# A New Chapter Begins in American Labor History: Some Lessons of the Recent UMW Convention

By E. R. FRANK

The recently concluded convention of the United Mine and factories of America, fcels in Lewis himself does not know. He quent warfare that ensued be- the AFL national leadership. Workers ushered in a new stage in the history of American its very bones how important and is extremely bold in method and tween the two labor factions labor and revealed once again that the CIO is the progressive life of the country and it under- and hesitant in his policies. wing of the trade union movement, because it is based on the stands better than anyone else The indicated policy for the CIO or mainly to the split in labor's only by this comparison. By the layed pending a possible appeal, den of the defense, and it did a workers of America's mass production industries.

ost the monientum of its huge army constitutes an eversplendid offensive and retreat- menaces the wage standards of ed slowly before the counter- the employed workers, and hinders the progress of the labor movement. Partly because of militancy of the workers these employment conditions, the why LEWIS BROKE WITH vistas for the entire labor move- ution to the problems of uncm- forward onto the broad highways cooled off after the first taste unions have made no important ROOSEVELT of defeat, the rear line trenches of the capitalist class opened es of the capitalist class opened of after the first taste advances during the past year. For the last two years, they have seen the courts and the lebel past year. For the last two years, they wances made by the CIO in its golden period from 1935 to 1937. But this step Lewis will not take the cases be appealed. upsurge, they found the courage lessly pushed backwards. to do in the days of labor's re- LEWIS COULD NOT IGNORE treat. The courts began harass- THE PERMANENT CRISIS ing the labor movement with anti-union judicial legislation. The state legislatures regained their lost courage. Beginning with pas- for the labor movement, at the sage of oppressive labor legislation in Washington and Oregon, at San Francisco. But Lewis the reactionary wave swept eastward, until today almost threefourths of the states have new Matthew Woll, who bases himself tyrannical laws designed to crip- on the aristocratic Photo-Engravple the labor unions.

#### UNION-BUSTING CAMPAIGN TAKEN UP BY FDR

busting campaign has been taken auto, rubber, glass, oil—the nerve over by the federal government centers of American economy. itself. The campaign against the WPA strikers and the infamous are not experts in economics or thurman Arnold "Anti-trust law" statistics. They have not delved indictments are but high-lights ir into reports of the Federal Rethe anti-union campaign launched serve Bank or the Department of by Roosevelt as a part of his fe- Labor. But they have seen with verish preparations for war.

stands today about 10% higher the last ten years and they know than in 1929. Ten million workers that, in spite of this, one third of still remain unemployed without the labor population still remains the possibility of being re-ab- unemployed, and given present sorbed into private industry. This conditions, will always remain

fire. What they dared not at-sible to stand still. Either you back to the slavery of the open tempt during the period of labor move forward or you are ruth- shop. They have further seen

Lewis chose to ignore the existence of this permanent economic crisis and its significance CIO convention held in November could not afford to ignore these matters for long. He is not some ers and a million dollar insurance company. Lewis is the leader of the unions in the mass pro-In the past year, this union- duction industries: coal, steel,

These mass production workers their own eyes production The index of business activity stepped up to the highest level of

# N.Y. Laundry Workers Win Five-Day Week

# New Agreement, Taking Effect March 15, Represents Another Step Forward

in November between the Laun- laundry drivers of Local 810 and dry Workers' Joint Board, affiliated themselves to the CIO have two beds for all of them. ated with the Amalgamated as the "United Laundry Work- Mother and 2-month baby and Clothing Workers of America, ers" and later to the ACWA as son 8 years old sleep in 1 bed, and representatives of 75 per cent Local 300 of that organization. two oldest daughters, 16 and 15, ture of the mining industry in of the employers of the laurdry Within a few short weeks union- sleep in the other and daughter America?" industry it. New York City, the ization was proceeding in bang-up 12 years old has slept on the floor industry is scheduled, on March fashion and in two months the for the past YEAR and the RE-15, to go on the 5-day work-week new union had grown from 1,300 LIEF IS AWARE OF THIS and laundry workers in New York in dry workers. contrast to the chaotic conditions | Local 300 remains as the Manprevailing in the industry a few hattan and Bronx local and there years ago when work schedules are eight other local unions in the of 60 hours a week for wages of Joint Board, including five cov- Alameda County is of Spanish-

er one of the dirtiest and most ville, Boro Park, Queens and Nas- and country charities! The Fed- of the 6-hour day, 5-day week and er one of the diffiest and most sau, a Linen Supply Local, a eral Unemployed Union in the that this demand was to constiemployees work amid sloppy wa- wholesale local and a hand laun- past six weeks has settled over tute the chief objective of the employees work amid sloppy wa-ter and scalding steam on clothing which frequently is nauseat- local of agent-drivers (regular a relentless struggle against the ing to handle. With few excep- drivers are organized directly in- relief authorities who deprive clitions, laundries are generally lo- to the Joint Board) affiliated di- ents of the necessities of life. cated in broken-down, unsanitary rectly to the ACWA. lofts where poor ventilation is the rule and the toll in workers by any means afford to rest on membership that they can refuse Murray continued campaigning Afro-American reports. rheumatism, sciatica, pneumonia their laurels or be content mere- to work out their relief, because for a national conference of busrheumatism, sciatica, pneumonia ly to safeguard victories already not only is it a policy of FORCED and other occupational diseases. It is safeguard victories already not only is it a policy of FORCED iness, labor, agriculture and govaries and of the Minneapolis sit apolicy of the gracefully as he could.

# AFL Failed

60-hour work-week, and a living health protection are still fre- worked the required amount of "America's Problem No. 1." of military forces or for the standard based on weekly wages quently non-existent or mere ex- hours. of \$6 to \$12 with no vacations, a cuses for what they should be. 7-day work week and the intim- The Chinese laundries have hardidation exerted by union-hating ly been touched by unionization, ization throughout the country of mine union leaders did not both- natives may be taken from their bosses and foremen, and you have and as long as this large section people on relief, WPA, and other er to explain. some idea of the industry before of the industry remains unorgan- forms of relief. Especially is this The convention further in- work essential to carrying on the tives, have been arrested. the CIO stepped in.

organize the various crafts in the ganized plants. New York industry for more than Despite the great victory of workers who are in need of as- abolition of all discriminatory twenty years. Petty racketeering the 5-day week, the wages re-sistance. In Alameda County the wage differentials in and between and competition between the main as low as between \$12 to majority of the former leadership districts and the inclusion of all craft unions, however, played \$22 per week. The victories al- of the WAA is now to be found captive mines under the next unright into the hands of the bosses, ready won are only an indication in the relief stations seated be- ion agreement. with the result that the AFL met of what can be done. The bosses hind the desks as case aides, etc. with little success. Today the re- claimed that the present condimaining AFL local No. 280 has tions could not be granted withless than 10 per cent of the work- out bankrupting the industry. ers in the industry.

# How Union Was Built

Workers Joint Board which nego- press forward for the 100 per tiated the new 5-day week con- cent unionization of the laundry tract, dates back less than three industry and the achievement of years, to March 1937, when over a minimum \$30 weekly wage 1,000 laundry workers struck in throughout the industry. The 5the Brownsville section of New day week must be converted to York (Brooklyn). After five a maximum 40 hour week with weeks the strike was favorably no reduction in pay. Only through settled for Local 280. This initial such a fighting program will the victory provided a favorable op- laundry workers achieve full realtion advances. The AFL missed cent working conditions and ecoits chance and gave no support nomic security. to the drive. The militants of Lo-

Under an agreement negotiated | cal 280 thereupon joined with the

Much to Be Done Add this to the picture of a years, the sanitary facilities and crease in budget after they have scribed by the convention as drivers to facilitate the movement

proved conditions anyway.

The history of the Laundry | The union militants must now

A LAUNDRY WORKER

This industrial proletariat, employed in the huge plants, mills Where is he leading the CIO? in labor's ranks and the conse- the timid and cowardly policies of six months and the probation on Printing Trades Council, and the indispensable it is to the economic violent in speech, but very timid Is it true that the decline of cies make those of the CIO leadthe full potentialities and latent is to break once and for all with ranks? No! Of equal and even of measure of the problems which the men were taken to the Hen- magnificent job. One measure of After the smashing defeat of the "Little Steel" strike strength inherent in the labor all capitalist politics, correctly greater importance is the policy the CIO faces, by the measure of nepin County jail where they will the Herculean efforts put forth lies and they are groping around an independent political party of servative, class-collaboration pol- as those of the AFL. Lewis' lack of funds. To bail out the and looking for the labor leaders labor, with an aggressive, fighting icies of its leadership; the lack of of confidence in the independent seventeen would cost \$3,700 for who will show them the path to program for jobs and security. a militant, realistic program to strength of labor, in the ability bail bonds; to have the enormous achieve this goal.

Roosevelt and the New Dealers, bor. whom they considered to be labor's friends, take the lead of this reactionary open-shop campaign. The bitterness and hatred of this industrial proletariat is storing up and creating a powder keg of social dissatisfaction and revolt derstand this fact. They know full well that they must adapt are to retain the leadership of the CIO. This is the explanation and the only explanation for Lewis's

# OAKLAND DOLE

ed to sleep in this room in the ers within the next months.

(2) Mother and five children chinery. employed Union stepped into the their union wage structures "agreed" to a possible 5 per cent (official) are aligned.

Attempt Forced Labor

The average family on relief in

The policy of WORKING OUT won. In spite of the great LABOR, but those who work will achievements of the last three not receive the promised 15% in- the unemployment question, de- to work as carriers or motor twenty-five cents a day.

# Where Stalinists Are

ized it constitutes a constant true in vicinities where the Com- structed its leadership to negoti- war. This includes farming, for-The AFL had been trying to threat to the standards of the or- munist - controlled Workers Alli- ate a national agreement cover- estry, manufacturing, road conance of America has sold out the ing the entire coal industry, the struction and common labor.

> But the workers won these im- Now Is Your Chance On Sale for Two Weeks Only-pensions of \$60 per month for all ternational Executive Board to February 1 to February 15 ANTI-DUHRING by Engels

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portunity for further organiza- ization of their struggle for de- MODERN BOOKSHOP 27 UNIVERSITY PLACE

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movement. These workers are de- dubbed "company unionism" in of the labor movement. Labor is the desperate needs of its memtermined to win economic secur- the political field, and march for- today marking time, first of all, bership, the politics of the CIO ity for themselves and their fami- ward onto the broad highways of because of the inadequate, con- leadership are almost as bankrupt For the last two years, they pale into insignificance the ad-threatening war.

PLAIN WEAKNESS

# that will inevitably explode. Lewis MINERS' CONFAB themselves to this mood, if they OCCUPIED WITH UNEMPLOYMENT

the retreat for the past two years

before the onslaughts of reaction and that the whole union structure of the CIO stands in jeopardy if this retreat is not halted. Cite Unemployment Effects

Phil Murray expressed these fears very clearly when ne warned the American capitalists OAKLAND, California-Here ment remains unsolved there signs of yielding to the union de- tion up aptly when he remarked: velt himself who directed the are a few typical cases of people would inevitably occur "uprisings mands of a 121/2 per cent wage ". . . the gas companies are at- vicious attack against the Minnewho exist on State Relief Admin- and strikes of workers for the increase, full seniority rights, tempting to use the union as a apolis strikers, and that he has istration in the state of Califor- right to live, for the chance to closed shop, and a signed con- guinea pig'. We refuse to be a only been brought up short bema and County of Alameda:

(1) Family of thirteen have been living in a one-room barn in Russell City for over two months, Russell City for ov and the relief social service is which will cause the unemployaware of this. The family is fore- ment of nearly 90,000 steel work-

following manner: mother and The coal industry suffers very

Menaces Wage Scales Unemployment further menwould inevitably be destroyed if they have to compete continually with ten million idle men.

far-reaching proposal to reduce coal operators this spring.

Still for "Conference" The 30-hour week was not pushed, however, as the answer propose to such a conference, stores for the military forces. There is a great need of organ- when and if it is convoked, the

Resolutions were adopted supporting the Wagner Health Bill, remained hanging in mid-air. Aftlic housing program and the CIO tion adopted the Lewis recomlegislative program of old age mendations empowering the "Inpersons over 60 years of age.

Attacks Roosevelt Again guilty of violating the Wagner Partisan League." Labor Relations Act be barred The convention paid silent tribfrom receiving government con- ute in its last session to its worktracts. The convention adopted a ing class heroes when all the delresolution demanding the passage egates stood in silence in comof Bill HR 331, establishing guar- memoration of the three union antees of collective bargaining in members killed last year by gungovernment contracts and called men in "Bloody" Harlan County, upon Roosevelt to issue immedi-Kentucky.

dramatic break with Roosevelt. in the recent period, have ascrib- be explained by the split in lab- on a conspiracy charge, whereup- Minneapolis Central Labor Union, But where is Lewis going? ed this decline solely to the split or's ranks? No! It is explained by on the judge gave him both the the Building Trades Council, the

two years can be ascribed solely ership shine by comparison. But ecution of the sentences be de- Committee that carried the bur-Such a policy would open up new point the way for a genuine sol- of the working class to march ment and would, by comparison, ployment, insecurity and the of an independent political party nicety just how heavy he could the united support of the AFL to

But this step Lewis will not take. precedented in recent labor his- quire on that road. His vacillat-He does not have confidence in tory, in the form of the "anti- ing policies won't work on that the independent strength of la-|trust" indictments, which threat-|road. But that only means that AFL-CIO SPLIT DOESN'T EX- ous AFL Internationals. How is forward in place of those of Lewis. Many bourgeois writers, com- al threat? It is confining its res- the CIO along the road it must go menting on the lack of progress istance to the hiring of lawyers, to solve the needs of the masses. of the American labor movement the drawing up of briefs and the Only as voices arise which articicians. A pitiable campaign! Is these needs, will the CIO move in this poor resistance, perchance, to the necessary direction.

These timid and cowardly poli-

en the very existence of numer- the necessary policies must be put the AFL responding to this most- There is no short cut to pushing button-holing of individual poli- culately and accurately reflect

# Strike Begins at Toledo Gas Plant As Talks Fail

By DOYLE CLARK ure of the Ohio Fuel Gas Co. to rates in the company's favor. come to terms with the Gas and Obviously the company was By-Products Workers local un- using the threat of strike as a

Scabs Imported

plants and the strike was in full

TOLEDO, Ohio, Feb. 1-Fail- cil was able to adjust local gas the singing of "Solidarity".

The Toledo Blade, a Hearst-Paul Block rag of the smelliest With customary alacrity the sort, wrote up heavily biased forced the administration to back father in one bed, two oldest acutely the ravages of unemploy-company proceeded to import stories on the situation heaping down. This, combined with the daughters in 1, two girls, 13 and ment. Murray described the new out-of-town scabs while with the via implication abuse upon the fact 1940 is an election year. 15, and a boy 5, sleep in another; coal loading machine which ac- same breath they launched an at- union. A front page editorial altwo boys in another and two counted for only 7 per cent of the tack on the union for bringing in so appeared in which it is pointmore in another; baby 2 yrs. old coal loaded in 1929, but has risen "outside elements" to help lead ed out that the gas company is in a crib; baby 10 months in a to 29 per cent by 1939. In ten the strike. Offers of union men, a "PUBLIC" utility. The undercrib; ALL SLEEP IN THIS ONE years, he estimated, 70 per cent thoroughly trained in gas-ma- handed aim of the editors is evi- of last year, served public notice tag day in Minneapolis during of all coal will be loaded by ma-chine operation, to operate the dently to mislead the readers in- it meant to defend the strikers which ten thousand persons doplants at minimum production to thinking that the utility is "Is it any wonder," he ex- were turned down cold by the municipally owned. This is a being undertaken by the Departclaimed, "that the United Mine company which preferred to low- vicious falsehood. The Ohio Fuel Workers view with alarm the fu- er morale and wages by an im- Gas Co. is a private enterprise portation of untrained and non-which piles up a goodly profit each year and enables its owners tral Labor Union, speaking over unions and unemployed organiza-On all points which the union to loll in limousines and man-the major radio stations of the tions have adopted resolutions of raised the company equivocated, sions. In this struggle, as in all aces the wage standards of the They held out against the de-similar struggles it is not diffi-15, to go on the 5-day work-week new union had grown from 1,300 has made no effort to remedy this schedule. This constitutes anoth- to 15,000 members. Today it has all warned the delegates that schedule. This constitutes another great step forward for the organized more than 30,000 launer great step forward for the organized more than 30,000 la

# with ten million idle men. The convention adopted the BRITISH DECREE FORCED LABOR of 60 hours a week for wages of the first speaking extraction, and what a first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester, Williamsburg, Browns- beating they take from the relief dustry through the establishment of the first speaking extraction, and what a chester is the first speaking extraction, and what a chester is the first speaking extraction, and what a chester is the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the mining industry through the establishment is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the first speaking extraction in the first speaking extraction is the firs

Nigeria, the Cameroons and other to a village and take seventy-five tests began to emanate from un- it is an election year and that British Government has invoked work them for seven consecutive July 31, 1939, the Sailors Union class he represents would have to the forced labor regulations instidays, or it may take twenty-five of the Pacific adopted a resolu- present itself as best it could as relief allowances is being enacted to the national unemployment tuted at the beginning of the sec- out of every hundred and use tion comparing the New Deal a "friend of the unemployed," The workers, however, cannot now and the Union is telling its problem. Instead, both Lewis and ond world war, the Baltimore them for fifty days. If the ser- with "the typical raw deal that President Roosevelt made an

ernment as the panacea to solve ages of 18 and 40 may be required prevailing wage, usually less than we protest the usurpation of dic-What Lewis or Murray would transport of arms, equipment or ulations which allows the British

villages and used in any kind of

The political program of the UMW, and in a sense of the CIO, a five billion dollar low cost pub- er vigorous debate, the conventake "appropriate action" and to render "such reasonable financial Lewis again lashed out at the support as circumstances may latter part of the convention at warrant at the proper time in the Roosevelt administration for support of the program that may France would like them to. its failure to support the CIO de- be agreed upon and worked out mand that all corporations found in cooperation with Labor's Non-

# Protest Leaders Arrested

Under the emergency war regauthorities to make "preventive In practice it means that the arrests" the leaders who would protest against any of the war regulations imposed on the na-

Some time ago, Wallace Johnson, organizer of the West African Youth League and of the was out to indict as many WPA are concerned, all efforts of West African native miners was strikers as possible, the Minne-Roosevelt and his supporters to arrested and placed in prison for the duration of the war. In the West Indies, Uriah But-

ler who led the general strike in Trinidad in 1938 has been arrested under the emergency war reg-

Reports that the French Government is sending M. Galan Dauf, native deputy from Senegal back home on a mission to boost native recruiting indicates that African young men are not rallying to the colors in the way that

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# Indictments Quashed In Minneapolis Trials

(Continued from Page 1) the conspiracy charge.

torney Tom Davis that the ex- strikers. It was this Defense remain until Monday or Tuesday. by labor is seen in the \$25,000 Actually, it is doubtful if an raised and expended by the De-

appeal will be made, because of fense Committee. transcript printed, another \$10,-000. The judge estimated to a

The fourteen women who were convicted, the judge announced, would appear before him Feb. 10 for sentencing, at which time the five who pled nolo contendere are also expected to appear.

#### Prisoners' Inspiring Meeting

Friday night in the Drivers Union Hall the indicted strikers met in an inspiring meeting. Max Geldman and Ed Palmquist spoke, explaining the meaning of the new developments. Charles Connors, only Negro among the defendants, rose and spoke of the lack of racial prejudice. All pledged their abiding faith in the Federal Workers Section. The increase-provided the city coun- moving meeting was closed with

### Who Quashed Indictments?

Roosevelt's "amiable" intercesion No. 12024 resulted in a strike club with which to force city pol- sion-that is the interpretation here early toway. Negotiations iticians to raise rates. C. H. Fell, being circulated by the adminishad proceeded in vain until 5.30 Vice President of the United Mine tration and its supportersa.m. this morning, when, as the Workers, with which the strikers doesn't fool the millions of workthat if the problem of unemploy- Company officials showed no are affiliated, summed the situa- ers who know that it was Roose-

apolis unemployed that finally strikers bail bonds.

# Labor Warned Persecutors

The Minneapolis union movement, as far back as July 28th WPA Defense Committee held a against the frame-ups even then nated over \$1,000 to the defense ment of Justice at Roosevelt's Unions throughout the nation orders. On that day John Boscoe, have donated to the WPA Depresident of the Minneapolis Cen- fense Committee. AFL and CIO state, warned that "We are de-solidarity with the Minneapolis termined to protect the legal strikers. rights of our members and de- In the middle of October the frame-ups. . . . The fight for jobs executive council passed a resoluat union wages and conditions, tion protesting against the fedand for decent relief standards eral courts for the persecution of for those who have no jobs, did the WPA strikers. not begin or end with the WPA strike in Minneapolis."

hood and declare that we will re- nation towards war. In the days at fascist regimentation of Amer-that the freeing of the Minneican labor. . . ."

# Defense Organized

WPA Defense Committee, made case will be unavailing.

up of representatives from the Teamsters Joint Council, and be-On the motion of defense at- gan raising funds to defend the

#### Green Joined Defense

On September 4, President William Green of the AFL joined the defense movement by pledging go on the sentences without pro- the persecuted Minneapolis WPA voking an insistent demand that strikers. "It seems clear," stated Green, "that the prosecution of relief workers in Minneapolis is persecution. . . .

'Working people everywhere protest against such a policy pursued by the government at a time when more than 10,000,000 are unemployed. It is bad enough for workers to suffer pain of unemployment. It is cruelty when the government adds to this suffering through persecution such as is being inflicted on workers in Minneapolis.

"The membership of the American Federation of Labor will extend to these persecuted people brotherly way he had always of moral support. The work of been treated and the complete the Minneapolis Central Labor Union in defending these persecuted workers is to be commend-

### Federation Rebukes Roosevelt

The president and the secretary of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor added their protests to Green's, dispatching a wire to Murphy protesting against the persecution and the high bail. A few days later the State Federation of Labor held its 57th annual convention at which it adopted a stinging resolution condemning the Roosevelt administration for supporting the WPA wage cut, and endorsed the

WPA Defense Committee. Early in September the Minneapolis Labor Temple Association labor protest against the govern- met and voted to pledge its \$78,ment's persecution of the Minne- 600 property as surety for the

The St. Paul Trades & Labor Assembly in September set up a WPA Defense Committee patterned after the Minneapolis committee.

Om October 6th and 7th, the

# Pressure Wins Victory

Shortly after Roosevelt and Seeing that he could neither Murphy proclaimed their inten-bluff nor coerce organized labor tion to institute criminal proceed- to back away from its declared ings against the WPA strikers, solidarity with the indicted and Forced labor is now in force in The British authorities may go particularly in Minneapolis, pro-convicted strikers, realizing that British colonies in Africa. The out of every one hundred men and ions throughout the country. On soon the party he heads and the vice required is less than one hour organized labor has always got- about-face and decided to get out The regulations provide that the natives must perform it with- ten from labor-hating bosses and of the Minneapolis situation as

tatorial power implicit in the that in Minneapolis will become threats to prosecute workers for more and more frequent the closstriking to defend their liveli- er the ruling class pushes this sist to the utmost any attempt to come, it is worth remembering apolis strikers was the work of the unions of this city and this nation. So far as those who have On August 22, when it was been close to the hellish persecuseen the Department of Justice tion of the Minneapolis strikers

apolis labor movement set up its whitewash the New Deal in this

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