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What's Happened to the Big Wage Increases Promised by Republicans?



Special from LABOR TODAY
by Lawrence Wittner

The recent announcement by the founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos, that his company would give substantial raises to its lowest-paid employees should not blind us to the fact that most American workers are not receiving big wage increases. In fact, the real wages (that is, wages adjusted for inflation) of average American workers are declining.

When justifying the Republicans' December 2017 \$1.5 trillion tax cut for corporations and the wealthy, President Donald Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan claimed that it would result, in 2018, in wage gains for American workers ranging from \$4,000 to \$9,000 each.

But, in reality, nothing like that has materialized. Instead, as the U.S. Labor Department reported, between the second quarter of 2017 and the second quarter of 2018, the real wages of American workers actually declined. Indeed, the second quarter of 2018 was the third straight quarter—all during the Trump administration—when inflation outpaced wage growth. The last time wages grew substantially above inflation was in 2016, during the Obama administration. Consequently, by August 2018, as the Pew Research Center reported, the purchasing power of American workers' wages was at the same

level as in 1978.

Why did the Republican promises go unfulfilled? A key reason for stagnating wages lies in the fact that U.S. corporations used their windfall derived from the slashing of the corporate tax rate from 35 to 21 percent under the 2017 GOP tax legislation to engage in stock buybacks (thereby raising their stock prices) and to increase dividends to share-holders. This practice produced substantial gains for big corporate investors but did nothing for workers. Although it appears that some workers (a reported 4 percent) did receive pay raises thanks to the tax cuts, it's estimated that corporations spent 88 times more on stock buybacks than on pay increases for workers.

So let's stop saying that Republican rule in the United States—from
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National Chair visits trade federation of Peru

Special to The Worker

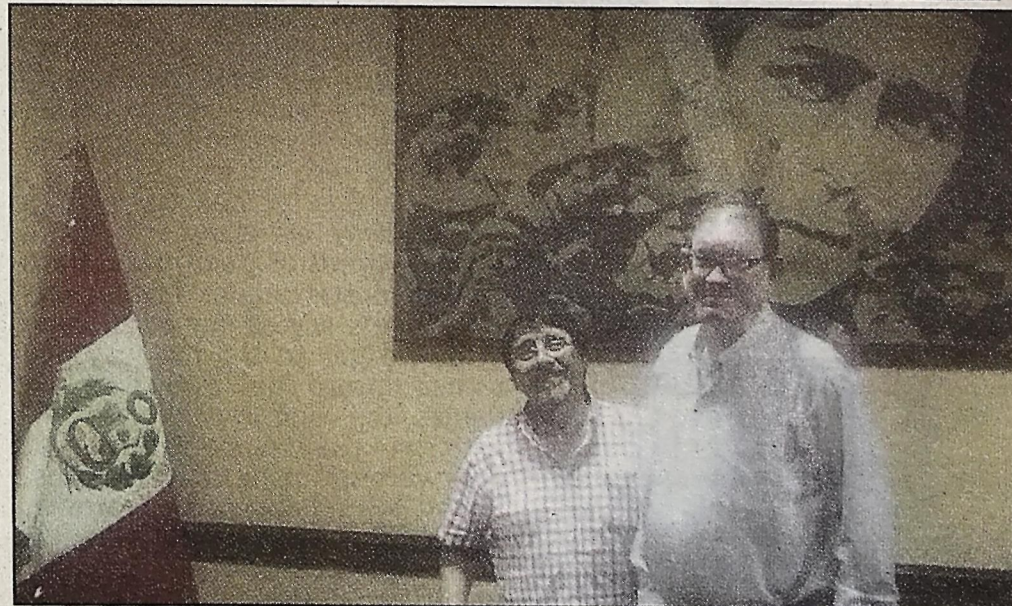
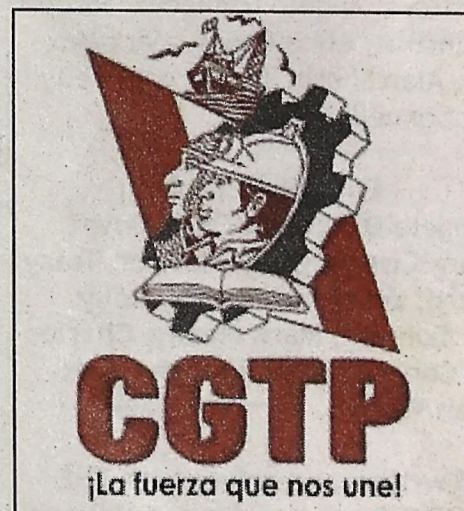
HOLLYWOOD, CA - While in Lima, Peru recently, PCUSA National Chair Joseph Hancock met with Victor Gorriti Candela, the Secretary of Planning and Logistics for the Confederacion General de Trabajadores Del Peru (CGTP). The Peruvian working class is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the achievement of the 8 hour day.

The founder of the CGTP, Jose Carlos Mariategui, was also the founder of the Peruvian Communist Party (PCP). His most famous work, "Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality," published in 1928, is the basis for the organizing successes of both the CGTP and the PCP, which enjoy wide popular support.

Modern Peru suffers from many of the attacks on the working class that we are experiencing in the United States today: widespread corruption, a constitutional crisis, attacks on the standard of living of the working class, attempts to pri-

vatize Social Security, attacks on workers's pensions, and the outright theft of Peruvian natural resources by multi-national corporations.

There are no simple answers to Peru's economic problems. The neoliberal model followed by the right-center politicians has been a complete disaster for Peruvian working people. The CGTP and PCP program of class oriented struggle with mass demonstrations in the streets is the only solution. We in the US can learn a great deal from the Peruvian example. A world without workers is impossible, a world without capitalism is necessary.



L-R Victor Gorriti Candela, Secretary of Planning for the Confederacion General De Trabajadores Del Peru, CGTP, Lima, Peru, and Joseph Hancock, National Chair, Politburo of the Central Committee, PCUSA. (photo provided) Dec. 2018-Jan. 2019.

Environment Page

New "planetary health diet can save lives and the planet

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ - "If we can assist people in regaining healthy lifestyles, and improve the environment, it's a win-win situation," Tracy Ford, chair of the Animal Rights Commission for Party of Communists USA said. "The new report of International scientists say by reducing red meat and sugar by half and increasing fruits, vegetables, and nuts is key to their research.

"A diet it says can improve health while ensuring sustainable food production to reduce further damage to the planet," Ford states.

And it can prevent up to 11.6 million premature deaths without harming the planet, says the report published Wednesday in the medical journal The Lancet.

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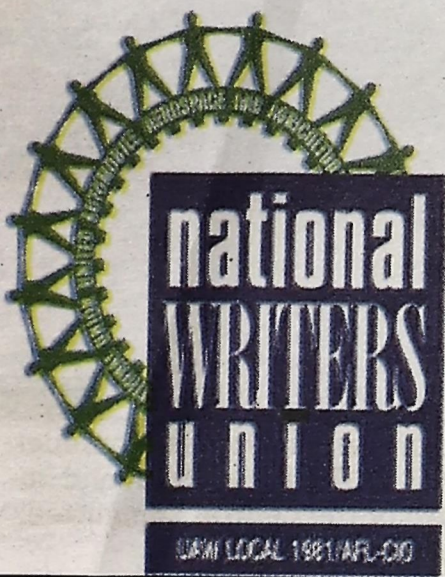
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California wildfires



Creator: Noah Berger Credit: AP Copyright: Noah Berger

BY ALAN SHORB

This article is an eyewitness report from what was known as the Thomas fire that began in Ventura County, California in 2017. Since that time, there have been several wildfires in California that have devastated the state. The two biggest privately owned utility companies, Pacific Gas and Electric, and Southern California Edison are largely responsible for the loss of life and property caused by these fires because of inadequate maintenance of their equipment, which was the origin of these unnecessary tragedies. By their consistent neglect, and despite repeated warnings from experts in the energy industry that a clear and present danger existed, these large private utilities ignored the warnings. These executives have shown us their true colors, that they only care about maximum profits at the expense of the working class.

The PCUSA believes that all utilities should be publicly owned and maintained by the people, not private corporations. Using the power of eminent domain, we call on the Governor and the California legislature to seize control of these companies and their remaining assets, and to place them under the direct control of the California Public Utilities Commission. PG & E and Edison utility workers should become state employees with full and complete competitive salary and benefits negotiated by their trade unions. Power to the people!

Upper Ojai, CA. My partner, Nuri, and I first heard at 6:30 pm from Nuri's son-in-law that a fire had started a couple of miles from us. This was the beginning of the Thomas Fire.

We could see the glow from the fire behind the next hill. Strong Santa Ana winds were blowing in our direction, so we kept our eyes on that glow. We also called elderly neighbors, who had not heard about the fire, in order to alert them to the danger. By 8pm we decided to evacuate. Driving the half mile out our dead-end road to the state highway was disconcerting. Right away we were blocked by the first fire trucks coming up our road. Then we passed a neighbor struggling with horses to get away from the fire. Before we reached the highway, we could see flames only hundreds of yards away, with the wind starting to blow glowing embers across our path. Even after we got to the highway and turned toward Ojai, away from the flames, the wind was filling the air with smoke and embers, and small fires were springing up on all sides. I was having trouble breathing, which didn't clear up until several hours after we came down into the small city of Ojai, which was not yet involved.

We spent the night in Ojai, with Nuri's daughter about 10 miles from the fire, expecting the fire

to be substantially under control when we woke up. However, in the morning, we saw that the fire was burning along the tops of many of the hills above town. And on TV there was nothing but coverage of the fire, which by that time had reached Ventura, just over a ridge from Ojai, pushed along by the continuing Santa Ana winds. Hundreds of homes in Ventura had been destroyed by then. At about 10 am the power went out all over Ojai, and we decided to evacuate again. It took us over two hours to get out of town, heading away from the fire toward Santa Barbara. Once we reached US 101 we doubled back, able to skirt the fire in Ventura, and headed for Nuri's relatives in San Diego. On the way to San Diego, we saw the smoke from at least four other wildfires that had started in Los Angeles and San Diego Counties.

A week passed in San Diego, and news of Ojai filtered in. The air quality was quite bad, especially for the very young and elderly. On our short street of about 25 houses, eight had burned down completely, another five suffered significant damage. Our house and the house next door survived intact, thanks to the efforts of Nuri's son-in-law who had been allowed to return the first night of the fire. All told, the city of Ojai proper, on the floor of a valley, suffered little damage, but buildings in the hills surrounding it sustained major damage, as did the cities of Ventura and Montecito. When we returned, our neighborhood looked like a war zone. As of now, a year later, not a single house on our street has been replaced.

By the time we returned to Ojai almost two weeks later, the Thomas Fire had become the largest wildfire in California history. Little did we expect that that record would be eclipsed within a year by the Mendocino Complex fire, with several other major California fires occurring during that year. When we returned, even though the fire was out close to Ojai, the smell of smoke was overpowering, and it continued that way until the rains began in mid-January. The hills around our neighborhood are filled with oil wells, as well as significant oil seeps. The seeps continued to smolder for well over a month, long after the rains came, contributing significantly to the oppressive smell of smoke.

Our area is a significant agricultural area, and lost almost \$200 million in agriculture income from the fire. We ourselves have two acres of avocado trees, and even though our house wasn't damaged by the fire, the strong winds caused most of the immature fruit to fall. Furthermore, either the heat of the fire or the strength of the wind damaged the trees enough that we have had very few avocados since then, though normally we have two crops a year.

Why these devastating fires in such a short time? One clear reason is climate change, which causes longer droughts in California, and paradoxically heavier rains that promote undergrowth. It also doubtless fueled the Santa Ana winds, which were the strongest of the year then all over Southern California. Climate change is becoming more acute year-by-year. And what is behind climate change? That is just as clear: it is the constant drive of capitalism for more growth and more profits, no matter what the cost to society, spurring the greater use of fossil fuels. Another reason that the fires are becoming so devastating is that (again) capitalism is starving the funding of social needs, such as the ability to fight fires. The fire department in our neighborhood never warned us of the fire, but only showed up as the neighborhood was already evacuating itself. After the neighbors returned home, community meetings often complained about the poor performance of the fire department. Also, scrimping on infrastructure contributed to the fire. One cause of the Thomas fire is attributed to the explosion of an power transformer, probably caused by a short when power lines contacted each other due to the Santa Ana winds.

Of course, another cause of the scrimping on social needs is the huge portion of our national budget that is devoted to the military. This is especially galling when we realize that the reason so much is spent on the military is to support American imperialism around the world, and even now on our very borders. This use of the military is to protect the income and wealth of our capitalist elites rather than to provide security for the bulk of our population. Furthermore, the US military contributes significantly to global warming, being the largest single emitter of greenhouse gases in the world.

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It's capitalism from page 5

how Quebec's doctors are rejecting pay increases, the significance of the YMCA workers' strike in Chicago, and the growing Japanese co-op movement.

Paul Farrell's 2015 article for Market Watch, said, Capitalism is killing America's morals, our future. In 2013 six theses were written on the same subject of how capitalism quashes human rights.

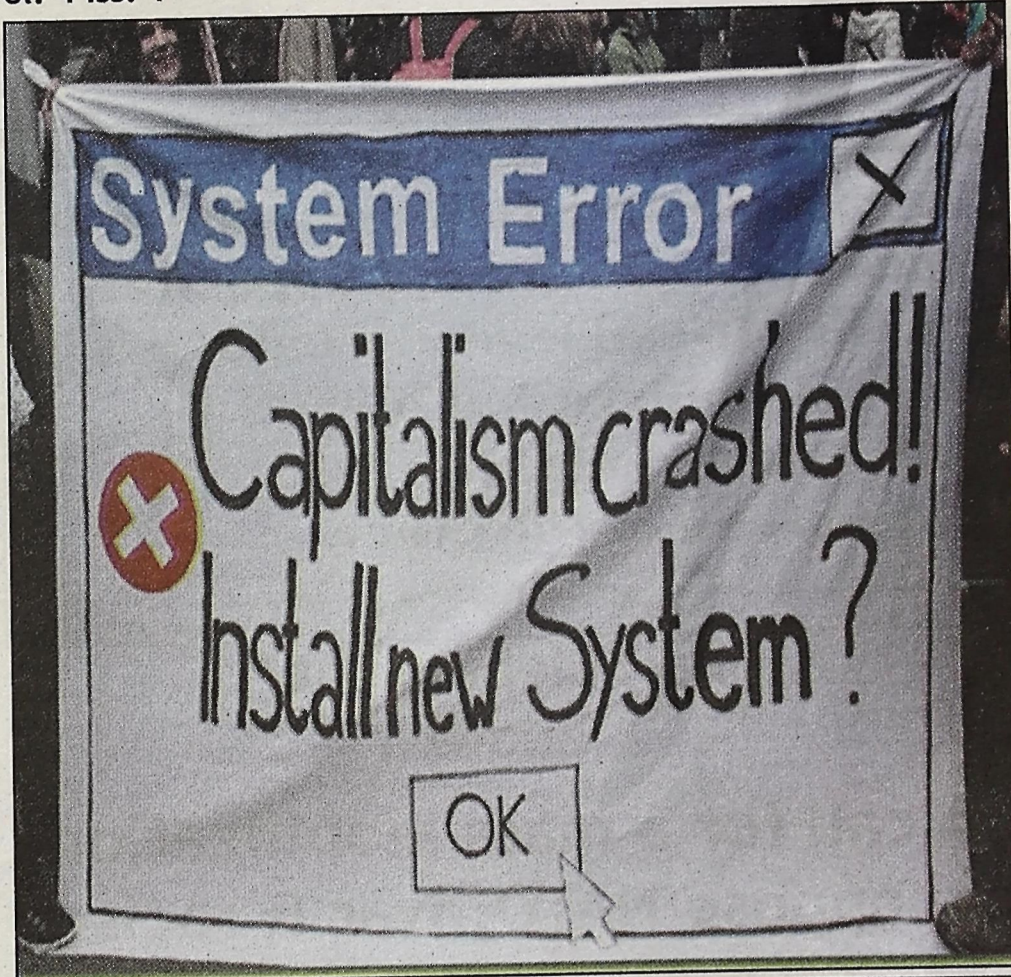
In a 1999 class presentation, from a Sociology class at the University of Regina, a class division is one of the exponents of capitalism. For Marx, the analysis of social class, class structures and changes in those structures are key to understanding capitalism and other social systems or modes of produc-

tion. In the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels comment that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Tithi Bhattacharya and Lance Selfa reported in International Socialist Review, where they stated, "This conversation about race, class, and capitalism obviously needs to develop more broadly..."

So capitalism seems to be the ONE item that the left can rally around to crush bringing about a more socialist world. Crushing capitalism is the ROUTE for any true revolution for the left.

If the left, rallied around crushing capitalism, then most of the problems in society would disappear completely. Start the new year, 2019, by crushing capitalism. Then the left is truly leading the RIGHT revolution.



A lesson in dialectically analyzing breaking news

The Worker Editorial Board Response

Recent viral videos sprung up showing a group of white high-school students wearing MAGA hats and clothing. The recordings from Washington DC revealed what appeared to be students surrounding and harassing a Native American US military veteran.

During Friday's (Jan. 18, 2019) Indigenous Peoples March in Washington DC, a group of white private high-school students from Kentucky wearing MAGA-branded clothing and hats appeared to surround and harass 64-year-old Native American Nathan Phillips, a veteran of the Vietnam War, as he played a drum and chanted in his

native language.

Though subsequent videos shows before the drumming started, the young teenage boys were being verbally harassed themselves. Black Hebrew Israelites, BHI, were taunting and insulting their (students) faith, their priests and their culture. What appeared to be smugness towards the Omaha Indigenous elder was being directed towards the BHI. How would any young teenage boy respond to this verbal abuse?

The social media culture is used to manipulate and incite persons while maybe not telling the whole story. Knee jerk reactions further the racism divide that is enveloping all nations. We can't just take a live streamed video or Instagram picture to tell the whole story. We have to go old school and use dialectical reasoning skills before making snap judgement.

Here is what we know to be reliable truth.

MAGA-branded clothing and hats are typically worn by supporters of President Donald Trump, and the 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) slogan is considered to be the most important catchphrase of the 45th US president's adminis-

tration.

Seeding Sovereignty, (seedingsovereignty.org), wrote of working through their own complicated and emotional reactions to the video, and attested to the generosity Phillips displayed: "The way we see it, uncle blessed them in spite of their behavior because he knows our ancestral teachings. Many of us love to say we are rising in beauty, but how many of us put that sentiment into action?"

Many have observed that Trump's polarizing rhetoric on immigrants to the US has contributed to the current climate of racial abuse.

US House Representative Deb Haaland (D-NM), a Native American and a professed Catholic, was at the DC rally. Haaland, pointed out that Trump has made it a habit to use Indian names, including Pocahontas, as insults toward political opponents.

"It is sad that we have a president who uses Native American women's names as racial slurs, and that's an example that these kids are clearly following, considering the fact that they had their 'Make America Great Again' [MAGA] hats on," Haaland noted. "[Trump has] really brought out the worst in people," the lawmaker added.

Rebecca Bengal, Vogue, reported eloquently, "On the video footage, it is difficult to hear exactly what is said. The students encircle Phillips, camera phones held out, a few jeering as he sings. One of them, smiling, maintains direct eye contact. Phillips kept on drumming. "We're indigenous," he said the next day in an interview with Indian Country Today. "We're different than that. When we see our youth going the wrong way, we will go up and say, "You are doing the wrong thing there, Nephew or Grandson. This is just the wrong way."

While this story is still unfolding, the fact remains that ill-equipped Trump for the presidency enflames

white nationalism. The root issue here is racism. It also further documents how the imperialistic fascists incite class divisions among all working class groups. At first news reports incited anger towards the white youth. The new videos incite hatred towards BHI. This must be addressed. There is no room in scientific socialism for class division.



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Peace and Solidarity Page

In capitalist history, invasion and class struggle are not opposites, as the official legend would have us believe, but one is the means and the expression of the other.



**Karl Liebknecht
quote**

A call for a mass mobilization to oppose NATO, war & racism

United National Antiwar Coalition, UNAC, announced a Protest NATO, Washington, DC, Lafayette Park (across from the White House). Which takes place at 1 PM Saturday, March 30, 2019.

Additional actions will take place on Thursday April 4 at the opening of the NATO meeting.

April 4, 2019, will mark the 51st anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the internationally revered leader in struggles against racism, poverty and war.

And yet, in a grotesque desecration of Rev. King's lifelong dedication to peace, this is the date that the military leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have chosen to celebrate NATO's 70th anniversary by holding its annual summit meeting in Washington, D.C. This is a deliberate insult to Rev. King and a clear message that Black lives and the lives of non-European humanity, and indeed the lives of the vast majority, really do not matter.

Since its founding, the U.S.-led NATO has been the world's deadliest military alliance, causing untold suffering and devastation throughout Northern Africa, the Middle East and beyond. Hundreds of thousands have died in U.S./NATO wars in Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Yugoslavia. Millions of refugees are now risking their lives trying to escape the carnage that these wars have brought to their homelands, while workers in the 29 NATO member-countries are told they must abandon hard-won social programs in order to meet U.S. demands for even more military spending.

Dr. King's words linking the three evils of American society: Militarism, Racism and Poverty, and his deeply profound remark that every

bomb that falls on other countries is a bomb dropped on our inner cities, reveal the deep-rooted relationship between militarism and the social, racial, economic and environmental injustices that now impoverish whole cities and rural communities and have plagued our society and the world for a long time. It was exactly one year before he was murdered that Rev. King gave his famous speech opposing the U.S. war in Vietnam, calling the U.S. government "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world" and declaring that he could not be silent.

We cannot be silent either. As Rev. King taught us, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Every year NATO has held its summits, people around the world have organized massive protests against it: in Chicago (2012), Wales (2014), Warsaw (2016), Brussels (2017 & 2018) — and 2019 will be no exception.

We are calling for a peaceful mass mobilization against this year's NATO Summit in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, March 30. Additional actions will take place at the opening of the NATO meeting on April 4.

We ask you to make every effort to join with us in Washington DC, or, if not possible, organize a rally or demonstration in your area. We need to show, in the strongest possible way, our opposition to NATO's destructive wars and its racist military policies around the world.

We also invite you to add your, and/or your organization's name to the list of supporters of the anti-NATO, Anti-War and Anti-Racism mass actions in Washington DC.

<http://no2nato2019.org/>



Military industrialization out of control

By Kelly McConnell

The military's increased spending this year has resulted in thousands of workers being laid off in the auto industry. 800,000 Federal workers are also out of work. This grim economy is staring right at the working class as well. The oligarchy within Wall Street isn't going to pull this country out of the recession. Wall Street has plagued main street Americans for decades. Exuberant wealth created and accumulated by the super rich is starving the working class. The government's budget has increased only favoring the military. What really are we defending? It seems so offensive to the rest of humanity.

This military budget boondoggle is being sucked into an endless pit at the Pentagon. 20 trillion dollars spent on the Cold War got us nowhere. More waste and corruption is ever increasing in the wasteland of runaway spending. The lack of concern for the workers is as much from the Democrats as the imperialistic Republicans. The so called

Democrats are afraid and cowering in Congress. There is always more for them and less for us. Yet paid for by over taxation upon the working class.

An entire fleet of a new bombers replacing B-52's at a bargain of 600 million each. F-35's are 135 million each. Much of the new weaponry that require additional spending over the years which has led to cost overruns. Renewing the nukes while adding more is the imperialistic fascist US agenda for world dominance.

Why is the US solutions for other problems of so little concern that military spending takes predominance? Problems with issues like earning a living wage, healthcare, homelessness, climate change and a crumbling infrastructure are forgotten.

It is time that the people need to make changes by working for a new world. This can be accomplished with socialism leading to Communism.



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