

Message from the Editors

“Tact,” Sir Isaac Newton once quipped, “is the knack of making a point without making an enemy.” It is a difficult knack to master, and one that many of us are still working on. Just as difficult, if not more so, is the knack of taking a point without assuming the one making it is an enemy. We all know from our personal lives just how uncomfortable it can be to tell someone we care about that they are behaving destructively; to point out failings that may be apparent from the outside yet invisible to the person themselves. Most of us also know how difficult it can be to hear from someone we love that our actions are unseemly or harmful. Defensiveness, denial and emotional reaction are the norm for most of us on these occasions—and not much changes in the transition from the personal to the social sphere. These dynamics seems to be a universal of human existence.

A recent article from new GEO contributor Carl Ratner, *The Corrupting Role of Corporate Co-ops*, has led to defensiveness and emotional reaction on all sides. This is, perhaps, to be expected anytime one wades into the murky waters of self-criticism, but we here at GEO, and myself especially, must accept some responsibility for the strength of the reactions evoked. Specifically, a not inconsiderable error in fact-checking occurred with respect to CHS Inc.'s sale of stock on the NASDAQ exchange. While CHS does sell stock to non-members, these are preferred stocks and carry no voting privileges. Carl's article implied that these shares conveyed voting rights.

The article also misquoted CHS's mission statement as increasing “stockholder” value, when the actual wording from the CHS website is “stakeholder” (although it is unclear to us what the difference between these two words is in practice). GEO regrets these errors and has made the appropriate changes to Carl's piece.

However, many apparently well-founded critiques of the business models and practices of both CHS and NCFC remain to be addressed, and it is our hope that more discussion about these and other seeming contradictions within our movement will be forthcoming in the weeks and months to come.

At GEO, we are committed to searching for truth, to admitting where we fall short, and to fostering a safe environment for passionate exchanges—within and between the movements we support. It is our hope that all involved—cooperators, activists, and ourselves—can find the humility and honesty to confront and address our failings, as we continue to encourage critical self-assessment of our movements and projects. If we manage to do that collectively, there is no criticism we need fear, and no obstacle we will not be able to overcome.

In Solidarity,

GEO Editorial Collective