



VENCEREMOS

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Melba Hernandez Invited To “A People’s Salute To Cuba”



Melba Hernandez with Vietnamese fighters in South Vietnam, 1973.

June 5—The Committee for July 26 today invited Dr. Melba Hernandez to the United States to give the keynote address at A PEOPLE’S SALUTE TO CUBA in New York City on July 26. If granted a visa, Dr. Hernandez will be the first representative of the Cuban people to speak to the U.S. public since Fidel Castro visited the U.S. in 1960, prior to the U.S. blockade.

The Committee’s invitation to Dr. Hernandez was signed by: Dennis Banks, Leonard Boudin, Katherine Camp, Dr. June Jackson Christmas, Nelson Canals, Rev. Ben Chavis, Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Richard Fagen, Stanley Faulkner, Henry Foner, James Haughton, Lennox Hinds, Florynce Kennedy, Arthur Kinoy, William Kunstler, Saul Landau, Betita Martinez, Florencio Merced, Dr. Arden Miller, Linus Pauling, Cleveland

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8th Brigade Returns From Cuba

On May 18th, 126 members of the 8th Contingent of the Venceremos Brigade returned to the U.S. after spending nine weeks in Cuba. Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian and white, we came from 14 cities in the U.S. As students workers and community organizers, brigadistas are involved in a broad range of political activity. Our respect and solidarity with the Cuban Revolution was the unifying force of the Brigade, along with our desire to make a concrete contribution to the construction of socialism in Cuba.

The Brigade stayed at the International Camp, Julio Antonio Mella. This year, we worked at two construction sites in Havana Province: “Los Naranjos” and “Ariguanabo” towns. Los Naranjos, housing workers from a dairy plan, was started by the 5th Contingent of the VB in 1972. It is nearing completion now; families have been living in some of the apartments for

two years, and children go to the elementary school built by the 7th Contingent. Other international brigades have also worked at Los Naranjos.

This year, the Brigade started the town’s commercial center, which will contain all the necessary social facilities: stores, a library, theatre and gymnasium. The Brigade also built sidewalks and finished some landscaping work.

Ariguanabo Town, the other work site, is being built by a “Microbrigade” of workers from a nearby textile factory. Construction started in 1971 and already units are finished and occupied by the families of workers who had lived in poor, substandard housing. The “Microbrigades” are Cuba’s answer to the severe housing shortage—the legacy of years of U.S. domination. The members of all Cuban Microbrigades are not professional construction workers. Instead, once the

decision is made to develop a new town in conjunction with a particular work center, all workers from that center choose a group of exemplary co-workers who form the construction brigade. While these people are released from work, the remaining workers make a commitment to keep up production so that absence of the construction workers doesn’t lower production. The 8th Contingent was the first international brigade that the Ariguanabo Microbrigade had worked with.

The entire contingent was divided into smaller work brigades consisting of North American brigadistas, Cuban students and workers, and skilled Cuban construction workers. Monday through Friday we were up at 6:00 AM, at work by 7:00 and home in the evening at 6:00 PM (with “merienda” snacks and a noontime break for lunch). Each work brigade chose a

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Melba Hernandez...

Robinson, Dr. Helen Rodriguez Trias, Pete Seeger, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Joe Walker, Doron Weinberg, Cora Weiss, Dr. Quentin Young and Howard Zinn.

The invitation noted Dr. Hernandez's distinguished contribution to her country: "...you have been a leading participant in the transformation of Cuban society. You have embodied the highest aspirations of the Cuban people from the time of your presence at the Moncada on July 26, 1953, throughout your legal career, and currently as President of the Cuban Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos...We are certain that your presence here with us will contribute greatly to our understanding of the new Cuban society, and to strengthening the bonds between our two peoples."

About Melba Hernandez

When Fidel Castro's supporters numbered in the tens on July 26, 1953, Dr. Melba Hernandez was one of them. She participated in the historic attack on the Batista dictatorship's Moncada Garrison, a struggle that ended six years later in victory. Dr. Hernandez, and one other young woman, Haydee Santamaria, joined the 165 Cuban patriots who made the abortive Moncada assault. Many were killed outright, or tortured to death after capture by Batista's soldiers. It was Dr. Hernandez who in the early days after her imprisonment, smuggled a letter from Fidel Castro to the Court—risking her own life to save Fidel's, guaranteeing that he would not be silenced. His "History Will Absolve Me" defense before the tribunal has since become the classic testimony of the ideals of the Moncada assailants—flinging in the face of the dictatorship its own crimes against the people of Cuba. After her release from prison, Dr. Hernandez unceasingly fought for the freedom of her compatriots.

Of Melba and Haydee's courage in



July 26 in Cuba, anniversary of the assault against the Moncada Fortress

those days, Fidel Castro said, "Never has the heroism and dignity of Cuban women been placed so high".

Now, 22 years later, Melba Hernandez is a heroic leader of the new Cuba — where, symbolic of the transformation which has taken place, the infamous Moncada Garrison has been converted into a grade school for Cuban children. Dr. Hernandez has spearheaded for over a decade the powerful Cuban movement of solidarity with the peoples of Indochina against U.S. aggression. An internationally recognized representative of her people, and a permanent member of the International Commission Investigating the Crimes of the U.S. in Indochina, she has traveled and met with people throughout the world. In 1973, she accompanied Fidel Castro in the first visit of a head of state to the liberated zones of North and South Vietnam, where she was invited to celebrate with the Vietnamese people the complete liberation of their homeland.

Now, the Committee for July 26, of which the Venceremos Brigade is an initiating member, has invited Dr. Hernandez to make another historic trip—to visit the United States, at the invitation of the progressive people of our country who are determined to break the barriers imposed by our government between ourselves and the Cuban people.

She has been invited to share in A PEOPLE'S SALUTE TO CUBA—a program of speakers, exhibits, and music which will show not only the 16 years of Cuba's remarkable achievements but also

the failure of our country to provide a dignified and secure life for its people. A PEOPLE'S SALUTE TO CUBA will also focus on Cuba's courageous stand with other peoples who have fought for their rights against U.S. brutality, and a special part of the program will be dedicated to solidarity with the independence of Puerto Rico.

A PEOPLE'S SALUTE TO CUBA, honoring the July 26 Moncada Assault, will be celebrated in 14 other cities as well, including: Washington, D.C., Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Kansas City, Champaign (Ill.), Durham and Charlotte (N.C.), Nashville and Atlanta. For more information, or if you would like to add your name as a sponsor of the events, write: Committee for July 26, P.O. Box 3169, N.Y., N.Y. 10001.

—CUBA REVIEW—

HOUSING IN CUBA: An in-depth analysis of the organization of building and construction in Cuba by a North American architect. (\$1.00)

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Previous issues include: PEOPLE'S POWER; SOCIALIST LEGALITY; and WOMEN IN CUBA; plus 7 other topical subjects.

Send your orders to: Cuba Resource Center, Box 206, Cathedral Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10025.

CUBA'S NEW CONSTITUTION

...OF, BY, AND FOR THE PEOPLE

On April 28th, the first draft of the new Constitution was submitted to the Cuban people for their discussion. Assemblies and preparatory seminars are being conducted by all the people's organizations — the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), the

Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), as well as all the local assemblies of People's Power.

Discussions of the constitutional draft will continue in the first Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba in December, and then a final draft of the Constitution will be presented to the people for their approval in a direct and secret vote. Once

approved, the Constitution will become the supreme law of the country.

A painstaking review of every facet of Cuban society, the draft telescopes 16 years of the Cuban Revolution into a single and unprecedented statement of the will and achievements of the Cuban people. We offer here some highlights of the draft Constitution for your consideration. . .

Preamble

"WE, THE CITIZENS OF CUBA, heirs and continuators of the creative work and the traditions of combativity, firmness, heroism and sacrifice fostered by our ancestors; by the slaves who rebelled against their masters; by those who awoke the national consciousness and the Cubans' ardent desire for country and liberty; by the patriots who in 1868 launched the wars of independence against Spanish colonialism and those who in the last drive of 1895 brought them to the victory of 1898, which victory was usurped by the military intervention and occupation of Yankee imperialism;

by the workers, peasants, students and intellectuals who struggled for over fifty years against imperialist domination, political corruption, the absence of people's rights and liberties, unemployment and the exploitation of capitalists and landowners; by those who promoted, joined and developed the first organizations of workers and peasants, spread socialist ideas and founded the first Marxist and Marxist-Leninist movements; by the members of the vanguard of the generation of the centenary of the birth of Marti who, imbued with his teachings, led us to the people's revolutionary victory of January;

BASING OURSELVES on proletarian internationalism, on the fraternal friendship, help and cooperation of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and on the solidarity of the workers and the peoples of Latin America and of the world;

GUIDED by the victorious doctrine of Marxism-Leninism;

AWARE that all the regimes of man's exploitation of man cause the humiliation of the exploited and the degradation of the human nature of the exploiters; that our Revolution uplifted the dignity of the country and of Cubans; and that only under socialism and communism, when man has been freed from all forms of exploitation — slavery, servitude and capitalism — can the full dignity of the human being be attained;

AND HAVING DECIDED to carry forward the triumphant Revolution of the Moncada and of the Granma, of the Sierra and of Giron, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, which sustained by the closest unity of all revolutionary forces and of the people won full national independence, established the revolutionary power, carried out democratic changes, started the construction of socialism and, under the direction of the Communist Party, continues said construction with the objective of building the communist society;

WE DECLARE our will that the law of laws of the Republic be guided by the following strong desire of Jose Marti, at last achieved: "I wish that the fundamental law of our republic be the tribute of Cubans to the full dignity of man";

AND ADOPT, by means of our free vote in a referendum, the following

Constitution

Basic Principles:

Power Belongs to the Working People

Article 4. In the Republic of Cuba all the power belongs to the working people who exercise it either directly or through the assemblies of People's Power and other organs of the state which derive

their authority from these assemblies.

The power of the working people is sustained by the firm alliance of the working class with the peasants and the remaining strata of urban and rural workers under the direction of the working class.

Article 5. The Communist Party of Cuba, the organized Marxist Leninist vanguard of the working class, is the highest leading force of the society and of the state, which organizes and guides the common effort toward the goals of the construction of socialism and the progress toward a communist future.

Article 7. The Cuban socialist state recognizes, protects and stimulates the social and mass organizations. . . which, (have) risen from the historic process of struggles of our people. . .

Article 8. The socialist state: a) carries out the will of the working people and. . . guarantees the liberty and the full dignity of man, the enjoyment of his rights, the exercise and fulfillment of his duties and the integral development of his personality. . . directs in a planned way the national economy; assures the educational, scientific, technical and cultural progress of the country;

b) as the power of the people and for the people, guarantees that no man or woman, apt to work, be without employment with which to contribute to the good of society and to the satisfaction of individual needs. . . that no child be left without schooling, food and clothing. . . that no one be left without access to studies, culture and sports;

c) works to achieve that no family be left without a comfortable place to live.

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Basic Principles: International Relations

Article 12. The Republic of Cuba espouses the principles of proletarian internationalism and of the combative solidarity of the peoples, and a) condemns imperialism, the promoter and supporter of all fascist, colonialist, neo-colonialist and racist manifestations, as the main force of aggression and of war, and the worst enemy of the peoples;

b) condemns imperialist intervention, whether direct or indirect, in the internal and external affairs of any state; and, therefore, armed aggression and economic blockade, as well as any other form of economic coercion. . .

c) considers war of aggression and of conquest to be international crimes; . .

d) recognizes the right of the peoples to repel imperialist and reactionary violence. . . (and) the right to determine freely their own destiny . . .



e) works for an honorable and lasting peace, based on respect for the independence and sovereignty of the peoples and on their right to self-determination;

f) establishes its international relations on the principles of equality of rights, sovereignty and national independence of the states and on mutual interest;

g) bases its relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and with other socialist countries on socialist internationalism, and on the common objectives of the construction of the new society, fraternal friendship, cooperation and on mutual assistance;

h) aspires to establish along with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean — freed from foreign domination and internal oppression — one large community of nations joined by the fraternal ties of historical tradition and the common struggle against colonialism and imperialism. . .

i) develops fraternal relations and relations of collaboration with the countries that uphold anti-imperialist and progressive positions;

j) maintains friendly relations with those countries which. . . respect its sovereignty, observe the rules of coexistence among states and the principle of mutual conveniences, and adopt an attitude of reciprocity with our country. . .



On the Family

Article 34. The state protects the family, motherhood and matrimony.

Article 35. Marriage is the voluntarily established union between a man and a woman. . . based on full equality of rights and duties. . . the support of the home and the integral education of their children through a joint effort compatible with the social activities of both. . .

Article 36. All children have the same rights, regardless of whether or not they were born out of wedlock. . .

Article 37. The parents have the duty to help provide nourishment for their children. . . to help . . . in the realization of their just aspirations; and to contribute actively to their. . . development as useful well-prepared citizens. . .

It is the children's duty . . . to respect and help their parents.

Education & Science

Article 38. The state orients, foment and promotes education, culture and science in all their manifestations. . . d) education is provided free of charge. The state maintains a broad scholarship system for students and provides the workers with multiple opportunities to study, with a view to the universalization of education. . .

g) creation and investigation in science are free. The state encourages and makes possible investigation and gives priority to that which is aimed at solving the problems related to the interest of the society. . .

i) the state promotes, foment and develops physical education and sports in all their forms as a means of education and of contribution to the integral development of the citizens. . .

Equality of Rights & Duties

Article 40. All citizens have equal rights and are subject to equal duties.

Article 41. Discrimination because of race, color, sex or national origin is forbidden and will be punished by law.

The institutions of the state educate everyone, from the earliest possible age, in the principle of equality among human beings. . .

Article 43. Women have the same rights as men in the economic, political and social fields and as far as the family goes.

In order to assure the exercise of those rights and especially the incorporation of women into socially organized work, the state sees to it that they are given jobs in keeping with their physical makeup; they are given paid maternity leave before and after giving birth; the state organizes institutions like children's day-care centers and boarding schools and it strives to create all the conditions which help to make real the principle of equality.

Article 44. Work in a socialist society is a right and duty and a source of pride for every citizen. . .

Article 46. By means of the Social Security System the state assures adequate protection to every worker who is unable to work because of age, illness or incapacity. . .

Article 47. The state protects by means of social aid aged persons who do not have financial resources or anyone to care for them. . .

Article 49. Everybody has the right to have his or her health protected. . . The state . . . (provides) free medical and hospital care. . . (provides) free dental care. . .

The Constitutional draft contains a total of 12 chapters and 141 articles, covering all aspects of Cuban society. Prior to this new draft, Cuban law was regulated by the amended 1940 Constitution, a progressive document which was the result of the people's struggles during the years of the Pseudo-Republic. It was in defense of the rights of the 1940 Constitution that Fidel Castro and Cuban patriots had carried out the assault on the Moncada Garrison, initiating the Cuban revolutionary war.

The full draft of the new Constitution may be obtained for 75 cents from the Center for Cuban Studies, 220 East 23rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10010.

8th Brigade...

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name for itself representing our people's struggles—one brigade was named after Rosa Parks, another after Lolita Lebron.

The Brigade was the first experience at construction work for most of us. It was harder than anything we'd ever done before, but as one brigadista put it: "You learn to stretch what you thought were your physical limits. You're encouraged to do more by the spirit of collectivity and also by seeing your sweat and muscle turn into the second story of an apartment building."

This year, there were experienced Black and white construction workers on the Brigade. Comparing work situations in the U.S. and Cuba, they talked about the differences: "Here in Cuba there's a lot less machinery to work with. But the people's spirit just pushes ahead. If we had the equipment that's available in the U.S., we could have dug this foundation in half the time. Think how much more could be produced if we had that machinery...after working here for just a short time, I really understand the criminality of the U.S. blockade of Cuba..."



Another thing that impressed many brigadistas at work was the attention given to health and safety. The Red Cross is always at the site, ready to deal with any problem. Even more important is the preventive care: work sites are clean and safe, and every worker gets a free yearly check-up. As brigadistas, we were also given free health care, including visits to the dentist.

On some week nights, we heard presentations from Cubans working in education, health care, the economy, culture and organizations such as the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). On other evenings, we saw internationally-acclaimed Cuban films in the camp's outdoor theatre.

On Saturdays, the camp prepared for visits from international delegations and leaders of national liberation movements. We heard representatives from Vietnam, Puerto Rico, Chile, and South Yemen. When the representatives from Vietnam came, they brought with them photos of the liberation of DaNang that were only 48 hours old. The Brigade responded with solidarity statements, our poems, songs. Saturday afternoons were set aside for production meetings. Each work brigade would assess the week's work and discuss our experiences with our Cuban co-workers. On Saturday nights, we partied. Some of the best known bands in Cuba came to the camp to play for us in the open-air plaza. Behind the bands was the Venceremos Brigade mural, a collective project that portrayed the theme of "International Women's Year".

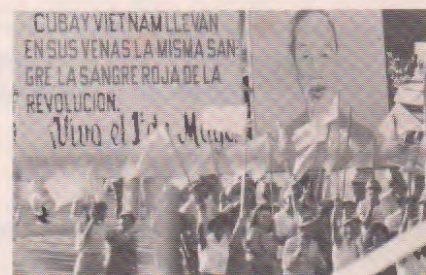
On Sundays, we visited museums, housing projects, resort areas, or spent free time sightseeing in Havana. We were invited into people's homes and treated as representatives of the U.S. progressive people. One brigadista noted, "I was completely drained after talking for a couple of hours with an off-duty bus driver. His questions about unemployment in the U.S. and what kind of movement we're building to respond to the crisis of racism in the schools really penetrated." During our stay in Cuba, we participated in several national holidays. April 14-16 was the 14th Anniversary of Playa Giron, the Bay of Pigs attack. Following the example of our Cuban co-workers, the Venceremos Brigade volunteered extra hours of work to honor those who fell in this first complete defeat of U.S. imperialism in Latin America. At the solemn activity we had in camp one of our Cuban hosts, Manuel, explained: "When we say that Playa Giron involved the entire population, that it represented the Cuban people's total support for the Revolution, this can be witnessed here in our camp. Among us we have over 25 people who responded to the call and fought at Playa Giron". He then read the names and work centers of these people—doctors, textile workers and kitchen workers at the camp.

Six weeks of work, struggling with wheel barrows and jack hammers, built strong bonds of respect between the Cubans and us. Overall production for the 8th Contingent was 108%. The last day of work, we had a huge celebration. One worker from each site was chosen by their fellow workers to be with us during the rest of our stay in Cuba.

For the next two weeks, the Brigade travelled across the entire island of Cuba—from the copper mines in western

Pinar del Rio province to the Sierra Maestra in eastern Oriente. We visited a rice plan, museums, a tobacco factory, schools, a dairy plan, and the elegant resorts that before the Revolution were open only to the rich. We met with the leaders of the Communist Party, the Young Communists, and the mass organizations in each region. There was free time to explore every city. The tour showed us the impact of the Revolution in every corner of the island.

We were visiting the Matahambre Copper Mines when we heard the news of the victory of the Vietnamese people. We spent the rest of the day singing, chanting and remembering the people in the U.S. and throughout the world that had fought against U.S. aggression and in support of the heroic Vietnamese people. On May 1, International Workers Day, the Brigade joined Cuba and all the world in celebrating this victory. We were seated with the exemplary Cuban workers at the Plaza of the Revolution when the parade began, led by Fidel and the Vietnamese delegation. All the floats and banners prepared by the different trade unions spoke to the solidarity Cuba shares with Vietnam. The flag of the National Liberation Front filled billboard sized posters. The brigade of Cuban construction workers, "Ho Chi Minh", returned from Vietnam where they had built dairies in time for the May Day celebration. These workers stand as a symbol of the total solidarity Cuba committed to the struggle of the Vietnamese people.



There are many more examples of Cuba's solidarity with the people of the world—including the Venceremos Brigade itself. The 8th Contingent of the Brigade has returned, ready to share with the U.S. people our photos, lessons, and experiences about the reality of life in Cuba—the only socialist society in the western hemisphere, only 90 miles from our shores.

In 14 regional areas throughout the country, brigadistas are working with July 26 Committees on this year's celebration, aptly called, "A People's Salute to Cuba".

VENCEREMOS!

Direct from Cuba ★

April 15 - 22

●Raul Castro speaks at the rally commemorating Militia Day, April 16. Militia Day honors those Cubans killed in the air raid preceding the U.S. attack at Playa Giron in 1961. As "a tribute to the martyrs, the date this year was chosen as the occasion to issue the Call to the First Party Congress.

●Laura Allende, Chilean Socialist Party Deputy and sister of President Salvador Allende, arrives in Cuba. In a special program April 17, she is presented the keys to a 20-unit apartment building in Alamar, built by a Revolutionary Armed Forces construction microbrigade. Chilean families exiled in Cuba will live in the apartments. Laura Allende was recently released from prison in Chile.

April 23 - 30

●Kenneth D. Kaunda, President of Zambia, receives a warm welcome during his April 21-24 official visit to Cuba. In addition to visiting the Alamar Housing Project and the Lenin Vocational School in Havana Province, Kaunda visited Santiago de Cuba with Prime Minister Fidel Castro.

May 1 - 6

●Havana—A massive International Workers Day parade (May 1) was dedicated to the victory of the people of Vietnam. More than 125,000 people marched, representing 23 national trade unions; stu-

dents and members of the militia and the armed forces. Prime Minister Fidel Castro led the parade, accompanied by Vietnamese heroines, Soviet heroes from the Second World War. In addressing the rally, Roberto Veiga, General Secretary of the Central Trade Union Organization of Cuba (CTC) announced that the unions have begun a national "emulation movement" to step up production in honor of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, to take place in December of this year.

May 6 - 12

●Fidel Castro addressed the May 8 ceremony commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Victory over Fascism. In assessing the victory in World War II, Fidel said, "The example of the Soviet Union and the saga of its Great Patriotic War demonstrate, first of all, the superiority of the socialist system, the strength of the socialist system and of Marxist-Leninist ideas."

●On May 8, U.S. Senator George McGovern returned to the U.S. following a 4-day visit to Cuba.

●The union of construction workers reported that more than 22,000 women are engaged in construction throughout Cuba.

May 12 - 18

●Two hundred and five Cubans, members of the Ho Chi Minh International Brigade constructing a 35-mile highway in North Vietnam, were presented with medals of Labor and Friendship by the Government of the Democratic Republic

of Vietnam.

●Cuba announced its active support to the creation of the Multinational Caribbean Shipping Enterprise, devoted chiefly to transporting cargo among its member countries. Manuel Gutierrez, representing Cuba in the planning sessions, declared, "(the Enterprise) will mean a hard blow to the monopoly traditionally exercised by the transnational companies."

●Melba Hernandez, President of the Cuban Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos attended the May 15 festivities in Saigon to celebrate the total liberation of Vietnam. During her official visit to Vietnam, she also visited Hanoi, where she was welcomed by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong, and where she met with Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap.

May 19-26

●Fidel Castro attended the May 20th reception to celebrate the Vietnamese victory, given in the Embassy of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, (PRG), and hosted by the Ambassadors to Cuba from the PRG and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

●The nationwide discussion of the first draft of the new Cuban Constitution continued, with the Central Union of Cuban Workers (CTC) reporting that to May 20, a total of 404,888 workers had participated in the discussions in their shops and work centers. The constitution is also being discussed by the other mass organizations.

Venceremos Brigade
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