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British miners demand

Truth and justice about 1984-5 strike

14 November: London trade unionists turned out in force to greet miners and their families seeking a proper investigation into the events at Orgreave coking plant in June 1984, where unarmed strike pickets were badly beaten by a huge police presence.

Media reports distorted events to blame miners for the violence and much of the Thatcher government's campaign against the miners is still cloaked in secrecy. The Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign is demanding that the authorities mount a proper investigation into the "Battle of Orgreave"



REINSTATE NUMSA IN COSATU!

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Reinstate NUMSA in its rightful place in the leadership of COSATU

On 8 November, 33 out of 57 office bearers of the South African trade union federation COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) voted to expel the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) from their federation.

NUMSA is the biggest, among the most militant, and certainly the most socialist-minded of the South African trade unions. It was a founder union of COSATU.

The decision to expel was taken (by a bare 58% of the federation office bearers) because those who had determined to get rid of NUMSA could not be sure that they would win the expulsion vote at a national Congress of all COSATU members.

NUMSA's expulsion was the latest act in a long saga of a developing and increasingly stark division in the South African trade union leaderships, which has now resulted in this very visible split.

The breaking point was 12 August 2012, when the South African police force shot down 34 striking miners at Marikana. Their crime was to refuse to sell their labour for less than a living wage.

At that point the metalworkers' union declared that South African politics could not carry on in the same way. They said, when a government collaborates with super-exploitative foreign-owned mining companies to keep wages at poverty levels by shooting down striking workers, that government can no longer be deemed a democratic government.

Class-collaborationist

The split in the South African trade union movement is a fundamental split - between the class collaborationist pro-African National Congress union leaders, and the union leaders (and members) who know that class collaborationist politics have achieved almost nothing since 1994 for the working class and the impoverished masses.

NUMSA and its predecessor union, the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) has fought since it was formed against class collaboration politics, and

for the working class to take the leadership of the South African revolution.

This split between the South African trade union leaders is also the material manifestation of an old argument - the opposition between the Stalinist theory of the two stage revolution, and the Marxist understanding of permanent revolution.

The two stage theory says that in colonial and semi-colonial countries exploited by foreign capital in increasingly brutal ways, the path to socialist revolution and common ownership of the means of production must obey certain rules of development, and pass through two stages.

First must come a bourgeois democratic revolution. The class that must lead and take power is the national bourgeoisie, which will introduce democratic reforms - the right to self-rule, democratic elections, and equal rights for all sections of society (before the law, in education, in employment) and so on.

Formal

This notion is modelled on the formal premise that every colonial and semi-colonial country in the world must pass through the same stages as the developed countries did in the 17th (England) 18th (France, America) and 19th (Italy, Germany) centuries.

According to the two stages theory, many, many years later, the democratic rights introduced by this first stage will gradually result in a socialist transformation of the economy and society. The huge hole in the theory is that it cannot explain how the exercise of these democratic rights will gradually and peacefully persuade a brutal exploiting class to hand over the means of production. It is in reality a cover for the permanent handing over of power to that class. The "second" stage is a sop to the workers and oppressed masses of those countries - to persuade them to support their own bourgeoisie into government.

This ideology, proselytised by the South African Communist Party (SACP) into the ranks of the African National Congress (ANC), and the trade union movement, resulted in an understand-

ing of the 1994 elections in South Africa as the "National Democratic Revolution" rightfully led by the ANC, and the first stage in the journey towards socialism.

The democratic elections were brought about through a "negotiated settlement" with the bankers, mine-owners and land-owners made by the ANC leadership with the ideological backing of the SACP. That settlement was made between a national bourgeoisie and its international counterpart.

The deal was that democratic elections would be allowed in exchange for the right of the international bourgeoisie to maintain its super-exploitation of black workers, and appropriation of South Africa's wealth at the expense of the masses of South Africa.

The deal was made only because the foreign exploiters of the country feared they faced the seizure of all their property, the mines, the banks, the land and the major industries by a mass resistance led by the working class.

In the early 90s, the huge self-sacrificing struggle of the oppressed masses of South Africa (led by a powerful and socialist-minded trade union movement) had reached the point where it constituted a challenge to the control foreign capital had over the South African economy. But those trades unionists and impoverished masses were exactly the people who were to be excluded from the deal. Those who were to benefit were the foreign exploiters and those black South Africans with close ties to the ANC.

The Marxist theory of Permanent Revolution maintains that in the colonial and semi-colonial countries the class which must lead any democratic revolution is the working class, and that it must lead an alliance with the poor peasants in a struggle to realise democratic demands. In order to thoroughly achieve those democratic demands (making them available to the working class and poor peasantry) it must carry over the democratic revolution to socialism. This means starting the overthrow of property relations through the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy under workers'

control – at the same time as achieving these democratic demands. The theory of Permanent Revolution is also clear that socialism cannot be sustained in a single country, and can only survive if it is carried out on an international scale. This is a key aspect for a working class party in South Africa, which must reach out beyond its borders as it seeks to establish a socialist society.

Crucial for the development of Permanent Revolution is that the working class must be in the leadership of both the struggle for democracy, and for socialism, and the dual processes cannot be separated. The class must have an understanding that it is not challenging one manifestation of capital (like apartheid) but challenging capitalism itself – and this means that the working class must have its own socialist party to fight for the development of that class consciousness. NUMSA (while remaining a trade union) is currently carrying forward the patient and solid investigation necessary for the building of that party.

NUMSA's document on the Freedom Charter's demands (pages 3 & 4 of the Workers' International journal October 2014) shows how the democratic demands of the South African National Democratic revolution can't be fully realised for the masses in the context of the continuing poverty, unemployment and inequality resulting from the maintenance of the capitalist economic system.

An example not used in that article is that of South African women. Despite having their equal rights enshrined in the South African constitution, South African women cannot equally participate in society because of the horrifying rate of gender-based violence in South Africa. This flows from the existence of a lumpen layer abandoned with no stake in society through mass unemployment. The lower a South African woman's income, the more she will suffer from sexual harassment, violence and rape.

Demonstration

The most powerful demonstration of all is the fact that striking mineworkers could not exercise their democratic right (enshrined in the South African constitution) to go on strike for a living wage because they were shot down by the "democratic" state.

We should remember that the difference between permanent revolution and the two stage theory – and which class should be in the leadership – had already been fought out in the 1980s through the development of the Workers Charter in the Metal and

Allied Workers Union (MAWU), the forerunner of NUMSA. This precious clarification was suppressed in the formation of COSATU when the National Union of Mineworkers under Cyril Ramaphosa used its weight in the movement to sideline the discussion.

That disagreement – over whether the trade unions should have the Workers Charter or the Freedom Charter as their programme – was the fundamental disagreement over which class should lead the South African revolution.

Airbrushed

Our Workers International comrade, Bongani Mkungho, fought for those conceptions his whole life long, but that period of South African working class history has now been airbrushed out. It appears only in hostile formulations on the National Union of Mineworkers' website to what they call "workerists".

It is almost impossible to find the Workers Charter on the internet – one of the few places is on our website here: <http://workersinternational.info/?s=workers+charter>.

NUMSA General Secretary Irwin Jim's generation arrived after that fight had taken place – and has had to rediscover the class nature of the ANC government at the cost of 34 striking miners' lives. These leaders still speak as if the two stages of the democratic and socialist transformations can be looked at as two separate processes and are putting the ANC's Freedom Charter forward as their programme. NUMSA (and the six other unions allied to them) are demanding to implement the socialist second stage immediately – locked in struggle with those who (under the guise of saying that 20 years is not long enough to change things) are determined that the second stage will never appear. In order to make sure of that, they must ensure above all that the working class does not take leadership and take power.

The pro-ANC office bearers of COSATU undemocratically threw NUMSA out of their federation because they want to expel a force which fights ceaselessly for the rights of South African workers, and which is clarifying for millions of workers what the split in their movement really means.

They and particularly the South African Communist party (of which many if not all of them will be members) are the "splitters" of the movement – and they have split the movement in order to benefit the exploiting class.



Bongani Mkungho

Thus, when Gwede Mantashe, Secretary of the African National Congress (and ex-NUM General Secretary, like Cyril Ramaphosa) says that he is saddened by the split in the unions and talks about unity – but then asks NUMSA to look at their actions – he speaks with a forked tongue.

COSATU must organise the Special National Congress that NUMSA and other COSATU unions have demanded for the past year – so NUMSA can put its case to the COSATU membership against expulsion, and for advancing the policies on nationalisation agreed at its 2012 conference.

The international working class must take sides in this split – between class collaborationist "sweetheart" trade union leaderships and those that clearly and unequivocally are fighting for the interests and the independent socialist programme of the working class.

We are not a group of outside observers but have participated actively in our trade unions and political groups over decades to support the long struggle against apartheid – only to find the government our efforts helped put in power shooting down striking workers.

Just as we took sides against the apartheid regime, we need to take sides in NUMSA's struggle – so the whole of the international trade union movement can be clarified. Socialism will never be achieved through collaboration with the exploiting class, and waiting for the day that never comes when they hand over power.

In Britain we are not yet at the stage of the most politically advanced trade unions in South Africa.

Instilled

We are still working our way through the class collaborationist outlook instilled by social democracy and Stalinism over many decades,

(Ctd. Page 4)

'Full support for immediate re-admission of NUMSA into the federation'

19 November 2014

The seven unions (FAWU, SACCAWU, PAWUSA, SASAWU, CWU, DENOSA and SAFPU) plus NUMSA convened a joint meeting of shop stewards and members attended by 2,200 participants at the City Hall on Sunday morning 16 November 2014 to report on the crisis ravaging COSATU.

The mass meeting was addressed by the General Secretaries of FAWU and CWU, respectively Katishi Masemola and Aubrey Tshabalala, before a keynote address by the President of NUMSA, Andrew Chirwa.

Katishi Masemola indicated that there cannot be a united COSATU

without NUMSA and there cannot be unity without others and that a united COSATU is a first prize and the only prize hoping that the basis for such a united federation will be the implementation of the 2013 COSATU National Congress Resolutions.

Katishi reflected that challenges in the federation, with NUMSA expelled, means that the working class will be the loser and those gaining will be Capital as it intensifies "class terror" (super-exploitation, be it through youth wage subsidy and labour broking or other ways) and the State as it aggressively pursues neoliberal policy trajectory, with National Development Plan (NDP) as its apex, all against the workers, the poor and entire working class.

Aubrey Tshabalala indicated that rational discussions and robust debates have been replaced by "let's vote", and voting is now happening on every issues, including on the adoption of agenda and approval of credentials among others. This, he said, led to NUMSA being expelled without substantive debates on the contents of a 59-page submission delivered over three hours.

Aubrey further insisted that the struggle of the 8 unions plus NUMSA is about reclaiming COSATU back to its rightful owners, which are workers and not the 33 individual leaders, many without a mandate to expel NUMSA.

The NUMSA President explained the NUMSA Resolutions and took the meeting through the rationale behind their resolutions of their Special Congress in December 2013 and on the five charges that it was charged for as a result of the court outcome forcing this clarity.

Chirwa took the meeting through the five charges and why these are frivolous and how the defective procedure has led to a botched process in that no guilty verdict was arrived at and the sanction was based on preconceived "surgical removal" sentiments held by some affiliates before the Special COSATU CEC in which this comprehensive submission was made.

The NUMSA President explained that the implementation of the Freedom

Charter is their uncompromising clarion call and the basis for their Resolutions. A Freedom Charter that must move South Africa from the dire situation facing the working class to a truly better life to workers and the poor than the enrichment of the few, no matter how black they may be.

He explained that the National Development Plan (NDP) does not represent this vision of the Freedom Charter but it is a neoliberal programme that will trap the working class in triple crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

Participants were allowed to ask questions/clarifications and to make comments and the overwhelming majority were in full support for the immediate re-admission of NUMSA into the federation and encouraged the seven affiliates to keep fighting for such a noble cause.

The underlying key theme in virtually all the questions asked by workers was whether we stay in COSATU or we form another federation. The answers from leaders and from other participants, which ultimately became decisions, were that we will fight for our COSATU that has NUMSA and return that COSATU to its rightful owners, the workers, with Special National Congress as a platform to achieve those goals.

The press statement was issued at 14:00 hours, when workers were still engaged in discussions and debates on the state of their federation ...

Issued by
Katishi Masemola,
FAWU General Secretary
On behalf of the Seven Unions.
19 November 2014

(Food and Allied Workers' Union, SA Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union, Public and Allied Workers Union of SA, SA State and Allied Workers Union, Communication Workers Union, Democratic Nursing Organisation of SA, SA Football Players Union, National Union of Metalworkers of SA)

Editorial Statement

(from page 3)

which manifests itself in uncritical support for an array of national liberation movements which are not led by the working class.

We still look to Stalinism's most successful international popular front organisation the Anti-Apartheid Movement (now known as Action on Southern Africa) to advise us on solidarity with South Africa. We are still going through the process of fighting for the Labour party to stand up for crucial democratic rights, like the right to strike unhampered by repressive laws, and the right to the Welfare State.

The issues and the choices are starker in South African because (as a new working class) they have not spent so long under the domination of a trade union bureaucracy saturated in social democratic and Stalinist conceptions, like Stalin's doctrine of "peaceful co-existence" between socialism and capitalism. The very best and most class conscious of the British trade union movement (among which is the leadership of Unite) sees itself still as fighting austerity and not capital.

That is why it is so important that take sides with NUMSA in this split - because they can help clarify us through their hard-won conviction that "the interests of capital and the working class are irreconcilably antagonistic".

ELECTION MANIFESTO FOR NAMIBIA 2014



WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TO REBUILD THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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Introduction

We are using the 2014 elections to propagate the following enlightenment for the working people of this country:

On 13 November 1970, the Namibian nation called together the National Convention at Rehoboth where national groups were represented by their respective leaders including the SWANU and SWAPO. It was to be a united front for the liberation of Namibia from South Africa. In January 1971 the UNO declared – SWAPO a tribal organization – the Sole and Authentic Representative of the Namibian People, thereby rendering void the right to self-determination of the Namibian People.

The UNO subsequently revoked the representative status of the leaders of the different national groups and thus opened the way for the South African sponsored Turnhalle Conference in 1975 and the Conscription Act in 1977.

We the present leaders of the WRP – then leaders of the Youth League - with others led the Anti-Conscription movement, which was opposed by the SWAPO leadership in exile.

Our election campaign is based on the following:

1. We, the WRP, go to Parliament to speak over the heads of the bourgeois parliament, to the masses of the people. We have no regard for the Namibian Parliament as it is an institution of capitalism and in a backward country like this it takes absurd forms in which it is a mere rubber stamp for legislation and decisions of the big corporations and the banks. We cannot speak of taking over parliament as the elections have already been rigged with inaccessible electronic voting machines made in India.
2. We are using these elections to advance the demands of the working class including the poor peasantry and in particular the demands of the SWATF/KOEVOET families and relatives, in relation to stolen pensions, loss of income and losses in general through economic sanctions, marginalization, victimi-

zation and discrimination, landlessness and homelessness.

3. We will articulate and support the demands of the Herero and Nama people for War reparations for Genocide (1904-8) from the German State.

4. We will put forward the seizure of our Natural Resources to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry in general and the neglected SWATF/KOEVOET soldiers in particular.

5. We will put forward the immediate cessation of the wanton sale of our natural resources through Exploration Licenses (EPL's) with seizure of it without compensation, to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry.

6. The demands of the SWATF/KOEVOET will also highlight the demands of the working class in general.

The Anti-Conscription movement led to mutiny within the SWATF and soldiers who escaped fled into exile to Angola and Zambia where they were forced to confess to being spies and all of them were killed.

In 1982 the “Five Western Powers” with South Africa and the UNO agreed to so-called National Reconciliation in which the South African sponsored parties would reconcile to leave the colonial economic situation as is.

SWAPO willingly reconciled with the colonial ruling classes, but seized N\$36 million of the SWATF/KOEVOET pension. These soldiers were demobilized and immediately became victim of Labour Hire and dire exploitation as part of the lower working classes.

The SWAPO leaders now use their phony liberation status to refuse to give back the stolen pensions.

The SWATF/KOEVOET represent in every respect the plight of the working classes of Namibia.

For this reason, we the WRP have integrated this group of soldiers to give them the respectable political home which they deserve.

7. We will further advance the demand for basic needs of the working class families to be provided and subsidized by the government on the first tier level (Municipalities), housing, water and electricity, public transport, clinics, kindergartens, sport and recreation facilities, etc to be brought to the people.

8. We will advance taxation for excesses and demand **living** wages tied to the rate of inflation (and not minimum wages).

9. We will demand land to the landless and subsidies for the upliftment of the poor peasantry

10. We commit ourselves to rebuild the 4th International with the world's working classes, the subregional working classes of Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and in particular South Africa with which we share a common political history.

Hewat Beukes

Authorised Representative.

Bosnia

‘We want to live by our own labour, and for that workers need to control production’

Last June, militant feminist and internationalist **Monika Karbowska** visited Tuzla, the “cradle” of the social explosion which had shaken Bosnia in February. There she met the men and women who work at the DITA factories which were at the heart of the popular mobilisation. This is her testimony and her interview with **Eminka Busuladjic**, union representative at DITA and one of the founders of the new Solidarnost union.

Tuzla, June 2014: It is very hot when we arrive in this medium-sized town in north-eastern Bosnia. Like almost every town in Bosnia, Tuzla is in a valley surrounded by wooded mountains. These mountains conceal acres of industrial sites nestling in the hill-sides: coal and salt mines (salt is the region’s historic natural resource) and the chemical plants processing these natural resources. As in all the countries run by the former “communist” regime, these medium-sized towns in what was then Yugoslavia were well provided with factories and the population had a golden age in the 1970s.

Tuzla is a town rich in long traditions of class struggle and workers’ solidarity. In fact it was the site of a workers’ revolution in 1920: Bosnian coal-miners came to the defence of Slovenian colleagues who had been sacked, setting up a short-lived Boshevik republic. An imposing statue in the dilapidated town square recalls for all time this gesture of the Tuzla worker.

On 5 February 2014, Tuzla gave the signal for a new workers’ revolt in Bosnia. Young people set fire to a public building in protest against the corruption of the canton government. The police retaliated and the little town was shaken by rioting. But then the workers at the DITA chemical complex, who had been protesting in vain for several years against privatisation, joined the movement and brought their Tuzla workers’ traditions with them: they convinced the young people to stop burning public buildings down. They also convinced them to support strikes against privatisation.

Then protest movements broke out in 10 other towns in Bosnia, including Sarajevo. Even Republica Serpska was affected, with demonstrations in Banja Luka. The demonstrators demanded the removal of corrupt elites and reform of the political system inherited



Eminka Busuladjic

after the Dayton ceasefire, imposed by western powers, which generated corruption at every level (municipal, cantonal and federal).

That’s when the activists in the Bosnian Left, which came out of the 2009 student movement and organised in several groups such as the Lijevi movement, had the idea of organising Popular Assemblies, or so-called Plenums, in the public cultural centres which still exist in every town in Bosnia.

Women played an enormous role in this renewal of the working class and social movement in Eastern Europe. We follow one of them, Eminka Busuladjic, one of the founders of the new Solidarnost union. Eminka started on the production line at the DITA factory 30 years ago. She worked her way up and is now in charge of research and development. She came under pressure to give up her trade union activities, but

she has not let go; it’s her factory and her life.

MK: Eminka, can you tell us about DITA and the struggles you have had so far?

EB: DITA, *Industrija Deterdženata Tuzla*, was one of the biggest chemical complexes in Yugoslavia. DITA produced liquid and powdered detergents which were feedstock for industrial and domestic cleaning products as well as cosmetics. DITA was a well-known leader in this field in Yugoslavia and had a big presence in the local market. It had its own rail link and factory shops as well as a big sales centre in Belgrade.

Run on the Yugoslav self-management model, the firm was nationalised when Bosnia was created, then privatised in 1998 for the benefit of “gangsters” who saddled it with 99 million German Mark debts and ruined it. Before privatisation, DITA had 1,000

paid staff and 400 “volunteers”. They were all sacked and at present there are only about 118 workers left, about 75-80 of whom took part in the protests [last February].

When we were privatised, 272 people bought shares but out of those 272, seven held more than 45%, and that was the management team. The workers were supposed to take out credits to pay for shares, between 1,000 and 10,000Km credits on monthly salaries of 2,000Km and monthly repayments of 500km [Km is the local currency based on the German Mark].

The director was meant to invest the money raised from the share sales, but he did nothing – the workers’ capital was embezzled. There was never any real workers’ control of the company management because they abolished public access to the accounts in 1989 and that’s why it was so easy to destroy the company.

Since then, investment has been zero and the machines are deteriorating a bit more every day. But in the chemical industry, plant is so heavy and maintenance is so important that if you stop maintaining it that really does say you want to stop production, since it won’t be easy to start up again. DITA is already some way down that road, with several production lines stopped.

(...) [The workers] know that DITA got big credits because the local director of [the Austrian bank] Hipobank was on the board, but nothing was invested because there was no workers’ control over it.

(...) The management strategy was to have the workers believe they would be paid once the liquidation of the business went through, so pushing workers to wish for the destruction of their own work-tool, selling off assets to pay themselves. (...) The aim was to wind up production and invest the money in tax havens.

MK: Can you tell us how DITA workers’ recent struggles went and what your involvement in last February’s Plenum movement was?

EB: Realising, because of the successive sackings, that privatisation simply meant destruction, the workers who were left at DITA started a strike and occupied the entrances to the factories from 4 April 2011 until 19 March 2012. The canton government promised it would be bought by the Serbian Bohemia group.

Wages were paid for two months, but in that period equipment and products worth 2 million Km were sold off, and that is probably what that manoeuvre

was all about. In November and December 2013 the workers revolted properly and blocked the entrances and exits to the factory. The company used private security guards to expel the workers from the site. The struggle came to a face-to-face showdown in front of the factory: the workers told the security guards they were not going to move and that they would not leave because they owned shares in the company.

That’s when they realised that management were trying to close the plant. It became clear that the credit lines the firm had taken out were never re-invested in production. Moreover, the management were sub-letting part of the factory on behalf of the subsidiary, LORA, whose shares are also owned by DITA directors.

We used to meet every Wednesday to protest. On 29 January 2014, we once again demonstrated outside the canton government office. That’s when the Marxist group, Lijevi, joined us and publicised our struggle in the media with photographs, films and articles. Then the protest movement took off in a massive way on 5 February. Police tear-gassed the workers and young people who were demonstrating. Police repression finally united the two components in the struggle, the workers and the youth.

10,000 people demonstrated outside the canton government building. In the end the government started negotiations. As it went on, the President of the canton resigned, but the situation at DITA was not resolved. The canton symbolically bought the company back for 1 mark, but the question of wiping out the odious company debt, which workers were demanding, never got mentioned.

The chemical union federation gave us no support, so we realised we had to act at a local level, with the support of local townspeople, our neighbours. For that, the experience of the Plenums, the Assembly and hundreds and then thousands of townspeople, open debates which took place at the cultural centre, was an enormous school of democracy for us, and of rebuilding the links at a local level.

I took part in the first Plenum on 7 February thanks to meeting a Lijevi activist. I talked about our struggle at DITA and that’s how unity between the workers and the other demonstrators was achieved.

There were 25 people at the first Plenum, and seven of them were arrested by the police. So we went to the court with them. There was a real

risk that the police would actually start shooting. Trade unionists, including us, came along to stop the police firing at the demonstrators. At the Plenums, we set up working parties with economists to demand a review of all privatisations. It was the young people in Lijevi who helped us. The Plenums demanded: “Workers to the fore!” The workers wanted to develop production and stop any new privatisations, and above all to raise the question of the company’s debts to the banks.

MK: How did setting up your union change the situation as it stood?

EB: The Plenums movement changed a lot of things because it put pressure on the courts, who started prosecuting “Mafia-style” privatisations and destruction of production machinery.

At the moment management organise “yellow” unions or call in people who did not join in the demonstrations to split the workers. It was to put a stop to that that DITA workers set up the *Solidarnost* union, to continue to put pressure on and struggle against the criminalisation of the Plenum movement: some people are still being prosecuted for “sabotage” and “crimes against private property” since the movement! Moreover, the unions are very fragmented. That’s why the Plenums had the aim of unifying the unions in a common front.

Anyone can join the *Solidarnost* union. You can be a member even if you don’t work at DITA. That broadens its base and turns it into a school of struggle. We want unemployed people, pensioners and students to get involved in the struggle. For example, pensioners from our industry have been a valuable source of support, and so have trade unionists in the electrical industry and health.

Before the war the unions were strong, but after they were talked down and destroyed. I’m a member of *Solidarnost* union but I’m on the strike committee too. Management accused me of lying and manipulation. They may even take me to court. Sub-contractors have also accused me of stopping them from working on the site. I don’t think what these sub-contractors are doing benefits the factory. In any case they can’t get me barred from the site because I’m a shareholder!

MK: What future do you want for the factory and what can activists around Europe do to support you?

EB: Every day the machines deteriorate a bit more. There is no time to lose. Two thirds of production has stopped, and some of the buildings are rented out to sub-contractors who store unidentified

chemical products here and don't produce anything. Why should workers have to pay for the management's corruption and refusal to do its job? The workers won't let up the pressure: We are occupying the factory and we demand an independent inquiry into the mafia-style privatisation and we want the privatisation to be annulled.

As for what activists elsewhere in Europe can do: The European Left can help us by sending activists who can publicise our struggle and our work ... We want to revive the region, we want to live off our own labour, and for that workers need to control production. Tuzla's trade unionists need support, publicity and solidarity from working

people in Europe. The most important thing is the working people's committee of the Plenum. We need to work to build up confidence between workers. A new revolt is brewing.

MK: Do any women work at DITA and are they involved in the struggle?

EB (laughs): Women are cleaner-living and more dangerous and have better endurance! The men can get drunk and put the struggle in danger! Women don't.

The demand to have the privatisation reviewed is revolutionary. Workers in Tuzla look on the privatisation as simply a criminal act when all's said and done, just like working people at Walbrzych in Poland who denounce

the way their town has been destroyed by closures and privatisation and seizure of their property by oligarchs who have no right to it.

It's not just about stopping a criminal act, but declaring it null and void, i.e. re-nationalising the firm. The emergence of this demand is a huge step forward in Eastern Europe.

Workers never gave up Yugoslavia's past, and it's coming back with the dream of new solidarity, a country where working people can once again have the respect that is their due, and – why not – power?

5 October 2014

Dig deep for DITA!

Workers across Europe can afford to spare a few pounds for workers fighting to save their jobs and their company in Tuzla

A very destructive war cost many lives and split the Bosnian working class. Then an international protectorate imposed new authorities, promising workers a "Swedish Paradise". But what they actually got was a "Greek Hell". There is no work for young or old, there is little enough medical care and it isn't free; You have to pay for schooling unless you go to a religious school; if the administration delays issuing you a new identity card, you simply lose the right to vote ... Meanwhile they have stopped trying to catch war criminals and do nothing for ex-combatants or war victims.

Peace is deadlier than war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Privatisation of industry has everywhere brought factory closures and new capitalists on the lookout for property deals; The Polichem chemical group's seaside hotel in Neum is worth ten times more than all its plant and thousands of workers in Tuzla.

The DITA detergent works are living symbols of political corruption and decay which stand out among the things that Bosnian workers have suffered. Only 132 of the thousand employees who provided all former Yugoslavia's industrial and household cleaning products remain. Shares that were sold to workers quickly ended up in the hands of particular people who saddled the firm with bank debt of millions of German Marks (the equivalent of the national currency Km), embezzled the money, giving it to "part-

ners" they control and then, either unable (or unwilling) to re-start production, handed the firm back to the state for a symbolic 1Km. But neither the state nor the canton of Tuzla wanted this poisoned present. They ruled it "unconstitutional", but they also, incidentally, refused to give it back to the workers until they paid back the astronomic debts ... What do you do in nightmare like this?

The hundred or so workers still at DITA have received no wages for 32 months. They have tried everything: factory occupation, hunger strikes, demonstrations, occupying cross-roads, lobbying all the political parties and trying all levels of the justice system. Even now, whatever the weather, they go on the street once a week and protest angrily. There are many couples with husband and wife working in the same factory. Many workers lost everything in the spring floods. Since February they have been the first to demonstrate, and today they are still the last to leave the demonstrations. But morally and materially they are at the end of their tether. Should we wait until one of them pours petrol over her or himself or jumps off the public gallery of Parliament onto the Mafia men and their mouthpieces below, to burst the bubble of fear and "every man for himself"? A Romanian worker did just that recently.

Only the working class in the rest of Europe can help Bosnian workers. Internationalism must not remain an

empty word. Fortunately there are still workers in Europe who can spare a pound or a euro to save their brothers in Tuzla from despair, like the members of the First International who paid a shilling a year to help their brothers on strike in a foreign country.

DITA symbolises struggle and resistance in Bosnia Herzegovina. If they fail, a wave of demoralisation will drown the Tuzla area like a new flood. To support them now is to support ourselves tomorrow,

*Radoslav Pavlovic
Monika Karbowska*

Emina Busuladzic is the chair of the strike committee. Her banking details for international aid (please mention "DITA") are as follows:

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(If you have difficulty making a transfer to Tuzla this way, please contact Workers International [see contact details on title page] for advice.)

Beefing up the bonapartism!

BALAZS NAGY warns of a real danger

Not long ago, Nicolas Sarkozy was unceremoniously bundled out of office. Now he's back on TV in all his pomp and glory. France's second channel (chaîne 2) is supposed to be a public enterprise run by the state, or successive governments, but in any case at taxpayers' expense. Now it gives Sarkozy the red carpet treatment. The way they transformed him from a duplicitous agent of the bourgeoisie into a messianic liberator was amazing and shockingly servile.

One faithful retainer, Yves Jégo, was moved to comment in astonishment, and with some justice: "It can't be right to give 45 minutes on a current affairs TV show to a Presidential contender" (*Le Monde*, 23 September 2014).

Now, it was Sarkozy who appointed the boss of this channel, and the current President, Hollande, was daft enough to keep him in the job. This man virtually prostrated himself in front of Sarkozy, and the simpering nonentity who conducted the interview like a willing stooge more or less got down on all fours. It may not make much sense, but that's the way things go in this general political climate.

Trials and tribulations of post-war Bonapartism in France

The government of the so-called Socialist Party and its associates – what a lot of people still call "the Left", is visibly on its last legs. It is too closely tied to moribund capitalism, too definitively compromised in the twilight decadence which drags all down in its gloomy wake.

But, debilitated as it is by this decline, the bourgeoisie still has to do something about the fact that its social-democratic servant is bankrupt and too weak now to face the growing perils. This is what explains the growing strength of fascist organisations and the disproportionate extension of their influence right across the old capitalist countries. But Trotsky warned that between social democracy and fascism there is a whole spectrum of intermediate regimes which the bourgeoisie can use to replace their failed social-democratic business managers without going straight over to fascism, with all the burdens and risks that brings. Fascism is an option they keep on a back burner, ready for use as a last

resort, but at the moment they are hoping to get by without it, especially since the memory of the traumas it inflicted is still very much alive. But, above all, the ruling class lives in hope that the virtual vivisection that has been performed on the world working class means they can take refuge in less rigid intermediate regimes which might avoid the brutal shock of fascism. (Indeed, the changes the working class has undergone, the way it has been scattered and physically weakened, and its theoretical and political arms changed and perverted, plus a series of retreats and serious defeats, have disarmed the working class and considerably weakened it in action.)

Under these conditions the capitalists think that, for the moment, a bonapartist regime is the most appropriate political form in which they can secure their position. But even in modern France such a political system is nothing new. The French bourgeoisie originally created this type of regime. They have often had to face bold challenges to their power, and are all the more inclined to rely on this particular crutch because it can easily be used as a massive club. But the bourgeoisie had no easy job trying to dust it off after World War II. De Gaulle had everything it takes to do the job and solidly established the Fifth Republic as the prototype of modern-day bonapartism, but in the end even he got the boot in the aftermath of the powerful 1968 general strike. While he himself paid the price for trying capital's strong-arm tactics on the working class, the Fifth Republic itself survived the onslaught of the oppressed thanks to the connivance of Stalinists and reformists.

You don't need to look very hard at France's political history since De Gaulle's humiliating fall from grace to see that French bonapartism, in the shape of the Fifth Republic, has followed a particularly chequered and contradictory path. None of the heirs to the Fifth Republic's bonapartist institutions has had anything like what De Gaulle had in terms of means, inclination and courage to destroy working-class gains in an open frontal assault. Every single one of them, without exception, has been steeped in the tepid pseudo-democracy of the Fourth

Republic, imbued with the long tradition of flabby pacifism, compromise and unprincipled shilly-shallying as a way of evading or bypassing conflicts and difficulties. The majority of them are impregnated to the very marrow of their bones in the spirit of this bourgeois democracy, whose pillar and vital principle is precisely the *class collaboration* guaranteed by opportunist workers' leaders.

But above all they were terrified by very lively recollections of the 1968 general strike, especially since, as irremediably civilian bourgeois, their links with the armed forces have been ad hoc and ambiguous. Mitterrand and later others went on the attack, directly and across the board, on the gains working people have made, but it was under the influence of the general international turn to so-called neo-liberal policies, and it was done tangentially and with many reservations and in the shape of a sustained war of attrition. While what they did was already unbearable for the working class, it has still not been enough to satisfy the bourgeoisie.

So the reason why today's bourgeois politicians and ideologues bitterly reproach their predecessors for not thoroughly dismantling all the working class's previous achievements and taming that class is explained by the figures who embodied the Fifth Republic after De Gaulle. All his Presidential successors have liked to dress in the bonapartist lion's clothes, but have turned out to be pretty toothless in practice, even though they were quite prepared to get their claws into working people.

Hollande's political incoherence makes him look like a marionette with its strings cut

None of the civilian bonapartist Presidents of France have had what it takes to carry out the mission conferred on them by virtue of their office, but the last in line, Hollande has without doubt been the least competent for the job. Of course, his limited abilities, narrow mind-set and penchant for double-talk all mean he finds it hard to take the job on properly, but he is no more stupid or short-sighted than any of the others. Events have gone completely over his head because, as head of the Fifth Republic he has had

to strain every nerve to reconcile the policy of class collaboration (normal in bourgeois democracy) with that of open confrontation between the classes (function of the Fifth Republic). And all the while, the stagnation of capitalism in its twilight prevents him from granting any concessions and insistently demands confrontation with the working class.

And so the wider conflict between these two choices faced by the bourgeoisie nowadays is concentrated in the person and policies of François Hollande. The outcome is the way real concessions are turned into broken promises in a series of pseudo-reforms on the one hand, and on the other the harsh daily reality of blows struck against working people, but which the bourgeoisie do not think are harsh enough. Hence the image presented of a government hanging in mid-air and pushed about by whatever wind is blowing at any particular time, as well as an irresistible sense of things finally falling apart.

When you look at the awful state social democracy's doctrine is in, what is most astonishing is that Hollande cannot somehow shake it off. Where he should give up on trying to square the circle between two bourgeois lines, one of which, class-collaboration, has already lost the battle to contain and calm class conflict, he has merely tried to alter the form within which he attempted to reconcile them. He did this by delegating a big part of his bonapartist task to that Socialist Party mini-Napoleon, Manuel Valls, a man whose own natural inclinations have already converted him from a shame-faced social democrat into a pocket Bonaparte. But despite what a lot of activists on the so-called far left expected, the obviously lame form of bonapartism affected by the Socialist Party only served to intensify the obvious signs that the party itself is falling apart, testimony to the insurmountable difficulties involved in turning this party into a pliable instrument for a reinforced bonapartism without major internal shocks and crises. Every attempt along those lines will just drag it closer to ultimate decay.

This historic collapse of social democracy, which expresses both the increasing severity of capitalism's crisis and the bankruptcy of one of the counter-measures the bourgeoisie relied on, also gives Sarkozy a second chance. This simple fact exposes Hollande and co.'s social democracy as the midwife of fascism or, more likely, a more

homogenous and resolute form of bonapartism.

Sarkozy's bid to be iron-fisted Bonaparte.

Sarkozy did not beat around the bush. He announced straight off that he was back on the scene as a serious candidate for the role of unbending Bonaparte saviour. He presented his political re-appearance as dispassionate obedience to the requirements of the situation, renouncing any personal ambition and explaining that he was responding to a higher, nay divine, call to help our suffering world. This marked reference to some quasi-mystical obligation as justification for his re-entry into politics and the clear-cut aspiration to be a supreme saviour are sure signs of a would-be Bonaparte. The odd journalist has noticed Sarkozy's occasional bonapartist tendencies, but none have pointed out that this re-appearance basically means he intends to set up a consistent and decisive bonapartist dictatorship.

Sarkozy's declared political project also exhibits all other elements of that sort of bonapartism. All the main ingredients of a pure and harsh bonapartism are present, alongside the insistent and repeated evocation of a supreme call to duty on the part of some divine providence.

First of all comes the claim to be acting for the benefit of society as a whole, above classes. Obviously he could not use the word "class" because he has banished it from his vocabulary, but he explicitly stated he wanted to abolish party differences as outdated leftovers and unite everybody behind his flag.

A whole raft of proposals accompanied and filled out this decision to jump over whatever democratic constraints the bourgeoisie itself has been forced to impose on society in order to channel class contradictions. And, in line with his wish to banish differences between parties, Sarkozy again spoke out against organisations which come between the various classes and the authorities, above all independent trades unions. Moreover, as a consistent bonapartist, he was for regular referendums where class votes are short-circuited by plebiscitary consultations with the "whole of society".

Needless to say, two essential ingredients of properly-established bonapartism were not omitted from his political plans. One is the intensification of overt nationalism, which Sarkozy expressed in his plan to end the Schengen Agreement guaranteeing free movement around the European

Union. The other is his decision to establish a political apparatus in the exclusive service of his bonapartism by radically transforming the Union for a homogenous and docile body under his personal control.

And this last point raises the important question: Will this clearly-formulated plan for an integrated, coherent, vigorous and determined bonapartism actually get the upper hand? To answer that, we need to look above all at the working people who are immediately threatened and targeted by this plan.

Workers disarmed in the face of this bourgeois dictatorship

Problems like this usually go straight over the heads of revolutionary and socialist organisations – because of their formalist and sectarian leaderships. To tell the truth, both their revolution and their socialism are no more than vague references to a rosy future; consequently they are quite separate from their day-to-day preoccupations and practical activities. That's why they see very little importance, or none at all, in the political and tactical changes the bourgeoisie introduce in the political form in which they try rescue their system as the crisis worsens. Even if some of them do draw attention to the danger of bonapartism, as the Lambertist organisation did over De Gaulle's accession, their politics have never gone beyond defending traditional bourgeois democracy. So their day-by-day struggle has been limited by that framework and their commitment to socialism remained at the level of propaganda – necessary, obviously, but restricted to the realm of ideas. Later they supported Mitterrand against De Gaulle's bonapartism in the name of this democracy. But as we know and Hollande has proved most recently, this democracy is no more than the antechamber to fascism or, specifically, bonapartism.

Whether or not these organisations actually mention bonapartism today, their slogans in general do not go beyond defending democracy as a whole against the attacks upon it. But the fact that the bourgeoisie is going over to bonapartism, even in a form masked and softened by any remnants of democracy like the Fifth Republic, means that this system is at already at a complete dead-end. So the concrete threat to toughen up the current "soft" bonapartism makes it even more vitally urgent to apply a bold and appropriate programme which can open up a *practical and concrete* path to socialism. Sarkozy taking the field to stiffen and

toughen up the regime is a signal, a warning of the need to formulate such a programme for a socialist alternative publicly and put it into action. It is a challenge, a veritable tocsin calling all Marxists to reply in one voice, despite and independently of whether they belong to separate organisations, overcoming their divisions and clarifying what this alternative means theoretically and practically.

The Left Front has virtually ceased to exist

Sadly, the Front de Gauche (Left Front) stands out for its complete absence from this particularly agitated political situation. What forces it had have already been dissipated by a succession of defeats in recent (municipal and European) elections, just when violent political crises have shaken the supposedly-socialist Parti Socialiste (but also the bourgeois UMP), exposing their internal contradictions and driving forward their decomposition (or explosion). The Left Front's main components, the Parti de Gauche (Left Party) and Parti Communiste (Communist Party) are following different political trajectories corresponding to each one's specific character.

Representing a petty-bourgeois layer of a workers' aristocracy ensconced in local government and the trade union leaderships, the Communist Party is throwing itself into variously-configured alliances, above all involving Hollande's disappointed elected representatives and officials. The aim of these parliamentary-style manoeuvres is to re-establish good old bourgeois democracy with "fair" class collaboration using the well-known political method of the popular front. And this at the very moment when the great majority of the bourgeoisie, in its insurmountable torments, has gone far beyond this stage, which is both outmoded and tailor-made to shore up its power. Now this reactionary orientation on the CP's part is dangerous because, outdated though it is, it can still mislead workers (as it did in the past) and channel their anger into an obvious setback. The CP may have willy-nilly had to abjure Stalin, but it would be a serious mistake to ignore that they have not got over their Stalinist conceptions.

The Left Party, meanwhile has been disappointed by its (predictably) poor election results and seems to have backed out of political life completely, just when politics have got agitated and offer a fertile field for determined intervention by an organisation of workers. The party needs some inspiration to lift

it from the demoralisation its defeats have caused, but they seem to be intimidated by how harshly reality has treated their rather broadly-drawn and inconsistent policies, and they have retreated into fantasy. Instead of a political programme, they have put forward a propagandist project for a Sixth Republic. But this demand has turned up all on its own, lacking both a head and a tail and completely detached from the concrete reality of struggles, about as appropriate in time and place as an ashtray on a motorcycle.

This demand is quite unexpected because it is on its own and, as it were, asexual. Nevertheless, at first sight it seems to be opposed both to Hollande's bastardised Fifth Republic and Sarkozy's project of consolidating this regime by reinforcing and accentuating its bonapartism. But if you look past the sentiments which animate it to what it concretely means as a demand, it turns out that this opposition is an illusory appearance, a mirage, and it does not really conflict with them at all. This Sixth Republic is not solidly located in a concrete programme for changing the whole of society; indeed, Melanchon scrupulously avoids any attempt to describe such a republic, so the vacuous nature of the project inevitably exposes it as an attempt to re-establish the old Fourth Republic. No amount of goodwill can change what this slogan ineluctably means. If it remains as it stands, this policy is condemned to rapid failure in this time of ever-intensifying class struggle.

(One cannot here pass over in silence Jean-Luc Melanchon's recent book: *L'Ere du Peuple* [The Age of the People] which marks a new stage in his theoretical and political regression. This is exposed by his explicit shift from being a declared representative of working people to the retrograde and dangerous mythology that exalts the people in general. At the same time he achieves a parallel conversion to a sort of visceral environmentalism, that petit-bourgeois substitute for social struggles and lifebelt for capital. A fuller examination would exceed the scope of this article, but in view of its significance it will be undertaken shortly).

For all that, it would be a premature to reject the Left Party out of hand as a definitively lost cause where working people are concerned. Indeed, it is hard to believe that all its members and activists will blindly follow that sort of renunciation of the class struggle. It will take an internal struggle to decide the organisation's fate. But in the meantime

this party, for now, like all the other far-left organisations, has shut itself out of the current political struggle in which the immediate stakes are capital's desire to reinforce its power using consistent bonapartism. The Left Party's general and summary denunciations of capitalism and/or its Fifth Republic are certainly not enough to make good the glaring shortcomings in their activity.

So an initial response to the question posed above, about whether Sarkozy's bonapartist project can succeed, is this: given the congenital and worsening maladies besetting the political organisations currently available to workers, as summarised above, they are hardly well-placed to prevent this big political shift, unless, of course, there is some unexpected outburst. So the answer depends on the outcome of the internal struggle currently underway between different political segments of the bourgeoisie distributed around the various bourgeois political parties (UMP, centrists, Front National, as well as the Socialist Party). They are in any case (with the temporary exception of the FN) ravaged by struggles between various factions precisely around problems relating to the profound need to transform the bourgeoisie's regime of political governance.

Bourgeois parties' deepening internal crises and conflicts

A relatively strong element in the UMP (to whom the various centrist circles can be added) is lining up behind so-called moderate leaders such as Alain Juppé or François Fillon, who express and represent a wing of the bourgeoisie. This element is still attached to the very relative tranquillity of bourgeois democracy based on class collaboration and is alarmed by the uncertainties of an open, brutal social confrontation and the unforeseeable consequences of a fascist or even just a clearly more authoritarian regime. But their weakness from the point of view of the bourgeoisie arises from the situation itself, which is more and more conflictual and intolerant of any such compromise, and which they are no more fit to deal with than the Socialist Party is.

This segment of the political bourgeoisie is on the one hand taken aback by capital's need to beef up its power (which means they are impotent in the face of fascism) and on the other disarmed when it comes to breaking the resistance of working people (in particular by smashing the unions). It is true their leaders try to outdo one another in demanding even greater social

destruction on their patrons' behalf than that announced and promised by Sarkozy, but this changes nothing fundamental in their position.

This is why, in order to remain in that body and/or advance their careers, more and more UMP leaders are rallying around Sarkozy, sometimes unexpectedly (Raffarin, De Villepin, Wauquiez, etc.). They are following or expressing the clear majority of the right both inside and outside the UMP who are massively opting for the tough solution to the crisis.

Analysis of the forces at work thus points to Sarkozy as the probable victor in a political competition already underway to provide weakening capitalism with a tougher and more stable government more able to bring it the support it needs.

But life is much richer and more varied than even the best analysis, based as it must be on the available data. Imponderables arising from the multiplicity of human activities could shift and change the picture. However, such activities themselves do not fall from the skies, since they are already rooted in objective facts. We can point to some of them, even if it is impossible to predict precisely what the future will bring.

For a start, even if the bourgeoisie would like for the moment to avoid and spare itself the extra expenses (economic, social and political) incidental to fascism, and would be content just to toughen up its bonapartist regime, it is possible that their calculations could be upset by various factors within even their own ranks which might help the Front National to come to power.

It is also possible that the break-up and decomposition underway in the Socialist Party will provide another candidate for the role of Bonaparte in the person of Manuel Valls, politically converted and personally completely up for this job.

And who can tell with any certainty what the outcome of the various judicial inquiries underway, all threatening Sarkozy, will be. There is not adequate space here to describe in detail how widespread all the corruption among politicians is and explain what it means, nor how lenient bourgeois courts can be where politicians are concerned. However, it is not entirely out of the question that Sarkozy will be found guilty. That would smooth the path for another UMP candidate, or maybe someone from the Front National. In any case, the victor would be the one who offers the strongest guarantees to the bourgeoisie that he or she will tie

working people down hand and foot and destroy the gains they have made in order to rescue exhausted capitalism in its death agony.

For the working-class solution!

Finally, and for that very reason, it is also possible that the masses of working people, including some of their political organisations, will rise in salutary fashion and come on the stage to overturn these machinations and change the situation from top to bottom. That will be much more likely if the activists in these organisations get involved in a decisive and unified struggle for the resolute defence of working people against the bourgeoisie's many-sided attacks; that would really lay the basis for a rising of that sort, which would be concentrated, and increasingly confirmed, in the struggle between the intensified attacks and resistance on the part of trade unions. Hence the vital importance of working flat out to link these organisations to the *workers' unions* and the struggles they are involved in. In any case, such a link is a major requirement of Marx-

ism, as well as a precise measure of all these organisations' real relationship to this revolutionary theory.

This theory clearly states that they have a duty, and one moreover, which the social context itself urgently requires, to offer a way out, a political programme for this resistance by the trade unions, and to organise to get it successfully on the road. The main axis of this policy necessarily must be to bring the unions to a break with the deceptive conception and rotten practice which demeans them to the level of "social partners" with the bourgeoisie. And at the same time bring them back onto the path of struggle for the emancipation of the working class. In the absence of such an opening, embodied in everyday practice, those organisations which claim to stand for working people and the revolution will fail in their elementary duty and, like a blunt and rusty knife, end up at the rubbish dump. That is the decisive choice today.

**Balazs Nagy,
October 2014**

Marxist Considerations on the Crisis: Part 1 by Balazs Nagy



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The Hungarian Marxist BALAZS NAGY originally planned this work as 'an article explaining the great economic crisis which erupted in 2007 from a Marxist point of view'. However, he 'quite quickly realised that a deeper understanding of this development would only be possible if I located it within a broader historical and political context than I had anticipated ... it would only be possible to grasp the nature and meaning of this current upheaval in and through the development of the economic-political system as a whole'

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