



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society
Melbourne NEWSLETTER
August 2018

Next Meeting
Monday
6th August
7.30pm
Unitarian Church
110 Grey St,
East Melbourne

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
PO Box 1051 Collingwood Vic. 3066	PO Box k364 Haymarket NSW 1240	PO Box 1455 South Perth WA 6951	PO Box 5683 West End Qld 4101	PO Box 6139 Kingston ACT 2604	GPO Box 323 Hobart Tas. 7001	Box 381 N. Adelaide SA 5006	PO Box 1082 Gosford NSW 2250	PO Box 854 Albury NSW 2640	220a Adelaide Rd Newtown Wellington New Zealand

Dear Comrades

June 24, 2018

I hope you're all OK in these extraordinarily difficult times. I've lived through the Great Depression, WW2, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Cold War and its aftermath, the Cuban missile crisis and god knows how many military incursions, takeovers and coups but I cannot remember a more fraught time than this. It's hardly news that Trump is a cold-hearted, capricious weirdo who shoots from the hip, but since his meeting with Putin in Helsinki, anti-Trump/anti-Russian hysteria has reached dangerous new levels with 'proof' of Russian interference in America's 'democratic institutions' and talk of treason. Not only bullshit but total hypocrisy. Americans might suffer from amnesia but the Russians do not. They remember all the foreign invasions and attacks on its sovereignty. Even before the Bolsheviks won their revolution during the bitter civil war, the Allies sent troops into Russia with the intent of installing a more 'acceptable' government. By 1919, the US was giving direct military support to Admiral Kolchak's White regime, but as prospects for victory faded, US troops withdrew in 1920, not by orders from the top, but because the ordinary soldiers were fed up and wanted to go home.

In 1941, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union before the US entered the war, Roosevelt and Churchill forged an alliance with Stalin, although their real intent was spelled out by Harry Truman, then a US Senator, 'if the US saw the Nazis were winning it should give them a helping hand', so once Germany was defeated, thanks to the Soviet Union, communism had to be dealt with. The US exempted key Nazis from prosecution for war crimes and used them to help overthrow the Soviets. One of its earliest actions involved Ukrainians (a close ally of the Nazis) parachuting them back into the Soviet Union to create mayhem. They failed, but it showed how the current furore over Ukraine is simply a replay of an old story. Post WW2, Germany was 'managed' by two new international agencies, the IMF and the World Bank, as part of an expanding US-style capitalist empire, while the Soviets were becoming increasingly concerned at the mounting crisis over Berlin, NATO, and the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a direct warning from Washington. In response, Moscow ramped up its own nuclear programme and the US retaliated by encircling them with military bases armed to the teeth with nuclear aircraft and missiles. Cold War One. Russians also remember the promise made by Bush Senior to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand during negotiations for the unification of Germany, but it did, right up to its borders, a major reason why the Russians moved back into the Crimea. And they remember that it was Washington who helped install the drunken fool Boris Yeltsin who encouraged an avalanche of dodgy Western investments and hedge funds to walk in and create a corrupt oligarchy that bled the country dry while Soviet citizens were reduced to poverty. But how many Americans know about Washington's malign influence on foreign elections, at last count more than 81. If Washington doesn't like the result, it 'moves in' and installs some murderous psychopath sympathetic to the Military/Industrial Complex. With a massive \$US1 trillion defence budget at its fingertips, it needs an enemy to justify such a grotesque sum, with Russia the constant, at the epicentre, and with other hated

figures coming and going according to 'need'. Iran is a useful second fiddle. You would reckon that only the unhinged would contemplate such a potential catastrophe. But not here in Australia in the Land of the Grovel, where we agree with all of Washington's demands, happy for Pine Gap to play a crucial role in its war games, the most important base outside the United States. In 1975, Pine Gap played a major part in the constitutional coup that ousted the Whitlam Government.

Julian Assange remains on a knife edge with Ecuadoran President Moreno visiting London with the assumption he is about to cut a deal with British authorities to withdraw his asylum protection. Sweden dropped its sexual assault investigation last year and the only criminal charge is a 2012 arrest warrant for 'failure to surrender' to UK's bail conditions, an offence carrying a prison sentence of up to two years, but UK authorities refuse to give a guarantee that Assange will not be extradited to the US where he will be thrown to the wolves and eaten up. But the Turnbull government couldn't care less. Or about Timor Leste, one of the world's poorest nations. When an ASIS agent blew the whistle on our government's illegal bugging of East Timor's cabinet room to advantage Australia in negotiations over boundaries and oil, ASIS Witness K and his lawyer Bernard Collaery were charged with conspiracy. The case will be held in secret and not allowed to be reported because Australians might be reminded about our shameful behaviour towards the tiny struggling nation that sits right on our doorstep.

There again, whether the case would be reported fairly or reported at all, is far from certain in our shrinking narrowly-based media landscape, which is about to get even more shrunken with Nine Entertainment's takeover of Fairfax Media. Nine gets 51% of the deal and all the power and Fairfax gets sweet FA. A sell-out by the Fairfax board and a national disgrace. PM Turnbull allowed it to happen, while former PM Paul Keating slammed the sleazy carve-up, declaring Nine had the 'ethics of an alley cat with no moral compass'. Balanced reporting of current affairs and the news? In your dreams.

The 'White Helmets' are back in the news, darlings of the West extolled as 'heroes' and 'saviours', when they're anything but. The name was 'created' by a shadowy New York-based PR mob 'The Syria Campaign' that was pinched from an Argentinian rescue outfit, the Cascos Blancos. The 'White Helmets' are not independent, apolitical or unarmed, but are funded by Western governments and Israel and only work in areas controlled by the armed opposition, mostly Nusra/Al Qaida, sometimes carrying weapons but always celebrating terrorist victories and assisting in executions and always supporting the overthrow of Assad.

Amongst all the rottenness, some sweet news. A miracle when British divers found all twelve plucky Wild Boar soccer club members and their wonderful coach crouched on a ledge deep inside the flooded cave in Thailand's north, but the effort to get them out was a truly global operation of courage and co-operation, with Thai's Navy Seals playing a major role, along with our two locals, Dr Richard Harris who sedated the boys, and vet Craig Challen. All of them true heroes who achieved the impossible. Viva!

Joan Coxsedge, Commentator-in-Chief, Melbourne ACFS (03) 9857 9249

[Sixty-five years since the assault on the future](#)

Yesterday Cubans of several generations began celebrations of the 65th anniversary of the assaults on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrisons

[Abel Santamaria, the soul of the movement](#)

Preparing for the Moncada assault, Fidel assigned Abel the mission of taking the Saturnino Lora Hospital, with the intention of protecting his second in command, who nonetheless was captured, tortured, and murdered by the dictatorship's henchmen, at 25 years of age



[Cultural gala and provincial event in Granma to celebrate July 26th](#)

Today Tuesday the 24th, to be held in Santiago de Cuba's Heredia Theater is a cultural gala to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the assaults on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrisons



[A Constitution to serve Cuba](#)

The first period of ordinary sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power's 9th Legislature concluded yesterday, July 22, after addressing a full agenda of important issues, outstanding among which was a proposed new Constitution

[A step further in relations between the Latin American and European left](#)

WE do not dare to speak for the Party of the European Left (EL), nor is it our duty to, but some elements of the Latin American experience could be very valid for Europe

[Raúl and Díaz-Canel congratulate the Nicaraguan people](#)



Army General Raúl Castro, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, and Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of the Councils of State and Ministers, send messages of congratulations to Daniel Ortega and Rosario Murillo, Nicaraguan President and Vice President, respectively, on the 39th anniversary of the Sandinista Revolution

[Raúl bids Nicolás Maduro farewell in Havana](#)

On Wednesday evening, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, bid the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, farewell at Havana's José Martí International Airport



[Cuban constitutions, yesterday and today](#)

An eminent university professor reviews Cuba's constitutional history and fundamental principles guiding the current process of reform

[As long as there is injustice, there will be revolutions](#)

During the closing session of the Sao Paulo Forum yesterday, an international campaign to demand "Freedom for Lula now" was launched, with a worldwide twitter effort planned for this coming August

[Like silver in the bedrock of the Andes](#)

A special plenary session entitled "For the Unity and Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean," central theme of the 24th Meeting of the São Paulo Forum, focused the debates of the second day of this annual space for political coordination



[Sao Paulo Forum, a vital battle for unity](#)

Granma International talks with José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera, Party Secretariat member, about the history and importance of the gathering



[An ironic historical coincidence, 120 years ago](#)

On the eve of another Independence Day celebration in the United States, July 3 1898, underway in Santiago was the final naval battle leading to the end of Spanish colonialism in Cuba



A Constitution to serve Cuba

The first period of ordinary sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power's 9th Legislature concluded yesterday, July 22, after addressing a full agenda of important issues, outstanding among which was a proposed new Constitution

Author: [National news staff](#) | informacion@granma.cu
july 23, 2018 09:07:50

The first period of ordinary sessions of the National Assembly of People's Power's 9th Legislature concluded yesterday, July 22, after addressing a full agenda of important issues, outstanding among which was the approval of a proposal for new Constitution of the Republic.

Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, and Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of the Councils of State and Ministers, were among the 600 legislators who approved plans to submit the draft, as modified during this session, to popular consultation, August 13 through November 15.

Esteban Lazo Hernández, National Assembly president, commented on the high level of discussion and commended the work done to prepare the proposal, which will serve to help the people during the consultation over the next three months.

Also approved during the ordinary sessions were a new Council of Ministers; the 2017 state budget settlement; and reports from standing committees working on Economic Affairs, and on Constitutional and Legal Affairs.

Accessed at: <http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2018-07-23/a-constitution-to-serve-cuba>

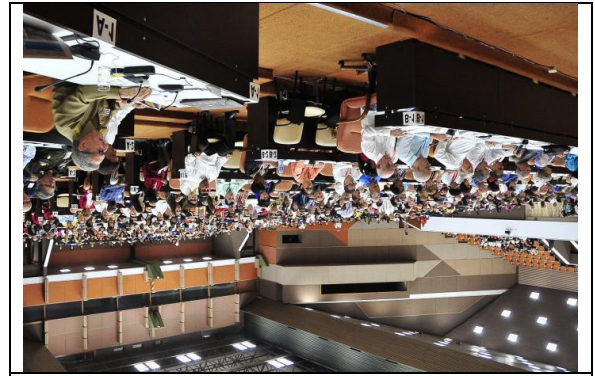


Photo: Estudio Revolución

Raúl Castro: No matter how great the challenges, our people will defend their socialist Revolution

Closing remarks by Raúl Castro, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, during the political-cultural act to mark the 65th anniversary of the Assaults on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrions, held this morning in the heroic city of Santiago de Cuba

Author: [Digital news staff](#) | informacion@granma.cu
july 26, 2018 10:07:28

None of us who had the privilege of participating in the July 26 actions, under the command of Fidel, could have dreamed then of being alive today, in a free, independent and sovereign country, with a socialist Revolution in power and a united people, ready to defend the work undertaken, the fruit of the sacrifice and spilled blood of various generations of Cubans.

Thus Army General Raúl Castro, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, began his central remarks to close the political-cultural act to mark the 65th anniversary of the Assaults on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrions, held this morning in the heroic city of Santiago de Cuba.

We celebrate this 65th anniversary in Santiago de Cuba not only due to its history, but also in recognition of the work undertaken here to benefit the people, under the leadership of Lázaro Expósito Cantro, Party First Secretary in the Province, alongside Beatriz Jhonson Urrutia, a vice president of the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba and president of the government in the territory, Raúl noted.

In this regard, he mentioned the comprehensive efforts on various fronts of the economy, which have resulted in an increase in quality and affordable goods and services for the population.



Raúl in Santiago de Cuba, July 26, 2018. Photo: ACN

The housing program is also advancing, with initiatives including the use of locally produced construction materials, while prioritized investments of national significance are advancing at a good pace, such as the Multi-Purpose Port Terminal and the San Luis Warehouse Complex.

Raúl reported that work is ongoing to increase exports of fruit, rum, lobster and agricultural produce, commercial activities are being reordered through local development projects that award greater autonomy to municipalities, making the best use of their own resources, which translates into greater contributions to the Budget and ensures the possibility of continuing to invest.

According to the Army General, the enthusiasm of Santiago residents is palpable, but there remains much to be done in the productive and services spheres to continue improving the quality of life of the people, with the aim of ensuring an increasingly beautiful, disciplines, clean and ordered city of Santiago, worthy of guarding the remains of our greatest children, among whom are the National Hero, the Father and Mother of the Homeland, and the Historic Leader of the Cuban Revolution.

He also recalled that the following months will see the commemoration of important events, such as the beginning of our independence struggles, and highlighted the recent approval by the

National Assembly of the draft Constitution of the Republic, which will now be submitted to a broad popular consultation process, and the results of this democratic exercise will be submitted to the Cuban Parliament to be analyzed once again, in order to draft the final text that will be submitted to a referendum, through a direct and secret vote.

The Constitution, Raúl stressed, is the fundamental law on which the state is based, and thus is the most important legal and political document of any country, defining the foundations of the nation, the structure of its branches of power and their scope, as well as guaranteeing the rights and responsibilities of its citizens.

The current Constitution, he noted, approved in a different scenario to this, needs to be reformed with the aim of including the transformations that have been carried out through the implementation of the agreements of the Sixth and Seventh Party Congresses.

Thus, a transcendental democratic process will begin, the success of which will depend, in the first place, on the active and commitment participation of all Cubans, under the leadership of the Party and the UJC and mass organizations, in which each must be aware of the need and scope of the changes that we must introduce, to ensure the irreversibility of Cuban socialism and the Revolution.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SAVINGS

Raúl noted that a tense situation continues with regard to the country's external finances, as a consequence of reduced income from exports of sugar, and tourism, due to heavy rains and the tightening of the U.S. blockade, which has impacted trade and international financial transactions.

However, he noted that the Cuban economy has seen modest growth, which is encouraging, but stressed that exports must increase and all unnecessary costs must be eliminated.

Raúl recalled that the greatest source of resources are savings, which more than a slogan must become a duty of all at all levels.

ADVANCING REGIONAL UNITY

Referring to the international context, the Army General recalled that at the beginning of this century, various progressive and leftist forces came to power in the region and promoted Latin American and Caribbean unity and integration.

Thus, he noted, the imperialist project of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) was defeated, and instead the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA) created. In 15 years, 60 million people were lifted out of poverty and three million were taught to read and write, as illiteracy was eliminated in Venezuela, Bolivia and Nicaragua. More than 20 thousand Latin American and Caribbean sectors also graduated from the Latin American School of Medicine, and 2,900,000 foreign patients saw their sight restored through Operation Miracle, as well as over a million Cubans.

Likewise, Raúl recalled the generous cooperation of Venezuela resulting in the Petrocaribe project, and emphasized the favorable conditions that emerged to create the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the UNASUR, which bring together countries with different politics, but with the same principle of unity within their diversity. He also pointed to the reactivation of MERCOSUR and the important actions of CARICOM.

He recalled that CELAC Heads of State and Government signed in Havana, 2014, the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, with the commitment to respect the right of each state to choose its own political system and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of any country.

Of course, he noted, this step was not to the liking of Washington, which has implemented the strategy of non-conventional warfare to hinder the advance of progressive governments of the region, and he highlighted the coups carried out in Honduras, Paraguay and Brazil.

Raúl also emphasized that the right has recovered power in some countries, some through fraudulent electoral processes, and others through manipulation. As was to be expected, they have not hesitated to roll-back the social policies that were of wide benefit to the population.

The U.S. government has declared the validity of the Monroe Doctrine, summarized as “America for the Americans” (read “the U.S.”), which means that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are subject to intervention, he stressed.

He underlined that one of the aims is to reverse the advances in integration and the exercise of sovereignty over natural resources, to impose its own agenda through a neoliberal offensive, aimed at destroying a decade of development.

He also said that the U.S., with the complicity of some governments, has attempted to reinvigorate the OAS as part of its attack against Venezuela, and undermine regional unity.

The recently concluded São Paulo Forum in Havana was essential as part of the political coordination of leftist forces of the region. The final declaration of the event is a program for the struggle of leftist parties and social and popular movements.

The Army General expressed the Cuban people, Party and government's solidarity with the peoples and revolutionary governments of Venezuela and Nicaragua, and reiterated the call for freedom for Lula da Silva in Brazil. He also congratulated the Mexican people and their newly elected President López Obrador.

CUBA WILL NEVER RENOUNCE HER PRINCIPLES

Diplomatic relations with the United States are officially maintained, with cooperation continuing on a limited number of areas and bilateral agreements.

Since the reestablishment of diplomat relations was announced, clear differences between the governments of the two nations on various issues have been voiced, however, Cuba reiterates the will to dialogue with respect and work toward improved relations on the basis of equality. Nonetheless, Cuba will never renounce the ideas it has defended for over a century.

In August 2017, he reiterated, under the pretext of alleged “sonic attacks” which are as of yet to be proven, diplomatic relations between Cuba and the U.S. became increasingly strained, as 17 Cuban officials were expelled from the U.S., and the latter's diplomatic personnel in Havana was reduced to a minimum.

Likewise, the application and extraterritorial nature of the U.S. blockade has been tightened, in particular the persecution of international financial transactions.

The Army General recalled the infamous memorandum of 1960, in which a U.S. official noted that the majority of Cubans supported the revolutionary government and that “The only foreseeable

ble means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship (...) to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government.”

“I have never read anything more cynical than those words” Raúl stressed.

The public statements against Cuba, he said, are characterized by manipulation and millions are destined to revert the political order in our country. In June, a U.S. official said that the countries of America have to accept that Cuba is the mother of all evils in terms of weakening democracy and human rights on the continent, and this reminds us of the attitude of former President George W. Bush.

It is no coincidence, he said, that in the draft of our Constitution it is reaffirmed that the defense of our socialist homeland is the greatest honor and duty of Cubans.

Cubans, he stressed, are a peaceful and friendly people, we do not threaten anyone, and for us avoiding a war is tantamount to winning it.

In the words of Raúl, once again, an adverse scenario has been established, but it is not the first, nor will it be the last time that the Revolution faces challenges and threats. We have taken risks and we have resisted undefeated over 60 years. For us, like Venezuela and Nicaragua, it is clear that we have to be prepared to face the attacks with unwavering faith in victory.

Since July 26, 1953, we revolutionaries have continued to overcome setbacks. Fidel, with the Moncada Assault, taught us to

Accessed at: <http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2018-07-26/raul-castro-no-matter-how-great-the-challenges-our-people-will-defend-their-socialist-revolution>

turn the setbacks into victories, and that nothing could contain the advance of our people. He demonstrated the strength of ideas and left us the permanent lesson of perseverance in just aims.

Back then Fidel said: Our heroic dead did not fall in vain, they accompanied us in prisons, and they fought together with us in the war and we see them reborn in the new generations.

After the triumph of 1959, the Army General noted, Cubans faced armed gangs, sabotage, plans of attacks, especially against Fidel, the blockade, media campaigns, the invasion of Playa Girón, the October Crisis, the introduction of pests and diseases, terrorist acts.

And in the 1990s, he continued, we faced the demise of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp, and the onslaught of imperialism. Cubans, in the midst of enormous scarcities, put our unwavering capacity for resistance and the will to defend sovereignty and socialism to the test, and that was possible thanks to the unity forged by Fidel.

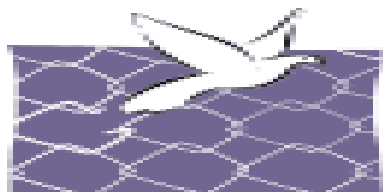
Today, Raúl stressed, 65 years after the Moncada Assault, with our independence already conquered and the permanent presence of Fidel among us, we can affirm that no matter how great the challenges, our people will defend their socialist Revolution. History has shown that we could, we can, and we will always be able to.

To commemorate the triumph of the Revolution, January 1, 2019, he promised, we will meet again in Santiago.

Anything from the list below you can bring to the ACFS monthly meeting is greatly appreciated.

Food and Household Items

- healthy breakfast cereals
- dried fruit, nuts & seeds
- flatbread
- long life (UHT) milk
- healthy snack foods
- tomato paste
- tinned sardines and salmon
- tinned tomato, corn and peas
- tinned beans and lentils (without sauce)
- green tea, black tea & instant coffee
- spices
- honey (in small jars)
- dishwashing detergent
- shaving items
- sanitary pads
- shampoo
- soap
- toothbrushes
- washing powder



asrc Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

People Feeding People

These are some practical ways you can help support families seeking asylum, who are living below the poverty line.

1. Become a [food sponsor](#)
2. Order a Foodbank ‘home delivery’ through [Coles Online](#)
3. Donate toilet paper online via [Who Gives a Crap](#).

The centre in Footscray is extremely grateful for items already donated by ACFS.

Cuba retains its crown in Costa Rica

The Cuban team defeated the United States in straight sets (25-17, 25-17 and 25-20), to retain the Norceca U19 Continental Volleyball Championship crown

Author: [Redacción Digital](#) | internet@granma.cu - june 12, 2018 14:06:02

The Cuban team defeated the United States in straight sets (25-17, 25-17 and 25-20), to retain the Norceca U19 Continental Volleyball Championship crown. The competition recently took place in Costa Rica, where both teams secured tickets to the 2019 U19 World Championships.

With a powerful attack and in good physical form, the Cuban team won their fifth title of the competition, and second consecutive championship crown, while the U.S. secured its fifth silver medal in the third final to date, reports Carolina Rivas.

Top scorers for the Cuban team were Alexei Ramírez (12) and José Miguel Gutiérrez (11), the only players to reach double digits during the match, while Clarke Godbold (7) with the most points for the U.S. team.

Cuba finished top of B after defeating Honduras, Guatemala, and the United States, advancing straight to the semifinals, where it triumphed against Guatemala, 3-0.

Meanwhile, Puerto Rico defeated Guatemala 3-1 (20-25, 25-19, 25-13, 25-17) to take the bronze medal, with the latter coming in fourth followed by Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras.

Cuban setter Christian Thondike was named the Most Valuable Player, and also won the award for best setter and server.

Meanwhile, his teammates José Miguel Gutiérrez and Víctor Andreu won prizes for best outside hitters, Luis Allen and Yeyco Jiménez for best blockers; Alexei Ramírez best opposite; and Ricardo Gómez best receiver.

The all star team was completed by Jordan Carcache of Nicaragua, best libero and defender, as well as top scorer David Ismalej, of Guatemala. **(Jit)**

Accessed at: <http://en.granma.cu/deportes/2018-06-12/cuba-retains-its-crown-in-costa-rica>



Norceca official website

Melbourne ACFS JULY 26 FUNCTION

More than 90 supporters packed the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church in East Melbourne, to celebrate the attack on the Monocada Barracks in Cuba. Short films were shown around Cuba's literacy campaign in Australia, Che and the recent film "All Guantanamo is Ours".

Our President Maree introduced the Cuban Consul, Comrade Dunia Martin, Hernandez who had just flown in from Canberra. The Consul praised the work of the Society and outlined recent changes relating to the proposed Draft Cuban Constitution. The Consul then took questions from the floor in a Q&A session.

The colourful and talented Xochiquetzal dance group performed for the assembled crowd. Internationally renowned classical guitarist Meredith Connie entertained an appreciative crowd. Treasurer Bill conducted the raffle of donated prizes. A full accounting of the money raised will be provided at next month's ACFS meeting. We thank all those who contributed to making this such a successful day.



Irish Senate passes bill showing solidarity with Palestine

Posted in [Europe](#), [Palestine](#), [World](#) - By Christian Noakes - July 17, 2018

Seanad Éireann, the Senate of Ireland, passed the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018 on July 11, which, if enacted, would make the purchase of goods and services from the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel illegal in the Republic of Ireland — the 26 southern counties not currently subject to British rule.

To become law the bill must also be passed by the Dáil, the lower house of the Irish parliament. Nonetheless, the passage by the Seanad is, in addition to being a significant step toward implementing the law, a symbolic victory and a testament to Irish-Palestinian solidarity. It also sets a precedent for transforming international consensus of the illegality of Israeli settlements into action.

While the right-wing Fine Gael government, currently in power, is opposed to the bill, it has otherwise enjoyed wide support. Along with Independent senators, like bill-sponsor Frances Black, the legislation was endorsed by members of Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil and the Green Party.

The widespread support for the bill reflects the pervasiveness of Irish-Palestinian solidarity that stems in part from shared history and the material reality of settler colonialism. The causes of both Irish and Palestinian liberation are firmly rooted in the struggle against British imperialism.

Winston Churchill, who was British prime minister during World War II and then 1951-55, was central in the formation of the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries earlier in his political career. These are two British police forces used to terrorize and subject the Irish people to colonial rule. He also sent members of these state terrorist organizations to Palestine, where they treated Palestinians with similar brutality.

There are other cases of members of the British ruling class playing a repressive role in both Ireland and Palestine. Arthur

Balfour served as chief secretary of Ireland, where he earned the nickname “Bloody Balfour” after ordering police to fire on a protest in Mitchelstown, County Cork, which killed three participants. He would go on to become the foreign secretary and author of the Balfour Declaration — a letter that established British intentions to prop up Zionist colonization of Palestine. (“Balfour’s Shadow: A Century of British Support for Zionism and Israel” by David Cronin, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017)

British stronghold in Middle East

The parallels of ethnic/religious inequality, colonial expansion, partition, internment and violent repression were, in part, a result of conscious and concerted efforts by the British. As a stronghold of British imperialism in the Middle East, Israel was regarded, in the words of a British governor of Jerusalem before it was established, as a “Little Loyal Jewish Ulster.”

Ulster is the part of Ireland still occupied by Britain, also known as the Six Counties. It was a stronghold for British imperialism, Loyalist colonization and occupation of Ireland. The settler colonial system of appropriation and dispossession was replicated and in some cases transplanted from Ireland to Palestine.

Although many in the U.S. see the struggle for Irish freedom as having been resolved, the conflict is far from over. The British ruling class and its bigoted colonizers exercise direct rule over many Irish people in the north of the island.

With “marching season” — an annual show of Loyalist, anti-Irish aggression from April to August — underway in the occupied Six Counties, located in the province of Ulster, the reality of settler colonialism and imperialism is again laid bare for all of Ireland. Loyalists have recently attacked the nationalist community of Short Strand in Belfast — including throwing a pipe bomb in an area where



Protesters during a rally organized by the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) on Dublin's O'Connell Street, 2018.

children had been playing moments before. (tinyurl.com/y6u3hrkc)

In Derry the Royal Ulster Constabulary/Police Service of Northern Ireland, an imperialist police force that has a long history of terrorizing the Irish community, have also attacked youth with potentially lethal plastic bullets — hitting one teenager in the throat.

It is in the material reality of this continued struggle and the history from which it emerges that the Irish and Palestinian causes are bound.

In response to the Seanad’s support for the Occupied Territories Bill, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman has called for closure of the Israeli embassy in Dublin. Defense ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Nahshon also said the Irish Senate’s act of solidarity was playing into a “dangerous and extreme anti-Israel boycott initiative.”

The bill, however, would only outlaw goods produced in territories that are internationally recognized under the Fourth Geneva Convention as being illegally occupied. Under the two-state consensus, the bill would not entail a boycott of all goods and services produced by Israel; it only bans imports produced in Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Israel’s mischaracterization of the bill as a boycott of Israel is completely in character with a state that also lies by accusing those who speak out against its continued campaign of ethnic cleansing of being anti-Semitic.

Accessed at: <https://iacenter.org/2018/07/25/irish-senate-passes-bill-showing-solidarity-with-palestine/>

China doesn't want a trade war, but it isn't afraid of one

After reaching a bilateral agreement, the U.S. lashed out, imposing new tariffs on Chinese imports

Author: [Gabriela Ávila Gómez](#) | informacion@granma.cu - July 18, 2018 11:07:41



Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping. **Photo:** Reuters

BEIJING.—The United States appears to be increasingly isolated and bereft of global allies thanks to the cavalier attitude of President Donald Trump, and his “Make America Great Again” policy.

The tycoon-turned-President’s attacks have not only been launched against the by now “historical enemies” of the U.S. — to put it one way — like Cuba and Venezuela, but he has lashed out without distinction against Canada, Germany, and France.

Some of the most talked-about episodes during the year and a half of his administration in Washington have been Trump’s statements about the construction of a wall on the border with Mexico (and that country bearing the cost), the alleged — never proven —

“sonic attacks” suffered by U.S. diplomatic personnel on Cuban soil; and more recently, the withdrawal of his support for the joint communiqué of the G-7 Summit, held in Canada, with comments addressed to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whom he described as “dishonest and weak.”

The list of U.S. “targets” also features China, a country on which it imposed a series of tariffs, despite the fact that a short time ago the two countries held a series of negotiations at the highest level in an effort to minimize their “big differences” regarding economic matters.

During the aforementioned talks, the Asian giant’s news agency *Xinhua* reported that “The two sides agreed that a sound and stable China-U.S. trade relationship is crucial for both, and they are committed to resolving relevant economic and trade issues through dialogue and consultation.”

But Washington continues to demonstrate that dialogue is not its cornerstone, and under the pretext of “intellectual property theft” announced it was imposing 25% tariffs on a list of Chinese goods worth approximately 50 billion dollars, which went into effect this July 6.

Trump stated: “The United States can no longer tolerate losing our technology and intellectual property through unfair economic practices.”

The announcement was accompanied by a warning: if the East Asian nation imposed trade restrictions, more tariffs would be imposed.

However, this is nothing more than a frontal attack on China, which through a statement from its Foreign Ministry noted that the U.S. had damaged bilateral interests, made abrupt changes, and unleashed a “trade war.”

“China doesn’t want a trade war. However, confronted by such a short-sighted act that hurts both the U.S. itself and others, China has no choice but to fight back forcefully, to firmly safeguard the interests of the nation and its people,” Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang stated.

In response, the government of Xi Jinping announced it was imposing tariffs on 659 U.S. goods, whose value amounts to 50 billion dollars.

Tariffs on 545 U.S. products, worth around 34 billion dollars, took effect from July 6, while the effective date of the remaining tariffs is yet to be announced.

Speaking to Latin American reporters on the issue, Zhao Kun, division director of the Department of National Economy of China’s National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), noted that while her country doesn’t want to wage such a battle, “We are not afraid of it, faced with any decision there will be a counterattack to match.”

Zhao stressed that China advocates trade globalization, and that protectionism is a double-edged sword that in the end will also end up harming U.S. interests.

The NDRC official noted that China will be temporarily affected by the move, but in the long term the national economy will be able to support itself thanks to internal consumption, an engine for development. “We have great confidence in the development of our country and we are optimistic,” she concluded.

The Asian giant launched its “Made in China 2025” plan a few years ago, which aims to turn the nation into a technological leader on a global scale, competing with powers such as the U.S., Germany, and Japan.

Among the achievements so far are the first Chinese-made passenger jet (the C919), and its first high-speed bullet train.

This is one of the most significant reasons why the Trump government decided to impose tariffs on the robotics, aerospace, and automotive industries. On the other hand, goods such as cell phones and televisions were not affected, at least for now.

Accessed at: <http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2018-07-18/china-doesnt-want-a-trade-war-but-it-isnt-afraid-of-one>

JOHN PILGER ON A HIDDEN HISTORY OF WOMEN WHO ROSE UP

6 July 2018

Like all colonial societies, Australia has secrets. The way we treat Indigenous people is still mostly a secret. For a long time, the fact that many Australians came from what was called "bad stock" was a secret.

"Bad stock" meant convict forebears: those like my great-great grandmother, Mary Palmer, who was incarcerated here, at the Female Factory in Parramatta in 1823.

According to nonsense spun by numerous aunts - who had irresistible bourgeois ambitions - Mary Palmer and the man she married, Francis McCarthy, were a lady and a gentleman of Victorian property and propriety.

In fact, Mary was the youngest member of a gang of wild young women, mostly Irish, who operated in the East End of London. Known as "The Ruffians", they kept poverty at bay with the proceeds of prostitution and petty theft.

The Ruffians were eventually arrested and tried, and hanged - except Mary, who was spared because she was pregnant.

She was just 16 years old when she was manacled in the hold of a ship under sail, the Lord Sidmouth, bound for New South Wales "for the term of her natural life", said the judge.

The voyage took five months, a purgatory of sickness and despair. I know what she looked like because, some years ago, I discovered an extraordinary ritual in St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.

Every Thursday, in a vestry, a nun would turn the pages of a register of Irish Catholic convicts -- and there was Mary, described as "not more than 4ft in height, emaciated and pitted with the ravages of small pox".

When Mary's ship docked at Sydney Cove, no one claimed her as a servant or a skivvy. She was a "third class" convict and one of "the inflammable matter of Ireland". Did her newly born survive the voyage? I don't know.

They sent her up the Parramatta River to the Female Factory, which had distinguished itself as one of the places where Victorian penal experts were testing their exciting new theories. The treadmill was introduced in the year Mary arrived, 1823. It was an implement of punishment and torture.

The Cumberland Pilgrim described the Female Factory as "appallingly hideous... the recreation ground reminds one of the Valley of the Shadow of Death".

Arriving at night, Mary had nothing to sleep on, only boards and stone and straw, and filthy wool full of ticks and spiders. All the women underwent solitary confinement. Their heads were shaved and they were locked in total darkness with the whine of mosquitoes.

There was no division by age or crime. Mary and the other women were called "the intractables". With a mixture of horror and admiration, the Attorney General at the time, Roger Terry, described how the women had "driven back with a volley of stones and staves" soldiers sent to put down their rebellion. More than once, they breached the sandstone walls and stormed the community of Parramatta.

Missionaries sent from England to repair the souls of the women were given similar short shrift.

I am so proud of her.

Then there was "court-ing day". Once a week, "bereft gentlemen" (whomever they might be) were given first pick, followed by soldiers, then male convicts.

Some of the women found "finery" and primped urgently, as if an inspecting male might provide a way out of their predicament. Others turned their backs should an aspiring mate be an "old stringybark fella" down from the bush.

During all this, the matron would shout out what she called "the good points" of each woman, which was a revelation to all.

In this way, my great-great grandparents met each other. I believe they were well matched.

Francis McCarthy had been transported from Ireland for the crime of "uttering unlawful oaths" against his English landlord. That was the charge leveled at the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

I am so proud of him.

Mary and Francis were married at St Mary's Church, later St Mary's Cathedral, on November 9th, 1823, with four other convict couples. Eight years later, they were granted their "ticket of leave" and Mary her "conditional pardon" by one Colonel Snodgrass, the Captain General of New South Wales - the condition being she could never leave the colony.

Mary bore 10 children and they lived out hard lives, loved and respected by all accounts, to their ninetieth year.

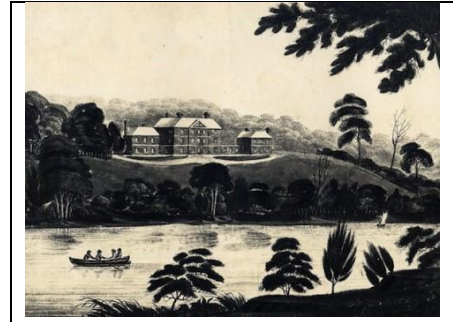
My mother knew the secret about Mary and Francis. On her wedding day in 1922, and in defiance of her own family, she and my father came to these walls to pay tribute to Mary and the intractables. She was proud of her "bad stock".

I sometimes wonder: where is this spirit today? Where is the spirit of the intractables among those who claim to represent us and those of us who accept, in supine silence, the corporate conformity that is characteristic of much of modern Australia?

Where are those of us prepared to "utter unlawful oaths" and stand up to the authoritarians and charlatans in government, who glorify war and, in collusion with an imperial master, invent foreign enemies and criminalise dissent and who abuse and mistreat vulnerable refugees to these shores and disgracefully call them "illegals".

Mary Palmer was "illegal". Francis McCarthy was "illegal". All the women who survived the Female Factory and fought off authority, were "illegal".

The memory of their courage and resilience and resistance should be honoured, not traduced, in the way we are today. For only when we recognise the uniqueness of our past - our Indigenous past and our proud convict past - will this nation achieve true independence.



John Pilger gave this address on the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Parramatta Female Factory, a prison where women convicts from mostly Ireland and England were sent to Britain's Australian colony in the early 19th century.

Trump, Putin and Helsinki

Posted in [Class struggle](#), [Europe](#), [Spotlight](#), [World](#) - By Fred Goldstein - July 25, 2018

While beating the anti-Russian drums of war, the paid scribes of the ruling class are all rallying behind the FBI and CIA. These are two of the greatest enemies of the workers and oppressed at home and abroad.

The Helsinki summit represents a new phase in the attempt by U.S. President Donald Trump to forge a rapprochement with President Vladimir Putin and Russia. This summit, however, comes at a time when the U.S. capitalist state is moving in the opposite direction — toward inflaming relations with Russia.

The basis for the attempted rapprochement is partly a common right-wing political orientation. Trump and Putin are both authoritarian, great-power chauvinists. They are both opposed to the European Union and NATO, but each for his own expansionist reasons. And they are both promoting reactionary, racist, anti-immigration forces in Europe as a tool to weaken European imperialism.

Revolutionaries and anti-imperialists are also opposed to the EU and to NATO. They rightfully want to see these imperialist institutions destroyed. But the EU and NATO must be destroyed in a progressive way: by the working class and the oppressed.

If Europe is disintegrated by right-wing, anti-immigrant, anti-working class forces, it could bring about nationalist, inter-imperialist military conflict. Such disintegration would unleash the forces of conquest and war.

Many on the left in Britain mistakenly backed Brexit because they were opposed to the EU. However, they wound up in an unwanted alliance with the likes of racist, anti-immigrant figures like Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and rabid anti-immigrant, chauvinist forces wanting to “make the empire great again.”

On the other hand, it would be progressive if NATO and the EU were undermined, not by Trump and Putin, but by a united working class, fighting the European bankers and bosses and their military interventions in Africa, the Middle East and eastern Europe. It would be progressive if class solidarity prevailed in the fight against anti-immigrant racism.

Pentagon and spy agencies need an enemy

Trump is trying mightily to reorient Washington’s foreign policy. But the Pentagon, the CIA, the FBI and the military-industrial complex are trying to sabotage these efforts. They need to inflate the sense of danger from an “enemy” in order to sustain and expand war preparations and keep military profits rolling in.

The Soviet Union used to be the main Cold War enemy of the U.S. and European ruling classes. Actually, the Cold War was a genuine class war — a struggle between two antagonistic social systems. The USSR was a socialist country that was under pressure around the globe from capitalist Washington’s spy agencies, military and diplomatic corps in over 100 countries. As long as the USSR existed, the entire ruling class feared for its property and profits. They feared the spread of socialism.

Capitalist Russia poses no such threat.

Now the U.S. military is driven by the goal of reconquering territories it lost during the Soviet period. That is what the attempted takeover of Ukraine was about. This would have moved the Pentagon to Russia’s southern border. It is why Washington moved NATO into the Baltics in 2004 and established a northern military cordon in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. And the U.S. has made Poland into a forward base in Central Europe. It is the strategy of encirclement. Washington also attempted a takeover of Georgia and has now incorporated Montenegro into NATO.

The ultimate goal of U.S. imperialism is to restore its own pro-U.S. regime in Moscow.

Russia’s contradictory role

Because of its strategic interests, Russia plays a contradictory role in its struggle with U.S. imperialism.

Putin partially rebuffed the attempt by U.S. and European imperialism to take over Ukraine. It has supported the resistance in the Donbass region and has protected its strategic naval base in the Crimea.

It has also backed the Syrian government in its drive to stop a U.S. takeover of that country. Putin is trying to protect Russia’s only land ally and seaport in the Middle East.

Russia has helped Cuba with export credits, automobiles, locomotives, oil and other exports on a strictly capitalist basis. It has forgiven much of Cuba’s \$3 billion debt left over from the Soviet era. Russia has also helped Venezuela with debt forgiveness, allowing Caracas to retain oil that it uses to pay debts.

It is perfectly understandable for oppressed countries under U.S. sanctions, blockade or military attack to ally with Russia and take aid from it. And revolutionaries and progressives should support and defend that aid. But this does not change the class character of the counterrevolutionary oligarch regime in Moscow.

Publicist lackeys and anti-Russia storm

The ruling-class publicist lackeys of all types have rushed to the public megaphone to do the bidding of the Pentagon and the spy agencies. Bourgeois journalists, news anchors, “expert” panelists, former and present government officials, retired generals and admirals turned “commentators” and “analysts,” think tank pundits, even late-night show hosts — all have vied with each other to attack Trump for being a tool of Putin and Putin for being a master manipulator who “interfered with our democracy.”

While beating the anti-Russia drums of war, these paid scribes of the ruling class are all rallying behind the FBI and CIA. And who are they? These agencies are two of the greatest enemies of the workers and oppressed at home and abroad. The FBI has infiltrated and framed up generations of communists, socialists, African-American civil rights organizations and liberation groups. It has hunted them down on their jobs and in their homes, imprisoned and even killed them.

For decades the CIA has overthrown governments, too numerous to list. It has carried out assassinations, set up torture sites and disrupted national liberation struggles all over the world. Because Trump is attacking it while trying to save his skin from the Mueller investigation, some liberals and progressives somehow got hoodwinked into defending these two cutthroat organizations.

Trump, the Pentagon, the CIA and FBI all must be equally condemned and fought against as enemies of the people.

Trying to undermine Trump

The Democratic Party leadership and many progressives are hoping that the campaign of Russia baiting will undermine both the Trump administration and the Trump Republicans in Congress, as well as erode his base. In addition to Russia baiting, they are hoping that the Mueller investigation into the Trump campaign will end up with the ouster of Trump.

Both these paths are a dead end for the working class and the oppressed.

This mentality of getting rid of Trump, no matter how, is very dangerous. Russia baiting plays into the war drive of the military. It will only drain the funds that should be used for social spending and reduce the already starved social safety net. It runs the increased risk of war, in which the working class of both countries would be the primary victims.

It will aid the Democratic Party establishment in its drive to maintain its political dominance over the broad masses of progressive forces, as well as reinforcing bourgeois chauvinist ideology. Using war propaganda to divert Trump's anti-immigrant, pro-cop followers only substitutes one capitalist evil for another.

Subverting 'our democracy' by interfering in elections?

One of the most pernicious propaganda narratives of the anti-Russian propaganda is that the Russians interfered in "our democracy."

First of all, it is not "our democracy." This is the democracy of the capitalist class. The rich control every platform of publicity, TV, newspapers, radio, film, etc. The bosses own all the major halls, arenas, theaters, stadiums. They own the newsprint, the presses and other forms of print media. They control the ideological and political content of every major public propaganda organ.

Democratic rights that may exist for the masses under this constricted, truncated capitalist democracy have been won through organization and struggle, at the cost of much blood, whether it's union rights, civil rights, women's rights or LGBTQ rights. Nothing has been given by the ruling class without a fight.

Democratic rights in the U.S. are in fact being taken away — but not by Russia. Voter suppression by every means possible has reduced the votes of African Americans, Latinx, Native people, Asians and poor whites.

This has been done by the imposition of voter ID laws, closing polling stations, gerrymandering electoral districts to reduce the electoral weight of oppressed communities, and just plain illegally purging voter rolls. The mass incarceration of millions of Black, Latinx and poor white workers is a shortcut to disenfranchisement, and not just during their term of imprisonment. Many states take away the right to vote of so-called felons for long periods afterwards.

And this is to say nothing of the police killing of Black, Latinx and Indigenous people that goes on day after day across the country.

And where are the democratic rights of millions of migrants to be free from persecution by Border Patrol stormtroopers and from Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents who roam the country, raid workplaces and neighborhoods? They kill, brutalize, imprison and deport with impunity.

The rights of women to control their bodies are denied every time a new anti-abortion law is passed; every time a women's health care clinic is shut down. Every time a batterer is ignored by the authorities, women's very lives are at stake.

These are real-life examples of interference with democratic rights that so many people have been jailed or died in order to realize.

Trump and democracy

Trump is an authoritarian, right-wing, racist, misogynist, militarist bigot. He is trampling on institutions and rights that were established for society's protection. The numerous government agencies that have been created over the years to curb corporate abuses are being completely destroyed by Trump.

These agencies and institutions have been regarded as riot insurance by the bosses. They were set up to limit the damage done by the capitalists in the jurisdictions indicated by their names. Corporate bribery and corruption have always allowed the bosses to weaken and circumvent various regulations. But Trump has taken it to a new level.

He keeps the loyalty and acquiescence of big business by destroying all progressive limitations on capitalist plunder and reducing the funds spent on regulation, such as the trillion-dollar tax cut, the transformation of the regulatory agencies into permissive enablers of the plunder of the environment, the destruction of public education, removing government oversight of public transportation, drugs and pharmaceuticals, Big Oil and mining, etc.

With all the tumult about Trump and Russia, the rights of the masses are under attack on a daily basis. The movement must turn its attention to combating these attacks. The enemy is not only the Trump administration and the capitalists who support him, but the capitalist system of plunder and exploitation as a whole.

Accessed at: <https://iacenter.org/2018/07/26/trump-putin-and-helsinki/>

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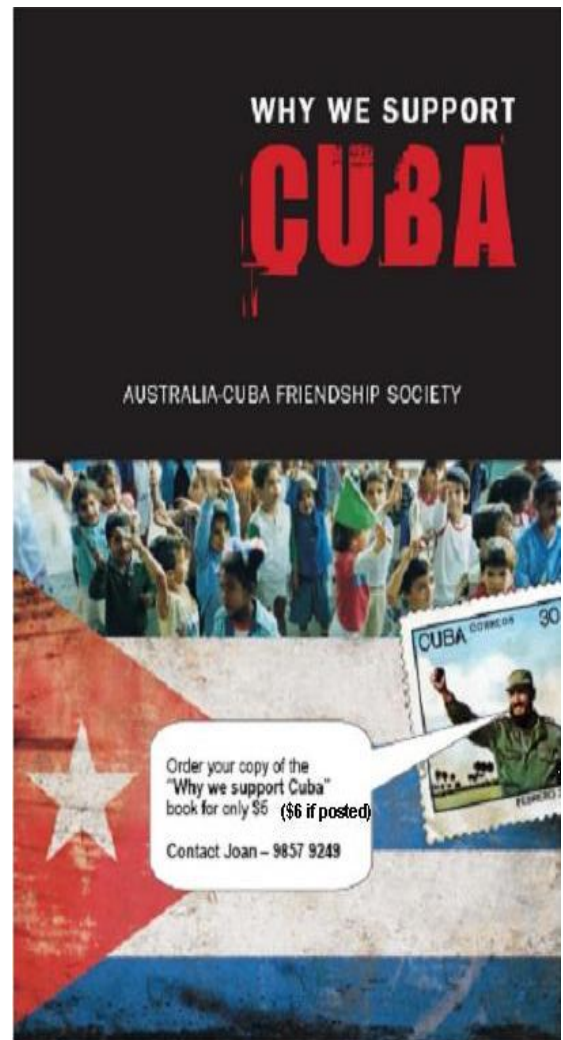
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