



POEMS OF TRIBUTE
TO HONOUR
PROFESSOR ROBERT
MANGALISO SOBUKWE

Tumelo Smith

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Dedication

To The Pan Africanist Congress And The Azanian People's Liberation Army

*These poems are tributes to Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe.
Today, the PAC is still facing the same challenges of the 'land'.
The PAC needs a true leader like Sobukwe.*

*We thank all the members of the PAC who served, suffered and
sacrificed their lives for the PAC of Azania and for
Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe.*

*Let us remember our Pan Africanist leaders: Zephaniah Mothopeng,
Clarence Makwetu, Sabelo Phama, Philip Kgosana, General
Willie Mokhonyeni, Benny Alexander aka !Khoisan X,
Ntsiki Khuzwayo, Enock Zulu and Ike Mafole.*

*Let us also remember (President) Letlapa Mphahlele,
Bishop Stanley Mogoba and General Mbulelo Fihla.*

*I dedicate this book to the PAC, the Azanian People's Liberation
Army Military Veterans Association (APLAMVA) and the
future generations that will be produced by the
Pan Africanist Youth Congress.*

*I wrote these poems after observing and imagining the
life of Sobukwe today and in the future. The teachings of
Sobukwe are real and educational.*

Izwe Lethu, iAfrica!

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Author Biography

I was born in the Galeshewe location in Kimberley on 11 February 1969. My mother is Dipuo Agnes Thethiwe Smith and my father is Mothusimang Smith, originally from Lesotho. My mother was a teacher at the St Dominics and St Peters primary schools. I am the last born of four children: the first born is Tony Smith, my sister Lorato Smith Phillips is the second born and my brother Tshepo Smith was born before me.

I studied at St Dominic's Primary School and completed my schooling at St Boniface High School. I am married to Lineo Mechaeline Ramabele from Maseru in Lesotho, and we have two daughters: Delile Pontso Smith, who was born in 1995, and Thuto Smith, who was born in 2005. In August 2016, my first-born daughter gave birth to my first granddaughter, Tshegofatso Smith.

I was recruited to the PAC underground programmes in 1985. In the same year I met Polite Xuma, who recruited me to the Azania People's Liberation Army (APLA). I then joined the Azanian People's Liberation in 1988 underground operations. I was trained internally in the Free State and the Northern Cape provinces, and travelled several times between the Free State and Lesotho. On one such occasion in 1990, I met the former president of the PAC and member of the High

Command of APLA, General Letlapa Mphahlele, in Lesotho before his arrest.

I became a member of the PAC underground in Galeshewe in 1988 after I was recruited by Polite Xuma in the Free State. Due to the harassment of APLA members in 1990 and 1991 by the Special Branch of the police, I went into exile in Lesotho, where arrangements were made for me to study.

I was elected onto the leadership of the APLA Military Veterans' Association two decades ago and currently still serve as Secretary for Social Welfare under the leadership of General Mbulelo Fihla. I participated in the establishment of the South African National Military Veterans Association (SANMVA) and serve on the National Executive Committee (NEC).

In 2012, following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Minister of Social Development, General Moseanedi approved the deployment of military veterans to the social development sector to undergo training and development. I was deployed to the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), where I am currently still working. This type of deployment is monitored by the SANMVA in all nine provinces of South Africa.

I graduated from the University of the Free State with a Post-graduate Diploma in Governance and Political Transformation. I also have a National Certificate in Customer Management Services from the University of the North West. I have a Diploma in Philosophy from St Augustine in Lesotho, and a Certificate in Ethics from the School of Governance in South Africa. In 2022 I was officially accredited with a Certificate of Accreditation as Facilitator and Presenter by the Pacific Institute of Canada and Ethiopia after receiving training that was sponsored by SASSA.

Sobukwe Background

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe was born in South Africa in a small town called Graaff-Reinet on 5 December 1924. His father was originally from Lesotho and his mother was a Xhosa-speaking South African woman. His family was poor, and his father worked as a woodcutter. Consequently, the Methodist Mission provided the funds for Robert Sobukwe's education.

A graduate of the University College of Fort Hare, Sobukwe was elected the president of the student council. The University College of Fort Hare was established for black students in South Africa.

Sobukwe was the PAC's first president and led the protest against pass laws, which culminated in the apartheid police killing innocent Africanists on 21 March 1960.

On 6 June 1954, Sobukwe married his wife, Zondeni Veronica (nee Mathe) Sobukwe. She was born on 27 July 1927 in Hlobane, Natal. Veronica was a trainee nurse at Victoria Hospital in Lovedale in the Eastern Cape.

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe

A true leader of Azania
Born out of nothing
Rich with wisdom
With knowledge of Azania
Izwe Lethu, Azania

Apartheid destroyed you
But your soul remains strong
Son of Azania, Mangaliso
We salute Sobukwe

Your dream of Unity
To see Africa United
They imprisoned you
The apartheid regime
Government of apartheid

You died a Hero
That poison took you away
From the Pan Africanist life
Azania mourns for you
Rest in peace Prof. Sobukwe

Sobukwe Clause

(Article 4 of General Law
Amendment Act of 1963)

The apartheid regime used a weapon
A weapon called the 'Sobukwe Clause' To imprison Sobukwe
indefinitely

Imprisonment without trial
Oppressive law of apartheid

The cruel government of apartheid
This clause was created for Sobukwe
Sobukwe survived until poisoned
At last our hero is imprisoned

Sobukwe nothing will take you down
You are the son of the soil
African son of Azania
You are praised by hero and heroine
You died before other heroes and heroines
Sobukwe was denied a right to defend himself

White Supremacy

Sobukwe was wrongly detained
Mangaliso was oppressed
He fought for justice
He fought for the Azanian people
Africa for the Africans

The apartheid regime oppressed him
They introduce illegal laws
Just to keep him in prison
You were isolated for a reason
Like a lion in the cottage

Sobukwe you never gave up
You fought for land
Land for Africans in Azania
Your spirit is strong
Strong like an elephant

Graaff-Reinet

A hero was born in graaff-reinet
A hero was raised in graaff-reinet
Indeed a true leader
Who fought against apartheid

We praise this town
Which gave birth to our Hero
A Hero of Africa and Azania
You will be remembered
By sons and daughters of Azania

Let graaff-reinet be honoured
A holy place for Africanists
Mangaliso a true Africanist
Rest in peace Noble Son

Pass Laws

(Illegal Document)

A document that caused blood
Blood on March 21st 1960
A peace march, no weapons
No guns but innocent souls

The apartheid police shot unarmed people
True Pan Africanists died
Only because of pass law
Illegal document destroyed lives

South Africans died on the 21st March 1960
Your blood will nourish the land
African land, Izwe Lethu

They shot innocent people
They feared Sobukwe and the PAC leaders
They hated African people
They shot them like monkeys

Sobukwe

30 Years in Prison

The apartheid regime finally imprisoned Sobukwe
Innocent Mangaliso was jailed
He was imprisoned because he fought for justice
Land first and all shall follow
Jailed for sharpeville day

Sobukwe fought against pass laws
He ended with a 'Sobukwe Clause' Today in the new democracy
No recognition of 'Sobukwe Clause'
South Africa is transformed since 1994
Freedom but No Liberation
Freedom but No Land
No one recognised the 'Sobukwe Clause'
Robert you went to prison for nothing
Today the Africanists still oppress
Their mindset had not change
You against the apartheid regime

Today South Africa of 1994
Is economise due to fraud
Mismanagement of funds for the poor
The poor lost dignity due to selfishness
Sobukwe you warn against hatred of Africans
Today Africans fight Africans

Armed Struggle

Indeed this was the road
Time to fight back
Time to show the apartheid regime
We can kill like them

The PAC gave birth to APLA
Azanian People's Liberation Army
Young women and men
Sacrificed their youth to fight
To defend Azania, Izwe Lethu

They are ready to die
They are to fight for the 'Land'
They banned APLA first
Because it was an army which they feared

They negotiated for themselves
They left the land and the economy
It was given to the minority
We were defeated at the negotiation
They settled for their own stomachs

State of Emergency

The weapon of the apartheid regime
They feared innocent souls
They forced Africanists to go to Foreign Countries
Division based on language to homelands
They imprisoned all Africanist leaders

They killed women and children
Robben Island a new home for men
They oppressed us from left to right
They used the state of emergency as a weapon

They controlled school language
They controlled our movements
They controlled our religion
But failed to control Our Souls
They feared us,
they feared APLA

Sobukwe a Danger to The State

The apartheid regime stated
Sobukwe is a dangerous man
Minister of Justice of apartheid
Sobukwe is a prisoner forever
They imprisoned an innocence man

They took him away from his family
They took him away from the PAC
They took him away from the Africanists
They failed to destroy his soul

They poisoned him because of truth
They poisoned him because they feared him
Sobukwe had done no wrong
Sobukwe hated apartheid with its roots

They will never change said Sobukwe
He calmed everyone to fight in peace
They marched to the police station
With no weapons but they imprisoned them
They feared Sobukwe until his death

Sobukwe Banned

(Kimberley)

He was banned from speaking to people
His movement was banned
He was banned from worshipping
He was banned from greeting neighbours

Sobukwe was denied his rights
Today they claim human rights
How can you claim to be free
Oppressed by fraudsters
Who stole from the poor

Sobukwe was banned from seeing his friends
They forgot to ban his mind
They forgot to ban his hands
His intellectual rise for his people
He raised his voice to the Africanist

His soul was free like a child
He taught people Africanism
People to continue to fight apartheid
'Never give up' said Robert Sobukwe

Sobukwe Defiance Campaign

Refusal to obey apartheid laws
They imprisoned him with others
Sobukwe remained strong
He never trusted the apartheid laws

Sobukwe said you must rise beyond the horizon
The war for justice is the key
Liberation is the only weapon
Sobukwe defiance campaign

Sobukwe did not involve other races
Race of oppression but believe in Pan Africanism
Reject apartheid laws he said, Robert
Azania will be free one day

Mass Uprising

The Pan Africanist Congress hated the pass laws
Sobukwe led the anti-pass campaign
All supported Sobukwe
On this day of brave decision

Let them arrest us
No pass laws again
We hate apartheid and the regime
We will fight for our people

We shall humble ourselves
Peace amongst the Africanists
War against the enemy
We will die for Azania

Race Discrimination

This action caused violence in South Africa
This was implemented by Hendrik Verwoerd
Who hated Africans in South Africa
He allowed oppression of the black majority

Apartheid was overruled by Africans
Discrimination is a crime
Unlawful policy of apartheid
Which promoted acts against humanity

Sobukwe fought against apartheid
Until death was the answer
Steve Biko fought against apartheid
Until Afrikaans was brought down

Tsietsi Mashinini fought against apartheid
Until death destroyed our people
At last freed from apartheid
Liberation Movements contributed
At last we are free of oppression

Sobukwe's Refusal to Obey the Apartheid Laws

Sobukwe rejected the apartheid laws
Laws of criminals and oppressors
Like a lion in a cage
He refused to be oppressed by the apartheid laws

Sobukwe was isolated on robben island
A prisoner of peace
He fought against the apartheid laws
The tiger of Africa for Africans

Sobukwe a true Leader
A Pan Africanist Leader
He refused to obey the apartheid laws
Laws of criminals and oppressors

The Apartheid Regime

South Africa was colonised
By those who hated Africans
Who saw Africans as monkeys
People to be killed at any time

Apartheid is a sin against humanity
United Nations declared at last
The laws of apartheid were created
By the evil government of apartheid

They united against Africans
They feared Africans
They oppressed Africans
They fail to oppress the soul

The PAC Hated the Pass Laws

The Pan Africanist Congress hated the pass laws
The pass laws of apartheid
Created to divide the Africanists
Land first all shall follow

The Pan Africanist Congress hated the apartheid laws
They hated the regime of apartheid
These laws were laws to regulate dogs
Africans are human beings

What wrong did we do
Is being African a sin
Apartheid is a sin against humanity
The Pan Africanist Congress hated the pass laws

Demonstration on March 21st 1960 (Sharpeville day)

These demonstrations brought change
After the death of Africans
This was a peaceful march
The apartheid police killed our people

Sobukwe led the march in Sharpeville
Philip Kgosana led the march in Langa
We hate the pass document
A cry from Africans

Bullets were the answer from the apartheid regime

Demonstration to all police stations
Peaceful demonstrations
Peace amongst the Africans
War against the enemy

The Apartheid Judicial System

The Apartheid law is a sin against humanity

The apartheid judicial system
A system full of discrimination
All judges of apartheid
Sentence only black people

The apartheid judicial system
Compromised the law to promote
Illegal sentences against Africanist
Oppressive laws to the grave

Apartheid law is unjust law
Humankind was destroyed
They destroyed our bodies
They failed to destroy our souls

Sobukwe

After His Arrest

(1961)

Mangaliso was banished to Kimberley
He was banned and house arrested
He became a slave in his own homeland
Mangaliso lost his joy in life

People in Kimberley welcomed him
He taught them Pan Africanism
He represented them at courts
Kimberley became his second home

Life will never be the same again
Sobukwe led his teachings
Pay your allegiance in Azania
Africa for the Africans

Sobukwe Denied Legitimacy

Mangaliso Sobukwe denied legitimacy

He was denied his freedom
He was denied his human rights
But remained strong like a lion

Sobukwe fought for Azania
Mangaliso fought for his people
Azania created a Great Leader
A Leader of Liberation

Sobukwe a reflection of the truth
He was poisoned for a reason
Apartheid regime feared him
They destroyed his body
But his spirit remained strong

Mangaliso demonstrated Africanism
A social life of sharing
'Never give up' says Sobukwe
A true Pan Africanist

The Death of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe

The nation mourned for a Leader
The poison brutally killed Sobukwe
The apartheid regime killed Sobukwe
At last he died peacefully

Sobukwe died for a reason
He created a platform for us
His legacy lives in us
Today we have a new government

A new government of fraud
Mismanagement of funds
The dream Sobukwe had
Is being destroyed by our own

Sobukwe, Father of Azania

A Father who led his people
Through apartheid oppression
Sobukwe led his people
Through the Sharpeville massacre

Sobukwe led all Africanists to prison
He said hand yourself to the police
We shall die for our Land
The Father of nation died in peace

The Founder of the PAC

Sobukwe founded the PAC
The Pan Africanist Congress
A home for Africanists
Azania for the Africanists

The PAC was founded as a
Liberation Movement
To fight against oppression
To bring down the apartheid regime

Sobukwe led the Azanians
Land first all shall follow
Izwe Lethu, our Land
Sobukwe our hero

Sobukwe on Robben Island

Sobukwe was feared by the apartheid government

Hendrik Verwoerd feared Sobukwe

The apartheid regime feared Sobukwe

Sobukwe was isolated in prison

Sobukwe was not allowed with inmates

He was isolated, alone

No visitor was allowed to see him

No family was allowed to see him

Sobukwe saw everything in prison

How the land was sold

How the economy was sold

How our human rights were sold

They poisoned Sobukwe

They brutally killed him

Sobukwe died of poison

His spirit was never broken

His soul remains in peace

Robert and Veronica Sobukwe

Sobukwe married a beautiful woman
A Xhosa girl from the Eastern Cape
A wife material, true Mother
She stood with Sobukwe

A nurse who fought for others
She fought against social injustice
She fought for human rights
She fought against unjust labour laws
Laws of apartheid and oppression

A couple who loved peace
They were both Africanists
They both paid for their loyalty to Azania
Their allegiance to Azania

Sobukwe, a True Africanist

Sobukwe, a true liberator
Who fought for his land
Who protected his people
Azania praises Sobukwe

Sobukwe declared war
A war against the apartheid regime
A war against social injustice
He saluted our Heroes and Heroines

Sobukwe, a true Africanist
Who served, suffered and sacrificed
For Azania and his people
And for the generations to come

Sobukwe and Children

Sobukwe was a real father
A father of children
The liberation he fought
It was for the future generations

Sobukwe loved children
He was taught Setswana by the children
Children in Galeshewe, Kimberley
A real father of the nation

A father of joy and happiness
A real father of Azania
Who loved Socialism
Sobukwe was proud of Pan Africanism

Walk Together with Sobukwe

All Africanists enjoyed Sobukwe's wisdom
All walked with Sobukwe as their leader
Sobukwe left his legacy
The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

Sobukwe still exists today
His teaching all over Africa
We lament for his death
We lost a true leader

Walk together with Sobukwe
Until the end of his journey
A journey of politics
A journey of liberation

Pan Africanist Culture

Izwe Lethu, iAfrica
Sobukwe's greetings to Azania
His teaching on Pan Africanist Culture
Azania of the Africanists

From Cape to Cairo
Morocco to Madagascar
Izwe Lethu, iAfrica
Sons and daughters of Azania

Sobukwe teaches the culture
Pan Africanist culture
Respect and love of your neighbours
Pan Africanist Culture

The Last Prayer of Sobukwe

The last prayer of Sobukwe
Is to see Africa United
Azania, sing Izwe lethu
A prayer of a true leader

Sobukwe was a symbol of peace
His dignity was respected by Africa
African leaders respected Sobukwe
Sobukwe, the heart of Africa

Sobukwe was a gift from God
His last prayer was destroy apartheid
Destroy oppression with its roots
The last prayer of Sobukwe

Explanatory Notes and Translations

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe

Azania is the name given to South Africa by members of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

Izwe Lethu is an Africanist slogan meaning 'our land'.

Robert Sobukwe had a particular vision of Pan African unity that stipulated that every Africanist had a sacred duty to strive for a United States of Africa. He sought inspiration and the point of departure for every action from the African continent he loved (Lebakeng 2018).

Sobukwe Clause

(Article 4 of General Law Amendment Act of 1963)

After Robert Sobukwe had completed serving his sentence in various prisons, a new General Law Amendment Act was passed that included the so-called 'Sobukwe clause', which allowed the Minister of Justice to renew his imprisonment annually. Consequently, he was transferred to Robben Island where he served another six years in prison.

'Son of the soil' is a reference to authentic citizens of South Africa as opposed to the alien whites (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009).

White Supremacy

The land issue was the most significant issue that preoccupied Robert Sobukwe. He felt that the African people could never be really true until the land was returned to its rightful owners (Pogrand 2019).

The cornerstone of the PAC's policy on land is the repossession of the land usurped by the colonial settlers and their descendants in various ways during the colonial, segregationist and apartheid eras (Ebrahim 1990).

Pass Laws (Illegal Document)

The pass laws were among the most repugnant and impactful apartheid laws for Africans because they denied them entry and permanence in the urban areas of South Africa. All Africans over the age of 16 years found in the urban areas had to have a pass, which indicated their right to be in the urban area. Those found without such rights were liable to imprisonment and deportation from the urban area. The PAC initiated an anti-pass campaign that took place on 21 March 1960 and resulted in the police killing 69 protesters and injuring 180 others at Sharpeville in the then Transvaal province (Pogrand 2015).

Sobukwe 30 Years in Prison

The two main parties in the negotiations that led to the ending of apartheid and the introduction of a democratic dispensation in 1994 were the ANC and the whites-only Nationalist Party. The PAC initially strongly resisted participation in the negotiations, and many feel that the outcome was a compromise in which black people lost much.

Armed Struggle

In the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, the apartheid government banned the African National Congress and the PAC on 8 April. In 1961, the PAC turned to armed struggle after the formation of a military wing known as Poqo. The decision to turn to armed struggle was taken at a conference held in Maseru in September 1961. The name of the PAC's military wing was changed to the Azanian People's Liberation Army in 1967 (Maaba 2004).

Sobukwe Banned (Kimberley)

The banning of the PAC occurred after the passage of the Unlawful Organisations Act of 1960 (Act No. 18 of 1960), which effectively banned the PAC and the ANC (Kondlo 2008)

Mass Uprising

A Joint Planning Council of the ANC and the South African Indian Congress decided to embark on a campaign to defy six unjust laws. The Defiance Campaign was launched on 26 June 1952, and thousands of volunteers defied the laws and courted arrest.

Sobukwe was one of the leaders in the ANC Youth League who opposed the campaign (Sobukwe & Gerhart 1970).

As part of its strategy to fill the apartheid prisons during the 1960 anti-pass campaign, the PAC adopted a 'no bail, no fine and no defence' approach. Consequently, Sobukwe did not defend himself in his trial.

Race Discrimination

Hendrik Verwoerd was Minister of Native Affairs from 1950 to 1958 and prime minister from 1958 until he was assassinated in 1966. Verwoerd was the architect of Bantu Affairs during the 1950s.

Steve Bantu Biko, born on 18 December 1946 in King William's Town, was a student at the University of Natal Medical School (Black Section). He formed the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) in 1969, the precursor of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Biko is considered the founding father of the BCM, and led several BCM organisations before his death in detention on 12 September 1977. Biko expounded many of the main principles of Black Consciousness in several publications before his death (Mzimane, Maaba & Biko 2006).

Tsietsi Mashinini was chairman of the Action Committee, later renamed the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC), with Mashinini as its first president. The SSRC led the student uprising in Soweto in 1976.

Sobukwe's Refusal to Obey the Apartheid Laws

When Robert Sobukwe was transferred to Robben Island, he was placed in solitary confinement in a house in a separate area. He was prohibited from having contact with other prisoners for the six years of imprisonment on the island (Hook 2001).

The phrase 'Africa for Africans' comes from a slogan of the ANC Youth League at the time Robert Sobukwe served in its executive. It was aimed at enforcing African nationalism in the ANC and later found expression in revised form in the PAC slogan that anyone who owed their first loyalty to Africa and accepted the rule of an African majority would be considered an African (Sobukwe & Gerhart 2016).

The Apartheid Regime

In 1966, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly labelled apartheid a crime against humanity, while in 1973 the UN adopted the Convention on Apartheid as a Crime Against Humanity.

Demonstration on March 21st 1960 (Sharpeville Day)

Sharpeville Day was commemorated by the liberation movements to remember the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. During the democratic era, the public holiday on 21 March is now known as Human Rights Day.

Philip Kgosana, a young PAC leader in the Western Cape, led a march on Parliament in Cape Town on 30 March 1960. In the wake of the arrest of many PAC members after the Sharpeville massacre, the young student played a leading role in the PAC in the Western Cape. Kgosana led about 30 000 protesters in the march.

Sobukwe after His Arrest (1961)

After Robert Sobukwe was released from Robben Island on 12 May 1969, he was banished to Galeshewe in Kimberley, 500 kilometres from Johannesburg, where he had lived prior to his imprisonment. He was placed under house arrest in the house he shared with his family, where he lived under conditions as a banned person (Ndlovu 2009). During his period of banishment in Kimberley, Sobukwe focused on completing a law degree and, after completing his articles in 1975, opened a law firm.

The Death of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe

Robert Sobukwe died at the age of 54 at Kimberley General Hospital from lung cancer on 27 February 1978. The manner in which he was treated during the period of solitary confinement on Robben Island, including being deliberately served with decomposed food and crushed-bone soup, and the periodic introduction of concentrated hot or cold air into his room, contributed to his condition (Ndlovu 2009).

Sobukwe, Father of Azania

In the wake of the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960, Sobukwe was sentenced on 4 May 1960 to three years' imprisonment after being convicted of inciting Africans to campaign against the pass laws.

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POEMS OF TRIBUTE TO HONOUR PROFESSOR ROBERT MANGALISO SOBUKWE

This collection of poems is inspired by my lifelong admiration for the founding president of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe. My admiration arose from the oft-repeated stories my grandfather, Petrus Thembu, told me of the community meetings he attended that were organised by Sobukwe when he was under house arrest during his banishment to Kimberley. I was told by my grandfather that Sobukwe would greet people in the community with a raised right hand and the words 'Izwe Lethu'. I adopted this manner of greeting people and eventually joined the PAC and its military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA). In 1990 I had the privilege of meeting the commander of APLA and former president of the PAC, Letlapa Mphahlele, in Lesotho.



Tumelo Smith



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