

-:- For the United Front of Defense Against Hitlerism -:-

(Continued from last issue)

The united front must have its organs. There is no need of imagining what these may be; the situation itself is dictating the nature of these organs. In many localities, the workers have already suggested the form of organization of the united front after the manner of defense cartels basing themselves on all the local proletarian organizations and establishments. This is an initiative which must be grasped, deepened, consolidated, extended to cover the industrial centers with cartels, by linking them up with each other and by preparing a German workers' congress of defense.

The fact that the unemployed and the employed workers are becoming increasingly estranged from each other bears within itself a deadly danger, not only to the collective agreements but also for the trade unions without there even being any need of a Fascist crusade. The united front between social democrats and Communists means before all the united front of the employed and unemployed workers. Without that, any serious struggle in Germany is quite unthinkable.

The Red Trade Union Opposition (R. G. O.) must enter into the free trade unions as a Communist fraction. That is one of the principal conditions of the success of the united front. The Communists within the trade unions must enjoy the rights of workers' democracy and in the first place, the right of full freedom of criticism. On their part, they must respect the statutes of the trade unions and their discipline.

The defense against Fascism is not an isolated thing. Fascism is only a cog in the hands of finance capital. The aim of the crushing of proletarian democracy is to raise the rate of exploitation of labor power. There lies an immense field for the united front of the proletariat: the struggle for the daily bread, extended and sharpened, leads directly under present conditions to the struggle for the workers' control of production.

The factories, the mines, the large estates fulfill their social functions thanks only to the labor of the workers. Can it be that the latter have not the right to know where the owner is directing the establishment, why he is reducing production and driving out the workers, how he is fixing prices, etc.? We will be answered: "Commercial secrets." What are commercial secrets? A plot of the capitalists against the workers and the people as a whole. Producers and consumers, the workers, in this two-fold capacity, must conquer the right to control all the operations of their establishments, unmask fraud and deceit in order to defend their interests and the interests of the people as a whole. Facts and figures in hand. The struggle for workers' control of production can and should become the slogan of the united front.

On the ground of organization, the forms necessary for the cooperation between social democratic workers and Communist workers will be found without difficulty; it is only necessary to pass over from words to deeds.

THE IRRECONCILABLE CHARACTER OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

Now, if the common defense against the attack of capital is possible, can we not go still further and form a genuine bloc of the two parties on all the questions? Then the polemic between the two would take on an internal, pacific and cordial character. Certain Left social democrats, of the type of Seydewitz, as is known, even go so far as to dream of a complete union of the social democracy and the Communist party. But all this is nevertheless a vain dream! What separates the Communists from the social democracy are antagonisms on fundamental questions. The simplest way of translating the essence of their disagreements is this: the social democracy considers itself the democratic doctor of capitalism; we are its revolutionary grave-diggers.

The irreconcilable character of the two parties appears with particular clearness in the light of the recent evolution of Germany. Hitler laments that in calling Hitler to power the bourgeois classes have disrupted the "integration of the workers into the State" and he warns the bourgeoisie against the "dangers" flowing from it (Vorwaerts, February 15, 1933). Leipzig thus makes himself the watchdog of the bourgeois state by desiring to preserve it from the proletarian revolution. Can we even dream of union with Leipzig?

The Vorwaerts prides itself every day on the fact that hundreds of thousands of social democrats died during the war "for the ideal of a finer and freer Germany".... It only forgets to explain why this finer Germany turned out to be the Germany of Hitler-Hugenberg. In reality, the German workers, like the workers of the other belligerent countries, died as cannon fodder, as slaves of capital. To idealize this fact is to continue the treason of August 4, 1914.

The Vorwaerts continues to appeal to Marx, to Engels, to Wilhelm Liebknecht, to Bebel, who from 1848 to 1871, spoke of the struggle for the unity of the German nation. Lying appeals! At that time, it was a question of completing the bourgeois revolution. Every proletarian revolutionist had to fight against the particularism and provincialism inherited from feudality. Every proletarian revolutionist had to fight

against this particularism and provincialism in the name of the creation of a national State. At the present time, such an objective is invested with a progressive character only in China, in India, in the East Indies, in Indonesia and other backward colonial and semi-colonial countries. For the advanced countries of Europe, the national frontiers are exactly the same reactionary chains as the feudal frontiers were at one time. Quite true! But these twins have become aged, infirm and have fallen into senility. The nation, like all economy, and democracy, as a form of the domination of the bourgeoisie, have been transformed into fetters upon the productive forces and civilization. Let us recall again Goethe: "All that is born is doomed to perish."

A few more million beings may be sacrificed for the "corridor," for Alsace-Lorraine, for Malmedy. These disputed bits of land may be covered with three, five, ten rows of corpses. All this may be called national defense. But humanity will not progress because of it; on the contrary, it will fall backward into barbarism on all fours. The way out is not in the "national liberation" of Germany, but in the liberation of Europe from national barriers. It is a problem which the bourgeoisie cannot resolve, any more than the feudal lords in their time were able to put an end to participation. Hence the coalition with the bourgeoisie is doubly reprehensible. A proletarian revolution is necessary. A federation of the proletarian republics of Europe and the whole world is necessary.

Social patriotism is the program of doctors of capitalism; internationalism is the program of the grave-diggers of bourgeois society. This antagonism is irremediable.

DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

The social democrats consider the democratic constitution to be above the class struggle. For us, the class struggle is above the democratic constitution. Can it be that the experience undergone by post-war Germany has passed without leaving a trace, just as the experience undergone during the war? The November revolution brought the social democracy to power. The social democracy spurred the powerful movement of the masses along the road of "right" and the "Constitution". The whole political life followed in Germany evolved on the basis and within the framework of the Weimar republic.

The results are at hand: bourgeois democracy is transformed legally, practically, into a Fascist dictatorship. The secret is simple enough: bourgeois democracy, just as the Fascist dictatorship, are the instruments of one and the same class: the exploiters. It is absolutely impossible to prevent the replacement of one instrument by the other by appealing to the Constitution, the Supreme Court at

Leipzig, new elections, etc.; what is necessary is to mobilize the revolutionary forces of the proletariat. Constitutional fetishism brings the best aid to Fascism. Today this is no longer a prognostication, a theoretical affirmation, but the living reality. I ask you, social democratic worker: If the Weimar democracy blazed the trail for the Fascist dictatorship, how is one to expect it to blaze the trail for socialism?

—But can't we social democratic workers win the majority in the democratic Reichstag? —That you cannot. Capitalism has ceased to develop, it is putrefying. The number of industrial workers is no longer growing. An important section of the proletariat is being degraded under continual unemployment. By themselves, these social facts exclude the possibility of any stable and methodical development of a labor party in parliament as before the war. But even if, in the face of all probability, the labor representation in parliament should grow rapidly, would the bourgeoisie wait for a peaceful expropriation? The governmental machinery is entirely in its hands! Even admitting that the bourgeoisie allows the moment to pass and permits the proletariat to gain a parliamentary representation of fifty-one percent, would it the Reichswehr, the police, the Steel Helmets and the Fascist storm troops disperse this parliament in the same way that they disperse today the parliament of a stroke of the pen all the parliaments which displease it? —Then, down with the Reichstag and elections?

—No, that's not what I mean. We are Marxists and not anarchists. We are supporters of the utilization of parliament; it is not an instrument for transforming society, but a means of rallying the workers. However, in the development of the class struggle, a moment arrives when it is necessary to decide the question of who is to be master of the country: finance capital or the proletariat. Dissolutions on the nation and on democracy in general constitute, under such conditions, the most impudent lie. In our eyes, a small German minority is organizing and arming, so to speak, half of the nation to crush and strangle the other half. It is not a question today of secondary reforms, but of the life or death of bourgeois society. Never have such questions been decided by a vote. Whoever appeals today to the parliament or to the Supreme Court at Leipzig, is deceiving the workers and in practice, is helping Fascism.

—Yes, the dictatorship in the Soviet Union at the present time has an extremely bureaucratic and distorted character. I have personally criticized more than once in the press the present Soviet regime which is a distortion of the workers' state. Thousands upon thousands of my friends fill the prisons and the place of exile for having fought against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Now even if one judges the negative sides of the present Soviet regime, it is necessary to preserve a correct historical perspective. If the German proletariat, much more numerous and more civilized than the Russian proletariat, were to take the power tomorrow, this would not only open up immense economic and cultural

THERE IS NO OTHER ROAD

—What is to be done under such conditions? My social democratic interlocutor will ask. —The proletarian revolution. —And then? —The dictatorship of the proletariat. —As in Russia? The privations and the sacrifices? The complete

stifling of freedom of opinion? No, not for me.

—It's just because you are not disposed to tread the road of the revolution and the dictatorship that we are both unable to form one single party. But nevertheless allow me to tell you that your objection is not worthy of a conscious proletarian. Yes, the privations of the Russian workers are considerable. But in the first place, the Russian workers know in the name of what they are making these sacrifices. Even if they should undergo a defeat, humanity would have learned a great deal from their experience. Now in the name of what did the German working class sacrifice itself in the years of the imperialist war? Or again, in the years of the unemployment? To what do these sacrifices lead, what do they yield, what do they teach? Worthy of man are only those sacrifices which blaze the trail to a better future. That's the first objection I heard you make. The first, but not the only one.

The sufferings of the Russian workers are considerable because in Russia, as a consequence of specific historical factors, was born the first proletarian state which, from an extreme poverty, is obliged to raise itself by its own strength. Don't forget that Russia was the most backward country of Europe. The proletariat there constituted only a tiny part of the population. In this country, the dictatorship of the proletariat necessarily had to assume the harshest forms. Hence the consequences which flowed from it: the development of the bureaucracy which holds the power and the chain of errors committed by the political leadership which has fallen under the influence of this bureaucracy. If at the end of 1918, when the power was completely in its hands, the social democracy had entered boldly upon the road to socialism and had concluded an indissoluble alliance with Soviet Russia, the whole history of Europe would have received a different orientation and humanity would have arrived at socialism in a much shorter space of time and with infinitely less sacrifice. It is not our fault that this did not happen.

Yes, the dictatorship in the Soviet Union at the present time has an extremely bureaucratic and distorted character. I have personally criticized more than once in the press the present Soviet regime which is a distortion of the workers' state. Thousands upon thousands of my friends fill the prisons and the place of exile for having fought against the Stalinist bureaucracy. Now even if one judges the negative sides of the present Soviet regime, it is necessary to preserve a correct historical perspective. If the German proletariat, much more numerous and more civilized than the Russian proletariat, were to take the power tomorrow, this would not only open up immense economic and cultural

perspectives but would lead immediately to a radical attenuation of the dictatorship in the Soviet Union.

It must not be thought that the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessarily connected with the methods of the Red terror which we had to apply in Russia. We were the pioneers. Covered with crime, the Russian possessing classes did not believe that the new regime would last. The bourgeoisie of Europe and America supported the Russian counter-revolution. Under these conditions, one could hold on only at the cost of a terrific tension of forces and an implacable punishment of our class enemies. The victory of the proletariat in Germany would have quite a different character. The German bourgeoisie, having lost the power, would no longer have any hope of retaking it. The alliance of Soviet Germany with Soviet Russia would multiply, not twofold, but tenfold, the strength of the two countries. In all the rest of Europe, the position of the bourgeoisie is so compromised that it is not very likely that it would be able to get its armies to march against proletarian Germany. To be sure, the civil war would be inevitable; for that purpose, Fascism is enough. But armed with the power, the German proletariat, having behind it the Soviet Union, would soon bring about a decomposition of Fascism by drawing to its side substantial sections of the petty bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Germany would have incomparably more cultured than the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia.

—In that case, why the dictatorship? —To annihilate exploitation and parasitism; to crush the resistance of the exploiters; to end their inclination to think about a re-establishment of exploitation; to put all the power, all the means of production, all the resources of civilization into the hands of the proletariat and to permit it to utilize all the forces and means in the interest of the socialist transformation of society: There is no other road.

THE GERMAN BOURGEOISIE WILL HAVE THE REVOLUTION IN GERMAN AND NOT IN RUSSIA

—Still, if often happens that our Communists approach us social democrats with this threat: Just wait, as soon as we will get into power, we'll put you up against the wall.

—Only a handful of imbeciles, windbags and braggarts who, as sure as fate, will run like the devil at the moment of danger, can make such threats. A serious revolutionist, while acknowledging the incapability of revolutionary violence and its creative function, understands at the same time that the application of violence in the socialist transformation of society has well-defined limits. The Communists cannot prepare themselves

step in this sense. Obviously, in our eyes, the Reichstag is not a capital historical conquest which the proletariat must defend against the Fascist vandals. There are more valuable things. Within the framework of bourgeois democracy and parallel to an incessant struggle against it, the elements of proletarian democracy have formed themselves in the course of many decades: political parties, labor press, trade unions, factory committees, clubs, cooperatives, sports societies, etc. The mission of Fascism is not so much to complete the destruction of bourgeois democracy as to crush the first outlines of proletarian democracy. As to our mission, it consists in placing the elements of proletarian democracy already created at the foundation of the Soviet system of the workers' state. Towards this end, it is necessary to break the link of bourgeois democracy and free from it the kernel of workers' democracy; therein lies the essence of the proletarian revolution. Fascism threatens the vital kernel of workers' democracy. This alone clearly dictates the program of the united front. We are ready to defend your printing plants and our own, but also the democratic principle of freedom of the press; your labor homes and ours, but also the democratic principle of the freedom of assemblage and association. We are materialists and that is why we do not separate the soul from the body. So long as we do not yet have the strength to establish the Soviet system, we place ourselves on the terrain of bourgeois democracy. But at the same time we do not entertain any illusions.

WHAT SHALL WE DEFEND?

—Very good, but we social democrats propose nevertheless to come to power by democracy. You Communists consider that an absurd Utopia. In that case, is the united front of defense possible? For it is necessary to have a clear idea of what there is to defend. If we defend one thing and you another, we will not lead to common actions. Do you Communists consent to defend the Weimar Constitution?

—The question is a fitting one and I will try to answer it candidly. The Weimar Constitution represents a whole system of institutions, of rights and of laws. Let us commence from the top. The republic has at its head a president. Do you consent you Communists, to defend Hindenburg against Fascism. I hope that the need for that doesn't make itself felt; Hindenburg having called the Fascists to power. Then comes the government presided over by Hitler. This government does not need to be defended against Fascism. In the third place comes the parliament. When these lines appear, the fate of the parliament emerging from the elections of March 5, will probably have been determined. But even at this juncture one can say with certitude that if the composition of the Reichstag proves to be hostile to the government; if Hitler takes it into his head to liquidate the Reichstag and if the social democracy shows a determination to fight for the latter, the Communists will help the social democracy with all their strength.

We Communists cannot and do not want to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat against you or without you social democratic workers. We want to come to this dictatorship together with you. And we regard the common defense against Fascism as the first

step in this sense. Obviously, in our eyes, the Reichstag is not a capital historical conquest which the proletariat must defend against the Fascist vandals. There are more valuable things. Within the framework of bourgeois democracy and parallel to an incessant struggle against it, the elements of proletarian democracy have formed themselves in the course of many decades: political parties, labor press, trade unions, factory committees, clubs, cooperatives, sports societies, etc. The mission of Fascism is not so much to complete the destruction of bourgeois democracy as to crush the first outlines of proletarian democracy. As to our mission, it consists in placing the elements of proletarian democracy already created at the foundation of the Soviet system of the workers' state. Towards this end, it is necessary to break the link of bourgeois democracy and free from it the kernel of workers' democracy; therein lies the essence of the proletarian revolution. Fascism threatens the vital kernel of workers' democracy. This alone clearly dictates the program of the united front. We are ready to defend your printing plants and our own, but also the democratic principle of freedom of the press; your labor homes and ours, but also the democratic principle of the freedom of assemblage and association. We are materialists and that is why we do not separate the soul from the body. So long as we do not yet have the strength to establish the Soviet system, we place ourselves on the terrain of bourgeois democracy. But at the same time we do not entertain any illusions.

AS TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

—And what will you do with the social democratic press if you should succeed in seizing power? Will you prohibit our papers as the Russian Bolsheviks prohibited the Menshevik papers?

—You put the question badly. What do you mean by "our" papers? In Russia the dictatorship of the proletariat proved possible only after the overwhelming majority of the worker-Mensheviks passed over to the side of the Bolsheviks, whereas the petty bourgeois debris of Menshevism undertook to assist the bourgeoisie to fight for the restoration of "democracy", that is, of capitalism. Now, even in Russia we did not at all inscribe upon our banner the prohibition of the Menshevik papers. We were led to do this by the incredibly harsh conditions of the struggle that had to be conducted to save and maintain the revolutionary dictatorship. In Soviet Germany, the situation will be, as I have already said, infinitely more favorable and the regime of the press will necessarily feel the effects of it. I do not think that in this field the German proletariat needs to resort to repression.

To be sure, I do not want to say that the workers' state will tolerate even for a day the regime of the (bourgeois) "freedom of the press", that is, the state of affairs in which only those can publish papers and books who control the printing plants, the paper manufactories, the bookstores and so on—that is, the capitalists. The (bourgeois) "freedom of the press" signifies the monopoly for finance capital to impose capitalist prejudices upon the people by means of hundreds and thousands of papers charged with disseminating the virus of lies in the most perfect technical form. Proletarian freedom of the press will mean the nationalization of the printing plants, of the paper manufactories and the bookstores in the interest of the workers. We do not separate the soul from the body. Freedom of the press without lynchings, without printing presses, and without paper is a miserable fiction. In the proletarian state the technical means of printing will be put at the disposal of groups of citizens in accordance with their real numerical importance. But how is this to be done? The social democracy will obtain printing facilities corresponding to the number of its supporters. I do not think that at that time this number will be very high; otherwise the very regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be impossible. Nevertheless, let us leave it to the future to solve this question. But the principle itself of distributing the technical means of the press, not in accordance with the thickness of the checkbook, but in accordance with the number of supporters of a given program, of a given current, of a given school, is, I hope, the most honest, the most democratic, the most authentically proletarian principle. Isn't that so?

—Maybe.

—Then shall we shake hands on it?

—I'd like to think it over a bit. —I ask for nothing else, my dear friend: the aim of all my reflections is to have you meditate once more upon all the great problems of proletarian policy. Prinkipo, February 23, 1933. —L. TROTSKY.

TO OUR READERS:

We must again beg the indulgence of our readers for the failure to publish in this issue all the articles which were announced last week. Once more it is a question of pressure of space which has obliged us to omit some of the material which we planned to include. We can assure our readers that the articles will appear next week as announced.

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The Mooney United Front--the Negotiations Must Be Conducted Publicly

The third session of the Congress Organization Committee of the New York United Front Free Tom Mooney Conference revealed that the party has taken another step deeper into the opportunistic swamp. The party was the dominant political current in the conference. It is in control of the Congress Organization Committee. If the party seriously means to build a united front movement and bring pressure to bear on the summit of the S. P. and the A. F. of L. through their ranks the organs of the united front are the instruments they must use.

The conference represented thousands of workers. The Congress Organization Committee has the right and the duty to speak in their name. What it has to say has a certain force and can constitute a pressure on the S. P. and the A. F. of L. bureaucrats and misleaders to remove the barriers they have erected across the road to the united front of the Mooney movement.

But the procedure must be open and take place before the eyes of the entire working class. When this is done the workers of both parties and in neither will see who stands in the way of unity and why. This is the way to teach the workers that the Communists are the spokesmen for the unity of the class.

This is not the procedure the party is following. It ignores the organs of the united front. Instead it has entered into a Negotiations Committee outside of the united front and its organs with Muste of the C. P. L. A. and Palmer of the Federated Press to draw the S. P. and A. F. of L. into the movement and the Chicago Congress behind the backs of its own membership and the working class. Hathaway's article in the Daily Worker of April 8 makes it appear that the negotiations are taking place openly before the eyes of the working class. This is false.

The party has two men (names unknown) on this Negotiations Committee. What they do there except to commit the party to these behind-the-scenes maneuvers is not clear. Palmer does not report it.

According to his reports Palmer seems to be doing all the work of back-door bargaining. Last Saturday he reported the following: the second session of the Organization Committee voted to issue an open letter to the S. P. and the A. F. of L. inviting them to enter the Mooney movement and parti-

cipate in the Chicago Congress. The letter was not issued because Louis B. Scott, Mooney's personal representative, thought it inadvisable to issue such a letter at the present time in view of the stage which the negotiations have reached. Instead Scott sent a personal letter to Julius Gerber! Palmer objected to Hathaway's article in the Daily Worker of April 8 which sharply criticized the S. P. for its sabotage of the movement and its slanders against the Communist party and the Chicago Congress. He implied that it might have a disastrous effect on the negotiations.

Palmer reported that Clarence Senior had told him that the S. P. was conferring in Chicago with the A. C. W., the I. L. G. W. U. and the Chicago Federation of Labor over the question of participating in the Chicago Congress. Senior said that they had come to this understanding with the Chicago Federation of Labor: Fitzpatrick agreed that if Frank P. Walsh would state publicly that the participation of Labor would help the Mooney movement they might come in. On this basis the S. P. would also consider the question.

Palmer got to Walsh. Walsh said that he had nothing to do with the propaganda and of the Mooney movement. He also said that he would not ask the Chicago Federation of Labor to participate in the Chicago Congress with Communists because of the latter's attacks in the past on Nockels and Fitzpatrick.

So Palmer chased around to Nockels. Nockels said that the Chicago Federation would not go into the Congress if there was one Communist there.

Nothing daunted Palmer reported back to Clarence Senior. Senior said that the S. P. was anxious to have the Chicago Federation of Labor, the A. C. W. and the I. L. G. W. U. participate but if they refused the S. P. would vote on the question of participation nevertheless.

Earlier in the week Senior had wired Palmer the conditions on which the S. P. would consider the question of participation. These were two in number: (1) the management committee of the Congress Organization Committee; (2) the speaker's committee of the Congress Organization Committee.

Wise needs no introduction to our readers. His attitude toward the Soviet Union and the working class movement is well known. It is sometimes necessary to suffer such people in united fronts—when they are the representatives of organizations participating in the united front. But that is not the case with Wise. He represents no one in this united front. Why does the party invite him to speak? This is not the way to build a united movement. But it is the Stalinist opportunist substitute for it. These adventurers think they will use Wise to fool the masses into believing that Hathaway and Wise on the platform are symbols of a united movement!

Strenuous objection was made to Wise by Linn of the I. W. O. and the Left Opposition. The motion of the Left Opposition to reject him was defeated. A motion to refer the matter back to the speakers' committee carried.

That is how the movement for Mooney's release stands now. The S. P. continues its cynical sabotage of the movement with impunity. And the Stalinists pursue their course deeper into the swamp. There were some people who greeted the party's turn from the ultra Leftism of the united front below with the hope that the Stalinists were steering a correct course. They showed little understanding of the nature of bureaucratic centrism. The Stalinists are incapable of pursuing a correct policy consistently. They move either to the extreme of ultra-Leftism or

All of this, Palmer told us, he reported to Hathaway! And all of this is reported to the Congress Organization Committee in the control of the Stalinists which votes to accept these reports! Only the Left Opposition raises its voice in criticism. Against our sharp warnings that this road leads to the swamp, plays into the hands of the enemies of the Mooney movement and discredits Communism in the eyes of the workers the Stalinists make a united front with Muste and Palmer in the Committee to reject our criticism and proposals.

At this session, at the conclusion of Palmer's report, the Left Opposition moved that the Congress Organization Committee, publish a summary of the negotiations up to date. Palmer ruled that the motion was out of order for lack of a second. He was about to proceed to the next item on the agenda when the miracle happened. Five delegates got up, one after another, and spoke for the motion. And it carried!

We attribute this stroke of good fortune to two causes. Palmer's report was too raw for Communists to swallow. And the front line Stalinist bureaucrats were not present to put the seal of authority and discipline on this opportunist brew. Nessin, Winter, Ballant, Moore must be mightily pleased with the results of the Negotiations Committee and content to let it replace the organs of the united front in broadening the Mooney movement. They did not attend the meeting of the Congress Organization Committee!

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The speaker's committee of which Nessin is the chairman reported through one of its members that, among the speakers for the Mooney mass meeting which is being arranged for April 27, will be, if the committee's invitation is accepted, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.

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