

PATRIOTISM AND THE LIFE OF THE STATE

THERE must be many to-day whose minds are troubled because they find it impossible to accept without reservation the opinions and the policy which have been generally adopted with regard to the war, and because, in consequence, their patriotism—their love of their *patria* and desire to serve it—cannot find, at least without much self-searching, the outlet which the majority have accepted. Are they to resign themselves to the idea that this mental tension is inevitable; to the idea that they must seem, and be, less patriotic than those who can accept the situation without any misgivings or detachment of mind?

The question, if it is considered adequately, reveals itself as a very large and very deep one; for it involves far more than the particular problem of war, and leads back to the ultimate principles of human society. Before attempting such a general consideration, however, we may note two particular preliminary points, since they seem to show that the presence even of the complete non-participant is not without its value to a nation in days such as these.

In the lively correspondence which is being carried on in so many newspapers and reviews to-day concerning present war aims and a future peace settlement, there is recurrent emphasis on the difficulty of thinking clearly and acting justly at the end of a long conflict. In *The Times* of Thursday, October 12th, for example, a correspondent, arguing for a constructive examination of an offer of peace, wrote: 'There is a queer hush, and western Europe is still at the cross-roads. Within a week or two all this may have changed. Hatreds which are still fluid may have become rationalized and synthetized into a religion, and then good

citizens¹ will no longer be able, and will not even try, to distinguish between reason and treason.' What does that imply, for the Christian? The Christian must hope, whatever his views of the war may be, that out of it may eventually come, not simply victory for his country, but a peace that is just. The question immediately presents itself: how guarantee that the peace terms suggested or imposed by the victors will be just if by that time it has become impossible to 'distinguish between reason and treason,' to consider the position objectively'? It is precisely here that the non-participant may do invaluable service both to his own country and to the world. Precisely because standing outside the conflict, he is likely to find less difficulty than those actively involved, in avoiding the passions aroused by war, and in preserving his objectivity of judgement. In a better position to avoid war psychosis, he is in a better position to retain the untrammelled use of reason. He is therefore in a position to help in the promotion of that just—objectively just—and constructive peace for which as a Christian he is bound to hope. It may be, of course, that he will be howled down: but at least it will not then be his fault that he has not served his country.

A second point suggests itself. 'Hatreds which are still fluid may have become rationalized.' The function of the non-participant is not confined to the end of hostilities. For the Christian, few things are so important as the avoidance of hatred; and again, in the heat of warfare few things are so difficult. We need, if the war is to be prolonged and if we are to remain Christians in more than name, we need the voice of reason and charity, lest we lose our mental balance and our Christian attitude of mind.

From the Christian point of view, then, the presence of the non-participant is of no small importance even in the actual prosecution of war; for he particularly is in a position to safeguard, or to help in safeguarding, those things—

¹ The phrase 'good citizens' may be noted: it will recur later.

the just end, the reign of charity—which we must above all seek. But the question is much wider, and deeper, than that, and demands a further analysis.

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Let us start from fact. There is, in human societies, a deep-rooted antinomy, a tension, which arises from the inevitable clash of the two principles—in theory complementary, in practice competitive—on which society is built. Aristotle defined life as *motus ab intrinseco*, movement springing from within; the definition is as applicable to society as to an individual. A society is alive only if, and in so far as, it is moving, evolving, casting off old and outworn forms, and adopting new. In other words, the life of society is expressible in terms of its own creativity, and self-creativity: it is alive if it is ceaselessly making and re-making itself. It does so, of course, only through the vitality, and dynamism, and creativity of its members. That is the first principle. On the other hand, the life of society is possible only when it is safeguarded by law. Here is meant not only law in the sense of immanent and unchanging principles of growth, but positive law also: those established conventional rules the object of which is to ensure order through uniformity and stability. Now in theory the principles of life and law are complementary; because the immutable laws (natural and divine) are in fact the necessary principles of growth and life—abrogate them, and you abrogate life; while positive laws are intended to meet definite circumstances and conditions of life, and, therefore, of themselves postulate that when those circumstances and conditions change, the laws will change also. But in practice there is tension; because there is, inevitably it would seem, a time lag between the movement of life and the movement of law. So the established legal conventions come to be regarded as a kind of vested interest, to be opposed and destroyed in the name of freedom and life as the economic vested interests are to be opposed

in the name of freedom and justice. We need not look far for a striking example: the ideological clash between Nazi and democratic thought has at its roots the conviction, on the Nazi side, that the democratic view of world society is *static*: a determination to uphold a legally established state of affairs regardless of the movement of life, the change of conditions, and therefore the demands of justice (for justice demands that law should not stifle but safeguard life); on the democratic side, that the Nazi view is *dynamism* run mad: a determination to alter the condition of things without any regard for that legal structure on which the whole of human society is built, and without which it must sink into chaos. The Nazi attack on reason is due not least to its identification of reason, not with law (which would be accurate), but with this static view of law. Thus the conflict between Nazism and the democracies can be simplified into an opposition between dynamic and static. With the rights or wrongs of such a simplification as statement of fact we are not here concerned; its invalidity as a statement of theory is sufficiently shown by the presence in the Covenant of the League (the legal structure of society) of Article XIX, the object of which was precisely the promotion of peaceful change. What does concern the present context, however, is this: that Nazism, while violently opposing what it regards as the unjustifiably static character of law, itself imposes a static régime which is far more ruthless and far more complete. Its watchword is vitality, dynamism; but vitality and dynamism are incompatible with rigid uniformity, with the levelling of all life to an imposed conventional pattern. Yet this levelling is of the essence of Nazism. As we shall see, society lives and grows through the dialectic of conformity and non-conformity, of standardization and originality, of the static and the dynamic. The thesis is the legally regulated uniformity of the many, such legal uniformity being *pro bono publico* in the sense that without its establishment there would be no order; and order is the condition of creative activity. But it

should be regarded, not as an end in itself, but as, precisely, the condition of, and means to, creative activity. That creative activity, on the part of the few, is the antithesis. From the two things together is born, and re-born, endlessly, the synthesis of the new society. Nazism condemns itself to sterility by posing its thesis and prohibiting the required antithesis. It establishes, by force, its regulated uniformity. It prohibits the creative activity of the non-conformer. The scientific genius, the artist, who cannot run to type, must be expelled or destroyed. There is no room for the Einsteins, the Freuds, the Walters. Compelling uniformity in the vain hope of thus achieving unity, Nazism dooms itself to self-destruction, because it expels from its own body the principle of vital change, and therefore of life itself.

This dialectic is of immediate relevance; and demands a closer examination. The Covenant of the League of Nations, with its Article XIX, is an excellent illustration of the fact that law, positive law, must always look beyond itself: must always legislate for its own supersession for the safeguarding of life. In practice, the law-element in society tends not to do so; the danger, at least, is that it will tend to petrify.²

Petrification means two things; it means the reduction of everything, and particularly everybody, to a common level; and it means reducing everything to a state of quasi-permanency, to immobility. The two things are connected. The end of social organization is not immobility but creative evolution; but the condition of creative evolution is personal freedom, and personal freedom means freedom to pursue a personal destiny; and personal destinies are irreducible to a common level because per-

² The 'law-element' may henceforth be referred to, for the sake of brevity, as 'law' simply; but includes (a) positive laws; (b) all the established conventions, etc., which go to make up the standard of *normality* in society.

sonalities, and personal capabilities, are irreducible to a common level. Quite apart, then, from the fact that, as Pops Pius XI put it, 'society is for man, and not *vice versa*,' and looking at the thing from the point of view of society alone, it becomes clear that the achievement of standardized uniformity is the last thing that society should attempt for its own good. A moment's reflection on the verdict of history is sufficient to reveal the truth of the fact. How have societies become great? Always through the work—the pioneer work—of their geniuses in the various departments of life; and the genius is the man who is essentially incapable of standardization, incapable of reducing himself to a common level. It is a commonplace to say that he is 'in advance of his times'; but the commonplace is worth recalling, because of its accuracy. The genius is in advance of his times precisely because he is the herald of a new order, a new synthesis, which emerges from the clash between the thesis of ordered society and the antithesis which he himself provides to it. His is the dynamism without which his society is doomed to remain irremediably static, and therefore to decay.

It is important to notice that the genius, or rather the type to which, as we shall see, he belongs and of which he is the outstanding example, is not anti-social. There are four types of men. There is the 'social' type: the man who fits naturally, and who therefore *ought* so to fit, into the existing framework of law, to live harmoniously on the common level. Because normal, it does not follow at all that he is mediocre; on the contrary, his creativity may be great; but it is best exercised in a setting of conformity to standard, and for that reason it will not as a rule serve the *dynamic* of society. Secondly, there is the 'sub-social' type: in which is comprised those who are not fitted for life in society at all, owing to mental or other deficiency. Thirdly, there is the 'anti-social' type: the men who devote their energies to the destruction, in greater or less degree, of society, the criminals. Finally, there is the

'extra-social' type; and this category comprises those who, like the anti-social, do not (in this case, cannot) accept the normal standards, but unlike them seek, whether consciously or unconsciously, not to destroy but to create, not to prey upon society, but to serve it. Confusion between the last two types is of course possible, and not infrequent perhaps, among the unimaginative: precisely because the extra-social individual serves society by opposing, either actively or at least passively, the accepted norms, he is sometimes regarded as opposing society itself, or at any rate things which are sacrosanct, and essential to society. Actually, he is destructive exactly in the sense in which a man who clears away the dead brushwood from a growing plantation is destructive, or in which mortification is destructive: he is destroying the dead or the death-bringing in order to create life.

But in order to do this vitally important work, must he necessarily be *extra-social*? Is the abnormality of the genius anything more than a pose? The question prompts an important distinction. There are people who apparently cannot keep an appointment, cannot keep to the right side of the road, cannot answer letters punctually, cannot do all the ordinary things that conventional civilized life demands of them: are they to be regarded as belonging to the extra-social type, so that their non-conformity is to be excused as subserving the higher end of the dynamism of society? Not necessarily: it may be merely the carelessness of discourtesy, the non-conformity of laziness, of an inferiority feeling or an inferiority complex, any one of a hundred very ordinary psychological factors to be found in the character of an ordinary individual of the social type. The true extra-social individual is in very different case. He *cannot* conform to standard, not because of some psychological or moral disability which ought to be cured, but simply because if he did he would be false to himself. And being false to himself he would be renegade to truth, and so to God.

This impossibility of conforming is not always seen explicitly as a problem of choice between personal destiny, truth, God, on the one hand, and social standards on the other. It may be simply a felt impossibility: a man will confess with humility and shame that he knows he ought to conform to standard requirements, and will not attempt to justify himself, though the onlooker, if he has any vision at all, will recognize that there is something of much greater value here than any conformity to standard could be. This is often, if not usually, the case with the genius. Ahead of his time, he sees what the normal type does not see: the fact that this or that established norm is dead and death-bringing; his work is to fashion the new forms; he *cannot* chain himself to a corpse, and he rightly refuses to do so; but his refusal is probably as instinctive as his acceptance of his own destiny. On the other hand, the issue may in other cases appear in perfect, and perhaps terrible, lucidity. This is more particularly the case with religious minds, or with conflicts in which religious or quasi-religious conventions are concerned. For then, unless the question has been thoroughly thrashed out, and the truth which lies behind it fully seen, the general problem fully resolved, the conflict will appear as a conflict of duties, and bring great suffering in its train. 'I am expected to do this and this; I ought to do them; yet I know that there is something in all this with which I cannot, without violence to truth, concur; and equally I know that I have work to do which will serve what these things also are meant to serve; but my work is incompatible with them.' That is a not uncommon dilemma; it is the dilemma from which this article began; and perhaps now an answer begins to be discernible to the question which was then asked.

Before that answer can be discussed, however, there are two points of capital importance to be considered.

So far, the genius has been taken as symbolizing the dynamic element in society, and therefore as symbolizing the principle which gives society its movement, its life. It

does not follow that the genius is always justified, or right. A large-scale observer, contemplating the tragi-comic evolution of this unhappy planet, would be in a position to say at any given moment: 'The direction in which you ought to be moving, the synthesis which you ought to be creating out of your present, is this'; and no doubt he would perceive numbers of extra-social individuals working in a different direction, towards a different synthesis. The genius may react against standards which are still vital, and accept others which are not; he may react against the right things for the wrong reasons. The most striking contemporary example has already been alluded to: the chief exponent of Nazism, who bears all the marks of the extra-social individual, not excluding his own faith in dynamism, is in fact imposing on his people, and other peoples, a complete and abject spiritual staticism which territorial dynamics cannot conceal. Yet even he—and this is the point of immediate relevance—even he may ultimately prove to have been the instrument of a necessary antithesis, since ultimately, if fortune favours our world, a more complete recognition of the nature of law, of its dynamic as well as its static character, may be born out of the present conflict. The extra-social individual may be wrong *au premier plan* and yet of vital importance *au second plan*. We live, not in an ideal world in which reason has only to speak in order to be obeyed, but in a world of stupidity and sin. In that real world, even mistaken dynamism is of value, since at least it keeps society fluid. The thing that is really hopeless, the thing that marks the end of an epoch, a civilization, a world, is *static* wrong-headedness without dynamic elements: an established standardization which is itself dead and which expels its only sources of rejuvenation. When that occurs, there is indeed every reason to write *finis* to the chapter, or to the book.

But the genius—and this is the second point—the genius, or the outstanding extra-social individual, is only the most obvious member of a large group, of a whole type, in which

the vast majority are ordinary enough people, but not for that reason insignificant. And as individuals they should be judged in the light of the fact that it seems permissible to discern in them a sort of equivalent group consciousness, a common vision (or perhaps only presentiment) of the synthesis of the future or at least of the necessity for present antithesis. *Securus iudicat orbis terrarum*; but there are two worlds; and if the static world is the right judge of the things which affect only the immediate present, the dynamic world must have a voice in the things which affect the future. To deny that voice is to foredoom the future. We are dealing still with the real, not the ideal; and in the real world it comes about, inevitably, that in every sphere the vested interests are static, of the social type. It is clear that, at least *in pluribus*, this must be so. A cross section at any given moment of the life of a society reveals an established, static order. Naturally, those are regarded as 'good citizens,' as sound members of that society, who unexceptionably obey the standards set at that particular moment. Naturally, again, the good citizens come as a rule in course of time to assume control of the life of the society; and for them their duty is clear: they must uphold the standards they have accepted and they must devote their energies to persuading or compelling others to accept them too. It is not in their nature to sense the flux of things, to recognize the essential *de iure* impermanency of their society's forms; on the contrary, they do all they can to turn the *de facto* semi-permanency of those forms into a *de iure* permanency. That is why, incidentally, we have found in our political experiments that democracy tends far too easily to become a mixture of bureaucracy and plutocracy: because bureaucracy is precisely the rule of the good citizens, the social type, and that type, being static, feels no compulsion to change the economic order that has come into being—and an economic order that 'comes into being' is fairly certain, human nature being what it is, to be plutocratic. When the static

order becomes unbearable, or when the static order is blamed for an unbearable state of affairs for which perhaps it is not primarily responsible, there is rebellion, and the dynamic elements achieve power for a time. Then there is excitement; and usually catastrophe. Because the dynamic has vision, but is impatient where means are concerned. The dynamic type alone is as incapable of good government as the static. One often enough hears it said of a man that he has been given a position of authority because he is a 'good administrator': a good administrator is one of the last people who should be given the governance of the *life* of a society. On the other hand, the extra-social individual is incapable, alone, of guiding the destinies of a society, because he is constitutionally incapable of administration. The former has executive skill, the latter vision: only in the combination of the two is society safe.³ And that is why, if another parenthesis may be permitted, the form of government most likely to bring happiness to man is that of a king assisted by ministers; for the ministers, of social type, can best perform the executive tasks of administration, while the king, being extra-social because 'extra-class,' and therefore alone in the kingdom likely to sense the needs of the people as a whole, has the vision to supply the dynamic pattern on which an administration can be based without fear of the petrification that attends on bureaucracy.

Let us return to first principles. 'Society is not for man, but *vice versa*.' An established order is not an end, but

³ There are, of course, numbers of individuals who combine, in varying degrees, the characteristics of social and extra-social types—just as, for that matter, there are individuals who are of mixed social and anti-social, or extra-social and anti-social, types. (To speak of types at all is inevitably to approximate, because ultimately individuals defy classification.) Such individuals, then, often make sufficiently adequate leaders or rulers; but the individual who combines, perfectly, the qualities of social and extra-social types, though he is certainly to be found, would seem to be extremely rare.

a means. A society in which the individual person is sacrificed, or standardized, in order to preserve intact the neat delineations of an established conventional order is a monstrosity. The office of authority is not to do violence to individuals that an established order may remain unchanged; but to do violence, whenever necessary, to the established order so as to meet the changing needs of individuals. Society is for man. There has been in this country a tradition of political theorizing in which the guiding thought has been to reduce the control of individuals by the State to the absolute minimum, to the negative 'hindering of hindrances' to the freedom of the individual. The truth in the theory is clear enough; the criticism that suggests itself against it is that a negative office is not enough; and that the State should promote, and not merely defend, the material opportunities for a full personal life. It is necessary, also, to guard against the danger of individualism by insisting on the duty of the individual to serve the society of which he is a member; in the Christian view of things, the individual achieves that perfection which it is the office of society to make materially possible, by basing his conduct on the principle not of selfishness but of self-giving, and of self-giving not least in the sense of service of his society. But there are two ways of serving society. A man can serve society by giving it what it asks. He can serve it by giving it what it needs. And the extra-social individual need not fear that in remaining faithful to himself he is being faithless to his society: for by being faithful to his own dynamism he is being faithful to society's greatest need, the need of life.

Society, then, owes a debt to the extra-social individual, not only in the general sense in which society is always for man and not *vice versa*, but in particular because of the vital contribution which the extra-social individual makes to society. If it is a crime to attempt to impose standardization upon him, it is a stupidity to ask of him the contribution which is made naturally by the social individual. It

is a stupidity, because it is shallow, to say that when England expects every man to do his duty, his service to society, she expects every man to do the standardized duty set by the static. For though on a short view that may seem reasonable, and necessary; and though in a time of crisis it may be necessary to co-opt into the task of preserving the static all who, without violence to truth, can be co-opted; still it remains that there are some who cannot in fact be so co-opted without violence to truth, and that it is bad policy—and certainly very bad theology—to sacrifice the long view to the short, to attempt to make sure of an immediate objective at the expense of dooming a more remote but more vital objective to failure. The business of the State—or, in general, of authority in any society—is twofold. It must uphold and preserve the rule of law: primarily, of course, of the immutable laws divine and natural, but also of positive human laws as the condition of an ordered society. But where these latter laws are concerned, it must start from the principle that society (and therefore the conventions of society) are for man and not *vice versa*, and also from the cognate derivative principle that such law looks always beyond itself to its own supersession, since the essence of all good law is that it either is or can become, not an externally imposed standard, but the expression of an immanent growth. Secondly, authority must safeguard the freedom of the dynamic element in its life, not merely because society is for man, but because the life of society demands that freedom, and is impossible without it. And to safeguard the freedom of the extra-social individual means, among other things, not to demand of him the service of the social individual, since such a service would be in fact not only a sin against truth, but a loss to society itself.

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Application to the particular problem of the present struggle will now, perhaps, present little difficulty. We

look at the problem primarily from the Christian point of view, from the point of view of the Church. What has been said above with reference to human society is true, with reservations, of the Christian society. With the immutabilities of natural and divine law go, in this case, the infallible teachings of the Church and its unchanging commandments. It remains none the less that the life of the Church, too, is in a sense expressible in terms of dialectic. Infallibility is not magic: it guides principally by declaring true the doctrinal elucidations in which the mind of the Church, prepared by the long dialectic of discussion, makes clearer and more explicit the content of the deposit of faith. Dogma is never the result of a sudden and unsuspected incursion of an infallible voice, speaking as though from the void. It is the end of a process. It canonizes elucidations of truth that have been debated by theologians, and, still more important, have been *lived* by the faithful. Hence, there is here too a dialectic, guarded, in a way in which the dialectic of merely human societies is not, by the hand of God, but a dialectic none the less, in which thesis and antithesis endlessly combine to fashion new syntheses, the conscience of Christendom ceaselessly grows to new insights and deeper visions. Here as elsewhere there is the static element, and there is the dynamic; here as elsewhere, the need for the diverse contributions of each. Here, as elsewhere, the extra-social individual plays his part, and the social his. And while the Papacy because of its unique character falls outside the present discussion, and would do so even were the Popes not, as they have so often been, human personalities so great as to defy the divisions of classification, still there are to be found within the Church, because it is a human society as well as a divine, the tensions, the need of understanding of diverse types, the possibilities of misapprehension and therefore of loss to society as well as to individual, that exist elsewhere.

Intellectually, the Church is a democracy to the extent

that infallibility means the canonization of truths that have already been lived. In recent times, Christian society has been much occupied with the question of war; and its discussions are a striking example of the dialectic of its life. The synthesis—and this is the tragedy—the synthesis has not been reached in time: thesis and antithesis confront one another. It is no discourtesy to either side to say that it is the social type that makes up the one camp, the extra-social the other. One is not attempting to argue here that the Christian pacifist, representing in this context the dynamic element, is to be regarded as looking forward to, and preparing, with an insight denied to the opposite camp, a future synthesis in which truth will be more deeply and more completely seen. That may or may not be so. The important fact for the moment is that this confrontation of different points of view is—we take sincere conviction for granted—a confrontation of different types: and each type must obey its destiny.⁴ Each type has its service to give. There must, first of all, then, be deep respect on each side for the other. A pagan dynamic may be scornful of the static; a pagan static may be scandalized by the dynamic. With Christians this ought not to be so. Secondly, the

⁴ It is of course a simplification to speak of two points of view in a matter in which there is an almost infinite variety, and gradation, of views. But such a simplification is unavoidable, and must be excused; the more especially as in the present context what is of immediate relevance is less the precise character of the views held than the personalities—rather, the *general* attitude of mind, and therefore the type of character in general—of those who hold them.

It may be added that in this confrontation the moral theologian, in the narrow sense, does not appear. As a person he will belong to the one camp or the other; precisely as moral theologian, his office is to inquire into and elucidate the nature of a present problem as present, to examine the incidence of general principles on particular facts. He may, indeed, find himself ranged, as theologian, on this side or on that; but it will be not as moral but as dogmatic theologian, as a Christian thinker concerned with the life of the Church.

social type must not expect of the extra-social a service it cannot give, nor ignore nor under-estimate the service it can give and is giving. There is no reason to suppose that one side is more patriotic than the other, since both sides love, and serve, the *patria*. The unpatriotic man is the man who ranges himself on one side or the other, it matters little which, for untruthful motives: for selfishness, or human respect, or slothfulness, or pride.

The rôle of the non-participant cannot, in good faith, be artificially assumed. The social type cannot suddenly decide to become extra-social, any more than the extra-social can decide to become social. These types represent ineradicable exigencies; and must be respected as such. Nor is the rôle of the non-participant, either in this present context or in any other, one to be envied. Clearly, nothing could be more shallow and unintelligent than to represent the non-participant as slothfully enjoying a luxurious inactivity at the expense of the industrious patriot. In general, it is relatively easy to accept the social rôle, to accept the established standards, obey the established conventions. That way lie reputation and esteem and, no doubt, honourable promotion. The other way is the way of opposition often enough and of suspicion; of persecution perhaps, or at least of disesteem. Even in the particular question here considered, the labour and the suffering is far from being all on one side. It should not be necessary to say so; but in times such as these it is not unlikely that truths such as these may be forgotten.

No matter what we may think about war, there is one thing that we must all, as Christians, hope for and pray for: that God, who 'writes straight with crooked lines,' may bring forth from the present a future in which the possibility of a truly Christian order shall not be so remote. We are in the depths of a tragic dialectic. Superficially, it is the clash of rival countries and rival ideologies. But let us make no mistake. The deepest dialectic is that which is taking place, not between the nations, but in the

nations: the dialectic in which Christians, in whatever country they may be, are groping slowly, and perhaps blindly, towards a new birth. In that flux and turmoil we need, under God, the help of both types, both elements, static and dynamic. We need, if our world is doomed to crumble, the help of those who will cling fast to the structure of law, to the established ways, to the accepted standards, lest we find ourselves deprived of them and left in chaos. But we need equally the help of those whose eyes are on the distant hills; who cannot labour for the present as the present would have them do because they are labouring for the future; who see perhaps, for that very reason, more clearly the possibilities for good and for evil in the order that is to come; and who, determined that the new Christendom shall be a Christendom nearer to the heart of Christ than was the old, are giving all the labour and the pain of their spirit, as their conscience prompts them, to the service of the Light.

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