

Special Branch
Annual Report

1978

SPECIAL BRANCH ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1978

PART 1 ANNUAL REPORT

PART 2 ADMINISTRATION AND STATISTICS

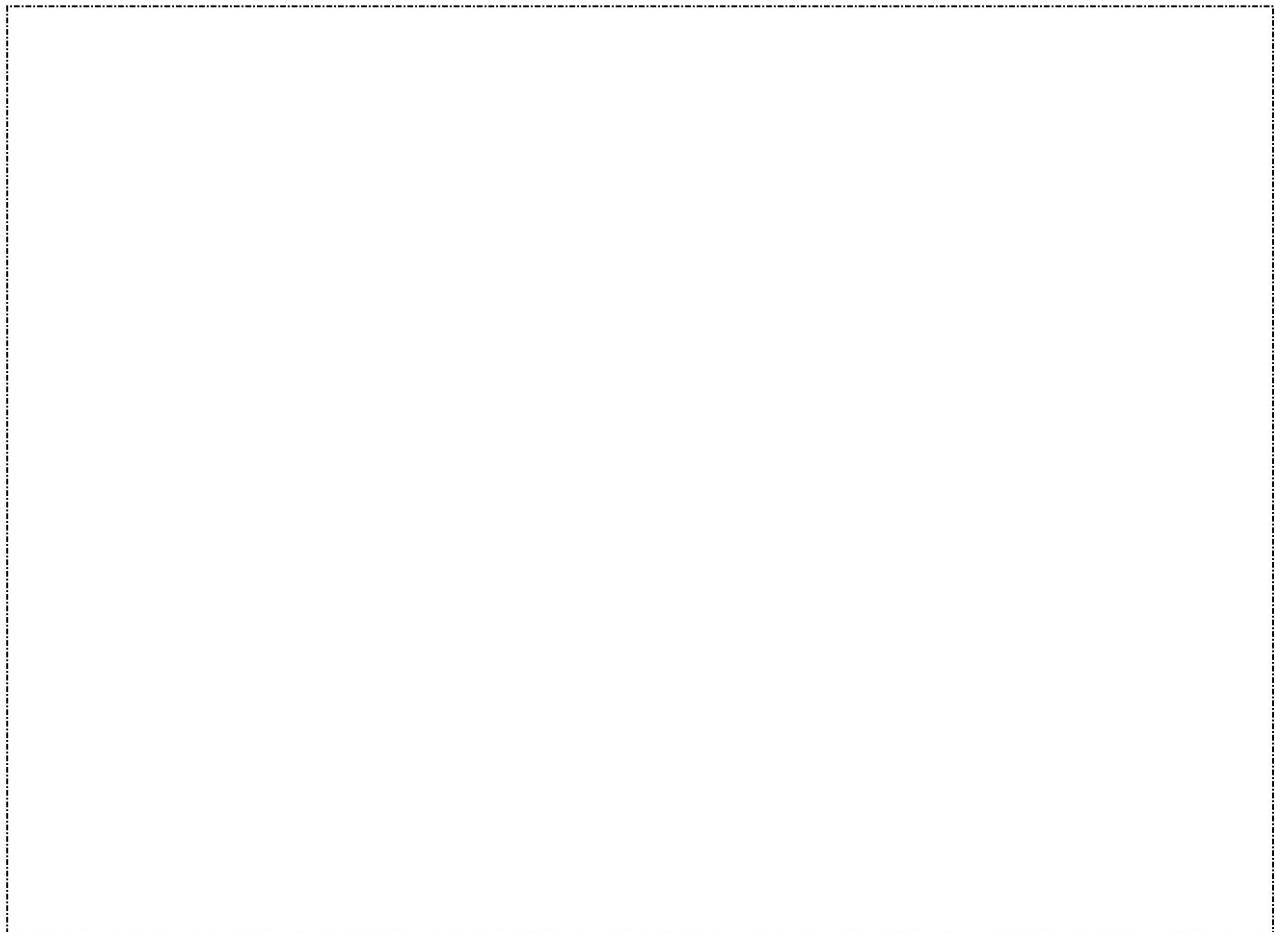
PART 3 B SQUAD ANNUAL REPORT

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PART 4 MONTHLY REPORTS

PART 5 INDEX TO MONTHLY REPORTS



The death on 11 September of Georgi MARKOV, who was a refugee from and bitter opponent of the current Bulgarian regime, was a reminder that the intelligence services of the Soviet Union and its satellites are still seeking out their enemies in the emigre communities. MARKOV died from the effects of a rare and deadly poison introduced into his body by means of a miniature pellet fired from a special "gun".

PUBLIC ORDER

The most serious public order problem arose in some areas of high immigrant settlement out of opposition to the National Front (NF), and was heightened by several brutal attacks on members of ethnic minorities.



The Anti-Nazi League (ANL), spawned by the trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), assumes a broad left base to oppose the NF. It demonstrated an ability to mobilise substantial opposition to NF public events with a degree of violence.

On 24 February, when it was clear that an NF march in Ilford during a parliamentary by-election would result in serious violence, the Commissioner banned "all public processions other than those of a religious, festive or ceremonial character" for two months. The ban was successful but prompted much criticism, particularly from the trotskyists and those on the extreme right.

Towards the end of the year it appeared that whilst the ANL could still muster sizeable numbers, it had lost the ability to draw the massive crowds seen in late 1977 and early 1978, thus easing the job of containing the violent elements.

The most notorious area for violence and disorder was Brick Lane, E1. An area housing poor white and predominantly Bengali immigrant families, it had for some time been the venue for NF paper selling activity and mindless attacks on immigrants. It became a natural focus for the ANL, whose supporters frequently clashed with the NF necessitating a large and continuing deployment of uniformed police to keep the peace. Much of the media reaction wrongly implied that the Asians were subject to a continual barrage of assaults by supporters of right-wing groups, whereas, whilst it would be more true to say a number of assaults were made by such people, many were made by hooligans with no political affiliation.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS

The NF, still the largest party of the extreme right with about 14,000 members, is particularly to the fore at parliamentary and local elections. The Young NF appeared to grow rapidly but was

[REDACTED]

difficult to measure because of its mix-up with the parent group.

The very much smaller British Movement and League of St George are more openly fascist and supposedly shunned by the NF. They tend to attract disillusioned and violent NF members and are subject to close attention by SB.

LEFT-WING EXTREMISTS

There has been no significant regrouping. Trotskyist organisations tended to predominate, with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) to the fore exploiting racial tension through the Anti-Nazi League (ANL).

The ANL is at a critical point in its development because, having deliberately directed its recruiting towards the trades union movement and those of moderate political belief, its own paranoia and aggression against the National Front (NF) have combined with the revulsion evoked by the gutter language used by School Kids Against Nazis (SKAN) to cause several influential supporters to resign. The SWP, as with others on the extreme left, recognises the workplace as a prime source of recruitment and power, and its recent re-organisation reflected this with the establishment of several branches based in factories, local government offices etc.

The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) continues its long-term policy of trying to educate the working class in revolutionary politics rather than exploitation of any specific issue and is fervent in its support for the Palestinian cause. In its hatred of the SWP the WRP castigates the ANL for lacking a firm political ideology and for providing the police with an open invitation to practice their 'worker-crushing' tactics.

The Party suffered a financial setback in November when Gerry HEALY, Corin and Vanessa REDGRAVE, Roy BATTERSBY and Roger SMITH of the Central Committee, and party member [REDACTED] Privacy incurred substantial legal costs in an inconclusive libel action against 'The Observer' newspaper. It arose from a report in that paper on 28 September 1975 which led to a police raid on the WRP Education Centre in Derbyshire.

[REDACTED]

The political changes in China are perplexing pro-Chinese communist organisations. The Revolutionary Communist League of Britain is gradually absorbing the smaller Maoist groups, and the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) has abandoned China as a source of inspiration. The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), whose leader, Reg BIRCH, is the only individual in this area to exercise any real influence as a senior official of the AUEW, has transferred its allegiance to Albania.

[REDACTED]

IRISH

'Bloody Sunday' Anniversary Demonstrations

9. Two demonstrations were held in London on 29 January to commemorate 'Bloody Sunday' - the Sunday of 30 January, 1972 when 13 people were killed in Londonderry in clashes with the First Battalion, the Parachute Regiment.

10. The main demonstration was organised by the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Demonstration Committee (BSCDC). The day's events began at 1200 hours with a 'symbolic picket' of Trafalgar Square by 14 persons protesting at the continuing prohibition on pro-Irish organisations using the Square. The main body of demonstrators began forming up at Shepherds Bush Green at 1400 hours to march to Hammersmith Town Hall. Some 1,200 demonstrators were present, the majority of whom were supporters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), International Marxist Group (IMG), United Troops Out Movement (UTOM), Workers Power and Workers Action. 25 supporters of the National Front arrived belatedly to heckle and they were easily contained by the police. The march passed off without disorder.

11. An indoor meeting was held at Hammersmith Town Hall under the chairmanship of Jerry FITZPATRICK (a SWP member and Secretary of the BSCDC). The speakers, who included Tariq ALI (IMG), Tony CLIFF (SWP) and Bernadette McALLISKEY (IRSP), followed a predictable line and all demanded withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. The meeting ended at 1730 hours and the demonstrators dispersed in an orderly fashion.



12. The rival march, organised by Provisional Sinn Fein, was supported by 450 protestors who represented a wide range of organisations. These included the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist) (CPEML), the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist) (CPIML), Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP), Indian Workers Movement (IWM), Prisoners Aid Committee (PAC), Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT), Socialist Workers League (SWL), United Troops Out Movement (UTOM), and the West Indian Defence Committee (WIDC). The demonstrators began assembling at 1400 hours at Speakers Corner and eventually moved off via an agreed route to Temple Place, WC2. The marchers arrived at 1630 hours and immediately held a meeting under the chairmanship of Jim REILLY (PSF National Organiser). REILLY began by thanking those present for their support and then spoke about the alleged atrocities committed by British troops in Northern Ireland. He was followed by Niall FAGAN (PSF Secretary Dublin), who spoke at length about the 'Bloody Sunday' incident. He went on to attack the treatment of prisoners in Long Kesh and this theme was taken up by the next speaker, Miriam DALY (IRSP Dublin) who stressed the inherent dangers of the psychological interrogation techniques used by the British Army. She concluded with an emotial attack against the presence of Special Air Service men in Northern Ireland. There followed a collection organised by REILLY and Kevin COLFER (PSF London Organiser), which realised about £170. The remaining speakers, seven in all, representing the left-wing organisations, spoke in general terms of their support for the Irish people in their 'struggle against British Imperialism'. The demonstration, which was orderly throughout, ended at 1800 hours.

National Front (NF)

Previous Met Report 12/77

16. On 7 January a confrontation took place between the National Front and its opponents at the Whitgift Centre, Croydon. Approximately 30 NF supporters had assembled at the Centre at 0940 hours to carry out a mass sale of their publication 'Spearhead'. A demonstration, organised to prevent the paper selling, attracted 150 supporters of various organisations, including representatives of the Croydon Labour Party, SWP, CPGB, Wandsworth Against Racism, Surrey Anti-Apartheid Movement, and Militant Tendency. By 1045 hours the left-wing group had increased to about 200 people and the NF contingent moved to the rear of the Centre where they continued to sell their paper until 1130 hours, when they dispersed. The left-wing group remained until 1350 hours, although the numbers present fell sharply after the departure of the paper sellers. Although slogans and counter-slogans were exchanged during the confrontation, the situation remained orderly with one exception, when the leader of the NF group, [REDACTED] Privacy [REDACTED] was arrested for threatening behaviour. Privacy [REDACTED] who described himself as Lambeth area

organiser of the Young National Front, is the eldest son of [Privacy] [Privacy]. [Privacy] the former Church of England curate to [Privacy] Prison whose public declaration of support for the NF resulted in wide-spread publicity. [Privacy] appeared at Croydon Magistrates' Court on 13 January and was fined £20 with £20 costs and bound over to keep the peace for 12 months. [Privacy] resigned in October, 1977 from his position at [Privacy] Prison and has since returned to Rhodesia where he is believed to have rejoined the Rhodesian Army.

17. A similar confrontation between rival factions took place between 1030 hours and 1300 hours on 21 January in King Street, W6. A small march by 40 NF members was picketed by 70 supporters of the SWP and other West London left-wing groups. There was vociferous shouting from both sides, but a large police presence prevented any physical contact. The demonstration went off without serious disorder, although one left-wing supporter, a member of the Labour Party, was arrested for conduct likely to disturb the peace.

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TROTSKYIST AND ANARCHIST ACTIVITY

Socialist Workers Party

Previous Met report 1/78

19. On 28 January the SWP Irish sub-committee sponsored a day school on the subject of Ireland. Despite being addressed by several leading figures of the ultra-left and activists in the Irish field (Tony CLIFF, Gerry FITZPATRICK, Eamonn McCANN), the morning session only attracted 80 people and the afternoon session about 50.

20. The speeches and debates contained nothing of particular interest and again there was failure to resolve one of the principal dilemmas facing the ultra-left when dealing with Ireland - how can a revolutionary party, drawing membership and support from the working class justify supporting a terrorist group/liberation movement (in this case the Provisional IRA) when the victims of the latter's warfare are often innocent workers. At this particular meeting, Tony CLIFF claimed that the Provisional IRA committed a serious error of judgement in extending their bombing campaign to England and hoped there would be no further attacks here. However, this argument was countered by McCANN who claimed that CLIFF was not facing reality as the Provisional IRA was the only effective anti-imperialist force at work in Ireland.

21. Information received concerning the activities of the Lea Valley District of the SWP gives an insight into current party activity in the anti-fascist and industrial fields. With regard to anti-fascist activity, six identified members of this district are attempting to form a squad of 30 SWP members who, like themselves, are willing to risk arrest and imprisonment in order to provide violent opposition to the NF. Their aim, if they proceed with this project, is to break up NF meetings, intimidate NF supporters and demonstrate on NF marches. The Anti-Nazi League are directing much of their search for funds towards the Jewish communities in north and east London. It was claimed at a recent meeting of this district that single donations in excess of £1,000 have been received by the Anti-Nazi League from these areas.

[Redacted]

22. In the industrial field this SWP district claims to have 10 members holding positions of authority (usually shop steward) at their places of work. Whilst 10 is not a great number, it does represent a significant proportion of the membership of this district and helps the SWP to manipulate trade union activity in this area.

Communist Party of England (Marxist/Leninist) (CPE(M-L))

23. Though the activities of this extreme maoist group are limited because of the size of its membership (measured in hundreds), the leadership continues to promote ideas which have a potential for causing problems in the field of public order.

24. At recent meetings of the East London People's Front (ELPF), the front organisation of the CPE(M-L), discussions have taken place as to how and when to attack members of the National Front and what action to take about photographers at demonstrations. It has been decided that photographers should first be warned not to take photographs of CPE(M-L) supporters and if they refuse to comply they should be attacked and their equipment destroyed.

25. It was, of course, ELPF members who instigated the trouble at the picket of the NF election meeting at Ilford on 25 February. It did not escalate into a larger incident because the trotskyist elements at the picket would not support the ELPF agitators.

26. The ELPF are also considering whether to exploit the latent desire of some children to cause criminal damage to school premises under the spurious guise of the fight against fascism. This idea arose from the fact that one group of children were angered at their youth club at Fairlop School, Ilford, being cancelled to allow a NF meeting.

27. CPE(M-L) in their own right have formed the 'Little Red Guards' as a means of drawing children into party activity. Despite the misgivings of a minority of members that the idea is wrong in principle, it is understood that a number of children now receive low-key political talks on Saturday mornings, followed by an outing in the afternoon.

FASCIST AND ANTI-FASCIST ACTIVITIES

Anti-Nazi League (ANL)

Previous Met report 11/77

12. Much recent activity by this organisation has been concentrated

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on frustrating or preventing electoral activity by the National Front (NF). Typical of these activities was the picket on 15 April of a NF election meeting at Loughborough Infants' School, Minet Road, London SW9. Here, about 600 ANL supporters aided by members of other socialist and ultra left groups picketed the meeting.

13. Mindful of the wording of section 8 of the Representation of the Peoples Act, the NF admitted '30 members of the public' in addition to their own supporters. In reality, of course, these 30 were ANL supporters who proceeded to interrupt the meeting with continuous heckling. NF stewards restrained those elements of the audience who wanted to 'deal' with the demonstrators but violence eventually erupted when an ANL supporter made an unprovoked attack on a NF member of the audience. After the ANL supporters were ejected, order was restored in the hall.

14. Further arrests were made after the meeting when a group of NF supporters went to Brixton police station to protest about police action at the meeting. Those arrested included Martin WEBSTER, charged with wilful obstruction of the highway and obstruction of police in the execution of their duty. The implications of WEBSTER's arrest are further discussed in paragraph 21. Of those arrested during the day, mainly for public order offences, 8 were NF supporters and 26 were ANL supporters.

15. Nineteen persons were arrested for highway obstruction, possession of offensive weapons and threatening behaviour on 27 April at a NF election meeting at Walthamstow Senior High School for Girls at Church Hill, London E17. There were 100 NF supporters in the hall with approximately the same number of opponents outside. The latter consisted principally of Socialist Workers Party and ANL members. All the arrests took place after the meeting when demonstrators attacked NF supporters leaving the hall.

The ANL 'carnival against the Nazis'

16. On 30 April a demonstration described as 'a carnival against the Nazis' was held under the auspices of the ANL. It took the form of a rally and meeting in Trafalgar Square followed by a march to Victoria Park, London E2, where it culminated in a 'rock concert'.

17. It is significant that by promoting the demonstration as a carnival and obtaining the services of popular musical groups, the organisers were able to attract a large number of young people to what the latter regarded as a free concert. Those attending numbered about 60,000, making this the largest public demonstration in recent years. Whilst it must be admitted that the ultra left were present in some force and a large number present were genuinely concerned about racialism, without the provision of free entertainment the event would have attracted no more than 15,000 people.

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

18. The event was generally well organised and passed without incident and it will no doubt feature prominently in future anti racialist propaganda.

The National Front (NF)

Previous Met report 3/78

19. The NF are facing further pressure from local authorities about the interpretation of section 8 of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1949. Thus the Inner London Education Authority refused the NF the use of a school in Lewisham on the grounds that its meeting would not have been public and, in this instance, would have interfered with other school activities. Although the NF began legal action, because the matter would not have been resolved in time for the May local authority elections they allowed it to lapse. If other local authorities deny the NF access to school property however it is likely that the Party will take the matter to the High Court, for they believe that they have a good case. Legal action would take the form of an application for an order of mandamus to force the local authority to comply with its duty or, alternatively, a declaration of those duties.

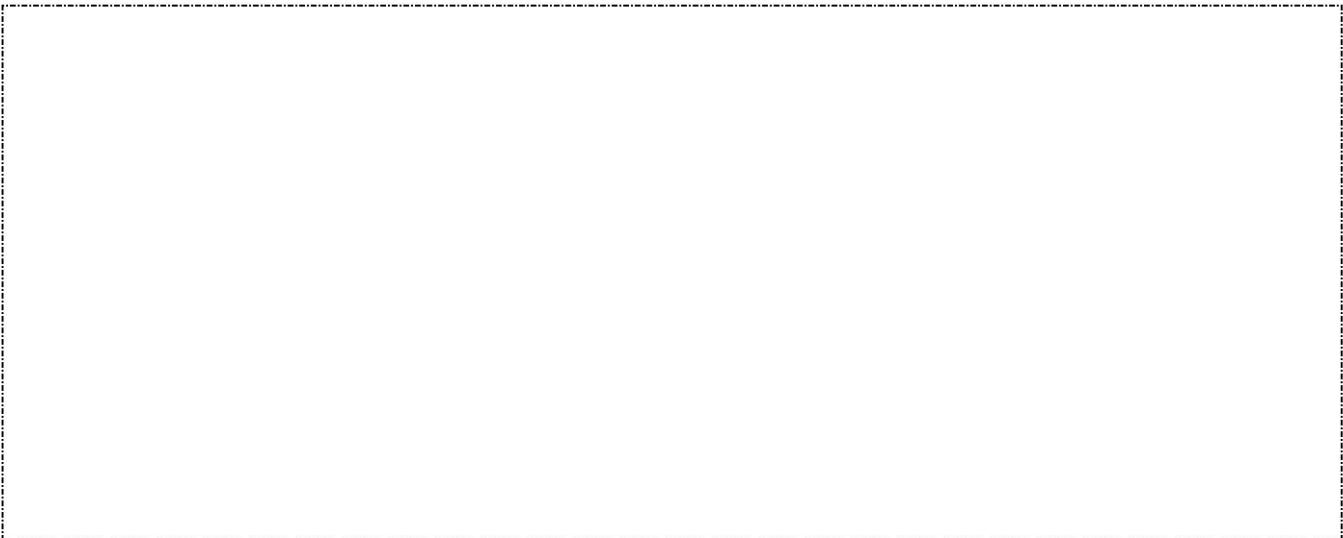
20. Although there are no reports of similar action in London, school caretakers in Manchester have followed their union's (National Union of Public Employees) advice and have declared that they will not open or close school premises for NF meetings.

21. Earlier in the month it was reported that the NF was hardening its attitude to co-operation with police at marches and meetings, in the belief that it restricted activities and caused a loss of credibility within its membership. Despite an assurance by Martin WEBSTER that co-operation would continue, his subsequent arrest for obstructing police at Brixton, whilst attempting to form a march, coupled with the strong complaints of police behaviour and attitude at the Brixton meeting by the NF chief steward [Redacted] **Privacy** mean that the matter is still unresolved. [Redacted] **Privacy** has stated categorically that as far as he is concerned co-operation with police is at an end.

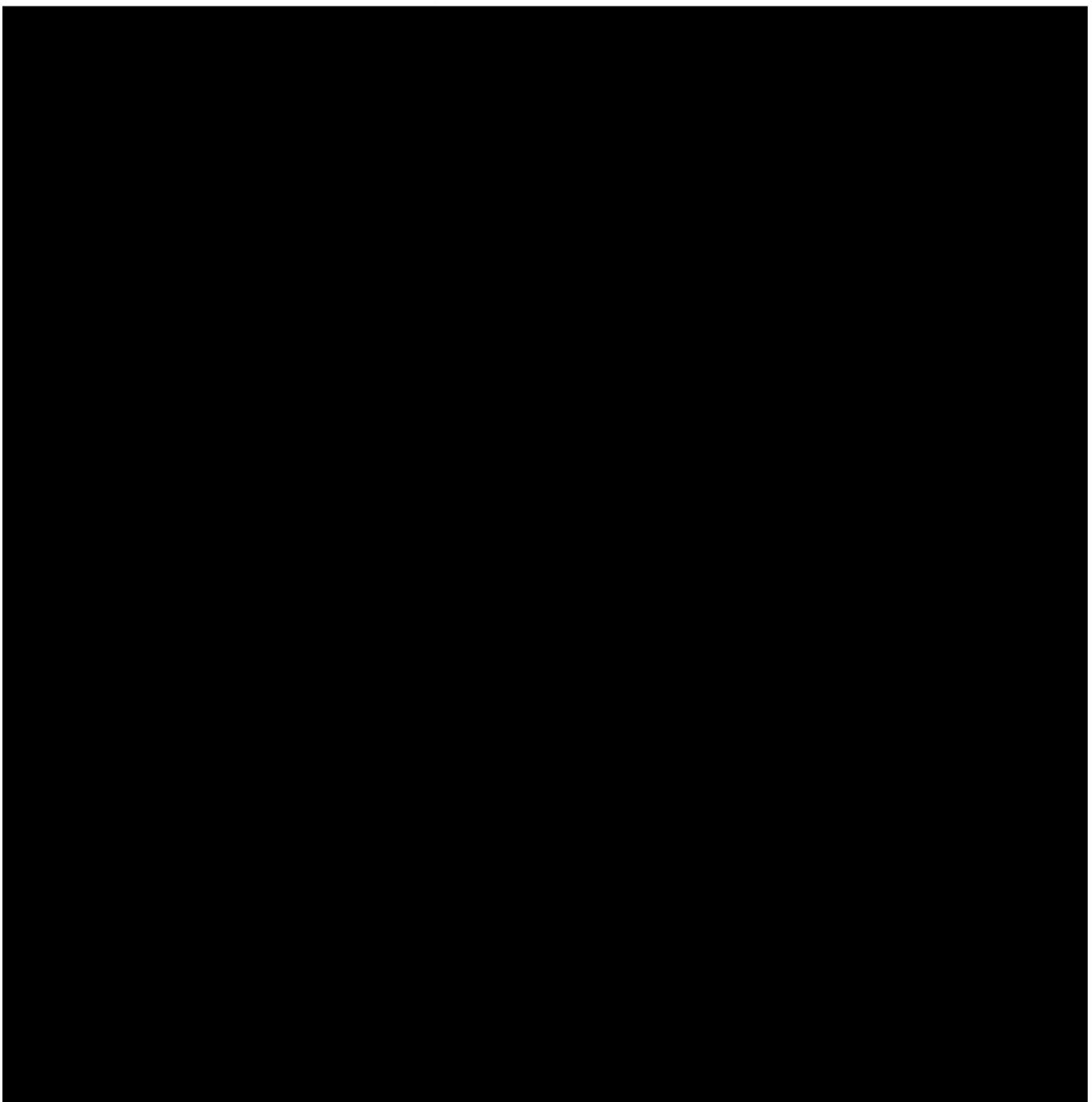
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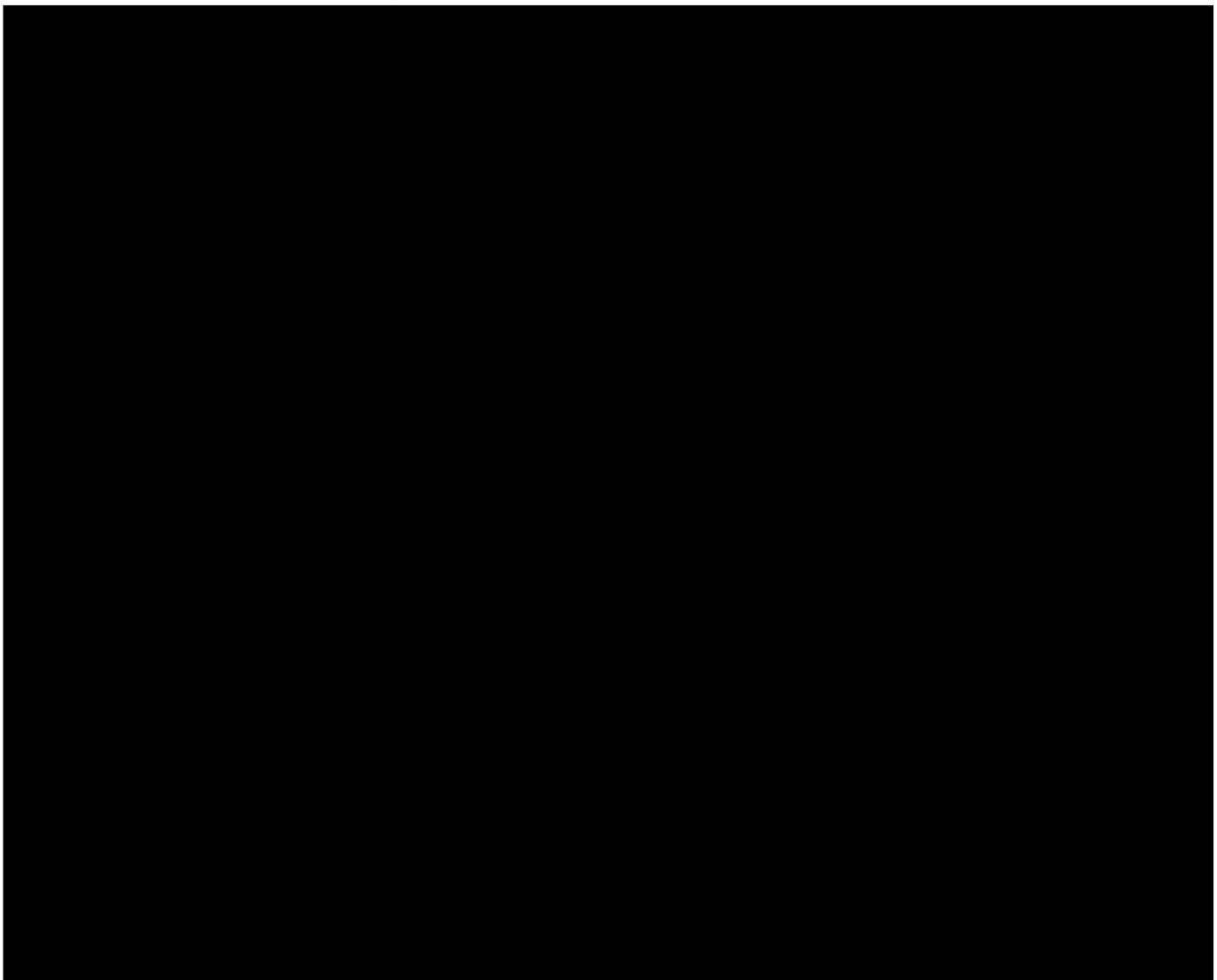


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