

CATHOLICS
SPEAK
ON
SPAIN



WITH PREFACE BY LLOYD ROSS

1^p.

WHY THIS BOOK IS PUBLISHED.

This book is a collection of statements by prominent Catholics. Its aim is neither pro-Catholic, nor anti-Catholic; it is merely to show that important Catholic groups are supporting the Spanish Government, just as other groups are supporting the fascist rebels.

This fact is driven home, at the time of writing, by the newspaper reports of the bombardment by Franco's air force of the convent at Durango, in the Basque provinces. Among the hundreds killed during this raid, there were 13 nuns and a priest who was celebrating mass.

This book is published to help bring about in Australia what has been brought about in Spain—the union of Catholics and non-Catholics against their common enemy. Let us prevent the spread of fascist ideas and fascist movements—and fascist terror—on the soil of Australia!

PREFACE.

Unlike the writers of this paper, I am not a Roman Catholic; but like the writers, I am an enemy of War and Fascism, and a supporter of the toiling masses. So important today is the struggle against Fascism, that this struggle can unite all friends of democracy and the toiling masses, irrespective of race, creed or politics. For let it be emphasised again and again, that the Spanish masses are supporting the Government against Franco and Fascism. Only the existence of such support enables the Government to resist the forces of Italy and Germany; because Franco has not that support, his only chance of success is to obtain the assistance of foreigners, and to terrorise the people of Spain. Hitler, who attacks the Roman Catholic Church at home, assists Franco in the name of Roman Catholicism, because Hitler's driving motive is not the defence of religion, but the spread of Fascism.

The democratic and liberal forces of the world can therefore appeal for assistance to all religionists, whose driving force is the preservation of democracy and peace. This pamphlet should do much to inform the Australian public that the issues are not religious, but political and economic.

LLOYD ROSS,

(National President, Australian Movement
Against War and Fascism.)

A LEADING SPANISH LIBERAL LAWYER.

Ossorio y Gallardo is one of Spain's leading Catholics, a famous lawyer, founder of the Christian Social Movement in Spain, and formerly a Minister in the Spanish Government under the Monarchy. We give here some extracts from his address to the European Conference in Aid of the Spanish Republic on October 10th, 1936.

You have heard it said that the civil war was produced in Spain because Spain was groaning beneath the power of a communist government, a terribly communist government. Ah well! I am not a communist, not even a socialist; and I tell you that this story is false, false, false, absolutely false.

The February elections gave the victory to a coalition of the parties of the Popular Front: Right Republicans, Left Republicans, Right Socialists, Left Socialists, Communists, Catalan Republicans, Basque Republicans (Right Catholics), supported unreservedly by the Syndicalists, and even by the Anarchists. All these parties, all of these trade unions, had formulated a programme which was definitely republican, and the workers' parties had shown a fine loyalty to it. The workers' parties had taken this attitude: "Carry out your republican programme; we will support it without reserve in the government, in the House, in the street, and, until the time when you have finished your task, we will not think of commencing ours."

A republican programme, a republican government, and strictly republican, sincerely republican, composed of members of the bourgeoisie. The Government was chosen by the House, by Parliament. But what sort of a House? A House elected under the auspices and direction of a Right-wing Government, with the precise intention of making impossible a Left victory.

However, the Left triumphed, by legal means, in an undeniable manner. The Left obtained nearly 300 deputies. The parties opposed to the Left obtained 200 deputies. This swing-over shows clearly the impartiality of the election. . . .

Would you like to know what was the fault of this Government of the Left?—and I accuse one of the Ministers, M. Marcelino Domingo, here present—its fault was not following a Left policy. They were too respectful, almost fearful, in face of the Conservative interests of the country. I, a Christian democrat, that is the reproach I make to this Government. I desired and still desired a social policy more advanced.

However, it was of no avail. The Right began a policy of persecution, defamation and insulting language towards honest men, men of outstanding and magnificent honesty. On the first day,

abstention. "We will retire from Parliament; we will not debate, we will have nothing to do with these men!"

Towards this Government! A bourgeois Government! A republican Government! A Government of conservative tendencies! Such a Government that when you hear it said that Spain had a Communist Government, you can answer: "You lie!"

Ah well! One day war broke out. The Spanish State, betrayed and attacked by the military, gathered together the common people, the peasants and workers, and formed a militia army. It was necessary, from the proportion of political forces and from logical reasons, to form a Government of all parties of the Popular Front. And then, people said: "The Communist Government!" Ah well! Let me give you a list of the men who make up the Government:

President	M. Largo Caballero, Left Socialist.
Justice	M. Ruiz Funes, Left Republican.
Marine	M. Prieto, Right Socialist.
Finance	Doctor Negrin, Right Socialist.
Interior	M. Galarza, Left Socialist.
Public Works	M. Just, Left Republican.
Public Instruction	M. Hernandez, Communist.
Agriculture	M. Uribe, Communist.
Industry & Commerce	M. de Gracia, Right Socialist.
Labour	M. Thomas Piera, Catalan Republican.
Communications	M. Giner, Right Republican.
Two Ministers	M. Giral, Left Republican.
without portfolio	M. Irujo, Right Republican and Basque Catholic.

Two Communists! And you see and read anywhere: "The Red Government!" "The Red men who rule Spain!" "The men who work under orders from Moscow!" "The men of Stalin!" The men sold to Russian Communism!" And there are only two Communists!

Would you like to know who are the most conservative, the most careful of all the ministers? The two communists.

Often you hear this accusation: "War was declared because the Catholics were being persecuted. It was necessary to strike in defence of Catholic liberty." I reply as to the other accusation: "False, false, false!"

Every church in Spain was open. The sacraments were being observed in every church. Every Catholic in Spain was taking part in the church services. . . .

But what happened after July 18th? The majority of the clergy and many Catholics placed themselves, from the first, on the side of the military rebels, and proclaimed themselves fascist. The people replied. Should I, a Catholic, make excuses for these happenings? Not at all. But I am a man of logic, I am a lawyer, accustomed to understand and appreciate causes and consequences. And when I consider the conduct of certain Catholics

and clergy of my country, I am obliged to deplore, but to understand, the reprisals of the masses of the people. . . .

Journalists often ask me: "How do you, a Catholic and a Conservative, put yourself on the side of the Government?" It is quite simple: Because these men have right on their side, have right and justice, and are the victims of an unpardonable treason, undeniable and almost inconceivable.

Happily, I am not the only Catholic on the side of the Government. No! No! For two years, we have been rebuilding Catholicism in Spain. There is a group of intelligent young people, there are honest, virtuous priests, there are the Basque Catholics who, from the first day, made their declaration of Christianity. . . .

Spain will triumph. When? To-morrow, the day after, next year, in two years, in ten years? It is difficult to prophesy when two civilisations are at war. The new Spain will conquer for two reasons:

First, because our affair is not "Spain's affair." It is France's affair, England's affair, it is the affair of every democracy in the world.

Finally, because there cannot disappear, to-morrow, or ever, a people who, with their blood and the life of their sons, defend independence and liberty!

A CONSERVATIVE UNIVERSITY LECTURER.

The following extracts are from an essay by Senor Jose Maria de Semprun Gurrea, published by the Press Department of the Spanish Embassy in London under the title "A Catholic Looks At Spain." The essay originally appeared in the French Catholic review "Esprit," for November 1, 1936. Senor Semprun Gurrea has been a lecturer in philosophy of Law at the University of Madrid; he belonged to the Conservative Party.

When, hearing of violence against the members of the Church and objects of religion, people will insist on crediting the Government, or the Popular Front, with a policy of deliberate persecution, they forget what is happening in the Basque provinces. I speak from what I saw during this last summer. In the Basque country, where there is incomparable enthusiasm for the struggle against the rebels, where the people and the authorities are unreservedly on the side of the legal Republic, the priests and the religious of both sexes, enjoy absolute liberty, and receive every respect, while the religious services are carried out with all the traditional assiduity and devotion of those provinces. . . .

It can truly be said, that if the number of Christians supporting the republican regime had been greater before and during the revolt, then the fate of religious institutions would have been far different. The example of the Basque country is conclusive proof; a clergy, either loyalist, or at least, sincerely respecting

the regime; political parties and Basque workers' associations, openly Catholic, and at the same time ardently militant against the rebels; in return for this, an enviable religious peace obtains. Have we nothing to learn from the coincidence of these facts? . . .

A special chapter should be given to the persecution of priests and religious, not sympathising with the insurgents, which these latter have ordered. The surest proof of the severity of this persecution, is that the religious of various orders, and numerous priests have, on the approach of the Fascists, hastily sought refuge outside the country. In Navarre, the rebel armies imprisoned several Capuchins for the serious crime of being defenders of Basque nationalism. I could quote name after name. . . . (Senor Gurrea quotes in a footnote from a Right Journal, "La Petite Gironde," a report of the shooting of a Basque Nationalist priest by the Fascists, following the capture of the cargo boat "Galerna.")

In face of these events, I, a Catholic, have chosen to stand with the supporters of the Government against the military, and the Fascist rebels. . . . As far as I am personally concerned, I think I can explain why I have made my choice, by explaining what I have chosen. To say it once for all, and frankly, I have chosen the people. . . . The humble, forgotten, impoverished, neglected people. The people who are the real victims of the present tragedy, as of almost all the recent tragedies in our histories. . . . I have chosen the people, humiliated, forgotten, brutalised, and unknown. . . . I choose the people because I can see in them, in spite of their occasional blasphemies, and their horrifying sacrileges, the most living semblance of the dolorous humanity of Christ. Of Christ who came in human form among the people, and has remained in close contact with them. Of Christ, who spoke these words across the centuries: "Misereor super turbas," "I have compassion upon the multitudes."

JOHN MCGOVERN, BRITISH M.P.

John McGovern, of the Independent Labour Party, and member of the House of Commons, is a Roman Catholic. Disturbed by the reports of religious persecution, he went to Spain to investigate for himself. His findings are set out in a pamphlet "Why Bishops Back Franco," published by the Independent Labour Party, and in an article in the "New Leader," of December 11, 1936. The following are extracts:—

In and around Valencia, there are few churches which have been burned. In Barcelona there are many. I set out to find why they had been burned. I looked at the names of business firms near a burned church. I said: Here is a lawyer, here is a dentist, here a merchant, here a small shopkeeper. In the house near the school lives the schoolmaster. I will go to them and say: "Can you tell me why this church was burned?"

This particular church dominates the Rumbblas, one the leading boulevards in Barcelona. It juts into the centre of this broad street, and commands the centre of the town, south and north.

Each of these men, chosen at random, gave me the same answer, when I asked why the church was burned. They all said: "Well, the church was used as a Fascist centre. Machine-guns were posted in it north and south. Fascist officers manned the guns, and every opening of it was occupied by rifles."

Remember, these people I interviewed were Catholics. One old banker said: "My heart bleeds for the way my religion has been prostituted for material gain and political domination." . . .

There was the case of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Barcelona. There was a crowd of tens of thousands, some say of nearly 100,000, outside his Palace, demanding his life. Durruti, the Anarchist leader (who afterwards met his death outside the gates of Madrid), came upon the scene with only twenty armed men. He addressed the crowd from the steps of the Palace: "Let us have no nonsense of this kind. We have to direct ourselves to other tasks in the days that lie ahead." He brought out the Bishop, put him in a motor car, and handed him to the Government of Catalonia, who placed him on an Italian warship. Five hundred priests and monks were placed on the same warship. . . .

This Bishop was protected in this way, although at the General Election, along with the Bishop of Valencia, he ordered a three-days' prayer by the whole of the Catholic people, for the return of the Fascist right wing. . . .

In the Basque provinces, where the priests have liberal sympathies, they go about their duties unharmed; their churches and monasteries are untouched. They are respected by the people because they have stood with the people in their struggle against tyranny. . . .

To say that Franco is engaged in a war for Christian civilisation is the most outrageous hypocrisy.

I have spent some days in Madrid, and I have seen evidence of that fight for "civilisation." I have seen the city bombed day and night; public buildings, working-class homes, hospitals, set on fire by incendiary bombs. I have pictures of women and children bombed and machine-gunned as they stood in line for their daily rations. Heads were blown from children's bodies across the street, and legs and arms in different directions. Women soon to give birth, were blown to pieces.

German and Italian planes, and guns manned by Moors and Legionnaires, are bringing terror to Madrid. Franco would not last a week if he had to depend on Spanish support.

A FRENCH WOMAN PACIFIST.

These extracts are from the speech of Madame Malaterre-Sellier at the International Conference held in Paris on January 16 and 17, 1937. Madame Malaterre-Sellier is well known for her work in international peace movements.

It is as a Catholic and Christian woman, that I wish to give of Republican Spain, the testimony of one who has just come from Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona. . . .

I can say that in Spain they welcomed me, not only as a Republican coming to a country struggling for its existence, and for liberty, which is so dear to it, but they welcomed me also as a Catholic, ready to claim our religious liberties—on the condition that they would never be turned from their true purpose, to become an instrument of oppression and domination. . . .

We have the right to hold our heads high, and to say that it is not only the social liberties, but liberty as a whole that we are defending, when we help to prevent the Spanish Republic being crushed by international Fascism.

A SPANISH PRIEST.

On September 20, 1936, Father Leocadio Lobo broadcast the following declaration to the people of Spain. Father Leocadio Lobo is described by Senor Jose Maria de Semprun Gurrea, the Catholic Conservative University lecturer, as "a model of felicity to his priestly calling, assistant priest for years in the most important parishes in Madrid, a man of solid culture and impeccable character (I can speak of him in these terms because I have known him for some fifteen years)."

The final move, the last word of madness in this state of things, was the rising of the army leaders and the Fascists, against the people of Spain. I cannot hide the truth, and the truth is this. The attack was begun by the military and the Fascists; revolutionary or not, the Spanish proletariat maintained an attitude within the law, and was content to shape little by little, the so-called Pact of the Popular Front, which in those circumstances, and at that time should, as I understand it, have been upheld almost completely by the Catholics of Spain.

Therefore, the responsibility, the tremendous moral and material responsibility, for this struggle without precedent in history, rests with those who provoked it, who in public and private, obstinately maintained that the Spanish problem could only be solved by force of arms, exploiting the discontent of the military leaders; it rests with those who exasperated the combative attitude of our youth, those who insanely applauded inhuman and brutal repressions, those who provoked crises because the death penalty was not exacted, those who forgot the whole history of Spanish thought and loosed this tide of frenzy and violence.

The Spanish people cries out that they, they rebels, shall not pass. And they shall not pass, for neither reason nor justice is with them, for they have confounded together things that are utterly opposed, Christ and Mahomet, violence and religion, Fascism and Spain!

I ask you to think. Fascism, disguised or not disguised, is essentially Anti-Christian.

THE LEADER OF THE BASQUE NATIONALISTS.

On October 1st, 1936, in the Parliament of the Republic, Don Jose Antonio Aguirre, leader of the Basque Catholic Nationalist Party and President of the Government of the Basque Provinces, defined the attitude of his party in these terms:

"Spanish democracy is fighting Fascism, and Basque nationalism must always stand by democracy. For that reason we are with you. The Republic opens paths of liberty to all the people, whatever their ideas and leanings may be. It gives liberty, it gives life, and Basque nationalism will always be with it. You are here and we are here to perform an act of transcendental importance; you will be shown, and I hope you will approve, the Statute of the Basque Provinces. This is a progressive Parliament, and we confide our aspirations to you, knowing that you will give them the treatment which they deserve. But in this moment, I again stress that our country, that we as well as you, are face to face with Imperialism and Fascism, and THAT WE TAKE THIS STAND CHIEFLY BECAUSE OF OUR PRINCIPLES, WHICH ARE STRICTLY CHRISTIAN AND CATHOLIC. If ever this spirit should force us to take the side against you, be sure we shall do it as loyal adversaries; but today this very sentiment brings us to your side. Christ could not desire the criminal use of bomb and bayonet to conquer the world. But in your proletarian movement, though differences exist, there is nothing to shock us. We recognise all that is true in your movement. Are the multitudes that follow you moved by a mere Utopia? No. You have listened to the outcry of the multitudes who demand a rebuilding of society in place of a society which has become rotten. A Christian movement like yours, justifies a social advance. Why else did Christ come into the world if not for that? We come from the people, we are of the people as Christ was, and we stand with the people. We are at your side to conquer and root out Fascism."

THE BASQUE CATHOLIC YOUTH.

At the Youth Conference held in Paris on December 19th, the representatives of the Young Catholics of the Basque Nationalist Movement declared:

(a) That they are Basques by nationality, Catholic by religion, and that their programme is summed up in their watchword: (Jaungoikua Eta Lege Zarra." ("God and the laws of old.")

(b) That they are fighting today at the front against the officers and their allies, the Carlists and Phalangists, by right of lawful defence against those who are seeking to destroy their whole Programme, and the social and cultural work of the Basque nationalists, against imperialism and violence, in the shape of a governmental system, for the establishment in Euzkadi (the Basque Country), of a social system based on democracy, liberty, and respect for the rights of the individual. They are thus acting in harmony with these traditions, which are contrary to all dictator-

ship of a class, a State or a person, and respectful of the rights of the individual and of family, as well as of all free institutions.

(c) That they protest against assassinations and crimes committed by any party whatsoever, and especially against the assassination of priests and women by the rebels in Guipuzcoa.

(d) They call for the respect of innocent lives and religious liberty throughout Spain, as observed in Euzkadi. They hold up the Basque Government as an example. They demand that war should be humanised, that bombardment of open towns should cease. They call to the youth of the world to rally to this crusade, and suggest that an International Congress should be called, to study the realisation of the maxim—"People have no right to exterminate the innocent and the vanquished."

The Young Basques want to see a new Euzkadi, rooted in its political, social and religious traditions, a democratic Euzkadi, which shall be the fulfilment of their watchword;

"JAUNGOIKUA ETA LEGE ZARRA—(GOD AND THE LAWS OF OLD)."

A LEADING CATHOLIC WRITER.

Don Jose Bergamin is one of the leading young writers of Spain, and director of the Catholic review "Cruz y Raya." The quotation given below is from his speech broadcast to the Spanish people on September 20, 1936.

It is thus that I understand my independence as a writer, and my liberty as a Christian Catholic believer, united inseparably with the people, who have suffered for justice throughout the centuries, and are now fighting gloriously, giving their lives for their truth—their liberty, their independence—which is also our truth and our life. Let all men understand this; the voice of the people is the voice of God.

The clearest of all truths here in Spain, clearer than ever before, even in the blood and the fire which envelop us, is this; that on one side is the Spanish people, all the people of every part of our land, knowing themselves, with their tradition, and their history, their past and their future, clear and bright, as never before in the truth of their life and hopes; while on the other side is a handful, a mob of desperate traitors, who have had to call in outside help, foreign, barbarous, anti-Spanish, to fight against us, provoking this war which is suicide for them, but which they hoped might be suicide for Spain. Cast your eyes for one moment on that tragic pyramid of grotesques; generals, bishops, Moors, Carlists in red berets—they are like some fantastic mumming-show of Death.

They entrust the defence of their Spain to Moors and soldiers of the Foreign Legion, for they have no Spanish hands and bodies to defend them. This is the truth of Spain in these bloody hours. We are the Spaniards; they are a handful of traitors with some

thousands of barbarian mercenaries at their command, with some weapons of war bought on credit, out of the spoils to which they would reduce our land.

AN OXFORD UNIVERSITY LECTURER.

The Daily Telegraph (September 22 and September 29, 1936) published two letters from Don Enrique Moreno, from which the following are extracts. Don Enrique Moreno is a Catholic, and a lecturer at Oxford University.

We Spanish Catholics have been scandalised by seeing the greater part of the Spanish clergy, joining the initiators of a rebellion against the legitimate Government of the nation. Even in the event of a rebel victory, what influence on the masses will the priests have, whose hands might appear stained with blood? The memories of the peasants murdered by the legionaries, and of the women violated by the Moors, would always be an insurmountable barrier between religion and the people.

I believe sincerely that the silent and persevering work of a minority of Catholics, working within the Republican regime, will redound more to the glory of God, and to the benefit of His Church, than the immediate and purely political triumph of a clergy, condemned to live among the hatred and the animadversion of the majority of the country. And this, especially if the highest authorities of the Catholic Church make every effort, not to render incompatible the practice of Catholicism with the fulfilment of the obligations which all citizens, Catholics and non-Catholics, are in duty bound to carry out in support of the legitimately constituted Government. In the present case, this legitimacy can only be denied through ignorance and malice. . . .

As to the abuses committed against nuns, I must declare that, having lately worked in the service of the committee for the Protection of National Artistic Treasures, work which enabled me to visit many nunneries, I do not know in Madrid, of a single case in which nuns have been outraged by the loyalists.

I am not a Bolshevik disguised as a Catholic, but a Catholic who is fulfilling his duty of supporting the legitimate Government of his country against those who—I do not know if in God's name—have introduced the Moors into Spain, and are trying to turn my country into a kind of German or Italian protectorate.

AN ENGLISH CATHOLIC OPINION.

The following are extracts from an article by 'Viator' in the Catholic Herald (London), August 21, 1936:—

“. . . The danger of an army victory lies in the possibility of a military dictatorship which will only re-establish the old evil system with which both Church and Army were bound up in the past, and do nothing to supply Spain's need which is a constructive social order. The Church, it is certain, will gain nothing if it

creeps back to power under General Franco's bayonets; only a thorough spiritual cleansing and revival can save Catholicism in Spain.”

A SPANISH PRIEST.

On September 14, 1936, Father Juan Garcia Morales broadcast from Madrid to the people of Spain. In the course of his speech he said:—

Comrades of the world, and my brothers. You must know that many Spanish priests are on the side of the people, and with the people's cause, that they wear the honoured uniforms of the popular Militia, and that they stand opposed to their brothers in the priesthood who have left the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus on the altars, have taken up rifles, and have trampled underfoot the commandments of God's law, to hurl themselves like tigers on the working people of Spain. . . .

All we Spanish Catholics are anxiously waiting for the words of our Holy Father in Rome. . . . Your Holiness is the Representative of God Who was a carpenter, and a poor man—and in the Name of this God, Who died on the Cross for just men and sinners, you must condemn those military chiefs and clergy, who have taken up arms against a legally constituted government.

On my knees, making my profession of Catholic faith, I wait for the voice of Your Holiness, hoping that to-morrow it will prove itself a light to lighten the understanding of the rebels, so that they may be convinced of their crimes, and laying down those arms which they have taken up against the people, they may smite their breasts and say a solemn 'Miserere.'

SEVEN SPANISH CATHOLICS APPEAL TO THE CATHOLICS OF THE WORLD.

After a month of the bombardment of Madrid, a group of well-known Spanish Catholics published the following manifesto:—

At this moment it is difficult for reason to keep control over passion; so great are the horrors of the civil war which has been let loose on the soil of our country, that even the clearest spirit cannot overcome its sadness, its bitterness, its indignation. A terrible responsibility rests on those who, disregarding the commands of conscience, and the requirements of the law, have initiated this fratricidal struggle.

All of us, Christians from different social strata, separated also perhaps by different political conceptions, but united by the superhuman link of the same faith in the commandments of God, we have decided to raise our voice in all modesty, to protest against all this injustice. Every day we hear of new crimes; from hour to hour the dark clouds of war grow heavier overhead.

Is it possible that after twenty centuries of Christian history, there are still men who call themselves Catholics, who are neglecting so clearly their most elementary duties?

We would rather not express our feelings on the brutalities of a civil war, where the most elementary rights, prescribing for the care of the civil population in time of war, are being cruelly violated. It is only the Christian ethic itself which forces us to protest, with all the force of our convictions, against such an abominable event as the bombardment of Madrid, capital of the Spanish Republic, which is now being repeated day after day.

With good reason, the famous town of Oviedo, has been given the name of "the martyred town." But what will Madrid be called, devastated by foreign bombs, besieged by a colonial army, cut to the heart by the massacre of its women and children? Churches and hospitals, schools and factories, whole quarters of the town, far from the theatre of war, have been pitilessly rased to the ground, hundreds of innocent victims buried under the ruins. It is impossible to describe this terrible scene, one's very breathing stops before a reality even sadder than it is terrible.

It is therefore before God and before history, that we raise our voices, to express to all the powers of the earth, our horror at these crimes. We sincerely believe that all men of goodwill will find themselves at our side.

Ossorio y Gallardo, Spanish Ambassador in Brussels.
Leocadio Lobo, Vicar of San-Gines, Madrid.
Professor Garcia Gallego, Canon of Segovia.
Jose Gallegos Rocaful, Canon of the Cathedral of Granada,
Professor at the University of Madrid.
Jose Bergamin, director of the Catholic paper, "Cruz y Raya."
Jose Carnes, Catholic writer.
Jose Maria Seprum, Catholic writer.

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