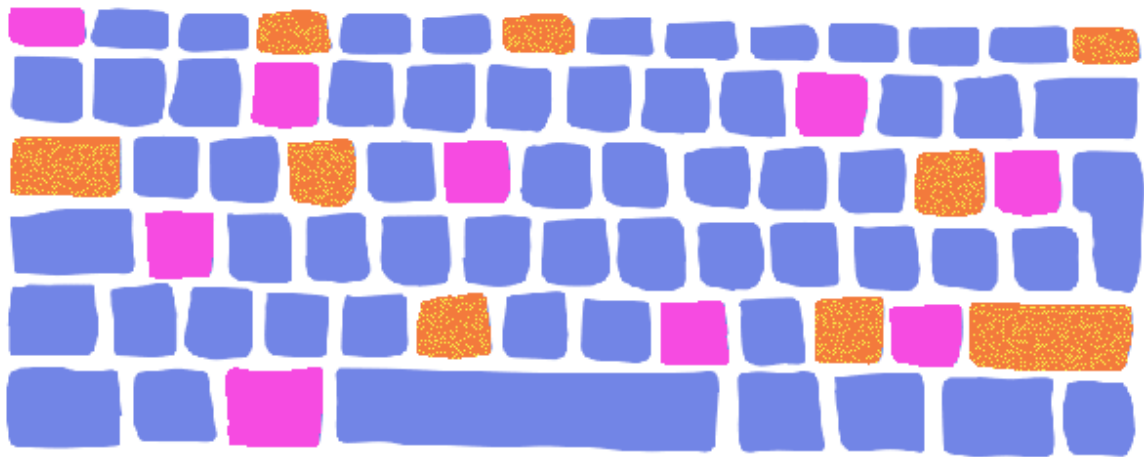


MAY 5, 2026

May 5, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



A YEAR AND A HALF ON THE WAITLIST

Dear Coop members,

In 2024, I signed up for as many checkout waitlists as I could. After a year and a half, I finally got off one of the lists. I was happy, but also stunned that it took that long: When I joined the Coop in 2017, I got off a similar waitlist in about two months. Today, you can't even get on a walking or checkout waitlist—every one is filled to capacity.

There's a lot to like about the changes we've made in recent years to our work system. The online system is easy to use and the increased availability of one-off shifts has increased work flexibility. But some of the changes have been for the worse. It's been getting harder to get one-off shifts and to get onto recurring shifts. Before the pandemic, we had a shift exchange board if you needed to miss a shift. You could also show up for an FTOP shift without pre-scheduling. Those options are gone.

The Coop's labor model relies on members providing labor, and the Coop needs to manage its labor needs carefully. But the model has to work for both the Coop and the members. It only works if members can actually get on a shift. I'd like the general coordinators to report to the membership on how the work slot system is currently designed, including how work slot numbers are determined and apportioned, and whether there's an opportunity to review it with the member experience in mind, not just operational efficiency.

*In cooperation,
Eric Rasmussen*

IN SUPPORT OF A REFERENDUM

Dear Coop members,

As staff members of the Coop with a range of political perspectives, we ask the presenters of the boycott proposal to bring this item forward as a referendum of the full

membership, rather than deciding it solely at a General Meeting.

The signatories below represent over 80% of our 70 full-time employees (and excludes the General Coordinators). We have a wide variety of opinions on the boycott itself, but we have come together to request a referendum vote, which would allow every member to vote by email ballot, ensuring equal participation and transparency.

This request comes from care for the Coop, its members and the long-term health of our organization. A referendum offers the clearest way to understand how the entire membership feels about this issue. While General Meetings have served the Coop well for decades, decisions with the potential for division deserve the broadest possible participation. Those seeking a similar boycott in 2012 recognized this and asked for a referendum. Past referendums have determined major issues such as hybrid General Meetings, purchasing another building and selling meat and beer.

A referendum allows all members to be heard, regardless of work or life schedules. It ensures fairness, accessibility and legitimacy by reflecting the will of the full membership—not only those able to attend a single meeting.

As staff, we've dedicated our energy and care to the Coop, and we know every decision shapes members' experiences and the community we share. Our goal is that every member feels at home here, and that means listening to every voice.

The aim is not only to reach a decision, but to reach one the Coop can collectively stand behind. A referendum provides the strongest foundation for that unity and shared purpose.

Sincerely,

Anna Adelson

Carline Aurelus

Masha Bezlepkina

Gillian Chi

Jim Christensen
Gabriel Concha
Sophie Cowen
Jana Cunningham
Ibou Diallo
Elly Dittmar
Dennis Dorgan
Dominique Esser
Francisco D. Ferreiro
Jessa Fisher
Mae Frankeberger
Karina Gee
Britt Henriksson
Martha Hoffman
John Horsman
Fiona Iacovangelo
Ronald Jean-Gilles
Marlen Tapia Jimenez
Joseph Gordon
Phi Lee Lam
Gustavo Lopez
Ken MacDonald
Alexandra MacDonnell
Henry Maldonado
Karen Mancuso
Marion Moran
Karen Martin
Terry Meyers
Jonathan Miller
Chris Moore
Garrett Mukai

Kevin O'Sullivan
Adrienne Pabst
Charles Parham
Lisa Pelavin
Jerome Petitgand
Marvin Pique
Valerie Ratron-Neal
Cecelia Rembert
Craig Roberts
Brian Robinson
Amy Sanford
Eiko Saotome
Jacquelyn Scaduto
Jacob Slaton
Jason Sparks
Renee St. Furcy
David St. Germain
Tanya Steinberg
Jack Stroman
Yuwadee Tantipech
Alexander Walsh
Zili Wang
Yuri Weber
Jason Weiner
Oren Yaniv
Andrew Young

BDS DOES NOT ALIGN WITH COOP VALUES

Dear Coop members:

General Manager Joe Szladek is correct that Coop decisions on contested issues deserve thorough deliberation. As part of the cooperative movement, our actions should be guided by the International Cooperative Alliance principles, applying them both to our core mission and to any activities beyond the operation of our store.

In 2019, the ICA issued a Declaration on Positive Peace through Cooperatives. In 2023 it called for peace in Israel and Palestine, urging all parties to pursue a peaceful resolution that safeguards lives and livelihoods on both sides.

The BDS movement is fundamentally at odds with this vision of positive peace. A proposal to align our Coop with BDS should not be considered. Doing so is not neutral; it confers legitimacy on an approach in conflict with our stated principles.

BDS does not advance a shared future for Israelis and Palestinians. It does not foster coexistence and rejects mutual recognition. It presents itself as nonviolent, yet fails to meaningfully address armed groups or violence against Jews.

The contents of recent *Gazette* letters and the statements at the General Meeting have convinced me that the Coop's BDS advocates have no practical interest in the welfare of Palestinian Arabs and promoting peace. Rather their efforts are to dehumanize and exclude anyone who disagrees with their cause.

Coop engagement with the Israel-Palestine conflict should promote efforts to bring about a peaceful end to the conflict. Our Coop's voice should be used for:

- Calling for the disarmament of Hamas and other militant groups so reconstruction can commence.

- Supporting and amplifying voices, such as Realign for Palestine, that work to bring about pragmatic solutions.
- Recognizing the shared humanity and aspirations of both sides.

Our Coop must act consistently with ICA principles and our shared community values.

Sincerely,
Barbara Mazor

GENOCIDE PERSISTS WHILE PSFC PROCRASTINATES

Fellow members,

On March 31, I was one of several members who presented a proposal to boycott Israeli goods, a proposal that waited more than two years to come before the membership. During that long wait, a genocide raged in Gaza, with more than 75,000 slaughtered according to research published in the world's leading medical journals (likely a vast undercount). Meanwhile, settler violence against West Bank Palestinians radically escalated and the U.S. Israel war of aggression on Iran claimed massive casualties across the Middle East.

In the April 14 Coordinators' Corner, general coordinators wrote, "There is an urgency among some members to move boycott discussions forward," adding that "elected governance committees' responsibility requires resisting compressed timelines."

There's nothing compressed about a timeline that prevented the PSFC from having a GM discussion or vote for over two years. Now that we've finally had the GM discus-

sion, it's time for a vote. This is our governance practice.

During these past two years, GCs have made many excuses for this unconscionable delay. They said it would cost over \$40K to find a big enough venue to address the matter, simultaneously arguing against hybrid or remote meetings. Throughout this time, we who condemn Israeli genocide and support a boycott have stood in front of the Coop and talked with any member willing to speak with us, we've written to the Gazette (and have often been censored), we've written our own publications that have been condemned as "rogue" for expressing criticism of GC actions or genocide.

And here is a link to an article by me from the 04/14/2026 Gazette.

The GCs are right about one thing: Many of us feel urgency to do whatever we can to stand against genocide and to implement a boycott of Israeli products. It's time to vote on this boycott—as soon as possible. Let's stop procrastinating and make it happen at the next GM.

Now is the time,
Alyce Barr

VOTE TO KEEP A SUPERMAJORITY

Dear members and editor,

Because I believe that the Coop is at a critical juncture, I am asking members to:

- Look for emails from the Coop and check the Coop's website for the GM Agenda each month. When any agenda item has the word "boycott" please sign up for attending "online" or "in person."

- Please vote for me in the Board election this June. You'll receive an email in late May or early June which will guide you on how to vote online. Here is a link to all candidate statements.
- My Campaign: I might lose this election because 3000+ members will be receiving an email urging them to vote against me. Please talk to and reach out to all members that you know if you believe that electing me is important. Please also, if you have the time and inclination, campaign for me on the sidewalk outside the Coop.

Members of the Board of Directors have the final vote after receiving the advice of the members at a General Meeting or through a member referendum. As the senior General Coordinator, I had a vote on the Board from 1977 to May 2025 and I approved the advice of the members every time. I look forward to continuing to help nurture the Coop in the coming years whether or not I am on the Board.

Currently there is a great difference of opinion on whether the Coop should boycott products from Israel. The problem we face is that all prior boycotts at the Coop were supported by nearly 100% of the members. The Coop is a community and this situation could rip the Coop apart. Please vote to preserve the supermajority needed for boycotts.

*Sincerely,
Joe Holtz*

JOE SZLADEK IS MOVING THE GOAL POSTS

Dear Linewaiters' Gazette,

I have a lot of time and respect for Joe Szladek, but must call him out for moving the goalposts in his Coordinators' Corner column of April 14, 2026. Just as the groundswell

of support to boycott Israeli goods at the Coop has inched us closer to adjudication by members in our newly-minted hybrid General Meeting, a call for this issue to be settled by referendum is a nonstarter. This sort of manipulation from the bully pulpit illustrates exactly what I distrust about our Coop leadership, namely its unwillingness to let our vibrant democracy flourish. Please sit this one out, Joe, and let this issue be decided in the General Meeting.

*Sincerely,
Damien Neva*

SZLADEK RESPONDS TO NEVA LETTER

Dear Coop Members,

Contrary to the claim made in Damien's letter, there is no attempt to move the goalposts. Rather, there is a call to maintain consistency with past practice. In supporting a referendum, I am advocating for the same standard the Coop followed when it last considered a boycott of Israeli goods in 2012—ensuring that all members can participate and have their voices heard.

A referendum is not a barrier to democratic participation; it is a way to broaden it. Keeping that standard in place ensures fairness, transparency and continuity in how the Coop handles matters of this importance.

*Joe Szladek
General Manager*

NATIONWIDE RESISTANCE TO BDS

Hello Coop:

The Hamas-supporting BDS movement continues to receive strong nationwide push-back. Join the fight against it. BDS violates our PSFC's International Principles of Cooperation and our Mission Statement. They need PSFC, not the other way around.

Cornell rejected a Student Assembly's resolution divesting from the Cornell-Technion partnership, signaling that when Israel is singled out among other nations, it exemplifies social injustice. Reminds me of how BDS quietly ignores PSFC goods from human-rights abusing countries of China, Turkey and the U.S.

University of Texas at Dallas suspended its SJP chapter through 2027 for disrupting official proceedings, stripping them of university recognition. The Coop's General Meeting Chair Committee long ago should have taken similar action against BDS's illegal takeover of the Coop's April 2025 General Meeting, leading to our votes becoming meaningless.

Burlington, Vermont rejected an anti-Israel ballot question, while a separate resolution funded screenings of "The Other," a documentary exploring the complex relationship between Israelis and Palestinians, plus up to \$10,000 for "restorative community dialogue sessions" with trained facilitators. Can PSFC follow suit?

The state of Indiana signed Senate Bill 160, legislation designed to prevent individuals from concealing their identities while committing acts of intimidation in public spaces. Why not apply this to the average PSFC General Meeting?

Duke University's chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine was suspended after it posted an image on Instagram of two pigs—one labeled "U.S. Imperialism" holding the torch of liberty and the other labeled "Zionism" holding the Star of David.

Informed by disruptive “protesters” calling for violence outside of synagogues, the New York City Council established protest-free buffer zones outside houses of worship and religious schools.

More to come!

Jesse Rosenfeld

SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DRC’S RESPONSE TO MY LETTER

Dear Coop members:

The *Gazette* published a letter of mine (“The DRC’s Shameful Failure” from April 14) regarding my dissatisfaction with how they handled a mediation between me and another member. The DRC responded to my complaint with a letter of their own in the same issue.

I request that the DRC answer these questions for consideration by the Coop membership:

You state that you “felt that offering mediation was an appropriate conclusion to our investigation.” What exactly did you hope this mediation would accomplish?

What “agreement” do you believe resulted from my mediation? The person I was conversing with simply checked out of the meeting without as much as a “goodbye.” If the DRC can simply hide behind the confidentiality clause here, what kind of clarification, not to mention enforcement, can ever be made for such supposed “agreements?”

What is the point of offering mediation as an option if there is no clear stated goal as to what the mediation is meant to accomplish? If I had known that agreeing to “partici-

pate” in a mediation meant shutting all doors for future action regardless of the mediation’s conclusion, I would never have agreed to mediation.

It feels to me as if the DRC proposes mediation not as a sincere effort to try to resolve a conflict, but rather to pat themselves on the back so they can claim that they “followed all the procedures” and “did whatever they could” so they can then wash their hands from any further involvement or duty in the matter. This is quite irresponsible.

I do not see anything in my experience that could be deemed a “resolution” of anything.

*Sincerely,
Sarede Switzer*

ISRAELI PRODUCTS BOYCOTT

Dear Members,

We will soon have a chance to vote on a proposed Coop boycott of Israeli products. Voting **YES** will affirm Palestinian civil society’s nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) call for the international community to uphold their human rights. I appreciated the informative presentation by PSFC4Palestine at the March 2026 General Meeting, as well as Board candidate Taylor Pate’s clear and principled advocacy on this issue.

I will be voting **YES** for the following reasons:

- The Coop’s Mission Statement commits us to social responsibility and care for others.

- BDS is a call from Palestinian civil society to act on those values through nonviolent economic pressure.
- Palestinians are asking the international community to boycott goods and companies connected to Israel as a protest against ongoing violence, displacement and systemic injustice.
- Targeting products made in Israel not antisemitic. I strongly oppose antisemitism, and I also oppose the genocide, violence and displacement of Palestinians in Gaza, Israel and the West Bank.
- As members of the Park Slope Food Coop, we have a responsibility to uphold principles of fairness and justice both locally and globally.

*Sincerely,
Christine Schmidt*

YES, IT IS GENOCIDE

Dear Coop,

Recently, a Gazette editor rejected my letter because I declined to supply an expert reference for my statement that Israel has committed genocide against the Palestinian people. I've since heard from other members who have been required to supply "attribution" when making this claim. For future reference, here is a partial list of human rights organizations, international law bodies, Holocaust and genocide scholars, and other authoritative sources that have publicly recognized Israel's genocide:

Organizations

- • South Africa's case against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

- • The U.N. Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (UN-SCIIP)
- • Report by the U.N.'s Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory ("Legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide")
- • International Association of Genocide Scholars
- • Lemkin Institute for Genocide Preven
- • Genocide Watch
- • Amnesty International
- • Human Rights Watch
- • Doctors without Borders (MSF)
- • B'Tselem
- • Physicians for Human Rights Israel
- • Oxfam
- • Medico International
- • University Network for Human Rights
- • The Center for Constitutional Rights

Individual authorities

- • Omer Bartov, Israeli genocide scholar
- • Raz Segal, Israeli historian
- • Shmuel Lederman, Israeli specialist in political theory and genocide studies
- • Amos Goldberg, Israeli professor of Holocaust Studies
- • Lee Mordechai, Israeli historian
- • Francesca Albanese, U.N. Special Rapporteur on Palestinian rights in the occupied territories
- • Nimer Sultany, human rights lawyer and editor of the Palestinian Yearbook of International Law

- • Maryam Jamshidi, Associate Professor of International Law at the University of Colorado Law School

Fellow members, please feel free to cite this letter if and when you encounter an editorial diktat forbidding you to mention Israel's genocide.

In cooperation and against atrocity,

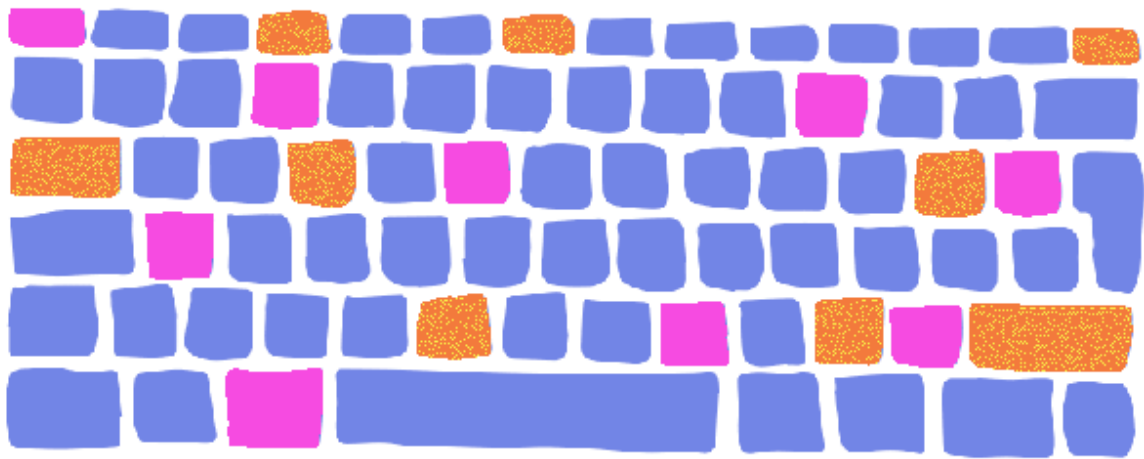
Jan Clausen

Editors' note: Due to an editing error, this letter was inadvertently omitted from this issue. It was uploaded on May 7.

FEBRUARY 10, 2026

May 5, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



LIDL HIGHLIGHTS LACK OF COOP AFFORDABILITY

Dear Editor,

I appreciated very much Anita Bushell's January 20 article on the Park Slope branch of Lidl, a new German grocery store on of which I was unaware. Among other things, she

highlighted items in several categories that are more affordable at Lidl than they are at the Coop, including mandarin oranges, multigrain bread, and croissants. All but one variety of apple there are also on offer at a lower price. All this with no work requirement.

Bushell prefers the quality of goods and feeling of community at the Coop. I do too, but her survey highlights an important reality: Increasingly, we are a place less about affordable foods and more about elevated (or some might say snobby) preferences and responsible (or some might say politicized) sourcing.

Our markup was “temporarily” increased to 25% from 21% nearly six years ago and with spiraling health care and other costs, reporting out of the general meetings makes clear there is no return on the horizon to the original lower food prices. For the past year, I’ve found it cheaper to have coffee delivered from Finland than to buy it at the Coop, to give one example.

Meanwhile far more members seem interested in engaging in geopolitical debates than with costs and affordability. Instead of turning up our noses at Lidl, we should consider how to replicate their tight mission focus and efficiencies. Or we should at least be more honest about the fact that affordability, for those of us who don’t qualify for special programs, is slipping away at our beloved Coop.

In cooperation,

Ryan Tate

Receiving shift (Lifter)

REGARDING LIDL’S REVIEW

Dear Coop community,

Anita Bushell's January 20 article on the relative merits of Lidl and the Coop ("Cheap-Croissants but Lidl Charm") misses the mark. The Coop and Lidl are fundamentally different, but it hardly warrants pooh-poohing Lidl.

In truth, many Coop products are expensive, and Lidl is generally cheaper. As Ms. Bushell observes, the Coop wins on quality and variety. But many products at Lidl—like fresh breads—are actually superior to the Coop's. Lidl produce, while not as good as Coop produce, is decent and mostly cheaper than what's for sale at Trader Joe's. It's hardly fair to diminish it as "an okay option for last-minute dashes."

Frankly, I find Ms. Bushell's mockery of discount promotions as features of a "a glorified mini-mart" deeply out of touch when affordability is such an important issue. I also struggle to relate to her lamenting the loss of the semi-suburban Key Foods parking lot and ruing its replacement with housing units, many set aside for affordable housing. (N.B. It was community leaders who advocated for an affordable grocery store in the development.)

Lidl is not especially warm or charming; most groceries aren't. It employs the same antitheft gate system used across Europe. If this system reduces the shoplifting that chain supermarket operators often cite as reasons for avoiding certain neighborhoods, it's a reasonable trade-off. Lidl has been expanding across the city, often in neighborhoods lacking affordable alternatives. It's also open to anyone who walks off the street—unlike the Coop.

I rather like the Coop, which is why I'm a member, but that doesn't mean I look down on Lidl. I do however wholly disapprove of mocking a discount grocery store's food as "technically edible."

Sincerely,

Daniel Stone

PAGING COMPOSTABLE BAGS TO THE BULK AISLE

Dear Coop members:

As a newer member of the Coop, I've been impressed by the sustainable practices in place: a robust composting system, food donation to CHiPS and other food rescue organizations, reuse of delivery boxes for shoppers, and much more.

I'm curious about one, albeit small, area where we might be able to do better: the plastic bags used for pre-packaged bulk items and bread. I recognize there may be considerations I'm not aware of—cost or performance issues with compostable options—though given compostable bags are available in the produce section, I wonder if there's potential to transition these remaining plastic bags to compostable (or at the very least non-plastic) alternatives.

Part of my motivation for writing this letter is to see if this is something other members would support pursuing. The Coop's commitment to sustainability is a large part of what drew me to the organization, and I would love to help continue to drive this core part of our mission: "We strive to reduce the impact of our lifestyles on the world we share with other species and future generations."

Kindly,

Kristen Mashikian

FOOD HOLDS ENERGY WITH A MESSAGE

Dear Coop members,

In 2015, when my daughters were 5 and 4 years old, I joined the PSFC. Our family enjoyed all the organic goodies we are so blessed to have available. My friend Anna, also a PSFC member, pointed out how I would bring carrots and a peeler with me to the Children's Museum; my nephew would laugh at how my stroller would be full of food and called me a refrigerator.

We would not leave home without all our food.

In the book *Food Rules*, writer Michael Pollan observes how much of what he sees for sale doesn't "deserve to be called food." Instead, he prefers to "call them edible food-like substances."

Having growing up in Tunisia and in Switzerland, I was alarmed at the quality of food sold in the US. My studies confirmed what my intuition was telling me: food is more than calories and nutrients. It holds the energy of the farmer, the farm, nature, and the intention behind the making of that food. Food holds a message.

I started cooking for my community to have conversations on ethical food and why we need to know where our food comes from. When we eat local food, it's easier to know the energy it holds. We want to give money to people who are caring for our land and taking good care of their employees and animals. I don't want to eat anger and pain, do you?

Guided by that philosophy, I do not buy ingredients from Israel, and I'm in favor of boycotting all goods from there until Israel ends what an overwhelming number of human rights organizations and authorities on international law say is a genocide, and Palestinians live freely.

I am honored to serve the PSFC with my food. I offer a vegan Tunisian sandwich called LA TUNISIENNE, free of cruelty. Find it Sundays in the grab and go fridge.

Sincerely,

Nadia Ketoure

HAVE RACHMONES: IMAGINE MENSTRUATION WHERE IMPORT OF HYGIENE PRODUCTS IS BANNED

Fellow Members,

Perhaps you've heard someone ask: Why Israel? Why do thousands of Coop members demand a boycott of Israeli products, especially now that there's a ceasefire*? Let's take a closer look and use an Israeli newspaper as a source. On January 22, 2026 *Haaretz* reported a "shortage in basics such as beef, poultry and hygiene products, caused by Israel's decision to ban the entry of these products..."

These banned hygiene products include menstrual supplies and diapers. Last week, I received a charity request to fund period kits for menstruating women and girls in Gaza. I was ready to donate, but then wondered: would these even make it through the blockade?

In the Yiddish-English home of my girlhood, my mother would often tell me to "have rachmones" (empathy or compassion) for others. Whether or not you've ever menstruated, it should be easy to imagine how wretched it would be to have no products to absorb your menstrual blood, and how much more of a horror it would be if you were living in a freezing cold refugee camp with extremely limited toilets or clean running water, and let alone privacy.

Every time we member-owners stock, sell, and buy Israeli products, we contribute to the economy of a country that has chosen to keep Palestinians in Gaza without period products and diapers.

Have Rachmones,

Alyce Barr

* It's hard to understand what Israel considers a ceasefire, since Israeli forces have killed over 470 Palestinians during the current ceasefire.

SOME SEE UPSIDE TO A “LOOMING COLLAPSE”

Dear Members,

I read recently of a “looming collapse” of Israel’s agricultural exports market. Whether or not we boycott Israeli goods at the Coop, this collapse could achieve what so many courageous amongst us have campaigned for: a better world.

Sincerely,

Damien Neva

KNOW THE FACTS BEFORE YOU VOTE

Dear Coop community:

As we gear up for what’s sure to be a contentious discussion (and, finally, a vote!!) on

the boycott of Israeli products, it's essential that members reach out and learn the facts about previous and current organizing efforts.

Please DO NOT believe claims of antisemitism (I for one am proudly Jewish) and other emotional appeals to secure votes against a boycott. Some members weaponize such claims, and it behooves all of us to understand the facts and vote our consciences.

The Coop has a long, proud history of boycotting products from countries and entities that fail to act in accordance with our Mission Statement. I urge all members to familiarize themselves with that Statement and the importance of boycotts in the struggles worldwide for justice.

Yes, this issue brings “conflict” among us and, yes, discussions on these matters can be challenging, but I believe in the Coop, its Mission Statement, and the integrity of our members to proceed with the facts and in a spirit of cooperation

Sincerely,

Carol Wald

TRYING TO “JOIN THE CONVERSATION” WOULD BE EASIER WITH SOME TRANSPARENCY, PLEASE

Dear Coop members:

I'm writing with questions about the December 30 “Join the Conversation” memo announcing a facilitated conversation about conflict in the Coop community, capped at 12 participants, with work-slot credit for attending. The memo emphasized confidentiality and directed members to apply online.

I applied almost immediately, but wasn't selected. I understand that there was likely limited capacity, but when shift credit is offered for a limited-access event, the selection and approval process should be transparent.

Questions I hope the Coop can answer:

- Will there be additional sessions, and will members who weren't selected this time get priority or another clear path to participate?
- What were the selection criteria? Was it first-come/first-served, a lottery, or based on other considerations? If so, what were they? Was race, ethnicity, religion, or identity considered?
- Who approved this as eligible for shift credit, and under what policy or category? What safeguards ensured it was administered fairly and consistently?
- Where was this discussed publicly within Coop governance? I don't recall seeing it in General Meeting materials or minutes, but I'd appreciate a pointer if I missed it.

Sincerely,

Vivek Bhagwat

COOP WORK-SLOT CREDIT

Dear Editor:

On January 12, I participated in a Coop event for work-slot credit to discuss how conflict at the Coop "affected your experience as a Coop member." It covered "your experience as a Coop member during times of conflict, especially if it feels personal," and was not about making "decisions about a boycott or convincing anyone of a par-

ticular view.” (Quoted text is all pulled from the document from the moderators). Six people took part.

We agreed to no audio recording and no names. Moderators were asked what they were bringing back from this session to the Coop community. They said they were not providing any information to the Coop.

I argued that the Membership needs to obtain value for holding this session as the Coop provided the site and work slot credits to the participants. It is not a breach of confidentiality to provide a high-level report, which does not include names or direct quotes.

I noted that I could write a letter to the *Gazette*, following those guidelines. One participant was against any letter writing. The moderators who had advised that they were not decision makers, now ruled against my right to inform the Coop. At that point I left the session.

If the moderators want to hold this type of meeting under the “No Feedback” to Members rule, then it should not be held on Coop property. It is really a private activity. The Coop should not host or provide work-slot credits for something that doesn’t inform the Members and directly or indirectly, benefit the Coop.

I respectfully request that any future sessions be canceled.

In Cooperation,

Stewart Pravda

IN THE LAND OF “BROKEN LAND DREAMS” (WITH APOLOGIES TO THE BOSS)

Dear Coop members,

My magical realism novel, *Broken Land Dreams*, out in Kindle and print, mentions the Coop and Park Slope. It's not just for Boomers, guys in search of themselves, or Brooklynites, but those in need of a Hired Power, progressives, mindfulness types, literary mavens, utopian dreamers, and young superheroes with contemplative and critical thinking powers.

The book defies a conventional linear narrative. In Part I, Jacob Traum, a grumpy, retired high school social worker and meditating lefty boomer, tells us his wife Maya has left him and warns him he needs to recover from himself. He describes the puzzling and socially unjust things he broods and dreams about that contribute to his disposition and emotional absence.

In Part II, the surreal story begins. With the help of his dreamt-up, gender-fluid, hired power with superpowers from the future, Jacob embarks on a Dante-esque, pandemic-era personal journey. In Hell Inc. he's confronted by, then manages to escape three right-wing rats, leaders of the Ratocracy conspiracy—Ratty Ghoulani, Ayn Ratnd, and Pete the New York Pizza Rat. The rats seek revenge by infesting his former high school with Ratocratic values and plan to take over Brooklyn. With the help of his Park Slope (Purgatory) men's group, the Brooklyn Codgers, and his high school students' socially conscious meditation group, imbued with their own superhero powers, Jacob must face himself as well as the Ratocrats in a final showdown to reach Heaven (the Brooklyn Botanic Garden), save Brooklyn, and earn back Maya.

In our post-pandemic and Trump-redux era, this re-telling of Dante's cosmic journey will appeal to many of us facing an uncertain future and to those who appreciate how truth, love, and Brooklyn-style dreams triumph over meanness, greed, fake news—and New York rats.

Sincerely,

David Forbes

NOTE FROM THE GAZETTE EDITORS

February 14, 2026

To Gazette readers,

Inconsistencies occurred in applying the Gazette's Letters to the Editor policies in the February 10, 2026 issue. As a result, two letters from that issue have been temporarily removed pending a review of those policies.

As the Coop's publisher, the General Coordinators have a responsibility to ensure that published material aligns with institutional and legal standards and that policies are applied consistently. In this instance, General Manager Joe Szladek and General Coordinator Ann Herpel were involved in the decision to remove the content in order to address those concerns.

A review of the Gazette's editorial standards and policies is underway to ensure they are clearly defined and consistently applied.

We regret any confusion this may cause and appreciate Gazette readers' understanding as we complete this review.

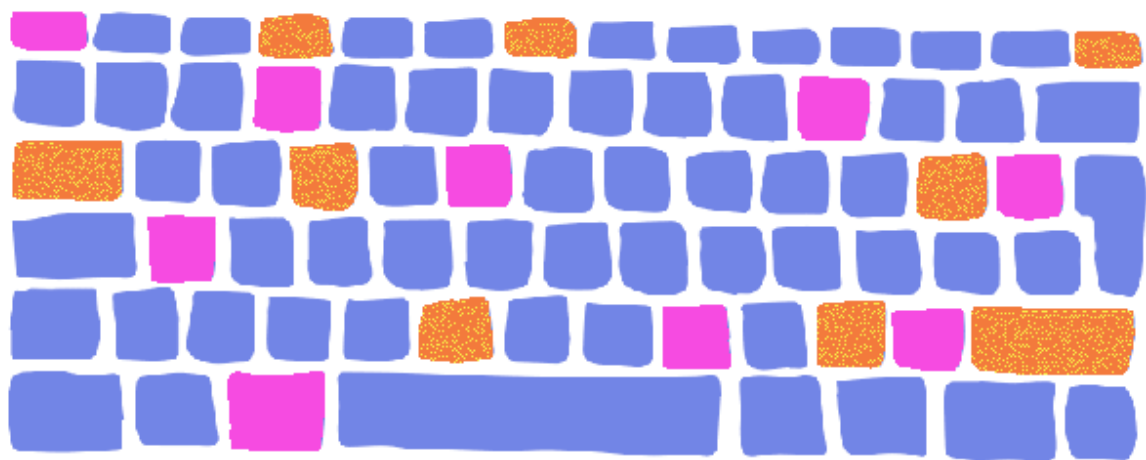
Thank you,

Gazette Editors, Joe Szladek and Ann Herpel

DECEMBER 30, 2025

May 5, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



APPLAUDING POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS

Dear Coop members:

Granted, General Meetings aren't always fun and are sometimes even contentious. But we—the Coop Family—should be proud of some of our recent accomplishments and current considerations. Starting in January, our new hybrid structure will open up participation to many more of our members. (Note: I would have gladly been more active over my last 18 years if I—as a single parent and very busy nonprofit manager—could have participated remotely.) And some new initiatives are exploring robust, creative ideas for enhancing education and awareness regarding committees and operating procedures; offering training, leadership development and greater inclusivity; and clarifying protocols for ensuring appropriate democratic communications. Way to go, Coop!

These types of developments help me feel even more welcome and inspired. Let's keep up the momentum and commitment to innovation, inclusivity and equity in our dynamic democratic experiment.

Sincerely,

Mitty Owens

Coop member since 2006; social justice writer on Substack

ATTILA THE HUN AND KARL MARX BOTH LIKE GOOD FOOD AT FAIR PRICES

Dear Coop members:

The Park Slope Food Coop is a grocery store. It is a good place for me to shop. The grocery-store aspect of the Coop is great; the political activism is not. I recall that at a GM in 2016, an “Education Committee” member urged us to go to Philadelphia and protest the Trans-Pacific Partnership at the Democratic Convention. Nearly a decade later, members argue over banning products. I stopped attending GMs. Now a member writes a letter about wishing for the ideological purity of a bread supplier.

On December 10, Lidl grocery store opened at 120 5th Ave., close to the Coop. Their prices are lower compared with the Coop prices for similar items. The produce is not as good as that of the Coop, but the bakery is better; they have freshly baked croissants that are crisp for 49 cents. They also offer a large selection of meat and fish at slightly lower prices. I have not yet tried the meats to know about the quality.

The Coop prides itself on being founded in 1972. I grew up where there are coop entities that are thriving to this day that were founded in 1908 and the other in 1915. Both stick to their knitting. The first one is a coop bank that started very small and over the last hundred years has expanded to many branches in many cities in India. No members or account holders entertain political activism at the bank. My question is how long before members of the PSFC are turned off by political activism and walk with their feet. If I have problems with any products, I have the option to NOT buy that product.

Sincerely,

Amol Kaikini

CHANUKA AND ANTIZIONISM

Dear members,

I recently saw a flyer advertising an Antizionist Chanuka party and thought this was hilarious seeing as Chanuka is the most Zionist Jewish holiday there is. On Chanuka, we celebrate indigenous Jewish resistance over Greek colonizers and the restoration of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

Unfortunately, there are quite a number of such self-proclaimed “antizionist” Jews right here at our coop who are working to ban the sale of Israeli goods (BDS).

As progressive as these folks might envision themselves to be, they are nothing but our generation’s version of the Hellenistic Jews, who mistakenly thought that if only they were more empathetic towards their overlords, or better assimilated, they could “keep the peace.” Tragically, they fell to the same fate as their “less liberal” brethren.

Because while the Hellenists were technically only against religious zealotry, not Jewish people per se, and antizionism opposes only Jewish *statehood*, ultimately, the soul of the Jew is inseparable from his or her body, and Jewish identity is intrinsically tied to the land of Israel, the center of which was known historically as “Judea,” as it was the ancestral homeland of the tribe of Judah, the source of the word for “Jew.”

To be clear, this does not mean one must endorse everything the Israeli government does or that it is in any way above critique, but to call oneself an Antizionist while at the same time celebrating Chanuka, is oxymoronic.

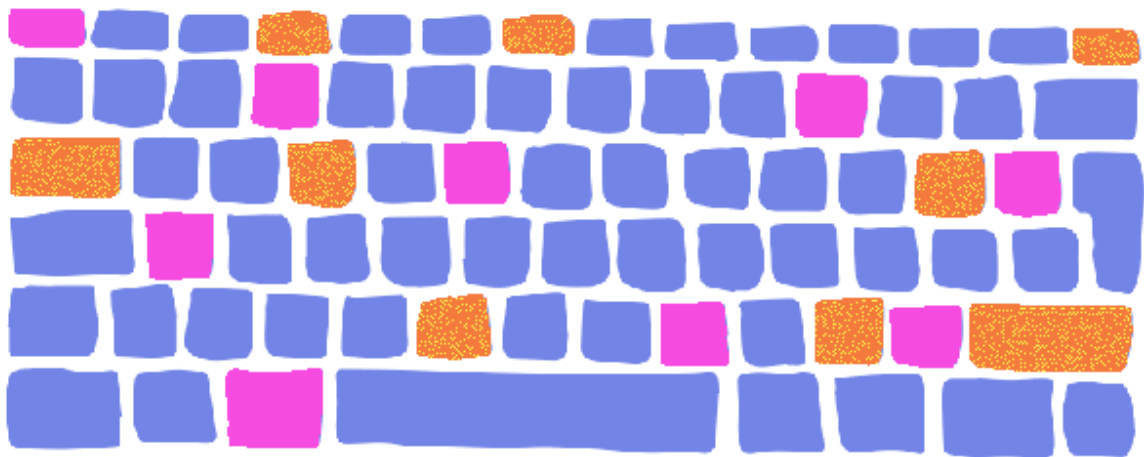
Pro-Israel Jews and friends, as evidenced by the public Menorah lighting outside of the Coop this year, the antizionists are only making us stronger. Stay proud and stay loud.

Sarede Switzer

NOVEMBER 18, 2025

May 5, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CONGRATULATIONS COOP RUNNERS

Dear Members,

Congratulations to Coop members who completed the New York City Marathon on Sunday, Nov. 2. The marathon travels through all five boroughs from its start in Staten Island to the finish in Central Park, passing nearly right by the Coop on its route in Brooklyn along Fourth Ave. On Marathon Sunday, the whole city embraces the spirit of generosity, cheerfulness and bonhomie that I hope we all bring to our community year-round. I wish you all a speedy recovery, and I do believe we carry epsom salt in aisle four to help you along!

Barry Leybovich

FOOD COOP PRODUCT REVIEW

Dear Gazette and PSFC,

I think it would be highly useful for Coop members if the *Gazette* had a product review section with reviews provided by members. I have recommendations, good and bad, that I'd like to share, and would like to hear others' recommendations as well. It would also make members aware of products they didn't even know we sold—like cat-butt magnets or drying racks for plastic bags. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Michael Katz

DISCLOSE THE LEGAL OPINION NOW—“CONFIDENTIALITY” IS NOT A VALID EXCUSE

Dear Coop members:

The topic of the alleged legal opinion (a) stating that hybrid meetings can be implemented without amending the bylaws and (b) validating the practice of allowing the board to vote on matters that do not appear before it as member-initiated agenda items has been an ongoing topic of discussion. (See voluntary article, June 24, 2025, and letters to the editor and General Coordinator responses on Aug. 26 and Oct. 28, 2025.)

The General Coordinators have stated that the legal opinion is not in writing. On the basis of 20 years in commercial litigation in which I reviewed and drafted legal opinion letters, I say that that proposition is literally incredible. It calls into question (a) what question the GCs presented to the unidentified attorney(s) who rendered an opinion and (b) whether the attorney(s) examined the governing documents of the Coop and conducted an evaluation of the events of April and June 2025 in the context of New York law. The decision to change Coop practice on the magnitude of what is happening without a proper legal opinion is plausibly a breach of fiduciary duty.

In the Aug. 26 issue of the *Linewaiters' Gazette* I called for disclosure of the fabled legal opinion. GC Joe Szladek responded there that the opinion is confidential. That response is not valid. No law is stopping management from disclosing to the membership whatever shred of writing shows the legal reasoning—which they should do for an opinion that supposedly legitimizes the end of the Coop's historical governance structure and calls into question whether the Coop's bylaws and guidelines mean anything. Even if the legal opinion were confidential, nothing prevents management from making a limited waiver of confidentiality with whatever redactions are necessary.

Disclose the opinion now.

Sincerely,
Noah Potter

Editors Note:

Noah sent a version of this letter to the LWG on Aug. 29, 2025, for inclusion in the Sept. 16, 2025 issue of the LWG, though it was not published. Noah intended to deliver a version of the letter to the Chair Committee at the Sept. 30 meeting but he was sick that night and, at his request, a fellow member delivered the letter to the Chair Committee to be read (in accordance with the meeting rules). The Chair Committee did not read the revised letter due to his absence. The report on the meeting in the LWG noted a comment during the meeting that he should submit the letter to the LWG.

General Manager Response to Noah Potter's Letter

Dear Coop Members,

Following the April 29 Board meeting, the General Coordinators sought legal guidance from attorneys with extensive experience in cooperative governance. This was not a request for a single, formal legal “opinion,” but part of an ongoing and broader dialogue about the Coop’s governance practices and legal compliance. We have consulted these attorneys numerous times to clarify questions of authority, process and best practices under cooperative law.

We approach these consultations thoughtfully and thoroughly—asking questions from multiple angles to test the consistency and reliability of the attorneys’ guidance. Our goal is to ensure that all perspectives and member concerns are represented in how we frame our inquiries, and that the resulting advice supports sound, transparent decision-making.

Based on advice from the Coop’s governance attorneys, and as previously shared

with members:

- The Board has the authority under the bylaws to take the action it did on April 29.
- A bylaw amendment is not required to allow hybrid General Meetings.

Maintaining confidentiality in communications with legal counsel is both standard and essential. This confidentiality protects the Coop's ability to seek candid, independent advice and to meet its fiduciary responsibilities to the membership. While we share the conclusions of our legal consultations when they directly affect Coop operations or members—as we have done here—the underlying attorney-client communications are privileged and not disclosed. This approach is consistent with standard practices across cooperatives, nonprofits and other member-owned organizations.

Respectfully,
Joe Szladek
General Manager

I MET WITH A SAILOR FROM THE GLOBAL SUMUD FLOTILLA

Dear members,

On Friday, Oct. 10, 2025, at my local coffee shop in Gowanus, I met with a sailor from the Global Sumud Flotilla, an international civil-society maritime initiative aimed at challenging the Israeli blockade of Gaza. This person across the table from me shared that they were only a few days removed from having been taken from international waters at gunpoint by Israeli forces while attempting to deliver humanitarian aid to Palestinians, a mission they described as a moral and legal obligation under the Genocide Convention.

I was struck by this person's bravery and could not help but reflect on the inertia of our cooperative over the last two years to not even table a vote for the boycott of Israeli goods. Have we become so numb that we fail to recognize the humanity of Palestinians? A better Coop and world are possible, just as the many boats sailing toward Gaza have inspired so many to believe.

Sincerely,

Damien Neva

OCTOBER 7, 2025

May 5, 2026

Letters to the Editor



HYBRID MEETINGS ARE COOPERATIVE JUSTICE

Dear Coop community,

As someone who works to make technology more accessible for people with disabilities—many of whom are too often excluded from participating fully in daily life—I've been heartened to see the Board move forward with establishing hybrid meetings.

The truth is, much of our world is designed with the assumption that everyone can participate in the same way. But we know that's not the case. Hybrid access gives us the chance, right here in our Coop, to help level that playing field. It's a concrete step toward inclusion, making sure that more members are able to join in one of the best parts of living in our great city: the democratic process of cooperative governance.

In a time when disability rights are being challenged across the country, it is especially meaningful to see our Coop taking a different path—one that centers equity, care, and community. Hybrid meetings are not just about technology; they're about affirming our cooperative values and ensuring that no one is left out.

I encourage the Board to continue leading in this direction. It's an opportunity to live out the spirit of cooperation we all value and to strengthen our community by making it more welcoming to everyone.

In solidarity,

Matthew Bambach

PEACHES

Dear Coop members:

In the Sept. 16, 2025, letters to the editor, there is a letter by a member who had peaches that "were not very good." I would like to reply that this season, I had amazing, delicious, juicy local IPM yellow peaches almost every time. I let the peaches sit out a day or two to soften and ripen. I was sorry when I shopped last week that there were no longer any local IPM yellow peaches. I look forward to them next season.

Sincerely,

Julie Gabriel

IN SUPPORT OF HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Coop community:

I've heard that the Coop Board is considering hybrid meetings. I'm writing to fully support hybrid meetings so those members who wish to attend in person may do so, and those many more (busy parents, disabled, crowd-avoidant folks) who may wish to attend online may also do so.

Approving hybrid meetings and hybrid voting strikes me as a logical, rational move to include as many members as possible.

Kind regards,

Daniel Millman

Member since 2014

YES TO HYBRID MEETINGS

To the editor,

I have been a Coop member for the last 11 years, since moving back to New York City from California. As much as I would like to attend every meeting, it is just not possible for me. I am very interested in what happens at the Coop and am completely in favor of hybrid meetings. As the saying goes, no one is smarter than all of us—hybrid meetings give all members an opportunity to be part of the discussion and to vote on the

many important issues that are discussed. I urge the Board to approve hybrid meetings so we can move on and start working together for the benefit of all members.

In Cooperation,

Joy Millman

IN SUPPORT OF HYBRID MEETINGS

Dear Gazette:

I am writing to support the PSFC Board in implementing hybrid general membership meetings for our beloved Coop. Participating in our Coop's democracy should not be hindered by an inability to show up to a physical space (because of Covid concern, childcare needs, or myriad other reasons). The recent vote showed that a large majority of the members who voted support hybrid meetings. Thank you in advance, PSFC Board, for making this a reality.

Sincerely,

Steve Quester

BOARD VOTE TO ENACT HYBRID MEETINGS

To the editor,

I'm relieved to hear that the Coop board will likely hold a vote on hybrid meetings soon and that it is expected to pass. Those members who voted have already made it

clear that the majority prefers more accessibility to decision making. We want the wider membership to be able to participate fully, only fair given that we're all owners.

I'm confident that the Coop can (in this instance anyway) show the world what democracy, inclusiveness and tolerance look like in an intolerant time.

Best regards,

Sierra Smigelsky

PRESERVING A COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

Dear Coop community:

Did a lack of decorum at August's Food Coop General Meeting signal tacit approval to blacklist members? A member was allowed to belittle and vilify fellow members who signed the petition opposing the Israeli government's escalating mistreatment of the Palestinian populations.

Singling out a member by name and publicly accusing them of being unfit for participation in Coop activities because they signed a petition smells a bit like McCarthyism, no?

What cold wind is blowing through what was formed as a socially democratic institution?

We, all members, are responsible for preserving this very special cooperative community.

Sincerely,

Pam Thomas

HYBRID MEETING FORMAT!

Hello Coop Members!

I am soooooo excited and in complete support of our Board for passing this crucial ability for all of us to be able to attend and make important decisions about our beloved Coop. Thank you to all who made this happen! It is so hard to attend monthly meetings and now we can all do this from the comfort and ease of our electronic devices from anywhere in the world! I am currently overseas tending to sick elderly parents and do not know when I'll be able to return. And being able to attend a meeting virtually is the only way I can be a vital part of our community. So another big thanks!

Sincerely,

Una Weiss

EVERYBODY GETS A VOTE!

Dear Coop members:

Having been away for some months, I am now gratified to learn that there will, in fact, be a way for ALL of us to vote on Coop matters after all! The Board will meet and discuss the matter of hybrid voting, that is to say, voting both in person and from home, in the near future. Moms and/or dads in need of child care or elder care, those

who are disabled and can't get to the park, those who are immunocompromised and risk illness and even death as did my own (and only) brother last June from exposure to Covid, those for whom a walk at night through a City park is a little too daunting... we ALL will get to vote on all Coop matters from the comfort of home or office if we prefer not going to meet in person. Our Board will take the information gained by previous discussions, forums and votes and will make it happen!! Finally!!

The crisis of governance with which we've been confronted will be resolved democratically, and by all Coop members, in the near future. What a relief! The Coop gets more democratic while the rest of the country gives in to bullies. That's why I love our Coop. We can undergo difficult change and the bullies don't win. This gives me hope for us all.

Sincerely,

Carol Wald