

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY STUDENTS AND ADVISORY COUNCIL OF OEO'S UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

September 16, 1966

∟ Your goal is education. Before I became a politician that was my profession. ∟ Education is to this day my most important cause -- as I'm sure the chairman of your advisory group, Arthur Flemming, is well aware, since his days as Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Sargent Shriver has asked me to read to you a letter he received from a student who attended the Upward Bound program where I formerly was a college ~~professor~~ ^{Teacher}, the University of Minnesota.

∟ Mr. Shriver informs me this young lady's comments are typical of the response from Upward Bound students all over the country -- and I must tell you they are heartwarming indeed to a public servant who has worked

long and hard to get the Office of Economic Opportunity established by Congress and to get just this kind of educational approach to defeating poverty in schools and on campuses across the land.

My fellow Minnesotan prefaces her remarks about Upward Bound by explaining that she has lived in several different foster homes. "I'm sure," she says, "I know how a pup feels that has been dropped out on the highway in strange unfamiliar surroundings."

Then, "Along came Upward Bound and a whole group of young adults feeling very much like I did ... We suddenly realized we were important, that we were not just those poor kids from poor homes but actually we were people. Someone cared, someone thinks we are worth working with and most of all, we found out we, too, are citizens. Citizens of the greatest country on earth, the most generous country, with a government that takes

time to think of the needs of each individual and make sure he has his right to be a citizen and an individual. We now know that each American is important in his own way to this great God-given nation.

"I would like to thank you, the President, and the United States of America for my experiences with Upward Bound. Upward Bound not only taught me and the others the values of higher education but also a love, respect, and tolerance of our fellow man."

↳ If you all have gotten that much out of the Upward Bound program, I don't think you need any encouragement from me.

But let me tell you this. Your government is not only willing but anxious to invest in your future because we know there is no better way to invest in the future of America.

It has always been in the American tradition to strive to do better than those who went before us. We believe in the innate worth of the individual and his ability to change his circumstances. Upward mobility in our society, more than any other in the world, is based not on who you know or what favors you can buy -- but on what you know and what you can do.

I think you know that both your President and Vice President of the United States have come from humble circumstances. I had to work my way through high school and college ~~working in my father's drugstore~~. The President often talks movingly about his work with the National Youth Administration, a program of the thirties to help give young people a break.

I wish all American could see within your Upward Bound programs the friendships created among many different racial and ethnic groups through understanding and knowledge.

One of your fellow students tells us much better than I could how opening the mind to learning will bring the racial peace this nation is so desperately struggling to achieve. She writes:

"I had been brought up with a strong racial prejudice; my parents never understood the truth and they didn't intend for me to. Now I realize a person is a person, and your personality dominates the color of your skin. Getting to know the Negroes in the program has been, I think, probably one of the most valuable experiences. I can never again discriminate against another person merely because of their skin color or what church they attend."

This young girl has already learned a lesson that she can teach others. I hope all of you will help to spread the knowledge and understanding you have gained from your experiences in Upward Bound within your families and your communities.

Everyone connected with this great educational endeavor, Dr. Frost, ^{And} Educational Projects, Incorporated, which is assisting Dr. Frost and his staff, and, most of all, the teachers, counselors, undergraduate tutors and the Upward Bound students deserve our wholehearted support. Upward Bound, thanks to its participants, brings to fruition many individual and collective American hopes and dreams, some still to be realized. With your help, we will realize them.

STENOGRAPHIC TRANSCRIPT

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

(This transcript was prepared from a tape recording.)

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National Advisory Council

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Speech Made by Hubert H. Humphrey
Vice President of the United States
to the
Upward Bound Student Body

Indian Treaty Room
Executive Office
Washington, D. C.
Friday, September 16, 1966

SPEECH MADE BY VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

DR. FROST: May I have your attention, please?

I have the high honor and the distinct privilege to present to you the Vice President of the United States.

(Applause.)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much, Dr. Forst, and Dr. Fleming and Sarg Shriver and the members of the Advisory Council and, then, most important of all, members of Upward Bound student body.

Now, I have here a six-page speech, and I'm going to see that you all get it. I'm just not going to pay any attention to it a bit because I have already had the most joyful experience of this day and of many days in the privilege of being able to shake the hand of each of you and to say a word to each of you and to see each of you.

I just want to thank you for coming to Washington. I want to thank you for what you are doing for yourselves, the fine example that you are setting for others, and ultimately what you are going to do for your country.

It's been a very thrilling experience for me to work with young people. I guess I've been doing that most of my life. I'll have to tell you just a little bit about that experience. Even before I was married, I had the privilege of serving as a Scout master. Some of the young fellows around here might have been a member of the Boy Scouts. And

1 that troop was organized back in the time of the Depression
2 which you have heard about as a period in American history.
3 The very first meeting we had was with six youngsters, six
4 young fellows, and we met in the vestibule, the doorway of a
5 church in a dust storm in South Dakota.

6 I've already had a chance to say hello to some of
7 these fine folks who are from South Dakota.

8 What is your town now in South Dakota, dear?

9 VOICE: Mission.

10 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY. Mission. And a young lady
11 from Pine Ridge. And I think there are one or two others here.

12 We started out with six, and the door of that church
13 was closed. I think that was rather indicative of some of the
14 attitudes that existed at that time. Many doors were closed.
15 Many doors have been closed to you, and many doors have been
16 closed to many other Americans. But we've learned that doors
17 were supposed to be opened. As a matter of fact, it is rather
18 difficult to keep a door closed. You have to put a gadget in
19 it to keep it that way called a lock. They are supposed to be
20 opened and that's what life is supposed to be. It is supposed
21 to be an open adventure without any closed doors.

22 But we went on from those six to a group of young
23 men. The age was then 12 to 17. And I asked several of you
24 how old you were, and some said 16, some said 17, and so on.
25 We went on to a group of 42. And in that group of 42, we had

1 most of the young men in that community that had been able to
2 get into some trouble. And it seemed as if my troop was the
3 one that was the repository for the youngsters that got into
4 some trouble.

5 I think you would be interested in knowing that we
6 won the President's Award, which is the highest award that you
7 can get in scouting three of the six years that it was my
8 privilege to serve as scout master, not because of me, because
9 I didn't know very much about it, but because of the young
10 people. And we went on to other pursuits as we grew older,
11 scout master and scouts. I was only 21, 22 years of age and
12 didn't know very much about anything. But we had enthusiasm
13 and we had affection for one another, and we had a desire to
14 make something out of our respective lives. Every boy from
15 very modest means or poor, because you couldn't be anything
16 else but poor in 1932 and '33 when the country was prostrate.
17 In the area where I lived there was nothing. I should say to
18 my friends here that within ten miles of my home town there
19 were 75 vacant farms that people had left. The top soil had
20 blown off. The ground was as hard as this floor. There had
21 not been a crop for eleven years, and people were impoverished.
22 And that included everybody. Those that weren't impoverished
23 were living on the credit of somebody else. And that included
24 almost every family that I knew.

25 I went to college during that period. The first

1 quarter that I went to college, my father was kind enough to
2 provide me with \$15 a month. And then on the second quarter
3 he said we couldn't afford it. And I had the wonderful
4 opportunity of going to the University of Minnesota during
5 that period of economic difficulty in our nation. And, frankly,
6 it was the happiest period of my life, because it was maybe
7 the most challenging.

8 I dropped out for several years. I was a school
9 dropout, because I just couldn't do anything else but. We had
10 to have the family stick together and see if we could maintain
11 a business, a very small business. We were fortunate enough
12 to be able to do that. We weathered the storms of adversity
13 and depression.

14 And then I had the good fortune in 1936 to marry a
15 very lovely lady, and she brought me a great dowry. She had
16 been working for a public utility company. I think she was
17 getting \$45 a month, as I recall. She was an accountant. She
18 had been in college for a couple of years, and she had
19 purchased a refrigerator, an electric one. It wasn't paid for,
20 but that's what we had to start married life with.

21 As I told my young son the other day who was married
22 in rather luxurious surroundings, I said, "Well, I hope you
23 enjoy your life as much as your mother and I have. But your
24 honeymoon is in Hawaii, and ours was a one-day trip up the
25 north shore of Lake Superior, Duluth." And when we went there

1 I remember so well because I went to the Hotel Duluth and I
2 said how much is it for a room, and they said five dollars,
3 and I went to the other hotel. It was two dollars.

4 We took a boat ride on what was known as the SUPERIOR.
5 It was an old excursion boat. It cost 25 cents a ticket. That
6 was quite an occasion for us, as I hadn't seen any body of
7 water that was very big up till then. In fact, it hadn't
8 rained for so long in my home State that I thought rain was
9 something of fiction rather than fact.

10 We took that boat ride, and I'm happy to tell you that
11 it was a safe ride, but the next week the boat sank. It wasn't
12 much of a boat.

13 So I was upward bound. I think I know a little bit
14 about being upward bound.

15 One of the advantages of starting rather lowly is
16 that there is only one way to go and that's up. If you make
17 up your mind. Of course, you can just lie flat on the ground
18 and be apathetic, socially and intellectually paralyzed. You
19 can even dig yourself into the dirt. But the best thing to do
20 is, if you are lying flat on your face on the ground, is to
21 turn up on your back and look up and decide that you're going
22 to move up. And in a very real sense you're demonstrating
23 in many, many ways two or three things.

24 First of all, you're demonstrating that a free
25 government, a democratic government, can have a heart. Because

1 the Government of the United States which some of you have
2 commented upon in your letters to Mr. Shriver. And in these
3 prepared remarks that I have, one young lady that's attending
4 the University of Minnesota where I used to teach wanted Sarg
5 Shriver to thank the President and to thank the Government,
6 to thank the people of the United States for giving her this
7 opportunity. That letter tells in profound and simple language
8 and great feeling what some of us have been trying to say, but
9 quite inadequately, that a government can have a heart, too.
10 A government with compassion and a government of the people,
11 by the people and for the people ought to have a heart, ought
12 to care. Because unless it cares, then it isn't a government
13 for the people.

14 And this government does care. Your President cares.
15 Your Congress cares. Your friend Sarg Shriver cares. Dr.
16 Frost cares. This Advisory Council cares. Everybody -- not
17 everybody, but most people care. And it's because most people
18 do care that most of us get along.

19 So you have demonstrated quite clearly by your
20 life experience thus far that a government does care. But
21 more importantly, you have demonstrated something else. You
22 have demonstrated that when young people get a chance, they
23 can and most of them do make something out of their lives.
24 And that's what you're doing. You are in the very real sense
25 a living testimony, or living testimonial, to the fact that

1 when somebody does get a chance, that they take advantage of
2 that chance and do something with it for their own good and
3 for the community's good and for the national good.

4 Now, this places quite a burden on you. Because in
5 a very real sense, you see, you have been selected as gifted,
6 or at least potentially gifted, talented, potentially creative,
7 unusually able young people. And you are called upon not only
8 to do well by yourself, but to set such a good example that it
9 will inspire others. That's quite a burden. But you'll do it.

10 One of the troubles about leadership is that it's
11 no privilege or luxury. It's a responsibility. And you in
12 your own right, each of you now are leaders. You're going to
13 be a leader when you go back to your high school. Those of
14 you that right now are going on to college, you're going to be
15 a leader, because you have proven what people ought to have
16 known, that there is tremendous power and potential in the
17 heart and the soul and the mind of a human being if it can be
18 released, if it can be enriched, if it can be given a chance.
19 And that's what this is all about. Upward Bound means exactly
20 what it says, you're going places.

21 Everything today seems to be reaching out. These
22 astronauts, they went up 850-some miles the other day. They
23 were really upward bound. But let me tell you -- let me tell
24 you that they, too, once were earthmen. And let me also tell
25 you that I know the astronauts, and I know not of a single one

1 them that didn't have a humble start.

2 So there is real reaching out and upward bound
3 potential in I think most everybody.

4 One of the delights of working with young people is
5 that it's always so exciting. Sometimes rather unpredictable,
6 as you are perfectly willing to confess, I'm sure. I have
7 three sons and a daughter, a son-in-law, and two daughters-in-
8 law. We recently had a new annexation to our family. She is a
9 very beautiful young lady.

10 I just think I should say a word about that young
11 lady. Her parents are very poor people. She earned every
12 day of her life's schooling. She graduated with honors in a
13 small college and is now a teacher for retarded children or
14 gifted children, the unusual. It can be, you see. This
15 whole country is made up of people that have reached out, that
16 have made up their minds that they were not satisfied to stand
17 still.

18 I've been talking recently to some of our large
19 corporate executives. You'd be surprised who some of these
20 people are. I saw a man up here the other day that -- Mr.
21 Keith Funston, who is the top man of the New York Stock
22 Exchange. I met him a few years ago. I used to read about
23 him. I just want to mention his name. And the first time I
24 met him, I was very much -- well, we were both sort of at
25 arm's length. I had never been to the New York Stock Exchange

1 and he had heard some things about me that he wasn't too happy
2 about. But I called on him one day just out of curiosity when
3 I was a Senator. And when you read about people like this,
4 there is a sort of a mysticism that surrounds them, or fiction.
5 You never really realize that they are maybe people like the
6 rest of us are. And I found out that this man was born in
7 Romona, South Dakota. Now, that isn't very big. That's even
8 smaller than Dolan, South Dakota, where I started out. And I
9 found out that he hadn't had any better break in life in his
10 early days than I had. He was a very, very ordinary man that
11 had decided to make his life much better than ordinary.

12 I was talking not long ago with Mr. Roger Blough of
13 the United States Steel Corporation, one of the great corporate
14 executives of America. He used to work in a steel mill as a
15 laborer.

16 I was talking not long ago with the head man of the
17 City National Bank in New York. He started out as just a
18 country boy at Normal, Illinois.

19 This nation is made up of people like that. You can
20 go all up and down the line. As a matter of fact, right
21 across the street here is a man that serves as President of
22 the United States who decided in his sophomore year, I guess
23 it was, of high school that things weren't good enough for him
24 at home. He was taking off. And as he said, he was a school
25 dropout for a little while. He went out to California. He

1 worked. He learned a great deal in that work period. And then
2 he came back and went back to school and he finished teacher's
3 college and he started out being a school teacher. He received
4 his first check was \$60 in a little school for Mexican-American
5 students. And he gave that check to his students to buy books
6 and to buy playground equipment. And he reached out, and he
7 was upward bound.

8 There are just all kinds of folks that are upward
9 bound. It's a great crowd you're with, you know. That's the
10 whole secret of this country. I think the genius of America
11 is not the minerals that it has, or the forests, or the mines
12 or the wealth in its banks. The genius of America is the
13 motivation of its people, this sense of wanting to do better.
14 And whenever a country gets to a point where it's self-satisfied,
15 then it is already on the downhill bound course.

16 There are two programs that I like above all in our
17 so-called war on poverty. I'd rather call it our adventure
18 in opportunity. That's really what it is. This is an adventure
19 in opportunity. Those two programs are Head Start for the
20 little ones and Upward Bound for you. And may I say that there
21 are hundreds of thousands of young people in America today
22 that ought to be in a project Head Start, and there are hundreds
23 of thousands like yourself that ought to be in Upward Bound,
24 to get this taste of what an education can mean, get this
25 wonderfully exciting experience that a university or a college

1 campus, to be associated with friends and neighbors that you
2 have never met before but here they are in the family of man.
3 I'll bet every one of you have had a summer that you'll never
4 forget.

5 My goodness. What a privilege it must be. What a
6 wonderful, wonderful experience. And I hope that you have
7 just savored every moment of it, that you have just sort of
8 gulped it down, and that you are now in the process of digesting
9 it.

10 Well, enough of the pontificating here. Just a
11 word or two to you.

12 You know, I believe that it's about time that we
13 started to level with each other, as we say it. Nobody can
14 make your life for you. You've come to that conclusion a long
15 time ago. Every so often some people come and say, "Well,
16 now, I'm going to help you make your good life." Now, we
17 can help a little bit. There are some things that can be
18 done to help. For example, this program is of help to you.
19 But ultimately it depends on what you want to do with it.
20 What you intend to do with your life. You have to do your own
21 breathing. That is, most of the time. There are some iron
22 lungs, but they are difficult to walk around with.

23 You have to do your own seeing, your own feeling,
24 and your own thinking. And above all, you have to visualize
25 your own goals. Nobody can do that for you. And if they do,

1 it's wrong.

2 So you ought to kind of set your sights on what you
3 want out of your life.

4 I was out on a Job Corps center, Sarg, the other
5 day, out at Albuquerque, New Mexico, with 300 young ladies
6 there. It was a thrilling experience for me, and we had a
7 ball. It was great fun. Wonderful. I said, "Look, this
8 Job Corps center is your university." Now, it didn't have
9 the name Harvard or Notre Dame or Minnesota, California, or
10 whatever college it might be. But it had the sign up there,
11 Job Corps Center, that's a university.

12 What is a university? A university is an institution
13 where you learn about life. Or more importantly, where you
14 learn how to enjoy what is available in life. I think somebody
15 once said that a university is a log with a student on one
16 end and Socrates on the other. It's the student and the
17 teacher.

18 But really what it is is the opening of the mind.
19 It's the teaching of the latent talent, the development of the
20 talents that are there that were given to you by birth. These
21 are some of the things that Thomas Jefferson talked about when
22 he talked about those unalienable rights, the God-given rights,
23 these natural rights. And there are certain natural talents
24 and there are certain inherent abilities and capacities that
25 you have and they just need to be refined and developed and

1 released. And that's what you are after, that's what you are
2 trying to do.

3 So decide that you're going to just do something
4 with yourself and then be a leader of somebody else. Now, the
5 truth is that there are a lot of folks that need your help.

6 I have come to the conclusion a long time ago that
7 men of my age seldom can really be young people. We can be
8 helpful. I'm a parent, and I think I have a little influence
9 on my youngsters. But I notice that people that have the
10 greatest influence on young people are other young people.
11 And when you get a chance, you just tell them a little bit
12 about your experience. Now, you can dress it up a little. We
13 give you a certain amount of political license.

14 My children have heard me talk about my early experience
15 and they get better every time I tell them.

16 (Laughter.)

17 As I said, "That just proves that your father is
18 becoming a better writer, he is putting a little more drama
19 in what he says." But the kernel of truth is still there
20 even if it seems difficult to find on occasion.

21 Now, you tell your friends in your high school what
22 you've experienced. Make them want to do what you've done.
23 I'm sure that if their teacher tells them about it, it won't
24 be nearly as significant as if you tell them. And I'll tell
25 them why. Because you've experienced it.

1 I used to teach American government. I feel like I
2 owe every student a refund. Because I had never been in
3 American government. But now I've been in American government
4 and I know what goes on in American government. I'm not going
5 to teach from the theory of it; I'm going to teach from the
6 hard realities of it. And I still feel that I am a teacher.
7 I know a great deal about this wonderful government of ours.
8 And it hasn't made me cynical because I've learned about it.
9 I feel better about the government.

10 And you've learned a great deal now about what the
11 world is like. You've had the experience of a new world, a
12 different world. And maybe many of you knew before you had
13 that experience. Share it.

14 An old English professor of mine one time told me --
15 I was writing themes. And I was writing about the League of
16 Nations and about international law and all these sort of
17 things. And I was getting C's and D's. I won't take myself
18 any lower than that because I'm too proud. And I went to Dr.
19 Briggs and I said, "What in the world has happened?" I said,
20 "Why these low grades?"

21 And he said, "May I suggest something to you? Why
22 don't you write about something that you know about? And
23 then maybe what you write will have some meaning." Talk about
24 something that you know about. Talk about your experience.
25 Share it. Motivate, not only yourself, but motivate the others.

1 We have a Youth Motivation Task Force that works in
2 our Youth Opportunity Program. Men in American business,
3 professional life that made it on their own. Most of them were
4 people from the minority group that were discriminated against,
5 never had a break. The laws were not on their side. They
6 had to fight and claw their way up the ladder of success. And
7 these young men, and many of them are not so young now, are
8 going out to high schools and talking to young people and say,
9 "Look, it can be done. When I did it," says this man, "it was
10 a little more difficult. Now it's even better. It can be
11 done. Get busy and do it."

12 But I'll venture to say this, that any one of you
13 can do a better job of motivating your fellow classmates in
14 your school and your high school than any teacher or any person
15 from any university if you'll just talk a little bit about
16 what you've had as an experience this summer.

17 I hope that you'll go on to college. I hope that
18 most of you've resolved that that's what you want to do. If
19 not college, a technical school or some particular kind of
20 specialized instruction. But, above all, I know that you'll
21 complete your high school course. It's a vital thing that
22 you do, it's part of the equipment of life now. I don't say
23 that you can't survive without it. Of course you can. But
24 you'll just enjoy life that much better.

25 I trust that you'll have a good time here in

1 Washington. This is your nation's capital. Some of you have
2 already told me how much you liked it. Well, there is a lot
3 to see, and you just see every bit of it.

4 Just remember this, that you're living in a country
5 that has tremendous responsibilities in the world and great
6 opportunities for people. No matter how bad you may think it
7 may be here, I can tell you after having traveled around --
8 and I talk from experience -- it's better here than anyplace
9 else. And you're going to make it better. You're going to
10 make it better. I'm going to speak at the Bicentennial at
11 Howard University next week, and I'm not going to get the
12 crying towel out either. I don't think most people like to
13 hear about our troubles.

14 I'm simply going to try to point out in that speech
15 where we are going to be 50 years from now because you've got
16 to dream about where you're going to be. And many of you
17 will be very active 50 years from now. And fifty years from
18 now when you look back on this day, or 25 years from now and
19 you look back on this day, you will say, "My goodness, look
20 where we were and now look where we are." Because the
21 opportunities are going to be unbelievable, unbelievable.
22 And remember this, that you're needed. You're needed. You're
23 needed for your country, for your community, for your family.
24 You're going to be needed in every endeavor in this land.
25 And make yourself the best that you can possibly be. Take

1 extensive personal self pride in something that you own, your-
2 selves. This is yours. You belong to yourself and to your
3 God. You were given these great mental, physical facilities
4 that are yours and faculties. And this spiritual life that
5 is yours. Make something out of it. And go to it.

6 I hope to see many of you along the way. And by the
7 way, if you ever as we travel about, I want to just extend
8 you a little invitation. I get around the country quite a
9 little bit. If you hear that I'm in town, I gave each one of
10 you a tie clasp, the boys, and each of the girls a little charm
11 bracelet.

12 And you have yours on there, don't you, Rebecca?
13 Good.

14 So when you hear that I'm in town, you just call up
15 and say, "I'd like to come up and say hello." I guarantee,
16 we'll find time. I can always move aside an old adult.

17 (Laughter.)

18 In fact, I don't mind doing it at all. Because most
19 likely I'll be a little tired, and I'd like to meet somebody
20 that's got the get up and go and zip and the pep that you have.

21 So when you read in the paper, if it gets in the
22 paper, that I'm in town, you just pick up the telephone and
23 here's what you say. If you're a young fellow, you say,
24 "Listen, I'm one of those young friends of the Vice President.
25 I'm one of his Upward Bound buddies." That's all you've got

1 to say.

2 And if you're one of the young ladies, you just
3 simply say, "I'm one of Humphrey's girls."

4 (Laughter and applause.)

5 Now, if Mrs. Humphrey should answer the phone, will
6 you explain in a hurry what that means? Or I won't be upward
7 bound, I'll be out of this world.

8 Thank you very much.

9 (Applause.)

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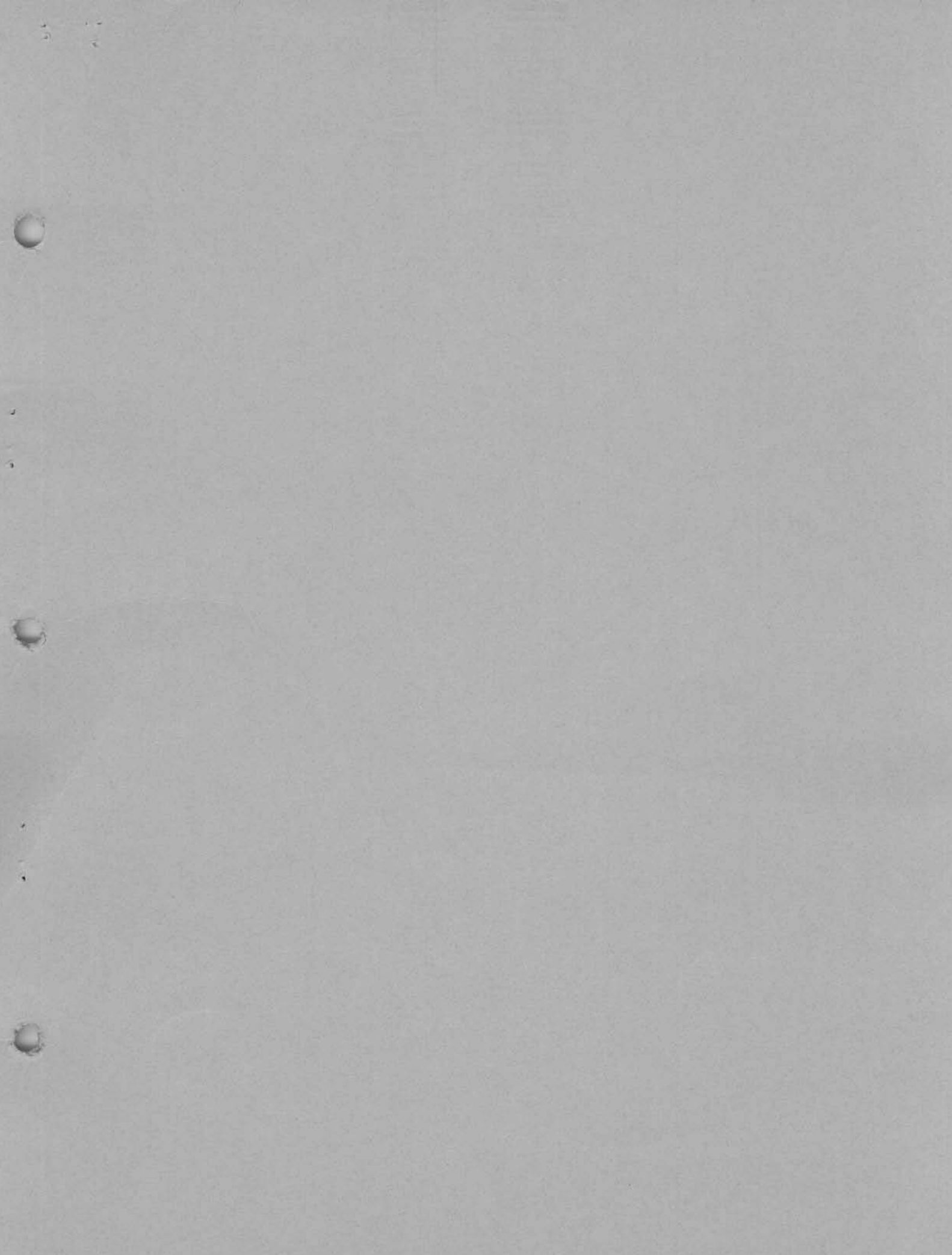
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