

Freedom

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NOTES.

Then They Wake Up!

In some old country mansions there is a custom by which, on one day in the year, the positions of master and servant are reversed, the servants taking the places of their master and mistress, who, with the rest of the family and some guests, carry out the orders of their servants, wait on them at table, and do the general work of the house. The next morning the old order of things is resumed. It is a pleasing custom to all who take part in it, but no one is under any illusion about the matter. A General Election puts us somewhat in mind of this old custom. Every few years our Parliamentary rulers step down from their lofty position, and, making humble bows to the "free and independent citizens," ask them to be kind enough to express their wishes as to how the government of the country should be carried on, what reforms they desire, and who should be the servants by whom these things are to be done, promising with their hands where their hearts should be that all orders given to them shall be faithfully obeyed. The "free and independents," flattered by their newly acquired position of authority, immediately proceed to draw up programmes of measures designed to remedy every evil under the sun. Then they drop pieces of paper in boxes, first marking on them the names of those whom they wish to act as their servants and carry out their orders, afterwards retiring to bed with the feeling of having done a good day's work. Then they wake up!

The March of the Unemployed.

Bonar Law will find the unemployed a far more difficult problem than many others he has on his hands. From all quarters of England, Scotland, and Wales the unemployed are marching on London, and they have announced their determination to send a deputation to him on November 22, shortly after their mass arrival in London. Since the slump in trade first came the unemployed have been living on unemployment benefit and what small savings they had by them. But the last two years have seen all these vanish with everything that could be sold or pawned, and now they have nothing but the outdoor relief, which has to be squeezed out of the Guardians. Well, even Bonar Law and his friends will hardly dare tell the unemployed they must starve. Surely he is not so unpatriotic as to think that citizens of the greatest Empire the world has ever seen will be so lacking in spirit as to die of starvation *en masse* in Trafalgar Square. That would be a tremendous shock to the prestige abroad of "our great and noble Empire." The coloured subjects of the Empire are already beginning to suspect that the great white idol has feet of clay, and if they knew that we were so poor that we could not feed our own people at home, veneration for the white man would slump to zero. But, speaking seriously, we think that at present there is nothing in sight that would improve trade sufficiently to absorb many of the unemployed, and therefore, as an alternative to starvation, they should think out a scheme by which they could support themselves on the idle acres of the country, and get the support of their fellow-workers in forcing it on the capitalists. This would certainly be far better than the fatalistic—and fatal—attitude they have adopted so far.

Marriage or Free Unions?

Several cases of marriage troubles which have been in the law courts recently have drawn attention to the injustice caused by the working of the divorce laws. In the case of Mrs. Rutherford, the wife of Colonel Rutherford, who committed a murder,

but was adjudged insane, the judges have decided that they have no means of releasing her from this terrible yoke. Had her husband been sane when he committed the murder, of course he would have been hung and she would have been free. Now she is tied for life to her lunatic husband, who was committed to Broadmoor Prison "during his Majesty's pleasure." In another case, where a woman is charged with attempting to murder her husband, some of her letters read in court showed how loathing it was for her to be compelled to submit to her husband's conjugal embraces. Knowing how distasteful it is for the ordinary man or woman to bring their marriage troubles before the vulgar gaze of the courts, we may be sure that where one case comes into court, fifty are kept out of it. Some time ago it was stated that there were a million married men and women living apart under separation orders. Law costs prevent many of them from getting divorce, apart from the fact that it is very difficult for a woman to get a divorce unless there is cruelty. Many sneers are thrown at Anarchists because they advocate free unions or free love, and vivid pictures are drawn of the ill-effects of what is termed licentiousness; but many people who have thought out the question are aware that the sex relationship would be more dignified and wholesome if each side realised that only mutual agreement would keep them together. The care of the children, which is always raised as a bogey, is not an ethical question, but an economic one. Under our present system it certainly is a great obstacle, but when our opponents raise that question we know they are in the last ditch.

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CONGRESS.

We have received from our comrades of the French Anarchist Union the following letter, duplicates of which have been sent to Anarchist organisations throughout the world:—

Paris, October 14, 1922.

DEAR COMRADES,—The International Anarchist Conference of Saint-Imier charged the French Anarchist Union with the duty of organising, as speedily as possible, an International Anarchist Congress. Having exchanged views with militants in several countries, it seems to us that this Congress should be held in Berlin, from January 28 to February 1.

We beg you, therefore, to let us know, with as little delay as possible, if your organisation will be able to be represented at this Congress, at the place and on the dates named above.

We urge you, dear Comrades, to make all the efforts in your power to participate in the labours of this Congress, which ought to bring, at last, into practical effect international Anarchist agreement.

Awaiting your prompt response, believe us, dear Comrades, yours fraternally.

Replies should be addressed to André Colomer, care of *Le Libérateur*, 69 Boulevard de Belleville, Paris, France.

We ask comrades in this country to let us know, as soon as possible, if it is their desire that an English delegate should be sent to this Congress; and if so, what financial help they are willing to give towards the expenses.

Satan inspired the oppressors of mankind with a fiendish thought. He said to them: In each family take the strongest and bravest men and give them arms. Then I shall give them two idols, called Honour and Loyalty, and one law which they shall call Obedience to Duty. They shall worship these idols and blindly obey this law.—*Lamennais*.

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New Whips for Old.

The great unthinking mass of the people of this country are being roused to a high pitch of excitement by the coming General Election, when they will exercise their hereditary right of choosing which of their masters shall hold the whip over them for the next few years. They fondly imagine that they are electing servants who will carry out their wishes, whilst all their past experience should tell them to the contrary. Parliament and voting are the most cunningly-devised instruments by which a people forge their own chains. Charles the First lost his head because he infringed the monopoly of Parliament to levy taxes, but what we are pleased to call representative Government levies taxes and grants monopolies compared with which Charles's were mere child's play. To-day Parliament is but a screen behind which the great landlords, financiers, and captains of industry lay their plans for the exploitation of the people at home and abroad. Their representatives in the House of Commons often squabble over the sharing of the plunder, but nothing that would really abolish their right to rob is ever brought before the House.

The power of our wealthy ruling class is founded on their ownership of nearly everything by which we maintain life. The land, which is the source of all wealth, is in their hands, and by means of that monopoly they have acquired control of everything that comes from it or has to make use of it. Rivers, roads, railways, motor transport—every new invention passes under their control, and is made a further means of increasing their riches. Do you require land on which to build a house, or to grow food, or to dig for coal or iron ore, you must first obtain their permission and pay their price. It is impossible for anyone to evade their grasping clutches. Having the means of life in their hands, they have thereby gained control of all public institutions. Banks, courts of law, churches, schools, universities, army, navy, police—everything by which the public life of the country is regulated is made to support their interests and their class. With all this vast economic and political power in their hands, the rest of the population are but hewers of wood and drawers of water for them, and can have no real liberty whilst this monopoly lasts.

Having realised how helpless the people are in the face of this gigantic monopoly of the natural resources of the country, we have diligently studied the various party programmes to see if they have any plans by which this load can be lifted and the people gain freedom of access to the means of life. We have looked in vain. With about two million unemployed or under-employed in the country, there is not the slightest sign that the fences round the land will be thrown down to give these men and women a chance of earning a livelihood. Let the system last even though the unemployed die of starvation.

Conservatives and Liberals naturally support the present system, their only differences being as to who shall hold the reins—and the whip—of Government, which gives them the power to grant favours and privileges to their friends and supporters. One would expect, however, that the Labour Party, "supported" by the Communist Party, would bring forward some radical proposals for the undermining of Monopoly, which they have condemned so often as the source of most of our social ills. But in the "Call to the Nation" issued by the Labour Party there is not the slightest sign that they intend to abolish Monopoly. The capital levy, increase of taxation, taxation of land values, and all their other schemes would leave the power of exploitation in the hands of the wealthy class, and in some cases even strengthen their position. Nationalisation of mines and railways by purchase would merely mean that the State would collect the dividends for the shareholders and be directly interested in the making of profits, with the Labour Party holding the whip for

the time being. The party is a conglomeration of ex-Liberals, Fabians, Socialists, and Communists, each and all of whom distrust freedom for the workers and imagine themselves the divinely-inspired leaders who will eventually bring their flocks into the new land of State Socialism, where their lives will be regulated from their State cradle to their State grave.

The lack of vision shown in all these fatuous and futile proposals makes one wonder whether those responsible for them have forgotten the horrors and ghastly tragedies of the last eight years. Twenty million people swept away by the wars generated by capitalists and financiers, wars which should have fired such a hatred for the whole rotten system that its abolition would have been a matter of weeks or months only. And the best that these timid and pitiful politicians can do is to bring forward palliatives to make the system tolerable until more wars, more disease, and more misery break out on a more devastating scale.

Those who vote to-day will help to support the system which is now squeezing the life out of millions of our fellow-creatures. Those who realise the folly of voting will devote their energy instead to pointing out the humbug of representative government.

RUSSIA'S FALSE GODS.

Il Risveglio (Geneva) reproduces an article by Sebastien Faure which expresses so eloquently what we conceive to be the truth about the Russian Dictatorship that we quote from it extensively. The article is entitled "The Twilight of the Demi-Gods," and Faure asks how it is that the Bolshevik leaders have been able to command the mystical adoration paid them during the last five years. His answer is that, by astute and able management, they have been posed as more than men, as giants in genius, as Demi-Gods. He puts it thus:—

"A new religion has been founded, with its own worship, its own ceremonies, its own prayers and hymns, its own infallible dogmas, its own investitures and sacred hierarchy of prelates, priests, and faithful acolytes, its own paradise and its own hell. To be in close relations with these gods, to be their imitator, their disciple, their representative, their mouthpiece, their confidant—this fills the worshipper with pride, and boundless is his contempt for other men. In breathing the same air as these divinely appointed miracle-workers, in speaking the same language as they employ, and in maintaining the same theses, the adorer instinctively feels himself growing to their gigantic stature; while, by accepting without discussion their decisions and expelling as heretics the bold and sacrilegious spirits who wish to examine those decisions and test their worth, he recommends himself to the veneration of the kneeling masses and sees himself clothed already with the purple he hopes, sooner or later, to don officially."

"Patience!" cries Faure; "these are idols that will fall, and at no distant date"; but not, he adds, to-morrow. Having got into power, these demi-gods cling to it with all their might, and to preserve it they will make every possible concession to bourgeois capitalism and resort to every conceivable method of repressing those who rebel against them. "Almost daily," he says, "in the economic field the Bolsheviks draw nearer to the capitalists and farther from Communism; while in the political field the development is even swifter. The so-called Proletariat State is harking back at full speed to all the forms, institutions, and methods characteristic of the Capitalist State, and with equal celerity it is drawing away from all the principles, methods, forms of organisation, and social conditions that belong to Communistic life. If this goes on, the famous Dictatorship of the Proletariat will be indistinguishable from that of the bourgeoisie. Lenin, Trotsky, and Chicherin will be admitted to the circle of recognised Heads of the State, commanders-in-chief, and diplomatists who, bearing the ignominious brand of Capitalism, reap thereby the momentary glory of a passing day. They will be found standing side by side with Poincaré, Foch, and Lloyd George."

These men, Faure continues, are not heroes but traitors, false to the great revolutionary trust confided to them; and, using the phrases chanted incessantly by their worshippers, he writes:—

"The admirable man, the prodigy, the incomparable organiser, the giant, the genius, is he who, having dedicated himself to some enormous labour, allows nothing to divert him from his task; who, seeking to put order in the place of chaos, thinks out and employs forms of organisation and methods adapted to his ends; who, overcome by the forces opposed to him, prefers death to abdication; whose conviction is so profound that he defies persecution; who will suffer martyrdom rather than betray."

A passage worthy of Nietzsche. In fact, the qualities here set out by Faure as necessary to greatness are almost identical with those attributed by Nietzsche to the Superman. Shelley had a similar vision, and in his "Prometheus Unbound" clothed it in verse that ought to be immortal.

A TIMELY PAMPHLET.

"Cartesian Economics: the Bearing of Physical Science upon State Stewardship," is the somewhat alarming title Prof. Frederick Soddy has given to a reprint of two lectures delivered, November 10 and 17, 1921, to the Student Unions of Birkbeck College and the London School of Economics. Its title, however, need not frighten any one, and perhaps it is well that we are getting away from popular labels and learning the strength of a more sober style.

Professor Soddy has made inanimate mechanism his special study, and he states frankly that through his examination of the steam-engine he has reached the economic opinions he here expresses. They are most radical opinions, fatal to the existing order. Inasmuch as all life's physical problems are energy problems, he starts with a consideration of the source from which all energy is derived—the sun. From that, and from that alone, comes the fuel that keeps the entire planetary machinery in motion. On the proper utilisation of that fuel life depends.

It is thanks to solar energy that we exist. Our individual bodies are stored with it, and we use it, in proportion to our intelligence, as we find it stored around us. "Wind power, water-power, and wood fuel are parts of the year-to-year revenue of sunshine no less than cereals and other animal foods. But when coal became king, the sunlight of a hundred million years ago added itself to that of to-day and by it was built a civilisation such as the world had never seen."

Surely that is a suggestive passage; and, in reality, this fundamental energy-fact once firmly grasped, life's true political economy comes clearly into view. Another fact emerges instantly, viz., that the original flow of inanimate energy can be transformed into vital energy only through the agency of the vegetable world. "The life-use," he writes, "demands the intermediary of the plant, and though coal was once alive it is long since dead. The laborious and wasteful travail, through farming and agriculture, has once again to be gone through. In spite of the striking advances of the past century, the agriculturalist, peasant, and farm-labourer form the dominant economic class, and will remain so until some new discovery of science deposes them. To my mind this is one of the least obvious and yet most fundamental facts of economics and social science at the present time."

Let no one scoff at this as being only theory. It is most practical. It takes us to the root of the whole trouble, and shows us that in abandoning our individual and collective control of natural resources—of that vegetable world by which we feed ourselves and maintain the fires necessary to existence—we have abandoned all. As Adam Smith said, more than a century ago: "When food is provided it is easy to find the necessary clothing and shelter." We cannot ignore the land question. We must recognise that the food-producer is the man who keeps us all alive. The proper indictment of our capitalist civilisation is that it is grinding the life out of the masses for the sake of providing accessories, conveniences, and luxuries, while starving them to death.

This pamphlet shows very conclusively that our lives depend on the daily revenue of energy we derive from the sun and harness to our uses through the operations of agriculture; and that this energy is a constantly flowing stream into which we have to dip incessantly. We cannot stand with crossed arms and idly watch the current. By the law of our being we have to use it all the time; and it is the attempt to store it up, to impound it, to withdraw it from the general stock and convert it into a monopoly for the enrichment of the invasive few, which is causing all the poverty and suffering of this unnaturally distracted world.

This study of the sources of energy, of natural law, carries us far, and furnishes us, as we have said, with a political economy fatal to the pretensions of the governing class. We cannot, for lack of space, pursue the argument in detail, but we quote one more paragraph which seems to us singularly appropriate at this present moment, and one that ought to awaken thought and pave the way for action. It runs:—

"The industrialised countries are, with an enthusiasm reminiscent of a lunatic asylum, turning out an ever-increasing plethora of mere factory products and sending them forth to compete in ever-shrinking markets in exchange for food, and are pouring forth an ever-increasing stream of armaments to fight among themselves for markets. The only goal in sight is war and yet war, the blowing up of the plethora and the permanent devitiation of the stock of the white race, at the time, too, when, by reason of failing fecundity, the prospect of its having to fight about something other than markets is becoming evident."

We wish more comrades could be induced to read publications of this closely knit, well-balanced, scientific type. We wish so many would not think they know it all when they have studied Kropotkin or Bakunin, Marx or Henry George. A movement succeeds in proportion to the energy of its supporters, and the sign of that energy is the amount of thought they themselves put into general circulation, under the pressure of the circumstances of their own time. If we live only on the revenue of the past, we die. If we ourselves do

not create, there is no real life in us. The dead cannot make our propaganda for us. In this, as in all other things, it is the present generation that has to show itself alive.

The price of this pamphlet is only sixpence, and it is published by Hendersons, 66 Charing Cross Road, W.C. This means that it will be brought to the attention of many Socialists, and Socialist thought is changing. It is learning that the individual cannot be ignored, and that no schemes can hope to be successful if they fly in the face of natural law.

THE ADAPTABLE COMMUNIST.

Mr. William Gallacher, who is standing as the Communist Party candidate at Dundee, has issued an election address which is full of hot-air. It opens thus: "Comrades and Fellow Workers, —On November 15th you will be called upon to make a decision that will have far-reaching consequences for you and to the future of our class." Bosh! The day after Mr. Gallacher is elected—if he is—the hooters will blow and the jute workers of Dundee will bend their backs to the yoke as before, and Mr. Gallacher's speeches at Westminster will not lighten their load for one moment. After saying that Parliament is a sham, he continues: "If it is your will that I shall carry on the struggles in Parliament, I will give my whole strength to the task." There's a nice adaptable man for you, workers of Dundee! In other words: "I know it's a sheer waste of time, but for your sake and for £400 a year I will go to Parliament if you wish it."

For a Communist and a member of the Third International his reference to Russia is very meek and mild: "Recognition of Soviet Russia means an opportunity for the workers there and work for the unemployed here." But when he says he will support Ireland, India and Egypt "in any effort they may put forward for independence," and at the same time says: "In general I will support the Labour Party," he is talking with his tongue in his cheek, for the present leaders of the Labour Party have said definitely that they will not agree to Ireland and India breaking away from the British Empire, which independence really means. In his concluding sentences Mr. Gallacher says he has "neither respect nor loyalty for the Monarchy and the Constitution," yet he knows that before he can take his seat in Parliament he will have to take the Oath of Allegiance, which he will begin as follows: "I, William Gallacher, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George, and will defend him to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies, and attempts whatever, which shall be made against his person, crown and dignity." We hope he gets elected, if only to hear him take this oath!

Mr. Gallacher, we have said, is a very adaptable person. In February, 1920, he wrote an article in the *Workers' Dreadnought*, in which he spoke scathingly of Parliamentary action and those seeking Parliamentary honours. Writing in the name of the Scottish Workers' Committee, he said:—

"This Committee is definitely anti-Parliamentarian. . . . We represent the revolutionary movement in Scotland. . . . For a considerable time we have been sparring with the official Parliamentarians. . . . But this state of affairs cannot continue long. We are winning all along the line. The rank and file of the I.L.P. in Scotland is becoming more and more disgusted with the idea of Parliament, and the Soviets or Workers' Councils are being supported by almost every branch. This is very serious, of course, for the gentlemen who look to politics for a profession, and they are using any and every means to persuade their members to come back into the Parliamentary fold. Revolutionary comrades *must* not give any support to this gang. Our fight here is going to be a most difficult one. One of the worst features of it will be the treachery of those whose personal ambition is a more compelling force than their regard for the revolution. . . . The official I.L.P. is bitterly hostile to the Third International, the rank and file is for it. Any support to the Parliamentary opportunists is simply playing into the hands of the former."

That was Mr. William Gallacher in 1920. To-day this Communist, whose "personal ambition is a more compelling force than his regard for the revolution," is offering, if elected, to give "general support" to the gang of Parliamentary opportunists who, in his own words, are "bitterly opposed to the Third International," of which he is a member. We think Mr. Gallacher has all the makings of a great politician, and one of whom the Communist Party should be proud. But we are glad we do not have to "look to politics for a profession."

If my soldiers would really think, not one of them would remain in the ranks.—*Frederick the Great.*

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

We find it at the present moment distasteful to discuss the details of the Labour and revolutionary movement as it is working itself out in various countries. Europe is being shaken to its profoundest depths by a series of world-shattering upheavals, and the big eclipses the little. It seems to us, for example, absurd to talk about "the united front" when we consider what has taken place in Italy; and it may well be that the situation now developing in Constantinople will throw into the shade even Mussolini's *coup d'état*.

Certainly, as we see it, these international convulsions should not dampen our ardour, but they should open our eyes to the fact that colossal revolutionary transformations are working themselves out, and that the action is on the grandest scale. What we are witnessing at present is a hitherto unparalleled triumph of State philosophy—the State as a vast military machine, captured and recaptured by whatever armed forces prove themselves at the moment most powerful. The Great War was the overthrow of the Teutonic Imperial machine by the Allies' Imperial machine. In the Russian Revolution the Romanoff machine has been succeeded by the Lenin-Trotsky machine. By sheer military violence the Fascisti have taken possession of Italy, and by sheer military violence Kemal has dethroned the Sultan.

We may be very sure that these new conquerors will have their imitators, for there are plenty of ambitious spirits who understand that the capture of the State is the high road to prosperity and power. A Monarchist *coup d'état* which will seize the reins of Government in Southern Germany is now reported as likely to occur at any moment, and the contagion will not stop there. Of one other thing also we may be well assured—the great and recently-awakened World of Islam is watching every one of these upheavals keenly and is preparing itself to play an active part.

Our contention is that this is our own great opportunity; for the Anarchist movement rests on the conviction that the State, as the epitome of militarism, of coercion by the armed hand, of rule by brute force, is crucifying mankind. It is now, when all humanity is being stretched on the cross, that we are called on to proclaim our faith in all that purity which makes it truly great. It is now, when the storm is breaking over us most devastatingly, that we have to head straight into it, and that there should be no tacking about on devious courses. If we dodge, we are lost. If we do not declare ourselves boldly and plainly now, we shall not be heard of again for many a long year to come.

We explain here our own position. The Anarchist exchanges that come to us from France are still telling us why our comrades left the C.G.T. and formed the C.G.T.U.; how the latter split over the question of taking orders from Moscow, and so forth. Exchanges from Spain and the Argentine insist that we cannot be good Anarchists unless we are also active Syndicalists; and some of them—*Lucha Social*, for example—declare that we are no good as either if we do not work for the Moscow programme. It is all very interesting, because it shows that interest in the social question is not entirely dead; but we feel about organisation bickerings much as we feel about the bickerings of politics, viz., that they belong to a smaller past, that they do not fit into the huge movements of the present, that they are out of date.

The Syndicalist question is being ardently and virulently discussed, and probably it will largely absorb the attention of the forthcoming Berlin Congress. If dissensions do not show themselves at the Congress itself they will be much in evidence outside of it, for a vigorous propaganda of opposition to anything that savours of officialdom, centralisation, or other departures from basic Anarchist principles, has developed. Many of our correspondents believe that absorption in the details of Syndicalism will detract greatly from our activities as propagandists, and look with much suspicion on the official machinery set up already.

In the latest "La Révolte and Temps Nouveaux" publication, P. Richard presents this view. He emphasises, in the first place, our need of a practical programme, which will explain clearly how we propose that the complicated requirements of modern life shall be satisfied, both in the agricultural and industrial domains; how such services as those connected with the running of mines, railways, electricity, lighting, heating, etc., will be conducted; for it is not sufficient to shout Revolution! and then expect the Revolution to make itself. "Moreover, precisely because men at present regard masters as a necessity, we must see to it that the Revolution is not juggled with by the clever, and by the fishers in troubled waters; and also—an equally dangerous rock—that we ourselves, by the very fact of our revolutionary initiative, do not come to be regarded as the eventual successors of the present masters. To the anxious eyes of those

who are looking beyond themselves for the remedying of their ills we ought not to appear as possible directors who will issue orders, pass laws, and act as high priests. Everywhere, always, we ought to show that this Revolution is not going to work to the special profit of those who now foresee it. All are to profit by it, even if all do not take part in it. All, whoever they may be and whatever their present position in the social hierarchy, are to be benefited. That this work may be completed, and modern equipment be for the good of all, co-operation by all is necessary."

Richard criticises most severely the Lyons Congress, which he styles a "so-called Anarchist Congress." He declares that it has set up the very Anarchist hierarchy we used to denounce as a thing never to be endured. Of the participants in that Congress he writes: "It is useless for them to defend themselves with the plea that they do not wish to copy the political parties. That is just what they have done." He insists that these secretaries and members of regional federation bureaux will not add to the vigour or intelligence of the movement at large, but will, as such officials always do, end by regarding themselves as superior to the rank and file; in a word, Dictators. "Bastien calls this the being strongly organised. For my part I call it the being strait-jacketed, domesticated, directed, brigadied by secretaries, treasurers, propaganda delegates, and what not. . . . Bastien says—listen carefully to this:—'Our object is to prevent those sympathisers whom our propaganda has touched, but whom our lack of organisation hinders our absorbing, from joining a political party.' Ah, bah!" If we do not make permanent converts, the fault is clearly in our propaganda, and no amount of brigadiering will remedy that.

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