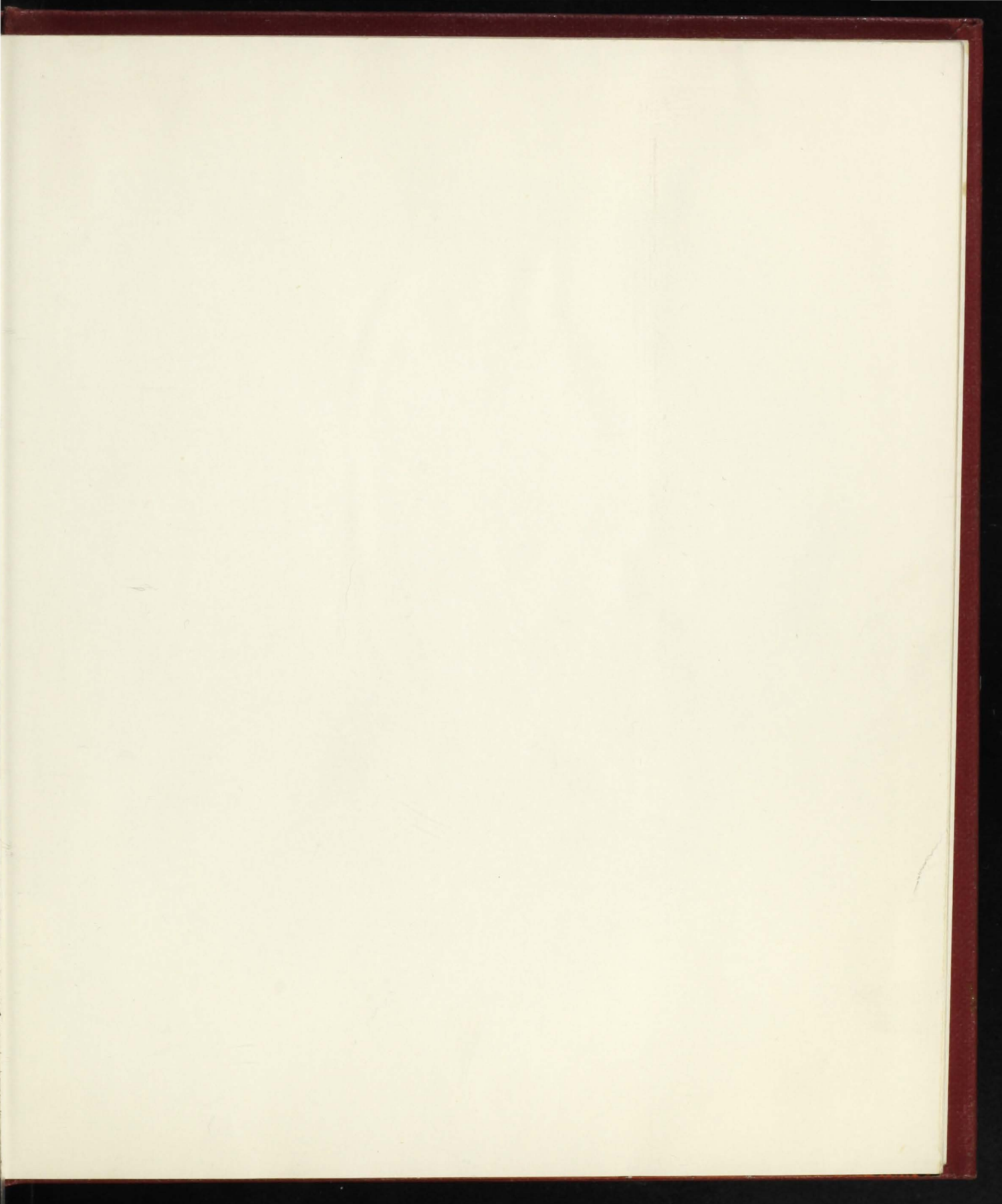


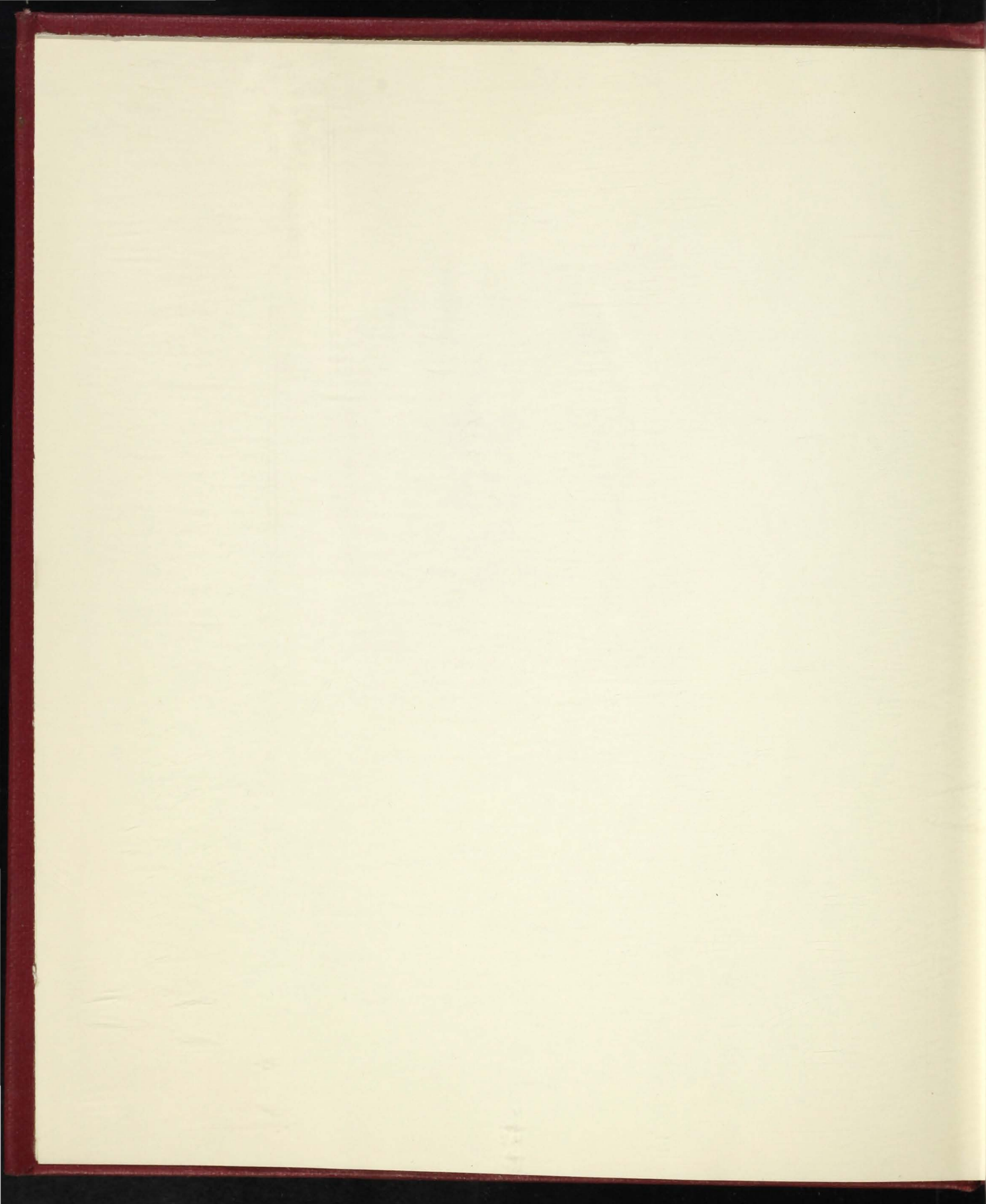
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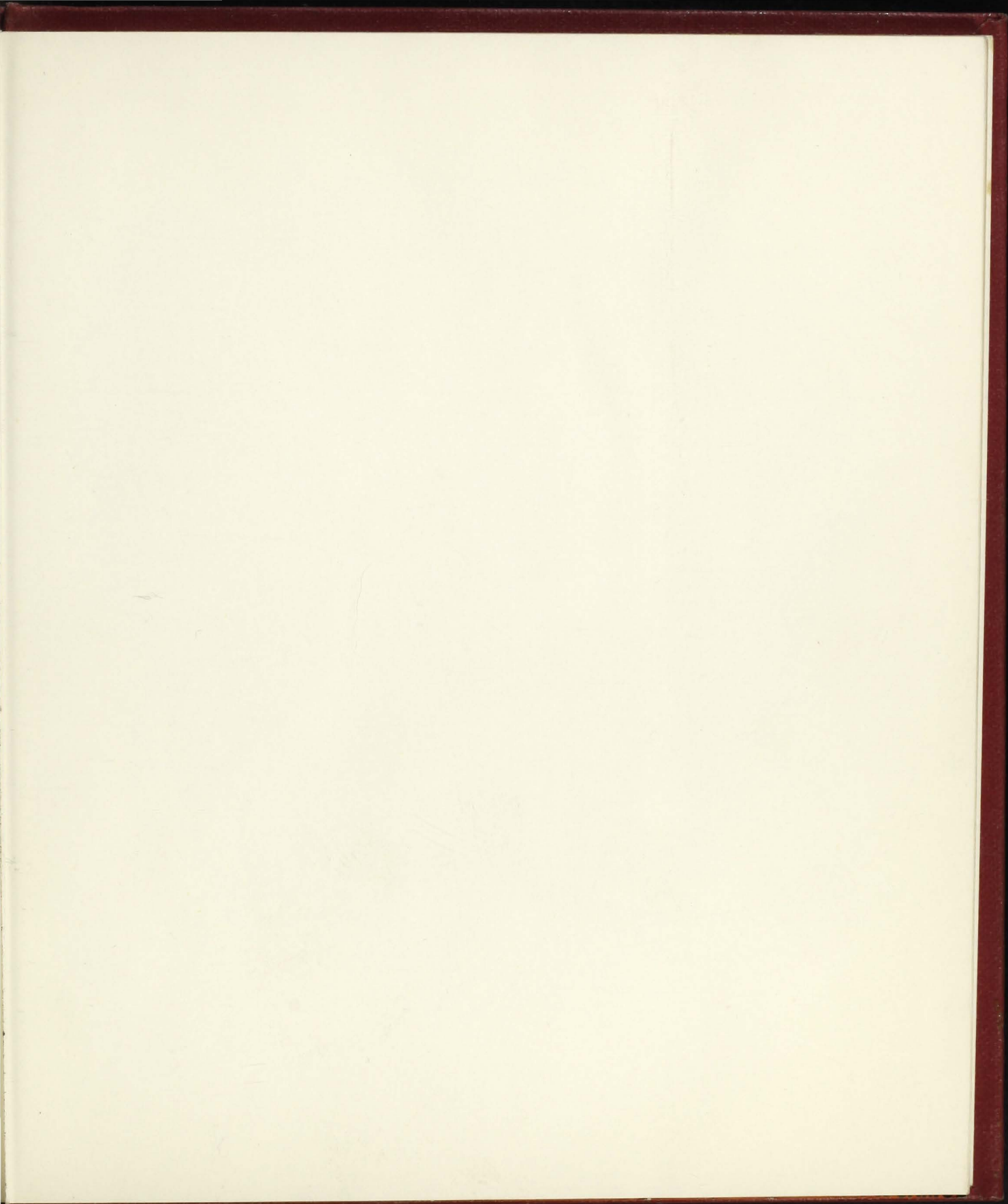
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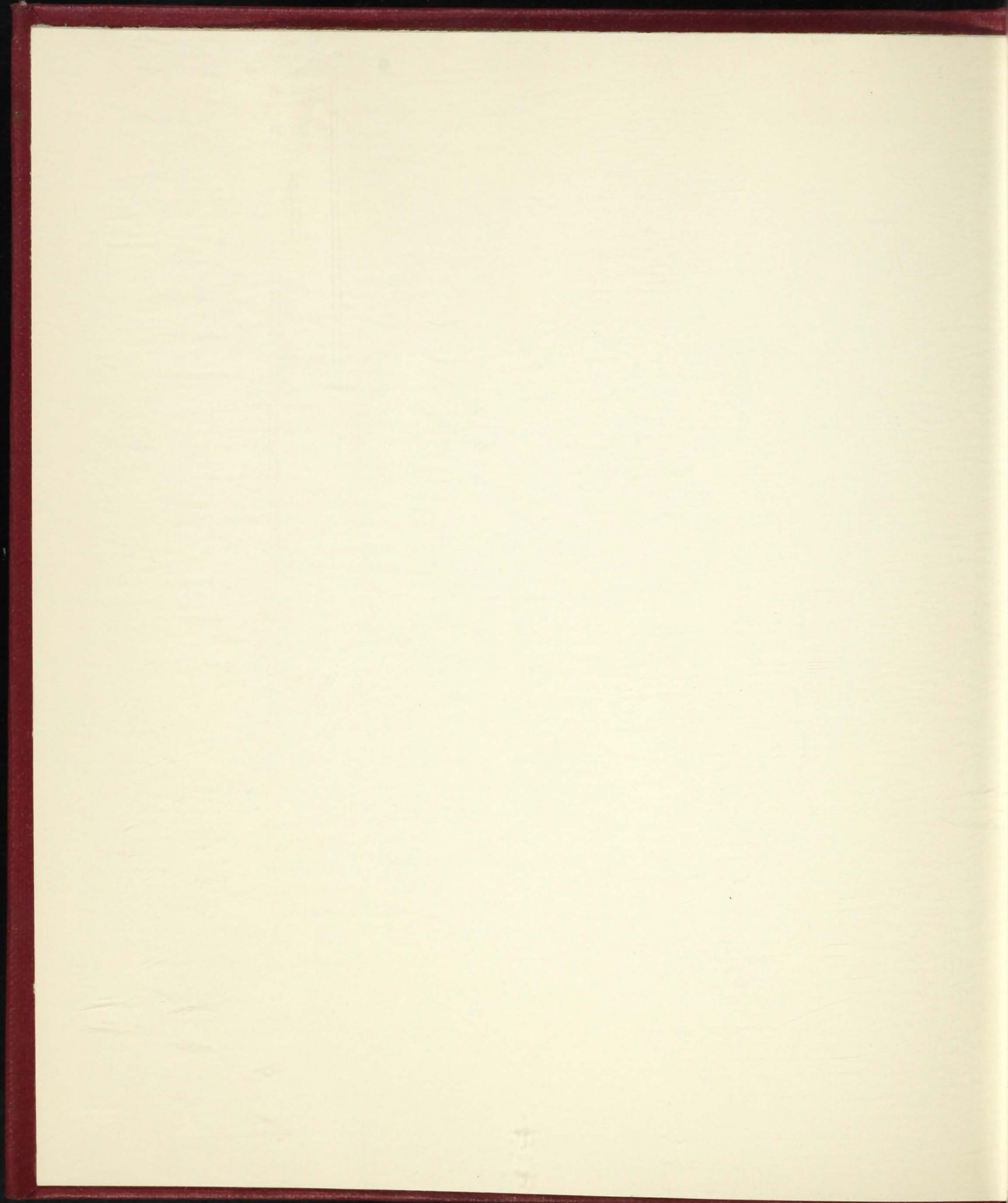


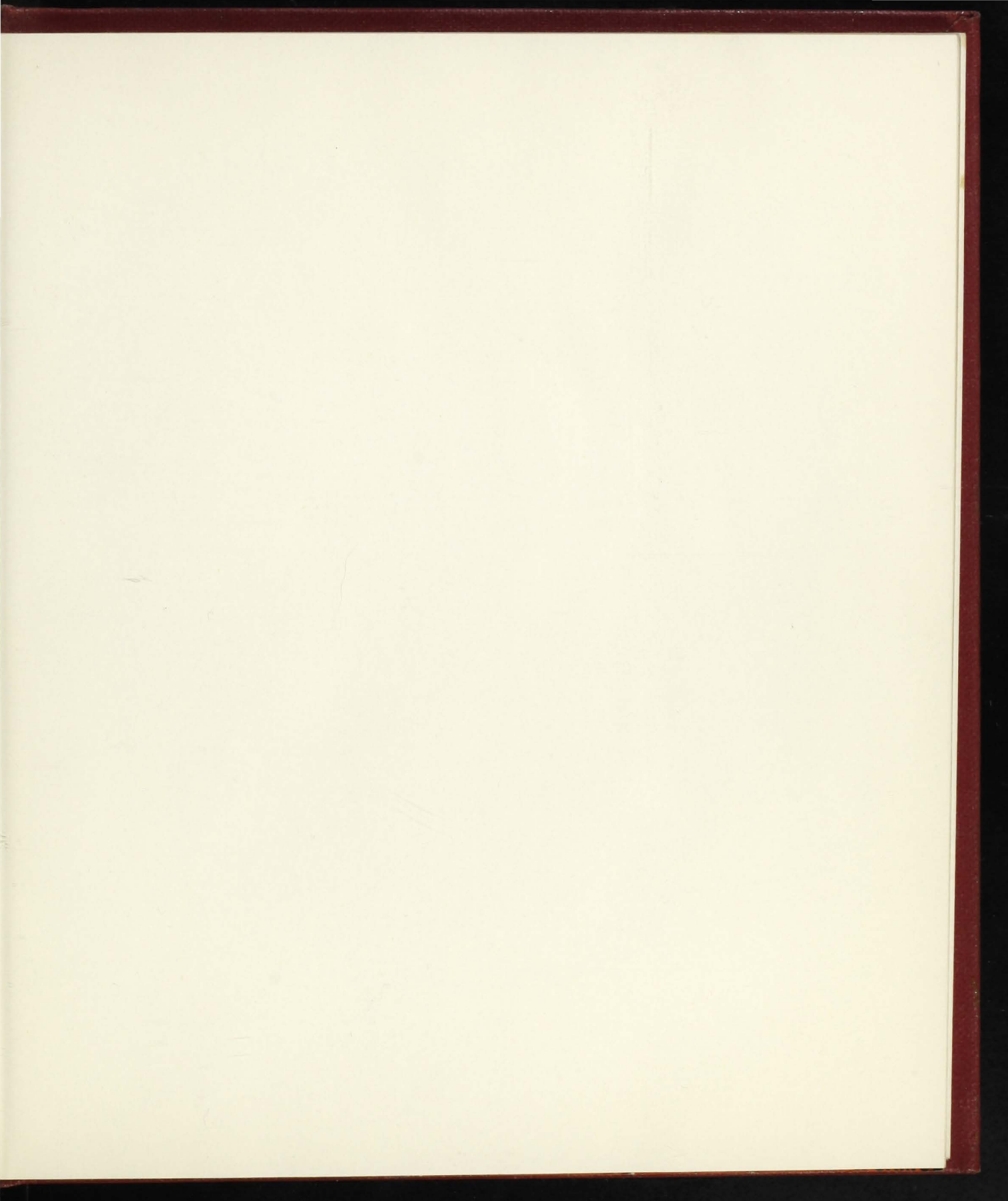
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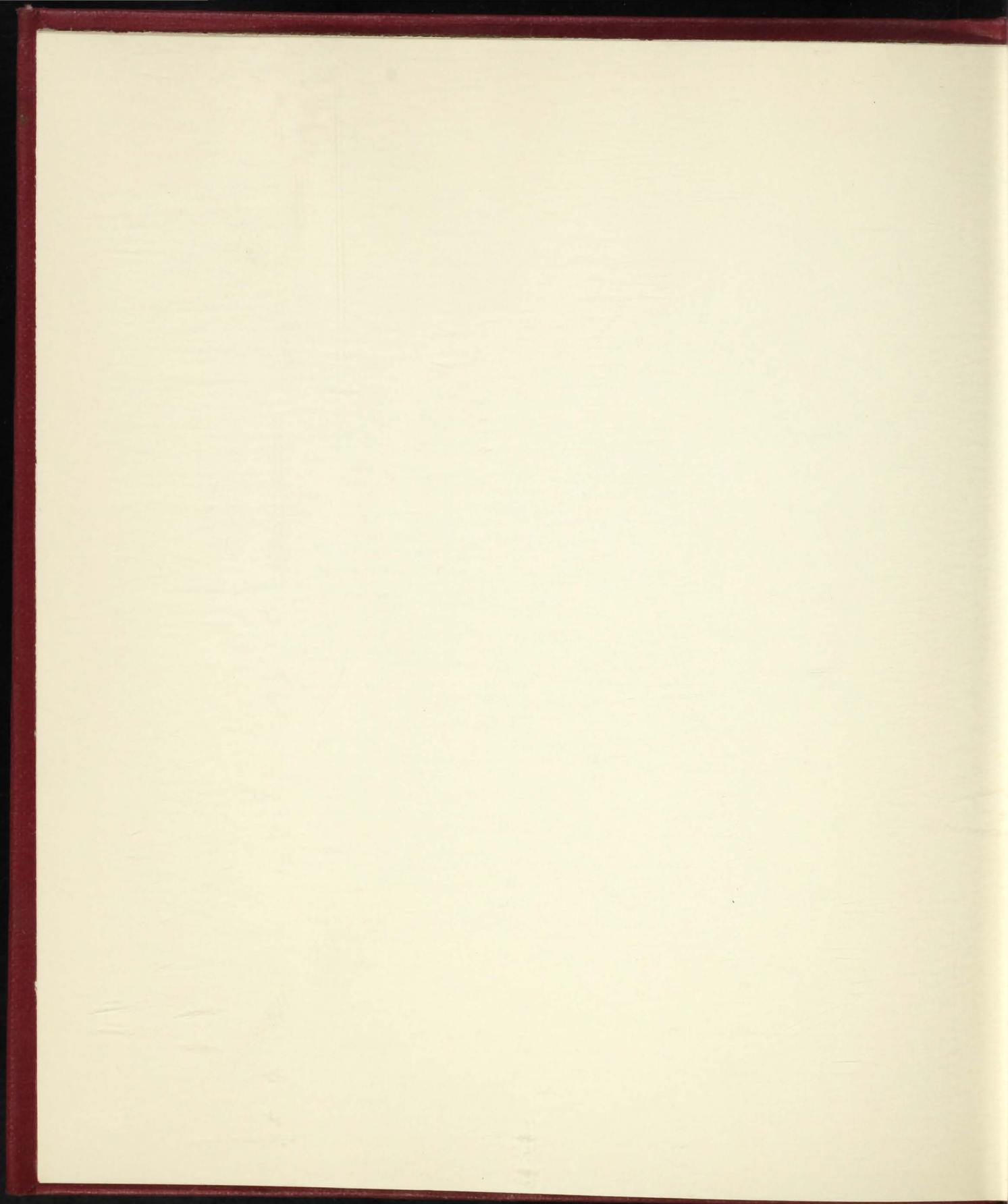




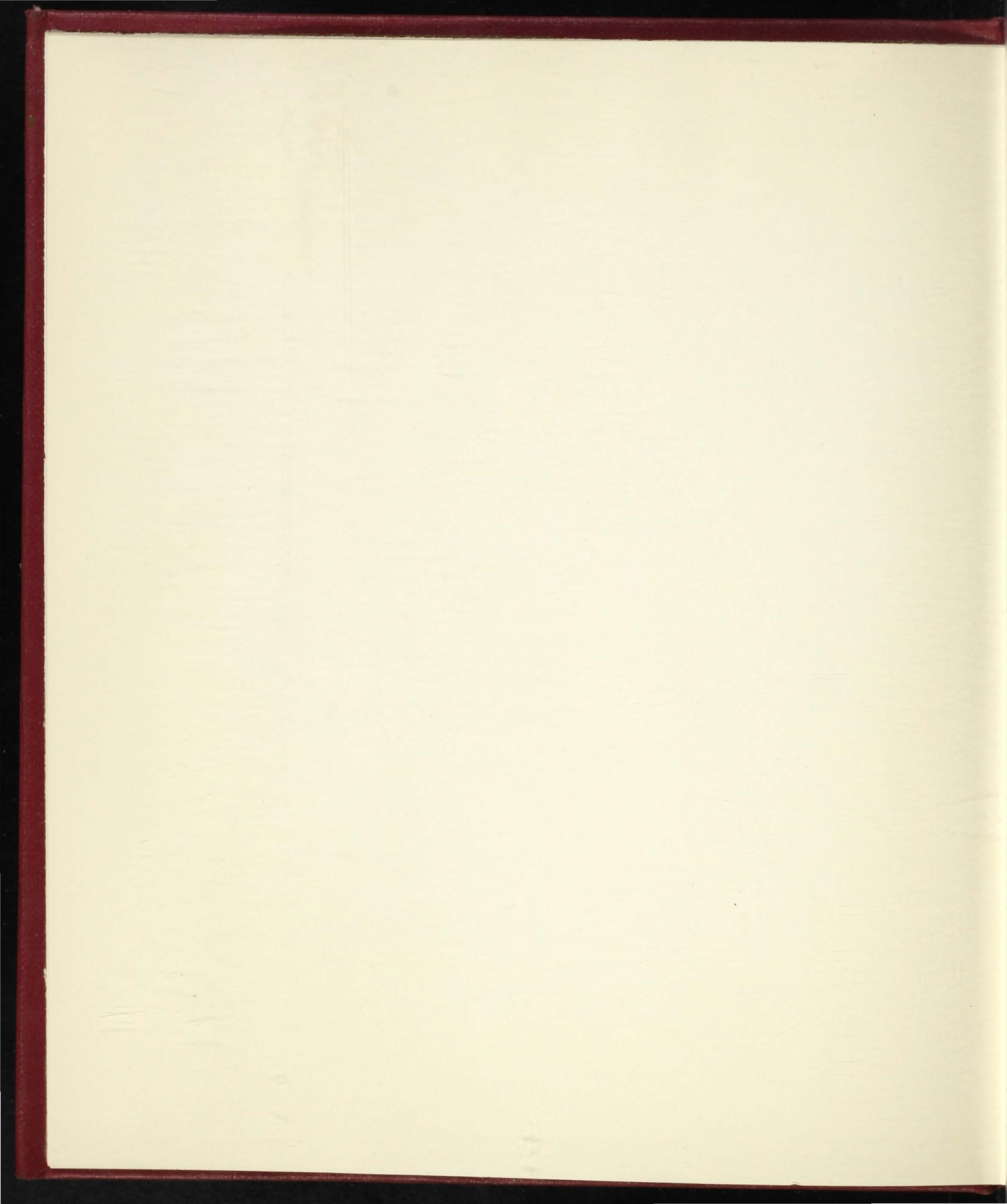


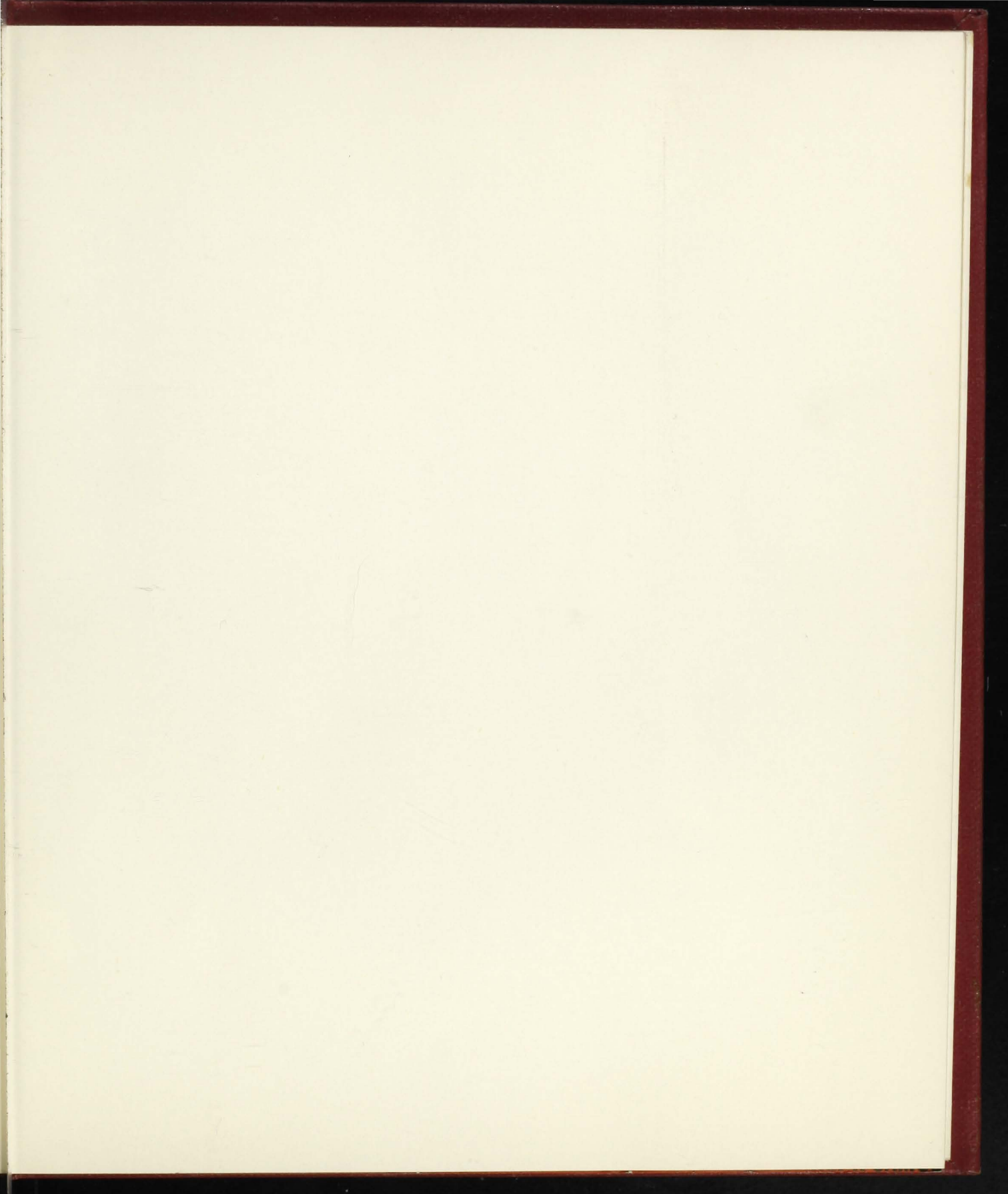


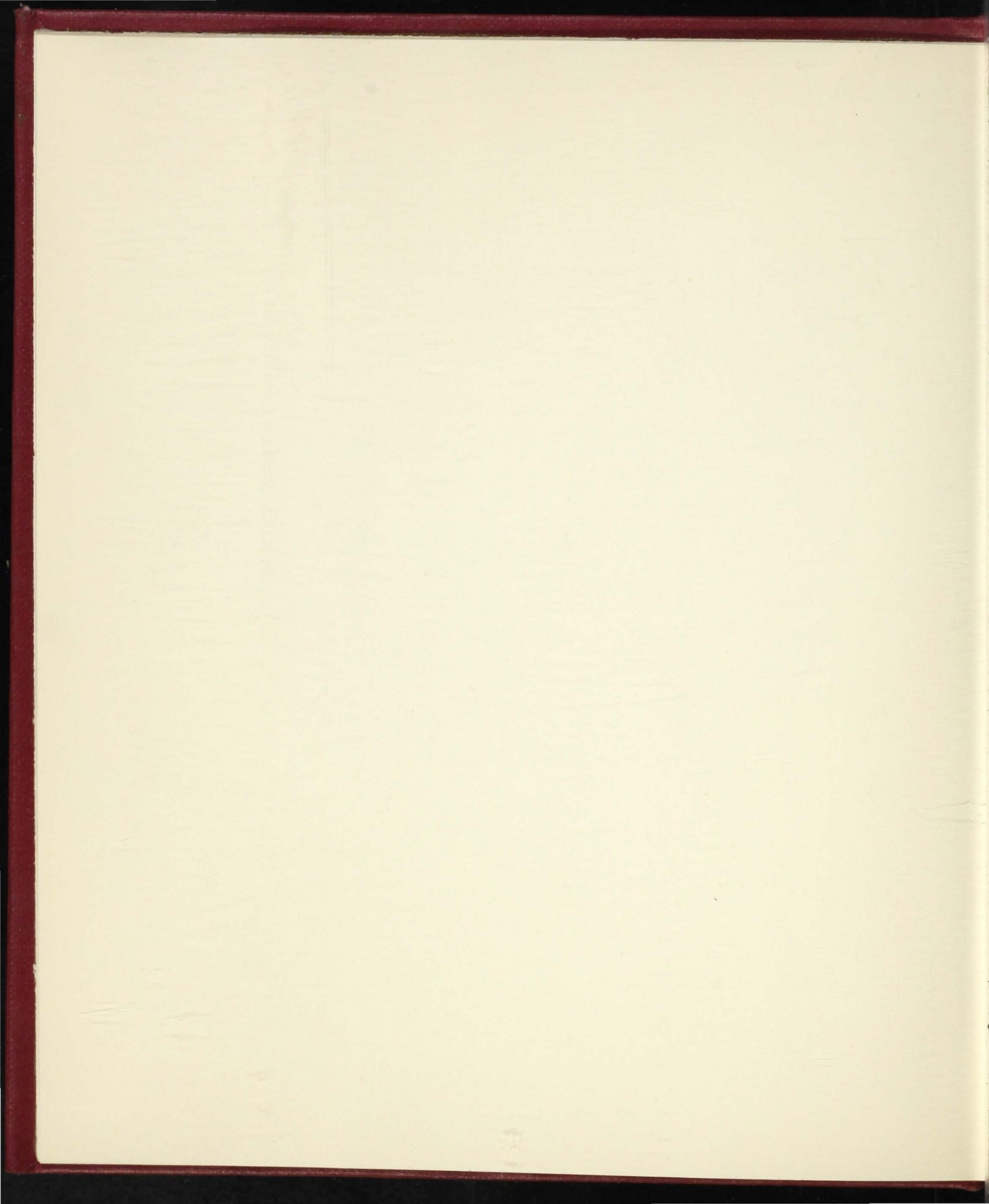


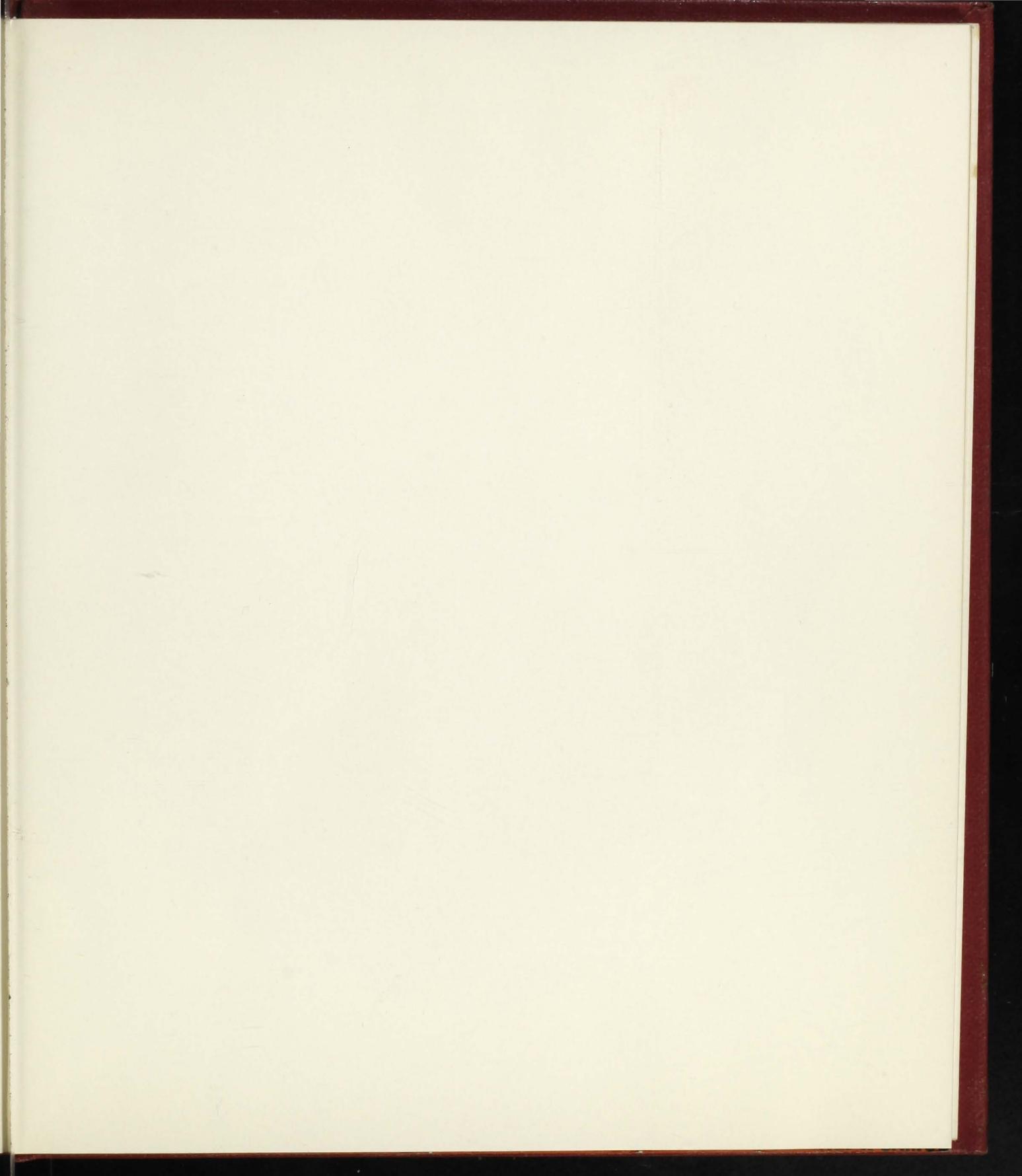


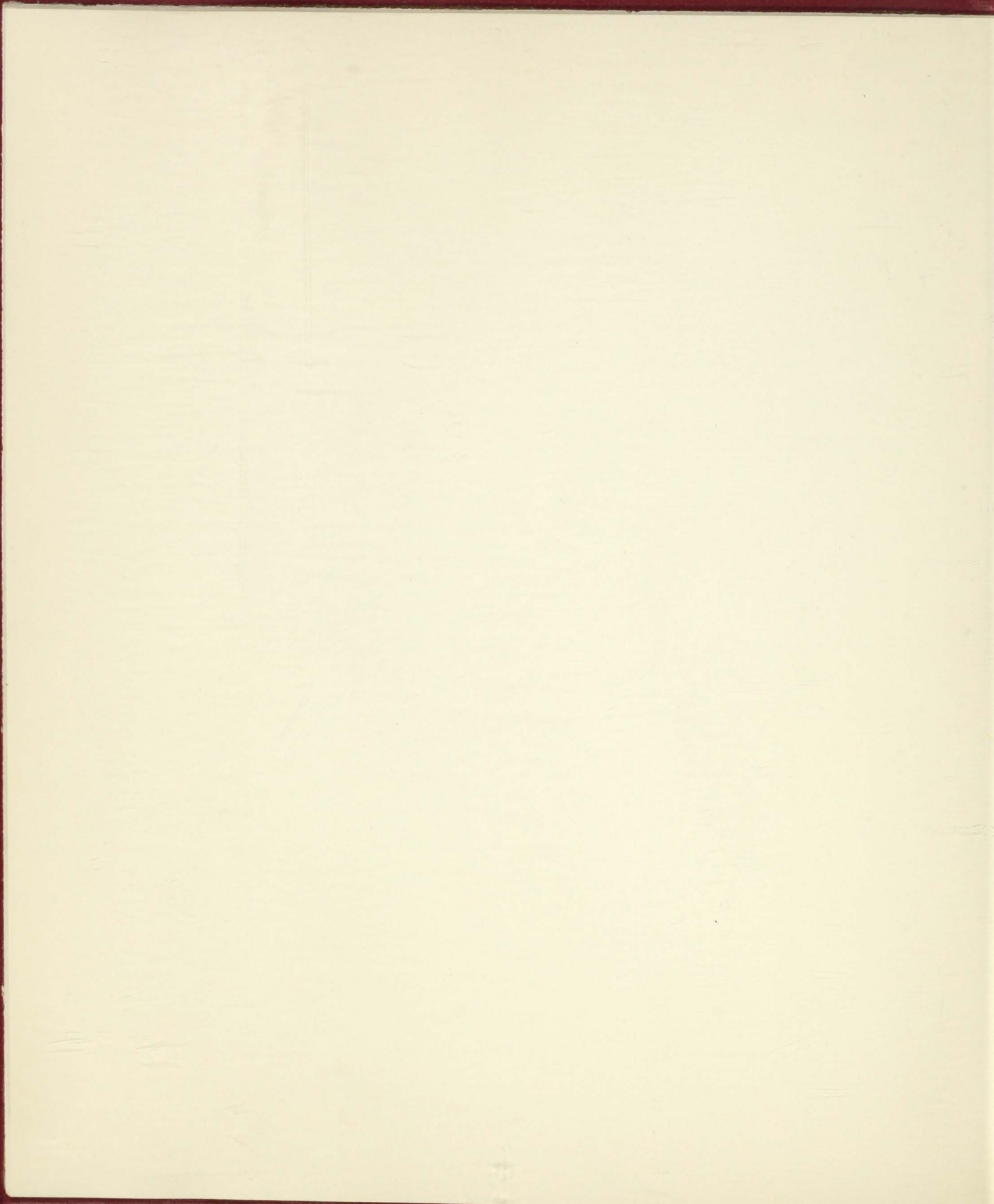


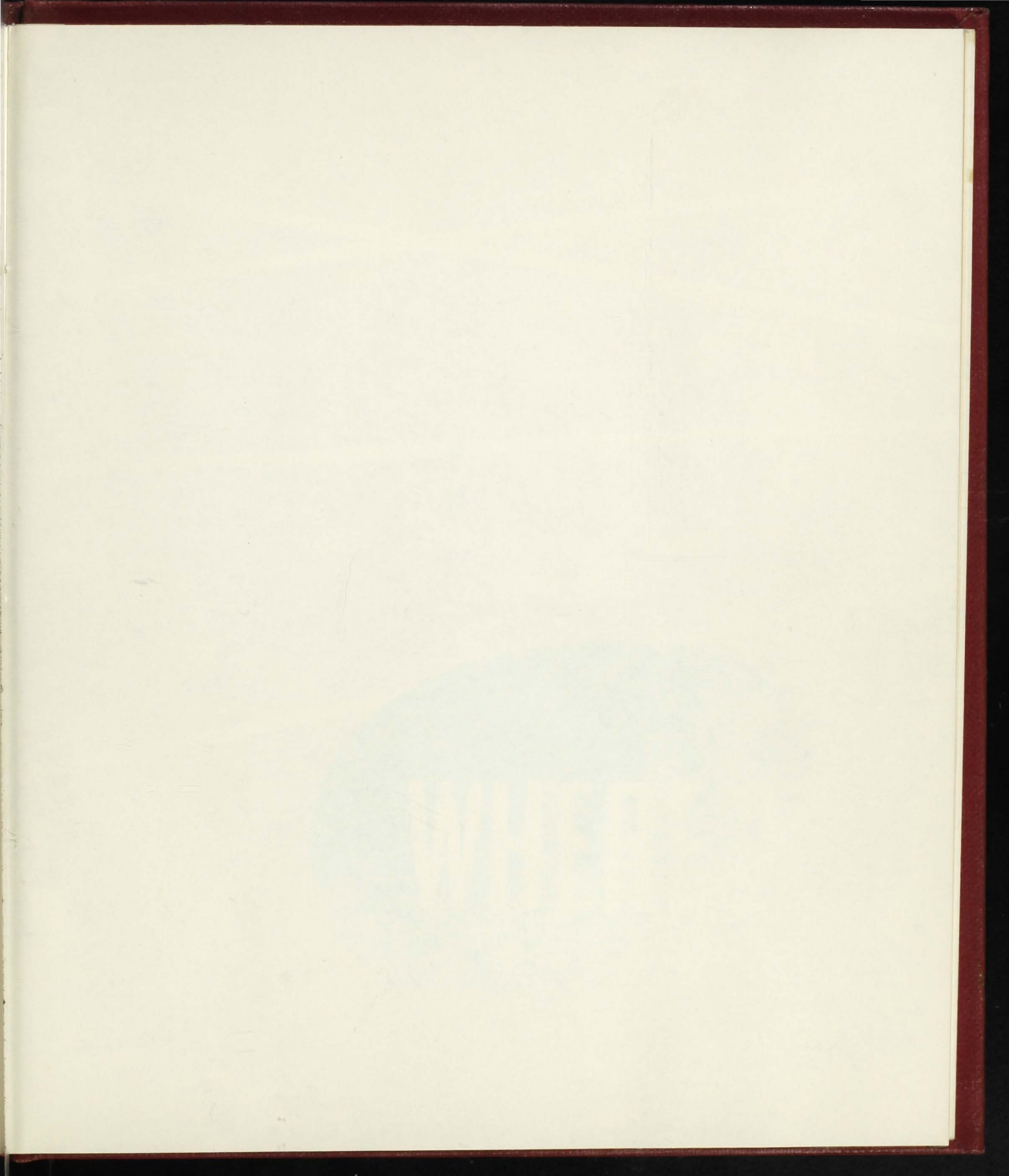


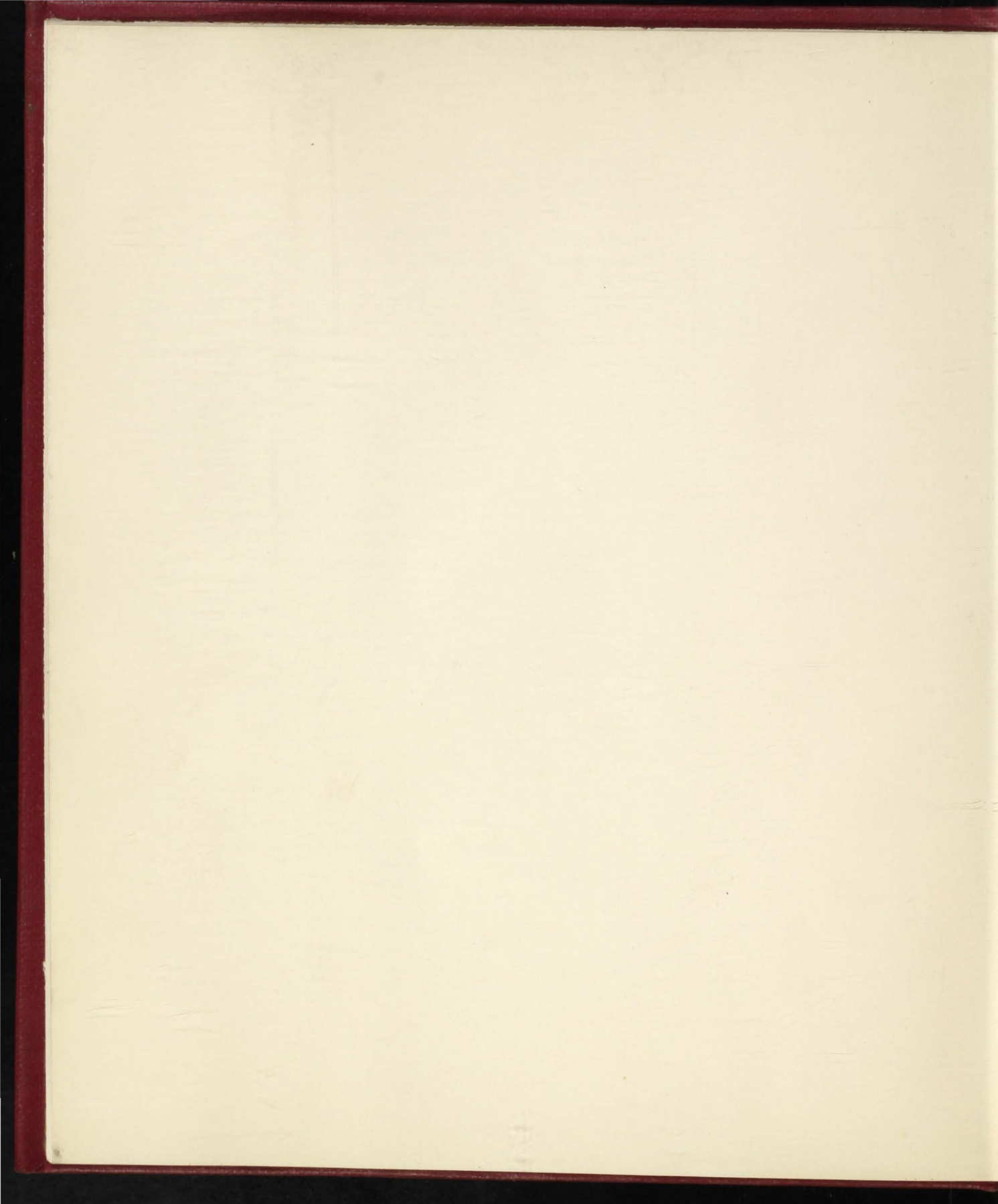














5 VIEWS ON LABOUR'S FUTURE

WHERE?

ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN ALAN BIRCH DOUGLAS JAY ROBERT NEILD RALPH SAMUEL

Five views on Labour's future
together with an analysis of
the election results by
HUGH BERRINGTON

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WHERE ?

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HUGH BERRINGTON is Lecturer in Government, University College of North Staffordshire.

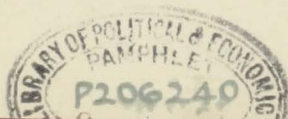
ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN is Member of Parliament for Bristol South-East.

ALAN BIRCH is the General Secretary of USDAW and Chairman of the Economic Committee of the TUC.

DOUGLAS JAY is Member of Parliament for Battersea North.

ROBERT NEILD was Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and is now on the staff of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

RALPH SAMUEL is one of the editors of *Universities and Left Review*.



What happened ?

THE MAIN purpose of this analysis is to discover the source of the Liberal vote and to show what happened in the New Towns and on the housing estates. But let us look first at the overall national pattern.

TABLE 1. Turnout and Loss (Straight Fight 1955 and 1959)

REGION ¹	RISE IN		
	SWING %	LOSS ² %	TURNOUT %
NORTHERN SCOTLAND (6)	-1.0	-1.6	4.1
CLYDESIDE (14)	-1.8	-3.6	2.3
SOUTHERN SCOTLAND (19)	-0.8	-1.6	2.4
NORTHERN ENGLAND (32)	1.2	2.1	2.6
YORKSHIRE (36)	1.4	2.5	2.4
MANCHESTER AREA (17)	-1.5	-3.0	2.5
MERSEYSIDE (16)	0.5	1.1	3.5
REST OF LANCASHIRE (21)	0.3	0.6	1.8
EAST MIDLANDS (29)	1.9	3.6	1.3
EASTERN COUNTIES (12)	1.7	3.5	0.9
B'HAM & BLACK COUNTRY (27)	3.3	6.2	1.3
OTHER WEST MIDLANDS (15)	1.9	4.0	3.8
NORTHERN HOME COUNTIES (19)	2.9	6.1	1.6
GREATER LONDON (28)	2.7	5.0	0.7
SOUTHERN AND SOUTH EAST (30)	1.6	2.7	1.0
SOUTH-WESTERN (7)	3.4	6.4	1.7
WALES (12)	1.5	2.5	3.0
TOTAL—GREAT BRITAIN (340)	1.4	2.7	2.0
MINING AREAS (24)	0.7	1.0	3.3
ENGLISH RURAL CONSTITS. (31)	1.2	3.0	1.9
ALL ENGLISH CONSTITS. (289)	1.6	3.1	2.0

1. Eight of these regions are the same as those defined by *The Economist* in its appraisal of the election results (October 17th, 1959.). The rest have been defined by the author.

2. 'Loss' is a more accurate index of changes in party support than the crude 'swing': 'loss' shows the percentage of former Labour voters who have presumably changed sides. It is found by dividing the percentage swing by the percentage of votes formerly held by the party losing support.

The figures in brackets show the number of seats within the region where there were straight fights between Labour and Conservative in both 1955 and 1959. A minus sign indicates a swing to Labour: no minus a swing to the Conservatives.

Labour's decline was most severe in the Black Country, the Northern Home Counties, Greater London and the towns in the South-West. The Conservative loss was most pronounced in Clydeside and in the Manchester area—though there was some swing to Labour in all parts of Scotland. Elsewhere the Labour loss was lowest in the North-West and in regions with a large mining vote—Yorkshire, Wales and Northern England.

There seems to be some correlation between the Labour loss and the size of the increase in the turnout. In eight areas the increase in the poll was below the average for the whole country. In all but one of these, Labour's loss was greater than average. In nine regions, the turnout rose by more than the national average; with one exception, Labour either gained in these regions or suffered a less than average loss. It seems that in some areas, a few former Labour supporters did not go to the poll, and so by their abstention contributed to the Tory swing.

In English rural constituencies the Labour loss was almost exactly the same as in the rest of England. Agriculture, evidently, had no special grievances at this election. In 24 selected mining areas, however, the swing to the government was slight, and much lower than the swing in the rest of the country.

Did the Liberals take more votes from Labour than from the Conservatives, as their leaders assert, or were they a greater handicap to the Conservatives, as some observers have recently suggested? In order to test these assertions those seats where there were straight fights between Conservative and Labour in both 1955 and 1959 have been examined, region by region, in order to estimate the direct swing from Labour to Conservative, in different parts of the country, and have been compared with the results in those constituencies fought by Liberal candidates in 1959 but not in 1955. Constituencies contested by Independents or minor party candidates at either election have been omitted altogether.³

How realistic are the conclusions? Their validity depends on one assumption—that the loss from Labour to Conservative (or *vice versa*) would have been the same in the seats where the Liberals intervened as in the rest of the region. We cannot be certain that this is correct; but where a substantial number of seats are affected by Liberal intervention in any region the assumption is probably true.⁴

A complication arises from the small number of constituencies affected by Liberal intervention in some regions. The smaller the number of such constituencies, the more likely that the result will be distorted by the idiosyn-

3. Although the conclusions are controversial, shortage of space precludes a full account of the method by which they were reached.

4. A further calculation of the ratios in which votes were drawn from the two parties has been made on the extreme assumption that the swing to the Conservatives in constituencies affected by Liberal intervention, was as much as one per cent above or below the regional swing. The findings are not greatly changed by even these extreme assumptions. For example, in the South and South East the ratios would not have been worse (from Labour's viewpoint) than 32:68 or better than 42:58.

cracies of one or two seats. Thus the figures for the Manchester areas, Merseyside, the Black Country, Northern England and Clydeside are given for the sake of completeness but the constituencies involved are so few that it would be rash to infer that the figures shown are necessarily true of the region as a whole. In a few instances, such as Yorkshire and the East Midlands, there are rather more constituencies where the Liberals intervened but there are still too few to justify any confident assertions.

TABLE 2. Liberal Intervention
REGION

	(1)	(2)	C	(3)	L
NORTHERN SCOTLAND (5)†	—3.6	17.7	35	:	65
CLYDESIDE (3)*	—	13.6	87	:	13
SOUTHERN SCOTLAND (5)†	—3.4	13.6	52	:	48
NORTHERN ENGLAND (3)*	2.5	10.9	55	:	45
YORKSHIRE (6)†	2.3	16.5	50	:	50
MANCHESTER AREA (1)*	6.2	15.3	43	:	57
MERSEYSIDE (2)*	—	11.1	48	:	52
REST OF LANCASHIRE (5)†	—	23.5	56	:	44
EAST MIDLANDS (6)†	4.2	12.8	63	:	37
EASTERN COUNTIES (8)	2.5	14.9	47	:	53
BLACK COUNTRY (2)*	2.4	12.5	43	:	57
OTHER WEST MIDLANDS (10)	4.2	17.3	49	:	51
NORTH HOME COUNTIES (18)	4.2	13.4	52	:	48
GREATER LONDON (17)	5.2	11.7	60	:	40
SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST (20)	3.6	15.4	36	:	64
SOUTH WEST (9)	4.8	16.7	57	:	43
WALES	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL—GREAT BRITAIN (120)	3.8	14.7	51	:	49

Key—The figures in brackets give the number of seats in the region contested by the Liberals in 1959 but not in 1955.

* Indicates that the number of seats in the region affected by fresh Liberal candidatures is too small to justify conclusions about the region as a whole.

† Indicates that the number of constituencies affected by fresh Liberal candidatures is small, and that the figures must be treated with reserve.

Col. 1 shows the percentage of the total vote by which the Liberal poll increased in constituencies they fought both times.

Col. 2 shows the proportion of the total vote won by the Liberals in seats where they intervened in 1959, but did not fight in 1955.

Col. 3 shows as a ratio the estimated percentage of votes they drew respectively from the potential Conservative poll and the potential Labour poll in seats where they intervened in 1959 but not in 1955.

A few reservations must be made about this table. In the South-West the constituencies where there were straight fights on both occasions were mainly urban, whilst those in which the Liberals intervened were largely rural. The swing which has been applied, therefore, is an urban swing. The swing to the Conservatives was probably less in the rural constituencies, and if that is so, it means that the true ratio lies nearer 52:48 than 57:43. In Yorkshire and Northern England the swing to the Conservatives was probably higher in the seats where the Liberals intervened than in the region as a whole, and in this case the ratios in which the votes were drawn would lie nearer 55:45 and 63:37 respectively. The high Liberal vote in the rest of Lancashire, and the extent to which it was drawn from the Conservatives can be partly ascribed to the result in a single constituency—Rochdale. Moreover in some regions, notably Yorkshire, there seem to have been striking variations from constituency to constituency.

Despite these qualifications, some assertions can be made.

(1) The Liberal vote varied from less than 12 per cent in Merseyside and Greater London to 16 and 17 per cent in the South-West, Yorkshire and Northern Scotland.

(2) There are some regional variations in the sources of the Liberal vote. In Greater London, and more doubtfully in the East Midlands, Liberal intervention seems to have hurt the Conservatives more than Labour. In the three Clydeside constituencies, the Liberals seem to have drawn nearly all their votes from the Conservatives. In South and South East England, however, Liberal intervention has been to Labour's disadvantage. Elsewhere, their votes seem to have been drawn from the two parties on a one-to-one basis, proportionately speaking; in the Eastern Counties they seem to have taken a slightly higher proportion from Labour, and slightly more from the Conservatives in the North of England and the South-West. *Over the country as a whole their votes seem to have been drawn from the two parties in equal proportions.*

(3) In most areas, the turnout increased more in seats affected by Liberal intervention than in other constituencies. Nationally, the increase in turnout in these constituencies was 1.2 per cent more.

(4) There is a nucleus of Liberal voters, numbering just above 1 per cent in the whole country, who in the absence of a Liberal candidate will not bother to vote. This factor has not been allowed for in calculating the proportions of Liberal votes drawn from the two parties. If it were possible to allow for this, the effect would be to widen the ratios a little.

(5) In absolute terms the Liberals undoubtedly took more votes from the Conservatives than from Labour—but this was due almost entirely to the fact that in the seats they contested there were more Conservatives to take them from. This explains why some observers (*e.g. The Economist*, 17th October) have concluded that Liberal intervention handicapped the Conservative Party.

This inference is based on the fact that the crude swing in the seats where the Liberals intervened was less than in those where there was a straight fight at both elections. All that a comparison of the swing figure tells us, however, is that a larger *number* of Liberal votes came from the Conservatives; they tell us nothing about the *proportions*.

It is not easy to explain all the regional variations. But what can be said with confidence is, first, that there is no evidence to support the Liberal claim that most of their votes were drawn from Labour; and, secondly, that neither Liberal intervention nor the size of the poll had much influence on the result. Labour lost because some of its erstwhile supporters went and voted Conservative.

A number of constituencies affected by new towns, or new estates, have been examined. The 1955 vote in these constituencies has been adjusted by the increase (or decrease) in turnout, and the regional loss figure, and the result has been compared with the votes actually cast in 1959. From these comparisons, it has been possible to estimate how the new inhabitants voted.

Twenty constituencies affected by new towns or housing estates were examined in detail. The proportions in which the new voters probably divided are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. New Towns and Estates. Estimated Distribution of New Voters

CONSTITUENCY	CONSERVATIVE	LABOUR	LIBERAL
HITCHIN	48.0	39.0	13.0
HERTFORD	52.0	48.0	—
HORSHAM	51.0	49.0	—
BILLERICAY	37.0	43.0	20.0
EPPING	39.0	47.0	14.0
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD	48.0	41.0	10.0
HORNCHURCH	58.0	18.0	24.0
PUTNEY	48.0	52.0	Nil
NORTHFIELD	40.0	60.0	—
COVENTRY EAST	31.0	69.0	—
KETTERING	53.0	47.0	—
NOTTINGHAM SOUTH	43.0	57.0	—
BRIERLEY HILL	63.0	37.0	—
GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOUTH	52.0	48.0	—
HUYTON	35.0	65.0	—
WYTHENSHAW	50.0	50.0	—
LANARK	44.0	56.0	—
GLASGOW, SCOTSTOUN	35.0	65.0	—
„ PROVAN	26.0	74.0	—
„ CATHCART	33.0	67.0	—

It must be emphasised that these figures are based on the assumption that the swing amongst the original electors was the same as in the region as a whole. (Except for Coventry, where the swing in the city was much lower than in the region. Here a swing for the city has been applied.) If the swing were greater or less than in the surrounding region, the validity of these figures would be affected. It must also be stressed that the percentages relate to all the newcomers—not just to those living in housing estates or new towns.

The results are erratic, and it is not easy to discern any clear pattern. This may be due to the immigration of owner-occupiers in some constituencies along with the development of new estates, or to a counter-movement out of the constituency as happened in Lanark. In many of the new council estates Labour seems to have done better than in the new towns—though it is hard to explain the Wythenshawe figures. The new estates in Glasgow appear to be overwhelmingly Labour.

The Hornchurch figures seem too bad to be true. Possibly the swing among the old voters there was abnormally high. The Liberals can draw little comfort from the new towns; they did best in Billericay where they apparently won the support of about 20 per cent of the new inhabitants. What is surprising is that Labour often did well in new estates, in areas where the swing went heavily to the Conservatives. At any rate, there is some evidence to support the view that Labour voters on the new housing estates are less prone to change their views than those in the new towns.

The author is grateful to Mr. A. Hubert for help in preparing the Statistics.

Modernising the party

WHAT IS needed is a complete overhaul. There is nothing fundamentally wrong. But we have allowed ourselves to deteriorate into rather a ramshackle outfit because we have been unwilling to face some of the difficulties that have beset us. In four consecutive elections the Labour Party has lost seats in Parliament. Unless something happens to change the trend, the election of 1964 will see us weaker still.

The recommendations made here are intended to remedy that state of affairs. Somehow we must re-equip ourselves for the next election and for another period of Government. Whatever happens we must not waste the next five years.

Nowadays we hear a lot about the 'image' of the party. There is no objection to the phrase so long as we understand what it means. A good image cannot be given us by an advertising agency. It cannot even be pursued for its own sake. It is something that comes by doing the right things. Like 'Digging for Victory' it means hard work by individuals in their own back gardens as part of a central plan. It does not mean that we will find what we want after a superficial scraping of the ground.

The policy on which we fought the election was a good one. It stirred the imagination of the Party and won the interest of the public. The campaign was fought on it. It would be foolish to attribute our failure to any one part of our policy. And it would be disastrous if we were to jettison those parts that we thought unpopular in a panic effort to win back popular support. The effect of doing this would be to cast doubt on our integrity in proposing that policy in our manifesto. Nor can we seriously contemplate abandoning Socialism in an age when the socialist economies of the world are rapidly overtaking those of the capitalist nations.

What is wanted is a forward look at 1965-1970 when the next Labour Government may be in power. We have not been looking far enough ahead. Nobody wants to produce more documents to commit us to the detailed programme we should need to adopt. What we want are a lot more ideas to form a pool from which a Labour Government can draw in due course. This is also the role of the Fabian Society.

The party constitution is far too cumbersome in operation and requires careful re-examination. The National Executive Committee should appoint a Constitutional Commission, invite evidence to be submitted to it, and

publish a report which can be studied before the 1960 Conference. This cannot be left to a sub-committee of the National Executive. Something more like a Royal Commission is required. It should be empowered to examine the whole thing from top to bottom, including the Conference arrangements, the voting procedures, the make-up of the Executive, regional organisation and the relations between the National Executive and the Parliamentary Party. Without making radical changes in the balance of power, there is plenty of room for improvement.

We also need new aims and objectives to be written into our constitution. The present ones do not now represent our aspirations. We might well also adopt World Government as an objective and pledge ourselves to the Declaration of Human Rights—as well as re-stating our socialist purpose. New aims and objectives clearly stated may help us in a practical way to draw in young people. We so often appear to be too materialistic. Here is an encouragement to lift our eyes from our daily chores and reflect on what it is all about.

Transport House requires special thought. It cannot be re-organised until some attention has been given to its role and purpose. This has not been done in recent years—and many of its troubles stem from this very fact. It must of course remain the servant of the Party under the supreme direction of the National Executive.

The most important thing is to try to widen its responsibilities to cover the whole Party—especially the Parliamentary Party. Labour MPs really need servicing and Transport House should do it. It is not now equipped to provide such briefing. This is a great source of weakness. The Research department needs expansion. More effort must be devoted to the day-to-day issues as they arise. It must also plan for future policy-making. But it can never have on the staff enough people to cover the whole field. It should therefore develop itself as a clearing-house, keeping in touch with research done by others. The Left is fortunate in its strong academic wing and could well utilise the work of those at Universities and elsewhere.

The most urgent job of all at Transport House is in the field of propaganda and publicity. The Press and Publicity Committee of the Executive, meeting once a month, looks after only one section of the output of the Party. Meetings are handled by the National Agent's Department and Broadcasting is in a water-tight compartment of its own. There is too little co-ordination with the Parliamentary Party. A new Information Department covering the total output of the Party assisted by an Advisory Committee and tightly linked to the work of Labour MPs is an urgent necessity.

There should also be an organisation and methods survey at head office. These points stand out. Heads of departments should meet together at a weekly conference. When work is done in isolation it weakens the sense of unity between individuals. Good internal communications are very important.

There must also be a considerable increase in the salaries paid. From the General Secretary downwards, the reward for responsibility is quite inadequate.

But you cannot get a continuing sense of political purpose permeating down from above and good co-ordination with the Parliamentary Party unless a senior member of the Shadow Cabinet, who is also a member of the Executive, is given special responsibility for Transport House. The Executive might elect him—as a permanent Vice-Chairman—on the recommendation of the Leader, with whom he would naturally have to work.

Finally, there should be a new committee to replace the Campaign Committee. If the officers of the National Executive Committee and the Parliamentary Party could meet once a week, most of the problems of co-ordination would disappear.

The battle, in between elections, is in Parliament. And the effectiveness of the Opposition is a major factor affecting the public attitude to the Party. There is room for improvement. The Shadow Cabinet cannot really do its job while it only meets once a week. It should have at least a short daily meeting to discuss tactics. And it needs better servicing. The Leader should have some of the work lifted from his shoulders and should have more power to pick front-bench spokesmen. He might well appoint two PPSs and even an Administrative Assistant to help him run his office.

Back-bench MPs feel the gap between themselves and Transport House even more acutely. They are not helped with briefs and they feel that they are not taken into consultation enough when policy is being made. The group meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party are no substitute for this.

Finally, MPs are undoubtedly restricted by the present Standing Orders of the Party. Whatever the justification for these may have been with a narrow majority one way or the other, this argument no longer applies.

The Front Bench should be given more authority and the back benches more freedom. These changes, combined with regular weekly meetings of the whole Parliamentary Party, would do a great deal to increase the effectiveness of the Opposition.

Going further afield, we are bound to consider the impact of Labour Councils and Councillors on the public attitude to the Party. We must try to bring about an improvement in relations between the Councils and the public. The standing orders of many Labour Groups are far too rigid and should be relaxed, at least as much as for MPs. It is unjustifiable to lay down restrictions on the freedom of speech of Labour Councillors, even if unanimity in voting is necessary. Secondly, the petty rules and restrictions maintained by some Labour Councils must be eased. No amount of hymn-singing on May Day about human brotherhood can erase the irritation of being told that you cannot keep a dog if you live in a council house.

The links between the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement are ancient and strong. Without them, the Party would be a sort of wishy-washy Lib-Lab Coalition or else a futile socialist splinter group. It is exactly for this reason that the Party must take note of the fall in popularity of the Trade Union movement. This is causing anxiety to the Trade Union leaders and has political repercussions that affect us. A recent Gallup Poll testing the public attitude to various institutions such as the Royal Family, Parliament, the Civil Service and the City, showed the Trade Union movement to be less popular than the House of Lords and to be the institution with the highest unfavourable vote. Much of this is due to the hostility of the Press. But this makes it all the more important that the union viewpoint should be put over clearly.

The TUC and the Labour Party should sit down together to discuss this question. Much could be done without major changes. Each trade union should appoint one man to be responsible for public relations. He could do a great deal. If Labour MPs were given some background material on union activities and industrial disputes, they would find opportunities for making use of it. There are other ways of helping too. The Party TV studio, for example, could be lent to union leaders who might want to make use of it. For whatever reason, the case is not getting across now. And—perhaps for this reason—the trade unions seem to be no more successful than the Party in attracting young people into politics. We would do well to have more young trade unionists as sponsored candidates for Parliament.

The Party has no effective Youth Movement and far too many young people vote Tory. These two problems cannot be dodged any longer. A new Youth Movement must be launched in such a way as to capture the imagination of younger people. Their strength is in their energy and argumentativeness, and inquisitiveness. We should seek to use these qualities to bring strength to the Movement. Its first job might well be to conduct a nationwide quiz among young people to find out what they think about things. This could be a valuable source for further expert study.

The biggest headache for the organisers of past Labour Youth Movements has been the fear that their policy would get out of step with that of the Party. We must face this risk frankly. A new Youth Movement must be allowed real freedom. If we do not attract young people, the Party will wither away. As it is, many general committees in local Labour Parties have an average age that is well into the sixties. A bad winter might carry off half of them.

None of these proposals are particularly revolutionary. They were not intended to be. The Party is fundamentally sound and only requires modernisation. We must make it work properly. Our objectives, our policies, our campaigns and our methods must all be re-examined to get them right. The sooner we get on with the job the better.

More than a protest

ANY TENDENCY to dramatise the position of the Labour Party following the 1959 General Election is naturally met by a plea to keep calm. But to see drama in the present situation is not necessarily to panic, whereas keeping calm may easily degenerate into complacency. Of the two attitudes, I would, therefore, tend to prefer the former. After all, the stark fact is that following eight years of Tory Government, the electorate has chosen to have four or five more years of the same thing.

This means that, barring some great international or domestic crisis (which no sane person wants), by the time another chance comes some twelve or thirteen years will have elapsed since the end of the Labour Governments of 1945-1951. In that time changes in our society and in the composition of the electorate itself will have made the acts of the 1945 Labour Government of still less relevance to the current situation. If Labour is to have the necessary impact, it must be as an entirely new alternative to the Conservatives.

A really serious attempt must, therefore, be made to understand and profit from the lessons of defeat. Why was it that after we had waged a first-rate election campaign under excellent leadership, the Tories achieved a result which must have exceeded their expectations? Of course, the timing of the election was in their favour both as regards the domestic and international situations. They had conducted an extensive and costly advertising campaign for months before, aided by much publicity on the part of their 'non-political' friends. But these things are not enough to account for their increased majority at the third time of asking.

There is no need for us to be despondent. The Labour Opposition is a powerful one with substantial support in the country. A relatively small swing would completely reverse the decision. But our objective is still and must always be a Labour Government. The elementary fact must be stated that this can only be achieved through the ballot box by obtaining the votes we failed to get this time. While recognising the increased Liberal vote and that probably it contained more potential Labour than Conservative support, I think its significance has been somewhat overdone. Certainly Labour must get not only these potential votes but a good many which went to the Tories, including those of many trade union members and their families. We must do this without sacrificing any of our present support.

Let us clear away any misconception about 'vote-catching'. It would be the height of cynicism just to advocate something attractive and drop everything thought to be disliked. There is in any case no evidence from this election that political parties and policies can be sold like detergents. To go out and win the votes we need, is not a case of discarding principles; it is a matter of re-examining those principles—socialist principles—and the manner of giving effect to them in terms of the actual society we live in and not one which has been superseded. This is not just a case of 'presentation'—there is no alibi there. If the policies we advocate to give effect to our principles are inappropriate, no amount of new presentation will succeed.

It is not a new discovery that the Britain of today is not the Britain of 20 years ago, any more than of 40 or 60 years ago. The whole point of the deliberations which have been taking place inside the Party during the past three years has been to find policies which correspond to that change. Two things have, I think, now emerged.

One is that we have underestimated the effects of the vast industrial and social changes which have taken place; the other is that we have failed sufficiently to convince the public even of the extent of our progress in revising policy.

We cannot altogether blame the public for this if, as I believe, we have not sufficiently convinced our own active supporters of both the need for the adaptation of policy and the extent to which we have already met that need. Too often we have satisfied our own ranks by permitting different interpretations to be placed on policy after it has been debated and adopted by majority decision. It is one thing to have a majority and minority point of view—it is both certain and desirable that within a democratic party this will always be so. It is another thing if the majority view continues to be presented differently according to the varying interpretations placed on it within the party.

To take an example, the way in which the extent of public antipathy towards nationalisation was exploited in this election. (To recognise this antipathy is not to discard one's belief in measures of public ownership.) Yet the Tories' attitude was far more illogical than Labour's. If nationalisation was the unmitigated evil it was made out to be, why did not the Government propose the denationalisation of Coal, Railways, Gas and Electricity? After all, these, particularly the two former, constitute the rallying point around which the campaign of misrepresentation and prejudice against the name revolves.

Labour's official policy was far from being dogmatic. 'Renationalisation' of Steel and Road Transport were proposed but there was considerable flexibility as to the form and extent of future public ownership. A serious attempt had been made in the policy statements to relate such measures to economic and industrial needs. In the case of steel, a large amount of public money was already involved and in transport the problem of achieving co-ordination and efficiency and preventing waste and eventual chaos is difficult to ignore. No

alternative way of dealing with this problem was offered by the Conservatives.

Clearly, however, our opponents were able to pose the issues as for and against a somewhat abstract view of 'nationalisation'. We must take some responsibility for this. In spite of the way in which both the party and the TUC have insisted that public ownership, as one of several complementary policies, should arise from (and should *be seen* to arise from) a wider policy for industry and economic expansion as a whole and not as an end in itself, how many of our own supporters have continued to, or have appeared to, advocate it as just that? Evidence is seen in the way in which some party and trade union representatives show resentment when asked to consider detailed questions of why, how, where and when shall public ownership be extended. To them it still appears to be in the nature of a creed.

We must defend more vigorously (though not uncritically) the existing nationalised industries and not reject the possibility of further extensions of public ownership as a necessary part of future policy. But we must recognise the reasons why a less dogmatic attitude to this question is justified as compared with 1918, when it became officially part of Labour Party and TUC objectives. Forty years ago there could appear to be little prospect of achieving justice for the worker so long as private ownership continued. There were no grounds then for supposing that under the kind of mixed economy we have now, there could be full employment, extensive communal services based on the acceptance of much higher taxation and trade union rights established to the present extent over larger fields of private industry.

Now as soon as anyone talks this way some socialists react violently. One is charged with complacency, with ignoring injustices and inequalities which still exist. To anyone brought up on the doctrine that capitalism and Toryism mean unemployment and poverty for the workers, it is admittedly difficult to admit that this may not necessarily be so. But does one cease to be a socialist by admitting the reality of a given situation; that the Tory Party may be prepared to borrow sufficient of Labour's techniques of government to counter this argument; that they may consider it more important to keep in office than to act traditionally?

Let us beware of trying to portray conditions as being appropriate to our policies instead of adopting policies to suit conditions. That way we are led not only into seeking to convert people to a belief in our policies but, first, to persuading them that conditions are worse than they themselves think they are. If the society we are appealing to is no longer one of 'haves' and 'have nots' but rather one of 'have somes' and 'have mores' the difference of approach is perhaps greater than we hitherto appreciated. Of course, unjustifiable inequalities remain which we believe only Labour can put right, but they are not the inequalities of yesteryear, as a glance round at any sporting fixture, entertainment centre, seaside promenade, car park or main line railway

station at weekends will demonstrate. To say that we now have a different working-class is, after all, only to pay tribute to the past efforts of the Labour and trade union movement.

All this is of profound significance to the trade unions as well as the Labour Party. We must make serious efforts to find out what the vast army of members are thinking and render them articulate. The fact that the day-to-day activities of the unions must necessarily be carried on by an active minority of part-time and full-time officers can be deceptive. The picture is one of intense movement and debate amongst this active minority, with the general mass of members responding spasmodically and often unthinkingly to some particular turn of events. So far from denigrating this large rank-and-file army, I would emphasise its importance, an importance which certainly cannot be overlooked at General Election times. The responsibility of the active minority is not just to thrash out differences amongst itself but, above all, to seek to understand and truly represent the general body of members on which it depends for its continued existence.

I believe that many of the so-called 'militant' rank-and-file 'leaders', who castigate the official leadership for being divorced from the membership, are themselves utterly and completely unrepresentative of the rank and file. They are to a large extent responsible for creating in the minds of the public a concept of trade unionism as pursuing a narrow self-interest, which is not only inappropriate in present-day conditions, but is alien to the best traditions of our movement.

It is not enough to say, although it is true, that these elements correspond to many of the 'free enterprise' fraternity in business today who are able to pursue their own purely selfish objectives in relative obscurity or even under a cloak of respectability. The existence of the double standard applied to the pursuit of immediate gain, regardless of social consequences, should not be overlooked. But it must often appear to the public that there is a contradiction between the declared aspirations of the trade unions and some of their day-to-day activities; between their advocacy of planning in economic affairs and a lack of self-discipline and co-ordination in matters which can be deemed to be within their own control.

Unofficial strikes are perhaps the most easily recognisable symptoms of this ailment, particularly the quite large proportion of them which arise, not just from the existence of a grievance or a failure on managements' part to maintain the high standard of personnel relations required today, but from the activities of minorities *whose philosophy or enthusiasm leads them to regard the act of striking as of more importance than the object itself*. The trade unions can no longer afford to indulge this 'over-enthusiasm' and must take firm measures to counter this philosophy.

Important and urgent as it is to deal with the problem of unofficial action, the future industrial and political tasks of the Trade Union Movement require something more. We must remove the conception of trade unions as being mainly defensive—depending for their existence on the processing of grievances. Their role must be much more positive—to use the power and influence of organised labour to obtain greater recognition of the improved status of the worker in industry and society. We must not make the mistake of measuring status only in terms of income—side by side with rising wages and improved conditions of employment must go a greater feeling of responsibility for helping to mould the pattern of industrial and social life.

Whether this positive role can be accomplished without fairly radical changes in the outlook and structure of the Trade Union Movement, without some subordination of the rights of individual unions, each pursuing a series of unco-ordinated programmes at their own time and in their own way, to a wider agreement on objectives and methods, is a question which we must be prepared to face and answer.

A big task lies ahead of both the Labour Party and the trade unions, to win over a greater measure of public support in the coming months. The Party needs it to win elections, the trade unions to accomplish their industrial work. The approaches needed by both sections are not only reconcilable, they are complementary. The Party is not content to be a permanent Opposition, the trade unions are and must be seen to be more than a protest movement. Both must not be afraid to discard old slogans in the interests of creating in the minds of their supporters and the public a movement capable once again of leading the advance to that higher form of society, materially and ethically, which is the real meaning of socialism.

Beyond state monopoly

WE SHALL make more progress in finding the way back to power for the Labour Movement, if we look at its present prospect in a wider historical picture. Up to 1914, Britain had a Liberal Party, which alternated in Government with the Tories for several generations. It was a non-class party; and it represented, if imperfectly, the reforming impulse in all sections of society from the trade unions and radicals to the old Whig noblemen. It lost power because (despite the belated efforts of Keynes) it failed to understand the post-1918 problem of unemployment and the trade cycle.

In the 1920s and 1930s social democracy gained ground in almost all democratic countries. Why? Because the 1914-18 upheaval accentuated the trade cycle; and the wage earners, better organised and educated, were no longer willing to stand the unemployment which persisted year after year. These conditions have changed again—largely because the great debate in the 1930s among socialists and economists led to these practical conclusions:

- (1) that by progressive taxation and social services the inequality of incomes could be steadily corrected; and
- (2) that by planned control of the flow of money demand the old unemployment cycle could be ironed out.

But this very success had two consequences, which the more conservative-minded in our Labour Movement don't yet seem to have noticed. First, the British Tories realised that they must take the hint and admit grudgingly that full employment and expansion were possible. Secondly, the real impelling grievance of the wage-earners (other than the coal miners) dwindled. *We set out to transform society in 1945-51. We succeeded so well that we have now got to transform ourselves.* We set out to get rid of class-consciousness. Again we succeeded so well that we are surprised to find so many wage-earners no longer respond to a class-conscious appeal. This is broadly why social-democracy has been on the ebb since 1950 all over the Western democratic world, except in Scandinavia and New Zealand.

For these reasons, it seemed to me before the last election that, despite great enthusiasms, splendid leadership, excellent propaganda and genuine unity, Labour, with its existing appeal, was up against underlying social forces that were irresistible. Those of us who canvassed daily and relentlessly (and met the electorate, instead of theorising about what they ought to think) found this confirmed. Many of the younger wage-earners were not moved by

the old appeal. In the more prosperous factory areas, the old feeling of 'working class solidarity' was less strong than in districts still facing unemployment. The new council housing estates were less solid than the old. Young men of 17-21, gathering round the loud speaker cars, knew little or nothing of the Labour Party, except that it stood for 'nationalisation' and the 'working class,' to which they apparently did not feel they belonged. And all these social forces are likely to strengthen, not weaken over the next five years. People may vote in the next election who were two years old in 1945.

We shall win next time if we read these lessons. Those who don't value personal impressions should look at the overall figures. The Tory vote went down from 49.8 per cent to 49.3 per cent and Labour's from 46.3 per cent to 43.6 per cent; and the Liberal went up from 2.7 per cent to 6.0 per cent. Therefore if Labour had gained the percentage which was added to the Liberal vote, the result would have been: Labour 49.6 per cent, Tory 49.3 per cent. Labour lost not because the Tories gained nationally, but because there was a swing from Labour both to the Tories and the Liberals.

Why was this? Anybody who fails to answer that question and just echoes the slogans of the past, is not helping the Labour Party back to power. True, the Tories spent lots of money; their propaganda was unscrupulous; and they seized on an economically favourable moment. But this argument is too complacent. They always will do these things. We should be foolish and defeatist to assume serious economic difficulties at the time of the next election. Our whole Opposition effort will be devoted towards pushing the Government into expansion and full employment. Also, we can hardly count next time on even a Tory Government committing the frantic follies of Suez, Hola, Nyasaland and the Rent Act all in one four-year period!

The beginning of wisdom is to rid ourselves finally of what are frankly two Victorian Marxist fallacies. First is the idea that private enterprise capitalism will be rocked by the trade cycle into collapse. Certainly unplanned capitalism can yield neither social justice, security, nor steady expansion. But to assume in the 1960s that it will totter into calamity in the 1932 style is to fly in the face of the evidence. Marx had the foresight of genius, on the experience of the 1840s and 1850s, in predicting this. But to revive his old dogma today is rather as if a Renaissance Pope, in Galileo's day, was to have based his diplomacy on the assumption that the Second Coming was due in the next five years.

The other frankly Marxist cobweb is the belief that socialism consists in turning the whole of industry and trade into a State monopoly. It doesn't. It consists in social and democratic control of the distribution of our incomes and resources in all sorts of ways, for the sake of greater equality and freedom.

Marx's basic mistake, understandable in 1848, was to think that what mattered was the *source* of individual incomes, when it was really the *size*.

When he first conceived that all unearned income as such was wicked, he did not foresee or notice the British Post Office Savings Bank with its 2½ per cent interest for the wage earner, or the Co-op divi., or retailer's 'profit'. And he derived this fallacy partly from Ricardo. So the idea that socialism essentially consists in nationalising everything (which may have lost the Labour Party votes in 1959) is based, not even on the facts of a hundred years ago, but on the discredited theories of a hundred and fifty years ago. As soon as it is agreed that compensation must be paid to private owners, it is plain that no rapid re-distribution can come through nationalisation.

Having briefly swept away these mental cobwebs, let us return to 1960. What is the true destiny of Britain's greatest progressive party? First, let us start from what the electorate really wants and needs, and not what professional politicians think it ought to want. And it really can't be denied that what people most want today, and the country needs, are better pensions, better housing, better schools and health services, a fairer distribution of property; and abroad, peace and a radical policy throughout the colonies, Commonwealth, and under-developed areas of the world.

In Britain itself we ought to gather the support of all who want these things. I have no doubt, after the experience of the election, that there are a majority of voters—despite all the snobbery and selfishness of today—who desire more social justice, expanding social services, a liberal spirit among local authorities, and a genuine progressive purpose in Africa and other colonial areas. Yet these are the basic convictions of the Labour Movement. What we have to do is to tear off the false mask of sectionalism, class-consciousness, and even intolerance, which is largely foisted on us by the Tory press, but occasionally given creditability by a small die-hard faction in our own midst.

Among many practical ways of carrying this out, I just mention a few. Why not issue fewer detailed policy statements, which may appear rigid, and substitute more general statements of aims and principles? Why not hold the Party Conference at Whitsun (as we used to) instead of October, to make crystal clear (what is the truth in any case) that the political Labour Party takes political decisions and does not tag along behind the trade unions, TUC or Co-ops. And mightn't the Parliamentary Party itself have a try at suspending its standing orders again, and trusting its members to act with discretion and loyalty?

Secondly, let us all, at long last, grasp that public ownership is not the major point in the argument. Public ownership is a *means* to social justice, and only one means at that; and 'nationalisation' is *only one form of public ownership*. With all the brotherly love in the world, it is hard to be patient with people who still at this late day think that because one form of public ownership, the public monopoly, has been found suitable for electricity, gas, coal, *etc.*, it is *therefore* suitable for cotton or ball bearings or department stores or horticulture.

As well argue that because my shoe fits me, it's going to be made to fit you too—or that the measured periods of *The Times* will console the readers of *Tribune*.

The simple truth is—can't we all grasp this now?—that *the public monopoly is suitable for the public utility and monopoly trades*, because there the economies of large scale are at the maximum, the advantage of competition at the minimum, and the disadvantages of monopoly and bureaucracy at the minimum also. We are now near the end of the natural monopolies. The Swedish Socialists, much the most successful socialist party in the world, who have been in power for over 20 years, have not carried public monopoly beyond postal services, railways, air traffic, and some other public utilities. Steel and manufacturing industry generally are privately owned, and distribution is left to competition between the Co-ops and private traders. Even the Russians are not so stupid and dogmatic as to try to apply the State monopoly to agriculture. The collective farm is a co-operative enterprise, where the producers share a large proportion of the earnings of the enterprise.

Nor is that a new revolutionary discovery in our own country. Few, if any, in the 1920s argued that the public monopoly was a fit pattern for everything. Mr. Herbert Morrison in his *Socialisation and Transport* of 1932, an admirable book which started the vogue of the public board, argued from the Port of London Authority and the Metropolitan Water Board to London Transport. But he very wisely said that we should not assume the 'form proposed for transport' was suitable 'for all industries and services'.

—And some equally eminent and up-to-date authorities have put the point lucidly in this way. I quote from *Keeping Left* of 1950:

'In the last few years we have learned to distinguish the means of Socialism from its ends . . . We are approaching the end (with the new proposals in *Labour Believes in Britain*) of the "natural monopolies" and we can therefore move beyond the technique of nationalising whole industries one at a time by one Act at a time.'

This was signed by Dick Crossman, Barbara Castle, Ian Mikardo, Harold Davies, Leslie Hale and Stephen Swinger.

I entirely applaud this wonderful unanimity. It wholly accords with what I wrote in *Forward* after the Election, and now repeat with conviction refreshed by these two quotations—'We must now make it plain that we believe in social ownership through the Co-operative movement, municipal enterprise and public investment; but that we do not believe in the extension of the public monopoly to manufacturing industry or distribution.'

This, I believe, is the true way ahead for the Labour Movement. For here at least there is a bit of luck in our favour. The type of public ownership which is in some ways less popular—*i.e.*, the public monopoly—is also the least suitable for those parts of the economy still in private ownership. It would be very awkward if it were the other way round. But as it is, we can fortunately apply those forms of public and social ownership in future—the non-mono-

polistic forms—which are both popular and suitable, to other parts of the nation's economic life.

Inevitably, a monopoly is open to some attack, because it involves restriction on competition and some centralisation. But these are justified in the case of public utilities and natural monopolies by economies of large scale. It is impossible to avoid some feeling against any monopoly, public or private, however justified, even with the best arguments in its favour. (Far the surest way now, incidentally, to raise the morale and reputation of existing public enterprises would be to give them more commercial freedom to charge what prices they think economic and so show they can pay their way.)

But the competitive forms of public ownership *are* popular, because they develop without pushing anyone else forcibly out of the way. The Co-op grows by competition, and should grow more. The building of factories and industrial estates in development areas is so popular that every area clamours for more. The grant of shares to the State in exchange for loans for needy industries like cotton, aircraft and shipping would be opposed by very few. British Petroleum, over 50 per cent of whose shares are Government-owned, is not unpopular, because it has no formal monopoly powers. The complaint sometimes seems to be that it sells oil too cheap, not too dear. Yet British Petroleum has paid more revenues into the public exchequer than all our other public enterprises in all their history. Here is one obvious moral for the future. Other things being equal, for heaven's sake let's choose forms of socialism which people want.

And this links up with the central positive theme, which, I suggest, the Movement should hammer home as the crucial issue which really divides us from the Tories. We stand, in an increasingly affluent society, for the collective devotion of a far greater part of our national resources to those services which must be provided by public effort, and the electorate want—better houses, pensions, schools, health and youth services and all the rest. But (apart from expansion, which the Tories will say they want too), there is only one way, economically, of getting these things without higher taxes; by steering into the community's hands a steady stream of industrial shares which would otherwise present capital gains and rising dividends to the lucky propertied few. This is the valid economic argument for community share ownership, and other forms of competitive public enterprise. None of the snags of the public monopoly apply here. Let us put this over as pertinaciously as we put over the valid case for full employment against the reactionaries of the 1930s.

Surely on these lines the traditional believers in public ownership and the genuine libertarians and crusaders in the Labour Movement could all unite well in advance of the next election. The central theme would be this: better public services for all citizens, and the progress of public ownership 'beyond' (to use *Keeping Left* phraseology) the state monopoly towards a policy of

drawing on unearned incomes steadily (often without compulsory purchase) to pay for these services.

With this theme, I am sure we could beat the Tories. And that is our *duty*. Those few in the Labour Party who can even *contemplate* losing again are not keeping faith with the old people, the people of the Commonwealth, or the world. If there is not a Labour Government, you don't have a vacuum, you have a Tory Government. Most of us have lived through Munich and Suez. To allow another Tory Government to be elected, if we can help it, is to fail the Movement and fail the nation.

Prosperity and reform

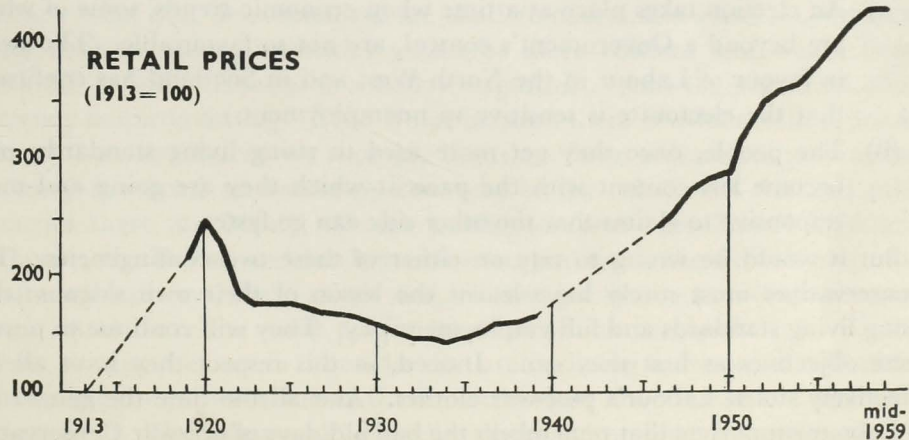
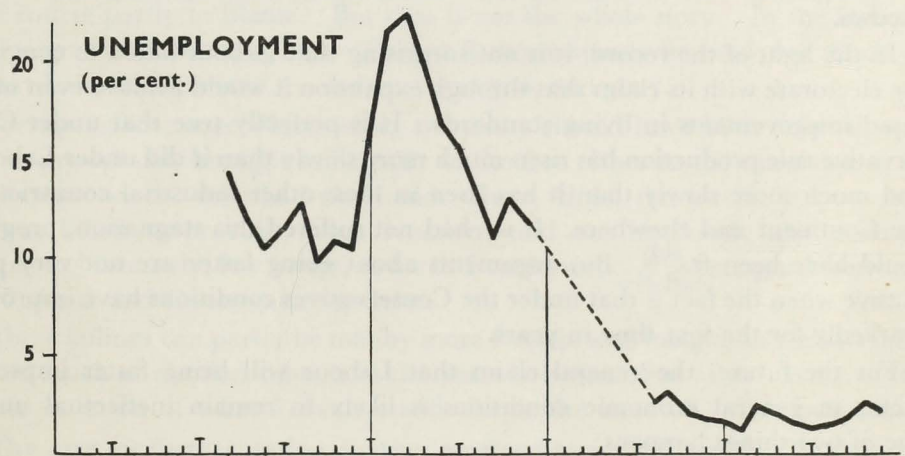
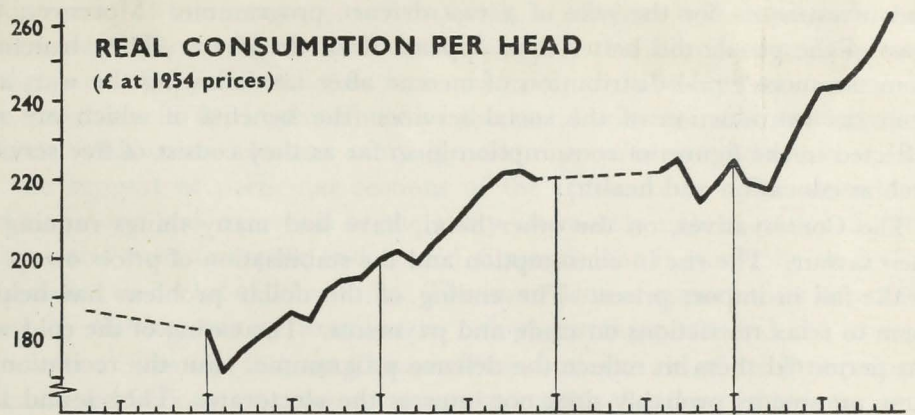
THE CONSERVATIVES won mainly because they could claim that their record in raising living standards in this country was unrivalled. Their slogans 'Conservative freedom works' and 'You have never had it so good' were telling because they were true. And their sinister rider, 'Don't let Labour ruin it' played effectively on the association of Labour rule with post-war austerity and controls.

It is worth looking at the record to see just how the average voter has fared, in economic terms, under the two parties. The chart on page 27 shows what has happened to living standards (as measured by average consumption per head, corrected for price change), to unemployment and to prices since the first world war. In the inter-war period average living standards rose. But the rise, which owed a lot to the fall in world prices of food and other commodities during the slump, was slow. And there was great inequality in living standards, especially between the employed and unemployed. Unemployment never fell perceptibly below 10 per cent of the insured labour force. At its peak it reached 22 per cent. Those were the conditions that turned a generation to the Labour Party.

In the post-war period of Labour rule, unemployment in peace time was cured: from 1947 onwards it never rose above 2 per cent. But average consumption per head scarcely rose at all: it was practically the same in 1951 as it had been in 1945. And prices rose throughout the period.

Under Conservative rule since 1951, unemployment has remained almost as low as under Labour: although it has risen above 2 per cent for considerable periods, it has never exceeded 3 per cent. But average living standards have risen faster than in any period since the first war. The increase slowed down during the credit squeeze from 1955 to 1958. But since then there has been a sharp spurt. During the eight years of Conservative Government, from 1951 to mid-1959, consumption per head has risen by 20 per cent. That is as great as the increase in the 26 years from 1913 to 1939. Added to that, prices, as we have been repeatedly reminded, have at last been stable for more than a year. Statistical differences of a few per cent do not mean much, but the difference between 20 per cent and zero undoubtedly means a great deal.

These are the basic economic trends that impinge on the voter. There are, of course, many explanations. The Labour Government after 1945 was struggling with the problems of reconstruction. World prices kept rising:



Source: London and Cambridge Economic Bulletin.

that raised retail prices, squeezed consumption and compelled us to export more. At the end of the period, the Government held down consumption—and investment—for the sake of a vast defence programme. Moreover, the mass of the people did better than appears from the chart. They benefited from the more equal distribution of income after tax following the war, and from the introduction of the social services (the benefits of which are not reflected in the figures of consumption in so far as they consist of free services such as education and health).

The Conservatives, on the other hand, have had many things running in their favour. The rise in consumption and the stabilisation of prices owe a lot to the fall in import prices. The ending of the dollar problem has helped them to relax restrictions on trade and payments. The easing of the cold war has permitted them to reduce the defence programme. But the recitation of these arguments probably does not impress the electorate. They sound like excuses.

In the light of the record, it is not surprising that Labour failed to convince the electorate with its claim that through expansion it would achieve even more rapid improvements in living standards. It is perfectly true that under Conservative rule production has risen much more slowly than it did under Labour, and much more slowly than it has risen in most other industrial countries on the Continent and elsewhere. If we had not suffered this stagnation, progress could have been faster. But arguments about going faster are not very persuasive when the fact is that under the Conservatives conditions have improved markedly for the first time in years.

For the future, the general claim that Labour will bring faster improvements in general economic conditions is likely to remain ineffectual unless one of two things happens:

- (a) An election takes place at a time when economic trends, some of which are beyond a Government's control, are not so favourable. (The swing in favour of Labour in the North-West and in Scotland has confirmed that the electorate is sensitive to unemployment.)
- (b) The people, once they get more used to rising living standards, may become less content with the pace at which they are going and more responsive to claims that the other side can go faster.

But it would be wrong to rely on either of these two contingencies. The Conservatives must surely have learnt the lesson of their own slogans: that rising living standards and full employment pay. They will continue to pursue these objectives as best they can. Indeed, in this respect they have all too effectively stolen Labour's post-war clothes. And all the time the generation of Labour supporters that remembers the bad old days of pre-war Conservative rule is dying and being replaced by a young generation enjoying the fruits of rising living standards. Economic conditions are not turning them to Labour.

If the appeal of economic expansion is ineffective, what can be said of other, less materialist, aims? A progressive party must not appeal only to narrow self-interest. It must make a wider appeal, to idealism and to people's non-material ambitions. Here the Labour Party, in this election campaign and in the years of opposition before it, seems to me to have been at its weakest. The programmes for improvement of the social services were generally admirable. But in the election campaign they appeared far too much as bids for the support of particular sections of the community. The attitude to nationalisation was equivocal as the Party alternately upheld nationalisation of steel and road transport and denied rumours that it would be so beastly as to nationalise a lot of other firms. The impression of opportunism was made worse by the last-minute promises to reduce purchase tax and not to raise income tax. The fact that the Conservatives, with the aid of the Press, sought to make the Labour programme appear to consist of a series of bids for votes is of course partly to blame. But that is not the whole story. In the Labour campaign there was too little of what Labour stands for and too much of 'What Labour offers you' (—and you, and you, and you).

Foreign policy, over which wider sympathy should have been enlisted, was not in my opinion brought sufficiently to the fore either in the campaign or in Parliament in the months beforehand. Suez, Hola, the Devlin Report and Cyprus failed to provoke much reaction; and on the Bomb, about which people feel intensely, few voters, so far as I could see, could distinguish between the Labour and Conservative policies.

These failings can partly be met by more forceful and imaginative leadership, not so much at election time as in the years between. But at the centre of the whole question of what Labour stands for is the issue of public ownership.

The case for further nationalisation emerged as a combination of a point of honour—what you denationalised we shall re-nationalise—and a claim that, under nationalisation, industries would be more efficient and would better 'serve the nation'. Honour is a hollow argument. And the argument about efficiency is unconvincing. That is not because there is evidence that private industry is more efficient. It is simply that there is no evidence at present that efficiency is related to ownership one way or the other. In this and other countries there are highly efficient public concerns—the British Electricity Authority, the British and foreign airline corporations, the French and other continental railways, the Renault and Volkswagen motor car companies, and so on. And there are some public concerns which are inefficient. That is mainly because they are in industries that are declining or in special difficulties, for example the railways and coal. Similarly there are efficient and inefficient private firms. The worst again are generally in the problem industries, such as cotton and ship-building. The further argument applied to steel—that under nationalisation it would be made to expand its capacity faster than it would in

private hands—is also unconvincing. More rapid expansion can be achieved by building publicly-owned plants to supplement the private ones: there is no need to nationalise existing plants.

The Labour Party appears to have concentrated on these technical arguments, despite their weakness and their vulnerability to counter-attacks, because it was afraid of being called doctrinaire. In doing so it was side-stepping the main issue. Most advocates of nationalisation have read some socialist literature. The ultimate appeal of public ownership to them has little to do with technical efficiency or—nowadays anyway—with full employment or industrial relations. It is an appeal to the spirit of revolt and to idealism. It is based on the hope that through public ownership it will be possible to achieve economic and social equality, co-operation instead of competition between individuals, and a weakening of respect for money in favour of a new set of cultural values. The promise to re-nationalise steel and road haulage, despite the technical and other arguments, was in large measure made to meet people who ultimately have this faith.

But in reality it is a useless sop. It may or may not be possible to achieve the idealists' goal by total public ownership and a general confiscation of private property. But it is almost certainly impossible to do so by partial nationalisation accompanied by financial compensation. For so long as private industry and private fortunes exist, they will continue to whet the competitive instincts, to produce the inequality and to foster the pursuit of money. In a mixed economy, the nationalised sector cannot be insulated as an idealists' enclave where different values rule.

If that is acknowledged, *there is really no ideological case for further piece-meal nationalisation.* There is every reason to be honest about this. The very fact that the attitudes of the Labour Party to nationalisation have been equivocal has permitted the Conservatives to play on the fear that any particular proposal for nationalisation is the thin end of the wedge of universal public ownership. And the confusion of dogma has similarly prevented Labour from conveying a clear image of what it stands for.

If it is decided to drop nationalisation and to accept the present mixed economy there will be no lack of problems. There will be plenty of scope for expression of the Party's faith in equality and justice. In many areas it could be far more radical in its thinking and more forthright in its utterances.

In a brief list of aims to pursue, I would start with international policy—disarmament, under-developed countries, colonial policy and Europe. In economic policy, I would leave aside the question of controls: few are ever likely to be needed and, if the need for them really does arise, the public will accept them. But there are many problems of how to sustain expansion, raise efficiency and replace decaying industries and plants by new ones. Here, and in the promotion of research and development, there are real problems

of public responsibility and a need for Government expenditure and public enterprise. Connected with this there is the need for a really imaginative attack on the reconstruction of our industrial cities. They are a disgrace. Their replacement involves problems of the location of industry and housing, and of aesthetics too. New cities are far more important than the municipalisation of old ones. The possibilities are great. If we continue to build houses at a rate of about 300 thousand a year and the population remains nearly static it should be possible to demolish and replace every house now standing in this country in less than 50 years. The true objective is not so crude, but that is some indication of the possibilities.

To produce greater equality and social justice the main reforms required are in the field of education, taxation and the social services. The problems are well known. But education is perhaps the most fundamental. Nothing divides our society as much as the social gulf between state and private schools. Nothing will bring greater relief than the improvement of state education to the point where private schools die away and all our children rub shoulders in the same educational system. The Labour Party should not rest until its leaders contentedly send their children to state schools, not to private schools.

The quality of life

MOST PEOPLE believe Labour lost the election because of boom and prosperity. This explanation is more plausible than the conclusion sometimes drawn that the fortunes of the Conservative Party mainly depend upon the affluence of the economy. It would take more than downturn in the trade cycle to shift the growing number of Tory working class voters from their belief that 'you've got to vote for them; they're the people with the money, they know how to handle it'. And it would be foolish to forget that Conservative administrations can be returned in conditions of obvious adversity; indeed the two greatest Tory triumphs of the century—the elections of 1931 and 1935—were won in face of massive unemployment and widespread human misery. The Conservatives today hold in reserve powerful and dangerous appeals which they would not hesitate to use if the country were less prosperous. In time of trouble they could be expected to exploit more fully the mood of frustrated national pride which they have done so much to foster by their conduct in Suez, Cyprus and Africa—a campaign, say, around British manufacture of the hydrogen bomb, on which Labour appears ill-equipped to fight.

If the argument from prosperity could make us too complacent, there is another popular explanation which seems unnecessarily depressing: the belief that the electorate were seduced by a callous individualism summed up in the catchphrase of the day. It is true, of course, that the Conservatives have done everything possible to create a mood of selfish individualism, and not many of their supporters can have gone to the polls thinking about the submerged fifth of the nation. But the Left seems too ready to condemn the Conservative half of the electorate for the sins of their representatives. Labour itself did not demand sacrifices; on the contrary, it offered more welfare for less taxation. Among working-class Conservative voters, the embattled egotists' were not so common as the people who said 'they haven't done any great harm, 'they've given the working man a fair deal', and who asked 'would Labour do any better?'

There is also the view that the Conservatives were returned on the swing of newly-prosperous working class people, mainly in the South of England and notably on the post-war estates, who had come to see themselves as 'middle class' or 'classless'. It is true that there are many working-class people on the move into the middle class—but then there always have been.

Clearly they are important. But in Stevenage and Clapham (where I have

conducted a number of interviews on class and politics since the Election) the larger part of the Conservative's new voters described themselves as working-class, and it was as working-class people that they had voted Conservative—like the warehouseman on a pre-war Clapham housing estate who said: 'There are only two classes, the bosses and the workers. I vote for the bosses; they give you the work and they've got the money'; or the Stevenage engineer working on the Blue Streak rocket:

'Labour's better for us, for the working class. But the Conservatives are better for the country as a whole. They're the party of businessmen; they're used to running things—they were brought up to it; and, after all, what's the state except the biggest business of them all?'

It is not the working class who are disappearing, but some of the class support which Labour has traditionally enjoyed.

Let us look, then, at Labour's own weaknesses.

A three week campaign, conducted with mounting enthusiasm and support, was not enough to eradicate an impression left in the years of opposition that Labour was, at times, deficient in principle. The opposition seemed to invite charges of electioneering by oscillating between violent denunciation of the Conservatives on comparatively trivial issues—HMSO envelopes, the Hurry affair, the Bank Rate Tribunal—and marginal differentiation on such crucial ones as defence. On the Hydrogen Bomb, from the time of the first Aldermaston march—and the pitiful 'anti-test' campaign—to the recall of the Municipal Workers Conference, Labour seemed more concerned with preserving the appearance of Party unity than with confronting the issues of nuclear disarmament. If Labour could play politics on the Bomb, might they not, people wondered, do the same on other issues?

It was not that Labour had no policy—the weakness of the 1955 election—but that there seemed this time to be too many: fourteen policy statements, with no evident relation to each other and no clear informing theme.

A party facing the prospect of office is inevitably cautious about specific commitments. But it was on the larger issues that Labour sometimes seemed most vague. Egalitarianism, for example, presented as Labour's supreme aim in *Towards Equality*, was altogether absent from *Industry and Society*, with its commitment to growth capitalism, and then reappeared during the election in *Britain Belongs To You* which claimed that there were still two nations in Britain. In *Industry and Society* the State was to participate in the 'almost automatic capital gains of industry'; in *Britain Belongs To You* it was to tax capital gains as a fruitful source of revenue and principal bastion of privilege. In the earlier document the men at the top in industry were praised for 'serving the nation well'; by the time the election manifesto was published they were being described as the 'faceless men of power'. Nationalisation, as put forward in the election programme, was, as its critics claimed, a liability and a dogma. It was never related to Labour's welfare or socialist aims, and the anxious

denial of plans for further nationalisation—the Tees-side Labour candidate inserted an eve-of-poll advertisement saying a Labour Government would *not* nationalise ICI—can hardly have inspired confidence in Labour's plan for steel.

Labour failed to give any clear picture of the kind of society we live in. What kind of society was this? Capitalist or statist? Two nations or one? Who ran the economy? The Government? Benevolent managers or faceless authoritarians? Responsible bankers or grouse-shooting dilettantes? At different times Labour suggested all of these, adopting one kind of argument at Party Conference, another in polemic with the Conservatives. Even in its more radical moods the Party did not seem much clearer. What face did it attach to the 'faceless' men? Mr. Pumphrey on the Woking train? And what did it propose to do about the system so vigorously denounced during the campaign? Appoint more tax inspectors? Amend the company law?

Labour's failure to project a coherent and relevant picture of capitalism in the 1950s had important consequences in the election. Many of the voters interviewed at Clapham and Stevenage, for example, were scarcely aware of the existence, character and social function of the public schools. When they spoke about the rich and the upper class it was generally of 'the Mayfair lot', 'people who go out and enjoy night life', 'the idle rich—the dukes, the duchesses and people like Sir Bernard Docker'. They were often unaware of the existence of the active rich—the energetic executives, the bustling brokers, the dominating directors. Consequently they were inclined to accept a good deal of the rhetoric of the Conservative 'opportunity state', and they had no image of the structure of power and privilege to which they could relate take-over bids, capital gains and expense accounts. Labour's campaign about business scarcely touched them, while the 'voiceless poor'—the old, the injured and the sick—had been kept for so long out of sight and out of mind that they never became a very real presence. The propaganda of the 'opportunity state' had largely concealed from view both the top and the bottom of English society; awareness of the continued existence of the ruling élites was as likely to produce submission as the choice of Labour's alternative. The Conservatives' third term of office will extend both the confusion and the abdication of responsibility.

The prospects for the next five years are not good. The social and political élites look more confident than they have for decades. Privilege and profit are firmly anchored to the thriving corporations of industry, banking and insurance. Business is placed firmly at the top of English society, uniting old élites with new; our whole way of life is taking on an increasingly commercial flavour. The market now decides the priorities of the nation. The same amount is spent every year on packaging as on education, on advertising as on scientific and industrial research. We live in what is increasingly a business civilisation, and it is the business values which are everywhere extolled: the Minister of

Education refers to schoolchildren as 'pretty valuable stuff' and addresses them as 'my clients'; the President of the Institute of Directors says that 'the engineering graduate is today the most saleable commodity in the world—except perhaps a bar of gold'. More brains, more energy, more money will go into the arts of salesmanship than ever before. What *The Queen* calls 'the boom in lavish living' will go on. Cigar sales will no doubt double under the present Conservative administration as they did in the last. Britain will almost certainly retain its place as the largest importer of champagne, 'the drink that says success'. And the Institute of Directors will perhaps be forced to expand its medical department, which deals with the disastrous effects of business lunches on members' health. Pensions? Africa? Subtopia? You will have to shout if you want to make yourself heard above the din of the big boom.

There is not likely to be another Labour Government while the class system flourishes and the business values go unchallenged. The stronger the ruling class looks, the more people, like working-class Tories in this election, are going to defer to them. The stronger business becomes in shaping the life of the nation, the more utopian other forms of social organisation will appear. The great argument for the *status quo* is that it is there, and seldom has it looked more securely established than today.

But Labour is not powerless in face of the pressures of business and class. It can contest the claims of resurgent capitalism. Labour's primary task is to create a climate of socialist and radical opinion to oppose the ethos of the acquisitive society. It is not true, as *The Economist* is fond of asserting, that you can no more cure snobbery than you can adultery, or that values and moral standards lie outside the proper concerns of a political party. But Labour can hardly hope to check the advance of business values and class power unless it is vigorous in putting forward the alternative, socialist vision of a society of equals based upon co-operation and human brotherhood.

If Labour is to succeed, the cry of 'equality' cannot be allowed to remain a rhetorical reaffirmation of socialist conviction, to be uttered on the more ceremonial occasions. It is much too relevant to the present condition of the nation. Notting Hill and Knightsbridge exist within the boundaries of a single London borough. Portal and Cunliffe, the 'old guard' rulers of British Aluminium, received £88,000 for loss of office: BMC workers had to conduct a major strike to secure two weeks compensation for their 'loss of office'. There are double standards in welfare, double standards in education; two nations in old age, two nations in youth, two nations at work. It is for Labour to show the way in which we can create 'one nation'—a slogan which is merely vacuous when uttered by the Conservatives—better than anybody else at being an élite—but which sums up the true purpose of the socialist movement.

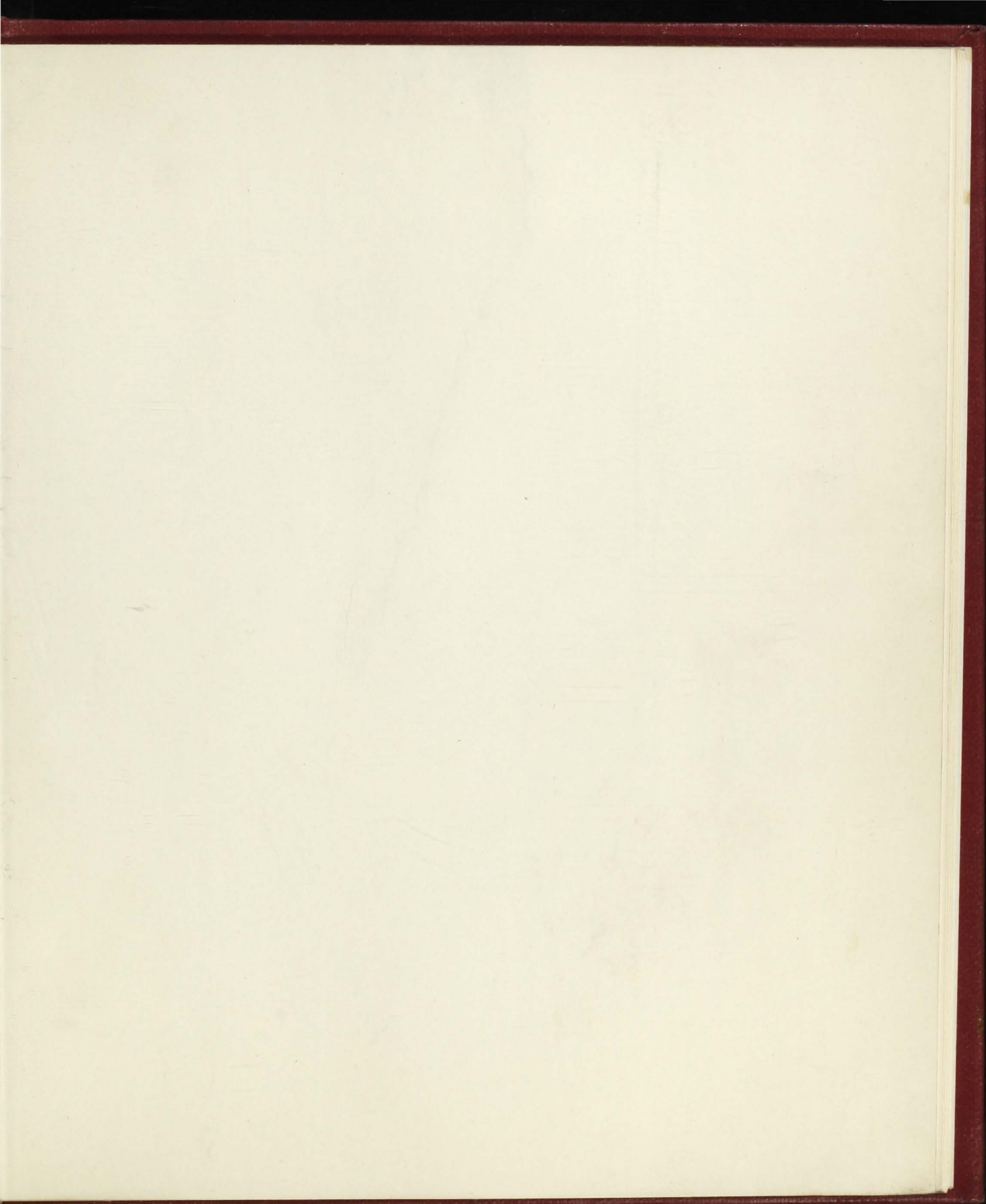
If any substantial challenge is to be offered to the newly-ascendant Capitalist ethos Labour cannot continue to accept the motives and hierarchical structure

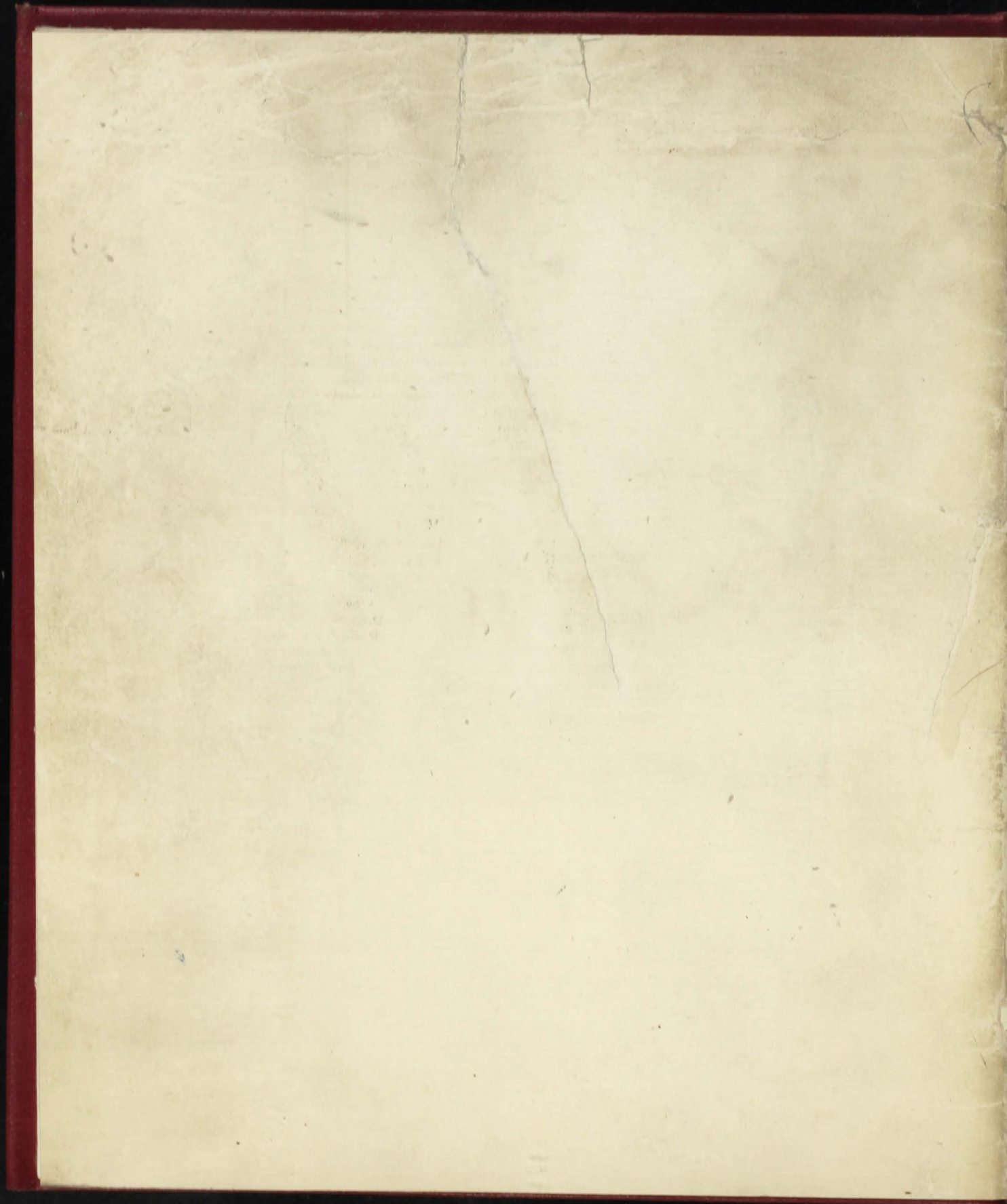
of the business corporations—the organising centres of class privilege and power in Britain. But public ownership, as the socialist alternative, makes no sense unless the aim is to establish an industrial democracy—workers' control over hiring and firing, health and welfare, security in work by ending the weekly wage contract, worker participation in management. Social ownership will be a purposeless exercise unless there is thorough accountability to Parliament and the public, and if state-owned firms act as leaders in pricing policy, industrial research and technological innovation, as well as setting the pace in standards of welfare, labour conditions and democracy at work.

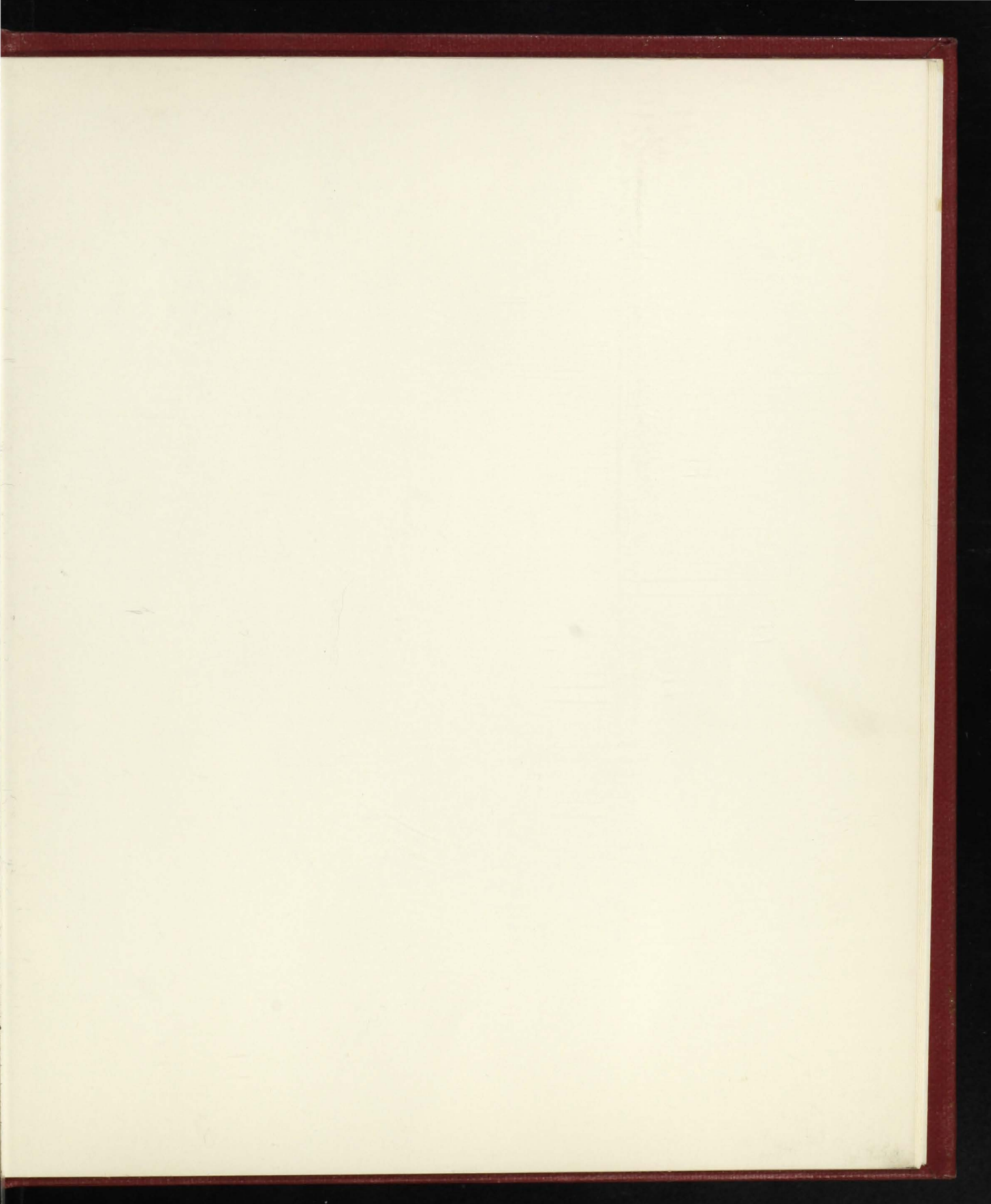
It is not only in these that Labour has become intolerably constricted. How inadequate today is our concern with education! We have talked a great deal about eleven plus, school buildings and the school leaving age—we have said little about the purpose and values of education, and nothing at all, until *The Younger Generation*, about the relationship of school to a leisure culture, or the place of the school in the community. We have attacked Conservative economies in public housing, and we shall need to go on doing this. But we have been terribly complacent about the mean standards which prevail on so many estates. Labour councils are among the worst offenders in bureaucratic and unimaginative planning; they are often responsible for a host of stupid and petty restrictions which make the council house tenant, on some estates, a second-class citizen. Sometimes Labour councils seem consumed with the pride of faction and the arrogance of leadership. It is time they became living examples of humane and socialist administration, imaginative in their plans and presentation, open and democratic in their routines.

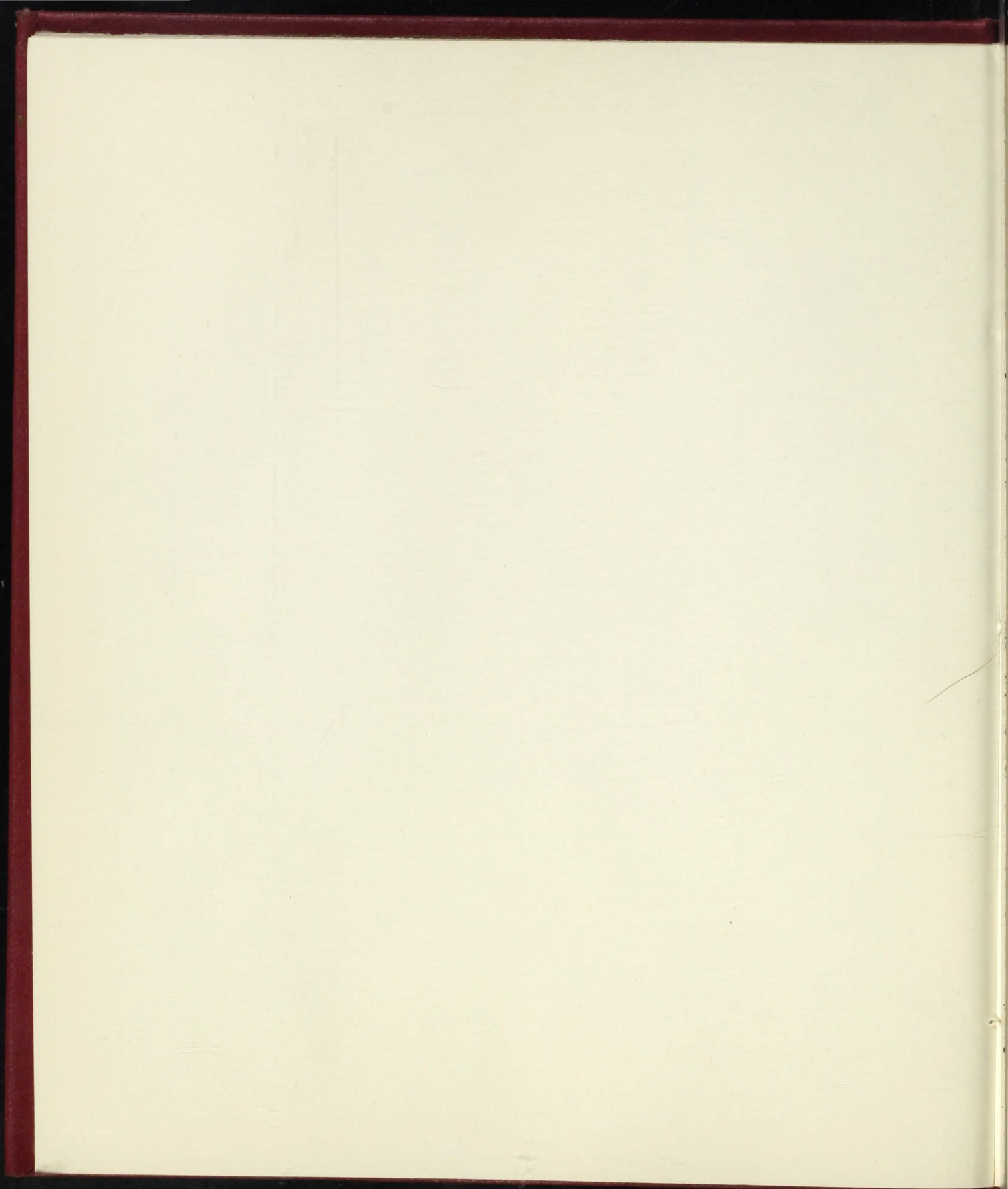
In the end, Labour's future depends upon the quality of life in the Movement. Yet there are now perhaps fewer active socialists than at any other time in the century, and Labour is more distant from the lives of its supporters than it has ever been. If the present inquest on defeat follows the pattern of the last there will be still more ambiguities in policy and principles, still more elaborate methods of chasing postal voters and compiling marked-up registers. Even more attention will be concentrated on 'bringing out the Labour vote'. But if we do not renew the Labour Movement, if we fail to make new socialists—Labour's most urgent duty to-day—we may find there will no longer be a Labour vote to bring out. As a woman in her sixties said to me in Stevenage:

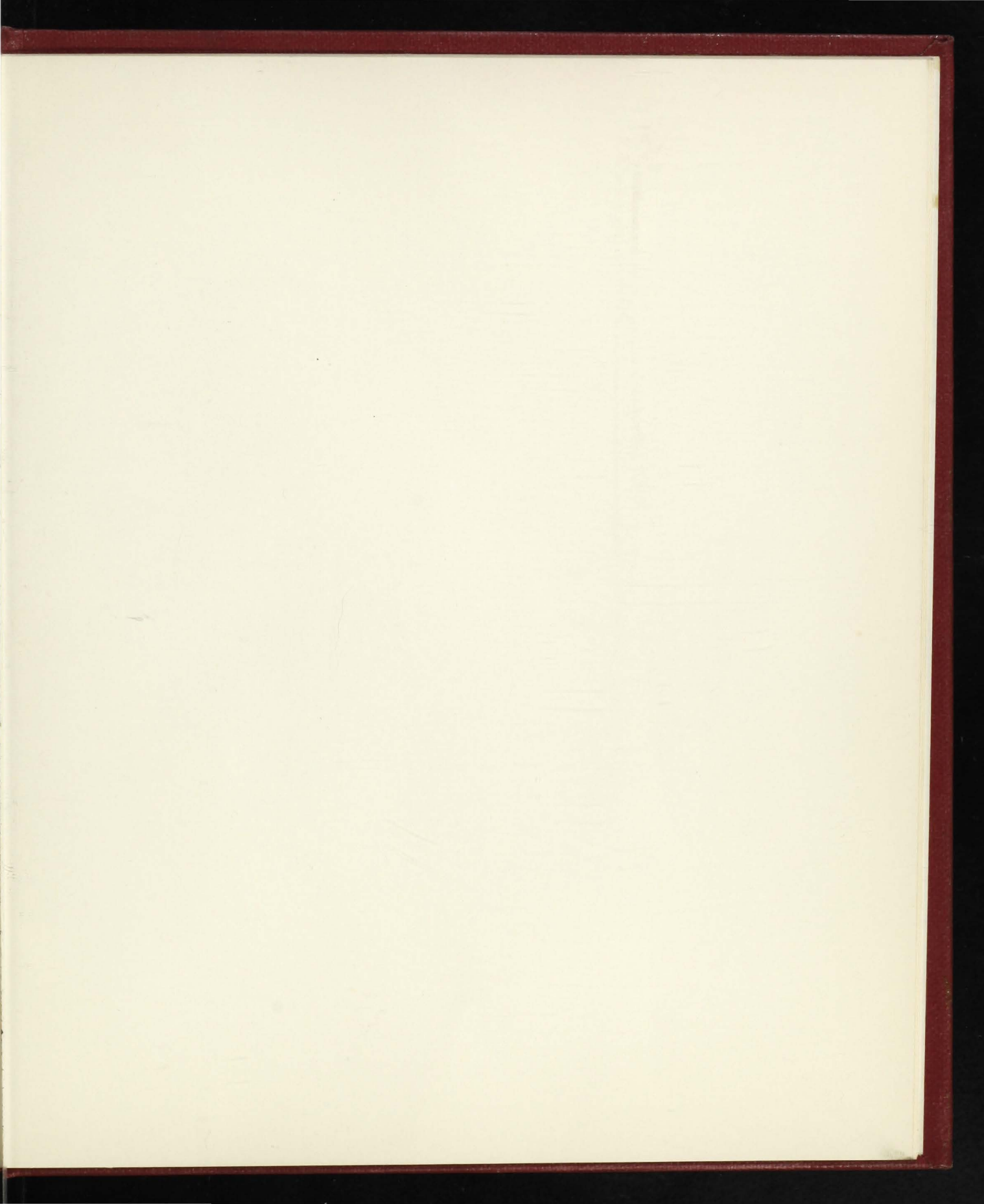
'Things are not what they were years ago. When we were in Walthamstow, my son was a strong Labour man and my husband used to go to the Labour Hall. There was a family on the corner where the man used to put up for Labour. We used to stand at the street corner for the meetings; if you listened you knew what they were talking about, and you understood what you were voting for. But that was all before the war. Now they tear round for your vote at election time, but you don't seem to see them again until the next election. We're all Labour people in this family, and I've voted Labour for thirty years. This time I was that little bit uncertain. I don't think we really understand it now. Labour seem to have become so distant.'

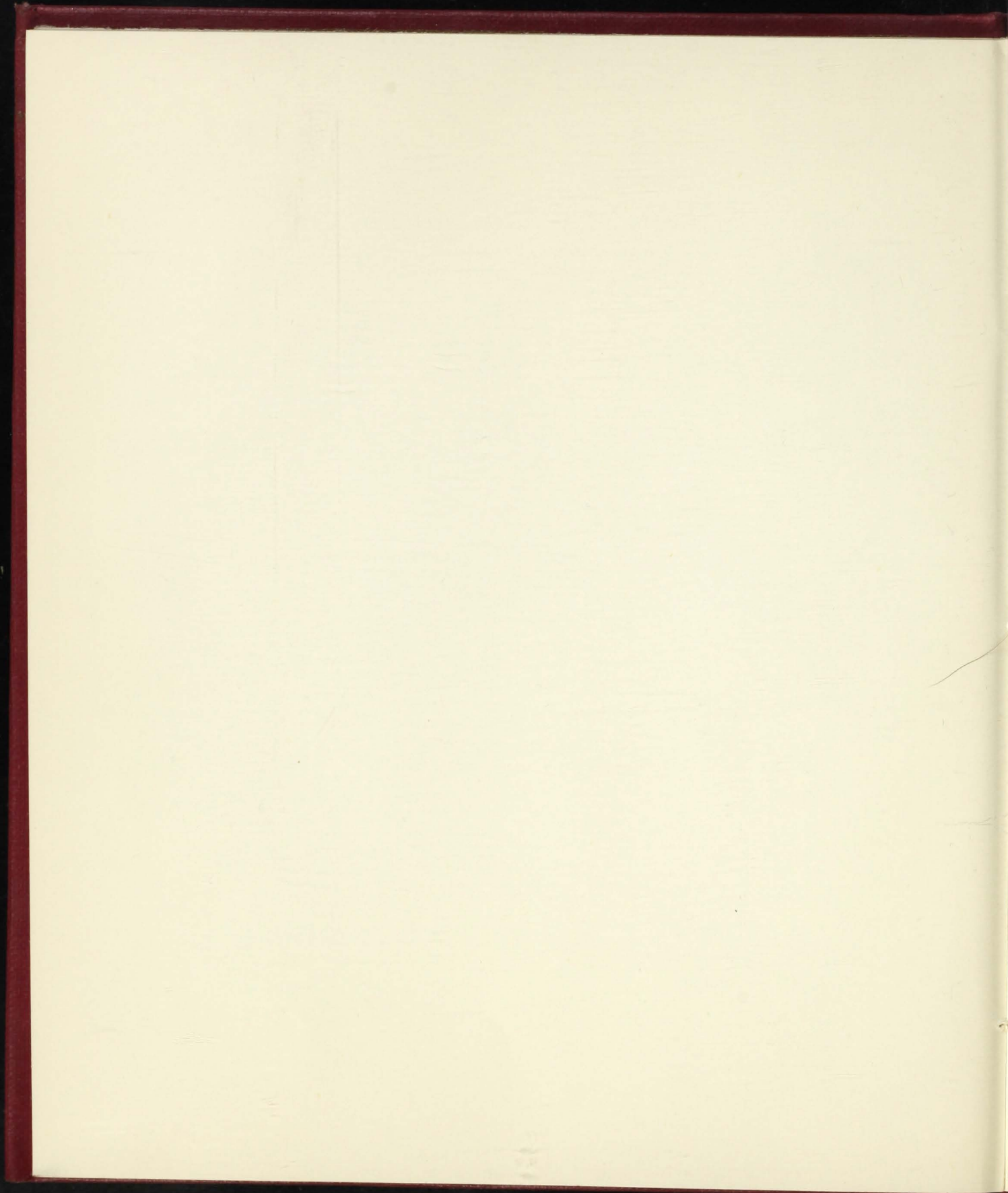




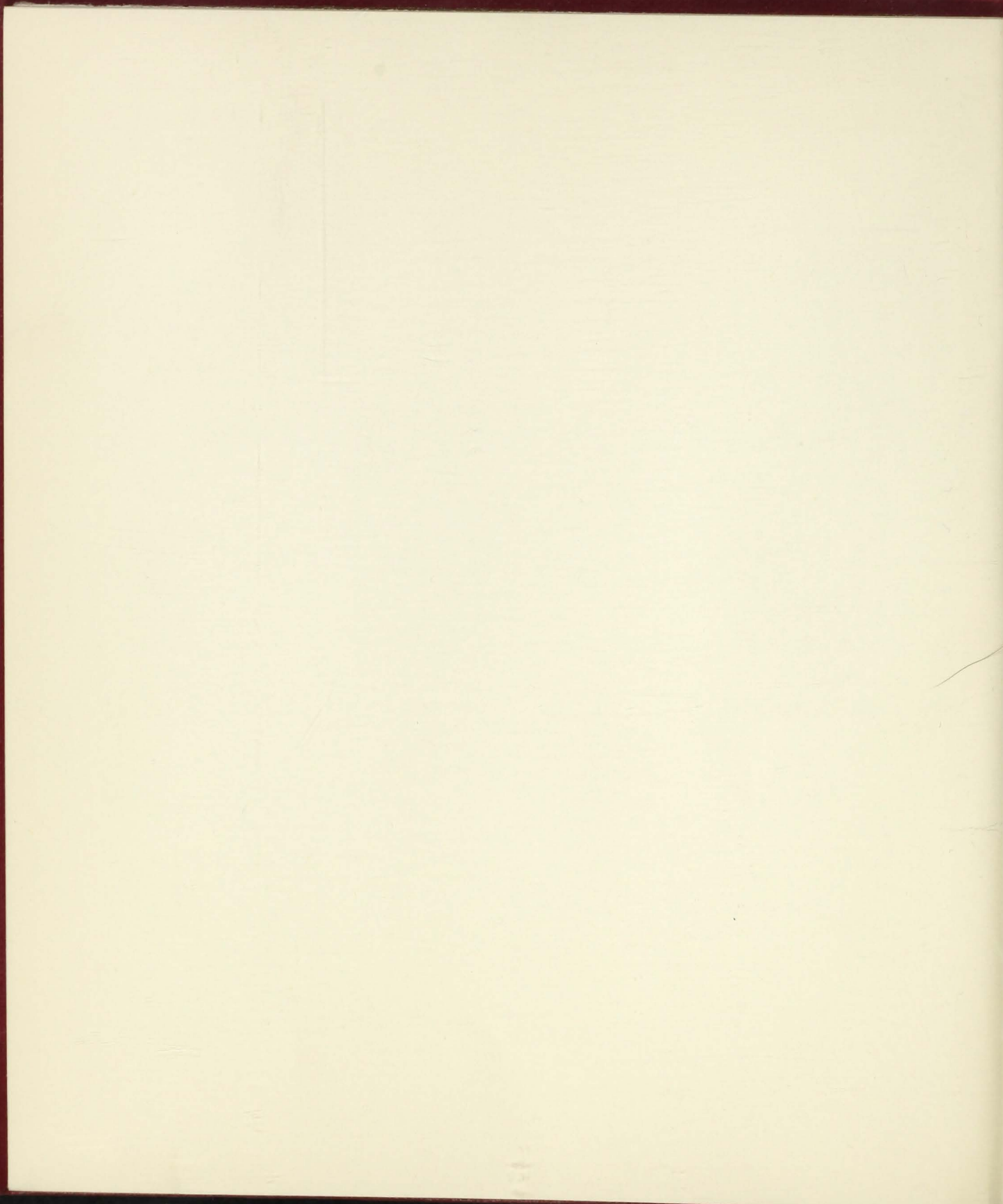


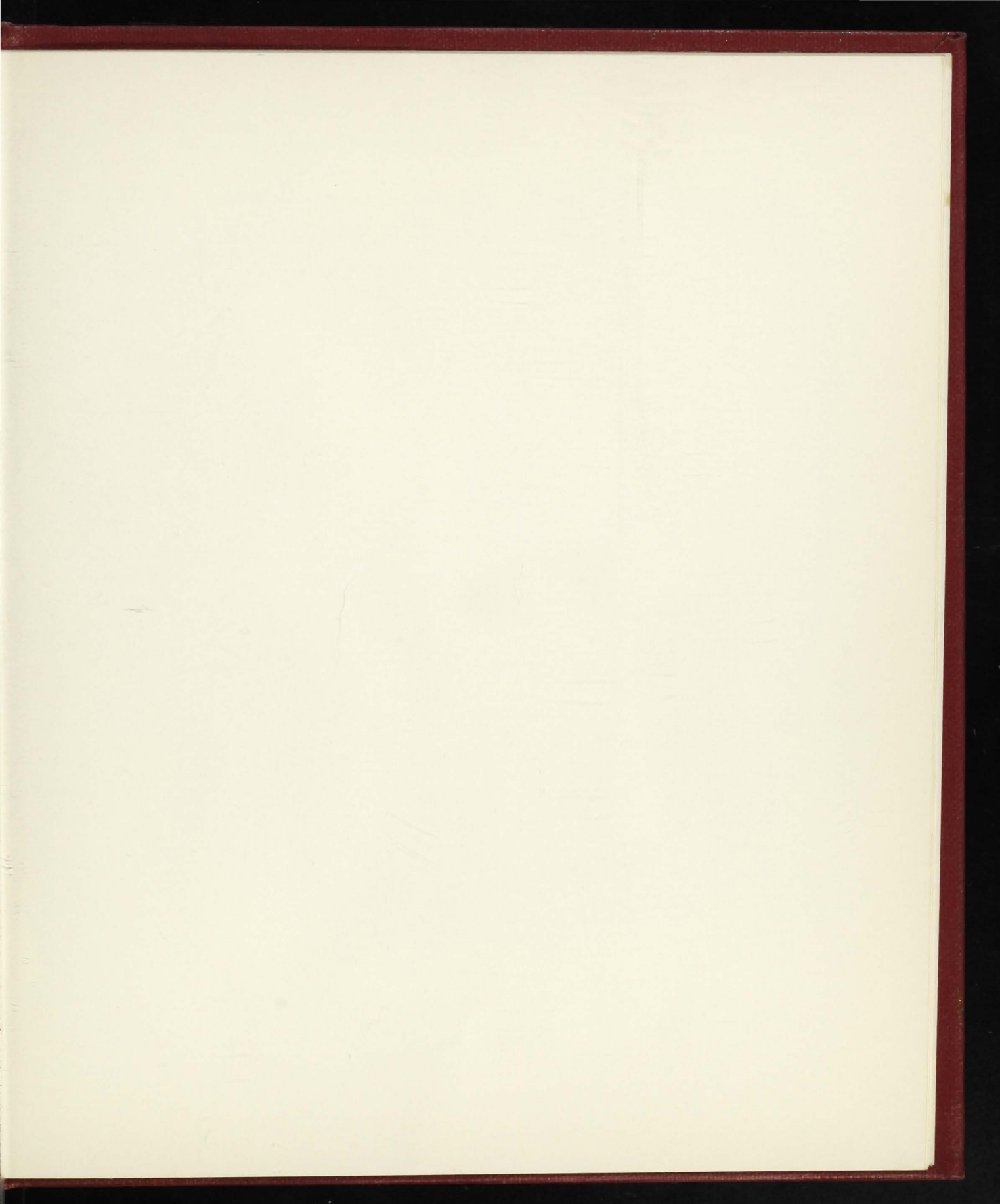


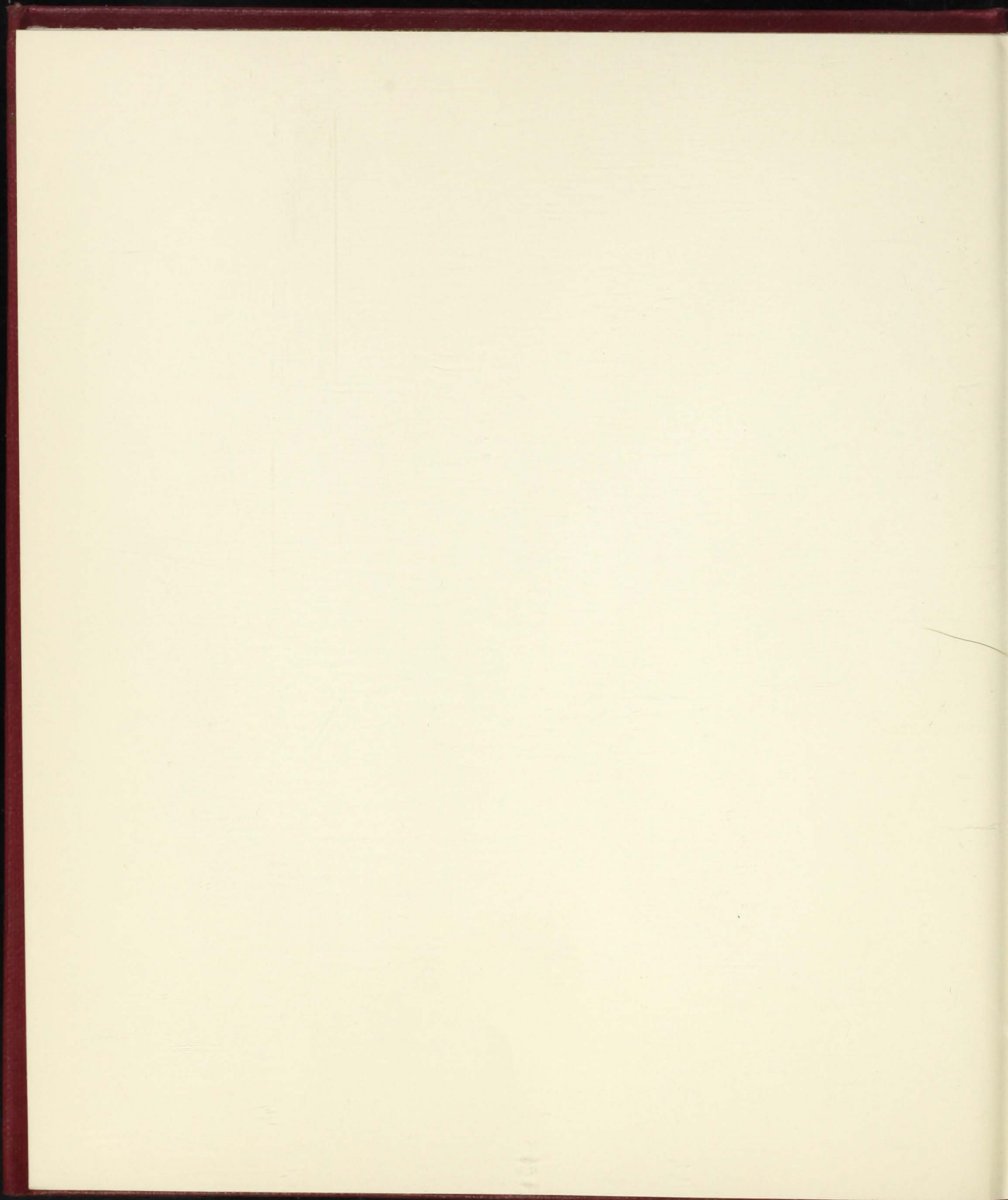


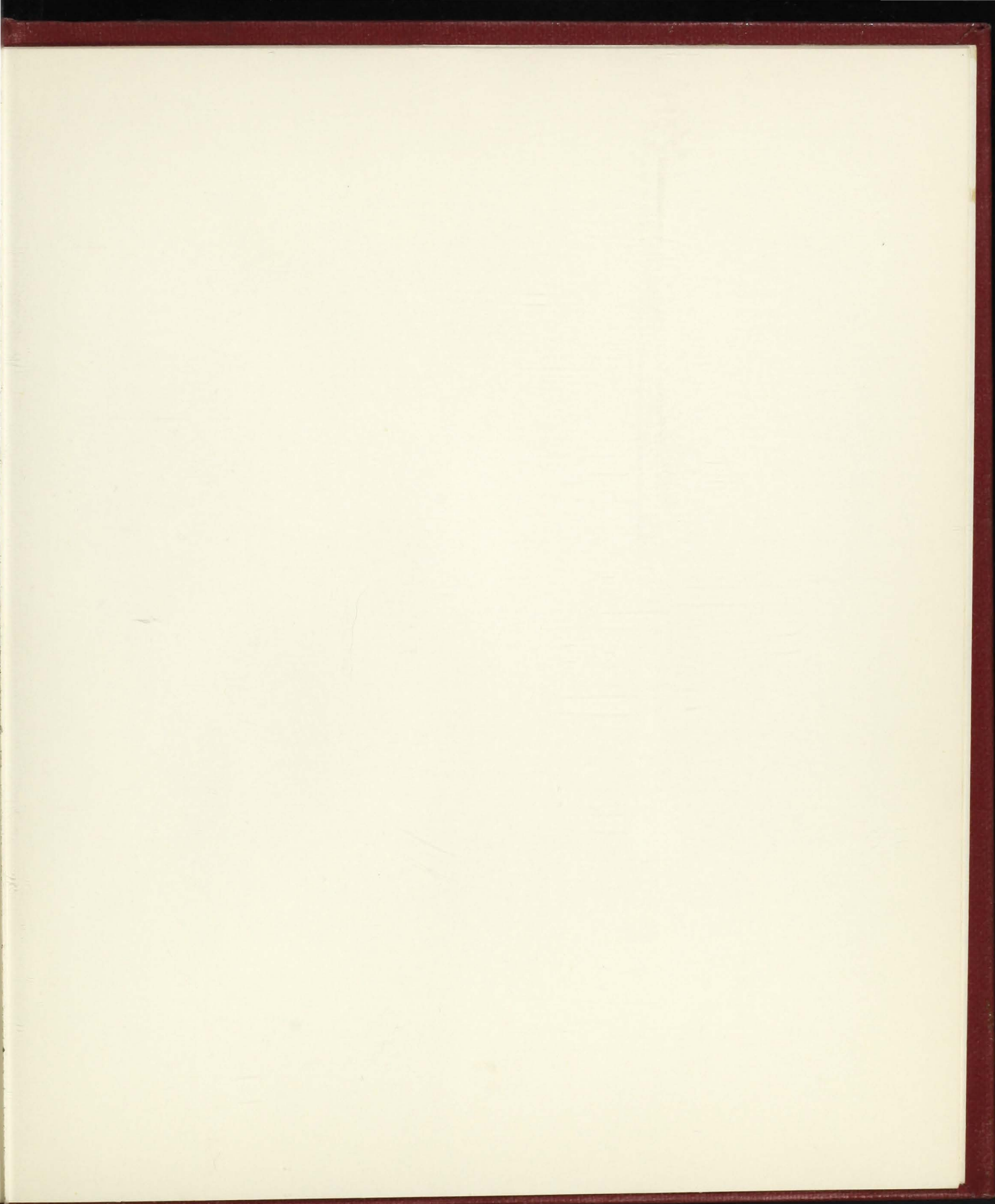


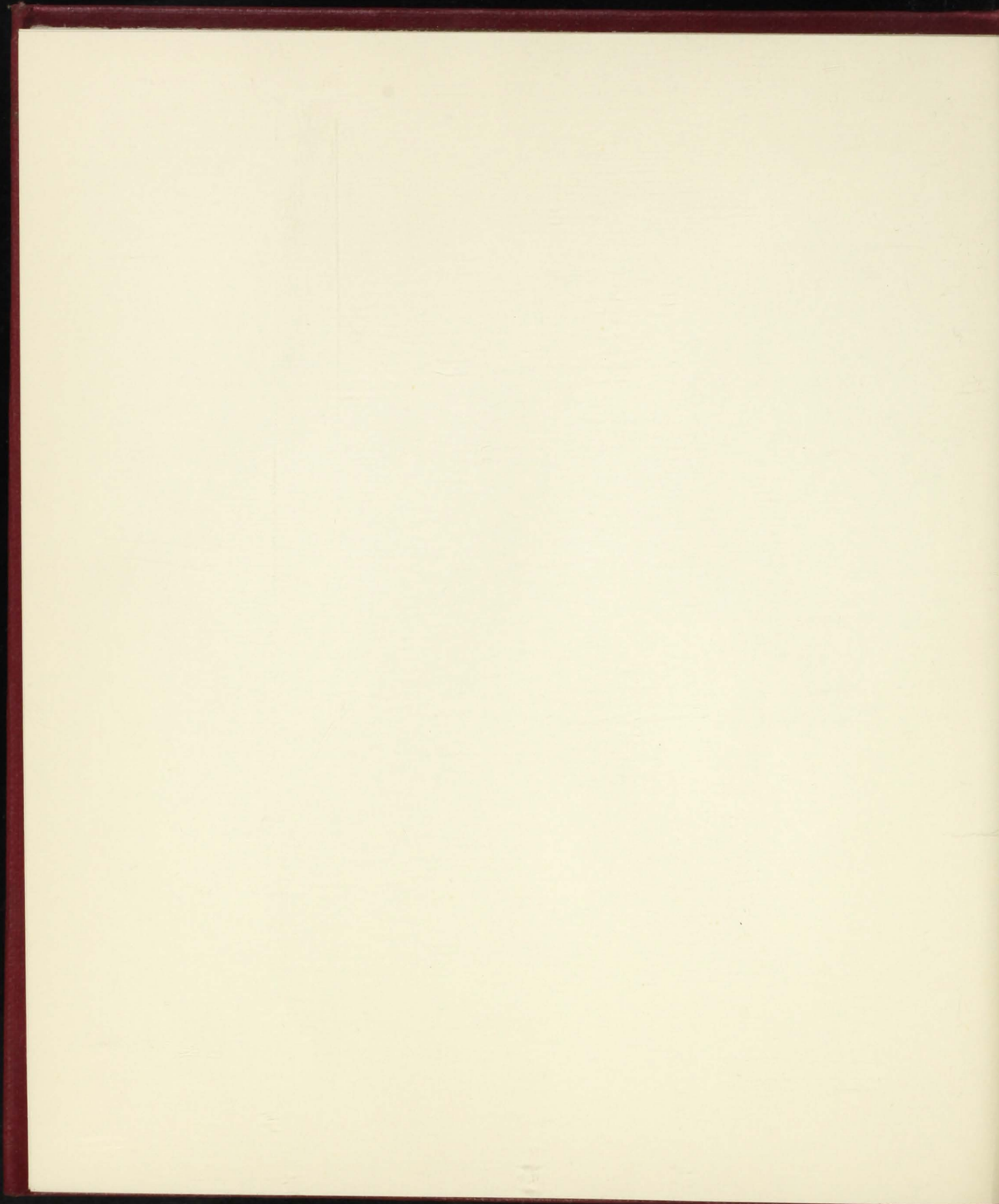


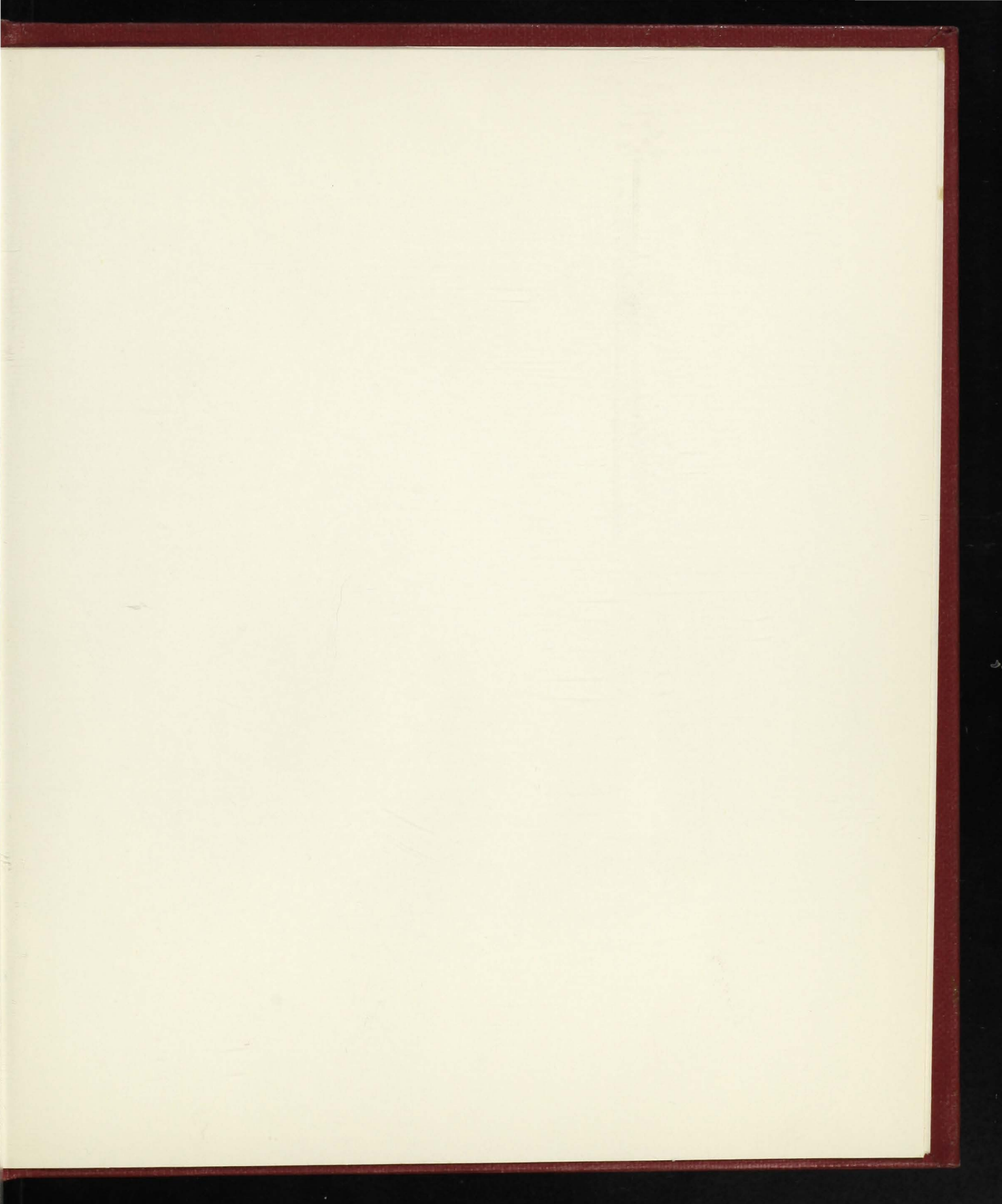


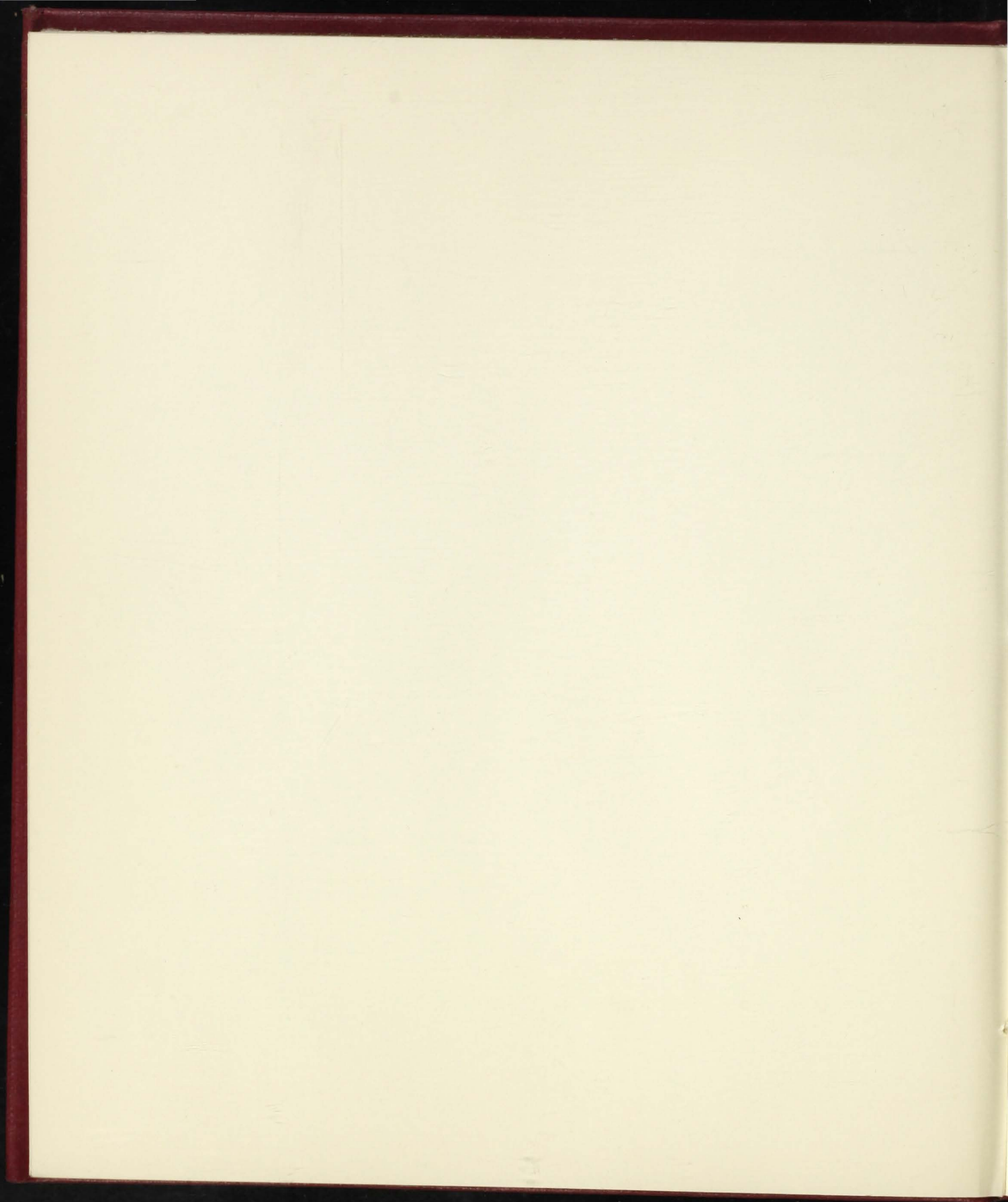


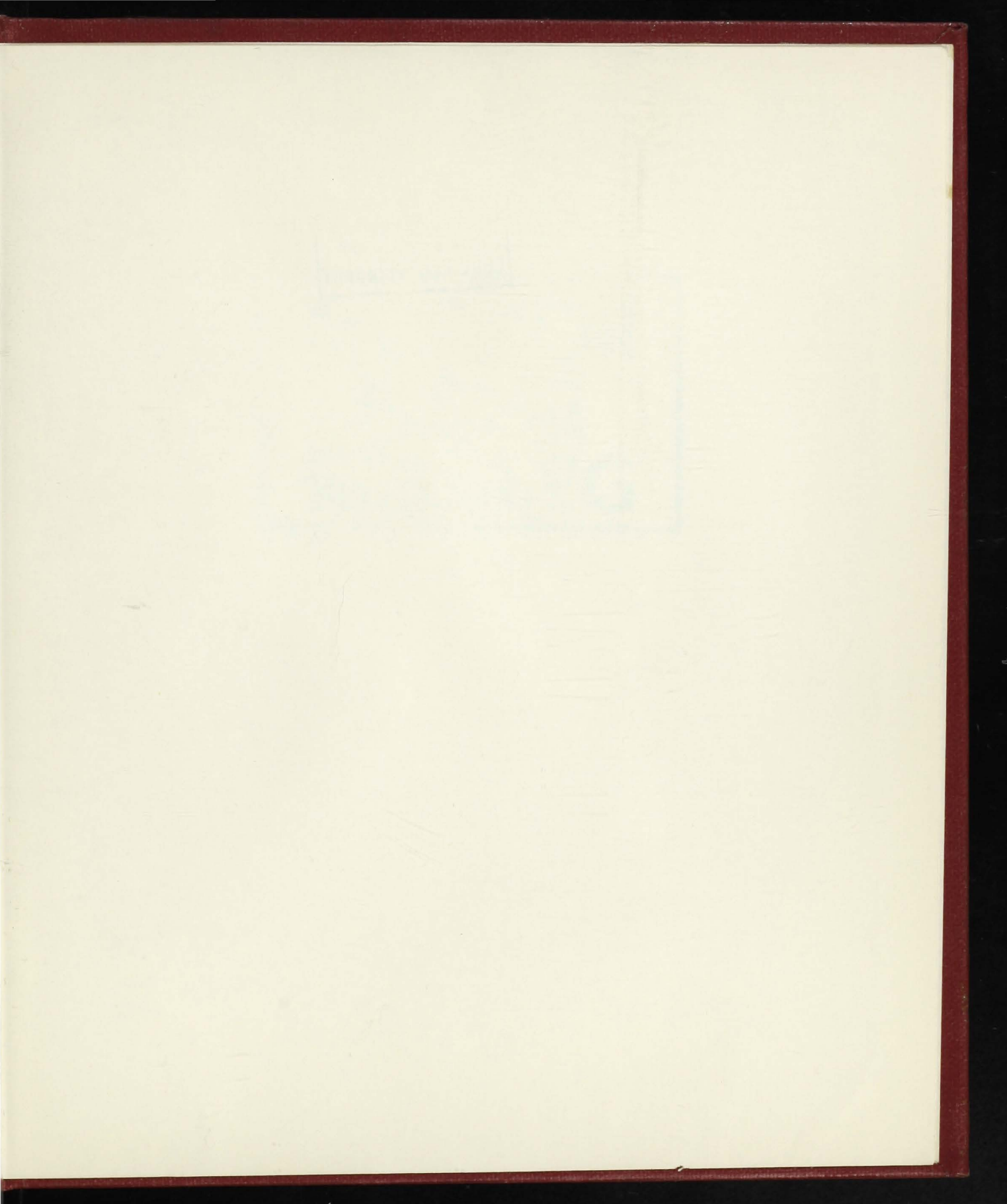












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