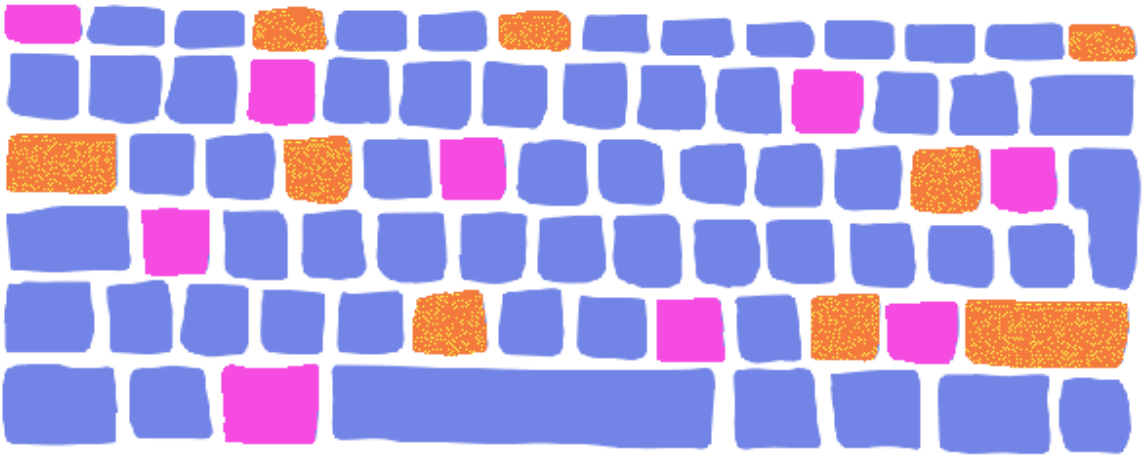
JULY 28, 2026

July 28, 2026

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



LONGING FOR THE BEFORE TIMES (AKA THE AGE OF WIRE-BASED TWIST TIES)

To the Editor,

Is anyone as irritated as I by the new bits of tape used to close the tops of prepackaged bulk items? Before, when twist ties were used, you could reseal the bag and then, when it was empty, save the bit of paper-coated wire for further uses. You could also reuse the plastic bag.

Now, unless you want to spend several minutes trying to coax the plastic seal up and off, which in any case rarely works, you must slice it with a scissor blade or knife and deal with the resulting holes through which bulk contents often spill unexpectedly.

Is the shortened packaging time really worth the savings this new method offers?

Sincerely,

Thomas Rayfiel

Response from a receiving coordinator

Dear Thomas,

Your frustration with the tape used to seal bags is understandable. The Coop processes roughly 6,000 pounds of bulk bin items weekly. One single hopper machine runs nearly every shift of every day. Bag tape allows rapid processing of hundreds of pounds of diverse products each day. Twist ties unfortunately are not a viable option.

Twist ties are preferred for the majority of bulk items, with the exception of olives and the bulk-binned items. Yet we can’t always make that happen. Examples of those instances are when a member has arthritis and the twist ties cause them pain, or when shopping is so heavy we are unable to keep up with the demand.

Staff welcome suggestions, and you can speak with a coordinator to understand specific operational choices.

Respectfully,

Britt Henriksson
Receiving Coordinator since 2010 and Coop member since 2003

THE BDS MOVEMENT AND ITS ANTI-COEXISTENCE CONSEQUENCES

Dear Coop members:

4,000+ Park Slope Food Coop members voted to boycott Israeli products, even though BDS stands in direct opposition to the Coop's founding principles of inclusion and cooperation.

I've been an outspoken critic of BDS and its refusal to even dialogue with "Zionists."

After the vote passed, I spoke with several of the people it directly affected including Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

The Jewish founder of Seed & Mill told me the financial hit was negligible, but what devastated her was the malice she now feels from Coop members. Her tahini is produced by an Arab Israeli Muslim family who was dismayed by the news. Julia Zaher, the Palestinian-Christian CEO of Al-Arz Tahina, said she's avoided engaging with the Coop entirely to protect her mental health; a previous BDS campaign against her had already landed her in the hospital with a stress-related psychiatric crisis.

Hadas Lahav, CEO of Sindyanna of Galilee, put the irony plainly: Her products are grown by Palestinian farmers and produced by Arab and Jewish women who've

worked side by side for decades toward peace and shared economic opportunity. As she told me:

“Boycotting Sindyanna of Galilee is counterproductive because it does not advance peace or cooperation. On the contrary, it undermines the very kind of partnership that offers hope for a better future and harms the Palestinian communities it claims to support.”

This is the real record of the boycott: not solidarity, not peace, but a Palestinian-Christian business owner hospitalized, and a coexistence project punished for the crime of Jews and Arabs working together. PSFC Members for Palestine hasn’t advanced peace. It has alienated many Jewish Coop members and poisoned the workplace it claims to care about.

Sincerely,

Ramon Maislen

THE LIE REGARDING “INFORMED PERSPECTIVE”

Dear Coop members:

The July 7th edition of *The Linewaiter’s Gazette* included a report of the May General Meeting in which a vote in favor of boycotting Israeli goods passed.

The following is an excerpt from that report:

*The employees argued that a referendum “offers the clearest way to understand how the entire membership feels about this issue” and “allows all members to be heard, regardless of work or life schedules.” Caramichael disagreed. “**This is a superior for-***

mat because you can actually listen to debate and get an informed perspective," *he said.*

Unfortunately, the meeting lacked debate or presentation of various perspectives. Ramon Maislen, the presenter of the other side was barred from speaking due to a technical formality. The agenda committee never bothered to ensure both sides of a contentious, community-defining vote were even on the table together.

Furthermore, the meeting coordinators chose to run an impromptu vote to skip discussion—something never done before in the Coop's history.

Nothing says "informed perspective" like silencing the other side and rushing the vote before anyone could think twice.

Sincerely,

Sarede Rachel Switzer

OUR THIRD PLACE

To the Editor,

My wife and I joined this Coop in 2004, one month before the birth of our first child.

Today we have three children, live two blocks away, and for twenty-one years, one of us has shopped here most days.

This wasn't just where we bought groceries. It was our third place.

This was where we nourished our family. Our children learned the names of Coop fruits and vegetables before they ever walked the aisles of a supermarket. We

bumped into neighbors. Community wasn't an aspiration–it was something we lived.

For more than two decades, over 90% of the food we ate came from these aisles.

I served on countless squads, including running turkeys every Thanksgiving for many years.

We didn't just shop here.

We helped build this place.

I never imagined saying this:

I can no longer walk through those doors with a clear conscience.

Not because of a product boycott.

Because of what that vote revealed.

Since the end of May, my family has felt profoundly betrayed. The discrimination feels real.

Not because anyone expelled us.

Not because anyone shouted at us.

But because we learned this community's commitment to inclusion has conditions. It extends to Jews only if they hold the right political views.

I have watched members express profound compassion for suffering thousands of miles away. I have also watched the tears of fellow Jewish members be questioned, explained away, or overlooked.

When our pain is explained away, our belonging becomes conditional too.

Twenty-one years ago, we believed this would always be our community.

Today, I no longer believe that is true.

I hope this Coop finds its way back.

Because after 21 years, I miss the welcoming community we once had.

With profound sadness,

JJ Berney
Member since December 2004
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rz1oidTYVBs

END THIS DOUBLE STANDARD!

Dear Coop,

I'm thrilled that the membership has elected Taylor Pate to the Coop Board. Taylor's commitment to member democracy, food justice, and affordability will stand us in good stead. Her enthusiasm for the larger co-operative movement brings the energy we need to help the PSFC move forward.

While the Annual Meeting was heartening overall, I'm deeply troubled by something that took place during the questioning of Board candidates. I asked candidate Barbara Mazor about a reference to what she called "Arab supremacy" in remarks she made at the April GM during a debate over whether to adopt an Israeli goods boycott. In response, Barbara cited what she claimed was a history of Arab domination over various ethnic minorities. This was a diversionary tactic involving another denigrating

remark about Arabs in front of an audience of hundreds of fellow Coop members. Her original statement had been understood as racist not only by me, but by many other members with whom I've discussed it. The General Manager called it divisive in an all-member email dated May 4, 2026. Barbara's comment at the June meeting doubled down on the original offense.

This episode is symptomatic of a larger Coop problem: the needs and concerns of Arab and Muslim members are often treated as negligible. We hear over and over, for instance, about the hurt feelings that some pro-Israel members are experiencing because of the boycott, often phrased in a way that not just dismisses but renders totally invisible the sentiments of Arab and Muslim members whose families and communities have been and continue to be devastated by Israel's actions. Such practices within our Coop community resonate with and may help to sustain rampant anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism in the larger society.

It's on all of us to correct this double standard.

In cooperation,

Jan Clausen

Response from Barbara Mazor:

Jan Clausen's letter is built on selective quotation rather than engagement with the content of my statements. She recasts a discussion of historical context as an accusation about an entire people. She does not address the history. Instead, she isolates one phrase from a broader discussion, stripping the remark of its context while impugning my motives.

My remark at the April meeting noted that the narrative used in the pro-BDS presentations omits the actions, choices and ideologies of the other actors, such as Hamas and other armed groups. The history of Arab-Muslim conquest, political dominance,

treatment of minorities, and opposition to reforms extending equal rights is well documented and deeply relevant to understanding the origin and nature of this conflict.

Moreover, the Coop has now endorsed the BDS movement after more than two years of meetings, presentations, debate, and votes devoted to the issue—despite its being unrelated to the Coop's foundational purpose. That is at odds with the claim "the needs and concerns of Arab and Muslim members are often treated as negligible."

Indeed, this has been the pattern of pro-BDS advocacy at the Coop: a predetermined conclusion supported by the selective presentation of information, omission of Palestinian agency, and personal denunciation of those who disagree. That is not honest debate. History, evidence and context matter. Rigorous inquiry is the appropriate response to challenging ideas, not accusations about motives.

JUNE 16, 2026

July 28, 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 reprocessed 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 direction, 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 commitment 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 bystander 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 "diversity 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. Di-

versity 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 boy-

cott 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 threshold 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 controversial 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 toward 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 optimism 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 demand. 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.

COORDINATORS' CORNER: A MESSAGE FROM JOE HOLTZ

July 28, 2026



October 15, 2024

Dear Members,

In 1972, I was part of the small original founding/planning group that worked on launching the Coop during the latter part of that year, and then managed the official opening in February 1973. In early June 1975, at the age of 25, I became the first Coop employee. In late June 2025, after 50 years on the job as a General Coordinator, I will retire.

The recognition of the Coop's 50th anniversary, in 2023, helped me conclude that my 50th anniversary of becoming our first employee was a fitting time for this difficult decision. I stayed all these years because of how special the Coop is and because of the difference the Coop makes in so many people's lives. I have stayed because of the overwhelmingly positive energy and thoughts so many of our members have about the Coop. I have stayed because of how much our members care for the Coop and

feel connected to their Coop.

And I have stayed because of the Coop's great staff. Over the years, I have been, and continue to be, fortunate to have wonderful, dedicated, hard-working, thoughtful and caring employee-colleagues. They understand how special the Coop is, and it has been an honor to have worked side-by-side with each of them in this interesting, challenging and exciting endeavor of serving the membership and making the Coop strong.

I also stayed because every year I could answer the following question with a "Yes": Is the job still interesting and challenging? To this day my answer remains: Yes. Nevertheless, it is time for the Coop to forge into the future without me as an employee. I feel that responsible planning includes retiring while I can still walk, talk, think and be available to the Coop.

I've been privileged to have had the opportunity to help both members and staff build a democratic institution that welcomes people from all walks of life into the community and practices cooperation through genuine participation in running our communally owned store. I have loved helping to build a community success in a society that is so focused on individual success.

My sister and I grew up in a three-generation household of seven. My home had nearly constant visits by a ton of relatives and family friends. There was always conversation and interaction. As a kid, I asked questions about how businesses worked, partly due to an instinctive love of numbers. The Coop job included both elements: lots of interactions with people and lots of numbers. As an adult I never saw myself working for a profit-making business. However, a member/owner cooperative business was the right fit for me. People who want to cooperate are precious to me.

My dad told me time and again that people "should not rest on their laurels" and not base their actions on past successes and not rest because of any positive "newspaper clippings." I incorporated those lessons into my life at the Coop. I came to understand

that a killer of businesses was overconfidence. I came to understand that we must always carve a path toward success and avoid the paths that could put us into a downward spiral. This was integral to my approach to good stewardship of our Coop.

I am grateful for having the opportunity to do this job for this community, this "local society," for what will soon be 50 years. I'm confident that the staff and you—the thousands of members who make up this local society—will continue caring for the Coop, ensuring that it continues for generations. Thank you all for caring.

Joe Holtz
General Coordinator, General Manager and Co-Founder

PS: I hope to write more articles for the *Gazette* in the coming months about the parts of the Coop that most resonate with me and that have contributed to building this vibrant and vital cooperative of ours.

FLOORED BY JOE HOLTZ'S SUSPENSION

July 28, 2026
Dear Coop,

As a PSFC member for the last 34 years, I'm floored by the Personnel Committee's punitive measures against Joe Holtz for wearing an N-95 mask and coming in to work without knowing he would test positive for Covid that day. The man might have improved your quality of life for decades and withstood any number of uncalled for insults, but he is *not* a fortune teller.

Hayley Gorenberg's detailed reporting in the *Linewaiters' Gazette* presents the facts, and I concur completely with the letter written by Cynthia Blyer that outlines the Per-

sonnel Committee’s unprecedented, uncalled for, unjust and downright bizarre punishment. I add my voice to those who demand, as Cynthia did, that the committee:

1. Reimburse Joe for the month of July.

2. Keep in mind that we are running a cooperative, not a gulag.

Cynthia stressed that Joe would be the first one to speak up if another staff member were treated like this, or about any kind of unfairness in our community and in the world.

I will be attending the upcoming General Meeting on September 27 to speak to this agenda item. If Joe is not reimbursed and all punitive measures rescinded at that meeting, I urge Coop members to protest the abhorrent and extremist actions of the Personnel Committee with an emergency referendum.

Jessica Greenbaum

DEARTH OF SHIFTS

July 28, 2026

Letters to the Editor



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

Dear Editors,

I would like to open by saluting the tremendous amount of work and consideration that have gone into the evolution of shift assignments. This is no mean feat. The introduction of recurring shifts, however, has upset what to me felt like a nicely poised system that offered maximum variety to all working members. Having not signed up for a recurring shift (it's untenable for my schedule), I now realize the folly of my inac-

tion—gone is the variation of available shifts. I realize I will garner little sympathy; I too must adapt to the cold, hard truths of this new order. Still, I cannot help but feel something is lost now that member labor is much less fluid that it had been all these months since its return. I'd love for blocks of recurring shifts across the board to return to the open labor market for anyone who simply cannot commit to a recurring shift. Selfishly, I still think this would do wonders for the rest of us.

Damien Neva

FTOP RULES TOO RESTRICTIVE

July 28, 2026
Dear Coop,

With the recent return to recurring shifts, I find the Future Time Off Program (FTOP) policy that states you can only schedule two shifts at a time too rigid and not well publicized.

First, it does not appear anywhere in the Workslot Policy Agreement. Second, the two places it does appear—on the "Shift Calendar" web page and Section III, paragraph 7 of the Membership Manual—it is buried in the text and not easy to notice.

More importantly, the PSFC seems to encourage members to add credits to their shift bank credit but then limits members' ability to build up credit by limiting them to two scheduled shifts at a time.

In the Membership Manual, for instance, it states, "You need to work at least one shift per cycle but you are welcome to work extra shifts. Those additional shifts will add credits to your bank. There is no limit to the number of credits you can have in your

bank.” And then adds a little later, “You may have up to two scheduled shifts at one time, with no more than 2 shifts on the same date.” These two statements seem to be at odds with one another.

Moreover, when we accept the Workslot Policy Agreement, we agree that “Whenever possible I will cancel farther in advance, so other members have the opportunity to claim the shift(s).” Here, too, the FTOP policy makes it difficult to do so. For example, I will be traveling in November but cannot cancel my November shift and choose an alternate slot until I work my next shift in September. By that time, I fear the slots that are most convenient for me will be taken.

The system needs to be more flexible. Let’s increase the number of shifts that can be scheduled at one time.

William Yotive