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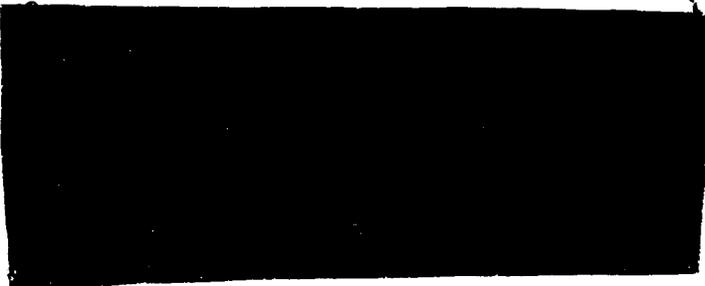
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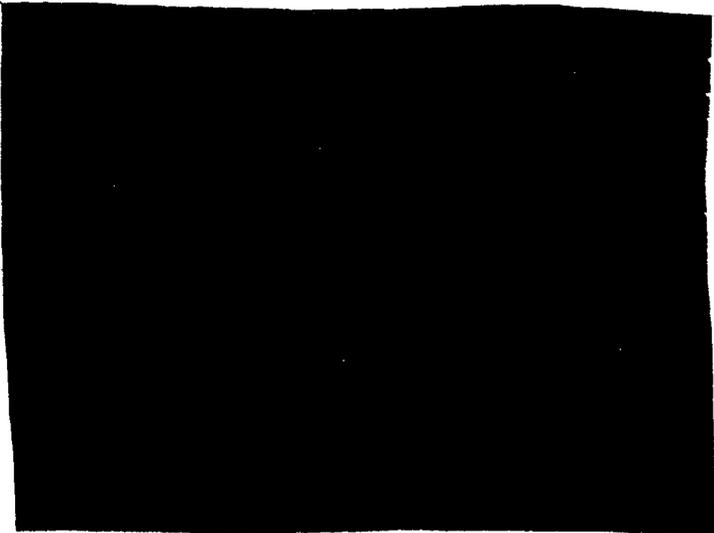
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Lebanon: Islamic Fundamentalism in Tripoli b3

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The radical Sunni Islamic Unification Movement is likely to remain an important political and religious force in Tripoli despite Syrian attempts to contain it militarily. As the IUM becomes frustrated with the Syrian presence in Tripoli, it will broaden its relations with extremist Shia and Sunni groups elsewhere in Lebanon. b3

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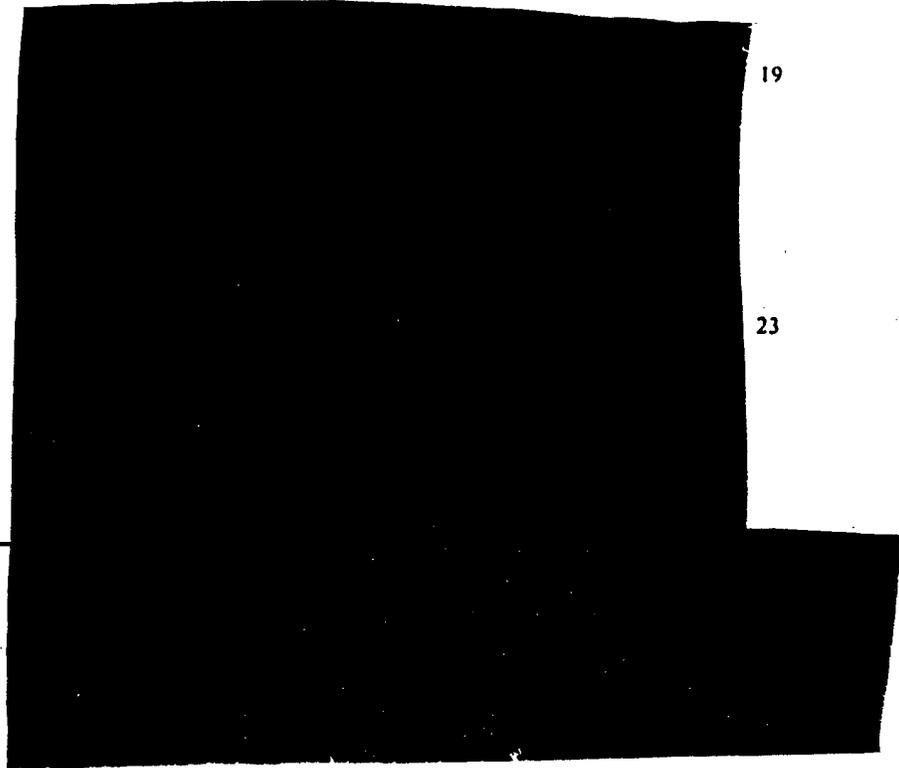
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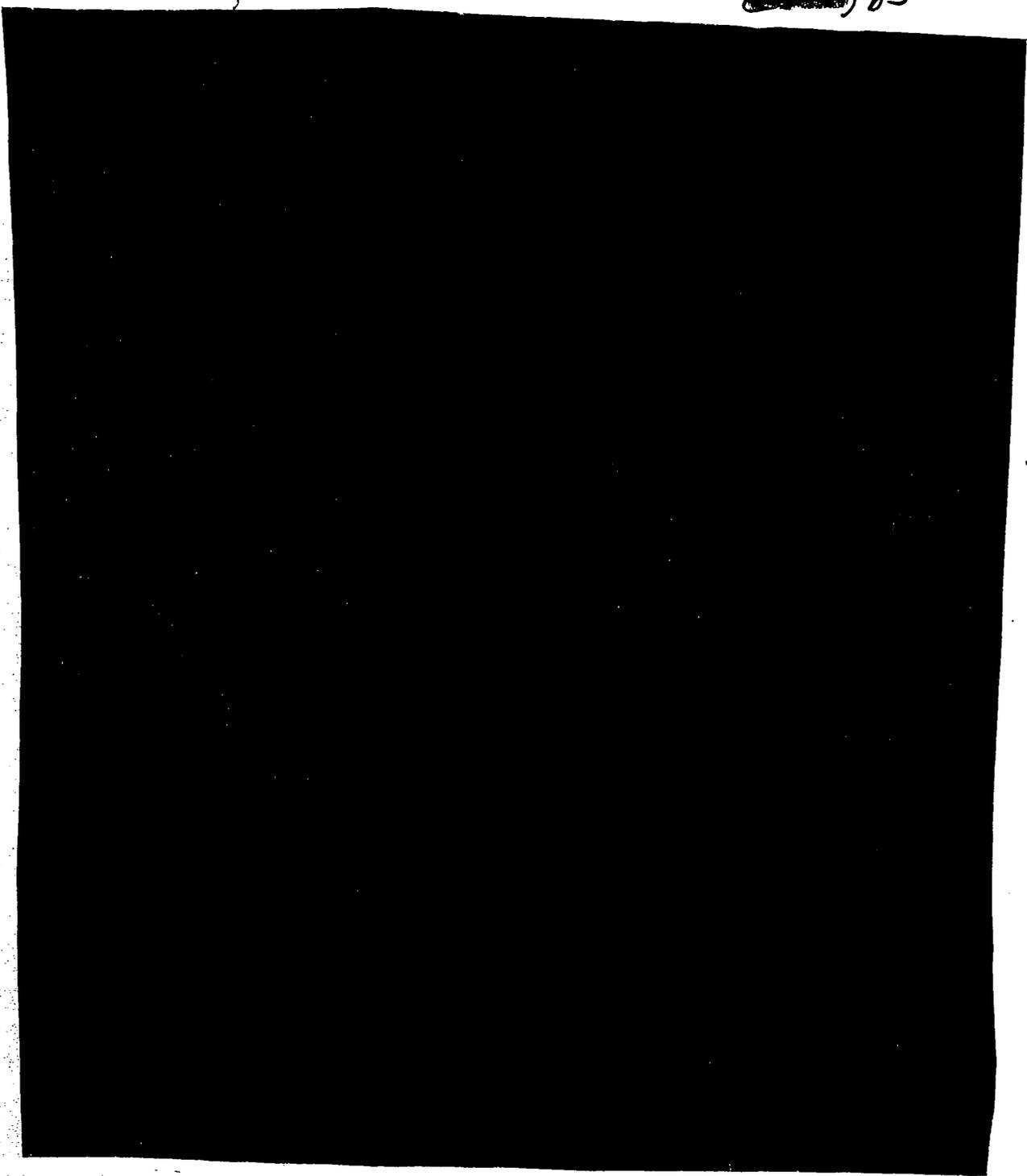
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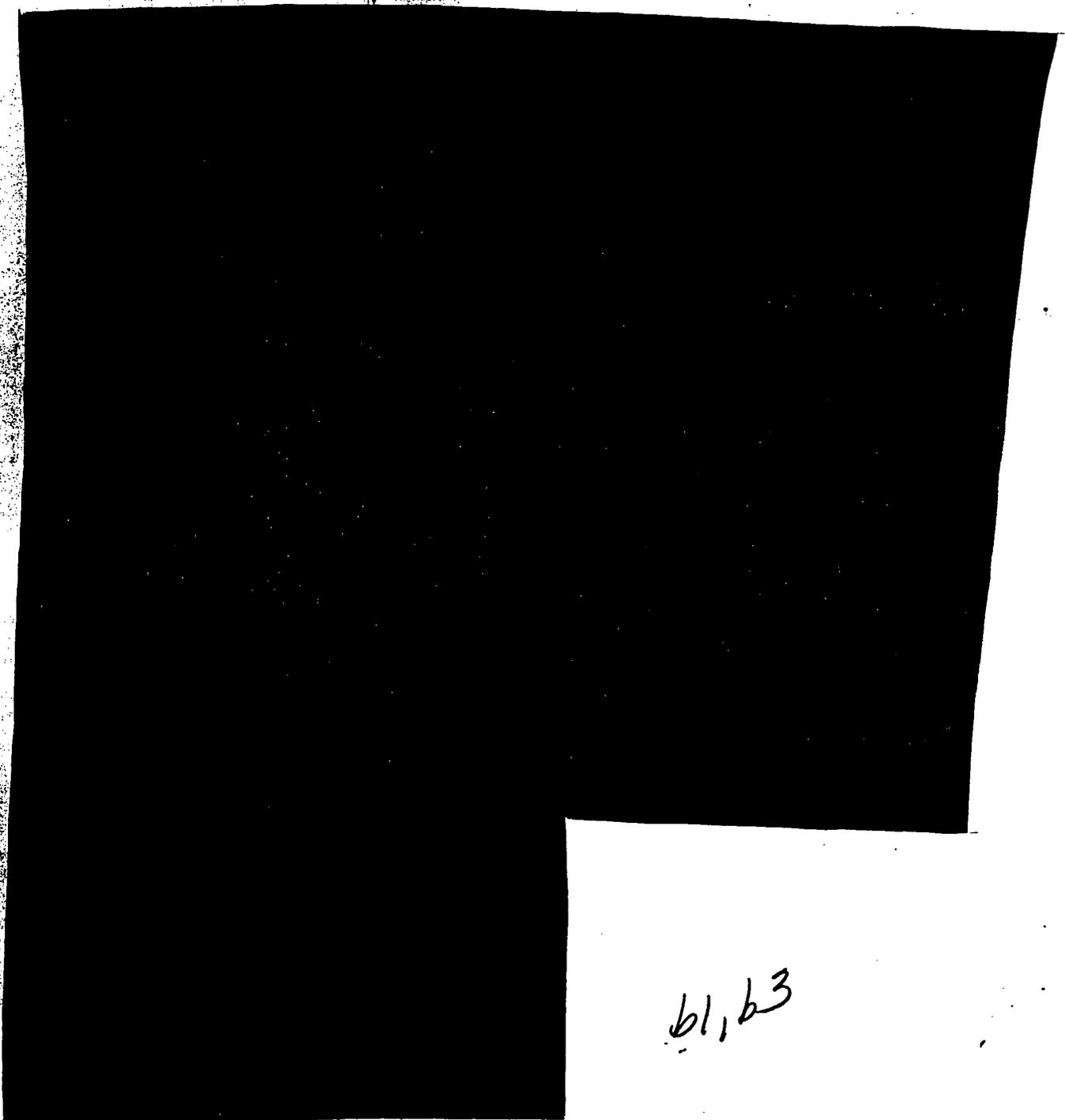


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Lebanon: Islamic Fundamentalism in Tripoli b3

Obey God and His Prophet and do not fight amongst yourselves lest you fail and lose your strength. Be patient, for God is with those who are patient.

Koran b3

The radical Sunni Islamic Unification Movement (IUM) of Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban is likely to remain an important political and religious force in Tripoli despite Syrian attempts to contain it militarily. As the IUM becomes more frustrated with the Syrian troop presence in Tripoli, it will cultivate its clandestine relationships with the extremist Lebanese Shia Hizballah and with other militant Sunni fundamentalists in Beirut and Sidon. b3

In the absence of a strong, centralized Lebanese Government, the IUM will increasingly succeed in undermining plans to strengthen the authority of the Lebanese state in the northern city of Tripoli. The IUM displays little political tolerance toward non-Muslim Lebanese and advocates autonomy from secular state authority. b3

The IUM's Support Network

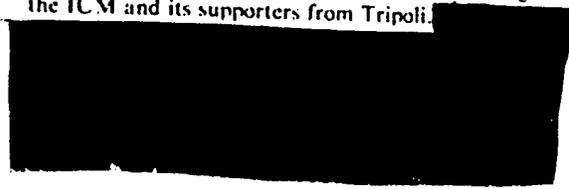
The IUM is a purely Sunni Muslim organization with a clear-cut fundamentalist ideology. It draws its inspiration from orthodox and inflexible Islam, and its leader, Shaykh Sha'ban, maintains strong ties to radical Shia clerics both in Lebanon and Iran. Sha'ban is vehemently anti-Western and often shares Iran's goal of ridding Lebanon and the Muslim world of what he perceives as American and Zionist influence. He favors the imposition of strict rules and regulations governing every aspect of human behavior from dress codes to the prohibition of liquor consumption, which he has already imposed on the inhabitants of Tripoli. b3

Sha'ban's IUM is the largest Sunni fundamentalist group in Lebanon and has connections to smaller fundamentalist groups outside Tripoli. A group calling itself the Islamic Liberation Organization, which we believe is a covername for Sunni fundamentalists,



Shaykh Sha'ban addressing a religious gathering in Tripoli. Pictures of IUM martyrs in foreground. b3

kidnaped four Soviet diplomats in Beirut in October to express solidarity with the IUM following a Syrian-sponsored military campaign to disarm and dislodge the IUM and its supporters from Tripoli.



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The IUM has been busy cultivating both radical and nonradical Muslim support outside Tripoli, but repeated confrontations with Syria over the control of Lebanon's second-largest Muslim city have weakened the movement militarily. Membership within the IUM fluctuates considerably. In times of crisis or when threatened from outside, members display remarkable cohesion. When the threat subsides, however, IUM leaders resume their factional disputes.

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Organization

The IUM is a loose coalition known in Arabic as Al Tawheed, or oneness, a reference both to Islamic belief in the oneness of God and in the unity of the faithful. It has no specific hierarchy or institutional discipline. Shaykh Sa'id was proclaimed "prince" of the movement in 1982 and became the spokesman for the remaining leaders. The IUM reached its zenith in that year when it seemed unified, but it was subsequently faced with severe personality conflicts that led to the transformation of the movement into a cluster of quasi-autonomous entities.

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he claims should include both Shias and Sunnis, as necessary so long as the Islamic community in the Middle East is threatened by the West and Zionism. b3

IUM leaders believe in the invincibility of their mission and, hence, the righteousness of their message to the United States and the West. They attribute most of Lebanon's social and political ills to Westernization. b3

Sha'ban advocates revolutionary violence and argues that Islam is fully capable of facing the challenges of Western modernity and education, and this should alleviate Lebanese Christian fears of Islamic domination. He has repeatedly challenged the United States and the West. b3



Sha'ban sees Lebanese nationalism as a Western-imposed phenomenon and a product of both colonialism and imperial hegemony. He believes Lebanese society is in need of an alternative model—a Muslim framework based on the sharia, or Islamic law, for a new nation state. On this issue, all IUM leaders agree, but there is fundamental disagreement on how to bring this about. b3

Relations With Iran

Except for Sha'ban, IUM leaders view their relations with Iran as a marriage of convenience. The IUM needs Iran to check Syrian belligerency inside Tripoli, and Iran views the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in that city as part of its overall Lebanese strategy of increasing its influence and prestige within both the Shia and Sunni communities. Iran is trying to use radical Shia elements to bolster the IUM. Hizballah members often parade in Tripoli chanting pro-Khomeini slogans and are trying with IUM complicity to establish a foothold in that city, much to the unhappiness of the Syrian regime. b3

Social Origins

Several factors have contributed to the emergence of the IUM as an Islamic militant organization.

Foremost among them is the increasing sense of isolation felt by inhabitants of Tripoli as a result of declining Lebanese Government authority over the last 10 years. The city's isolation, coupled with massive social dislocations resulting from increased unemployment or underemployment, aggravates Tripoli's economic and demographic imbalance.

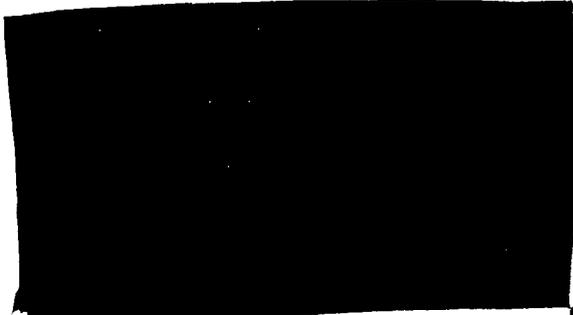
Muslim and Alawi unskilled labor has poured into the city from surrounding villages and is competing for scarce job opportunities. This situation has resulted in the development of conflict over jobs, status, power, and resources. b3

The success of Islamic fundamentalism in Tripoli is rooted in the IUM leadership's ability to translate economic and social grievances into political causes.

The lower-class Muslim community has been mobilized through an intricate system of support from mosques and religious centers throughout the city. Islam has been used as a vehicle for military and social mobilization to consolidate control throughout the city. IUM has resorted to intensive social and political indoctrination to instill revolutionary fervor within its constituency. b3

The Islamic Foundation of the IUM

The Islamic Unification Movement was founded in the name of Islamic unity. Its leaders often quote the Koranic verse exhorting Muslims to unite: "Become bonded together by the rope of God and do not fragment." Sha'ban justifies his call for unity, which



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revolves around Khomeini's leadership, implying that both support Khomeini's spiritual leadership, an issue not fully accepted by other IUM leaders. Several factors hamper further Hizballah-IUM cooperation in Tripoli:

- The absence of a significant Shia population in Tripoli.
- The traditional rivalry between Sunnis and Shias.

In keeping with its policy of exporting the Islamic revolution to other Arab countries, Iran wants to use the IUM to build a sound Islamic fundamentalist foundation in Tripoli. Iran's goal is to establish a base in Lebanon as a prelude to the triumph of Islamic militant forces in that country. After having built a strong loyal following, Iran will establish coalitions with other parties and groups in sympathy with its overall revolutionary goal. b3

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The Syrian Factor

Growing IUM activism in Tripoli has been a thorn in the Syrian side for several years. Syria accuses the movement of harboring both antiregime Muslim Brotherhood fugitives and pro-Arafat Palestinians opposed to Syrian policy in northern Lebanon.

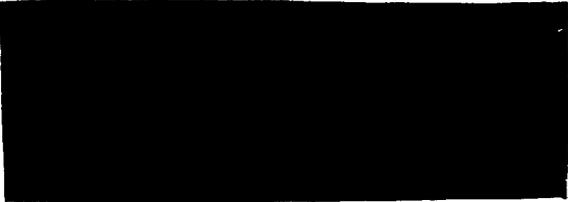
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Relations With Hizballah

The IUM's relationship with the Shia Hizballah is based on mutual interests. Both are anti-American and anti-Israeli and view the United States as supporting Christian and Zionist domination of the Islamic community in Lebanon. Husayn Musawi, head of Islamic Amal and a prominent Hizballah leader, points out that Hizballah's affinity to Sha'ban

Damascus considers the growth of the IUM's financial and military power in Tripoli as detrimental to its long-term interests in Lebanon. Syrian President Assad has been particularly displeased with Sha'ban's attacks on the Christians in Tripoli. To this end, Syria wants to rearm and refortify its former positions inside the city, which in the past two years have been taken over by the IUM militia. b3

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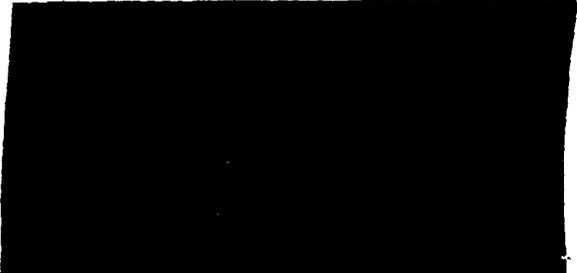


Syria has attempted to blockade the Tripoli harbor to deprive the IUM of vital military supplies that would enable the IUM to continue fighting. Syria wants to

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Development of the IUM

- 1975-81 *Destruction of the pro-Iraqi Ba'thists and followers of Farouq al-Muqqadam's 24 October militia by newly emerging Islamic militia loyal to Sha'ban.*
- 1982 *IUM becomes a formal entity.*
- 1983 *IUM joins Arafat in sending off Syrian and Arab Democratic Party militia attacks on Tripoli.*
Arafat departs Tripoli, leaving behind large cache of weapons in Sha'ban's trust.
- 1984 *IUM leadership splits and forms new organizations.*
- Late 1984 *Reorganization of the IUM under the banner of the Islamic Meeting. Signs of independence and separation continue.*
- June 1985 *IUM militia joins forces to face Syrian and leftist threat.*
- October 1985 *Syrian troops enter Tripoli. IUM alliance appears to be holding together.*



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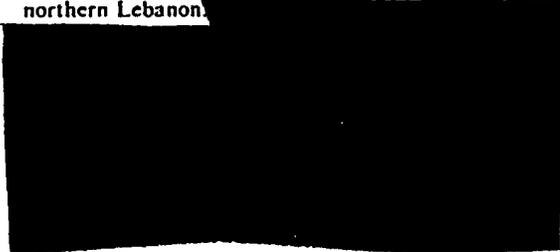
Outlook

Syrian policy toward the IUM appears to be limited to containing the fundamentalist movement in Tripoli. The IUM must rely on its complex network of support inside Lebanon and on Iranian patronage to survive a future Syrian onslaught. Syria, however, will find it hard to move much further in pacifying Lebanon without dealing with the fundamentalist groups and their principal backer, Iran. If Iran significantly reduces its economic support to Syria, the Syrians will be less reluctant to crack down on the fundamentalists. Moreover, Iran may have to capitulate to Syrian interests to safeguard its credibility among the majority of its Lebanese Shia constituency and to maintain Syrian support against Iraq.

The IUM has only limited popular support, even in Tripoli. It may continue to increase its following if political chaos and social despair continue, but it will have to avoid provoking a Syrian military response that could destroy it. Sunni fundamentalism is unlikely to become a powerful phenomenon outside of Tripoli. The Sunnis in Beirut, Sidon, and Tyre are not prone to religious extremism. The importance of the IUM outside of Tripoli lies primarily in its alliance with the Hizballah.



demoralize and disarm the IUM as quickly as possible without having to deploy troops permanently to northern Lebanon.



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The IUM's survival as a militant organization rests on continued Sunni-Shia cooperation. IUM leaders must subordinate their traditional rivalries to immediate security considerations. In the long run, the Shia belief in authoritarian charismatic leadership as embodied in the Imamate, and the traditional Sunni adherence to the concept of Islamic consensus, will

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pose a major obstacle to continued cooperation among the IUM's leadership, on one hand, and the IUM and other fundamentalist groups such as Hizballah, on the other.

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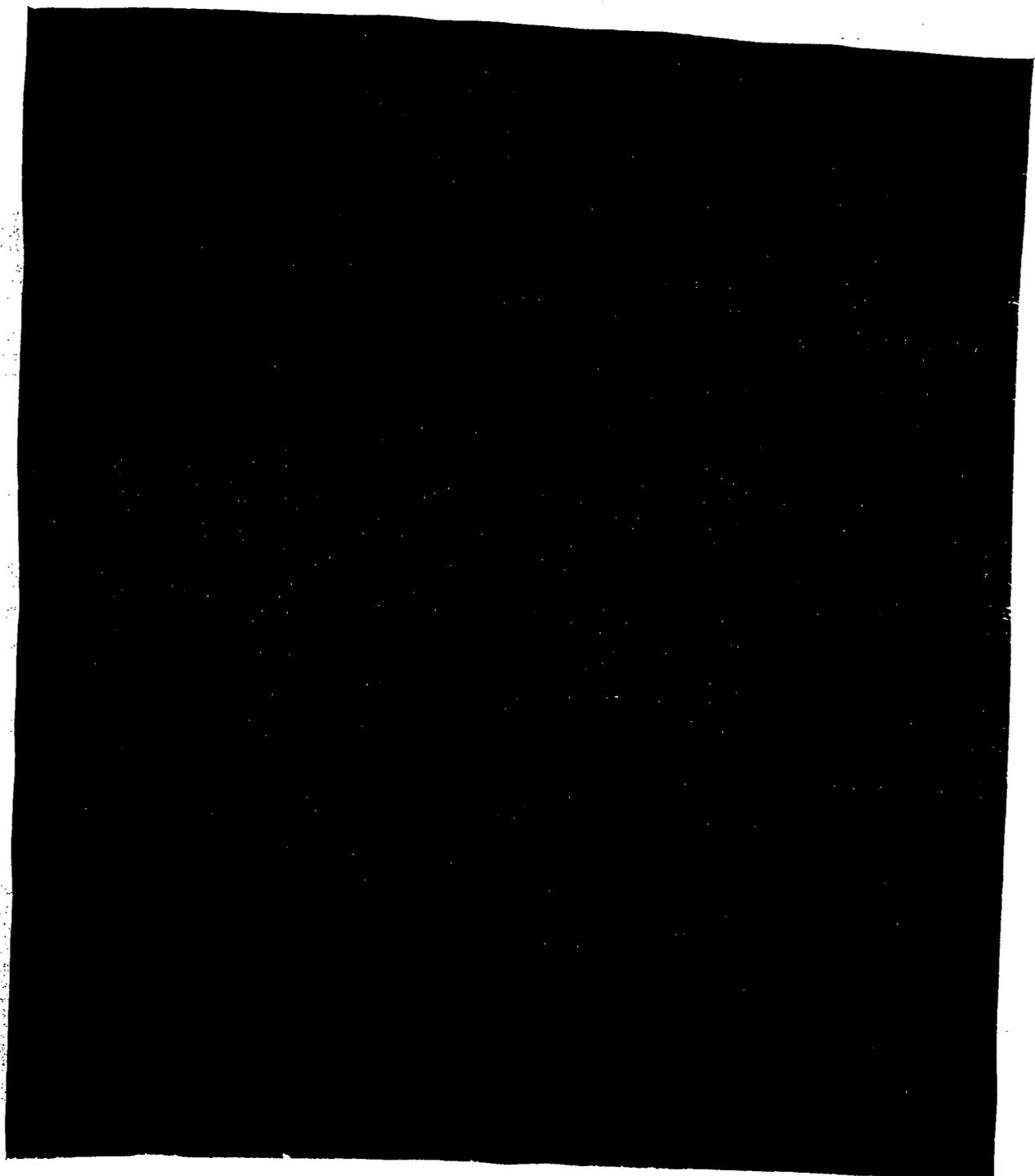
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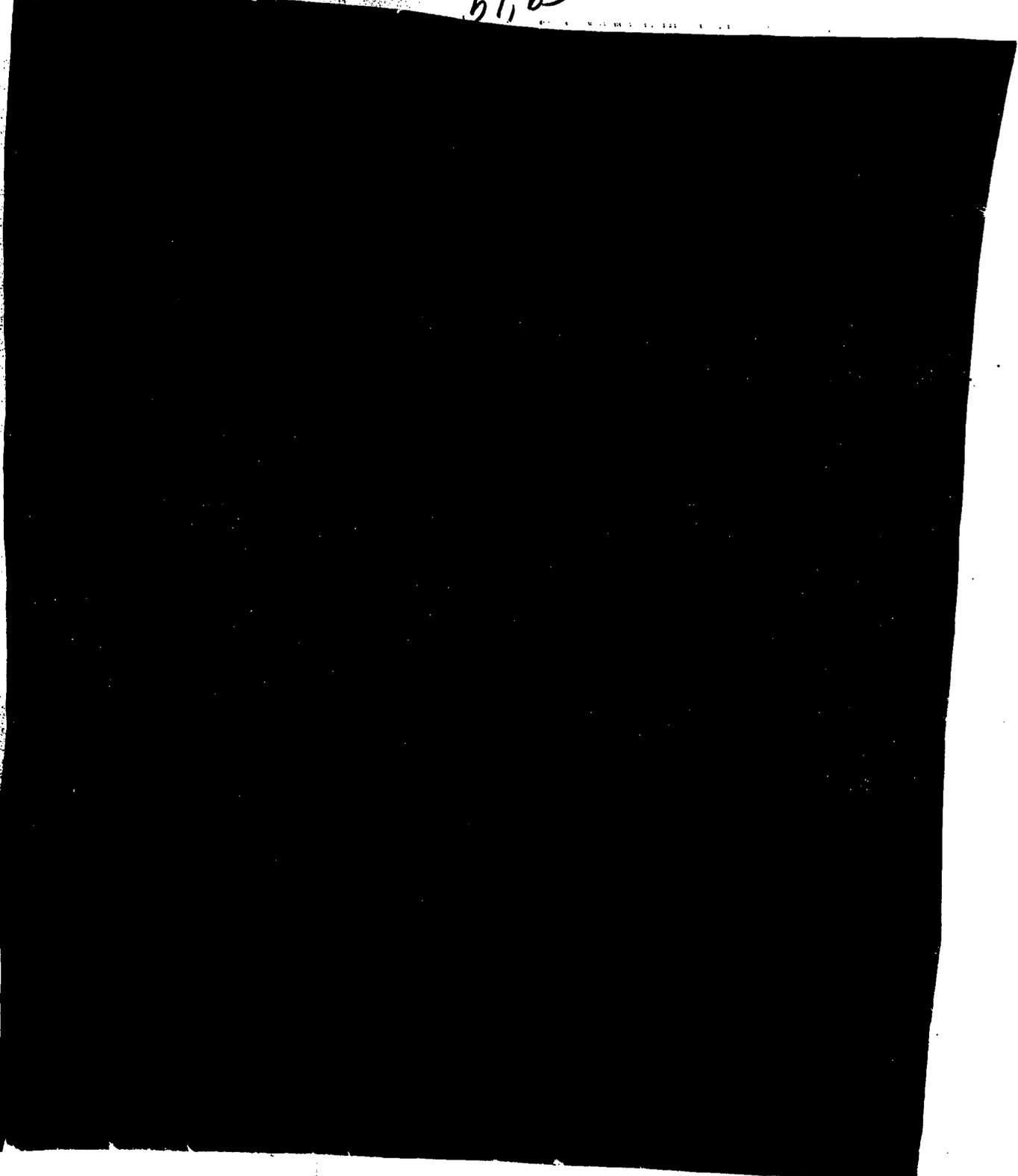
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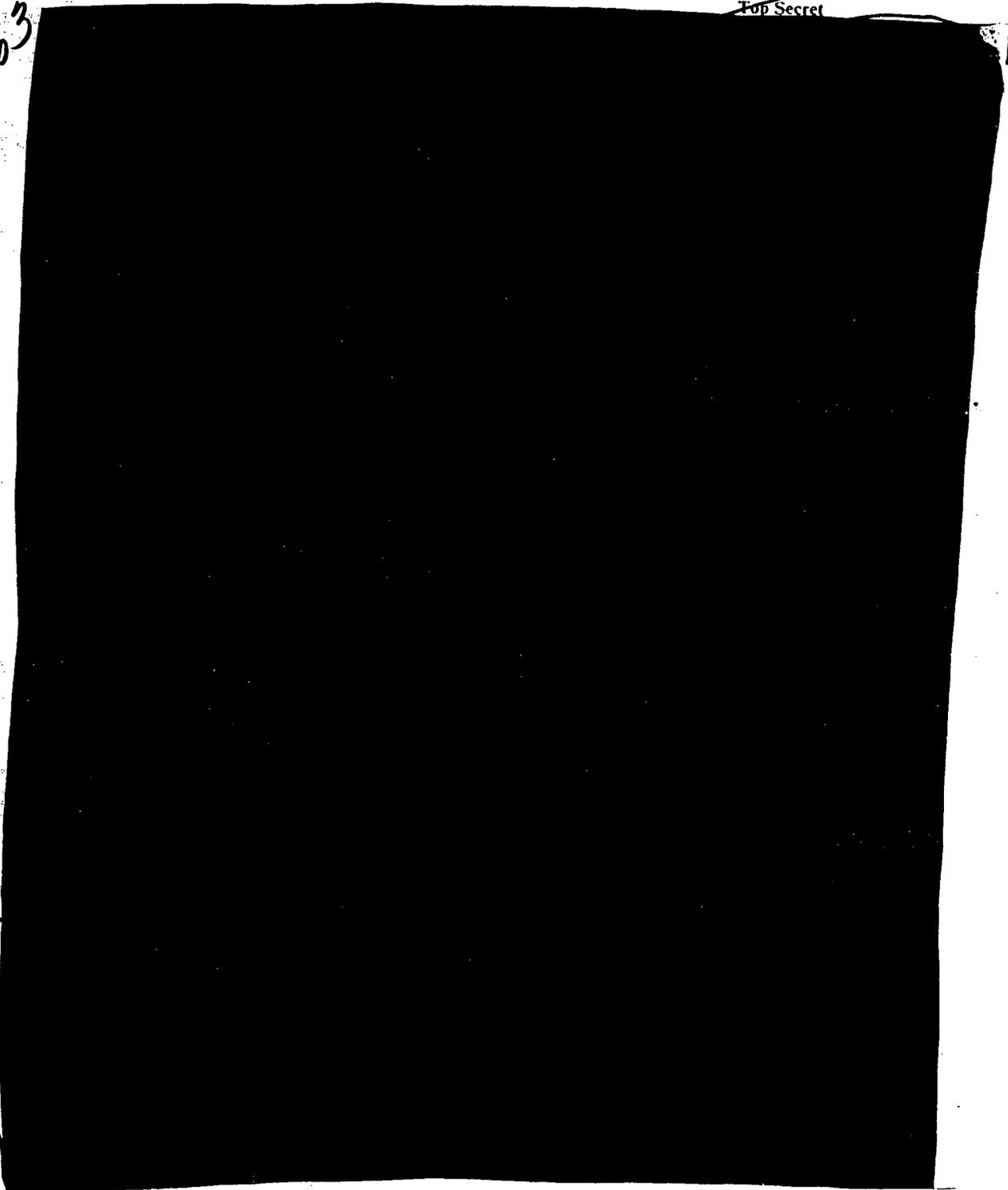
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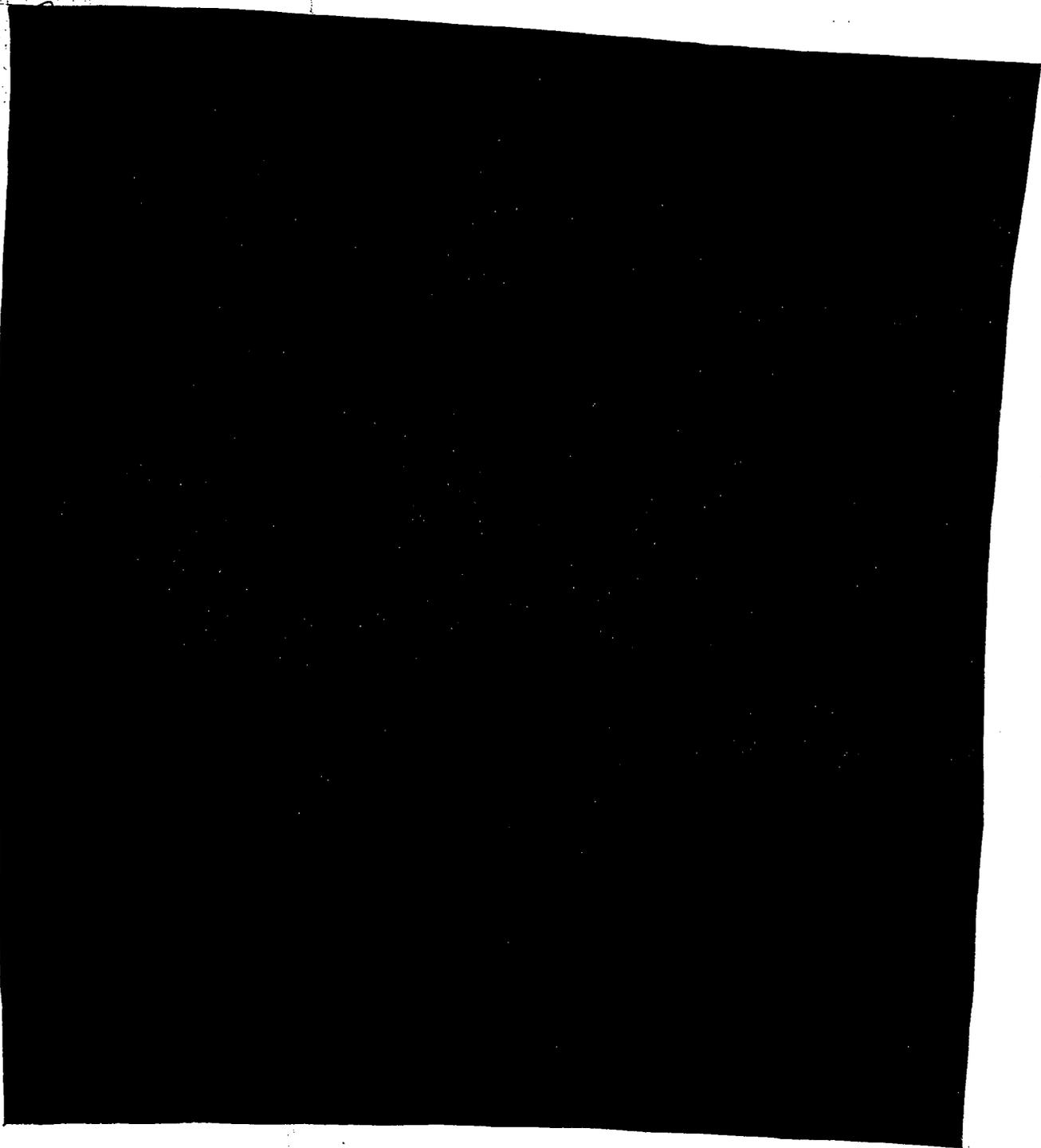
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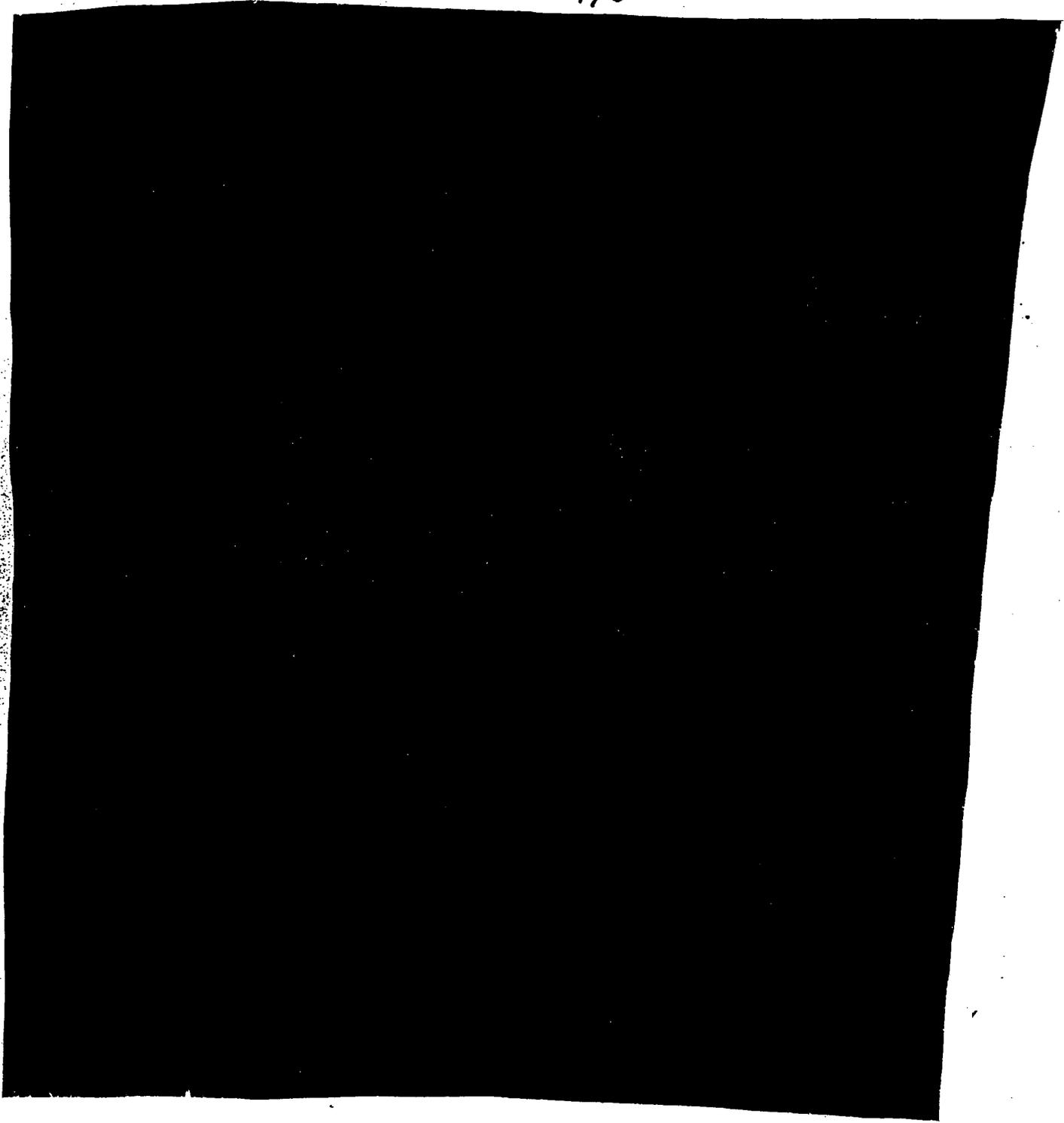
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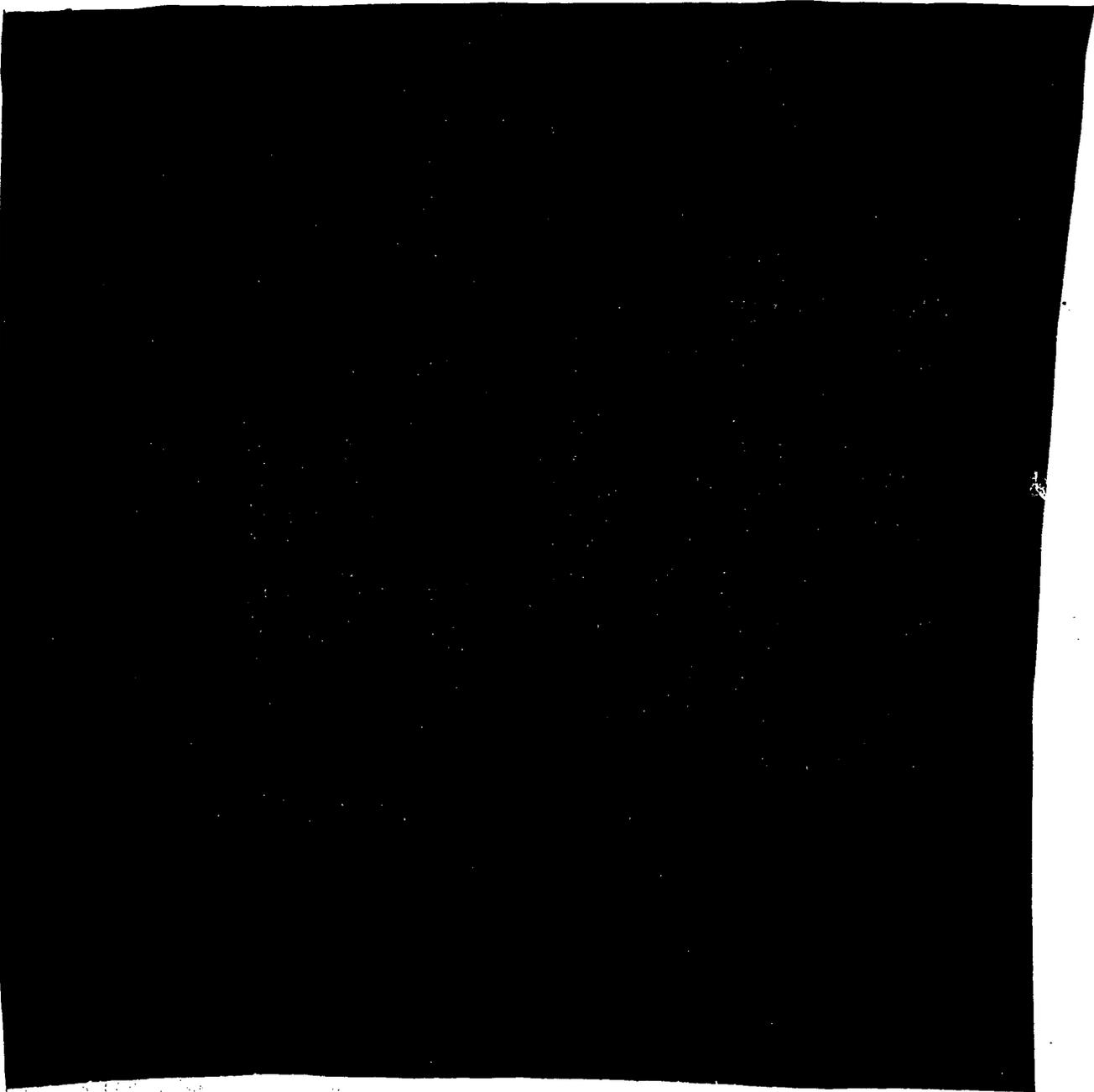


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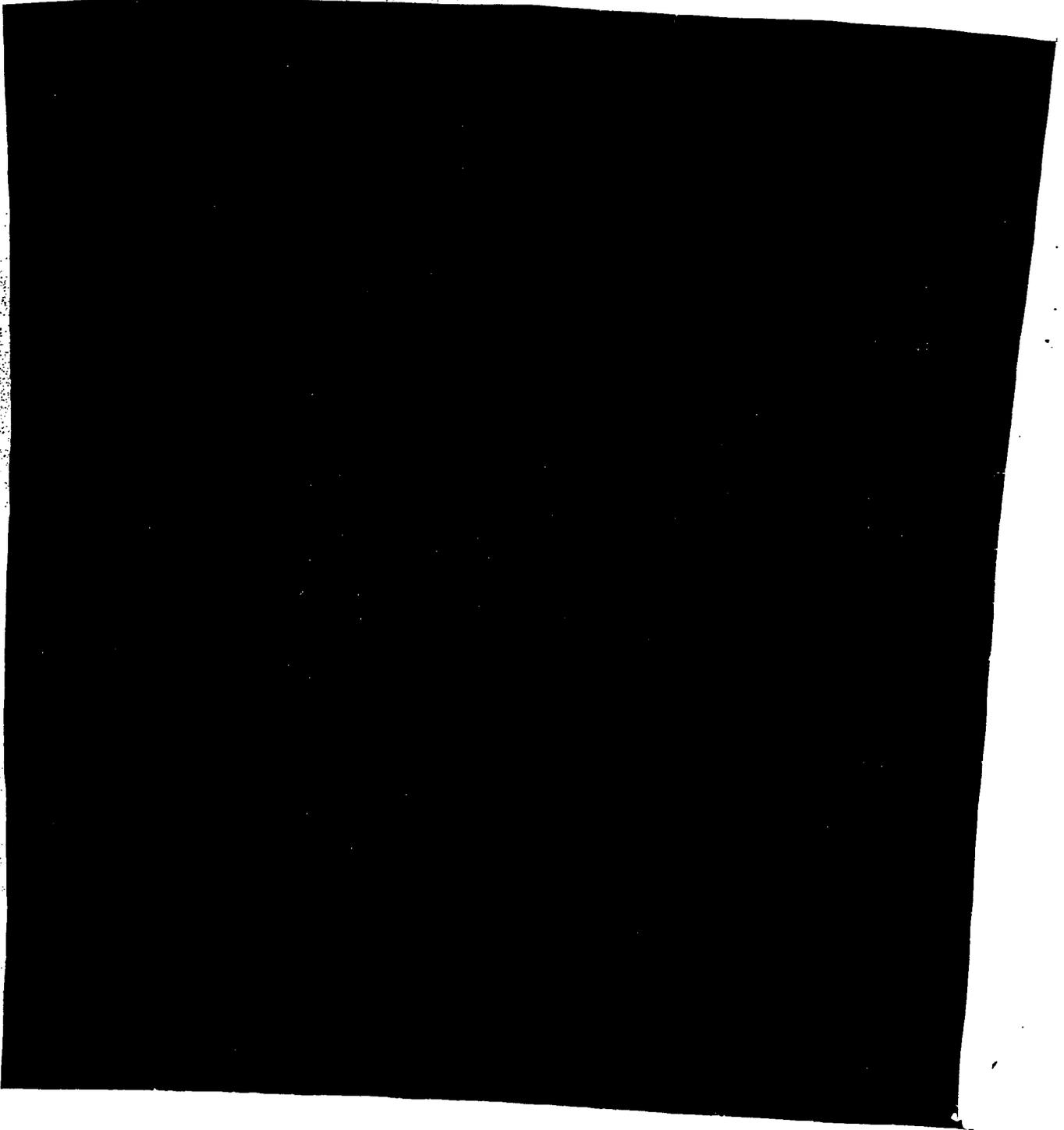
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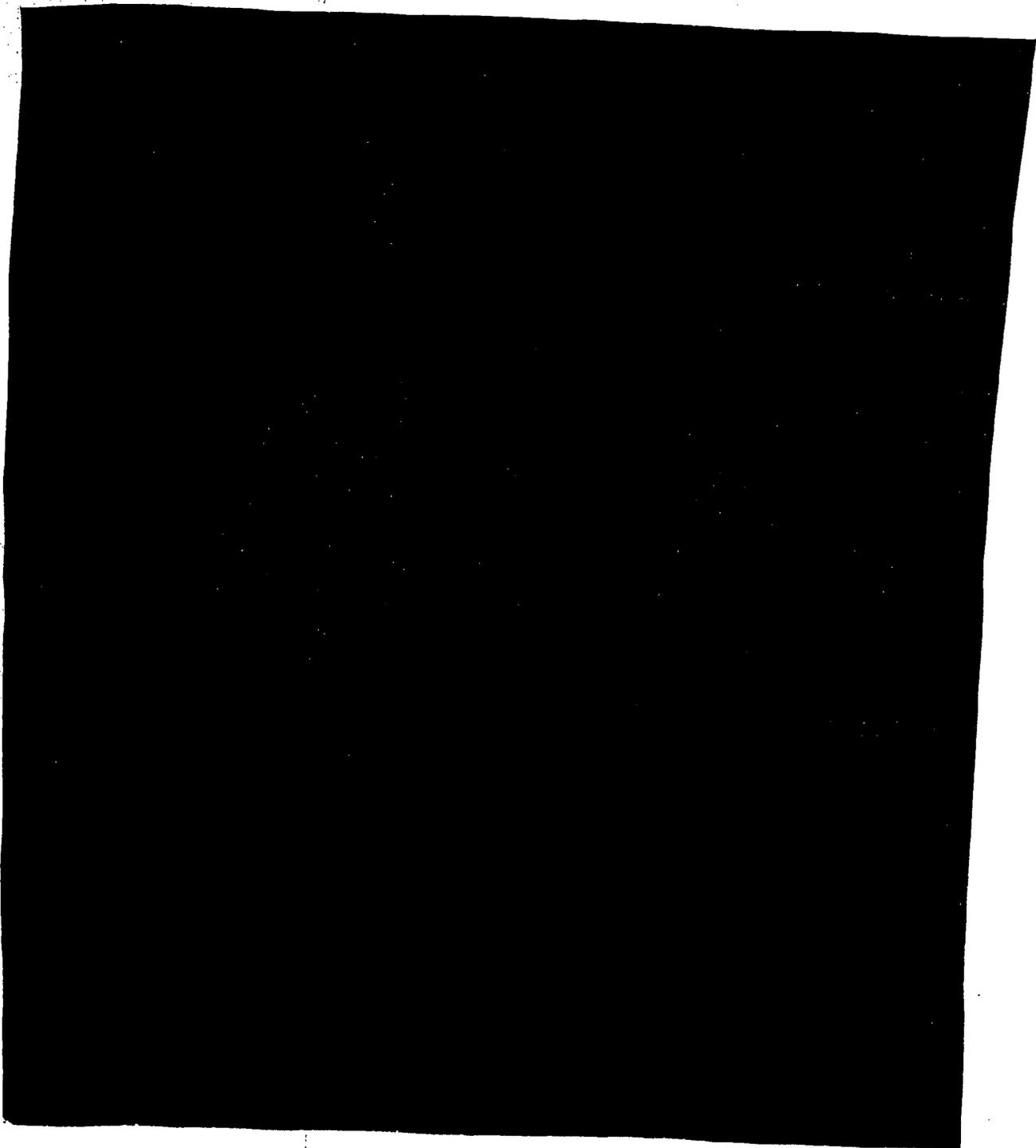
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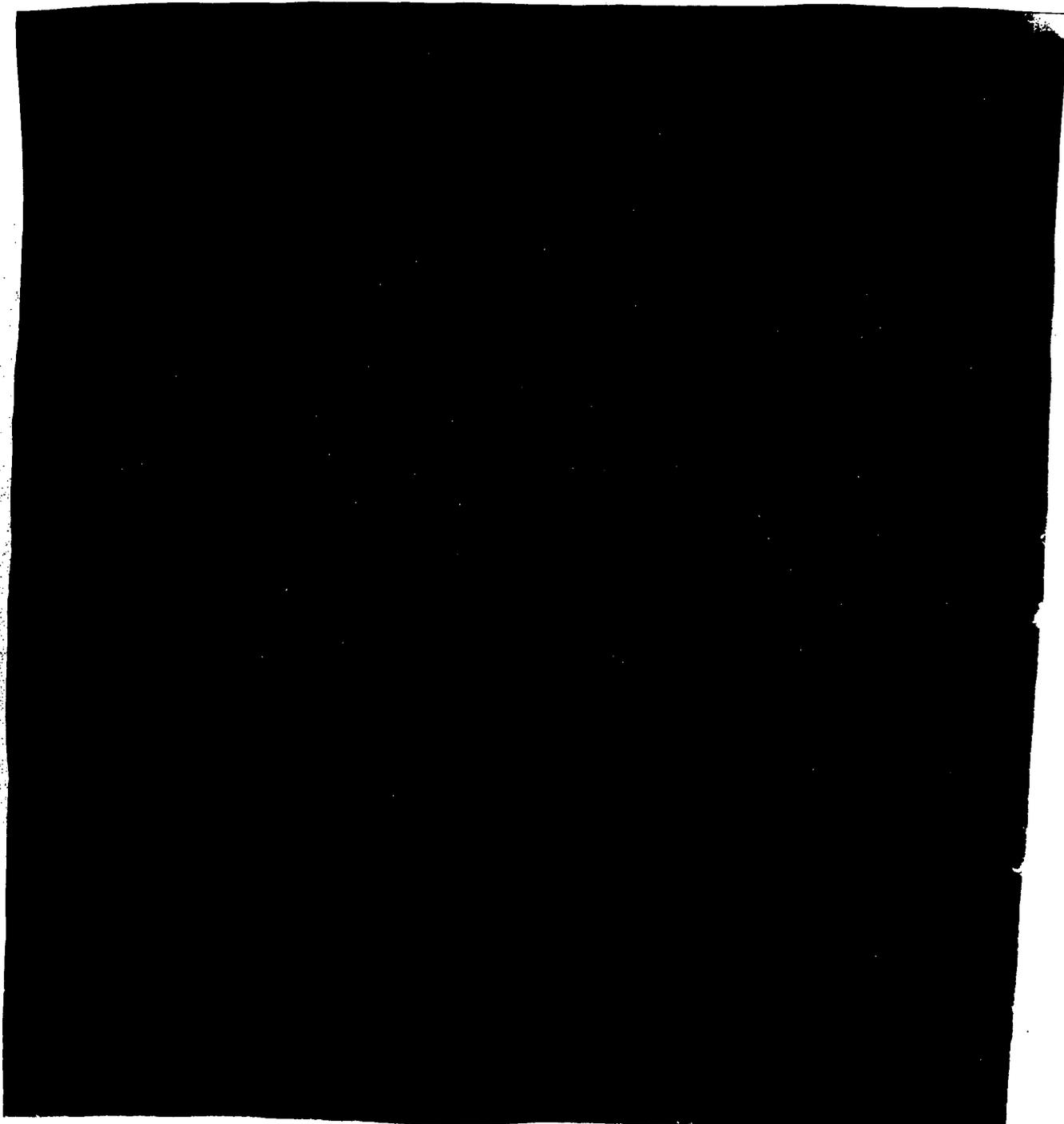
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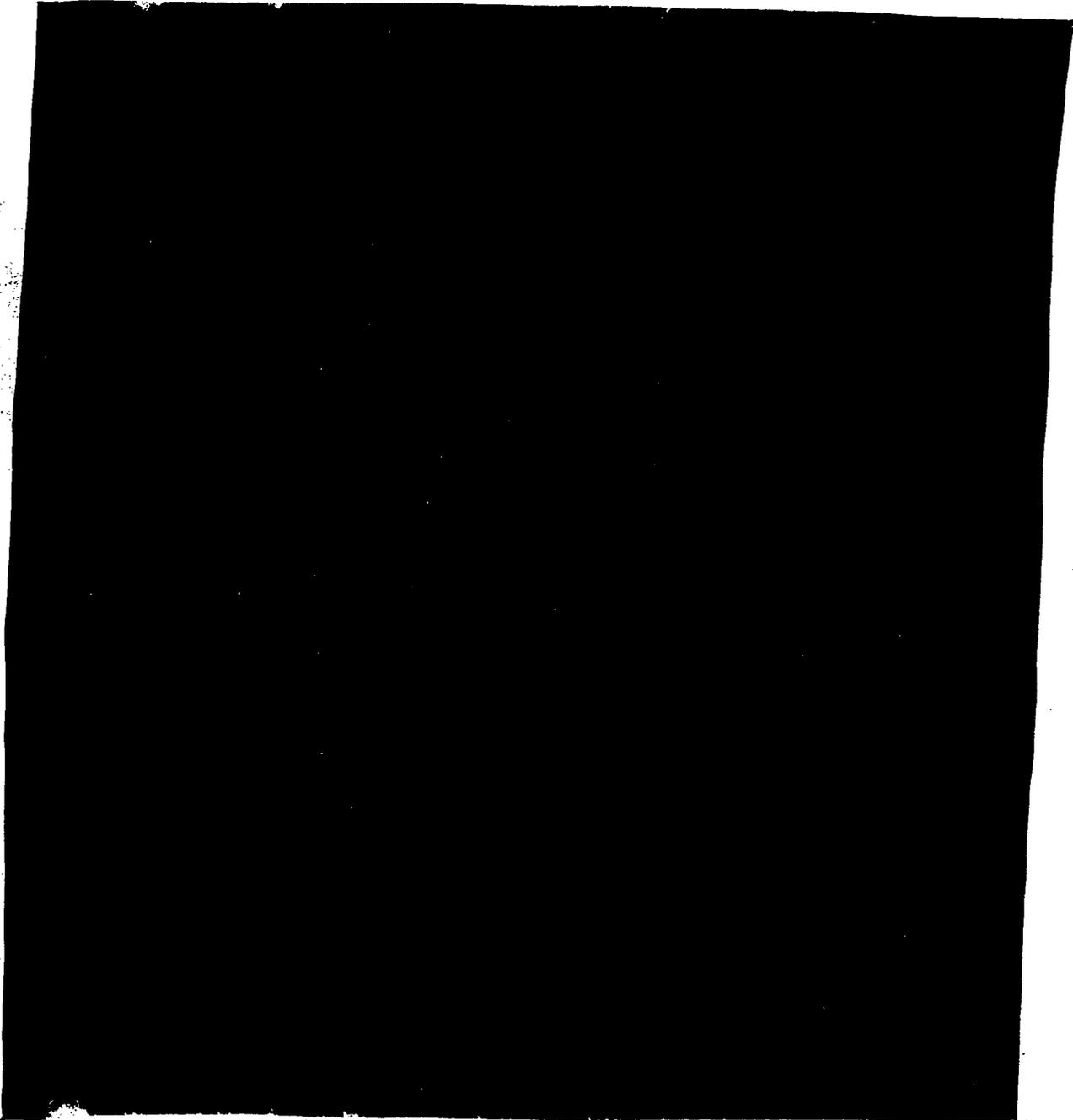
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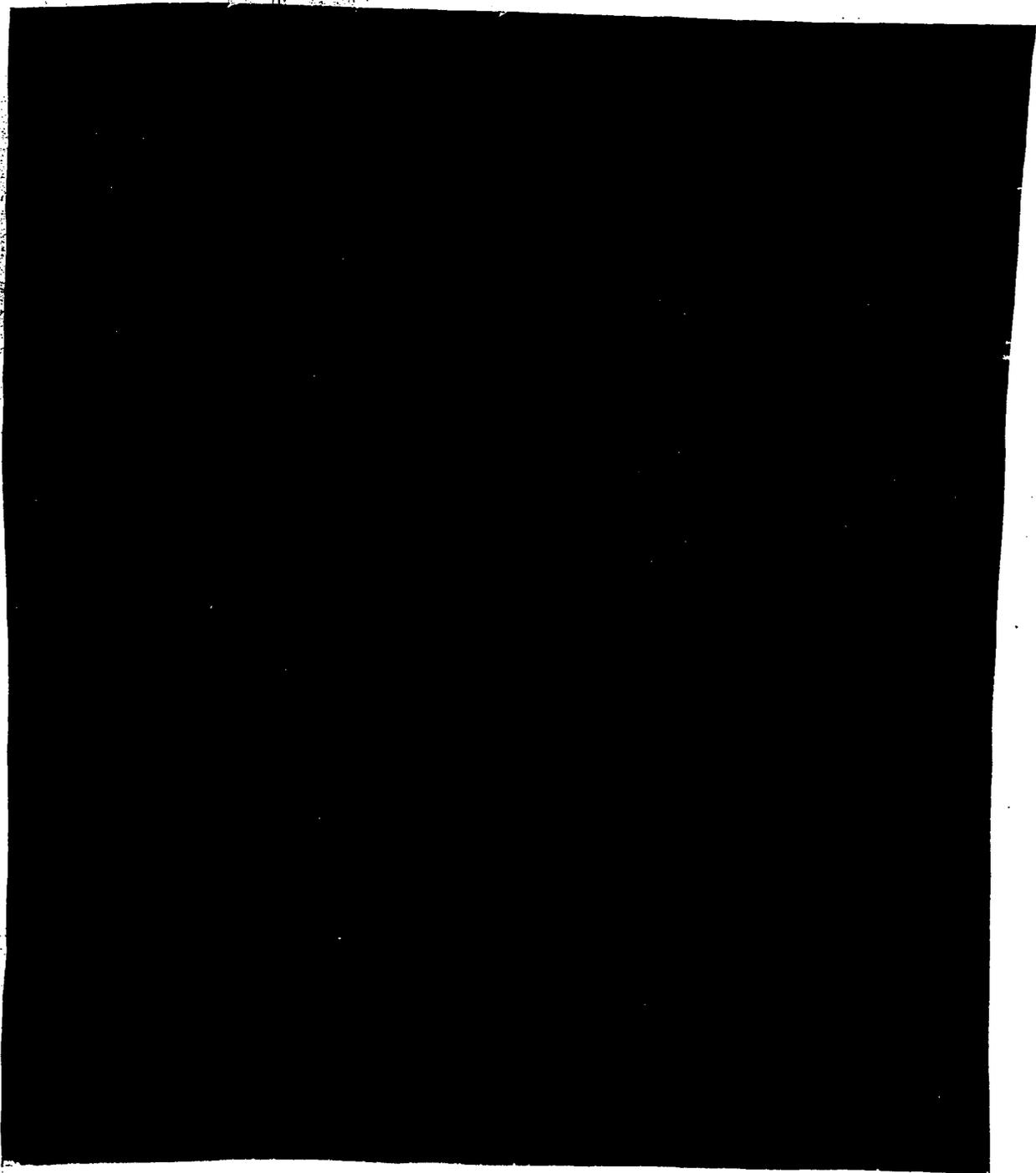
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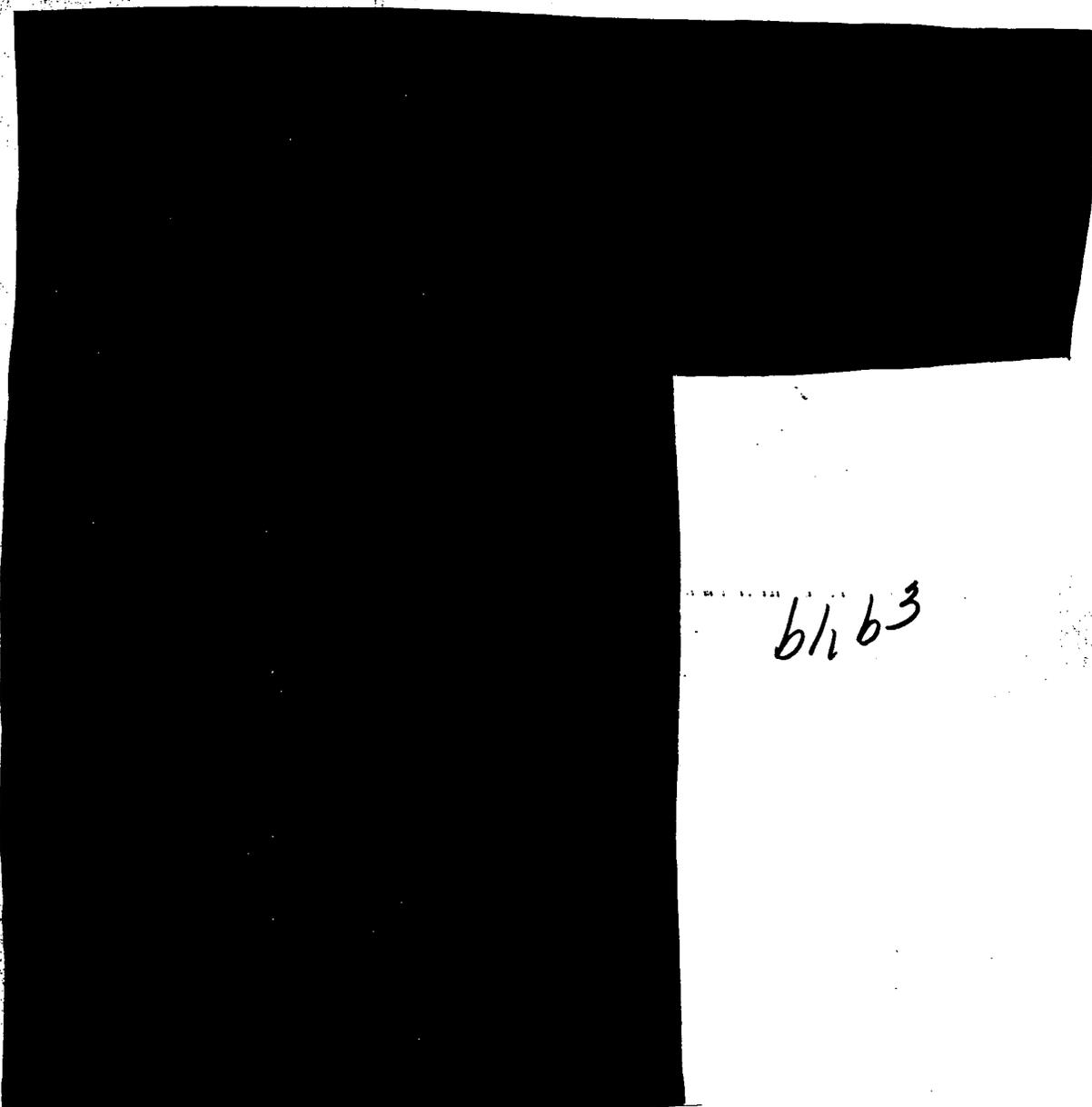
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