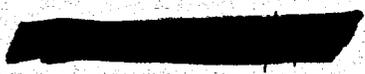
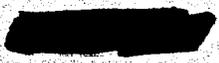




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YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP REACTION TO DISSIDENT ACTIVITY [REDACTED]

The Yugoslav leadership is being faced with increasing signs of restlessness among the country's intellectuals. The authorities have taken steps to show the small and disunited dissident movement that there are firm limits to acceptable criticism, but it has scrupulously remained within legal bounds in combating such protest. The dissidents have responded by continuing to press their demands by means of such legitimate vehicles as petitions.

Early last week, the Serbian Assembly acted on a decision announced last June to terminate the salaries and pension rights of seven Belgrade University professors should they refuse to accept nonteaching positions at the university. The men were forced to give up their teaching posts in 1975 and were put on partial salary because of their involvement with the dissident Marxist journal "Praxis." The authorities feared the potentially disruptive contact between students and the "Belgrade Seven," as they came to be known, and hoped to sever that link by offering them research positions. All of them, however, refused the "take-it-or-leave-it" ultimatum and, in view of last week's decision, will reportedly soon file for unemployment benefits.

Last November, the Serbian authorities rejected a petition by two leading dissident authors--Dobrica Cosic and "Praxist" Professor Ljubomir Tadic--to publish Javnost, (The Public), a proposed new journal intended to be free of ideological criteria and censorship. The leadership--no doubt concerned by the journal's potential for anti-regime criticism--was also irritated by the petitioners' attempt to maximize foreign attention and moral support by publicizing the request at the time of the UNESCO conference in Belgrade. They probably also felt impelled to block the first instance of dissident activity since Tito's death which attempted openly to construct a broad-based consensus within the fragmented dissident community.

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The authorities are also reportedly planning to take steps against two Croatians who instigated a petition calling for amnesty for political prisoners. They are said to have decided definitely to put on trial Croatian nationalist Franjo Tujman, in connection with interviews he gave last year to foreign journalists, and reportedly will take similar action against Vlado Gotovac, who is considered the prime mover behind the petition.

While thus serving notice that there are limits to the criticism the regime will tolerate, the authorities* have shown moderation and acted on legal grounds. The signatories of the Croatian petition, as well as Serb, Croat, and Slovene intellectuals who signed another recent petition calling for increased press freedom, have been criticized by the media but there is no hard evidence that they have been subjected to arrests and interrogations.

The Yugoslav party has long maintained a policy which "differentiates" between what it considers legitimate criticism and "antiregime" dissent which threatens the socialist self-management system. The post-Tito leadership is keenly aware of Yugoslavia's human rights performance at a time when large Western loans are under negotiation, and this fact alone largely accounts for the moderation shown thus far. Concern over Western reaction, for example, has probably been the reason why the authorities have not moved against noted dissident Milovan Djilas, despite the recent publication of his book, Tito: The Story From Inside, which debunks aspects of the Partisan effort in World War II.

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An apparent division between moderate pragmatists and hardliners in the leadership over how best to handle the growing dissident problem may also prevent agreement on stronger measures. As long as dissent does not become more of a disruptive factor in political life, hardliners like Party Presidium Secretary Dusan Dragosavac--who last July called for increased "domestic vigilance"--should be kept in check by moderates concerned about the effect such action would have on Yugoslavia's international image.

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