stock as of that day.

GENERAL COORDINATORS' REPORT

Hoagland reported that General Manager Joe Szladek was not at the GM, as he was attending the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG) Conference. Szladek wanted Hoagland to share that the NCG allows co-ops to combine purchasing power "to get better pricing from distributors and manufacturers, developing shared deals programs, providing resources and support for things around operations, finance, technology, marketing, staff development." Due to Szladek's absence, there would be no financial report at this meeting (though it was emailed to the membership), but there will be one at the next meeting, on October 27.

Hoagland reminded members that the last GM of the year will be on December 1, the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

He also called attention to the new membership lottery system launched in August as a way to give more people a fair chance at getting into the Coop. Staff are keeping an eye on how it's going, as there have only been three new member orientations so far, but several more are scheduled through mid-October.

There are also new shift opportunities for experienced workers who want to take on more responsibility: Cashiers, who handle all forms of Coop payment (require checkout experience); Front End Operations, supporting the shopping floor (requires experience in checkout, cashier, flex work, entrance cart return, etc.); and Receiving Team

Leaders (requires experience with Receiving operations, how things move around on the floor, etc.).



Susan Bockenhauer asked if her husband needed experience to become a checkout person.

All three opportunities are “restricted” shifts, meaning that only members who have been trained can see them on the calendar. Members interested in pursuing the Cashier or Receiving Team Leader roles can reach out to the Membership Office for more information and to schedule training. Those interested in learning Front End Operations can email FrontEndSupport@PSFC.coop.

Hoagland also publicly responded to Yejia Chen’s question from last month’s GM about Zoom poll auditing and verification. He explained that although the Zoom poll is anonymous, attendees have to register ahead of time. In order to register, you have to be a member and can only register one way, either in-person or virtually. For virtual registration, the Member Services sign-up email address has to match the

Zoom account email address when logging in.

As Hoagland explained, “If we know who’s in the meeting and control who’s in the meeting, we can be confident that only members are voting in the meeting…and we can allow there to be some privacy in how people vote. To this point, including that massive May GM, we haven’t found any nonmembers logged in.”

INTERNATIONAL TRADE EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT



Coop members watch Bart DeCoursy on Zoom giving his report from the Trade Education Committee.

On Zoom, Bart DeCoursy of the International Trade Education Committee provided an update on President Trump’s ongoing feud with Canada, which now includes a 50% tariff on over $27 billion of Canadian goods. Canada vowed to retaliate dollar for dollar, but the impact on the U.S. economy is likely to be minimal, since the tariffs are only on a small percentage of total trade between the two countries. For the first time since 2015, President Xi of China recently visited the White House, where it was announced that most tariffs were eliminated, rare earths are now available for

purchase, and Chinese exports of toys would be back on track in time for the holidays.

Downes asked, “How does this affect Coop goods?” DeCoursy noted that the objective of the committee is to educate members on what’s happening in big trade deals and many of these things have a ripple effect that can impact the Coop.

Astrinsky added, “I’m in charge of the facilities of the Coop and everything that we’re buying from plywood to conduit to BX cable—anything that would help in improvement—those prices have pretty much doubled in every way.”

CHARLIE ROGERS TRIBUTE



Charlie Rogers, who is retiring, was praised for his many years of outstanding service as GM chair.

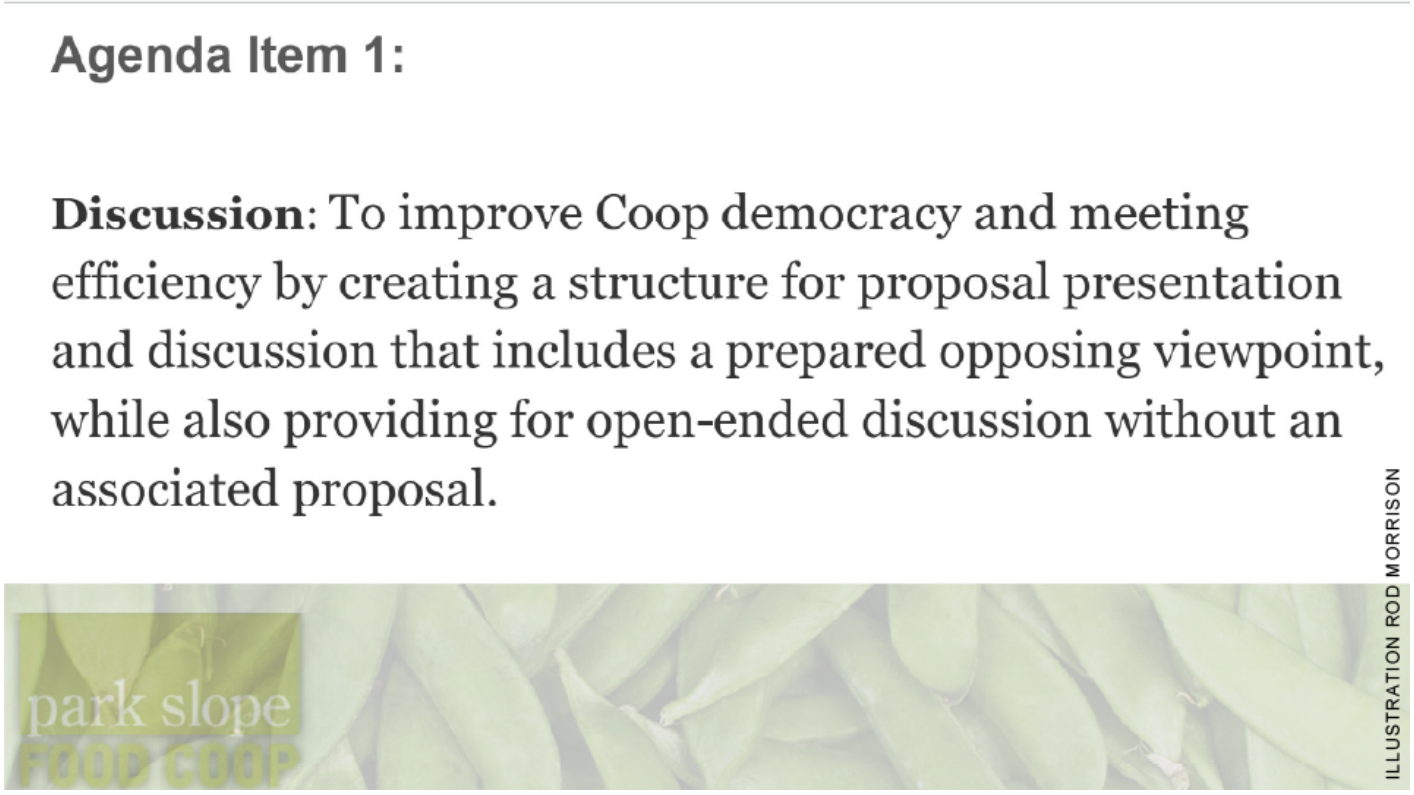
While the slides for the first agenda item were being set up, Charlie Rogers of the Chair Committee announced this would be his last time chairing a General Meeting, as he earned enough credits to retire.

Astrinsky commended Rogers, saying, “Charlie has been an unbelievable chair for so many years and so helpful and so giving…Charlie was our savior through the pandemic when we had to switch to Zoom right away…I just want to say thank you so much, really, from the bottom of our hearts. You’ve done a tremendous job.”

There was applause, to which Rogers smiled and responded, “Normally, I’d say, ‘No applause please.’ ”

ONLINE, ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION AND VOTING PROPOSAL (VOTING ITEM)

On Zoom, members Yejia Chen, an accessibility engineer, and Tyler Yandrofski, a public health data analyst, presented a proposal to create an online forum to discuss GM agenda items and vote asynchronously. In addition to the forum, the proposal would also create a Forum Moderation Committee (of three to 12 members) and a temporary Asynchronous Alternatives Implementation Committee.



Members expressed gratitude at the level of detail included in the proposal and supported the idea of expanding ways to participate in the democratic process of the Coop. But members also expressed concern about the amount of work that would fall on Coop staff and the big responsibility of forum moderators. Some members suggested amending the proposal to include a trial period. One member asked, “How, in real-time, does moderation actually work to keep the forum a safe space?” Chen said that

they would bring moderation up at a future GM so as to have more time to discuss how it would work. Viren Mehta (Zoom) added, “This is exactly what the Coop needs, but as many of the questions have pointed out, there are significant issues that need to be sorted out.”

After about an hour of presentation and discussion, there was a motion to postpone the vote on this proposal. The motion passed, 100 votes to 85 votes. Members can share proposal feedback or suggested amendments directly with the sponsors.

GM PARTICIPATION SHIFT PROPOSAL (DISCUSSION ITEM)



Sun Yu proposed replacing GM workslots with a yearly participation shift.

Member Sun Yu, author of *Park Slope Food Coop: 50 Years of Cooperation*, presented a proposal to replace the current GM workslot with a yearly participation shift. The proposal would make the GM participation shift a rolling one-year term, with ten members added to the shift each month, resulting in 120 members regularly attending GMs.

Members asked if the shift would require in-person attendance and expressed concern about the capacity of the Picnic House. Yu responded that in-person attendance would be mandatory. Members also questioned what the proposal would actually be

solving for and whether having the same people attend the GMs would decrease the diversity of attendees. Millard “Mitty” Owens (Zoom) asked, “Can you elaborate on the benefits of stability and continuity?” Yu said that continuity among GM attendees is a good thing. By having the same people attend the GM month after month, the Coop would avoid having the same discussions over and over again.



Elinoar Astrinsky stressed that Picnic House seating at 255 limits in-person attendance at GMs.

Astrinsky added that there was a time when one person from a squad would attend the meeting and then report back what happened. Pre-pandemic, members could sign up for credit twice per calendar year. However, when the Coop moved away from a squad system and to a six-week work cycle, credits for working in-store had to be re-balanced with credits for GM attendance, committees, etc.

There was no vote on this proposal, as it was only a discussion item.



Numerous Coop members came to the podium with questions and comments.

CLOSING

There were no minutes to be presented. The Board of Directors voted to accept the advice of the members in attendance.

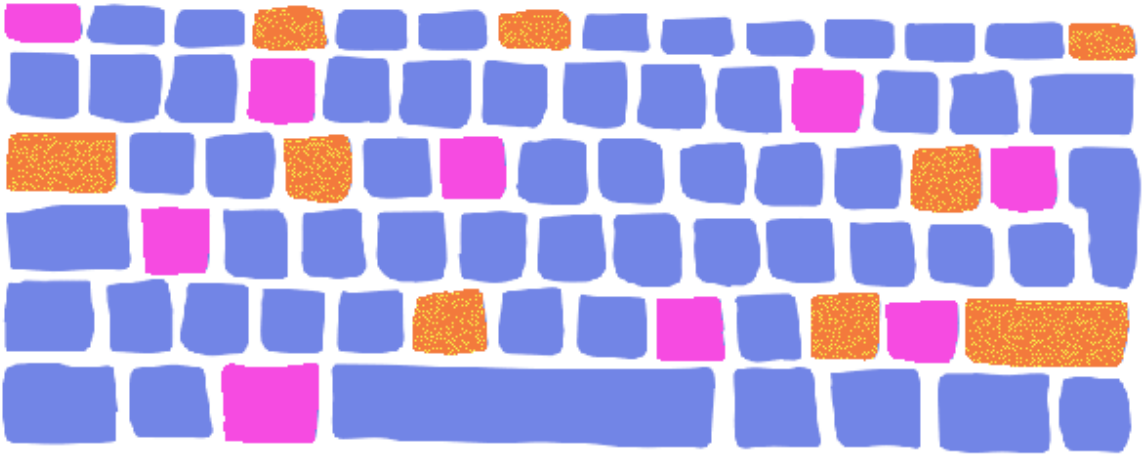
Charlie Rogers banged the gavel—his first and last time doing so—and adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Rosie Nisanyan has been a Coop member since 2024 and is the Arts & Culture Multi-media Correspondent for The Armenian Weekly*.*

NOVEMBER 10, 2026

November 10, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



ONLINE ALTERNATIVE TO DECISION-MAKING

Dear Coop members,

Thanks to everyone who came to the September GM and shared their thoughts on the proposal to create an online, asynchronous alternative to decision-making. The item was postponed, allowing us to further consider members' concerns around forum moderation, staff commitments and other topics.

I'm interested in getting more detailed thoughts from those who spoke (and everyone else!), in particular:

- For those with concerns about moderation, what do you think of Discourse's base guidelines (and accompanying blog post with rationale for said guidelines)? What do you think is an acceptable response time by moderators? Do you think any of the following moderation features would be helpful or harmful?
    - Limiting the number of consecutive replies by a single non-thread-owner member?
    - Limiting the minimum and maximum number of characters in a reply?
    - Requiring a certain period of time between replies to a thread by a single member?
    - Temporarily closing a topic under certain conditions (e.g., if the mod queue reaches a certain length; if a thread has a certain percentage of flagged/hidden/removed replies; regularly overnight)?
    - Limiting specific agenda items to GM only? By what process? One idea: If the sponsor requests it during agenda-item submission and the GM reaches a certain threshold of first-week GM signups after the item is scheduled.
- For those interested in a pilot program for the forum, what does that mean to you? What questions would you like the pilot to answer? Should all members get access, or only a select group?
- For those with suggested amendments, send them my way!

Please email me at psfc.async.prop@gmail.com to share your thoughts on these topics, or any other topic related to the proposal, thanks!

Sincerely,
Yejia Chen

FOOD BAGGING CONCERNS

To the Coop:

My grandson has severe food allergies that include tree nuts. His allergies are such that he even has a health para in school. I recently bought a small bag of peanuts packaged by members. Imagine how I felt when I emptied the bag into the food I was preparing for a holiday dinner and found a cashew in the middle of the peanuts. Thank goodness I saw it immediately, but I had to throw out the food.

Please, fellow members, take really good care when you are bagging food. There are people for whom one tree nut or two sesame seeds will spark an allergic reaction. Their well-being depends on you.

Thank you for your attention,
Judith Foster

SADDAM HUSSEIN ELECTIONS 1995 AND 2002

Dear Coop members,

People who were not adults in the 1990s may not be aware of these historic events. Iraq, under the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, held two referendums. There was one

open position and only one candidate on the ballot. The country declared Saddam Hussein won by over 99% of the vote.

Our GM on August 25 had an agenda item to elect members for the two open positions on the Personnel Committee. There were two candidates for the two open positions. The process where the interested members are vetted by committees before they are put on the ballot was news to me. It did remind me of Saddam Hussein's practice of one position and one candidate—himself—and mandatory participation by the population.

The proposal to change the election practice was deferred to the next meeting. I do hope members read this before the next GM.

Sincerely,
Amol Kaikini

IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Dear Coop,

I wonder if we could bring back more cohesive and social work shifts. It's difficult to get any sort of momentum under the current system, with people coming and going from one shift to the next.

For a year or maybe more, SUVs and vans have been parking on the sidewalk in front of Scottadito restaurant next to the firehouse. I called the cops once, and they did nothing about it. Is the Coop community going to tolerate this on our block? We have a liaison to the firehouse—has this person reached out to Scottadito and the firehouse about the situation? The Coop does not exist in a vacuum: We are part of a community spanning our own block and Park Slope. If we do not protest this parking impunity,

figuring this is none of our business, this will send a green light that we look the other way and do not care about lawlessness.

Is there an actual policy regarding filming or taking photos in the Coop? Who is allowed to pursue this, who gives permission at the Coop, and on what basis? Recently, an article came out in the *Forward* about the Coop, which had me in the frame while I was waiting in line. No one asked my permission, and while I don't resent the situation, it made me wonder how these decisions get made.

Recently, Zohran Mamdani proposed a network of publicly owned food grocery stores to address affordability and food insecurity. While this is certainly understandable, given the affordability crisis, I am perplexed why food cooperatives have been left out of the picture. Why isn't Mamdani proposing food cooperatives, which are more sustainable and democratic than his current scheme? Has the Coop reached out to city government?

Sincerely,
Nikolas Kozloff

LOW PRICES: NO LONGER A COOP BIRTHRIGHT

Dear Coop members,

For the nearly 20 years that I have been a member of the Coop, I thought that the low-price/high-quality product value of the Coop made "putting up with" the unique challenges of the place worthwhile. The cramped, unpleasant experience of shopping at the Coop seemed justified by the price/value relationship.

Unfortunately, recent events have caused me to reevaluate the overall "Is it worth it?" question. I landed on the answer of "no." Surprisingly, in part because the Coop

no longer provides a compelling value in the products it sells.

On a recent shopping trip, the prices of several items in my basket (fresh blueberries, frozen berries, and Borax soap powder) were at least one dollar higher than prevailing prices at other neighborhood grocers.

After Covid, when we all “pulled together” as a community in support of the Coop’s broader mission, we were also asked to put up with an increased markup. I justified continuing to shop at the Coop because I felt good about the values of the place and I enjoyed the social interaction (one recent letter writer called it their “third space”—I felt that way too).

After this spring’s contentious general meetings and generally hyperpolitical atmosphere, I decided enough was enough.

The store Syms used to have a slogan: “An educated consumer is our best customer.” You can no longer say that about the Coop. Coop prices are HIGH. This is also driven by a retail environment that has changed dramatically, with new physical entrants (Whole Foods, Trader Joe’s, Lidl, specialty stores) and endless online options.

For the Coop to thrive, it needs members to spend more money to drive volume (and reduce prices). Maybe all of the political agitators should have considered this as they foisted their agenda on the broader community.

Sincerely,
Jed Meyer

HELPING IN VENEZUELA

To the Editor,

Apropos of Sonia Alio's fine August 18 article about contributing to organizations that are helping the victims of the earthquake in Venezuela, I add that the organization World Jewish Relief is also helping. Contributions can be made via the organization's website:

https://www.worldjewishrelief.org/venezuela-earthquake/

Thank you,
Irvin Schonfeld

DINERS

Dear Coop members,

A wonderful article on Park Slope diners failed to mention that the original Purity was on Seventh Avenue and Union Street. Across Union was the Economy—where folks went when lines to Purity were too long. The writer also should have mentioned Terrace on Fifth Avenue and Garfield, the Seventh Avenue donut diner near Eighth Street, Little Purity on Seventh Avenue and 11th Street; and there is also the Fifth Avenue Diner near Ninth Street.

Sincerely,
Steve Viuker

BRING BACK THE BIKE VALET

To the Editor,

For a brief time, the PSFC offered a bike valet service. It was great. Shoppers on bikes did not need to bring locks (opening up weight and space for groceries); the area was covered in the event of rain; and, most importantly, there was plentiful room. The service ended for reasons I don't know, and not reviving the program represents a missed opportunity to embrace greener city living. Biking and other non-car movement is on the rise, and the PSFC is woefully short on bike racks. The three or so racks in front of the entry are always packed, making a hazard for walkers. Please bring the bike valet service back.

Sincerely,
Amelia Wilson

The General Coordinators Respond

Dear Amelia,

We appreciate your interest in making biking more accessible and convenient for Coop members. Unfortunately, we are no longer able to offer the bike valet service because we no longer have access to the space in front of the wall where it was previously located. We were able to use that space with the permission of the principal of St. Francis Xavier School on President Street. However, since the Department of Education took over the building, the space is no longer available for the Coop's use.

Additionally, our operations sometimes require the use of portions of the sidewalk, which must take priority over bike valet parking.

As an alternative, we encourage you to contact the NYC Department of Transportation to request the installation of additional city bike racks along Union Street.

In cooperation,
The General Coordinators

JULY GM: PLASTIC USE AT THE COOP, A LOTTERY SYSTEM FOR NEW MEMBERS AND MORE

November 10, 2026



September 8, 2026

By Jess Powers

On the muggy evening of July 28, 107 Coop members attended the General Meeting despite the looming threat of rain. Lisa Pacenza of the Chair Committee deftly

chaired her first meeting.



Members queue up to sign in for the general meeting.

During a relatively quiet Open Forum, the Equity, Access and Community Committee (EACC) presented information about a forthcoming virtual town hall. There were unanswered questions (due to staff absences) about security measures and threats made to the Coop, as well as about how the process of determining when to start or stop stocking items works.



Matt Hoagland addresses the attendees.

Another inquiry about fewer shifts being available during the summer was confirmed by General Coordinator Matt Hoagland, who cited more members taking temporary leave, a seasonal dip in sales and “[building] shifts out proportionally” according to demand.

The General Coordinator’s report compared the availability of new member orientations to scoring tickets to a sought-after Broadway show. With so much demand and limited supply, the Coop moved to a lottery system in mid-August. Roughly 700 people attempt to join the Coop in a given month, and the new system aims to make the experience less stressful and more equitable.

The Plastic Reduction Committee was first up during Member Committee reports. Their presentation detailed an inaugural survey’s findings. Coopers who responded affirmed that they are “moderately to extremely” concerned about plastic use at the Coop and that plastic consumption influences their buying choices. The committee identified increasing self-serve bulk options, providing alternatives to plastic bags, reducing the number of plastic clamshells in use and minimizing the impacts of plastics in food processing as top priorities.



Members of the Plastic Reduction Committee.

Committee members researched other cooperatives in Brooklyn and found that automatically emailing receipts, providing bulk options for refillable liquids such as laundry detergent, charging a small fee for plastic bags and a taring system (weighing bring-your-own containers for bulk items) are potential solutions.

Committee members acknowledged that the very high foot traffic and sales volume of our Coop might make these approaches challenging because of space, sanitation and other concerns. They plan to provide tip sheets in the coming months on how to store produce so that it stays fresh without the use of plastics.

In the survey, members shared that their current favorite low-plastic items include loose produce; items like nut butters and yogurt in glass jars; bulk goods; cherry tomatoes in cardboard containers; bar soaps wrapped in cardboard or with no packaging; Hibar deodorant, solid shampoos and conditioners; Meliora dish soap and laundry detergent; Blueland foaming hand soap and detergent; and Dr. Tung’s dental floss,

made from polyester fibers but free of PFAS and other potentially toxic chemicals and sold in cardboard packaging.

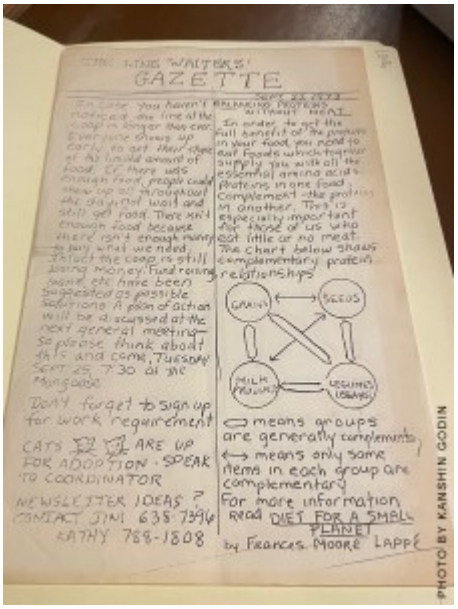
Committee members shared that the Coop currently spends $15,000 annually on face masks and TerraCycle plastic film and wrapper recycling costs. They are still in the “idea generating state” and can be reached at: ReducePlasticPSFC@gmail.com.



Kanshin Godin speaking about the print Gazette.

The Linewaiters’ Gazette Print Exploration Committee provided the next update on the agenda. The committee grew out of a desire to recapture some of the “weirdness” that was lost when the Gazette went solely online during the pandemic. Committee members said they believed that the online publication is “so efficient, less communal, less wacky” and wanted to explore other options.

Meeting attendees agreed that they missed the tactile experience of reading the publication while on the checkout line. They also expressed a desire to be able to communicate with other members after the loss of classified listings and the bulletin board in the stairwell.



An example of an old print Gazette page.

Kanshin Godin of the Linewaiters' Gazette Print Exploration Committee shared historical images of old Gazettes, including a handwritten flyer written by the author Frances Moore Lappé. The archive can be viewed at the Center for Brooklyn History in Brooklyn Heights (appointments are preferred).

Committee members said making a recommendation was outside the scope of their exploration, but they said they believed that the current editors of the online Gazette would be open to collaboration. To discuss further or for more information, you can email hello@kanshin.computer.

The meeting agenda then moved to votes for or against members of various committees.

First up was the Financial Advisory Committee, created to examine the financial performance and economic conditions facing the Coop, to provide advice and to publish reports in the Gazette. Committee members seek to "strengthen the financial knowledge of the membership" beyond financial reporting that is obtained via the Treasurer's Report given during General Meetings and summarized in the Gazette.

The committee has no decision-making authority. After a short presentation, introductions were made to a slate of seven candidates with financial planning and analytics expertise at social change groups, the hospitality industry and financial services organizations.



Michael Freedman-Schnapp of the Financial Advisory Committee.

General Meeting attendees commented on gaps in the selection process and the professionalism of the candidates despite stated initial intentions to include diverse candidates who don’t have strong financial backgrounds. Michael Freedman-Schnapp, the founder of the Committee, explained that there is a “provision to bring in others to help” at a later date. All of the candidates were elected to the committee.

Next the Revolving Loan Committee, which supports start-up Coops, had one member up for reelection, Wendy Fleischer. Attendees inquired about how the Committee would work with other Coops or with the new city-owned groceries that Mayor Zohran Mamdani’s administration prioritizes. Fleischer explained that the committee’s fund doesn’t currently have a lot of money, but they could advise or would need to raise additional funds to support a new Coop with low interest loans. She was reelected.

Finally, the Pension Education and Report Committee, which monitors the performance of the staff pension fund, had two members up for reelection for three-year terms: Allison Thrush and Kathy Martino. Although neither was present for the General Meeting, Committee Member Avi Fisher read their statements about their experience and desire to continue serving on the Committee. Both were reelected.



Ballot Closeup.

Next, an agenda item with Updates to the Guide to the General and Annual Meetings, which fixed typos and clarified “mailed” to “emailed,” among other minor edits, was also passed.

The Presentation of the Minutes followed and there were no corrections. Finally, the Board of Directors accepted the advice of the members present and unanimously accepted the election and agenda votes.

With the meeting over, attendees exited into the humid air in Prospect Park.

TAYLOR PATE WINS BOARD SEAT, DEFEATING COOP CO-FOUNDER JOE HOLTZ

November 10, 2026



July 28, 2026

By Leila Darabi

Photos by Michael Berman

Members elected Taylor Pate to the Park Slope Food Coop Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting held the evening of Tuesday, June 30. Pate defeated a field that included Coop co-founder and former General Manager Joe Holtz despite a coordinated campaign urging members to vote against her.

Pate received 3,447 yes votes, 813 more than Holtz, and was the only candidate elected to the Board's lone open seat. Her victory came despite endorsements from Coop 4 Unity urging members to vote no on her candidacy and paid social media advertisements by a seemingly related group called Israel War Room promoting Holtz and opposing both Pate and fellow candidate Tim Hospodar. Meanwhile, the Instagram account Park Slope Food Coop Members in Solidarity with Palestine endorsed Pate, while opposing Holtz and fellow candidates Barbara Mazor, Ralph Yozzo and Serko Artinian. They also distributed a voter guide and campaign video ahead of the election and members handed out copies of the group's newsletter, *Express Checkout*, outside the meeting.

The election concluded the Coop's 2026 Annual Meeting, where members also reviewed the Coop's audited financial statements (PDF) before convening the June General Meeting, during which they voted to retain the Coop's independent auditors and reelected the Board's existing officers.



Members at the meeting.



Ben Sacks wants the Coop to use data to make shopping lists.

A QUIETER MEETING, FAMILIAR DIVISIONS

The first annual meeting since members voted in May to boycott Israeli products opened with a noticeably different atmosphere from recent General Meetings.

The Prospect Park Picnic House filled steadily as members arrived, though there was no line stretching outside the building as there had been during the boycott debate. Unlike recent General Meetings, which opened with member comments, the annual meeting began with the contested election for one open Board seat.

“I just want to acknowledge the last couple of meetings of the Coop have been quite contentious and heated,” Chair Committee member, Genevieve Yue, told members.

Referring to May’s record-setting meeting, she said the Chair Committee had been working to improve members’ experience after “the largest General Meeting ever held at the Coop.”

For much of the evening, the atmosphere reflected that effort. Applause was limited, interruptions were rare and discussion remained largely focused on candidates and governance.



Yuri Weber explains Coop sourcing priorities.

BOARD CANDIDATES FACE THE MEMBERSHIP

Seven candidates sought the Board's lone vacant seat.

Before candidate statements began, Board President Brandon West read a message from incumbent board member Tim Hospodar announcing that he was withdrawing from the race in protest of an item passed at a previous general meeting that would require the Board treasurer to be a high-ranking Coop staff member involved in the Coop's finances, calling the requirement "unfair, if not undemocratic" and "a dangerous precedent." Because online voting had already opened, Hospodar remained on the ballot.

The remaining candidates offered sharply different visions for the Coop.



Joe Holtz

Holtz reflected on helping found the Coop in 1973 and described Board members as “the keepers of that flame” of direct democracy.

Pate, a food policy professional and former housing cooperative Board member, emphasized democratic governance while expressing support for the May boycott vote.

“I’m really proud of our Coop for fighting for human rights and for using our voices to vote,” she said.



Rex Ledesma

Rex Ledesma and Serko Artinian focused on technology, transparency and improving members’ shopping experience. Artinian also emphasized that he was “not endorsed

by any group.”

Appearing remotely via Zoom, Barbara Mazor argued that the debate surrounding the boycott had exposed broader governance concerns.

“Democracy means that you listen to all sides,” she said. “It’s not a democracy when only one side gets to speak.”

Questions from members centered on whether candidates would uphold the Coop’s May vote to boycott Israeli products if elected and whether they had been transparent about endorsements or affiliations with organized groups campaigning in the election.

Member Damien Neva asked Holtz about paid social media advertisements from a group called Israel War Room directing members to Coop 4 Unity’s website while promoting his candidacy and opposing Pate.

“I wasn’t aware of that group or those activities,” Holtz replied. “As a Board member, if I were to be elected, what would I do about people’s activities outside the Coop? I don’t think there’s much we can do.”

Members also repeatedly questioned Holtz about his relationship with Coop 4 Unity.

“You have been endorsed over and over and over by Coop 4 Unity,” one member said. “Why have you not disclosed your affiliation with Coop 4 Unity and your alliance with them?”

Holtz rejected that characterization.

“I’m not affiliated with any group of members,” he said. “I am affiliated with all members who love the Coop.”

The question of whether Board members should implement the will of the membership also surfaced repeatedly. Asked directly whether she would uphold member decisions, Pate answered unequivocally.

“Yes, I would always uphold the will of the membership. That is no question,” she said.

Mazor offered a different perspective, arguing that directors have an independent legal obligation to act if members approve actions that could harm the Coop.

“If the members did something that was illegal or damaging to the Coop, even if everybody wanted to do it, I would be obliged and obligated, legally obligated, to turn that down,” she said.



Joe Szladek

Mazor also faced questions about remarks she made during April's General Meeting referring to "Arab supremacy," comments General Manager Joe Szladek later criticized as divisive in an email to members sent on May 4. His email referenced the comment without naming Mazor.

During the June meeting, Mazor acknowledged that she had made the comment, claiming she had been referring to "a historical fact of Arab hegemony and the subjugation of all the native peoples of the Near East."

Responding later to questions about Coop 4 Unity, Mazor said the group's concerns were about governance rather than Middle East politics.

"We call ourselves Coop 4 Unity because we support the cooperative principles of the International Cooperative Alliance," she said.



Collecting votes.

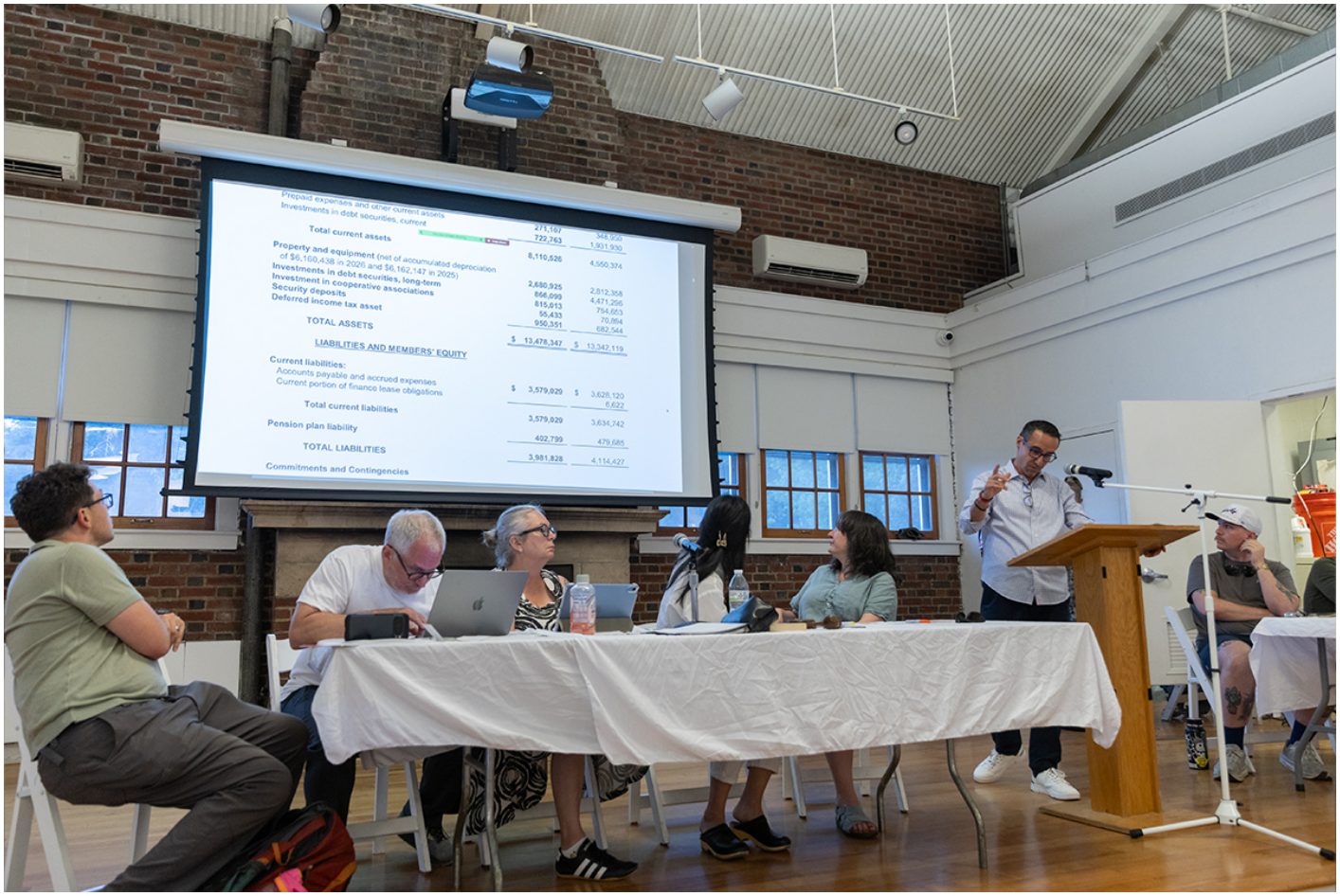
THE RESULTS

When voting closed, Pate emerged as the clear winner. She received 3,447 yes votes and 2,185 no votes. Holtz received 2,634 yes votes and 3,091 no votes. Rex Ledesma received 2,433 yes votes and 1,724 no votes, the only other candidate to receive more yes than no votes, though Ledesma was not elected because only one seat was available. Barbara Mazor received 1,746 yes votes and 3,748 no votes; Serko Artinian received 1,945 yes votes and 3,096 no votes; Ralph Yozzo received 1,500 yes votes and 3,453 no votes; and Tim Hospodar, who had withdrawn from the race after voting had begun, received 1,294 yes votes and 2,962 no votes.

FINANCIAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS HEALTHY BALANCE SHEET

Following the Board election, members turned to the remaining business of the annual meeting: the presentation of the Coop’s audited financial statements.

Representatives from Cornick, Garber & Sandler reported that the Coop remained financially healthy, with sales exceeding $63 million, a return to a modest net profit after posting a loss the previous year, and changes to the Coop’s cash and investment holdings that prompted questions from members.



Sal Vicari from the Coop’s accounting firm.

Members pressed the auditors on market volatility, the Coop’s long-term pension obligations, rising healthcare costs and the decision to shift investments into cash.The auditors said the Coop’s balance sheet remained strong. Pension trustee Terry Meyers said the Coop’s pension plan had recently been evaluated as approximately 17 percent overfunded and explained that the Coop continues to make annual contributions under its funding formula.

The annual meeting concluded following the financial presentation.



Marita Downes wants to keep the accounting firm.

Members then convened the June General Meeting, where they voted to retain Cornick, Garber & Sandler as the Coop's independent auditors before reelecting Brandon West as president, Tess Brown-Lavoie as vice president, General Manager Joe Szladek as treasurer and Rebecca Schoenberg-Jones as secretary.

By the end of the evening, the Coop had one new Board member, but otherwise an unchanged roster of officers of the Board of Directors.

Leila Darabi joined the Gazette *as a reporter in 2016. She posts photos of the food she makes with Coop ingredients on Instagram (@persian_ish).*

JUNE 16, 2026

November 10, 2026



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

PRINTED GAZETTE?

Hello Linewaiters!

It would be wonderful if the *Linewaiters' Gazette* were available to read while waiting in line at the Coop. Perhaps we could print a handful of copies, laminate them, and circulate them in store—similar to how the carrots are used—so members can read while they wait to check out. I think this would increase engagement, and I would personally love to read it during that time. It might also be nice to offer an option to receive or pick up a printed copy. My household observes phone-free mornings on the weekends, and this is something I'd really enjoy incorporating into that time.

Thanks for listening!

All good things,
Rebecca Gladstone

PLASTIC REDUCTION AT THE COOP: SOME INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

To the Editor:

As a PSFC member involved in the Coop's plastics recycling (before it was mandated by NYC) as well as involved in further plastics reduction over more than two decades, I'm very encouraged to see the renewal of these efforts.

Previously, subcommittees of the PSFC Environmental Committee took up these challenges. Some of this history was shared last fall with the new stand-alone committee:

Original Plastic Roll Bag Reduction FAQ (2011–2012)

"From an environmental perspective, recycling should always be a last resort. Reducing our use of disposable plastic is critical. Plastics recycling, like plastics manufacturing, releases toxins into the air, water, and soil, and consumes excessive nonrenewable energy. Our plastics are often sorted through by low-income workers and repro-

cessed in low-income neighborhoods—whether in the U.S., in Asia, or elsewhere—with greatly increased health risks as a result."

Not a 'Ban'—Just Our Triple Bottom Line: More Q&A About Phasing Out Plastic Bag Rolls at the Coop (*Linewaiters' Gazette*, June 2012)

The May 28 Plastic Bag Vote: What It Is, What It Isn't (*Linewaiters' Gazette*, April 2013)

I am heartened that Coop awareness has evolved over the past 15 years—and hope we can all learn from our history in order to move forward more effectively.

Yours in cooperation,
Regina Sandler-Phillips
PSFC member since 1995

POINT OF ORDER

Dear Editors,

At Tuesday's meeting, the supporters of a boycott argued against a referendum on a specific premise: that the General Meeting is the better venue because it enables live Q&A and debate from all sides. That premise was not honored. A motion to end discussion carried before any such exchange took place, followed immediately by a vote passing the boycott.

I have been a member since 2004 and attended the General Meeting in 2012 held at Brooklyn Tech where the discussion was whether to have a referendum. The discussion was informative and engaging. I learned then that the Park Slope Food Coop needed to be a part of a broader coalition to participate in a boycott and I came to

Tuesday’s meeting still wanting to know which one and on what terms including their relationship to B.D.S.

The supporters of the boycott did themselves a disservice by not answering a single question or entering into a discussion with the membership in attendance.

Sincerely,
Peter Karp

ONLINE-ONLY FAILS DEMOCRATIC GOALS

Dear Coop members:

I attended the online General Meeting late last month expecting to learn about and vote on a controversial boycott proposal. Instead, I encountered an issue that extends beyond this turbulent moment.

If we aspire to greater fairness and inclusivity, on Tuesday night, May 26th, 2026, we went backwards. Outside of the Coop, current attempts to expand early voting, mail-in voting options and polling location numbers all move our society toward inclusivity. The Coop’s hybrid voting addition moves us in that direction as well. Making this week’s vote online-only did not.

At the GM I saw a sincere attempt by well-meaning volunteers to run a large meeting addressing a controversial proposal. Thanks to the committee for trying, but that effort was derailed by flawed solutions to efficiency and security concerns that lost sight of democracy. On a weeknight/work-night, this meeting started late, suspended debate, ran long and suffered tech gremlins and connectivity issues. It also decided divisive and emotionally charged Coop policy questions through an online-only vote.

How does online-only anything promote democratic expansion? Please consider that all issues of real significance and/or fueled by great passion should leave an option for real (actual, not virtual) human participation. Open meetings, hybrid meetings and referendums all meet these criteria. Our participation at the May 26th General Meeting required members to be available in that one time slot, supported by a computer or smartphone and connectivity. This digital-only event format further assumes that members possess a degree of technical proficiency not previously required for Coop membership. Such digital exclusion affects seniors in particular at a higher rate than others.

The digital divide is real and disenfranchises Coop members. Opportunities to vote, especially on such hot-button issues, should not be narrowed to a tech-mediated five-minute window.

Sincerely,
Bert Beiderman

PRE-EMPTIVE SILENCING OF DISSENT IS ANTI-DEMOCRATIC AND UNCOOPERATIVE

Dear Coop members:

I have been a Park Slope Food Coop member since 1988 and have long valued the Coop's commitment to democratic process. Although I voted in favor of the boycott, last night's decision to move directly to a vote silenced those who opposed it. I believe in a democratic process that allows for multiple points of view to be heard. This mirrors the current state of politics in the United States, where dissenting voices are increasingly shut down. I am deeply disappointed.

Sincerely,

Anthony Viti

TOUCHING THE THIRD RAIL

To the Editors:

Although I have marched for Palestinian rights and believe Israel is guilty of war crimes, I intended to vote “No” on both proposals at the GM. I was disenfranchised because the Zoom poll never worked for me, and I was prevented from speaking when discussion before the final vote was barred.

A friend never received the link to join the meeting. Of some 8,400 members who registered, only 6,634 actually voted on the boycott proposal. We’ll never know how many of those 1,700 other members were unable to join or to vote. And what of the majority of Coop members who didn’t register at all? In the end, fewer than a quarter of our membership approved two of the most consequential decisions in our Coop’s history.

The Coop works because we are all rowing in the same direction. For more than half a century, we have largely avoided the divisive third-rail of politics. When we did venture into the political realm through boycotts, the proposal was broadly supported. Opponents should be harder to find than a Court Street Grocers sandwich at 7 p.m.

This all went out the window on May 26 and we are reaping the consequences. We hired security guards for a time to keep the peace, and members must now scan in to go to the second floor. We don’t yet know the financial impacts.

I know those who championed the boycott did so from a place of deep conviction. But I’m not sure they thought through the implications to the Coop of making this political point. I fervently hope we can learn from this and resume pulling in the same direc-

tion, all of us.

Sincerely,
Ken Coughlin

WHY DID YOU VOTE TO BOYCOTT ISRAELI PRODUCTS? DO YOU CARE ABOUT PALESTINIANS? DO YOU WANT TO HURT ISRAEL'S ECONOMY? THESE ARE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

Dear Coop Members,

The Members for Palestine boycott list included 9 items (some say 11). Among them was Seed + Mill tahini. It's well worth a trip to Chelsea Market to try their halva. But why was Seed + Mill targeted when it is a New York company? Because Seed + Mill partners with a tahini factory in Israel that is owned by Palestinians. Equal Exchange Organic Olive Oil, a business collaboration between Arab and Jewish women in Israel, and Arab Israeli owned Al Arz Tahini were also included in the boycott. Removing these products directly impacts Palestinian jobs and income. Yet, these businesses were targeted because the Palestinians involved are Israelis.

Twenty percent of Israel's population is Arab. Arabs Israelis can be Muslim or Christian, Bedouin or Druze (a unique and fascinating religion). There are Arabs in the Israeli Parliament. Arabs make up a fifth of undergraduate students in Israel, and there is a significant representation of Arabs in the medical workforce. At the same time, Arab Israelis do face discrimination and inequity within the state of Israel. Many Jewish and Arab activists within Israeli society are working together to address these inequalities through the vision of a shared society.

I have been a member of the Coop for 17 years because it is a community founded on the values of service and cooperation. These products represent a shared commit-

ment to supporting Israel as a healthy democracy. It is difficult for me to understand how the Coop community could turn its back on companies that are dedicated to working together in a spirit of cooperation.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Sussman

ON UNITY

Dear Coop members,

Anti-BDS organizers at our Coop often spoke of “unity.” Without a hint of irony, a few even took their case for “unity” to the *New York Post*. In practice, what their idea of “unity” always required was for members to just stop talking about the Middle East. The implicit offer of their “unity” was this: if our Coop kept buying Israeli products uncritically, everyone could stop thinking about the Middle East, and we could all shop happily ever after.

But there are Coop members for whom the Middle East is not just an abstraction getting in the way of an idyllic shopping experience. I am one of those members. In February, Trump and Israel launched a war of aggression against my home country of Iran. Please imagine the alienation I felt shopping while my parents became internal refugees, blast waves shattered my aunt’s windows and the neighborhood my grandfather taught me how to bike in was bombed using AI targeting software.

Members with experiences like mine have silently lived under the weight of what our Coop has spent years debating whether to inconvenience itself over. The vote in May was the first time this institution acknowledged what we have been carrying for so long. I am thankful to all those members who made that night possible; I am thankful that their principled efforts overwhelmed the arrogant paternalism displayed by some

of our leadership; and I am thankful that our membership voted for BDS in a landslide.

I joined the Coop for cheaper groceries, yes, but also because I believed it was a place united by the conviction that what we buy is not separate from our place in the world. The victory of BDS tells me that conviction still unites us here.

Sincerely,
Ali Safarkhani

WE DID THE RIGHT THING THE RIGHT WAY

Dear Editor:

As a member of the PSFC since 1979, I have seen our organization go through many difficult and contentious phases. There was a time when I chose to actively engage. Although I no longer attend in person meetings, I do always vote (when there are online or mail-in options to do so). Currently, I depend on the *Linewaiters' Gazette* to stay informed. The *Letters* section is my window into member concerns and issues.

Like 6K+ others, I attended the May 26th General Meeting—the two boycott issues being so important to me. I am pleased to say I felt only genuine pride and gratitude for all involved. To see the first ever PSFC fully online Zoom meeting format so brilliantly, deftly facilitated was a real joy. What we, as a community, have achieved to make the PSFC more truly democratic is something I have long hoped for. I applaud the stamina and determination of each member leader who worked so diligently to make this happen.

For me, this Zoom format was near flawless. I did not step away from my screen at any point. I was totally captivated, impressed to see everyone speaking with so much

care, conviction and dignity. Every slight glitch in the process was handled with calm and grace.

No doubt there will be fatigue, pain and bruising. Those feelings are par for the course in any noble effort to effect change and inclusion. There will be push back. I believe the PSFC will survive it. Brava and deep gratitude for all concerned.

I feel strongly WE DID THE RIGHT THING.

Dolores Brandon Thompson

THE MISGUIDED MOVEMENT OF SOLIDARITY THAT DESTROYED OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Coop members:

I have been a member of the Coop for 27 years. I have loved it for the same reasons as many of us—the cooperative spirit, collegiality, commitment to diversity, quality of food. I am absolutely appalled by the cynical, manipulative, aggressive, devious and hate-filled process by which the two measures at the last General Meeting were rammed through leading up to the boycott of products made in Israel. As we all know, this boycott has nothing whatsoever to do with Bamba or tahini. It has everything to do with a multiyear campaign that an anti-peace, anti-co-existence, historically illiterate and functionally anti-Semitic BDS movement has waged to hijack the Coop's visibility and significance to promote their cause. They worked strategically to get positioned on committees and did indeed get their boycott passed by around 4,000 of 16,000 members—hardly an overwhelming majority of the total membership. They worked to shut down the possibility of a Coop-wide referendum, which the paid staff seemed to prefer. Some pro-boycott members say they feel they're putting external pressure on the Israeli government, or "stopping genocide." How absurd. What the

Coop boycott has actually and ONLY accomplished is to drive a massive wedge and sow discord in our once-great Brooklyn institution, causing alienation and dysfunction. It is the antithesis of cooperation on all levels. Those who voted for it may feel very virtuous about themselves and what they have signaled to the world, but it is meaningless to geopolitics and the lived experience of actual Palestinians. If only the members who rammed this through devoted their significant passion and energy into something that spurred real progress in the world, the kind that doesn't have to do with slogans, simplistic thinking and social media. Instead, they've decimated the spirit and unity of our Coop.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Bleyer

FINALLY, THE COOP IS ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF HISTORY

Dear Coop members:

The May 26 General Meeting went more smoothly than I expected. After 2.5 years of acrimonious disputes, the proposals to repeal the undemocratic supermajority boycott threshold passed by 61% of the vote against 38% opposed. And despite a concerted campaign of bad-faith fearmongering by pro-Israel Coop members, who augured the "destruction" of the Coop, the much-demonized boycott passed by a resounding 67% of the vote against 31% opposed. This proves that when it comes to Israel's actions, fearmongering no longer has power in New York. Indeed, there is growing evidence of ordinary Americans' weariness of Israel's special status in domestic politics as shown by the deference that Democrat and Republican give to it and the carte blanche that Israel receives in the form of billions of dollars in US military aid annually.

When states and politicians fail to heed the will of the majority, civil society organizations like consumer and worker coops play a crucial role in building international solidarity. Though I do not believe that taking Israeli products off the shelves will make so much as a dent in the Israeli war machine, I am thrilled to see that the Park Slope Food Coop has finally honored its long-standing tradition of boycotts and taking a principled stand against injustice. As a historic New York City institution, the Park Slope Food Coop sent a powerful message to other civil society organizations about non-cooperation with regimes—in this case, Israel—that perpetrate genocide.

Hopefully, this vote will propel other coops across the country to boycott Israel's goods. Last Tuesday night, the PSFC took a clear stand against the normalization of genocide.

Sincerely,
David Diaz

WHAT DO YOU FEAR MOST? PUBLIC SPEAKING? A LAWSUIT? FIGHTING WITH YOUR PARENTS? OR…

Dear Coop members:

Right now, one of my strongest fears is being an "innocent bystander."

I fear taking on the belief that I am special: that I have impunity from the consequences of the evils done around me or on my behalf. That I am somehow above accountability. That I do not have a responsibility to make amends for living on stolen land, for benefiting from institutions founded on enslavement or for stopping violence around the world done in my name, "U.S. consumer." That somehow, I am just a bys-

tander to all the violence but am innocent myself.

I am afraid of feeling so hopeless or helpless that I cope by losing myself in reading fiction, playing video games or overconsuming food and drink. I am afraid of falling prey to the lie that there are some people who are powerful and I simply am not one of them. That those people will unabashedly commit depraved evils in order to pursue their desires. That I cannot be part of changing the environment that supports and allows human evil.

And I know there is more. I see that the flip side of this fear is the fear that I actually do have power to change things. Because if I do have the ability to make things better, then does that mean I am behaving in some immensely immoral way by not being active right now?

I hope you and I both cultivate hope even when the genocide continues, Coop members do and say things that are wrong, and we see the Trump/Epstein/Musk class continue to live with impunity. I hope we cultivate a compassion and kindness filled with such determination that we find ways to improve the situation. That we get involved.

Sincerely,
Idris Merchant

BDS PROPONENTS FAILED TO RESPECT AND HONOR OTHERS IN OUR VERY COMMUNITY

Dear Coop members:

Like many of you, I attended the May 26 General Meeting. It was my first. At times, it seemed to drag, burdened by the compunctions of procedure, but as a lawyer, I am familiar with these niceties and I understand their place. And the process seemingly

worked: almost everyone voted, the majorities carried the day, and the people got what they wanted.

Even so, after all was said and done, I felt a deep sadness. That sadness is still with me today.

To put it all out front, I voted against the boycott. I have my reasons. But that is not why I'm sad. I understand that democratic processes don't always yield the results we want, but that doesn't mean the processes have failed.

I am sad because the majority of my fellow members voted to end discussion about the boycott before it began. They voted to move forward with a vote, knowing how painful and deeply-felt these issues are, without even offering the minority an opportunity to be heard. Sure, it may not have changed the outcome. But that's not the point of hearing each other out: we listen to each other because it honors our fundamental human dignity and it provides us with an opportunity for catharsis—even if we cannot truly find dialogue at the end of the day.

I know how strongly we feel about these issues. They are deeply serious, important issues. But please, I implore us all, our discussions don't need to carry the same division and closed-heartedness that characterizes that of the larger political world. Our community can do better than that.

If you're reading this, I want to say that I love you. And I want to listen to you.

And I hope you want you to listen to me, too.

Thank you,
Alex Kronman

NOT ONE DIME

Dear Coop members:

It is with great regret and guilt that my family will spend not one dime at the Coop.

My heart is with the Coop workers who depend on this Coop for their livelihood, health insurance and whom I've worked and bonded with for the past 24 years. But, I can no longer shop at a coop that decided that: Israel has no right to exist; that Israeli lives (murdered, raped, kidnapped) don't matter; that international law such as the 1947 UN Resolution 181 declaring a two state solution for Jews and Arabs doesn't matter, that UN Resolution 194 that only allows right of return for non-violent refugees does not matter. That my wife's family that fled Yemen cerca 1950 and escaped to Israel due to anti-Jewish violence is labeled as a colonizer when refugee would be the appropriate term.

Around 70% of those present (less than 1/4 of the total membership) voted to cut off debate and not hear a different narrative, or refused to take this issue to a coop-wide referendum despite an appeal by the workers and an extremely flawed online voting system. That only one side making a specious genocide claim can speak while silencing a different perspective.

The government in Gaza (Hamas) very easily could have stopped the war and brought in food simply by returning the hostages and disarming, but instead they chose to have the civilians of Gaza pay the price for their genocidal activities on October 7, consistent with Article 7 of the Hamas Charter, which explicitly calls for the killing of Jews.

The Coop has embraced the BDS movement, which, based on my reading of Omar Barghouti's book on BDS, explicitly condemns cooperation and eschews dialogue with

those who believe differently (e.g., Zionists). A movement that, based on the two BDS presentations at Coop meetings and the BDS web site, does not condemn the genocidal actions and aspirations of Hamas. Instead of allowing each of us, individually, to decide what we buy, we have thus allowed BDS to coopt our coop.

And I say Not One Dime.

Murray Lantner

BRAVO TO THE MEETING CHAIRS

To the chairs of the May General Meeting,

Thank you for so diligently carrying out your duties under immense and unprecedented pressure. The hours of preparation you put in before the meeting, the patience with which you navigated the many unexpected moments and your stone-cold poker faces throughout indicated deep respect for your fellow Coop members and the institution of the Coop.

I hope you all took Wednesday off to recuperate. If there is a fund for Josef to have a spa day soon, please let me know where I and the other members of my Coop group chat can contribute, as we were all concerned about his stress levels in particular.

In gratitude,
Zoë Leverant

NEVERMIND TAHINI, WHAT'S BEEN VOTED OUT IS TRUE COMMUNITY

Dear Coop members:

I am so disappointed and hurt by the result of the boycott. We joined the Coop to support farmers and the sustainability goal of shopping locally. The additional benefit of providing fresh food for my family at reasonable prices was more icing on the cake. However, once I joined, I obtained an addition benefit that turned out to be the most valuable one.

Watching the shelves empty and fill made me realize I was part of something bigger: I became part of an organic group of people sharing that objective and taking action to ensure its survival and growth.

We claim all the time that we, as citizens of the world, are part of that seamless web that connects us all.

The Coop provided proof that I was.

That is why the vote was a one-two punch.

I was born in Brooklyn, and my wife and kids were born at Methodist. Our home has been in the family since 1947.

The Coop, that breathing organism that was such an integral part of my neighborhood, was under attack (from both inside and outside).

Also, an attack on a dozen Israeli farmers and manufacturers felt less like a condemnation of the Israeli government and more like an attack on Zionism.

The statement by some who supported the boycott, "I'm Jewish, so trust me I know a Holocaust" made me wince.

I doubt whether there were many South Africans or Chileans who were affected by the previous boycotts, but there are thousands of Jews affected by this one.

I can get tahini elsewhere, but identity and community are a lot more precious and harder to come by.

Thank you to all who were part of this messy experiment. I will miss you.

Eric Snyder

LAMENT FOR A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Dear Coop members:

My name is Greg Selig and I've been a Coop member for 17+ years, and now, likely, no longer. This is not a protest withdrawal, this is not a loser's departure, this is not revenge. This is dismay. The Coop is no longer the community I believed in, an institution based on the shared ethos of working together in order to sustain an alternate economic model. An example to the chaotic world outside: people from all backgrounds and affinities can overcome the headwinds of conformity and discover new pathways for a better way forward. The Coop has lost its way and chosen the banality of divisiveness for the sake of a myth that we are obligated to engage in social activism to bolster our credentials. The Coop is radical unto itself.

Although not overly publicized because of the self-interest of activist individuals on Coop committees, I mentioned in my previous *Linewaiters' Gazette* submission how NY Peace Institute had a program prepared for mediation at the Coop. Can you imagine? Folks from within our community, who have profound disagreements, choosing to work out their differences for the common good of the membership? What could be more cooperative than that? Even if the people did not know about this plan,

the broader membership should have been clamoring for a solution like this rather than submitting to the fracturing of our village. It was only too obvious that, regardless of vote outcome, a large number of people were going to feel hard done by and leave. So damn avoidable. The Coop lost concern for each other for the sake of the Golden Calf of “statement politics.” Who knows what’s to come, but the Coop is poorer for it.

With Regret,
Greg Selig

THE OBJECTIONABLE CURTAILMENT OF FREE SPEECH

To the Editor:

One of the leaders officiating at the May 26 PSFC meeting made a telling point at the meeting’s conclusion. She said that the cutting off discussion before any discussion of the proposal to boycott Israeli products could even begin was the first meeting in memory at which discussion about a specific proposal was prevented. In other words, no discussion of the boycott proposal was allowed. Only the individuals who introduced the proposal spoke. Nobody who opposed the proposal got to speak. Given the divisive nature of the proposal discussed, it would have behooved us to enable the large audience attending the meeting to have an opportunity to hear both sides.

I don’t deny the pro-boycott people the right to speak in favor of a boycott. That is what freedom of speech is about. But the pro-boycott supporters denied me and others the right to speak against the boycott. The best I could do was write my thoughts and quickly put them into the chat—not much of a message to the attendees with the chat scrolling by. What the pro-boycott adherents did to eliminate any discussion about the proposal was objectionable and bad for the Coop.

Sincerely,
Irvin Schonfeld

SOMETHING I NEED TO SAY

To my Jewish friends at the Coop,

I see you.

Sincerely,
Karen Mancuso

I WON'T BE SILENCED

Dear Coop members:

I am a proud Jewish Orthodox woman and a member since 2019. I attended the recent General Meeting and remain shocked and stunned by the offensiveness of its agenda. It wasn't conducted democratically and was more reminiscent of Putin/Castro style of governance. Members against the BDS movement were NOT permitted to respond to counter statements at the meeting.

Personally, I felt hijacked and stunned facing a bullying squad that spewed dangerous bigotry, seething hatred and discriminatory hostility. Bigotry and antisemitism masked by self-righteous indignation is not only alarmingly misguided, it's outrageously appalling and exceedingly dangerous.

The Coop is supposed to be a **safe** store where shoppers can buy organic groceries at a discounted price. It should NOT offer a springboard for the promotion of hate speech. To me, the meeting represented a personal attack for being Jewish and pro-Israel. Should a member or employee clock a shift or shop wearing a Ku Klux Klan cape or Aryan brotherhood attire, they would appropriately be addressed. Yet the same principles do not equally apply to members wearing keffiyehs with anti-Israel buttons promoting BDS while *that* constitutes printed hate speech. The glaring hypocrisy. The unabashed bias. The conspicuous silence.

The notion expressed by a pro-BDS member who felt unsupported after ICE raids on immigrants shocked me. The deafening silence after October 7th where **innocent** peace-loving civilians; men, women and children were brutally raped, assaulted, murdered, tortured, maimed, mutilated, butchered and then held hostage and NOTHING was said about it. There were no words of condemnation at the Coop. No speech uttered to detest violence. No call for unity against violence nor a cry for peace and the release of hostages. No meeting to campaign for a BOYCOTT against Palestine and to decry Hamas.

My father is a Holocaust survivor. Yesterday wasn't Kristallnacht. We won't be silenced, though the meeting made clear "if you support Israel, you're not wanted here." As a shareholder, my voice won't be silent.

Sincerely,
HL

GEOPOLITICS FOR SALE ON THE ENDCAP

Dear Coop members:

Until the last avocado is sold, the Coop will be primarily associated with the BDS

movement. Imagine going to a dinner party, cheese plate in hand, six-dollar six-pack of Orange Cat beer, and everyone is solely interested in what you think about a bi-national state in the Middle East. Instead of talking about seasonal stone fruit, you're going to have to get into heated debates about Qatari funding for American universities. Good luck with your organic journey, or should I say "Free Palestine Frisee."

Sincerely,
Anonymous

LOVE AND APPRECIATION ALL AROUND!

Dear Coop members:

This past General Meeting meeting, composed of close to 8,000 participants, all online from the comfort of home or library or workspace, is a testament to the thousands of hours dedicated to our achieving at last a hybrid meeting format which ensures the largest true participation of all member owners in how our Coop runs.

Thank you to PSFC Members4Palestine for your grit, determination and hard work which enables the largest possible number of members to have a voice going forward! Thanks for the hard and I'm sure stressful work of those chairing the committee, the meeting went well and was managed professionally. PSFC Members 4 Palestine is a lovely, democratic, smart, accomplished, multi-racial multi ethnic, friendly, fun loving, Coop-loving group, and if you too want to ensure the growth of democratic norms, food justice and an open, cooperative Coop that's fun to shop at—and is open to all—please join us!

Those of you who are considering leaving the Coop because two-thirds of the members at the meeting voted yes to the boycott of Israeli goods, please reconsider. You are welcome even though you disagree with the decision. Should you decide to leave,

there are many, many eager people lining up to take your place.

Thanks to all who help make this Coop great: members, staff, chair committee, board members, committee members. It's a real labor of love. I'm deeply grateful to you all.

Sincerely,
Carol Wald

WHY HYPOCRISY AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVITY SULLY OUR RECENT COOP VOTES

To the members who submitted agenda items 887 and 881:

Congrats and Mazel Tov—you did it! PSFCMembers4Palestine pushed through the removal of the Supermajority and BDS.

Over the last 18 months, your campaign ran on the platform that you're bringing the PSFC back to its roots and improving democratic order. However, your platform did all but that.

You've run on the platform that BDS supports democratic activity, however when someone peels back the veil and intricacies of BDS, they can see the realty: BDS leaves no room for debate or finding resolution through differences.

Many members—including me—have asked for mediation with BDS supporters in order to try resolving our different viewpoints, which are not just about the Middle East. Quite a few of us are concerned about the state of financial affairs at the Coop and how BDS conversations have pulled focus away from actual business matters.

BDS does not support the reality that communities—such as the Coop—have "diversi-

ty of thought." We will not agree on all items as such is human nature. However, value exists in embracing different opinions.

Many BDS advocates have posited "Jewish Values," such as the idea of repairing the world, as a rationale for the boycott. However, when one expands the scope of Jewish values, one sees that the embrace of difference is another core tenant of Judaism. Diversity of thought and opinion is critical to find harmony in large groups.

This can be summed up best in this statement from the late Jonathan Sacks, the United Kingdom's former chief rabbi:

"We have to learn to speak to those we do not hope to convert, but with whom we wish to live."

Sincerely,
Zack Zaban

GRATITUDE AND LET'S KEEP DEMOCRACY GOING!

Dear General Coordinators and staff, fellow member owners, the General Meeting chairing committee, and Park Slope Food Coop Members For Palestine,

Gratitude for the contributions you each made to the historic May General Meeting.

To the GCs and staff: grateful that you moved the meeting to a fully virtual space which minimized disruptions and made vote counting quick and trustworthy.

To the thousands of us who participated in the meeting: appreciation for showing up and engaging in a democratic process.

To the chairing committee: thanks for your commitment to giving people time to vote, even if it meant logging off and on again, and following the will of the meeting as it unfolded.

To Park Slope Food Coop Members For Palestine: massive props for steadily working to expand access and democracy (proposing hybrid meetings, restoring the simple majority for a boycott vote), for bringing the Israeli products boycott proposal to us with principle and clarity, and for all your generous and creative organizing, educating and communicating over the years.

Thank you all.

I hope we continue to strengthen the democratic processes we use. Let's find more ways to give General Meeting participants tools and information about how to engage, and let's adopt the practice of electing instead of appointing Chair Committee members while providing them with optimal support and training.

Proud to have been part of this landmark vote,

Kathy McCullagh

A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

Dear Linewaiters' Gazette,

I am heartened by the votes in the 26 May 2026 General Meeting. Boycotting Israeli goods is the least we, as a cooperative, can do for Palestinians living under a brutal occupation of 78 years. A better world is possible and this past Tuesday ought to serve as a catalyst for one.

Sincerely,
Damien Neva

BEEN THERE; GROUPTHINKED THAT

Dear Coop members:

We've been here before. And now our longstanding goal is achieved. We've banned Israeli goods from the Coop. I write "we" because I write as part of the collective. However, I voted against the boycott and against reducing the threshold for votes like this.

The threshold was instituted so that we, as a cooperative, could speak with one voice. But the lower threshold ensured that when only a minority of the coop's 17,000 members voted, an even smaller group was able to successfully ban Israeli products.

The presentation preceding the vote was built on claims about genocide, Israel and the Palestinians that I found misleading and unsupported. Many of the presenters seemed to use religion as a moral badge but it was unconvincing to me. This boycott, we were told, is similar to other boycotts in the coop's past. It's not. Irrespective of our fellow coop members' devotion to a democratic meeting, as the night wore on the process became more deeply flawed. Few speakers managed to present a coherent statement without being cut off.

After dragging on, the end came swiftly but without a proper rebuttal or related discussion, apparently for the first time in the coop's history. And the boycott will end when "Israel complies with international law including by ceasing unlawful discriminatory practices" against the Palestinians. In other words, never, because that standard cannot be met by any country on earth, including the United States.

Supposedly, Israel was on trial. But so are each of us. Our collective thrill at taking a moral stand is impoverished and stained by hypocrisy, groupthink, untruths and by an accomplice, BDS, that suffers from the same failings. What's next on the coop's moral agenda? Will we really still be comfortable shopping alongside Zionists? As I wrote above, we've been here before.

Sincerely,
Daniel Alter

YOUR COOP VOTE IS NOW MEANINGLESS

Members,

Due to:

• Throwing all our resources at online voting
• Ignoring overwhelming evidence from the start about how it could fail
• Massive and documented technical problems with the online vote on May 26, 2026
• Massive confusion over how to proceed under the voting problems
• And a desert of technical know-how to address any problems…

The Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement is now firmly in control of the Coop. The Board of Directors, the committees that support and run the General Meetings, and the BDS floor members forced through an uncooperative model for governance while turning their backs on PSFC's stance as non-violent.

They do not accept disagreement with their goals.

As yet, they do not have the power to banish you on a whim. So if you feel the slightest pressure to conform with an uncomfortable stance whether a floor member, paid staff, a General Coordinator, or member of any committee: report it! Email justice4parkslopefoodcoop@gmail.com immediately with your situation and as much detail as you can provide. Then file a complaint with the Coop's DRC by doing the same.

This turn towards neutering democracy and supporting violence concerns everyone because BDS is a movement whose leadership has argued that there is no moral right to condemn Palestinian violence, including the attacks of October 7, 2023. In that pogrom's wake, Omar Barghouti, spokesperson for Global BDS, stated that people "…have no moral right to condemn illegal or immoral acts of violence that the oppressed may commit…". According to the ADL, BDS campaigns frequently employ anti-Semitic rhetoric and imagery, and some of BDS's founding goals are anti-Semitic.

Your vote at PSFC is now meaningless and ignored. Democracy is dead. Don't look away.

Sincerely,
Jesse Rosenfeld

HAVE WE CONSIDERED THE PRICE WE'LL PAY WITH THIS BOYCOTT VOTE?

Dear PSFC members,

Before the heavily publicized general meeting on boycotting Israeli products, I had been thinking deeply about the issue. About a year ago, while locking my bicycle outside the Coop, another shopper approached, asking me to sign a petition supporting the boycott. I declined, wanting to better understand the issue before taking a position. As a Jewish liberal Democrat and longtime Park Slope resident, I have spent years navigating the difficult emotions and political realities surrounding Israel and

Palestine.

The large turnout at the meeting showed how deeply members care about this issue. Unfortunately, the discussion itself felt divisive rather than constructive. Instead of meaningful dialogue encouraging empathy and understanding, the conversation seemed focused on pushing a predetermined agenda. Members supporting the boycott appeared organized and prepared, while opportunities for open discussion felt limited. The Coop should be a welcoming place where differing opinions can be heard respectfully.

I left the meeting with important questions unanswered. I wanted to better understand how this boycott would affect Palestinians and Jewish communities, whether it could unintentionally contribute to anti-Semitism, and why alternative perspectives were not given more space. No members were invited to share concerns or discuss the complexity of the issue. For me, this boycott is not simply about products or sales; it is tied to a broader political movement whose goals and rhetoric I do not fully support.

Our Coop's mission emphasizes education, inclusion and community. I worry that this process damaged those values and created unnecessary division. While the boycott itself may have limited practical impact, the strain it placed on our community feels significant and lasting.

I hope future conversations encourage genuine dialogue, curiosity and compassion so members with different perspectives feel respected, heard and included together going forward.

In cooperation,
Jodi Radwell

BOYCOTT = RACISM

To The Editor:

Shopping at the Coop over the last several years has been extremely uncomfortable for me (a member of 18 years). There, I've been surrounded by keffiyehs—what some consider a statement of social justice and what I perceive as a symbol of hatred and self-proclaimed genocide of the Jews. The vote at the most recent GM made me feel like I am actually living in 1930's Germany. The "as a Jew" BDS proponents touting a "genocide" by the Israeli government is a bald–faced lie. The government is far from perfect, but the false narratives that vilify Israel—not to mention that consider the slaughter and rape of Jews on October 7th a justified act of resistance—are beyond belief.

Moreover, despite the fact that people were certainly ready to vote the way they were going to vote regardless of the voices heard, the fact that the propaganda was able to be presented without any opportunity for others to speak is another example of the "Free Palestine" movement never wanting to engage. Rather, it spews lies and silences those of us who want freedom for Palestinians but also want our families in Israel not to be murdered by Islamic jihadists.

No matter your opinion of the Israeli government, you need to understand that we—the Jews whose identity, history, culture and traditions are inextricably woven into our connection to our Homeland (i.e., most Jews I know)—feel like we are being kicked out of a place to shop because of our identity. That is called racism, folks. I know you think you're just punishing a government that's intentionally hurting people, but you need to understand that for those of us who know that Israel is defending itself, the result of the passing of this boycott is that you are committing injustice.

Sincerely,
Chana Balk

ON THE INTENTIONAL, WOEFUL LACK OF COOPERATION AT THE COOP'S GENERAL MEETING

Dear Coop members,

Despite the efforts of those running the monthly meeting on Tuesday evening, May 26th, the process was far from democratic. There was no opportunity for discussion after the pro-BDS members were allotted their ten minutes to present their proposal (again). No member who opposed the motion to boycott Israeli goods was even allowed to speak.

How was this a cooperative process?

Regardless, for anyone paying attention, the outcome was inevitable, given that the pro-Palestinian faction has hijacked the Coop.

So, congratulations! We are now officially a nexus for Palestinian rights. This will do nothing to help the Palestinians, and may lead to the demise of the Coop. We had a good run.

Sincerely,
Mindy Werner

NO GMS-TURNED-KINGS AT THE COOP

Dear Coop Family:

“No Kings” resonates with us all. So, I was quite shocked last June 4th when I opened an email from the then General Manager (GM) that was a completely one-sided partisan push, complete with inaccuracies such as the suggestion that the Coop has a long history of boycotting with a supermajority, when in fact we operated with a simple majority for 43 years, and disallowing an opportunity for response by utilizing an email which indicated “no reply” was possible. “The King hath spoken!” What? This was obviously so wrong and a flagrant violation of our principles and governance policies. Yet, to my knowledge, there’s been no formal corrective action taken. Is the Coop GM beyond accountability? Have we bestowed monarch status on this position? But worse yet, Joe Holtz is now running for our board. This should not be allowed; but I have faith that our good Coop family will send that message through our votes. (Here’s the video he proudly posted).

Sincerely,
Mitty Owens, 20 year member
Now active in General Mtgs thanks to hybrid

THE COOP BETRAYED ITS OWN MEMBERS

Dear Coop members:

The largest meeting in the Coop’s history was also its least democratic. More members voted than ever before, and yet the meeting made a mockery of the General Meeting’s most basic purpose: letting members be heard.

At April’s GM, both sides presented the pros and cons of lowering the boycott thresh-

old from 75% to 50%. Fewer than 400 members attended, but the process was fair. I presented Agenda Item 888 in favor of keeping the 75% threshold. Both sides had a voice.

At May's GM, over 7,000 members heard only one side, a 10-minute presentation with no rebuttal, no counterargument and no discussion.

I asked why I was not permitted to present my Agenda Item during the meeting itself. I was told that I "had failed to request the agenda item to be voted on," a supposed procedural requirement that I could not easily locate on the Coop's website. No one from the Agenda Committee informed me of this rule.

This raises serious questions: Why didn't the Agenda Committee notify me? Why would it schedule a vote of this magnitude and permit only one side to present?

The same failure of democratic process extended to the second Agenda Item: a vote on whether to boycott Israeli goods. For one of the most contentious proposals in the Coop's history, no discussion was held at all.

The Park Slope Members for Palestine championed hybrid meetings as a tool to expand democracy. They then used that same platform to silence thousands of members and foreclose debate. That is not progress, it is hypocrisy.

Sincerely,
Ramon Maislen

A RETURN TO MEMBER-OWNER DEMOCRACY

Dear Coop members:

We witnessed a stunning return to the Coop's tradition of popular democracy at the May General Meeting, and an encouraging sign of renewed interest in member-owner governance that will be critical to the future health of the Coop. Over 7,000 member-owners attended the May GM—far more than any other meeting in the 53-year history of this institution. Over 7,000 member-owners got to hear about Coop finances, the state of seasonal produce and, ultimately, decide whether we would boycott goods imported from a particular country. It is a reminder that when the Coop engages member-owners on issues that matter to them—regardless of their stance—we are all better off; votes on important issues should be embraced, not suppressed. Over the last several years, and especially the last several months, member-owners actually talked to one another in aisles and at checkouts and on the sidewalk about what kind of community we want to be, in ways that I had never seen since I joined the Coop in 2018. Hundreds of member-owners learned each other's names for the first time, developed friendships and worked together to advance their visions of the Coop. This is exactly the kind of truly socially meaningful cooperation on which the Coop will depend so it does not just survive but thrives in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,
Gabriel Young

OUTRAGED AT A LACK OF REFERENDUM

To the Editor,

It is outrageous and just plain wrong that two highly controversial questions—May 26 General Meeting agenda item 3 (concerning changing a longstanding Coop rule on boycott votes) and agenda item 4 (concerning a proposed boycott on products from Israel)—were not put to member-wide referendums as has been done with other contro-

versial matters in the past, such as whether to sell meat or beer.

Not everyone who cares about these issues could attend this meeting either. For example, my husband and I, both members for more than 25 and 35 years respectively, were originally scheduled to be on a plane at the time the meeting was held.

The way this was handled was terrible for members' trust in Coop leadership and thus a threat to our long-term well-being as a cooperative organization. The vast majority of Coop staff signed a statement in support of a referendum. Apparently, they were being ignored, which leaves us wondering what is really going on here.

Sincerely,
Regina Rae Weiss

VOTER SUPPRESSION ON DISPLAY AT THE FOOD COOP

To the Editor,

The May 26 meeting was one of the most unfair and undemocratic meetings in our Coop's history. For the first time, members were denied meaningful discussion before votes were cast. A cooperative should be built on transparency, participation and open debate, yet members were silenced and rushed through a process that affects everyone.

Equally troubling was the lack of fair representation. Many members did not have a real opportunity to vote or participate fully in the decision-making process. When large portions of the membership are excluded, the legitimacy of the outcome is seriously undermined. Procedures should protect democratic participation, not restrict it.

What occurred was voter suppression in practice. Preventing discussion and limiting

participation created distrust and division instead of cooperation. It sent the message that some voices matter more than others, which goes against the principles a coop is supposed to uphold.

Unfortunately, this meeting was also another example of how divisive and uncooperative the culture within the Coop has become. Healthy disagreement is part of any democratic organization, but suppressing participation is not. Leadership should be encouraging transparency and member involvement, not limiting it.

Members deserve equal representation, open discussion and a fair opportunity to have their voices heard. Until those principles are restored, confidence in the integrity of these meetings will continue to decline.

Sincerely,
Deirdre Levy

POLITICS AT THE COOP

Dear Coop members:

I believe the overwhelming purpose of the Coop is to supply the best food, vitamins, etc. at the cheapest price, thus benefiting its members as they wished upon joining.

If Iranian pistachios, Russian lentils, Somalian vegetable oils, Chinese tree nuts or Israeli medjool dates are of equal quality or better and are cheaper than elsewhere, they should be available.

The members of the Coop joined for health, nutritional and cost saving purposes. No one joined for the purpose of promoting political issues. Should a member wish to personally boycott items, for whatever reason, fine. But they need not eliminate choices

for other members, by vote or otherwise.

Let's create a proposal to serve our members in a way that serves their original intentions upon joining, and not torture our organization with outside, confrontational and divisive issues.

I tell people about the Coop, "Best produce for best prices." Let that be our calling card. Let political activists organize and protest elsewhere, and not poison our food purchasing with zealous political divisiveness.

Appealing for the inclusion of my idea, above, in our bylaws or mission statement and/or ….

Sincerely,
Melvin Hess,
With wife Esther Podemski

SUSTAINING AND NURTURING OUR COMMUNITY

Fellow members,

Many of you will recognize my name as one of the presenters of the proposal to boycott Israeli goods. I'm truly grateful to see our Coop standing in solidarity with Palestinians. On May 26th, more members than have ever attended a General Meeting voted to advocate for the right of Palestinians to food and shelter, safety and equality—all fundamental aspects of life we want for ourselves and our families.

For nearly five decades, I have given my labor, time and money to be a Coop member. Over these years, I have vehemently disagreed with the Coop on a variety of issues, including the sale of Israeli goods. Still, like many of my collaborators working to-

ward a boycott, I have never once considered leaving the Coop, or trying to harm it.

Whether or not you voted for the boycott, it is time to come together as a community to sustain and nurture our cooperative. Let's all work together because we're member-owners of the Coop—stewards of its health and future.

In cooperation,
Alyce Barr

REFLECTIONS ON THE MAY 26 "BOYCOTT ISRAEL" GENERAL MEETING

Dear Coop members:

a) I received the preliminary e-mail about the meeting. I did not receive the final "invitation" link. (I know the drill, having successfully attended the previous hybrid meetings.) I got onto the Zoom using the meeting ID that was sent to another member of my household. They, unlike me, got all the necessary e-mails. The Zoom app on my laptop recognized me. As the meeting was about to start, using the Q&A function, I wrote about not getting the link. Someone answered saying if I was using the Q&A function I was "in" the meeting. I participated in the votes. I ***assume*** they counted.

COULD ANYONE WHO GOT A HOLD OF THE MEETING ID LIKE I DID HAVE GOTTEN IN???

IS THERE A WAY THE COOP CONFIRMED THAT ALL ATTENDEES *AND* VOTERS WERE ACTUAL MEMBERS???

Coop sentiment ***appeared*** to be clear. A solid majority of ***voters*** felt Israel deserved to be boycotted. (I suspect members have felt this way at least since the point when the 75% threshold was put into place.) If all "uninvited" members like me would have

gotten in, I don't think it would have substantially changed the outcome. ***But…???***

b) The chair skipped over/did not honor the Open Forum portion of the meeting. It was on all versions of the Agenda. I had plenty to say but was not given the chance.

c) Hybrid meeting management ***NEEDS A LOT OF WORK****:* – Members not receiving the entry link – Confusion about how to count votes on the Referendum Amendment question. ***Were we ready for such a large meeting?***

d) An individual who supported the boycott said they were "excited" about the outcome. This entire situation is very sad and not something to be giddy about.

Sincerely,
Andy Feldman

PROUD OF THE PSFC AND ESPECIALLY PROUD OF OUR STAFF

Dear Coop,

I'm so proud of the PSFC for turning out in overwhelming numbers at the May General Meeting to vote on the boycott of Israeli goods. In my understanding, this is by far the largest attendance we've had at a GM. Amazingly, the total number of votes cast (6,753) exceeded the total vote in the June, 2025 referendum on hybrid meetings (6,504). We can have great confidence that we now understand "the will of the membership," given this massive turnout plus the fact that the boycott won by a greater than two-thirds majority.

The huge media response to our decision underscores what most of us already knew: the PSFC is an extremely influential institution both in our local community and in the national/international cooperative movement. This is cause for celebration, and for op-

timism about the positive impact of our ethical leadership, but brings some immediate challenges.

News organizations are publishing distorted coverage. We're already hearing about frivolous lawsuits and other "lawfare" approaches targeting us simply because we voted to honor our proud tradition of social justice boycotts. As we know from Joe Szladek's email of May 23, Coop staff have had to deal with a series of menacing incidents.

This is the time to come together as a community. Whatever our view on the boycott issue, we need to firmly reject these efforts to punish our Coop for making a democratic decision. Let's be especially mindful of the staff, who are doing a brilliant job of keeping the Coop humming along in extraordinary times. Let's support them however we can.

In cooperation,
Mischa Berlin

IN WITH THE NEW AND OUT WITH THE SPITEFUL

Dear Members:

It's a new era for the Coop, whose shelves now better reflect our values. We enthusiastically voted for a principled, necessary boycott of Israeli products, in solidarity with Palestinians and in protest of Israel's violent and dehumanizing apartheid system. News of the boycott reached friends in Paris, in Gaza and in every corner of New York City.

For some years now, there's been an upsurge in prospective Coop members. Since the May 26 vote, I believe the Coop will experience even higher new member de-

mand. As I write this, however, it is unreasonably challenging to join. Scheduled orientations are full, and prospective members need to act quickly to reserve a spot. Reddit users share tips on snagging orientation seats. It's the hottest, hardest ticket to score in NYC.

At this pivotal moment, when member participation is at an all-time high, how can the Coop involve more members to grow our membership, starting with easing the orientation process? Let's be creative!

Let's also consider the minority of members who, in response to the boycott vote, have said publicly that they are planning to leave the Coop. Others have said they plan to go on leave—a course that, while it may not violate Coop policy, I can't help noticing would deny the Coop revenue while not allowing new active (and shopping) members to take their place.

Still others, including in the pages of the *New York Post*, have indicated that they are considering taking steps such as scheduling shifts but not showing up, in an active attempt to harm the Coop. Such acts would be starkly uncooperative. Membership at the PSFC is a privilege. It is not a right. A member who publicly states they desire to harm the Coop should lose their membership, especially now when so many New Yorkers are clamoring to join.

Anonymous

Editors' note: Per our policy the Gazette permits anonymous letters only in certain cases.

MAY 26, 2026

November 10, 2026



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

GM FACT CHECK

Dear Coop members:

During the voting discussion at the GM on April 28, a member incorrectly stated that Trump lost the popular vote. According to the Federal Election Commission Harris received 75.0 million vs Trump's 77.3 million.

Thank you,
Brett Applebaum

ICE OUT OF PSFC!

Dear Coop community,

I am horrified to learn that there is an ICE attorney who is a member at the Park Slope Food Coop. A fellow Coop member informed us of this at the March General Meeting, thanks to a Guardian investigation into the personal lives of ICE attorneys who deport our neighbors. I highly recommend everyone read the article, which is titled, "The secretive, destructive work of an ICE attorney: 'My job is to do what I'm told.' "

ICE attorneys are a critical part of the Trump administration's deportation machine. Their explicit job is to provide reason to immigration judges—also hired by the Department of Homeland Security—to dismiss asylum claims and tear families apart. Every day, ICE attorneys provide a legal façade for the brutal federal agents who tear our neighbors out of their homes, imprison them in horrendous camps and deport our neighbors to countries they never even came from.

Park Slope Food Coop strives to be "welcoming and accessible to all"—but that doesn't work for an attorney whose job it is to help identify, kidnap and deport our neighbors. That kind of person makes the Coop unsafe, and the Coop has a responsibility to remove such a member.

If anyone sees ICE agents—or other deputized federal agents doing the work of

ICE—nearby the Coop or elsewhere in New York, you can call the NYC community hotline at (229) 304-8720. The hotline is staffed daily from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in English and Spanish.

As a Coop community and neighbors, we all have a responsibility to protect one another from the violence of this fascist administration.

Sincerely,
Sophie Shepherd

DEMOCRACY REQUIRES PARTICIPATION. DIAL IN FOR THE MAY 26 GENERAL MEETING

Fellow member-owners,

On May 26, members will vote on two measures that could permanently alter how this Coop makes decisions: whether to lower the 75% threshold required to enact any boycott, and whether to align the Coop with BDS. Whatever your views, these are among the most consequential votes in our Coop's history.

Our diffuse governance structure makes it so that these decisions will be made by a few hundred members out of 16,000. Moreover, at a General Meeting, only the presenters of an agenda item have a guaranteed voice. Those who oppose it may or may not be called on by the chair… randomly, with no time to build a case or an opportunity for rebuttal.

While this is a workable format for routine business, it is a remarkably poor one for a binary vote on a question that has consumed this Coop since October 2023. One side

gets a prepared presentation while the other gets to hope they're called on.

There is already a group with a mailing list of over 3,000 members who will be alerted exactly how and when to show up. If the broader membership sits it out, the outcome will reflect that slice of us—not all of us.

I'll be honest: I have a strong perspective on both items. But I'm not writing to share them or convince you. I'm writing because a decision this significant deserves the widest possible participation, and because I believe that sunlight is the best antiseptic.

You can participate from your couch: The May 26 General Meeting is available via Zoom, but you must register to participate in advance. To join, visit your Member Services account at foodcoop.com. Sign-up closes at 5:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Sincerely,
Tali Rasis

PLEA FOR CONFLICT MEDIATION

Dear Coop members:

It is now known that the Agenda Committee has scheduled the vote to eliminate the 75% super majority for boycotts and the vote to align the Coop to BDS principles for the next general meeting on May 26. Regardless of how unbalanced this process has been, there is another way. A more cooperative way: Mediation.

NY Peace Institute, a non-profit conflict resolution organization, has been contacted

and are ready to develop a fair, proven process that has all sides work toward a focused way forward to repair our community. They did precisely this when a similar issue over the Israel/Palestinian conflict fractured at P.S. 261. Their work in that case and countless others along with their commitment to empower all stakeholders to find creative and durable solutions to disputes is exactly what the Coop needs now. It is who we truly are.

So how do we implement this? If you are reading this before 5 p.m. on May 26, register to attend the general meeting and vote AGAINST changing the 75% super majority requirement and vote AGAINST aligning PSFC to BDS Principles. Regardless of the vote results, sign the petitions being circulated which state mediation as a desirable course of action. Attend General Meetings.

As Joe Szladek said in his letter to membership, “When attendance is low, well-organized participation by any side of an issue can have an outsized impact.” This is precisely how the voices of the unaffiliated but affected membership can be heard.

While it is understandable that sympathy for the Palestinian cause is high, aligning with BDS will not help them, or us. Alignment will expose us to financial and legal jeopardy. There is a third way. Let’s embrace each other and take back our unity.

With gratitude,
Greg Selig

MY STORY

Dear Coop members:

I am a Jewish Coop member who supports BDS because I believe that external pressure on the Israeli government is necessary if peace is ever to be achieved for everyone, Jews and Palestinians, who live in that land.

My parents grew up surrounded by anti-Semitism. My mother was born in Germany in 1925. She fled to Belgium with her family in 1938 and survived the war living underground in Brussels, working as a nanny. My father was born in Vienna in 1923. His father was in the early Zionist movement there. He fled with his family to Palestine in 1938. In 1948, in NYC, they fell in love and married.

They ingrained in me a deep horror of racism of any kind and an understanding of the importance of speaking out and acting against injustice.

As a teenager I was a Socialist Zionist. I admired the kibbutzim and the idea of "a land without people for a people without land." I knew Jewish refugees from Europe were refused entry to so many countries. But as I got older, I realized that much of what I had been told about Israel was untrue. And I understood the contradictions inherent in a state that gave privileges to one group of people over another. Those contradictions have led Israel to becoming the monstrous actor in the world that it is today.

I am writing this letter because I am upset by statements that BDS supporters are bringing hate to the Coop. I want undecided people to have a portrait of someone who has come to my position over time. I support BDS at the Coop not out of feelings of hate, but out of a deep love for my fellow human beings.

With hopes for a just peace,
Judy Loebl

BEFORE ANY BOYCOTT VOTE

To the editor:

The March 31 GM slideshow featured Rod Morrison's photograph, reproduced in the current *Linewaiters' Gazette*, showing Israeli products for sale at the Coop. There were nine items displayed, sold by five companies: Dorst, Equal Exchange, Seed & Mill, Eco Love and Al Arz Tahini. To adhere to BDS guidelines for a boycott, according to their website, these companies must "play a clear and direct role in Israel's crimes against Palestinians." The organization is thus not advocating a blanket boycott of all Israeli goods.

Before the Coop community can be asked to vote on a boycott, or on a referendum on voting to have a boycott, we need to hear from the Coop's pro-BDS supporters about the specific politics held by these specific Israeli companies, to ensure that this would not be a blanket boycott of all Israeli products, regardless of their company policies.

I therefore request that the pro-BDS group submit such a list for the next issue of the *Gazette*, perhaps as a reply to this letter. We need clear and verifiable information about the politics of companies selling Israeli products carried by the Coop. Please name the product, name the company and provide evidence of the company's support for the war in Gaza.

In cooperation,
Kathy Hieatt

BOYCOTTING THE BOYCOTT

Dear Editor,

I’m deeply concerned about the rift intensifying in the PSFC community regarding the proposed boycott of products originating in Israel. I’m worried because I see the surfacing of dangerous anti-Semitic sentiments that have been brewing throughout this conversation. I’m worried because I see a highly vocal, well-organized group, which represents a very small percentage of the overall membership, taking over our discourse and governance structures. I’m worried because I see the things I love about this Coop being torn apart in service of a boycott that won’t have any impact at all on human rights abuses in the Middle East (something I care deeply about).

I don’t want to leave the Coop if the boycott passes. More likely, I will retain my membership, but boycott the Coop itself.

I really don’t want to be put in that position.

Sincerely,
Geoff Davenport

A VOTE FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Dear Coop community:

As a proud Jew and a proud Coop member for over 30 years, I am deeply saddened to see the wonderful traditions of both Judaism and our Coop contorted beyond recognition as cries of “divisiveness” and “anti-Semitism” have entered the discourse about whether we should boycott Israeli goods. I stand with leaders in the international human rights community (including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International) as well as with Israeli human rights groups (including B’Tselem, ACRI, Yesh Din and HaMoked) in condemning violations when they occur regardless of who the perpetrators or victims are. As the child of Holocaust survivors I’m especially horrified by the ongoing atrocities in the Occupied Territories and urge our beloved Coop members to stand strong in the face of these violations of international law and vote YES to boycott Israeli goods and AGAINST the supermajority rule developed to thwart that boycott. We have a moral obligation to do so.

Sincerely,
Carol Wald

ABUSE OF THE COOP’S EMAIL LIST

Dear Coop members:

For the second time in a year, the General Manager has taken it upon themselves to use the Coop’s Email List to give their opinion about a live issue. In both cases the issue is Israel-Palestine, and in both cases the GM has seen fit to put their finger on the scale in favor of the pro-Israel segment of our membership.

The April 28 email states that a member is being investigated for remarks quoted earlier in the email. But in sending this email, our GM has both prejudged the matter and prejudiced the proceedings of the dispute resolution process he mentions. The email

publicly labels the remarks as “unfortunate,” “unacceptable,” “anti-Semitic” and having “no place at the Coop.” Worse, it refers to “the member who *made the anti-Semitic statement.*” These prejudicial comments were sent to the entire membership, including those who will sit in judgement on the allegations.

I requested to speak to Joe Szladek about this on May 5 and he kindly agreed. I asked him to explain why remarks condemning ethnic supremacism were anti-Semitic in his opinion. He did not really do so; instead he stated that he had heard from a lot of members who were upset and essentially told me that this is why he had sent the email. But this surely can’t be the standard for evaluating whether remarks are racist (anti-Semitism being a form of racism). That determination should be based on objective criteria not whether, or how many, people report being upset by them. If the latter is the standard, then all it takes for free speech to be selectively shut down is for a group of people to claim they found remarks “hurtful” to quote the email. That would be a shame.

Joe, please respond if you feel I am mischaracterizing our discussion.

Signed, Anonymous

Editors’ note: Per our policy the Gazette permits anonymous letters only in certain cases.

JOE SZLADEK RESPONDS

Dear Coop members,

Anonymous asked whether I felt they mischaracterized our conversation, and I’d like to clarify what I shared.

During our discussion, I told them that members could review my email to the membership directly for my reasoning and the context in which it was written.

I also told them that, yes, part of my responsibility as General Manager is listening seriously when large numbers of members report that a statement felt discriminatory, threatening or harmful to them, particularly in a workplace and community environment. That does not mean that “whoever is upset wins,” nor does it mean that accusations alone determine outcomes. It means concerns raised by a substantial portion of the membership and staff cannot simply be dismissed or ignored, and deserve attention and appropriate review.

Ensuring that members and staff feel safe and respected participating in Coop life is part of my role, and I will continue to take such concerns seriously.

Joe Szladek
General Manager
Park Slope Food Coop

PROUD OF OUR COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Dear fellow members:

I write on behalf of myself and not the Board.

It is so important that a vote on a boycott of Israeli products is finally happening. I appreciate everyone who has cooperated toward this possibility over long years. The committee for hybrid meetings has done a wonderful job implementing safe and well-run meetings, with participation from members and staff in the room and online. The chair committee has managed difficult discussions. Members who waited since 2023 to present their boycott proposal finally offered incredibly poignant arguments for why a boycott is urgent, and in keeping with Coop history. Without these efforts, it would not be possible for the Board to receive the will of the membership on this issue. I am proud to work on the difficult project of democratic governance with all of

you.

Reaching a vote at the GM is a victory for Coop democracy. The boycott proposal has faced countless obstructions and procedural delays. Bureaucratic gauntlets and uncooperative behavior have harmed the health of Coop democracy; trust in our governance is low. A referendum would further delay a decisive vote on May 26th. Long-standing precedent is that decisions such as this are made by members at GMs.

Israel's genocide in Palestine, and metastasizing violence in Iran and Lebanon, are relentless. Our complicity in U.S.-Israel wars is painful and exhausting. A boycott is the least we can do. I am proud to be a Coop member as we, I hope, align our buying practices with our moral conscience.

That said, as a board member, I look forward to hearing from members on this issue. I pledge to perform my due diligence in an unbiased way, and vote according to the will of membership, as I have since I was elected.

Sincerely,
Tess Brown-Lavoie
Vice President of the PSFC Board

GENERAL MANAGER'S WHOLLY INAPPROPRIATE MISSIVE

Dear Coop members:

Mr. Szladek's email sent to members of the Coop raises profound concern about our leadership.

His letter suggests to me that he did not reach out directly to the individual to hear what was meant by the phrase "Jewish supremacism." There is an "investigation" not yet complete but that sounds more like a witch hunt, as Szladek's email effectively conveys to the membership inappropriately and arbitrarily that the member is guilty of antisemitism. Szladek thus escalates tensions. To my knowledge, no other individual facing any disciplinary action has warranted such a missive from the General Manager. The only remote comparison is Holtz's offensive missive to restrain any vote.

Mr. Szladek effectively demeans all who find the genocide being waged by Israel unconscionable and criminal. I find that as profoundly hurtful as it is horrifying. This is an abuse of power and an attempt to slant membership views to his misguided efforts to counter "anti-Semitism" by again conflating rejection of Zionism with hatred of Jews.

Many argue that support of the current fascist regime in Israel is itself anti-Semitism, resulting in reinforcement of hatred of Jews by those already so inclined. The people SERIOUSLY being hurt, maimed and murdered by the hundreds of thousands are Palestinian and Lebanese children, women, families.

However, Szladek's email conveys no effort at any deeper understanding, preferring to inflame. The phrase "Jewish supremacy" is understood by many, including Jews, as rejection of those who believe "superiority" justifies cruelty and death. See, e.g., https://www.btselem.org/publications/fulltext/202101_this_is_apartheid.

The upshot of Szladek's commentary is support of apartheid and its consequences of ethnic cleansing, genocide and the need for Bibi to continue to wage war to keep him out of prison where he belongs. Any group's notion of "supremacy" is absurd, brittle, and false.

This abuse of power can have only one outcome: Szladek must resign.

Boycott the horror of Apartheid Israel.

Sincerely,
George Carter

UNION MARKET BLUES

Dear Coop members,

When I first joined the Coop, I walked its aisles like they were an art gallery. Every shelf felt curated, the best version of everything, chosen not just for quality but for principle. The Coop taught me that a grocery store can be an expression of values rather than just a place to buy things cheaper than at Union Market.

So I noticed the Sabra hummus. Not because it is particularly good (it isn't), but because it seemed out of place. In a space this limited, every product on the shelf is a choice. This is a Coop that refuses to sell Coca-Cola over labor abuses, that boycotted South African goods over apartheid, that won't stock bottled water on environmental grounds. And yet products from a state whose treatment of Palestinians has been called apartheid by B'Tselem, Israel's own leading human rights organization, take up valuable space on our shelves without scrutiny.

The reason is not that the membership supports this. A small group of members have spent years using procedural maneuvering to prevent a democratic vote. They raised the boycott threshold from a simple majority to 75% in 2016 specifically because they feared losing. They fought hybrid meetings to limit participation. When the story

reaches the *New York Post*, it is the BDS supporters who get cast as unreasonable, fixated on hummus and red peppers. But caring about where our hummus comes from is the entire point of a coop like this one.

On May 26, we vote on restoring simple majority for boycotts, the same standard this Coop used for decades. I urge every member to attend. I joined a Coop that cares, not a discount Union Market, and I would like to keep shopping at one.

Sincerely,
Ali Safarkhani

RESPONSE FROM THE GENERAL COORDINATORS

This letter contains two factual inaccuracies that readers should be aware of.

Sabra is no longer jointly owned by an Israeli company. In 2024, PepsiCo purchased the remaining 50% stake in Sabra from Strauss Group, becoming the sole owner of the company. All Sabra products distributed and marketed in the United States are now produced under PepsiCo's ownership.

The Coop did previously boycott Coca-Cola products. However, that boycott expired in October 2018 when its advocates did not present it for renewal, as required under the Coop's boycott procedures. Under those rules, boycott advocates must seek renewal each October or the boycott automatically lapses. The Coop currently sells products associated with The Coca-Cola Company, including items under the Simply and Fairlife labels.

ARE WE FORCING OUR FRIENDS INTO THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMIES?

Dear Coop members:

At the GM in March, a commenter said that “BDS pushes the moderate political forces in Israel towards the right.” Was the speaker disingenuous or merely ignorant?

Earlier this month, former Israeli prime minister Yair Lapid, a “moderate,” joined forces with former Israeli PM, the right-wing settler advocate Naftali Bennett in a bid to unseat Benjamin Netanyahu. Bennett is on record advocating “shoot to kill” policies, even of young Palestinians. “They are not children—they are terrorists,” said Bennet in 2018. Lapid’s views are much the same: “We need to get the Palestinians out of our lives. What we have to do is build a high wall and get them out of our sight… There will be no peace”. (https://www.timesofisrael.com/lapid-israel-needs--to-separate-from-the-palestinians/)

Certainly there are Israelis who oppose their government. If they stand against genocide, as some do (in a poll conducted at Hebrew University from last August, 62% of Israelis agreed with the statement that there are “no innocents in Gaza”) they should stand for justice—justice that is outlined in international law and on which the BDS movement is founded.

Standing for justice is an obligation for all human beings, only amplified when our country is a partner in genocide. Vote YES on May 26.

Sincerely,
Mischa Berlin

GENERAL MEETINGS NOW ARE A NEW FORM OF TORTURE

Dear fellow Coop members,

After almost 20 years of my Coop membership I've decided to write the *Gazette* for the first time.

You see, I have to confess: I'm not able to attend the monthly meetings any more. Just thinking of going makes me sick to my stomach.

Sitting among M4P feels like being trapped in an enemy camp, which leads to extreme discomfort, anxiety and deep sadness.

In my 46 years in America the Coop is the ONLY place where I have ever experienced this—a thick clot of concentrated hatred that's almost palpable.

I don't have the emotional strength, to subject myself to this torture any more.

To tell you the truth even shopping itself has become much less pleasant lately.

Respectfully,
Asya M. Gorokhovsky

WHO ARE WE?

To the Editor:

One day last year I was talking with an old friend and Coop member about the proposal to boycott Israeli products. "I hate what Israel is doing," he said, but in the next breath he told me he loves the Coop and is afraid that a boycott might break it apart.

I've thought about that conversation a lot. I'm guessing there are other members who

are really upset at what Israel is doing in Gaza and in Palestine generally, who understand that the U.S. is supporting Israel with military aid, but feel like the conflict has nothing to do with the Coop, and nothing we do here in Park Slope is going to change what's happening there. I've heard people say that deciding to boycott Israeli products will divide the Coop community and damage the cooperative spirit that it embodies.

For me, the critical questions are "Who are we?" and "What do we stand for?"

We have all watched as Israel has bombed Gaza, killing more than 70,000 people, over 20,000 of whom are children. We have seen Gaza reduced to rubble, its hospitals, schools, libraries systematically destroyed. They have done all this with our support.

No one pretends that the Coop deciding to boycott Israeli products will stop the slaughter and end the occupation. But the action will reverberate, in part because the Coop is so large and carries historical weight both in NYC and across the country. It will be another dent in the armor.

We have an opportunity to do something meaningful on May 26. Doing it will require all of us to step up and take action!

Who are we if we don't stand for anything?

Sincerely,
John Gordon

WHY I WAS CANVASSING OUTSIDE THE COOP

Dear Coop members:

I was moved by the proposal to boycott Israeli products at the March GM. I also thoroughly enjoyed the panel invitation from the same meeting. Check it out here if you haven't seen it yet. Wherever there is standing against oppression and standing for freedom for all (not just some), that's where I want to be. Thank you so much to the team of boycott presenters and the team of panel organizers. Their willingness to stand in solidarity with Palestinians and propose that we all together do so was a complete win for me.

Pointing at systematic state oppression is no small thing. Oppression wants to be normal or un-notable or even better, invisible or elusive. In fact, it is ugly and mean, it hurts across generations, it starves people, it separates them, it ranks them, it forces folks on trails of tears, and it does not want to be identified or take accountability. Right now, it's choke-holding Palestinians to the point of genocide and complete erasure. The harm from this contorted position cannot be innocently supported on our grocery story. We must say yes to a boycott.

To all the folks at the Park Slope Food Coop who have connections and family in Israel, I am so grateful. We need your local connections to move the issue even further. We need our own local connections here in Brooklyn to move our own government even further. Let's see our collective actions lead to collective freedom and peace for all. Palestinians, you are not invisible to us!

Sincerely,
Janna Beckler

FACTS ABOUT THE BOYCOTT SUPERMAJORITY

Members:

The successful adoption of our Boycott Supermajority appealed to common sense. I saw how our boycott guidelines in 2016 were only suggestions, not rules, and therefore prone to exploitation by outsider, non-PSFC movements that could steal our cooperative's platform to maximize visibility. I campaigned against ALL divisive boycotts and highlighted how cooperation among labor is honoring diversity. I showed how our guideline's weaknesses left cracks in our stability, and then we voted to plug those cracks. The supermajority vote was successful and perfectly legal. There is always grousing about "procedure" from the losing side, yet no one has ever challenged the actual results or proceedings. The supermajority continues to prevent violations of our International Cooperative Alliance and Mission Statement, and cancelling it means BDS ushering in support for a violently misogynistic, racist and Jew-hating theocracy (something BDS has never ever ever denied). Yes, we should fight that. How difficult is it to say we stand against violent theocracy?

The Boycott Supermajority simply codifies how PSFC spoke as one body, one voice, decades before BDS existed. Our natural cohesion meant no one considered simple majorities worth debating since all other boycotts were approved by nearly 100% of membership. If BDS is certain they represent the vast majority opinion, shouldn't they shoot for the historical 90% other boycotts have achieved? They can't. They won't. The "simple majority" counter-argument is therefore evasive and obfuscating, a red-herring foisted by the losing side trying to literally rewrite the rules for themselves only, exemplifying a boycott strategy the supermajority was designed to prevent.

Please vote to maintain our Boycott Supermajority. We did a good thing by adopting it. A really good thing.

Sincerely,
Jesse Rosenfeld

SUPPORTING OUR COOP'S PRINCIPLES

Dear Coop members,

It was appalling at the April General Meeting to hear a Coop member say "Jewish supremacism is a problem in this country….." and furthermore to hear some Coop members applaud the remark, a comment worthy of Tucker Carlson, Candice Owens and Nick Fuentes.

A statement issued afterwards by PSFC4Palestine did NOT directly condemn the aforementioned member's hateful statement. They weakly said in a detached manner, "The use of this term in an American context can call to mind harmful, centuries old conspiracies portraying Jews as a coordinated group seeking power over politics, finance or public life."

Their statement went on to explain how the supremacy label is (understandably) often used in the Israel-Palestine context (which is irrelevant because the Coop member's hateful comment was unquestionably in the context of the United States).

We as a community should be supporting groups on the ground in Israel-Palestine doing the real work of promoting justice every day. As longtime Palestinian activist Aziz Abu Sarah recently told journalist Peter Beinart, Palestinians and Israelis working together is NOT "normalizing the status quo" as "we're not accepting or normalizing the occupation….or current reality. Some people," he added, "are misusing normalization for any joint work between Israelis and Palestinians."

Does the Coop want to align itself with BDS which has condemned Palestinian-Israeli lead organizations like Standing Together and the Palestinian-Israeli produced Oscar-winning documentary *No Other Land*? These and other Israeli-Palestinian co-led groups such as Abraham Initiatives, Parents Circle Forum and the Palestinian lead environment focused Arava Institute are the initiatives the Coop should be supporting, not the exclusionary BDS.

In peace and cooperation,
Steven Gold

THE ESSENTIAL MEANINGLESSNESS OF A BOYCOTT

Dear Coop members:

In my opinion the Park Slope Food Coop boycotting a handful of items made in Israel, will have absolutely no effect on the goings on in the Middle East.

All it will be is a statement. Much like the statement we made in support of Black Lives Matter on July 28, 2020. From the minutes of that meeting, the proposal put forth said:

“The Park Slope Food Coop unequivocally supports Black lives and the dismantling of all systems that propagate and empower systemic racism #BlackLivesMatter.”

The proposal passed “with 96% in favor and 4% against (260, yes. 10, no).”

Virtually no one was against doing what we did here.

Early in my Food Coop career we supported the Grape Workers Boycott. I recall in that case that no one anywhere (except the owners of the grape orchards) objected to the idea of supporting the workers. Plus, the Coop sells way more California grapes than we sell Israeli bell peppers.

With our opportunity to join the BDS Boycott of Israel Products movement, Coop sentiment is WAY LESS clear. There is no unanimity amongst our 17,000 members. I'd say it's more like a hate fest.

If we remove the 75% boycott voting threshold and activate our blessed "right" to simple majority decisions, what would it really mean if the boycott was passed 8,501 to 8,499?

I say it would mean nothing.

Sincerely,
Andy Feldman

BETRAYING THE PRINCIPLES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Fellow members:

I have been a Coop member for 15 years because I believe in what this place is supposed to represent: a community built on genuine cooperation, across difference,

without exception.

What happened at the April GM was a betrayal of that. Not a political disagreement. A betrayal where some Coop members cheered a speaker who called Jewish supremacism a national problem. Elsewhere member complaints have been dismissed as “Jewish privilege.” In one incident, a woman stocking shelves was screamed at over supposed political disagreements. These are not the actions of a community in good faith disagreement. They are a campaign of dehumanization happening inside our store.

Somehow, I continue to be called a racist, a genocide-supporter and a “Zionist” despite consistently speaking respectfully and with moral clarity on what is happening within our community.

Sadly, the PSFC Palestine group doubled down on the term Jewish Supremacism via email and continues to spread hatred and libel. In fact, the PSFC Palestine email represents another assault on our sense of community. This is not who we are as a Coop. Full stop. That’s what I said at the GM and that’s what I’ll say in this email. I believe cooperation means cooperating with everyone, including those I disagree with. That is the founding principle of this Coop.

Board members who have participated in or enabled this campaign of hatred and dehumanization should step down. Not as punishment, but because leadership requires the trust of the whole community, and that trust has been broken.

The Park Slope Food Coop could be a model for how people in genuine conflict find a way to work together. That possibility still exists. But not if we keep allowing what is happening to continue.

In cooperation,
Ramon Maislen

IN SUPPORT OF TAYLOR PATE’S CANDIDACY

Dear Coop Members,

I want to give a big shoutout to Taylor Pate, who is running for the Board of Directors. If you have not yet read Pate’s board statement, please do so.

Taylor Pate is a person of deep integrity and principle, with a longstanding commitment to social, economic and racial justice. She brings extensive experience working at the intersection of food policy and procurement, has been a member of multiple food co-op communities in NYC, and has served on nonprofit and housing co-op boards. But beyond her qualifications, Taylor understands something fundamental: that access to fresh, affordable quality food should never be a luxury determined by income or zip code. Not only is Taylor highly qualified; she is also the strongest candidate running. That was especially clear at the March General Meeting, where her thoughtful and grounded responses stood out.

Taylor leads with courage and humility. She is unapologetically anti-genocide and anti-apartheid. She does not hesitate to articulate her support for boycotting Israeli products at PSFC, while also making clear that she will affirm the will of the membership, no matter which way the boycott vote goes.

Fellow PSFC members: we are now at a crossroads. At a time when people across our country are refusing to stay silent in the face of ongoing atrocities being committed by the Israeli government with full support of our own, we too have a choice about what kind of co-op we want to be. We can take a stand or we can be silent. But be assured, silence sends a message too, and it is chilling.

Taylor has shown that she is willing to lead with principle, even when it is difficult. That is exactly the kind of leadership our co-op needs right now.

Sincerely,
Upjeet Chandan

VOTE YES FOR A BOYCOTT

Dear Coop,

In recent days, I've been seeing news stories about the horrific unsanitary conditions in Gaza. Living in crowded tents, Palestinian children are covered with painful insect bites. Sewage overflows. The rat population is exploding. Rodents are so aggressive that people are afraid to sleep at night. These factors compound the effects from a severe shortage of necessary medications, food and building supplies—all due to Israel's ongoing blockade. A clip from Democracy Now details "the collapse of every essential condition required for human survival."

In this time of vigorous debate and inflamed rhetoric at the Coop, I want to re-center the underlying issue: justice for Palestine. I want to pay attention to the actual conditions that Palestinians are enduring—in Gaza, yes, but also in the Occupied West Bank, where Palestinian villagers are under attack by violent Israeli settlers as detailed in a powerful report by PSFC member Jasper Nathaniel during an online panel ("Palestine, Produce, Principles") held on April 21.

But I want to do more than lament Palestinian suffering and rage against the perpetrators. I want to embrace the idea that justice for Palestine means something incredibly positive. The horizon is liberation, not merely an end to genocide and apartheid. That sentiment is beautifully captured on a T-shirt I purchased from a Coop member many years ago. On the front it says "PALESTINE." On the back is a list that I only have space to quote in part: "The right to memory…the right to be heard…the right to

fish…the right to farm…the right to swim in the sea…the right to cross the ocean…”

In support of all these rights, please vote “yes” to adopt a Coop boycott of Israeli products that will end when Israel complies with international law in its treatment of Palestinians.

In cooperation,
Jan Clausen

THE BOYCOTT’S REAL OBJECTIVE

Dear Coop members:

I urge all members to think critically about the strategic ambiguity in the language of the boycott proposal and presentation shared by Members4Palestine at the April GM.

“Until Israel complies with international law in its treatment of Palestinians…”

From their presentation, this entails:

“Ending the occupation and colonization of Palestinian lands…”

They invite members to apply their own definition of what constitutes *Palestinian Lands*. For some, this will mean Gaza and the West Bank. The strategic ambiguity is that “*Palestinian lands*” could be interpreted many ways, including the internationally recognized land of Israel.

Make no mistake, a vote for this boycott IS a vote to boycott Israel until it no longer

exists. This is not a boycott for peace and equality. This is not a boycott for a two-state solution. You may have those noble goals in your heart, but a “YES” vote for this boycott is aligning yourself with the goal of completely dismantling the world’s only Jewish-majority state.

The organizers of this boycott did not seek cooperation with members opposed to that goal to find common ground. They exploited the latest escalation in hostilities, initiated by Hamas’ massacre on October 7, to push an agenda they have sought for decades, ending the state of Israel. They will gladly accept the support of members with less extreme goals to advance their agenda.

Should this boycott pass, the Coop will likely lose many Jewish families, who history has cruelly taught, time and again, that without Jewish self-determination there is no guarantee of safety for Jews when societies turn against them. When we leave, will the Coop ever again be able to muster 50%+1 members who accept your definition of peace between Israel and Palestine to end this boycott?

Respectfully,
Daniel G.

Editors’ note: Per our policy the Gazette permits anonymous letters only in certain cases.

IT DIDN’T NEED TO BE THIS WAY

To the diplomat who spoke at the last General Meeting:

In November 2024 I submitted an agenda item that might have spared the member-

ship at large from being bombarded with the topic of the “Israel boycott.”

The item, now Agenda Item 901, would pause a vote and establish a conflict resolution process by which the supporters and opponents of realigning the Coop with the principles of the BDS movement (which requires boycotting Israeli products), would engage in mediated dialogue and, if they could not resolve their differences, would allow the factions to present their respective proposals at the same time.

In January the Agenda Committee resumed scheduling agenda item relating to the BDS alignment vote.

On January 6 the Agenda Committee contacted me about scheduling Agenda Item 901 for discussion. On January I asked how it planned to schedule the items for discussion and voting since a vote on aligning with BDS would make mine futile. The Committee did not respond. I sent follow-up emails on January 16, February 23, on March 13. On March 14, I received a response that addressed technical matters but ignored that question.

I sent follow-up emails March 27, April 7, April 21 and finally May 5, the day before the Agenda Committee met to set the schedule for this month’s meeting.

The Agenda Committee never responded, and it scheduled the BDS-alignment vote for this month’s meeting.

I tried.
Noah Potter

IN RESPONSE TO NOAH POTTER’S LETTER

The Agenda Committee balances many competing demands and takes many factors

into account in crafting the GM agendas, including but not limited to the order in which items were received, the efficient running of the Coop, the proponents' availability, and other items in the queue. Our decisions are informed by the AC's charter and rules, which are available on the Coop's website. Out of respect for members on both sides of the issue who have been waiting for years for these discussions to take place, we have been advancing items related to a potential boycott of Israeli goods now that hybrid meetings make it possible to do so.

Noah Potter's item was submitted a full year after the boycott proposal he refers to and the AC engaged with his inquiries numerous times. No member has the right to insist that their item be heard before another member's item despite being submitted many months after, nor to demand that other members' items be indefinitely paused in service of their own.

The Agenda Committee

A LESSON FROM A HISTORIC SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

Dear Coop community,

In 1984, ten young grocery workers at Dunnes Stores in Dublin took a courageous stand: They refused to handle South African goods in protest against apartheid. They maintained their pickets in solidarity with millions of oppressed people they had never met, and their perseverance changed history.The strike was the direct catalyst for Ireland becoming the first Western European nation to ban South African goods. Other countries followed suit.

For their bravery, the grocery workers were praised by Nelson Mandela, who told them that "ordinary people far away from the crucible of apartheid cared for our freedom." Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who met them on his way to receive his Nobel

Peace Prize, simply called them “quite remarkable people” whose refusal to handle South African goods represented a “unique and inspirational act of international solidarity.”

This moment is a proud chapter in Irish history, and one I remember clearly. Growing up, my parents boycotted South African goods in our home. They taught us that standing up for equal rights meant STANDING UP FOR EVERYONE, WITH NO EXCEPTIONS.

Today, we members of the Coop have that same power to make a choice that sends a message. By voting to cease stocking Israeli goods, we can show our opposition to Israel’s apartheid policies against the Palestinian people.

We are a community of kind, caring and open people. While we may often feel powerless in the face of global events, in our own community we are not. We can choose to do what is right. It is a matter of principle: we should not stock products that help fund apartheid.

With kindness,
Connie Bree

LET US TOGETHER AFFIRM OUR SHARED VALUES

Dear Coop family:

I’m looking forward to us affirming both our core values and our greater cohesion. The tension has impacted me deeply. As a Black man with a Jewish mom (and Rabbi uncle), I understand many sides of oppression and issues of fear and insecurity. While praise is due to the huge Jewish movement that has undertaken self-reflection and

faced difficult truths, sadly, a different ilk has been a highly vocal minority here—attempting to silence our solidarity around one of the world's most important movements for peace and justice; advocating undemocratic measures; and claiming that our legitimate peaceful measures promulgate anti-Semitism and even terrorism. (I was called a Jew-hater and Nazi for passing out fliers asking simply for a vote to enable even a discussion of BDS.) Though this has tarnished my feelings toward the Coop, still, this is democracy, and we must find a way to forge our way through it, hoping to enhance greater mutual understanding but knowing that not everyone will be pleased. Still, if we are committed to a fair and transparent process, I'm confident that most members will respect the outcome, and hopefully feel even stronger about our little microcosmic experience in true participatory democracy.

Forward Ever!
Mitty Owens, 20-year member

DEMOCRACY NEEDS A SIMPLE MAJORITY

Dear fellow cooperators,

I attended my first virtual General Meeting last month and so appreciated the opportunity to listen from home—many thanks to all who worked to enable hybrid meetings, and a more accessible democratic forum, an option for our coop. I also appreciated the thoughtful presentation about restoring the simple majority as the requirement to support a boycott, as was the case for over 40 years of Coop history. I understand how returning to a simple majority would give each person's vote equal weight, which seems fundamental to democratic decision making.

Engaging in democratic member control is one of the Seven Principles of Cooperation

that, according to our website, “guide and protect the integrity of our business as a democratic institution beholden only to our Member-Owners (you).” Democracy doesn’t mean we all, or almost all, have to have the same ideas or be in agreement—far from it. Democracy means each of us has a voice, an equal voice, in decisions about our coop. Respecting a simple majority vote on boycotts is an important way to practice living this democratic principle. I’m glad we have the chance to “protect the integrity of our coop” by restoring the simple majority for boycotts at the May general meeting.

In cooperation,
Kathy McCullagh

WANT MORE COOP MEMBERS? PASS BDS!

Dear new friends and fellow Coop members,

There are so many red herrings coming from a small contingent that keeps insisting we abandon a core cooperative principle: solidarity (source: International Cooperate Alliance). Our mission says we “strive to reduce the impact of our lifestyles on the world… We try to lead by example, educating ourselves and others.” BDS is a global, values-driven solidarity campaign that aligns with our mission. The worry that it would meaningfully shrink our membership is simply absurd.

I’m new to PSFC. I only joined after dragging my feet. I hesitated when I realized that the Coop sold Israeli-made goods. I finally joined because I saw PSFC support for CHIPS and because there was an active boycott group (PSFC4P). Their existence gave me confidence that the Coop could still be aligned with my values. If we pass a boycott, as other Coops have done, we will be more successful, not less. (See: UK Coop, Alleanza, Firenze, Green Hill)

When I talk to Park Slope neighbors about the Coop, three replies keep coming up: “It’s great, isn’t it?”, “I can’t get in. I’ve been trying for months (or even years)!”, or a cautious naming that the Coop does not support BDS. That’s telling.

Coops offer an alternative to corporate systems precisely because they are political by design: a space where everyday people collaborate to reimagine our ways of producing and consuming. Sustainable, less corrupted, and considerate of the lives of all involved. If we want PSFC to live up to our mission statement as “a part of and support[ing] the cooperative movement,” the choice is clear: rather than be driven by fear, we must center our values and enact boycott measures that reflect solidarity.

With hope, cooperation & solidarity,
Anonymous

Editors’ note: Per our policy the Gazette permits anonymous letters only in certain cases.

ANTI-ZIONISM IS ITS OWN FORM OF HATE

Dear Coop friends –

Have we really turned into a place where dozens of people applaud when someone says “Jewish supremacism is a problem in this country”? The applause is more troubling than the actual statement. Are people actually unaware of the history, implications and consequences of this racist statement?

I think we can now clearly see the toxic effect the anti-Zionist Israel boycott campaign conducted by Members 4 Palestine (M4P) has had on our community.

One of the M4P leaders walks around our Coop wearing a black T-shirt with the declaration “Antizionism Is Not Antisemitism.”

I agree. Anti-Zionism is its own form of hate. Antisemitism attacks Jewish assimilation (“you can’t live as a minority”). Anti-Zionism attacks the Jewish collective (“you can’t live as a majority”). Antisemitism libels Jews as “non-white race-polluters who infiltrate and subvert nations.” Anti-Zionism libels Jews as “white colonizers who enact Jewish supremacy and are inherently genocidal.” The message of each is: “Jews Don’t Belong. Jews Out.”

If this boycott discussion continues, if the Coop continues to provide a platform for anti-Zionism, then the toxicity, hate, mistrust and division will only increase. Our Coop is no place for anti-Zionist hate.

The Coop survives on cooperation; this is not cooperation. It’s time to end this now.

Barbara Mazor

DO THE RIGHT THING

Dear Coop members:

As a somewhat recent Coop member but a long-time Jew (78 years), I find the charges of antisemitism repeatedly hurled at those who support a Coop boycott of Israeli products to be at best ill-informed and at worst dishonest. I urge *Gazette* readers to join the large number of Coop members, Jews and non-Jews, who support the boycott and to vote for it at the end of this month. The supermajority requirement is just the latest anti-democratic move by the opposition; we mustn’t let these tactics prevent us from taking a moral stand against Israel’s genocidal policies.

Sincerely,
Robert Rosen