Soviet Digest to Move to OSU

By ROBERT H. DORN
Lantern Staff Writer

The "Current Digest of the Soviet Press" will move from Columbia University to Ohio State's campus on June 15.

The weekly magazine has been issued for the past 20 years under the auspices of a nationwide committee of American scholars.

Translations from the Soviet press are published in the Current Digest, without comment or interpretation, for the use of analysts and scholars.

Soviet Information

The Current Digest's purpose is to "keep scholars informed of what is happening in Soviet affairs, especially in fields different from their own," according to Leon I. Twarog, chairman of the department of Slavic languages and literatures.

Each issue has an index of the complete contents of Pravda and Izvestia, the two leading Soviet daily newspapers; translations of major articles from these papers, and selections from approximately 60 other Soviet newspapers and magazines.

Current Digest's move to Ohio State will coincide with the transfer of responsibility for the magazine from the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies to the 2,500-member American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies on July 1, Twarog said.

Headquarters Coming Too

The Association, composed of educators in various disciplines, will also move its headquarters to Ohio State, from the University of Illinois.

The Current Digest will complement with Ohio State's programs in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. The Certificate Program for Translators of the Russian Social Sciences is a one-year program on the graduate level that trains students in language, applied linguistics, English composition, and translation techniques, Twarog aid.

Students who complete this program will be qualified to work in one of the 18 positions available on the Current Digest, as well as in government agencies or as free-lance translators.

Try to Solve Problems

Twarog said the Current Digest is moving from Columbia because the people there felt it would be beneficial for someone else to handle the operations of the magazine, since Columbia has had the Current Digest for 20 years and has experienced some problems with space and financing.

Ohio State has more space, better printing facilities, and costs are generally lower. The Current Digest will be housed in the Garage and Laundry Building, which is being remodeled, Twarog said.

The University Print Shop will compose, print, and mail the Current Digest, Twarog added.

Monthly Digest Too

The Current Digest also publishes a monthly, "Current Abstracts of the Soviet Press," in addition to the weekly magazine of translations. The monthly magazine was started in 1968.

A series of documentary reference books titled "Current Soviet Policies," has appeared as a by-product of the Current Digest and is issued at four-year intervals.

The Current Digest was established in 1949 by Leo Grulwiol, editor of the magazine, in Washington under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies.

Digest Trains

The Joint Committee was appointed by two societies—the American Council of Learned Societies, in the humanities, and the Social Science Research Council.

Columbia University invited the Current Digest to move to the New York Campus the following year.

The Current Digest has been a training ground for the academic world, journalism, and government.

Eighteen "alumni" of the Current Digest staff are now professors at leading colleges and universities, 12 are working in the press, radio, or television, including two Moscow correspondents.

Three have become translators of books, and five are in government service. The present staff number is 18.
Soviet press digest founder wins $18,000 grant

By Barbara Benak

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded Leo Grui
ewow, editor of the Current Digest of the Soviet Press and adjunct pro-

dfessor of Slavic languages and literature an $18,000 senior fellowship to study the Russian news media.

Effective in June, the award carries a grant for 1972-1973, during which Gruiwov will write a book about the changing patterns of news treat-

tment in the Soviet media since the Stalin Era.

Funds for the endowment fellowships are authorized by Congress for advanced training and research. Gruiiow's fellowship, his first, was one of 84 awards being sought by 715 applicants.

A similar fellowship was awarded to Arthur E. Gordon, a visiting pro-
fessor of classics at Ohio State. Gordon is professor emeritus of Latin at the University of California Berkeley.

An experienced writer, Gruiiow is well acquainted with the Russian media. Ten years ago, he co-authored the International Press Institute book, "The Press in Authoritarian Studies," which was published in French, German and English.

He has written a number of articles about the press and Soviet affairs for International Press Institute Reports, Columbia Journalism Review, the Boston Globe, the Columbia Forum, the Antioch Review, Problems of Communism, the Christian Science Monitor and North American Newspaper Alliance.

Former reference editor

In addition, Gruiiow has edited the Current Soviet Policies series of reference books and has translated numerous Russian novels and social science pieces.

Discussing his forthcoming book Gruiiow pointed out that despite the prominence of the Soviet Union in world affairs, surprisingly little attention has been paid to Soviet propaganda and the media. This is unfortunate, he added, since the media provide an invaluable clue to the direction in which society is moving.

"It's time for a serious study of the machinery of internal propaganda in the Soviet Union," Gruiiow said, "not just its structure and technology, but its goals, the way it functions, how it affects the society that it controls and that controls it."

Was Digest founder

In conducting his research, Gruiiow will use as his source material the 23 volumes of the Current Digest of Soviet Affairs (all of which have been published since he founded the magazine in 1949 with the help of a joint committee of the American Council of Learned Societies) and the Social Science Research Council.

Gruiiow described the Digest as "the Bible of scholars of Soviet affairs." The weekly magazine, which is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, contains English translations and a complete index of what Gruiiow termed the most typical and major stories from Russia's two principal daily newspapers, Pravda and Izvestia.

The Digest also provides translations of selected articles from about 60 other newspapers and magazines in the Soviet Union, ranging from a children's paper to a philosophy journal.

Together with Robert S. Ehlers, associate editor of the Digest, Gruiiow selects the material to be translated. All of the articles, exclusively from Soviet sources, are carefully translated, Gruiiow said, the lengthy ones being objectively paraphrased and condensed. The Digest's translations are presented strictly as documentary materials without added comment or interpretation.

Digest is record

The aim of the Digest, Gruiiow said, is to furnish a basic source and record of Soviet development, what the Russian people are being told and internal controversy that penetrates the censored press.

The magazine's 1,500 subscribers are primarily colleges and universities, governments, news media, businesses, libraries, researchers and scholars throughout the world. It has the highest subscription price in the world, costing $250 a year.

However, because of the growth of interest in Soviet affairs, the Digest has recently introduced special rates for $75 to $25 a year for high schools, two-year colleges and individual scholars.

"In the 23 years since I started this publication," Gruiiow said, "the number of scholars at the research university level has grown from about 50 to 2,500. Now they are spreading out into the junior colleges, two-year colleges and even the secondary schools."

Teaching the history, language, literature, geography and politics of the Soviet Union at these levels has resulted in a greater need for the Digest, commented Gruiiow. He believes that "this is a very new and healthy development, and a natural one in view of the fact that Russia has become possibly the second most powerful country in the world, after the United States."

Imitations exist

Although several imitations of the Digest are available, they handle only specialized and technical periodicals. The Current Digest is the only magazine of its type that covers the general press.

The Digest offices, which were based at Columbia University for 20 years, came to Ohio State in 1969 along with its sponsor, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

Although most of the Digest's 20-member staff had to be imported from other cities, it now includes two graduates of the Ohio State Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. They are Bruce B. Venrick of Columbus, a translator, and Jean E. Williams of Delta, chief of the index department.

Describing the Digest as an excellent training ground for scholars, newspapermen, government re-
searchers and analysts, Gruliov told of staff members who went on to further success.

Two former members are correspondents in Moscow, another is a CBS correspondent in New York, three are employed by the government, about a dozen are professors (including Frank R. Silbajoris of the Ohio State Department of Slavic Languages and Literature) and another is head of the Russian Institute of Indiana University.

One of the difficulties that Gruliov has experienced in finding people qualified to work for the Digest is that they have to be broadly educated. "Dealing with Soviet history, economics, political science, geography and literature requires a skilled newsman's ability to handle English as well as good news value judgment," Gruliov said. In addition, he noted that a staff member has to have a thorough knowledge of the Russian language.

For 10 years while editing the Digest, Gruliov worked for the ABC television network and then for CBC, the Canadian radio-TV network, as a weekly commentator on foreign affairs. He also served as consultant to the three foremost U.S. networks.

Although he holds no degrees, Gruliov has been a guest professor for periods of one to five years at Columbia University, Antioch College and the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva, Switzerland.


Gruliov holds the Soviet Distinguished Labor medal, presented to him in the Kremlin for his service in charge of American civilian relief in Russia during World War II. Born in Bayonne, N.J., he is married and has two children.
OSU prints top Soviet periodical

By DENNIS CUSICK

The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, the western world's greatest insight to Soviet thinking for over 20 years, is now published at Ohio State.

The weekly magazine, the only major western translation of the Russian press, is published to allow westerners to know what the Soviet people are reading.

"The digest is not for the average American," explained founder and editor Leo Grulow. "It's for scholars and analysts who want to know what the Soviet government is telling its citizens."

Following World War II, western correspondents in Moscow were severely handicapped by the strict censorship imposed by Stalin. Some correspondents were ejected from Russia and others were discouraged by the seemingly hopeless situation.

By 1948 only three American correspondents were left in the entire Soviet Union. At the same time, however, Soviet papers were available in New York with little censorship.

Grulow said, "What (could have been) more natural than to translate them, without comment or interpretation, for analysis and study in America?"

Grulow set out to establish a magazine and obtained the support of the American Council of Learned Societies. After receiving a small grant from the Rockefeller Foundation he canvassed the United States in 1948 and found only 49 people actively concerned with Soviet affairs, primarily scholars, journalists and government officials. To print the magazine for such a small group required that subscriptions cost $150 per year for the weekly.

Today, subscriptions sell for $250, making the digest the most expensive periodical in the world. Subscriptions are held by the news media, educational institutions, many governments, scholars and political analysts. Foreign missions in Moscow take the digest to receive accurate English translations in addition to the original Russian.

For nearly 20 years the digest was published at Columbia University. A severe space shortage and economic crisis at the school caused problems in producing the digest.

Having received offers to move to several universities, the publication accepted Ohio State's bid because of its quickly-rising Slavic department. A year ago the digest moved to temporary space on campus and later transferred to a new building on Millikin Road.

In order to get an accurate picture of the Soviet press the magazine has subscriptions to every Soviet publication allowed outside the country. Students from Ohio State's Slavic department translate the Russian papers.

Antioch College and Ohio State students with little or no background in Russian are recruited to proofread the translations because they can spot errors in English construction that a specialist in Russian might overlook.

From its meager start with 49 Slavic scholars in 1949, the digest now lists 1500 subscribers and 2500 members in the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, an organization formed in cooperation with the magazine which now runs it.

For the past two years the association has also published "Current Abstracts in the Soviet Press" which paraphrases essays, editorials and articles which are too long in the original text to print. Because of complications in running two magazines, "Abstracts" will be incorporated into "Current Digest" beginning next week.
Current Digest tracking glasnost

By Robert Boyce

Glasnost and perestroika spell both boon and burden to the staff of the Current Digest of the Soviet Press, according to the weekly publication’s editor, Robert Ehlers.

“Our work has never been as vital — the magazine is a stern taskmaster, challenging and stressful,” he says of the 40-year-old Digest.

Ehlers joined the staff when it moved to Ohio State from Columbia University in 1969. The past year has seen a 20 percent increase in the number of pages but a disproportionately greater increase in effort.

“This is a great period of change in world history and we are involved in generating a record of the evolution of the Soviet Union — the principal actor in this change.”

The Digest pays $4,000-$5,000 annually for 90-100 Russian language publications. Every issue covers a week’s worth of Pravda and Izvestia, which are the Communist Party and Soviet government organs, as well as systematic coverage of other publications.

“Since glasnost (openness) and democratization, there has appeared a new group of publications, and others changed from being dull to become exciting, such as Ogonyok,” Ehlers says.

“All of this scanning required that we apply our resources in a productive way, so we use a system of concentric rings, with the bull’s-eye on a small number of publications, a second ring of issues to keep an eye on, and an outer ring of lesser publications.”

The journal’s 12,000 subscribers include a handful of private readers and many institutions — mostly major universities; government bodies such as the departments of Commerce, Defense and State; intelligence agencies; and think tanks — which are heavily dependent on government contracts.

“One-third of our subscribers lie outside North America, with a heavy concentration in Western Europe and the British Isles. The Pacific rim — Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong — is a growth area.”

‘This is a great period of change in human history and...the Soviet Union (is) the principal actor in this change.’

— Robert Ehlers

The Digest has a staff of 10-12, all of whom have University staff contracts. The senior editors also teach advanced Russian language and translation courses.

The Soviet press has evolved under President Mikhail Gorbachev from a controlled operation to a more open institution not unlike the Western press.

The Digest, Ehlers says, presents these and other changes in greater depth than the popular press in the United States, with more documentation and clarification of issues.

Among the issues Soviets face are:

* Coming to terms with Russian history: “the mass executions, mass graves and prison camps.”
* A bureaucracy opposed to public scrutiny and to change.
* A “sorting out of politics,” such as ending the Communist Party monopoly and legalizing a multi-party system, “with perhaps something like social democrats becoming a dominant party.”
* Holding the Communist Party accountable for getting “the country into a mess” and “for the crimes of the Stalin era, the suppression of ideas, and a system that doesn’t work.”

Ehlers believes the present trend will continue “short of a collapse, such as a military takeover.”

He explains, “There just has been too massive a commitment to bringing (the Soviet Union) into the mainstream of European culture to go back. Russia has the basic attributes of a modern society — manpower, capability and now the free flow of ideas — but she must bring them to fruition.”
Digest needs name change after split

By David Tull

After more than four decades under the same masthead, the Current Digest of the Soviet Press has a problem with its name.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there really no longer is a Soviet press.

The digest, which has been affiliated with Ohio State since 1969, excerpts articles from about 100 Soviet periodicals and has circulation of about 1,200, worldwide. About one-third of the subscribers are outside North America.

“We’re obviously concerned about the problem of our name, and we’re coming to grips with it,” says Robert Ehlers, executive editor. “We’re trying to decide what to do. We’ve not come up with anything, yet.”

But the Digest has more time than Mikhail Gorbachev, whose departure was so sudden he could not clean out his desk before Boris Yeltsin was seated at it.

“We’re okay until the end of this volume year,” Ehlers says. “The material we’re carrying is about a month behind, so we’ll run articles from when it was the Soviet press until sometime in February.”

After that, it’s anybody’s guess. “The best idea so far is Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press.”

On a new name, staff are open to suggestions, Ehlers says. Ideas can be relayed to him or Fred Schulze, editor, at 292-4234.

The periodical has carried its name since it was founded in 1949. At that time, scholars and others in the west were concerned that little information was available about “such a large, powerful and important country,” Ehlers says.

Soviet censorship at that time was so rigid that censors even cut western news reports that quoted the official Soviet newspapers, Pravda and Izvestia.

Recognizing that the press was an important channel for understanding, the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council together conceived the idea for the digest. It was initially published in Washington, D.C., then at Columbia University.

Ohio State invited the publication here in 1969 at a time when a move was necessary because of space limitations at Columbia. Also Ohio State was expanding its interest in Soviet and East European matters.