

REPORT ON A VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA BY B.D. HAIGH
13 JUNE - 13 JULY 1990
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS AID
ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE AUSTRALIA/SOUTH AFRICA TRAINING TRUST

Purpose of Visit

To help identify suitable black South African candidates for work experience in Australia.

REPORT ON TRAINING AND AID

Purpose of Visit to South Africa

The purpose of my visit to South Africa was to assist in the selection of black South Africans for twelve months work experience in Australia and to report on the political and economic situation in South Africa for the Australian Council for Overseas Aid acting on behalf of the Australia/South Africa Training Trust.

The selection process was undertaken in conjunction with Ann Yates and Sara Hayward of the British South Africa Advanced Education Project and Karen Mundy of the Canadian South Africa Education Trust Fund.

Prospective candidates were interviewed in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban and Johannesburg. Because of other commitments I did not join Ann and Sara until the second stop of the visit, Port Elizabeth. I spent an extra two weeks in South Africa and made a separate visit to Cape Town and Pretoria. Karen Mundy had difficulties getting a visa and did not join the party until the last stop of the visit, Johannesburg.

Interview Process

Approximately 100 prospective candidates were interviewed of whom less than half were judged suitable for placement in Australia, Canada and the UK. Candidates were put forward through community-based organisations, the Black Management Forum, the Association of Black Accountants of Southern Africa and the ANC aligned Centre for the Development of Human Resources.

Interviews with each candidate lasted approximately forty-five minutes and covered areas of education, skills, employment, family composition, preparedness to pass on skills to the community, hobbies and other interests.

Candidates were required to fill out a standard form and notes were taken of each interview. Where necessary, money was provided for meals and transport. At the end of the interview process a meeting was held between members of the interview panel and a pool of suitable candidates was selected.

Result of Interview Process

Six candidates have been identified for immediate placement in Australia. All have finished technical training in electrical, mechanical and civil engineering. In order to gain their diplomas they require twelve months supervised practical training. They have experienced difficulty in securing attachment to South African companies and government authorities. They all complained that short-term vacation attachments saw them employed as cheap labour with little skill enhancement. They drew attention to negative attitudes on the part of supervisors and managers who were generally sceptical that blacks had the intellectual capacity to adequately perform in technical occupations. This problem was particularly marked in government authorities.

All the candidates are in their early twenties, all are from Soweto, and five went to school together and attended the Western Cape Technicon (Technical College) at the same time. They would gain mutual support from living together and finding attachments in the same Australian city. They are available to travel immediately, subject to health clearances and provision of passports. Their details are attached.

An examination of other applications might lead to the selection of suitable candidates for placement in Australia in other occupations.

The group of six is, however, unique and if they can be placed and successfully complete their attachments, provision of further candidates of this type might be considered as meeting a particular problem and area of need.

Problems

Many potential candidates indicated that they would prefer not to be absent from South Africa for as long as twelve months because of family commitments. They generally expressed a preference for attachments from two to six months. Fears were also expressed that if they left their job for any longer than two months the job could be lost. Some made the point that they could not be spared from their occupation for any longer than a month or two.

Other candidates had no formal training and were involved in community organisations or other 'informal community groups' and would therefore be difficult to place in employment in Australia. This particularly applied to the area of local government and community health and housing. Many of these potential candidates were working in civic associations which seek to do the work of discredited local councils. They generally have the support of local communities and seek to overcome a range of community concerns and problems in the area of housing, health, welfare and provision of utilities.

Ann Yates undertook to examine the possibility of establishing a special course in local government lasting around three months which might include attachment to local government bodies in Australia. The course would seek to provide exposure and a bare minimum of skills. A greater provision of skills in this area will need to be undertaken from courses provided inside South Africa.

Future Avenues of Training - Special Visitors Scheme

In addition to the lengthier periods of training which form the basis of the current scheme, consideration might be given to establishing a scheme of shorter periods of attachment to a number of organisations relevant to candidates' skills, occupations and interests.

In view of the short-term nature of such attachments, funding for accommodation and keep might have to be sought from the business community in Australia. Payment of a salary over the period of a short-term placement would probably prove impractical as the work benefit to an employer would be minimal.

However, the need for skill and experience enrichment amongst the black community is overwhelming and urgent. In view of this, thought might be given to establishing a Special Visits Scheme for black South Africans along the lines of the Special Visitors Program run by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Scheme might cater for future managers, administrators, community workers, union organisers, etc, who have a real need to see something of the world outside South Africa, to broaden their horizons and to gain exposure to other methods and ideas within areas of current employment and endeavour.

Initiatives and Future Directions

Summary

As originally intended, Australia through ASATT would assist in sponsoring qualified black South Africans for twelve months work experience to be gained from attachment to Australian companies or government agencies.

Experience of the last visit to South Africa demonstrated that black South Africans with the requisite qualifications were reluctant to take up the offer as they were:

- . afraid that their employer would not hold the job
- . unwilling to leave their families for such a long period
- . in occupations that could not spare them for such a long period.
- . being paid at white salary levels and could therefore undertake travel at their own expense at times and for periods that were more convenient.

Many expressed a preference for shorter periods of attachment and for exposure to a number of different work environments related to their interests and job experience.

It is therefore proposed that the scheme in its present form be retained in order to accommodate work experience for the type of candidate already identified, i.e. people who have completed theoretical training but require practical experience in order to complete a degree or diploma, but that it be broadened to include:

- . periods of attachment to be funded by industry associations, companies and government agencies;
- . that these attachments be to a number of organisations and for a total period of time of between four to eight weeks;
- . that the period of time might be extended by mutual agreement to allow for greater exposure and more detailed examination of relevant work environments but should not exceed six months.

The areas identified as most benefiting from shorter periods of attachment were:

- . community health
- . local government
- . education (school teachers)
- . welfare (social workers)
- . union organisers.

In all areas it was apparent that management skills were lacking and that as part of a short-term visit exposure to management practice would be very useful.

Some short-term candidates might benefit from a visit entirely constructed around management theory and practice.

The British are looking to organise a local government course of two or three months for people currently working within Civic Associations.

Civic Associations are community based. They are loosely structured and came into being to fulfill community needs following the rejection of the government sponsored and funded Community Councils. They seek to handle a range of issues covering housing, public amenities, education, health and welfare problems.

Training of Trainers

The visit also highlighted the need for the provision of skilled individuals from Australia to train trainers in South Africa and to perhaps bring to Australia certain key individuals for specific short-term periods of training that would return to South Africa and train other trainers.

This program would logically fit into the short-term visits scheme.

The provision of trainers from Australia would be cost effective and the expense might be met by Australian companies interested in the future of South Africa and by the Australian Government as part of an expanded aid program.

The intended provision of an Australian aid expert at the Australian Embassy in Pretoria will greatly assist in facilitating the proposals outlined above.

Contribution to the Economic Debate

Consideration might be given to providing funds in concert with other concerned governments, agencies and academic institutions for furthering the debate inside South Africa on the future shape of the South African economy.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the debate at present is unfocused and lacking in sophistication.

Thought might be given to helping to sponsor a series of conferences in major centres in South Africa with reference to social and welfare legislation in a number of western countries as well as economic theory and practice.

Funds might be provided for Australian academics, trade-unionists, businessmen and politicians to attend and/or organise these conferences or seminars.

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The ideal link points within South Africa would be academic institutions, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the South African Council of Churches, the ANC, Cosatu, the Black Management Forum, the Black Writers Association, the Association of Black Accountants of Southern Africa and the Black Lawyers Association. Involvement of relevant embassies would be necessary.

Appointment of such experts might be undertaken on either a long or short term basis and in conjunction with black organisations and community groups already undertaking training and skills enhancement.

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REPORT ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

There were several changes apparent since I was last in South Africa in 1979, the most notable being a reduction in the level of tension. Other changes were the increase in right wing violence, the 'civil war' in Natal and the number of black organisations with offices in the CBD of Johannesburg including the ANC.

What has not changed are the living conditions of blacks in the townships which for the majority appear to have deteriorated with squatters now living in Soweto and along the railway line between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

There are 1.7 million squatters estimated to be living around Durban, 70% of the potential work force is said to be unemployed in the Eastern Cape (i.e. around East London, King Williams Town and Port Elizabeth). Poverty in squatters' camps on the Cape flats outside Cape Town is as bad as anything I have seen in Karachi or Kabul. The population of South Africa is put at around 34 million. The annual increase is said to be around 3% and it is estimated that South Africa will have a population in the vicinity of 50 million by the turn of the century.

Middle-class Afrikaners seem to be resigned to change and are putting a reasonably positive face on it. They appear realistic about possible future problems but the majority are there for the duration. On the other hand, many English speaking whites who espoused liberal values (behind the coat tail of the National Party) ten years ago are increasingly nervous and appear to hold far more conservative views, some quite right wing and distasteful.

This does not apply to all sections of the English speaking community. Many academics, journalists, lawyers and intellectuals continue to give form to liberal ideals but their influence is as difficult to assess and define as it was ten years ago. They have by and large been excluded from the political process now unfolding. Some may find a home within the ANC.

The ANC is no doubt the most popular party amongst the majority of blacks at the moment. This is largely based on the perception that Nelson Mandela can deliver. However, were he to disappear off the scene, the ensuing power battle would erode much of this support and also give the National Party an excuse to slow down the process of change.

The ANC appears to be slowly moving toward becoming the 'establishment' party of the black middle class and upwardly mobile as well as attracting a section of the white 'liberal' community who previously might have supported the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party is becoming increasingly marginalised with regard to the processes now unfolding in South Africa. The Democratic Party co-leader, Wynard Malan, resigned in July over his membership of the secret Afrikaner society, the Broederbond. The resignation and the issue which caused it has thrown the party into further disarray.

De Klerk seems genuine in his desire to remove the major pillars of apartheid and should be given credit for taking the country so far down the path of reform.

However, several recent developments are cause for concern. One is a disclosure that the powerful National Security Management System (NSMS), which De Klerk claimed to have abolished in November 1989, has been reconstituted under another name, and the other was the recent arrest of senior members of the ANC said to be also members of the ANC military wing Umkhouto we Sizwe.

The NSMS was set up by former President Botha. It was dominated by security officers and reported directly to the State Security Council. In abolishing the NSMS, De Klerk said that the emphasis would be changed from security management to providing welfare services. The old NSMS worked on the basis that if physical conditions in the black townships were improved, agitation by black activists would disappear, and it, too, was engaged in welfare projects. Working through these projects, the security police sought to subvert black organisations and structures.

The new organisation will be known as the National Co-ordinating Mechanism (NCM). In structure it is virtually identical to the old system with the committees under it throughout South Africa continuing to operate as before, but under new names.

Community liaison forums have also been established to draw black communities into the structure. However, overall the SA Defence Force, the security police and the regional police commands are still in powerful positions.

The recent arrest of senior members of the ANC, said to be members of Umkhouto we Sizwe, might reflect genuine concern at the stockpiling of arms and the reorganisation of Umkhouto outside South Africa. However, the crackdown might have as much to do with De Klerk insisting to be seen to be even-handed in relation to black 'terror' groups as he is with white activists and to be setting the scene for a full scale crackdown against the right wing.

The build-up of arms within all political groups in South Africa continues to grow and could constitute a significant obstacle to peaceful political change in South Africa.

The right wing constitutes a real problem and will no doubt be responsible for many unnecessary deaths. The SAG has so far shown a reluctance to deal with it, but further bloody acts will force the government's hand. It has support in some high places and there is a suspicion that many of its members belong to the South African Police or were former members. Evidence has come to light that the Johannesburg City Council is running its own security wing and utilising the services of hit men, thought to be members of the SAP, were responsible for the death of anti-apartheid activist David Webster last year.

A meeting was organised with Joe Slovo, Secretary of the South African Communist Party, who proposes to return to South Africa in the near future and reorganise the party. Slovo had little to say of his future plans, however, the little that was said left the impression that the SACP was a spent force, out of touch and bereft of a political agenda. Its alliance with the ANC appears likely to become more distant as the ANC moves into the centre stream of South African politics. It should more logically form an alliance with organised labour and the unemployed and dispossessed.

The ANC claims to represent the black working class but so far has not fully exploited genuine grievances at the grass-roots level. Political observers look for pressure to be applied by it on the SAG to redistribute resources in areas of health, welfare and housing in conjunction with the negotiating process. The ANC appears to be developing an increasingly close relationship with the National Party. A genuine workers' party espousing socialist ideals is yet to emerge in South Africa.

Both the PAC and AZAPO claim to hold socialist beliefs. However, neither has developed a coherent philosophy. Of the two, AZAPO would appear to be the more sophisticated in terms of its political, economic and social agenda, but only marginally so.

Recently black school children and teachers felt constrained to stay away from school because of a lack of text books. The SAG eventually responded with R8m which was regarded by children and teachers as a drop in the bucket, and this is at a time when De Klerk was seen to be striding world platforms on the basis of bringing about real change in South Africa. However, whilst the SAG has so far failed to put its money where its mouth is, black political organisations, particularly those involved in the negotiating process, have also failed to make the redistribution of resources a key issue.

One might have expected that these issues would be addressed in conjunction with the negotiation process now underway. There is every prospect that the pillars of apartheid will be removed, elections held and a black government come to power without the lot of 60% of the country's population being changed. Pressure needs to be applied on the SAG to make it demonstrate that it is genuine about seeking fundamental change by immediately seeking to redress imbalances in the black community in areas of health, education, housing, welfare and local government.

Black expectations are high. If a black government does not deliver there is a real prospect of trouble with a new government inheriting all the instruments of repression and using them to maintain itself in power and eliminate opposition. Such a scenario would see a flight of white capital and skills.

As blacks wait for the process of negotiation to deliver there is a lot of apathy at the grass-roots level due mainly to generations of repression. There is also a lack of form and strength in black political organisations after the prolonged period of emergency rule. The pressure is now on them to organise and establish new structures, and as a result, there is reason to be optimistic, on the other hand, the potential for bloodshed between black organisations in the townships is high as groups and factions jostle for power and influence.

Both the PAC and AZAPO claim significant and growing support. The SAG continues to support Buthelezi, and thereby Inkatha, a major cause of the problems in Natal. A cessation of funding to Buthelezi might go a long way to solving the problem, however, the bloodshed has been going on for so long that the root causes of the fighting in many instances has more to do with revenge than political rivalry.

The agreement reached between Mandela and De Klerk on 7 August augurs well for future negotiations on formal negotiations to devise a new Constitution and the dismantling of apartheid.

Agreement was reached on the suspension of all armed action by the ANC in return for the release by the South African Government of remaining political prisoners and the return to South Africa of an estimated 22,000 exiles, mainly members of the ANC and their families.

In terms of future negotiations, Mandela still has the considerable lever of sanctions and is likely to be advised by the ANC not to accede to suspension until substantial agreement has been reached on the ending of apartheid and implementation of a new Constitution.

For his part, De Klerk is increasingly worried about a decline in the strength of his support which must be applying added pressure on him to reach early agreement with the ANC and other groups party to future negotiations. The South African Ambassador believes that if white elections were held now the National Party would lose power to the Conservative Party. De Klerk and the National Party are aware of this and may buy time by entering into some sort of joint governing arrangement with the ANC (and other black groups if they are prepared to be party to such an arrangement), whilst details of the dismantling of apartheid and the new Constitution are worked out.

Were this to occur, the ending of sanctions might occur sooner than now appears likely. However, there are many difficulties yet to be overcome. Not least of these will be the hostility of the right wing and the concerns of other black groups at the special status being accorded to the ANC by the National Party.

Although South African exporters appear in many instances to have found a way around sanctions, the South African economy has gone into recession for many of the same reasons that the Australian economy is now also in decline. However, despite this, black businessmen appear to be steadily advancing and prospering. Johannesburg is now a black shopping area, the whites having shifted their purchasing power to the suburbs.

Inflation is running at around 15% p.a. As a consequence and also because of the continuing disparities between black and white salary levels, South Africa is experiencing an unprecedented number of strikes by black workers. Strikes appear unplanned and unco-ordinated with the place of work being targeted rather than the whole of a particular industry. As a consequence, gains have so far been limited and where an employer has sufficient resources, workers have been forced to return to work without anything having been achieved.

It is estimated that over 1 million man-days have been lost as a result of black industrial action so far this year, which is almost three times the level in the corresponding period last year (463,800 man-days) and five times the second half of 1988 (229,600 man-days).

A recent strike at an hotel in Pretoria saw the management employ white students from the local Afrikans University on wages higher than the black labour they replaced. Black South African unions need to be better managed and to assert control over factory floor representatives and shop stewards. If the unions hope to achieve lasting gains they will need to target key industries and to plan and carry out campaigns at the national level. As yet there is little discussion or debate on the need for a basic wage, unemployment benefits, old age pension or national health scheme.

The Confederation of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), which has close links to the ANC, has attempted a national campaign for the introduction of a living wage, but it has broken down in the confusion of localised strike action.

Possible Future Political Initiatives

- . Pressure should be put on the SAG to provide training. There is no sense of urgency on the part of whites to adapt to changing circumstances and prevent further unrest and bloodshed by providing education and training and embarking on a process of job creation.
- . Western countries and agencies appear increasingly willing to help pick up the burden, but so far this has not met with an equal response from the SAG and, in fact, it is argued in some quarters that outside contributions assist the SAG by allowing it to deploy funds elsewhere other than to the black community.
- . Pressure should be put on the SAG to begin a redistribution of resources toward blacks at the same time as talks about negotiations are taking place, i.e. put their money where their mouth is.
- . Resources should be provided by western countries in terms of funds and skills to foster debate within South Africa on the future structure of the economy and more equitable social structures. Removal of the pillars of apartheid will not necessarily achieve this. Such a debate needs to be fostered inside the country where the local media would have the opportunity to fully report it.
- . The academic boycott should be informally relaxed.
- . A positive Australian initiative might be to press for the establishment of a Commonwealth Secretariat Aid Office in Johannesburg to properly co-ordinate the Secretariat's aid effort and to draw on skills and experience from Commonwealth countries at present not represented in South Africa and which might not be for some time to come.

- . An initial step towards establishing such a presence might be to make available facilities within a Commonwealth Mission currently represented in South Africa.

General Comment.

- . Australian aid should continue to be directed at community organisations regardless of political affiliations. Australia should keep control over its aid and thereby gain credit and build networks including trading links for the future.
- . Many community groups were critical of the decision to give aid directly to the ANC.
- . Provision of Australian aid official to the Embassy in Pretoria would greatly assist and enable direct disbursement of funds to community groups and enhance the work of ACFOA . The Australian Embassy's current aid program appears particularly well-founded and run, and with limited funding, achieving a very good result.

BRUCE HAIGH
July 1990

VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA - B D HAIGH

People on whom calls were made:

Mrs Ntsiki Biko	Nursing Sister, Grey's Hospital, King William Town
Mr Nkosinatti Biko	St Andrew's College, Grahamstown
Mr Terry Briceland	Managing Director, "The Daily Dispatch", East London
Dr Max Coleman	Human Rights Commission, Johannesburg
Father Thomas Duane	Mission of the Sacred Heart, Pretoria
Mr Mkhuseleli Jack	AMC, Port Elizabeth
Mr Peter Jones	Treasurer, AZAPO, Cape Town
Mr Raymond Louw	Former Editor, "The Rand Mail"
Mr Tom Manthata	AMC and South African Council of Churches, Johannesburg
Mr Chris Mokoditea	Educational Opportunities Council, Johannesburg
Dr Nthato Motlana	ANC, Medical Practitioner, Soweto
Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa	(ANC), Johannesburg
Mr Dikgang Moseneke	PAC, Lawyer, Pretoria
Mr Leon Marshall	Editor, "The Weekend Argus"
Canon Malusi Mpulwana	Uitenhage, Port Elizabeth
Mr Colin McDonald	Australian Ambassador, Pretoria
Ms Makgala Ngatane	Centre for the Development of Human Resources, Johannesburg
Mr George Negote	Director, Centre for the Development of Human Resources, Johannesburg
Ms Jane Madden	Second Secretary, Australian Embassy, Pretoria
Mr Edwin Ncula	Manager, Community Relations, Volkswagen (SA), Uitenhage.

Dr Mamphela Ramphele	University of Cape Town
Mr Kenneth Hlaku Rachidi	(BCM) Project Co-ordinator, Human Resources Development, The Southern Life Association, Johannesburg
Mr Sedupe Ramokgopa	(BCM) Executive Director, Funda Centre, Soweto
Mr Joe Slovo	Secretary, South African Communist Party
Mr Walter Sisulu	ANC, Head Internal Executive
Mr John Kane-Burman	Director, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg
Mr Vusi Kanyile	Director, ANC Finance Department, Johannesburg
Dr Beyers Naude	Ecumenical Advice Bureau, Johannesburg
Mr Neil Coleman	Congress of South African Trade Unions, Cosatu House, Johannesburg
Ms Nominise Gogo	Director, Self-help and Resource Exchange, Uitenhage
Mr Costas Criticos	Director, Media Resource Centre, University of Natal, Durban
Professor Peter De V Booyesen	Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Natal, Durban
Dr Jalram Reddy	Rector and Vice-Chancellor, University of Durban-Westville, Durban
Dr Barry Kistnasamy	Executive, National Medical and Dental Association, Durban
Mr Mashudu Ramano	Director, Association of Black Accountants of Southern Africa
Mr David Adler	Director, Community-Based Development Program, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
Mr Peter Sullivan	Deputy Editor, "The Pretoria News"
Mr Don Mkhwanazi	National President, Black Management Forum, Durban

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Mr K S Kongwa	Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria
Mr Achmat Dangor	Director, Kagiso Trust, Johannesburg
Dr Thun Eloff	Consultative Business Movement, Johannesburg
Ms Arlene Getz	Freelance Journalist, Cape Town

The Australian 26.11.90

Apartheid: don't be too hasty

SIR—The Leader of the Opposition, Dr Hewson, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Hill, and the Shadow Minister for Trade and Trade Negotiations, Alexander Downer, have all made recent statements urging an easing of economic sanctions against South Africa. It has also been reported in the press that Alexander Downer will lead a trade delegation to South Africa next year.

The Government has rightly condemned these statements and the planned visit as premature and urged the continued application of sanctions until all vestiges of apartheid have been removed, including existing apartheid legislation, and significant amendments to the Constitution implemented, including the provision of a common voters' role allowing for one man one vote.

The fact that less principled traders and trading nations are beating a path to

the door of a marginally reformed National Party should not encourage Australian interests to do likewise.

No doubt these overtures will be noted by the black majority who still await the lifting of oppression and the redistribution of resources by the South African Government, which will enable blacks to put their lives on a more equal footing with that of whites.

Mr De Klerk is winning his credit points easily. The major pillars of apartheid remain in place and the resources made available to blacks lag very far behind those available to whites in areas such as housing, hospitals, clinics, schools and social security.

During a recent visit to South Africa I was appalled to see that living conditions for blacks have actually declined over the past 10 years.

There are 1.7 million squatters living around

Durban alone. Squatters now line the railway track between Johannesburg and Pretoria. Over the same period, whites have maintained if not increased their standard of living.

If the much heralded reforms of the South African Government are to carry any weight with the majority of the black population and with the international community, then that Government will need to put its money where its mouth is and press ahead quickly with the remaining and major parts of the reform program, which are the removal of the major pillars of apartheid and the implementation of a new Constitution.

Senator Hill on the ABC AM program on November 14 said that he particularly liked the idea of getting involved in "areas that will result in greater person to person contact between South Africa and Australia, particularly in the trading

areas". He went on to say that Australia should through government facilitate greater trading opportunities.

Through the activities of the Australia/South Africa Training Trust, which aims to bring black South Africans to Australia for work experience, the Australian Government is already facilitating such contact which, besides important education benefits, will have important spin-off advantages for future relations with South Africa, including in the area of trade.

The Opposition might do worse than to throw its weight behind this important and worthwhile initiative by encouraging the private sector to make available time and places for black participants of the scheme.

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