

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

THE ANTI-MILITARY CONGRESS.

It is often asked, "What is to be done to advance the cause of Socialism if one refuses to take part in Parliamentary or County Council Elections?" and we have replied over and over again that *all* the really effective propaganda—the education of the workers to a higher and broader conception of a Socialist society than a mere governmental wage-system, to arouse the spirit of initiative, self-reliance and international solidarity—all this must and can be done by those who are free from the entanglements of electoral campaigning.

The Anti-Military Congress recently held at Amsterdam is another case in point. Our Dutch comrades have taken the initiative and called a Congress which has been very successful, and promises a vast field for international agitation against the military spirit and the imperialist crase. Here indeed is good work to be done, and, as the Congress has shown, work that can be shared in by enlightened and humanitarian persons, holding very various social ideas. And yet this vastly important movement has been shamefully boycotted by the Social-Democrats and "labour leaders," too absorbed in their Parliamentary careers to fight the curse of war, spite of their brave words in the years gone by.

Reynolds's and the *Daily News* deserve thanks for printing reports of the Congress, but as some of our readers may not see these papers we give here the gist of the manifesto issued by the Central Committee:—

"The Congress held at Amsterdam on June 26-28, 1904, founded the 'International Anti-Military Association of Workers.' It opposes to the black International of the Churches, and the yellow International of Finance, the Anti-Military International Labour—Labour which possesses nothing whilst creating all for the benefit of capital—which, producing nothing, yet possesses all.

"In spite of Peace Conferences and the promises of politicians, the people are being crushed beneath the enormous burden of military expenditure.

"Since the Governments have talked of peace, war has succeeded war, and the cannon takes the place of arbitration.

"The Anti-Military International Association has arisen to destroy this union of falsehood and murder, which has been imposed by the grasping covetousness of a set of rogues, and is tolerated by the ignorance and indifference of the mass of the people. It also opposes the subterfuge of a citizen army.

"The Amsterdam Congress has definitely constituted this International, which must become the weapon needed to combat the hypocritical and lying peace of to-day.

"In the meantime, the Central Committee and the National Committees will carry on an active propaganda, employing all the means at their disposal. The International Anti-Military Association of Workers is formed to wage war to the knife against militarism and all institutions that require the existence of militarism.

"It affords a new and powerful means of action to the members of Trade Unions who are unable to express adequately through their Unions their anti-military sentiments, as well as to those workers—alike those who work with their brains as those whom the present system has reduced to the state of beasts of burden—who are either unable or unwilling to join Trade Unions.

"Patience has lasted long enough. Action is now needed. Men and women with brains that think and hearts that feel, you who are aroused by falsehood, brutality, and injustice, it is to you the International Anti-Military Association of the Workers appeals for help.

"Let us get to work. Onward, and an end to militarism.

"Signed by:—

"DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS, SCHERMERHORM, FRED CHARLES, GEORGE DARIEN, G. YVETOT, M. D'ALMEREYDA, S. NACHT, PEDRO VALINA, K. VOHRZEK."

For such an object surely all the progressive forces could harmoniously unite, if the welfare of humanity has any meaning for those who use the phrase. The orgies of slaughter and bloodshed which modern capitalist States now indulge in to satisfy their greed and ambition can only be checked by arousing the people to a sense of the hideousness of the crimes of their rulers, and to urge them to combine in every possible way to crush the Frankenstein which is destroying them, and which they have to pay for and die for.

We hope the Congress will achieve its aims, and we are pleased to see that in 1905 it will be held at Oxford.

*** Any books on Anarchism, Socialism, or kindred subjects forwarded (if obtainable) on receipt of order and cash. Inquiries answered on receipt of stamped envelope.

Triumphant Hypocrisy.

The hypocrite is not exactly a new type; he was known centuries before Uriah Heep. But to-day he is in the ascendant in every sphere of life; he is triumphant and reigns supreme. Look around and see how the whole of social life is permeated by lies and sophistries. For a Prime Minister we have a Balfour, supported by a gang of liars whose intrigues and deceptions are proverbial.

In the Liberal ranks there is not one who treats these scoundrels as they deserve to be treated, not one fearless, uncompromising opponent of the criminal jugglery that establishes slavery in South Africa, abominable and cowardly slaughter in Tibet, and misery and starvation at home. Liberalism is stifled by the hypocrisy of respectability.

And the "labour leaders"—are they free from the taint? That is scarcely to be expected of those whose sole ambition is to breathe the atmosphere of the "den of thieves" at Westminster. They also are tame and timid in face of the infamies it is their self-imposed duty to combat. They also, or the majority of them at least, compromise with their enemies, act in fear of offending the prejudices of the ruling classes, and turn their eyes from the sufferings of the workers to the spoils of office which they fancy they see looming in the distance. When we read of these people thanking lords and ladies for their patronage of working-class movements, we sicken at the cant, and long to hear the honest talk of the simple folk one meets with in the high-ways and byways of life.

Naturally, under such conditions the ogre of religious hypocrisy raises its brazen head with unblushing effrontery, and no one is surprised that Booth should have his innings. All the great and good people in society have a kind word for exploitation in some shape or form; why, therefore, should not he have an extra dip into the spoils to be won from fear and superstition? To exploit ignorance and superstition may be as remunerative as Chinese slavery if judiciously worked. So misery and ignorance pay their tribute to craft and hypocrisy, and Booth drinks his fill of hysterical applause and the praises of a servile press whilst revelling in a flourishing exchequer.

In such an atmosphere no wonder that art becomes—well, what we find it. The drama, instead of placing before us real human problems to think over and to try to solve for ourselves, becomes a mere mirror of the frivolities and inanities of the "smart set," in which the human dolls of this circle not infrequently take the "lead."

In literature serious books are at a discount, and "A Guide to Social Manners: What to Say and what to Leave Unsaid," would stand a far better chance of publication than, for instance, a book on "Liberty of Mind," which, as John Morley has just told us, is the great mark of distinction between the man who is really educated and a half-educated man. Nor is it surprising that he should publicly state that a great friend of his who knows most of the prominent and leading men of the day can count but four who are really lovers of truth.

So one might go on probing the mockery of the life that surrounds us. The real conditions, however, are best painted for us in Byron's lines:—

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of commonplace, even in their crimes;
Factitious passion, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which sublimates
Whatever it shows with truth; a smooth monotony
Of character, in those at least who've got any.

ANARCHIST-COMMUNIST ANNUAL PICNIC.

BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY, AUGUST 1st.

In accordance with the arrangement made last year at Miller's Dale, the seventeenth Annual Picnic will this year be held at ROWSLEY, in Derbyshire.

Tea, 4 o'clock prompt, at Mrs. HENSBERGH'S, ROWSLEY; and the usual Conference will be held immediately after tea.

Freedom

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NOTES.

"LIFE AND LABOUR."

We advise all our readers to follow the interesting columns now appearing under the above heading in the *Daily News*. It is refreshing indeed to find a leading daily paper devoting so much space to matters that really do affect the well-being of the people. And what is more, the evils arising from our industrial system are dealt with in an intelligent manner, denoting a real insight into economic causes. In its issue of Wednesday, July 20th, there is an excellent exposure of the fallacy that wages, however high they may be, will ensure to the workers that amount of well-being and leisure for self-development which by the social control of wealth would justly be theirs.

Further, the tabulation of the average production of meat and dairy produce in the United Kingdom for the five years ended June, 1903, and the average consumption per head per annum of these prime necessities, gives us some figures that ought to be burnt into the brains of middle-class political economists. It works out that "the average milk wage is much less than one quarter of a pint per day"; butter and cheese consumption is also too low, while meat consumption is only five ounces per day, *uncooked*. But these are averages, and when it is remembered that a vast number of the population consume below the average, some idea of the condition of "Merrie England" may be obtained.

Now these facts should be known in every household, and the *Daily News* is doing more good in making them public than *Justice* and the *Labour Leader* will do in a hundred years with all their squabbling over "labour representation" (?).

THE FACTORIES REPORT.

The Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops has issued a report for 1903 which we should imagine is sad reading for the "reformer." We have only space to refer to a few points of interest, but they are sufficient to show how merrily the capitalist keeps on his round of exploitation, often under shocking conditions, spite of the laws passed after all the weary years of agitation. Here are some reasons why: Only 152 inspectors appointed to deal with 247,087 registered workplaces; besides out-workers to look after and a number of unregistered shops. Cases are found which, for sheer cruelty, would disgrace Bill Sykes; but no names may be given, so says the law.

An instance is given of a man, or rather a rapacious parasite, paying a woman, her husband and two children 10s. 6d. (inclusive) per week for making 144 pairs of corsets! It would be interesting to know what he sold them for.

Again we see clearly how the Truck Act fails to help the workers, since instances are given of employers fining and deducting to an extent that eventually leaves the poor workers, especially the women, in their debt.

The crying need, we are told, is for a better administration of the law. That cry has been heard before, and will continue to be heard till the exploiter is driven from his stronghold—the ownership of all the means of production.

CHILDREN AND CHARITY.

What a pitiful business is this sending of the children of the very poor for a fortnight into the country! Such a brief taste of the fresh air, such a short gaze at the face of Nature, is nothing less than a mockery when one remembers the smoke and dirt and degradation to which they must return for another weary year. Something so different might be done with these little ones, even under present conditions, if

people of intelligence and good feeling had the matter in hand, instead of the religious busybodies whose gospel of misery for the poor in this world is a good excuse for displaying their "charity" in the pulpit and press.

Some form of co-operation could surely be applied here, and the 800,000 school children who are turned into the streets to play amid all the dangers of London life might be enjoying for a month or so the fresh air, and doing many little useful things their youthful energies would love to do, without feeling the degradation of charity and without being compelled to bow to the minister and the Sunday school teacher to gain their favour for next year's "treat."

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

South Africa.

A correspondent writing from Port Elizabeth says:—"Looking at things from this distance, it seems that the present position of affairs both in England and on the Continent of Europe is very favourable to propagandism, and presents also considerable hope of action. In this country a great feeling of disgust is coming over the people. Port Elizabeth is a great centre of "Progressivism," i.e., Tory Jingo gold-bug parasitism; yet at the elections which are now taking place the number of Progressive voters coming to the poll greatly diminishes, while the S. A. party has gained more than 130 voters—452 at the election last week, as against 311 at the previous one. The S. A. party is still in an almost hopeless minority so far as Port Elizabeth is concerned, but the encouraging fact remains that the abstentions from the polls are evidently from among the successful, dominant, and blatant Jingo party. This points to sheer disgust and disappointment felt by a large number of persons, who are disappointed, bear in mind, with the results of their own political success. The state of things here is very bad; the town is full of unemployed, and large numbers of men are daily getting notice from the Harbour Board and railway, some of them men whom I have never seen out of work before.—H. G."

America.

The only important news we have from the United States is the report of events in Chicago. The great Meat Strike has passed through some remarkable phases. Evidently the masters have been using the bait of arbitration to outwit or dishearten the strikers. More than once a settlement has been in view, but each time the masters have failed to meet the men's demands the unions have replied by vigorously renewing the strike. The latest news to hand shows that the spirit of the General Strike is developing rapidly, and all things point to a momentous struggle.

France.

France is rapidly emerging from the curse of priestcraft, and although this hydra-headed monster will not be easily crushed, it has received a blow from which it can never recover.

Some fruits of the splendid anti-militarist propaganda which our French comrades have carried on for so long are beginning to show themselves. M. Combes, who seems to have a very sensitive feeling for the pulse of popular movements, has commenced a campaign in favour of universal peace. Of course this is politics, but it shows what good work has been done that Ministers should deal with these subjects to maintain popularity.

Nevertheless, French workers are not chloroformed by all this, and the strike of tramway employés at Brest shows the revolutionary spirit as strong as ever. The press reports say the men, and women too, fought the troops with knives, shouting "Long live Anarchy."

You have got to look at home and solve a very big problem, if you really want "universal peace," M. Combes.

ANARCHIST CONVENTION IN ST. LOUIS.

An Anarchist Convention will take place in St. Louis, Mo., U.S.A., on September 5-12, 1904. All comrades not able to attend the Convention are requested to send us for discussion essays on the following subjects:—

Anarchism, Communism, Individualism, Anarchism versus Social Democracy, Parliamentarism, the Sex Question and Anarchism, Zionism, Religion, Anarchism and Violence, the General Strike, our Position to the Trade Unions, Federation of Groups, our Literature, Modern Drama and Anarchism, and all other questions tending to further our propaganda.

Contemporaries please reprint. The essays will appear in our periodicals, and, if possible, we will print them in book form.

Address all communications St. Louis Debating Club, 1008 N. 17th St., Louis, Mo., U.S.A.

J. WASHTEL.

"Man, we are taught in our childhood, is a sociable animal. Above all, he is an animal amenable to discipline. He marches in a flock, like sheep. Only the sheep is less stupid. It does not create its own shepherd."—Henry Murel.

FREE SOCIETY.

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HERBERT SPENCER.

By P. KROPOTKIN.

III.

(Continued from page 23).

When allowance has been made for the error concerning the unknowable, which we have already noticed in the last chapter, Spencer's philosophy allows us to account for the whole series of physical phenomena—biological, psychical, historical or moral—always by means of the same scientific inductive method.

Reading his works we see how all these varied facts, having their place in such different sciences, hold together, how they are all manifestations of the same physical forces, and how we understand and judge them if we follow the same methods of reasoning that we would use for physical facts.

Does it follow that the judgments uttered by Spencer in conformity with this method are correct, and that he has himself always applied the good method to perfection? Certainly not! Be the book written by Spencer or any other thinker, it is the business of our own reason to judge whether the author concludes correctly and whether he has been faithful to his method. Here it is that we see the scientific method in its best light. It compels the author so to state his facts and arguments that we may judge them for ourselves. No god is speaking with you; your equal argues, and invites you to do as much.

So long as Spencer treats of physics, chemistry, biology, and even psychology (in other words, our emotions, our ways of feeling, thinking and acting), his conclusions are almost always correct. But when he comes to sociology and social ethics it is quite another matter.

.

So far he has *searched*—and found. Here—we feel it at once—he has *ready-made ideas*; the ideas of middle-class radicalism that he developed in 1850 in his *Social Statics*, before he had begun to elaborate his philosophical system. Besides, he had revised those ideas, developing them further in the bourgeois direction.

It is evident that in all scientific study everyone has, at the start, made some supposition—some hypothesis that he sets out to verify, but for proof or rejection. Even in the natural sciences it happens that a man becomes attached to his hypothesis after others can well see its faults; much more will this happen when the life of societies is the subject under discussion. Everyone starting work in this province has already his *ideal* of society. He has already drawn from his life and experience a given manner of judging the privileges of fortune and birth, which he either accepts or repudiates; he has his standard for the divisions of society; he submits to thousands of influences from his environment. As the sciences treating of social facts are in their infancy, and Spencer was the first to apply a really scientific method to them, it is but natural that he should have been unable to clear himself entirely of the middle-class influences that surrounded him.

Thus it happens that we are continually astonished by Spencer's conclusions. As we admire his suggestions in the *Principles of Biology*, so we feel the narrowness of his views as soon as he treats, for instance, of the relations between Labour and Capital in society.

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To quote one instance only—a very important one in truth—Spencer has been educated to the bourgeois and religious idea of *just retribution*. You have acted wrong—you will be punished; you have been a very hard-working engineer—your employer will add a shilling a week to your wages. . . . Spencer believes so any way. Thus does the principle of “just” retribution become for him a law of nature.

So far as children, the young that have not learnt to shift for themselves, are concerned, retribution will not be proportioned to effort; it is inevitable. But among adults, it is necessary that there be conformity to the law according to which benefits received will be proportioned to the merits of each: merits being measured by the capacity for self-support. Further, such are the *laws* of the preservation of species; and if we admit the preservation of any given species to be desirable, the *obligation* to conform to such laws, which we may call, according to circumstances, ethical or semi-ethical, will naturally follow.

Obviously all this language, with its idea of retribution, law and obligation, is no longer that of a naturalist. It is not an observer of nature that speaks to us, but a lawyer and an economist that moralises.

The explanation of this is as follows:—Spencer knows Socialism; he repudiates it on the grounds that if all were not repaid strictly in proportion to their works and merits we should have the death of society. To prove this principle—unassailable in his eyes—he tries to make it into a law of nature, and is thus compelled to abandon the scientific method for the time being, leaving it to us to take note of his mistake.

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The science of societies, modern sociology, contents itself no longer with a special manner of describing the “laws of thought” as the Hegelians did. Since Comte it has studied the various stages through which humanity has passed, from the savage Stone Age up to our day,

and thus discovers a mass of survivals, in our modern institutions, from institutions dating from the Stone Age.

Our religions, our codes, our burial customs, our great yearly feasts and our ceremonies are all full of them. It is by investigating the *evolution*, the gradual development, of our institutions and superstitions, that we come to understand—speaking plainly, to despise—them, whether legal, governmental, ritual, or other; also we thus come to guess at the future developments of our societies.

Spencer has done this work, but with the lack of comprehension for all institutions not to be found in England which characterises the great majority of Englishmen. Besides, he did not know men, he had not travelled (he had only been once to the United States and once to Italy, where he was quite unhappy in other than his habitual English surroundings), and he never understood the institutions of non-political populations.

This is the reason why we continually meet, in his sociology and ethics, with absolutely false statements, whether it be a question of interpreting ancient customs or of lifting the veil from the face of the future.

Translated from *Les Temps Nouveaux*.

(To be continued.)

DAWN.

“The woman's cause is man's. They rise or sink
Together. Dwarfed or Godlike, bond or free,
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow?” —TENNYSON.

“Well ye know
What woman is, for none of woman born
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressor flow.” —SHELLEY.

“Woman, as the bond slave, dwells
Of man, a slave, and life is poisoned in its wells.” —SHELLEY.

“Cursed vassalage
First idolis'd till love's hot fire be o'er;
Then slaves to those who courted us before.” —DRYDEN.

Since the days when the voice of Mary Wollstonecraft cried in the wilderness on behalf of her sex there has been a remarkable evolution of thought on the social, economic, and industrial position of women.

From despotic Russia to Republican America it is now generally admitted by all students of sociology that the “Woman Question” is the most important of all social problems.

The fact that women are contented with a lower standard of living than men, and that often they are not entirely dependent on their own earnings for the maintenance even of that lower standard, makes their rapidly increasing influx into almost every branch of industry a problem with which even the least far-seeing of men in the labour movement are being confronted. It is a problem which they find they have to face, whether they like it or not; and their gradual recognition that its solution is to be found in the trade organisation of all women wage-earners is a light-giving beacon to those who are groping in the darkness and obscurity which still surround the woman's question in its wider aspects.

Even if the functions of trade unionism were confined to raising wages and improving working conditions generally, the consequent higher standard of living and gain in leisure would mean a physical development in the great army of labouring women, the importance of which it would be difficult to over-estimate; but the possibilities of trade organisation as a factor in the uplifting of the sex are infinitely wider. It is as schools of social and economic education, in which the intellectual capacity and the administrative qualities which women undeniably possess will be more fully developed, that trade unions are performing their most valuable function.

The outlook of these women as a class will be thus immeasurably widened; they will acquire a new steadfastness of purpose and a belief in themselves. They will realise their responsibilities as mothers and as citizens; and will learn to apply to the great cause of humanity that spirit of loyalty which has always been a strong characteristic of the sex, but which centuries of false training and repression have diverted into narrower channels. Once having attained the economic independence which is a necessary preliminary—but at the same time no more than a contributory factor—to the freedom of women as a sex, and having secured opportunities for the cultivation of the faculties of perception and reason, which is the only true basis for education, women will be fairly equipped to undertake the inevitable struggle against custom and convention which is before them.

During the last decade many doors have been opened to the daughters of the middle classes, the more intelligent of whom have not been slow to take advantage of the opportunities created by the pioneers, many having slipped into the ranks of the professions and the upper grades of skilled labour. These women, free from the grinding toil and low standard of life, with its consequent effects of physical weakness and general deterioration of various faculties, have also escaped the ennui, and the vices incidental thereto, of the daughters of the idle rich. These two extreme classes, as apart as the poles and at either end of the social scale, meet in the same abyss of degradation

which is in the one case the result of overwork and the lack of the necessities of life, and in the other the result of idleness and over-indulgence in luxuries.

The middle-class wage-earning women to whom I have referred as between these two extremes, enjoying as they do a certain measure of independence, find an interest in their various intellectual pursuits infinitely preferable to the narrower life of domesticity which motherhood involves to all those who lack courage, or perhaps in some cases opportunity, to accept an alternative. The result is that there is a tendency to shun the responsibility of bearing children amongst those most fitted physically and intellectually, whilst their poorer sisters, working in the mill or factory, are producing a degenerate race of men whose stunted physique bears painful evidence to the evil effects of the strain undergone by their mothers.

This tendency against reproduction on the part of the partially emancipated woman is sometimes used as an argument against the equality of the sexes in social, civil, and industrial life; but, after all, it is the result of an inevitable reaction, and will disappear when motherhood no longer involves a choice of the relinquishing of a dearly-won independence on the one hand, or the sneers of organised society on the other. It need not be feared that woman, when physically fit and economically and intellectually free, will fail to realise that only in the noble function of motherhood can she attain the highest development and find her greatest joy.

When men and women understand that the freedom of the one sex is bound up with that of the other—that they must rise or fall together—then the promised land of liberty, equality and fraternity, peopled by a race of men and women sound in body and in mind, will dawn on the horizon, and will be reached by the harmonious co-operation of man and woman hand in hand.

M. R. M.

REPORTS.

Paisley.

At the last fortnightly meeting of the Paisley Trades Council comrade McKay proposed the following resolution, which was carried by a large majority:—

"That we press upon all trade unions affiliated to the Trades Council the necessity of being affiliated to the General Federation of Trade Unions, and coming into line with nearly all trade unions in France and all trade unions in Spain, as well as a large part in Holland, which stand on the basis of a general strike. The signs of the times point to the commencement of the inevitable conflict between labour and capital. Federation means solidarity, and solidarity means success to the workers in freeing themselves from the power of capital. Therefore, we urge upon all trade unions to prepare for the international general strike."

In speaking to his motion, McKay quoted extensively from the Canadian Province of British Columbia Government Commissioner's Report on labour conflicts for the purpose of showing that the capitalists are fully alive to the danger to their interests of trades federation. The idea of a general strike, McKay went on to say, was brought forward at the Congress of the National Federation of Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies of France in 1888, and was accepted by vast majorities of subsequent Trades Congresses held at different places on the Continent; and he concluded by asking the delegates to urge upon their societies the necessity of becoming affiliated to the General Federation.

Edinburgh.

Comrade McAra has been very active here for the past few months pushing the sale of literature. Last month a large number of pamphlets and three quires of *Freedom* were disposed of. It would be encouraging to hear of a revival of the group that was once so active here.

Leeds

Nothing very important is happening here, but for all that Anarchism is not yet dead. The comrades have been carrying on an unemployed propaganda, and have forced the City Fathers to re-open the labour bureau. Small but steady sale of *Freedom*. D. W.

Norwich.

Anarchist propaganda here is almost at a standstill except for the sale of a few *Freedom*s and the taking part in I. L. P. discussions. The question of political and municipal action holds the platform at present, and much confusion of mind exists amongst comrades regarding their attitude towards these movements. Possibly a General Election will help to clear the air—about the only good it is likely to do for us.

Oxford.

A good deal of quiet but effective propaganda is being carried on by the Oxford Socialist League. We are pushing the sale of *Freedom* and pamphlets, and losing no opportunity of holding discussions on Anarchism and its ideals, as well as upon "burning" questions of the day.

"No person will rule over me with my consent. I will rule over no man."—Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

"Many a man thinks that it is goodness which keeps him from crime, when it is only his full stomach. On half allowance he would be as ugly and knavish as anybody. Don't mistake potatoes for principles."—Carlyle.

LUCIFER, Son of the Morning.

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