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Owing to their genesis and the role in energetics and chemical industry, oil shales occupy a special position among fuels.

World-wide resources of oil shales as well their characteristics are not thoroughly studied. The resources are estimated to reach  $65 \times 10^{12}$  tonnes, and potential oil resources -  $550 \times 10^9$  tonnes. Compared to crude oil, oil shale resources are distributed more "fairly" i. e. uniformly - more than 100 states have got their own resources. There are states (incl. Estonia), where oil shale is the only energetic resource. Special literature on oil shale is scattered all over different scientific journals of the world.



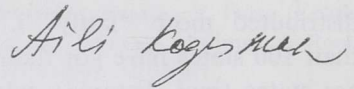
The journal *Oil Shale* was founded in 1984 as the then all-Union scientific-technical journal specialized mainly in oil shale problems. Its aim was to assemble the results of Soviet Union open researches into one scientific publication. In Soviet Union a high scientific potential was engaged in oil shale researches, and great work was done in investigating oil shales including those of foreign origin. Unfortunately the results of this extensive work are published mainly in Russian and therefore they are practically out of reach for wider public. No wonder, the researchers of some countries have to start from zero when beginning the investigations into their oil shale researches today (as Estonian scientists did 80 years ago).

As a rule, no systematic oil shale studies have been made. Only the former Soviet Union had standardized the methods of oil shale investigations. In other countries different methods of analysis have been used and different results have been obtained. Such a situation results in contradictory literary data. One can find, for instance, most different values for the Moroccan oil shale oxygen content - 40.4; 16.9, and 12.6 %.

Reorganization of the Russian version of our journal (*Goryuchie Slantsy*) into an English one (*Oil Shale*) from 1990 an has made it widely accessible through its coverage in ISI products and Internet homepage. Many researchers (e. g. from Israel, Jordan, U.S.A., Brazil, Canada,

Japan) have applied for getting information. It has occurred to us to organize a special information service at our editorial office for distributing the worthwhile information about long-term oil shale research carried out by Estonian scientists.

In 1997, we started to re-examine the earlier studies on oil shale published in Russian and to make this knowledge accessible by translating it into English and publishing in *Oil Shale*. The work was supported by Estonian Science Foundation. Our next project is an English translation of the monograph "Characteristics of Oil Shales and Shale-Like Rocks of the Known Deposits and Outcrops" by Drs. K. Urov and A. Sumberg. This issue summarizes the results of their long-time experimental work in the field of comparative analysis of oil shales from 100 different deposits all over the world and includes critical analysis of available data from the world literature. The English version of the monograph will probably be published in 1998.



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