

Initiatives

In Support of Christians in the World

National Center for the Laity
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Faith & Work Movement

Restaurants on Chicago's north side have unusual menu items. Thus lemon meringue pancakes were the choice when our National Center for the Laity recently hosted breakfast for Will Messenger of Boston and Alistair Mackenzie of New Zealand. They are leaders of Theology of Work Project (15 Notre Dame Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140; www.theologyofwork.org).

The two are travelling the country to promote the intersection of faith and daily life and to assess how their website and their resources meet the needs of pastoral leaders, seminary teachers and workplace activists.

After a seven-year effort involving 140 international Scripture experts, TOW has published commentaries on themes related to daily work. There is something on each Bible book and on 859 distinct passages. These commentaries can be obtained from Hendrickson Publishers (PO Box 3473, Peabody, MA 01961; www.hendrickson.com). Along with numerous blog posts and some video material, the commentaries are also on the TOW website.

The commentary on *Genesis* sets the tone, heaving aside the common mistake that work is a result of the first sin. Even before the fall, says *Genesis*, people were cultivating, dressing and caring for paradise. Another TOW commentary, titled *Women and Work in the Old Testament*, features Miriam, Rahab, Ruth and others.

With another round of coffee Messenger and Mackenzie told NCL that Protestants increasingly make the faith and work connection--including a younger group of Christians. Younger believers raise critical questions about the daily grind and suspect their religious tradition has some answers. Further, the visitors said, "some significant funding has been provided to networks of seminaries and churches to encourage this."

Let's say for the moment that Messenger and Mackenzie are correct about some Protestant young adults. Will those young adults find one another and get sufficient support

in their quest?

Although Messenger and Mackenzie are aware of some post-Vatican II movements among Catholic laity, their contacts are mostly Protestant. So they asked: Does NCL notice more Catholic young adults attempting to integrate their faith with work, with economics and culture?

In NCL's opinion most pastoral leaders and most Catholic worshipers to one degree or another have a post-Vatican II familiarity with Scripture, liturgy and doctrine. But too many still revert to a pre-Vatican II understanding of the word *church*. Too often, for example, "the church's position" on a contemporary issue is equated with a statement from the Chancery. Too often "peace and justice involvement" is equated with a Church-sponsored program. There is not enough independent lay initiative. Too few Catholics (clergy and lay) see work in the office, in the school, in the shop, in government, in the community, in commerce or in the arts as primary ministry, as a vocation.

Contact TOW by U.S. mail or through its website. Let TOW know what is happening in your workplace. Are young adults asking about the meaning of work? How does your parish support the universal vocation to the world? What types of supportive material would be helpful? Is it time for a Catholic convocation on faith and work?

Taking the Initiative

In Business

How does a business owner or executive determine if the company's product or service is good? "The default answer is the market," write Michael Naughton (John A. Ryan Institute, 2115 Summit Ave. #55S, St. Paul, MN 55105; www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst) and Fr. Nicholas Santos, SJ (Marquette Marketing Dept., 1250 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53233), editors of the Winter/16 issue of *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* (Villanova University, 104 Corr Hall, Villanova, PA 19085; \$40 for a bi-annual subscription). That is, say Naughton and Santos, normally the worthiness

of a product or service is determined by “how much people will pay for it” or how often they will purchase it. According to Catholicism, however, this market measure is “insufficient criteria to determine good goods.”

A recent commercial for a communications company has the tag line: *More data means more freedom*. What the company really means by *freedom* is putting more options in front of consumers. This is irrelevant to “authentic value of goods and services,” Naughton and Santos continue. In fact in our society equating *more options* with *freedom* is a negative.

The theme for this Winter/16 issue of the *Journal* is “Poverty, Prosperity and the Role of Business.” Eight essays follow the introduction. The contributors hail from Philippines, Spain, Italy, Ireland and the U.S.

Fr. John McNerney of University College Dublin, to highlight one *Journal* essay, writes about the creation of wealth from the perspective of Catholic *personalist principles*. His case study is Foxford Woolen Mills (Swinford Rd. & N26, Foxford, County Mayo; www.foxfordwoollenmills.com). Mother Mary Arsenius, RSC (1842-1932) founded this textile mill in the 1890s. Its purpose then and now is not only to make products and pay wages. The mill helps create self-determination and dignity.

Taking the Initiative *Against Inequality*

It is a modest effort. Tompkins County Workers’ Center (115 ML King St., Ithaca, NY 14850; www.tcworkerscenter.org) certifies Living Wage Employers—private, non-profit and government. Over 100 employers with a total of over 3,000 workers now display a living wage decal. TCWC defines a *living wage* at the southern end of Cayuga Lake as \$14.34. Those certified businesses are promoted through the TCWC networks.

Critics say this campaign like Fight for \$15 (www.fightfor15.org) will not narrow the wage gap because employers will raise prices. The wealthy, the criticism continues, exponentially outpace lower wage workers, no matter the wage floor.

Aware of the criticism, INITIATIVES still likes the TCWC effort because it is voluntary, not government mandated. Participating employers have a chance to be good and look good. Of course some of them

have to be cajoled into certification. And of course, some measure of government-enacted reform is a necessary part of a participatory economy.

INITIATIVES also likes the TCWC strategy because it can be replicated by, for example, a cluster of parishes, a steady community organization, even a local chamber of commerce. A well-conducted local certification campaign allows owners, managers, employees, plus church and community leaders to learn about one another and to grow in the virtue of solidarity.

Even the dollars and cents of the TCWC campaign appeals to INITIATIVES. It is one thing if the top earners make more money while everyone else has a proportionate increase. But, says a new report from Brookings Institution (1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036; www.brookings.edu), income for the bottom 20% has declined in the past two years despite job growth. In New Orleans, for example, wages for the lower 20% declined in the time frame, while pay for the area’s top 5% increased. The top tier earnings are 17.7 times greater than the average of the lower earners. In Atlanta the increase went up to 17.5 times; in Cincinnati it is 15.7 times. (*Chicago Tribune*, 1/15/16)

Retail executives, to give one example, usually say that any increase in wages means higher prices. They say that consumers will consistently favor stores with lowest prices. Thus these executives tolerate low enthusiasm and high turnover among their floor staff as a necessary downside for doing business.

Zeynep Ton at Sloan School of Management (MIT, 100 Main St., Cambridge, MA 02142) did some research. The *low prices model* in retail actually costs more than a *living wage model*. There are real costs for high staff turnover, inadequate training and minimum customer service. Profit accrues to those companies that retain competent workers by paying a living wage. The managers at those companies have to be creative, not lazy. Thus attracting and retaining top flight managers is the way out of the dysfunctional mindset that low prices require low wages. (*The Good Jobs Strategy*, Houghton Mifflin [2014], 222 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116; \$25)

Taking the Initiative *For Urban Development*

Until the latter part of the 20th century, Great Lakes and Atlantic coast cities plus their suburban municipalities could count on an industrial base to provide upward mobility for many families. Today economic and demographic changes necessitate new strategies. Unfortunately several development proposals are wrong-headed, writes Mike Gecan in *After America's Midlife Crisis* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6).

Gecan's list of bad approaches includes "one-shot" gimmicks like a new sports team and/or new stadium. There are several variables to the economics of a sports venue: the percentage and amount and terms of public financing, the type and number of jobs that will really go to local workers, the number of wins for the team two and three years after the shine on the stadium wears off, the durability or planned obsolescence of the stadium, the relationship of the proposed project to local restaurants, housing and more. In general though, Gecan is correct. "A new sports facility has an extremely small (perhaps negative) effect on overall economic activity and development," concludes *Sports, Jobs and Taxes* (Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036; \$26.95). Recent construction projects "cast doubt on the ability of stadiums, teams and sporting events to serve as economic catalysts," says *Sport and Public Policy* (Human Kinetics, PO Box 5076, Champaign, IL 61820; \$77).

All of which takes us to Milwaukee where in 2014 Wes Edens and others purchased the Milwaukee Bucks with an assumption that a new arena is to be built.

Common Ground (833 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53233; www.commongroundwi.org)--a coalition of about 50 churches, synagogues, mosques and civic groups--is affiliated with Gecan's Metro IAF (1226 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005; www.metro-iaf.org). Common Ground says many public sports facilities in Milwaukee deserve investment; namely, city parks.

Common Ground did some research. Edens, it turns out, is a director of Nationstar Mortgage (PO Box 650783, Dallas, TX 75265), a company involved with as many as 3,500 properties in Milwaukee. Many Nationstar homes are dilapidated; about 550 are in the

foreclosure pipeline. Common Ground thinks stopping Nationstar's blight on adjacent and nearby local properties takes priority over Edens' basketball arena.

At Common Ground's insistence, Nationstar's chief executive came up from Texas to Milwaukee last May. In August Nationstar announced an assistance package for Milwaukee. It will modify the terms of delinquent loans there; it will donate some money to a city program for home improvements; it will donate some property to non-profit housing groups; and more.

Then in January 2016 Milwaukee's mayor and city council approved \$47million in city financing toward a new basketball arena. State and county obligations bring the public portion of the deal to \$250million. Common Ground is still uneasy with the plan. It wants neighborhood investment. Stay tuned. (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 10/19/14, 3/5/15, 5/14/15, 8/28/15, 1/25/16)

More on Milwaukee's housing situation in a subsequent INITIATIVES, including comments on *Evicted: Poverty and Profit* by Matthew Desmond (Crown [2016], 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; \$28).

Taking the Initiative *On Campus*

The normal process for gauging employee's interest in a union at a Catholic college inserts government into a religious setting, says Fr. Dennis Holtschneider, CM (DePaul University, 1 E. Jackson St., Chicago, IL 60604). He believes that Service Employees International Union and National Labor Relations Board are *third parties* that have "no connection or commitment to DePaul and its students." He wants a clear boundary between church and state and wants "to maintain independence as a complete religious institution." Holtschneider does not think DePaul is anti-union. He does, however, oppose the organizing drive occurring among the school's part-time teachers. He believes the administration has a right to publicize their preference. "Everyone gets academic freedom at the university," he concludes. (*The DePaulia* [1/25/16], 2345 N. Clifton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614 and *Solidarity Notes* [3/16], 33 Central Ave., Albany, NY 12210)

Our National Center for the Laity is sympathetic to Catholic administrators. It is

difficult to operate colleges and other Catholic institutions these days, particularly in Illinois. NCL distributes a booklet about Catholic doctrine: *Catholic Administrators and Labor Unions*. Not every workplace must have a union, the booklet explains. Nor, does Catholicism have an opinion on this specific union at this specific workplace. Our doctrine simply says that for better or worse employees make the call about a union and that for better or worse administrators must forego paternalism or maternalism.

Institutions like DePaul could stay within Catholic doctrine and keep NLRB off campus, says NCL's booklet. Our doctrine would allow the administration to voluntarily recognize the teachers' group as a bargaining unit and subsequently discuss the teachers' issues in good faith. Many Catholic grammar schools already do this. If on the other hand DePaul trustees or administrators put legal barriers in front of their teachers or in other ways harass them, then the school is somewhere below Catholic standards.

Meanwhile in January part-time and non-tenured faculty at Loyola University (820 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611) voted 142-82 for a union. The administration thanked the teachers for their participation in the process. We look forward to "continuing the conversation and the negotiations with SEIU," the administrators say. Then oddly in late February Loyola raised jurisdiction matters, saying a religious institution is not bound by collective bargaining procedures. (*Phoenix* [1/27/16], 51 E. Pearson St., Chicago, IL 60611 and *Inside Higher Ed* [1/28/16], 1015 18th St. NW #1100, Washington, DC 20036 and *The Jesuit Post*, www.thejesuitpost.org; 2/18/16)

To keep current on this topic see *Catholic Employer Project* (www.catholiclabor.org). The fourth or fifth item in the left-hand column has a mechanism for regular alerts.

Taking the Initiative On Seafood

Early this year INITIATIVES reported on slavery in Thailand's seafood industry. (See *The Guardian* [7/20/15 & 12/16/16], 222 Broadway #2300, New York, NY 10038 and *N.Y. Times*, 7/26/15 & 11/26/15)

Since then our U.S. Congress (c/o Sen. Sherrod Brown, 801 W. Superior Ave. #1400, Cleveland, OH 44113; www.brown.senate.gov) amended a 1930 law so that now import of

seafood caught by forced labor is illegal. The U.S. is now the 20th country to join Port State Measures Agreement (U.N. Food & Agriculture, 2 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; www.fao.org).

Prior to this amendment our government certainly knew about slavery in Thailand and elsewhere. But the 1930 loophole allowed for the imports if U.S. domestic production of the product could not meet demand.

In a related development, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Ave. NW #5128, Washington, DC 20230; www.noaa.gov) has improved the tracking of seafood from ocean to U.S. markets. (*N.Y. Times*, 2/16/16)

Readers of INITIATIVES can make a difference, says Fr. Sinclair Oubre of the Apostleship of the Sea in the Diocese of Beaumont, TX. Check the country of origin label on seafood, he explains. "I especially ask that you consider purchasing only wild caught seafood, and especially wild caught U.S. shrimp. In doing so, you get *organic* seafood that is harvested in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner."

Oubre, who is involved with Catholic Labor Network (www.catholiclabor.org), ministers among the Vietnamese-American shrimping community. They operate more than 150 vessels in Oubre's area. "These hardworking people, most who are Catholic, comply with stringent state and federal rules," he reports. For example, these shrimpers "use turtle excluder devices and by-catch reduction devices."

For more information, Oubre recommends Texas Shrimpers Association (1000 Everglades Rd., Brownsville, TX 78521; www.texasshrimpassociation.org) and Southern Shrimp Alliance (PO Box 1577, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688; www.shrimpalliance.com). The websites have places to get U.S. shrimp, plus recipes plus links to more consumer information.

Work and Art

Reading literature, says Christopher Michaelson (Opus College of Business, 1000 LaSalle Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403; www.blogs.stthomas.edu/opusmagnum), is good for businesspeople, both personally and professionally. Literature does not automatically upgrade one's virtue, Michaelson said at a March conference, "The Power of Story Telling in

Business Ethics,” sponsored by Integritas Institute (700 S. Morgan St., Chicago, IL 60607; www.integritasinstitute.org). But it can. It also opens a businessperson to a perspective beyond narrow workplace issues. Literature thus transports the businessperson’s imagination across time and place; which might be helpful in our global marketplace.

Before revealing Michaelson’s list of stories that “shape, reflect and relate to 21st century capitalism,” here, according to a survey of executives, are their “top four classics of business literature”: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith (1723-1790), *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu (544-496 B.C.), *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527).

Now for Michaelson’s list. The novels must be of a length and a quality that his MBA students and businesspeople will read. And the books must be relevant to business concerns.

Michaelson says *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley (1797-1851) is quite contemporary. It is about someone who creates and who then walks away from unintended consequences. It is about privacy issues, technology, genetics and more. He also recommends *Diamond as Big as the Ritz* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Melville House [1922], 46 John St., Brooklyn, NY 11201; \$10) and chapter one in *The Financier* by Theodore Dreiser (Penguin [1912], 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; \$18).

Newer novels on his list include *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid (Houghton Mifflin [2008], 222 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116; \$14) and *The Circle* by Dave Eggers (Knopf [2014], 1745 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; \$15.95) and *Cities of Salt* by Abdelrahman Munif (Knopf [1989]; \$18.95).

Maryam Schechtman, University of Illinois dean of Liberal Arts and Science, joined Michaelson at the podium to expand on the benefits of literature. The very nature of literature goes beyond the content or even the apparent lesson of one or another story, she concisely explained. In a story “things signify other things.” That is, the story’s allusions and symbolism imply that there is significance beyond life’s surface. Literature is thus a testament to the meaning embedded in daily work.

Al Schorsch III, longtime NCL friend and recently retired University of Illinois dean of urban planning, is the new director at Integritas.

It sponsored an April bioethics symposium titled “Pope Francis’ Field Hospital: Inspiration for Healthcare.”

The Great Workbench

Back To Basics?

Apparently business culture has deteriorated to a point where common decency is not automatically presumed. Columnist Rex Huppke (ijustworkhere@tribpub.com) recently posed these questions: “Why is it so difficult for workplaces to achieve widespread kindness and the efficiency that would logically follow?” Why, despite contrary evidence, do managers persist in the “belief that kindness isn’t compatible with success?” Why do they act as if only “toughness and discipline” count? Huppke received many responses; enough to prove that civility and ordinary consideration at work are not taken for granted. (*Chicago Tribune*, 2/14/16 & 2/21/16)

Reports of harshness in today’s workplace contrast with a picture from the 1980s. Back then INITIATIVES carried many stories about humanistic business practices. Newspapers and trade publications in those days told of businesses attending to customer satisfaction, to employee morale and to community service. Positive management techniques were featured.

In 1982, for example, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman wrote *In Search of Excellence* (Harper Collins, 53 Glenmaura National Blvd. #300, Moosic, PA 18507; \$16.99) which profiled companies that fostered innovation through value-driven management. The excellent companies encouraged communication with customers and treated their employees as a source of quality. The book went into multiple printings.

Business magazines in the 1980s regularly featured “ethical companies.” There was even a popular monthly dedicated to business ethics. About that time our National Center for the Laity was mentioned in a *Fortune* article and in a *N.Y. Times* column regarding business ethics.

In the 1980s several Protestants authored books that highlighted the daily ministry of executives, small business owners and conscientious workers. Several of these authors chided their worship leaders for neglecting the positives in the business world.

Likewise in the 1980s Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) coined the phrase *spirituality of work*, calling it a way for “all people to come closer, through work, to God.” He called for an economy in which workers—including executives, floor managers and all employees—are the first purpose of the company. Everything else will fall into order, the pope said. (See *Pope John Paul II’s Gospel of Work*, NCL, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$8)

What happened to the humanistic work culture?

North American Spirituality

Fr. Samuel Mazzuchelli, OP (1806-1864)

Bishop Edward Fenwick, OP (1768-1832) of Cincinnati went to Rome, appealing “to his fellow Dominicans to send him missionaries,” writes Sr. Mary Paynter, OP. “Only one responded.” That was seminarian Mazzuchelli of Milan who arrived in Cincinnati in 1828. Fenwick ordained him two years later and assigned him to Mackinac Island (now in MI), Green Bay (now in WI) and “the whole of northwest territories.” Some French-Canadian Catholic families lived in that area, but Mazzuchelli’s ministry also included Indians—Menominee, Chippewa, Winnebago, Ottawa and others. He published a Winnebago prayer book and a Chippewa liturgical guide. He relied on Indian women to serve as parish administrators and catechists. Mazzuchelli protested the government’s policy of *Indian removal* and violations of treaties. In his later travels he ministered among miners, again including Indians and also Irish immigrants. (*Chicago Studies* [Winter/15], 1500 E. Saginaw St., Lansing, MI 48906)

Like most missionaries, Mazzuchelli persevered through the difficulties of travel, of accommodations and of learning languages. He also had to bear up under anti-Catholic bigotry. Some Protestant leaders urged followers “to save the Mississippi Valley from *Roman* power,” or “save settlers from the Catholics,” Sr. Mary Nona McGreal, OP writes in *Samuel*

Mazzuchelli: American Dominican (Ave Maria [2005], PO Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556).

A few Protestants reconsidered their prejudice as they got to know Mazzuchelli. For example, one Presbyterian leader “deplored [Mazzuchelli’s] connection with the church of Rome.” Yet she eventually praised his Christian virtues. Mazzuchelli participated in ecumenical organizations and showed kindness regardless of a person’s religious tradition.

As the U.S. Catholic population grew, additional dioceses were formed. Mazzuchelli travelled in several of them, including Marquette, St. Louis, Dubuque, Chicago and Milwaukee. Sadly, an *ecclesial turf war* included character accusations against Mazzuchelli.

More than 20 parishes owe their start to Mazzuchelli’s tireless efforts. He also led the construction of schools and other institutions. Mazzuchelli attempted to found a province of Dominicans in Galena, IL. But the bishop of Chicago, whose turf included Galena back then, declined the offer. And so, Mazzuchelli looked north over the border. In 1847 he founded the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters (585 County Rd. Z, Sinsinawa, WI 53824).

The National Center for the Laity rejoices with all Dominicans this year, the 800th anniversary of their founding. St. Dominic de Guzman’s (1170-1221) themes include the notion that a person becomes holy in the midst of daily activity—both the joys and sufferings of the day. The workweek then ascends to the weekend’s liturgical font of grace and from there holiness flows back into work. These are NCL themes too.

NCL counts several Dominicans among its longstanding friends. In particular, NCL has been a beneficiary of hospitality extended by Dominican University (7900 W. Division St., River Forest, IL 60305). Once upon a time the sisters there (formerly Rosary College) chose to forego a donation (*bribe* is more accurate) out of respect for the reputation of NCL founder Ed Marciniak (1917-2004), a part-time teacher at the school. The details of that incident are for another issue of INITIATIVES.

Happenings and Resources

Joe Berry (joeberry@igc.org) alerts INITIATIVES’ readers to the August 5-7, 2016 conference of Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor; a network for part-time teachers interested in worker justice. The COCAL gathering this year is in Edmonton. The host is CUPE Local 3911 (Peace Hills Trust, 1200 10011 109th St., Edmonton, AB T5J 3S8 Canada; www.cupe3911.com).

Blessings for Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center (1216 NE 65th St., Seattle, WA 98115; www.ipjc.org) on its 25th anniversary. It is sponsored by 13 orders of religious women, including Sinsinawa Dominicans. It has a sophisticated program called Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment. Using boycotts and stock proxies, the NW Coalition has nudged several companies toward better policies. For example, women religious, including those in the NW Coalition, took the problem of trafficking to Hyatt Hotels (71 S. Wacker Dr. #1200, Chicago, IL 60606). Hyatt in turn signed the ECPAT Tourism Code (30 Third Ave. #800A, Brooklyn, NY 11217). Employees in all 627 Hyatt hotels now get training in how to spot trafficking of children and how to stop it. IPJC's newsletter is *A Matter of Spirit*. It covers ecology, refugees, the economy and more.

Six years ago South Florida Interfaith Worker Justice (13727 SW 152nd St. #PMB 256, Miami, FL 33177; www.sfiwj.org) successfully campaigned to make Miami-Dade County the first jurisdiction to formally outlaw wage theft. Now there is national momentum to combat this multibillion-dollar problem, Interfaith tells INITIATIVES. In March Sen. Patty Murray (2930 Wetmore Ave. #9D, Everett, WA 98201; www.murray.senate.gov) introduced the Wage Theft Prevention and Wage Recovery Act.

Earlier this year Sen. Al Franken (60 E. Plato Blvd. #200, St. Paul, MN 55107; www.franken.senate.gov) introduced the Pay Stub Disclosure Act. It would aid employees' awareness of minimum wage and overtime regulations. Their pay stub would explain how wages are calculated, including whether they were paid overtime. The act would, among other protections, give employees the right to inspect pay records. Interfaith requests that citizens lobby their Federal representatives in support of the two bills.

Kim Bobo, former director of Interfaith Worker Justice (1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago, IL 60660; www.iwj.org) wrote a book about this problem: *Wage Theft in America* (National Center for the Laity, PO Box 291102, Chicago, IL 60629; \$6).

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