

*Panel*

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THE LATVIAN EXILES

1. Who is Mr. J. Feldmanis?

The Latvian Consultative Panel of the National Committee for a Free Europe has been formed on the basis of the proposals made by Mr. J. Feldmanis, the diplomatic representative of Latvia in the United States.

Mr. Feldmanis is a stout supporter of the National Ulmanis Dictatorship which existed in Latvia from 1934 to 1940. Under that regime, the Constitutional Parliament was dispersed, many deputies, including the president of the Parliament, Dr. Pauls Kalnins, were arrested, a concentration camp was established at Liepaja, all political parties were prohibited, the press was subjected to censorship, the democratic freedoms were annihilated and the democratic constitution was ignored. This dictatorship has been clearly described by Anglo-American authors, for instance: (1) "The Baltic States, A Survey of the Political Structure", prepared by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, New York, 1938, pages 54 to 56 ("The Dictatorship"); (2) Sumner Welles' "Guide to the Peace", Dryden Press, New York, 1945, page 123 ("The Ulmanis Dictatorship"). Even now the Ulmanis Dictatorship is glorified by Mr. Feldmanis, declaring himself to be the representative in the United States of the Ulmanis Government. In a speech to Latvian refugees given in Washington, February 24, 1951, Feldmanis declared that "there is no room for political parties" in exile. Mr. Feldmanis systematically fights the democratic exile parties and the Latvian democratic constitution of 1922. Mr. Feldmanis is responsible to nobody, and no political body controls him. He has been appointed by Mr. Karlis Zarins, the London Minister of the Ulmanis Government. Both of them firmly reject any political control by Mgr. J. Rancans, Latvia's exile vice-president, by deputies of the last freely elected Latvian Parliament, or by the representative of the democratic parties in exile. Both of them adhere to views which are autocratic, undemocratic and unconstitutional. In his recent book "The Revolution of May 15" (Stockholm 1951), Dr. M. Valters, the oldest Latvian statesman and bearer of the highest Latvian decoration, described Mr. Feldmanis' political attitude as a crime against the Latvian democracy. The book charges that Feldmanis has grossly misinformed United States authorities on the constitutional structure of Latvia and that he has misled the State Department (page 19). Dr. Valters, the author of this book, was an active Latvian politician away back in 1890; he is one of the founders of the Latvian State, and he later became Minister in Rome, Paris, Warsaw and Brussels.

Under these circumstances, it is a mistake that the Latvian Panel of the National Committee for a Free Europe has been composed exclusively on the basis of proposals made by Mr. Feldmanis, extreme right-winger in whom the democratic parties have no confidence, and who acts as the representative of Latvia's national dictatorship.

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2. Whom is the Latvian Panel to represent?

According to the National Committee for a Free Europe, the Latvian Consultative Panel has been composed "in accordance with the views of the exiled Latvians in the United States". This is ironic in principle; for the Panel's task is to provide information and to be consulted about the political views of the Latvian people, not in exile, but in occupied Latvia. The Latvian people, however, can be represented abroad only by the formerly freely elected Parliamentary deputies and by the foreign representatives of Latvia's political parties. The exiled element in the United States consists of non-political refugee organizations whose majority has a conservative bias and is therefore not fully representative. It is important to note that the United States representatives of the Latvian Social Democrats and Liberals, who polled about one-half of the votes at the last free elections in Latvia, have not been consulted by Mr. Feldmanis on the composition of the Latvian Panel. Feldmanis contacted only conservative quarters and supporters of the Ulmanis Dictatorship. It cannot be claimed, therefore, that the composition of the Latvian Panel corresponds to the views of all exiled Latvians in the United States.

3. False pretenses concerning Mr. Abers.

Following a suggestion by Mr. Feldmanis, the National Committee for a Free Europe has included Mr. B. Abers as a representative of the Latvian Socialists. Abers is no Socialist. He is a man with conservative views who once supported the Ulmanis Dictatorship and made propaganda for it at the Latvian University. To call him a Socialist is a gross falsification.

4. The one-sided and unrepresentative composition of the Panel.

The Latvian Consultative Panel today consists of seven members, all of them belonging to the right-wing. Three of them - Klive, Berzins, Freivald - are members of the reactionary Farmers' Union, which in 1934 participated in the anti-democratic revolution and in the formation of the Ulmanis Dictatorship. Two further members of the Panel - Masens and Abers - also hold conservative views and supported the Ulmanis Dictatorship. The remaining two members - Blodnieks and Rancans - are conservative democrats representing the Small Farmers' Party and the Catholic Party. There is no representation whatsoever on the Panel of the Latvian Social Democrats, who were Latvia's largest party, and of the Liberal Democratic Parties of the middle class. Such a Panel is not representative nor can it be expected to work efficiently.

Protests against this one-sided composition of the Panel have been raised by the Latvian democratic parties in exile, by delegations of Latvia's Central Council in Sweden and in Germany representing the resistance movement, and by the democratic press in exile (the newspaper "Latvju Zinas" and the periodical "Partijas Biletens"). The Socialist Union of Eastern Europe, which represents all the labor parties of occupied Eastern Europe, has requested the National Committee for a Free Europe to include the Social Democrats of Latvia in the Latvian Panel. In fact, Messrs. A. Blodnieks and J. Rancans, although they are themselves members of the Panel, consider the Panel to be unrepresentative.

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5. Extremists on the Latvian Panel.

It has been stated by the National Committee for a Free Europe that "no extremes" are represented on the Latvian Panel. Unfortunately, this is not true. Mr. A. Berzins, a member of the Panel, was one of the leaders of the Fascist coup in Latvia on May 15, 1934, and from 1934 to 1940, he acted as the propaganda minister of the Ulmanis Dictatorship. His chief task consisted of influencing the Latvian people with anti-democratic propaganda. In those years, all democratic organizations were closed down, and the free press was suppressed. He is also responsible for the erection of the concentration camp at Iiepaja. Mr. E. Freivalds, another extremist, was employed by Radio Riga during the Ulmanis Dictatorship, and there he conducted anti-democratic propaganda. With such right-wing extremists and supporters of dictatorship in the Latvian Panel, it is bound to compromise the work of the National Committee for a Free Europe as far as Latvia is concerned, and to facilitate Communist counter-propaganda. The protests from the Latvian democratic organizations against Berzins' membership on the Panel have so far been ignored by the National Committee for a Free Europe, and no explanation has been given by that Committee of the reasons underlying the admission of such extremists to the Panel.

6. The Voice of America.

The leadership of the Latvian Section of the Voice of America is equally unrepresentative and one-sided on the right-wing side. Mr. H. Iielnors, the Head of the Section, is a Conservative. His collaborators are O. Berling, a Nazi collaborator and Gestapo confidant who propagandized for the Nazi regime in Berlin and Riga during the war; and further, the above-mentioned Mr. Freivalds and one O. Ursteins, a right-wing artist. The Voice of America includes not one single collaborator from labor and/or democratic middle class quarters. Mr. V. Kraulitis of Boston, 75 Bromley Street, Latvian Social Democrat, applied for a job but was refused. There has been no reply to a letter from the Latvian Central Council in Stockholm which offered collaboration.

7. Mr. B. Kalnins' So-Called Prejudices.

In the words of Frederic R. Dolbear, Vice-President of the National Committee for a Free Europe, Mr. Bruno Kalnins "is understandably prejudiced in regard to these men". The truth is that Mr. Kalnins was unfortunate enough to have been a victim of the Ulmanis Dictatorship. In May 1934, after the Fascist coup of Mr. A. Berzins, Kalnins was illegally arrested together with his father, Dr. Pauls Kalnins, who was the President of the Latvian Parliament. Bruno Kalnins was sentenced by a dictatorial court to a term of three years imprisonment for having defended the Democratic Constitution with the aid of the Workers' Protection League (Arbeiterschutzbundes), of which he was the leader. Democratic labor organizations all over the world and the Inter-Parliamentary Union protested against that scandalous sentence. Protest

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telegrams from Emil Vandervelde, Camille Hujsmans and L. Jouhaux characterized the sentence as "judicial murder". A Latvian democrat and patriot who has been victimized by the Ulmanis-Berzins Dictatorship, Kalnins must obviously protest against the admission of supporters of the Latvian Dictatorship to the Latvian Panel, and there is no reason why his statements should be dismissed as "prejudices".

8. Mr. B. Kalnins' Political Attitude.

Mr. F.R. Dolbeare believes Mr. Kalnins' views to be "rather extreme left-wing". This is an entirely untrue statement. Both in Latvia and in exile, Kalnins is known as moderate and democratic Socialist. Mr. A. Blodnieks, the former Latvian Prime Minister and present member of the Latvian Panel, testified to this in a testimonial which was forwarded to the United States authorities on October 7, 1949: "I was able to assure myself of his unreserved allegiance to the moderate wing of the Social Democratic Party which was friendly to the state and uncompromisingly anti-Communist". In an official note dated September 2, 1951, and intended to be read by U. S. authorities, the Board of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, to whom Kalnins has been known for over 30 years, has stated that they know Mr. Kalnins to be "a moderate Socialist, pronounced Democrat and confirmed anti-Communist". The August 16, 1951 issue of "Nyheter från Sovjetunionen", the bulletin of the Soviet Embassy in Stockholm, in an article about Latvia described Bruno Kalnins as a "right-wing Socialist", "Anglo-American agent" and as a "hangman of the Latvian people".

Kalnins was one of the founders of the independent Latvian Republic in 1918. From 1918 to 1920, he participated in the Latvian Freedom War, fighting against the Red Army. From 1921 until 1934, he was the leader of the Workers' Protection League and as such had violent and bloody encounters with the Communists. He violently combated the Communists when President of the Central Bureau of the Trade Unions in Riga from 1918 to 1922. A deputy of long standing in all Latvian Parliaments, a Party Secretary and member of the Central Committee of the Social Democratic Party, and editor of the Labor Press in the days of Latvian independence, Kalnins was the most prominent fighter against Communism; and he was, in fact, considered by the Communists as their enemy No. 1 in the Latvian labor movement. Kalnins was for many years attacked and slandered by the Communist Press, and in 1932, the Communist Party in Riga sentenced him to death. The Communists who were responsible for this were sentenced in 1934 to long terms of penal servitude by a Latvian court. Kalnins was an expert in questions of national defense. For fifteen years, he was a prominent member of the Military Committee of the Parliament, and he closely collaborated with Latvia's Minister of Defense. In the days of Latvian independence, he systematically emphasized in labor quarters the need of military defense in the event of Soviet aggression.

9. Mr. Kalnins' Role in July 1940.

Mr. Dolbeare claims that in 1940, Mr. Kalnins was "a political commissar in the Soviet Russian Army". This is not true. Kalnins never served in or

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for the Soviet Army. The photographs produced by Mr. Dolbeare are simple evidence to the contrary, showing Mr. Kalnins in a Latvian uniform. Kalnins has served only in the Latvian National Army.

In July 1940, for a mere six weeks, Kalnins was the political leader of the staff of the Latvian National Army. This was in the first month of the invasion by Soviet forces, at a time when Latvia was still an independent state and when the representatives of the Soviet Union solemnly declared in Riga that the independence of Latvia would be respected in the future. The President was still K. Ulmanis, who had let in the Soviet forces without resistance in the hope that this would only be a temporary war phenomena. Ulmanis formed a new government, which in the beginning consisted of non-Communist members including Conservatives. Mr. A. Bilmanis, for many years Latvia's Minister in the United States, also supported the new government in the beginning; and in his Latvian Information Bulletin No. 6, Washington 1940, he wrote that "the new government is not Communistic in any sense of the word, and not a single cabinet minister is a Communist". It was by the Latvian President and his government that Kalnins was appointed political leader in the General Staff at the suggestion of the Latvian Army Command and with the consent of the leading Latvian statesmen and the politicians of all parties. That the Latvian Army Command suggested Mr. Kalnins is explained by the fact that Kalnins was a Latvian Officer and that for fifteen years, he had been the Secretary of the Military Committee of the Latvian Parliament. Kalnins was known to the Latvian Military Command as an expert on military questions. At the same time, appointing as political leader of the Army a clear democrat and enemy of what had up to then been the Ulmanis Dictatorship, served to make a change in policy publicly known. Also, Kalnins was known as a stubborn and inflexible political fighter, and the Military Command hoped that in the prevailing difficulties such a man would best safeguard the interests of the National Army vis-a-vis the Soviet occupants.

Mr. A. Elodnieks, a former Latvian Premier and now a member of the Latvian Panel of the National Council for a Free Europe, has stated the following in his above-mentioned testimonial: "At that time, the late Dr. Pauls Kalnins (the former president of the Latvian Parliament) convoked a meeting of several responsible public men, among whom was myself, to deliberate and decide whether or not Bruno Kalnins should take up the political leadership of the Latvian Army. In the end, it was decided unanimously by all present that Kalnins had to assume that hard duty. This view was shared also by General J. Balodis, permanent Latvian Minister of Defense, afterwards deported to Siberia. The same opinion was held by several leading officials of the Latvian Army." In a statement sent September 23, 1947 to all diplomatic representatives of Latvia, General V. Teffers, the head of the Court Martial Administration of the Latvian Army, declared that General R. Klavins, then the Commander of the Latvian Army, had told him that "B. Kalnins is a Latvian patriot and therefore most suitable as the political leader of the Army". Teffers further stated that the Military Command could move Kalnins to assume that function only after repeated and protracted negotiations, and

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that "Kalnins has never been in the Red Army". J. Stepanis, Latvian coroner and lawyer who after the departure of the Soviet troops in 1941 made a police investigation of Kalnins' activities, confirmed these facts in a certified testimonial of February 9, 1951, adding the following: "B. Kalnins had consented to hold the office of political leader of the Army in order to be able to defend the interests of the Latvian National Army, since in the beginning of the Russian occupation hopes were cherished that Latvia and her Army would remain intact even in the future. The Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party had been against this appointment and had repeatedly required his removal from the office, by pointing out that B. Kalnins had taken an active part in the war for the Liberation of Latvia from 1918 to 1920 and that he had sharply attacked the Communists in the press, the Parliament and Labor Associations during the period of Independence in Latvia. During the short period Mr. Kalnins held the office of the political leader of the Army, he did not propagate Communist ideology, but tried to defend the interests of the Latvian Army. Mr. Kalnins was on good terms with the higher officers in the Latvian Army, who were satisfied with his activities." This testimonial has been sent to the International Rescue Committee in New York at their own request.

It is clear, therefore, that Kalnins has never been a political commissar in the Soviet Army and that he did not sympathize with Communism in 1940. Most of the false charges against Kalnins originate from his political enemies who persecuted him during the Ulmanis Dictatorship and later during the Nazi occupation and now wish to compromise him in order to get the confidence of the American authorities. Unfortunately, the Latvian DP's who emigrated to the United States included a large number of these people. And may we mention in this connection, that no charges were made against Kalnins during the occupation. In fact, the right-wing circles which now attack him were most satisfied with him at that time. In 1943, when the leadership of the Latvian Resistance was elected, Kalnins received unanimous confidence and was given the responsible position of vice-president of the Latvian Central Council, later to be followed by most important and dangerous functions later on. There is, therefore, no reason for the National Committee for a Free Europe to give any credit to those defamations and to derive from them a negative attitude against Kalnins.

10. Kalnins' Activities from 1941 to 1951.

As has been mentioned before, Kalnins was one of the leaders of the anti-Communist and anti-Nazi resistance from 1942 to 1944. He was the vice-president of the Latvian Central Council - the High Command of the Resistance, which was plainly Democratic, National and pro-Allied. The Central Council included the "Presidium" of Latvia's Parliament and representatives of all major parties, including the Conservative Democrats and, at least for some time, the even more conservative Farmers' union. Kalnins at that time closely collaborated with Bishop J. Rancans, who is at present a member of the Latvian Panel. In July 1944, the Gestapo arrested Kalnins and confined him in the German Concentration Camp in Stutthof. After his liberation in May 1945, he

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wrote about his activities and his confinement in the "New Leader", January 16, 1946. Since 1945, Kalnins has lived in Stockholm where he is the Chairman of the Foreign Committee of Latvia's Social Democratic Party. On the basis of full powers received from the Party Executive, this Committee also works in occupied Latvia. In addition, Kalnins is the Chairman of Latvia's Central Council in Sweden, which coordinates the Latvian Resistance and the democratic parties in exile. Furthermore, Kalnins is a member of the Council of the Eastern European Socialist Union, London, and of the International Center of Free Trade Unions in Exile, Paris. In the name of Latvia's Central Council, Kalnins from 1943 to 1951 signed several documents directed to the United Nations, the Foreign Secretaries of the Western Powers and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, in which strong protests were made against the Soviet occupation of Latvia. In Sweden, Kalnins has given about one hundred and fifty anti-Communist lectures during the last five years before a number of Swedish organizations, including units of the Swedish Army. Kalnins further published two anti-Communist books; "Is the Soviet Union a Socialist State?", Stockholm 1948, and "The Struggle for Freedom of the Baltic Nations", Stockholm 1950. In addition, Kalnins is the foreign correspondent of the anti-Communist newspapers "Arbeiter-Zeitung", Vienna; "Volksrecht", Zurich; the Social Democratic Press Agency in Bonn; and the "New Leader" in New York in which he writes about conditions in the Soviet Union and in the occupied Baltic States. He is further a permanent collaborator in questions concerning the Soviet Union of the Swedish labor press and "Dagens Nyheter", Sweden's largest, best-known and pro-American newspaper. Kalnins is in contact with many members of the Swedish Government and enjoys the confidence of the Swedish authorities who have frequently consulted him in Baltic questions. Kalnins is well known in the International Labor Movement, and among his personal friends are such men as C. Huysmans in Belgium, Kurt Schumacher in Germany and K.A. Fagerholm in Finland.

Mr. V. Salnais, the Latvian Minister in Stockholm, in a memorandum dated September 23, 1947 to Mr. Bilmanis, the Latvian Minister in Washington, described Kalnins' political attitude as "firmly and consistently anti-Communist, envisaging an independent and democratic Latvian State". This memorandum also stated that Kalnins has shown in exile "the greatest possible tolerance toward Latvians with different views, dealing with all political problems exclusively from the angle of a sovereign Latvian State".

11. Communist Attacks against Kalnins.

Because of his lively anti-Communist activities in exile, Kalnins has been repeatedly attacked during the last few years by the Communists - more than any other politician in exile. Kalnins was thus slandered most violently by A. Jablonskis, the recently deceased Soviet-Latvian Minister of Justice, who published a special pamphlet with the title "Latvia's Social Democrats - the Serfs of the Bourgeoisie" (Riga 1947). "Cina", the official organ of the Communist Party, published two long articles (Nos. 163 and 164, 1950) with the headline, "Latvia's Social Democrats - Agents of International Imperialism", passionately attacking Kalnins' activities over the past thirty years and

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describing him as the principal enemy of the Communists who has always fought the Latvian Communists with all means at his disposal. In the words of that newspaper, Kalnins is today "an American agent". No less complimentary have been the attacks of the Communist Riga Radio, which has repeatedly defamed Kalnins, the last time on June 13, 1951. The Swedish Communist press - "Ny Dag" - has also repeatedly attacked Kalnins because of his anti-Soviet lectures for Swedish workers, branding him a "Baltic fascist". A German language anti-Communist pamphlet published by him in Vienna and distributed also in the Russian Zone of Austria gave rise to gross insults and several articles in the Austrian Communist newspapers, "Volksstimme" and "Österreichische Zeitung", disseminated in 1948, which resulted in repeated rejoinders by the anti-Communist "Arbeiter-Zeitung", whose editor-in-chief, Dr. O. Pollak, wrote on December 12, 1948: "The Austrian Communist paper has lost its head over a pamphlet written by Bruno Kalnins, a man highly respected throughout the world for his conscientiousness and Social Democratic consistency. Yet the Communist paper is unable to refute the facts cited by Kalnins in his book".

**12. Kalnins' Present Attitude.**

Kalnins is today the leader of Latvia's anti-Communist Social Democrats in exile. If the American organizations and authorities wish to collaborate with the representatives of Latvian labor, then they must do so through Mr. Kalnins, who is the official and authorized representative of the Latvian labor movement in exile and simultaneously the representative of the Latvian Social Democratic Party in exile which includes Latvian Social Democrats living in ten different countries and three continents, including the United States. Kalnins is best suited to collaborate with the National Committee for a Free Europe and with other American organizations. He has the full confidence not only of the Latvian Democratic organizations of all political colors, but also of the international labor movement.

**13. The Candidates for the Latvian Panel.**

It has been stated by Mr. F. Dolbear that Mr. V. Kraulitis, the candidate for the Panel nominated by the Latvian Social Democrats in the United States, was "not sufficiently experienced" for the work in the Panel. No evidence has been produced for this. Dolbear has never interviewed Mr. Kraulitis. Since 1947, Mr. Kraulitis has nevertheless fulfilled the political tasks incumbent upon a representative of Latvian Social Democracy in the United States.

The Social Democratic Party has also nominated Mr. V. Bastjanis as a candidate for the Panel. Mr. Bastjanis, a former Minister of Finance in Latvia, is a long standing member of Parliament and member of the Central Committee of the Party in Latvia, Vice-President of the Foreign Committee of the Latvian Social Democratic Party in exile, Chairman of the Delegation of the Latvian Central Council in Germany, and a member of the National Council of Refugee Organizations in Germany. There is no doubt that he is sufficiently experienced for the Panel. The National Committee for a Free Europe

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should take steps with the American authorities to speed up his emigration to the United States. His appointment as a member of the Panel would no doubt help him in obtaining a visa for which he has applied.

We wish to point out that the Latvian Social Democrats in the western States of America are represented by Dr. A. Lietuvielis, Oregon State Hospital, Salem, Oregon. The National Committee for a Free Europe might wish to contact him.

The Liberal Party of the Latvian middle class has appointed at its U.S. representative Mr. R. Zarins, former Latvian diplomat; address - 12035 26th Avenue West, B. 675, Denver 14, Colorado. He has also been nominated by that Party as a candidate for the Panel.

#### 14. Conclusions.

The following is perfectly clear from the above:

- A. The Latvian Consultative Panel of the National Committee for a Free Europe includes no representative of Latvia's labor and middle class. The composition of the Panel is unrepresentative and unfair. Unless its present composition is changed, good American money will be spent on a bad cause.
- B. The fact that the Latvian Panel is almost exclusively composed at present of conservatives and even of right-wing extremists and totalitarians is bound to compromise the prestige which the United States and the National Committee for a Free Europe enjoy in occupied Latvia and among Latvian democrats in exile.
- C. It is a mistake to heed only the recommendations of so extreme a right-wing diplomat as Mr. J. Feldmanis, who ignores Latvia's democratic quarters and provides the National Committee for a Free Europe with one-sided, even false, information.
- D. The composition of the Latvian Consultative Panel must be altered and expanded as soon as possible. The right-wing extremists, Berzins and Freivalds, as well as the political fraud, B. Abers, who represents nobody, must be removed, substituting for them representatives of Latvia's Social Democratic and Liberal Parties.
- E. The official candidates of Latvia's Social Democracy are V. Bastjanis and V. Kraulitis. The candidate nominated by the Liberals is R. Zarins.
- F. It is inadmissible and unfair to make false information given by his enemies the source of criticism of Mr. B. Kalnins, the Chairman of the Latvian Social Democrats in exile. Bruno Kalnins enjoys the full confidence of all Latvian democratic organizations and of the

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international labor movement. Having examined Kalnins' political record, one has every reason to examine also the political attitude of former and present-day right-wing extremists on the Latvian Panel in whom American quarters should place no confidence.

Foreign Committee of the Latvian  
Social Democratic Party

Foreign Representation of Latvia's  
Free Trade Unions

Stockholm, August 25, 1951.

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