

moving walls

group photography exhibition

13

- 4** Robin Bowman  
*Teenage America: Portraits of the Next Generation*
  
- 6** Edward Burtynsky  
*China*
  
- 8** Carl De Keyzer  
*Mongolia: The New El Dorado*
  
- 10** Friends of Island Academy and the  
International Center of Photography  
*I Am: Self Portraits by Young Women in Transition*
  
- 12** Margot Herster  
*Guantánamo: Pictures from Home*
  
- 14** Olivier Jobard  
*From Cameroon to France: Travel Journal  
of a Clandestine Immigrant*

# moving walls

## group photography exhibition

june 12 07 – february 29 08



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*While there is a province  
in which the photograph can tell us  
nothing more than what we see  
with our own eyes,  
there is another in which it proves to us  
how little our eyes permit us to see.*

Dorothea Lange  
American Photographer  
1895 –1965

# Introduction

WITH MOVING WALLS 13, the Open Society Institute (OSI) continues its support of engaged photographers who strive to bring attention to underreported social issues. This year we have included two collaborative projects that use photography by amateur photographers to compelling ends. Together, the work reflects a range of approaches that reveal the human stories behind the issues at the core of the open society mission.

For the last five years, **Robin Bowman** has documented the lives of more than 400 teenagers across the United States, part of the largest generation of adolescents to emerge since the baby boom. Bowman's collaborative approach to portraiture is complemented by the voices of the teenagers.

A partnership between **Friends of Island Academy** and the **International Center of Photography** focuses on an overlooked and dismissed portion of the next generation. Young women transitioning out of the criminal justice system created self-portraits that reflect their commitment to taking responsibility and becoming visible members of their communities.

Seeking the individuals behind the faceless images of Guantánamo, **Margot Herster** collected photographs of the detainees' families taken by the attorneys who represent the detainees. The photographs provide the detainees with a link to their families and the public with an intimate look into their lives, reminding all of us that these are people who have a right to legal representation.

As the debate over immigration continues in the United States and in Europe, **Olivier Jobard** crafts a personal narrative of one Cameroonian man's journey across half of Africa in search of a better life in Europe.

The governments of countries with economies dependent on natural resources bear considerable responsibility. They can develop the entire country, or enrich only a handful; ensure control over the country's destiny, or make it a victim of erratic global markets. In Mongolia, as a national debate rages over how mining should—and shouldn't—change the country, **Carl De Keyzer** humanizes the issue, showing how those who benefit the least from the buried treasure live.

**Edward Burtynsky** documents China's economic and social transformation in massive industrial landscapes. The images reveal the considerable impact of "progress" on people who are either tiny figures in a demolished countryside or, in a factory production line, the landscape itself.

The Open Society Institute's Documentary Photography Project grows out of OSI's long history of supporting documentary photographers, most notably through the exhibition *Moving Walls*. More recently, the project has broadened its efforts to expose new audiences to the documentary form with an international tour of *Moving Walls*, and to promote the use of documentary photography as an advocacy tool by supporting photographers and nonprofits or community-based organizations to collaborate in fostering social change.

# Teenage America: Portraits of the Next Generation

Robin Bowman

FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS, I photographed and interviewed more than 400 teenagers across the United States, documenting personal histories of the largest generation of adolescents born since the baby boom.

Adolescence is a time of insecurity feeding off the trauma of change, an often volatile time when teens experiment with different identities and seek to define who they are becoming. They challenge the definition and boundaries of normality. The breadth of my inquiry has ranged from grandchildren of a presidential family to teenage gang members in New York City, from a prodigal teen born to talent to one of the only teenage coal miners in West Virginia.

This project is not an outsider's assessment but a collaborative effort. My use of a Polaroid camera allows the teens to view their pictures immediately and to refine poses and appearances until the final image captures the way they want the world to see them. It is through this process, informed by feelings of trust and openness, that the impact of this study is generated.

The power of these images is complemented by the words of the teenagers themselves. Through candid interviews, I have captured their complex thoughts and feelings about their lives, hopes, fears, families, beliefs, and undefined futures. Their responses to a series of 25 questions allowed me to explore their attitudes toward sensitive subjects such as race, religion, sexuality, and the trauma of 9/11. While the words and images provide no final answers, the project offers many solid clues about the shape of this generation—and the country that formed them.

New ethnic groups seeking freedom and opportunity have rivaled the surge of early immigration that made this country great. Many Americans feel a sense of pride about the country's diversity, but many others, especially in rural America, hold on to a sense of national identity that is threatened by diversity. Ethnic groups that leave the urban centers and relocate to more remote areas of America are changing these communities and challenging attitudes toward differences. Their teenage children, confronted with the desire to assimilate and the need to preserve cultural identity, are part of the cultural face of contemporary America.

Other themes, familiar from the recent election in which the nation seemed divided into warring camps of red and blue, also emerge from the images, especially the clash between state and religion, war and peace, individual freedom and the demand for communal control. Equally telling, and disturbing, are the common threads: there is no shortage of absent parents, irrelevant schools, drugs both legal and illicit, and violence. But the project is not despairing. Rather, it finds hope in the strength and courage displayed by these remarkable young people as they struggle to define themselves.

Most people have a preconceived notion about what it means to be an American. I hope that the diversity of these stories will challenge and change some of these long-held beliefs.



Robin Bowman is a New York-based photojournalist devoted to documenting social and political issues, both at home and abroad.

After majoring in Anthropology at Wheaton College, Bowman studied photography at the Maine Photo Workshops. In 1984, she moved to New York City where she worked at Magnum Photos before pursuing a career as a photojournalist. She now resides in Maine.

She has worked as a freelance editorial photographer for such publications as the *Berlin Journal*, *Fortune*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, the *New Yorker*, *Sport's Illustrated*, *Time*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. She also spent four years as a contract photographer for *People*.

Her magazine and book projects have taken her to Bosnia, Cuba, Finland, Haiti, Israel, Mexico, Nepal, Rwanda, and South America. For the last five years, Bowman has been interviewing and creating collaborative portraits with teenagers across the United States, which will be published by Umbrage Editions in the fall of 2007.

In 1995, 1996, and 1999, Bowman's photographs earned awards of excellence from the Communication Arts Photography Annual. She is the recipient of a 2005 W. Eugene Smith Memorial Fund Fellowship, and she has received several grants from Polaroid. Her photographs have been included in exhibitions worldwide and are part of the International Polaroid Collection.

# China

## Edward Burtynsky

FOR 25 YEARS I HAVE CREATED IMAGES about how our civilization has imposed itself upon and transformed nature. During the course of my work I have become anxiously aware of the impact our actions are having upon the world. As a husband and father, as an entrepreneur and provider, with a deep gratitude for his birthright in a peace-loving, bountiful nation, I feel the urgency to make people aware of the consequences we could face. What we give to the future are the choices we make today.

For the past five years, I focused my attention on and made photographs about China. I began thinking about this formidable country as a subject around the time that construction began on the Three Gorges Dam. The voyages and resulting images I made during those years were as much about my personal need to understand the ecological events unfolding on our planet as they were about the powerful force China is now bringing to bear upon how the world does its business.

In my view, China is the most recent participant to fall prey to the seduction of western ideals, the promise of fulfillment and happiness. From my experience of living in a developed nation, the troubling downside of progress is something that I am sensitive to. The mass consumerism these ideals ignite and the resulting degradation of our environment intrinsic to the process of making things to keep people happy and fulfilled frightens me. I no longer see my world as delineated by countries, with borders, or language, but as 6.5 billion humans living off a single, finite planet.



Edward Burtynsky is considered one of Canada's most respected photographers. Born in Ontario in 1955, Burtynsky is a graduate of Ryerson University and Niagara College. His early exposure to the General Motors plant in his hometown inspired his ambition to depict global industrial landscapes. His imagery explores the link between industry and nature, finding beauty and humanity in the raw elements of mining, quarrying, manufacturing, shipping, oil production, and recycling.

In 1985, Burtynsky founded Toronto Image Works, a darkroom rental facility, custom photo laboratory, digital imaging, and new media computer-training center for the local art community.

Burtynsky's works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions across Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia. His prints are housed in public, corporate, and private collections worldwide, and are included in 15 major museums around the world, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Guggenheim.

Burtynsky has received numerous awards and fellowships, and has lectured at the National Gallery of Canada, the Library of Congress, and the George Eastman House. His images have appeared in various periodicals, including *Art Forum*, *Art in America*, *Art News*, *Blind Spot*, *National Geographic*, and the *New York Times*. He also sits on the board of directors for Toronto's international photography festival, Contact.

# Mongolia: The New El Dorado

Carl De Keyzer

BENEATH A REMOTE STRETCH OF THE GOBI DESERT in Mongolia's south, called Oyu Tolgoi, is one of the largest copper and gold deposits ever discovered. Canada-based Ivanhoe Mines, which possesses the rights to mine it, estimates the deposit is worth \$38 billion. In contrast, the entire GDP of Mongolia is just \$1.9 billion. Today Oyu Tolgoi is an outpost of makeshift offices and humble *gers*—the traditional white tents Mongolians have inhabited for millennia. But during the mine's lifespan—at least 35 years, probably more—the company envisions the area as a thriving industrial center, with high-rise apartments, five-star hotels, broadband Internet, and an international airport. Mongolia may well be the world's new El Dorado. It's not just Oyu Tolgoi, and it's not just copper and gold. Mongolia could be harboring a host of other valuable metals, as well as coal.

Mongolia has little else to offer the global economy beyond its mineral wealth. Much of this boundless country is completely undeveloped, with no industry, towns, even paved roads. Many people—about 40 percent of the population—still lead the nomadic lives of their distant ancestors, roving among the pastures with their herds of cattle, yaks, camels, sheep, and horses. Though mining has been an important part of the economy for decades—it already accounts for 20 percent of GDP and 70 percent of exports—the scale has been too small to do much to alleviate the country's poverty. Three-fourths of the population lives on \$2 a day or less. The capital, Ulan Bator, is notorious for its nearly 4,000 street children, some of whom survive subzero winters inside the city's sewers. Surrounding the city are informal settlements called “*ger* districts,” where unemployed citizens set up their tents hoping—but often failing—to find jobs.

Instead of elation, however, the buried treasure has generated controversy. A national debate is raging over how mining should—and shouldn't—change Mongolia. Emerging from isolation after decades of communist rule, Mongolia today is experimenting with democracy, enjoying an explosion of civil society, and tapping into the world economy to a greater degree than it ever did in the past. Mining can impact all of this: it can strengthen Mongolia's nascent pluralism, or contort the government into a corrupt kleptocracy; develop the entire country, or enrich only a handful; give Mongolia control over its own destiny, or make it a victim of erratic, insensitive global markets.

Unfortunately, there is little to guide Mongolia through this complex transition. Most developing countries with economies dependent on natural resources have miserable economic and political histories. Some, like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, deteriorate into chaos. The Mongolians realize that decisions made now could determine the future of their society for generations.

Excerpted from Michael Schuman's article “Mongolia: The New El Dorado” for the Asia edition of *Time*, published on July 31, 2006.



Carl De Keyzer likes to tackle large-scale projects. A basic premise of much of his work is that, in overpopulated communities everywhere, disaster has already struck and infrastructures are on the verge of collapse.

De Keyzer started his career as a freelance photographer in 1982 while supporting himself as an instructor at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, Belgium. At the same time, his interest in the work of other photographers led him to cofound and codirect the XYZ-Photography Gallery. A Magnum nominee in 1990, he became a full member in 1994.

He has received several awards, including the W. Eugene Smith Award, and his work is included in the collections of the J. Paul Getty Museum and the International Center of Photography, among others.

# I Am: Self Portraits of Young Women in Transition

## Friends of Island Academy and the International Center of Photography

YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM face tremendous barriers. The majority of youth transitioning out of the system live in low-income neighborhoods disproportionately affected by poverty, violence, and high rates of incarceration. Many have lost family members to drugs, violence, and AIDS. Many live in foster care, and some have children of their own. Many have experienced trauma in their lives such as physical abuse, sexual assault, neglect, and homelessness. These young people are termed “disconnected,” cut off from the factors that enable a young person to successfully transition into adulthood: positive role models, a stable family environment, and access to health care, nutritious food, and education.

Friends of Island Academy was founded in 1990 to help New York City youth return to their neighborhoods successfully, exit the criminal justice system permanently, and grow into self-sufficient adults. Though a staggering 65 percent of teens released from jails or detention facilities will return to the system, intervention programs, such as Friends of Island Academy, which provide job training, counseling, education, mentoring, and youth leadership development, can help reduce the recidivism rate. Friends of Island Academy has



Photographs: Sarah Guzman

become a national model for helping formerly incarcerated and at-risk youth get jobs, earn their diplomas and GEDs, and work to rebuild their lives.

In 2005, the International Center of Photography and Friends of Island Academy launched an annual collaboration. The program introduces young women to digital photography and encourages them to discover positive ways to express themselves. Photography and writing assignments are enhanced by discussions, field trips, and guest artist visits. The students' photographs and text, a selection from the inaugural partnership, highlight their journey from darker to more positive and healthier times. In each triptych, the student's commitment to self-improvement and photography is evident.

The young people at Friends of Island Academy who are transitioning out of the criminal justice system represent an overlooked and dismissed portion of the next generation. By providing comprehensive services for transitioning youth, Friends of Island Academy empowers participants to take responsibility, stay on a positive path, and become valuable, and visible, members of the community.

The International Center of Photography's Community Partnerships focus on collaborations with schools, community centers, and other nonprofit organizations. The goal of the programs is to teach photography as a way to foster self-esteem and community empowerment in New York City neighborhoods. These programs are designed to meet the needs and interests of each partner, integrating photographic instruction with youth development and social change.

The Portable Digital Darkroom program was created to provide digital media education to teens who have little or no access to digital technologies and photography. Classes are held at the International Center of Photography, and instructors also take digital cameras and laptop computers to the partner site (Friends of Island Academy). Participants learn how to make photographs, work with computers and software, download and edit their images, and combine photography and writing to express their ideas and tell their stories. The collaboration culminates in a celebration and presentation of the students' work.



# Guantánamo: Pictures from Home

Margot Herster

LEGAL SCHOLARS HAVE CALLED GUANTÁNAMO the most important civil liberties case in half a century. Since 2002, the United States has detained over 700 men, holding them virtually incommunicado after their post-9/11 capture. The administration labeled the detainees “the worst of the worst,” but officials and outside analysts have questioned the accusations against them. Government documents reveal that only 8 percent of detainees are characterized as Al Qaeda fighters, and less than half are suspected of committing hostile acts against the United States or its allies. While courts, attorneys, politicians, and human rights groups deliberate over living conditions, interrogation tactics, and the prison’s fundamental legality, those directly affected by these policies remain hidden.

The U.S. strategy to obscure transparency of Guantánamo includes restrictions on photography. The only images are of faceless orange jumpsuits and shackled hands taken by military photographers and censored journalists.

My connection to this issue compelled me to develop *Guantánamo: Pictures from Home*. My husband is an attorney with Allen & Overy, a law firm that represents 11 Yemeni nationals at Guantánamo. The more I learned about the individual detainees, the more I wanted to know: Who are they? What do they look like?

In June 2005, my husband’s colleagues traveled to Yemen to meet their clients’ families. When they returned, I asked to see their photographs. Their images hinted at the detainees’ personal and cultural lives, and revealed the burden carried by the families. Subsequently, I collected the photographs that attorneys from five major law firms, which represent 45 detainees from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen had taken on trips to their clients’ home countries. These images, originally intended to provide evidence that the families trusted the American lawyers to represent their sons, have become treasured objects within Guantánamo. For many detainees, the photographs are the only link to their families back home.

Amateur digital photographers have produced some of the most incisive recent wartime photographs. Abu Ghraib revealed the dehumanization engendered by war and the abuse of power, and snapshots of U.S.-bound, flag-covered caskets fixed the cost of war in American life. *Guantánamo: Pictures from Home* highlights the power of photography to build trust and sustain family relations, and to provide the public with an intimate look into the lives of the people detained at Guantánamo.



Photograph courtesy of Allen & Overy

Margot Herster is an artist and freelance photographer based in New York City and Austin, Texas. Herster holds an MFA in Photography, Video, and Related Media from the School of Visual Arts in New York City, as well as undergraduate degrees in psychology and art history from the University of Kansas.

Herster's work focuses on the social and psychological dynamics of family and interpersonal relationships. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including as a solo exhibition at SCALO Project Space in New York.

In response to the lack of information available about the individuals detained at Guantánamo, she developed the exhibition *Guantánamo: Pictures from Home* and the accompanying website: [www.throughthewalls.org](http://www.throughthewalls.org). The project, which combines photographic, audio, and video components, debuted as a large-scale exhibition at FotoFest in Houston in March 2007.

# From Cameroon to France: Travel Journal of a Clandestine Immigrant

Olivier Jobard

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE MOST POPULAR DESTINATION for immigrants in Europe. Some travel there because of family connections or cultural ties; others put themselves in the hands of smugglers, abandoning any control over their final destination.

In 2000, I visited the now-closed Red Cross shelter in Sangatte, France, just down the road from the entrance to the Channel Tunnel. The shelter was established to aid the large numbers of migrants who gathered there, waiting for their chance to cross the channel through the tunnel or on ferries.

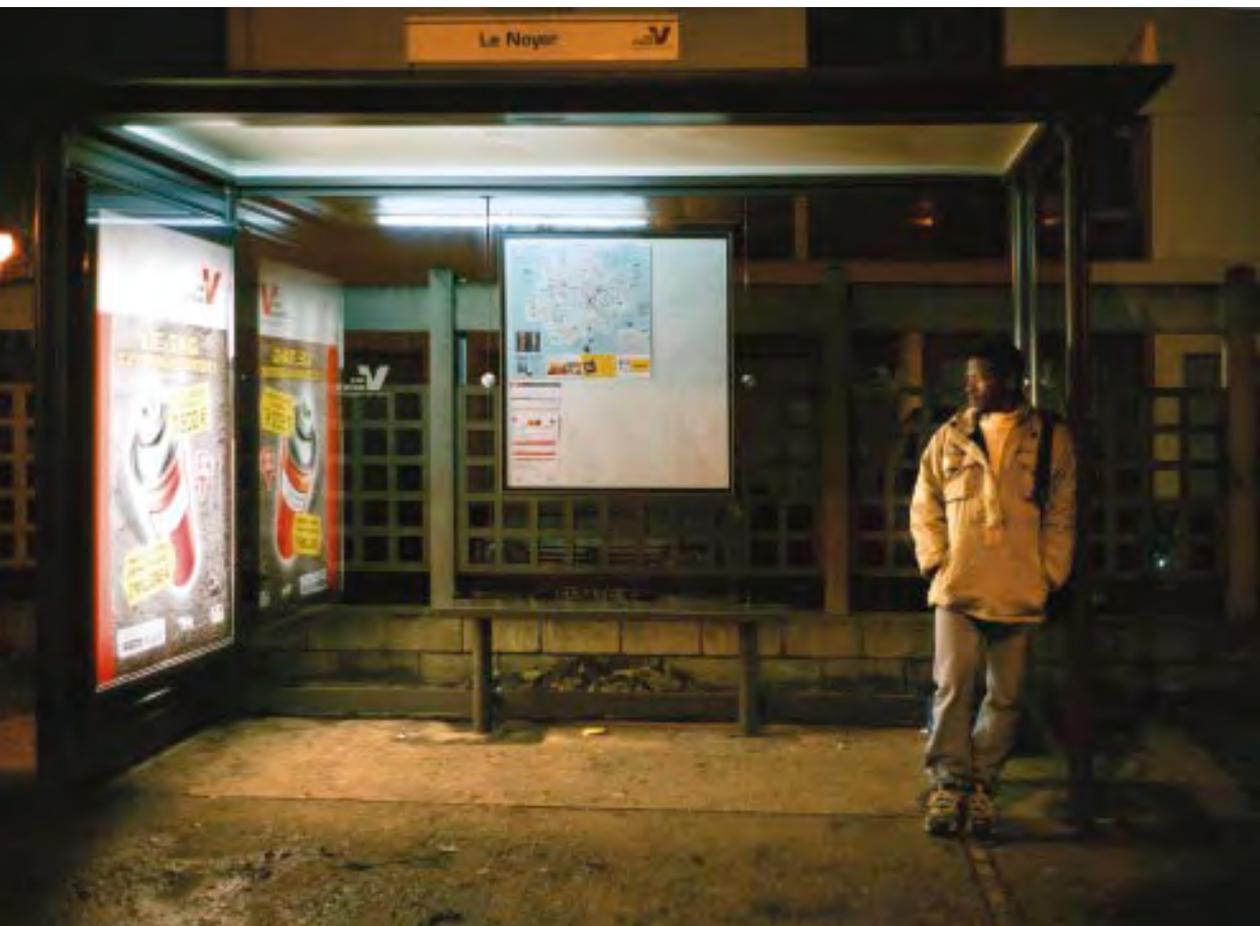
Many of the migrants were fleeing conflicts in Africa and elsewhere that I had covered as a photojournalist. For two years I returned periodically to Sangatte, listening to people recount their journeys from distant lands, and express their hopes for a better life in Europe.

After listening to their stories, I felt compelled to document their passage—to put faces to those usually called “*sans-papiers*,” people without papers. I decided to accompany one migrant on his six-month trek across half of Africa.

Kingsley is a 23-year-old lifeguard from the West African coastal town of Limbe, Cameroon. Kingsley worked at an upscale hotel giving swimming lessons to European tourists. He earned 50 euros a month, just enough to pay for food and rent for the two-room house he shared with his parents and seven siblings.

In Limbe, almost every person talked about crossing the desert to get to Europe. Kingsley believed in the European dream. In 2004, he left Cameroon on an excruciating six-month journey. He crossed Nigeria, Niger, the Sahara Desert, and Algeria. The driver of the truck had to stop often because of engine problems. Other migrants joined the caravan or left. The more they drove, the more they suffered from the heat, sun, and dust. Finally, he reached Morocco. He waited there for three months before boarding a makeshift skiff bound for the Canary Islands. For Kingsley, crossing the desert and the ocean was the only way to make it out. And six months after leaving Cameroon, he finally set foot on European soil.

I hope that Kingsley’s journey shows the willingness of people to abandon everything—family, culture, and past—for the dream of finding a better life abroad.



Born in 1970, Olivier Jobard entered the École Louis Lumière in 1990. After completing an internship at Sipa Press, he joined Sipa as a staff photographer in 1992.

His work has taken him around the world and into the heart of conflict zones in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan.

In 2004, he documented the passage of one immigrant from Cameroon to France over the course of six months. This human adventure resulted in a book published by Marval Publishers in France.

The Open Society Institute (OSI) works to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. Open societies are characterized by the rule of law; respect for human rights, minorities, and a diversity of opinions; democratically elected governments; market economies in which business and government are separate; and a civil society that helps keep government power in check.

To achieve its mission, OSI seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, OSI builds alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information. OSI places high priority on protecting and improving the lives of marginalized people and communities.

Investor and philanthropist George Soros in 1993 created OSI as a private operating and grantmaking foundation to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established, starting in 1984, to help countries make the transition from communism. OSI has expanded the activities of the Soros foundations network to encompass the United States and more than 60 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Each national foundation relies on the expertise of boards composed of eminent citizens who determine individual agendas based on local priorities.

For more information about Moving Walls, or if you are interested in purchasing any of the prints in the exhibition, please visit [www.movingwalls.org](http://www.movingwalls.org).

The exhibition is open to the public Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., through February 29, 2008. Please contact the Documentary Photography Project for more information: (212) 548-0600 or [docphoto@sorosny.org](mailto:docphoto@sorosny.org).

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