

EDITOR'S PAGE

SMALL ANNIVERSARY

In spite of its small area and relatively simple geological structure, Estonia is rather rich in mineral resources occurring both in the crystalline basement and the bedrock and also in the Quaternary cover. Mineral resources in Estonia were already used before written records began.

With no doubt, the most important mineral resource in Estonia is kukersite oil shale, rich in organic matter (up to 60–70 %). Its mining started in 1916 at Kohtla-Järve. Processing of oil shale was carried out by a state-owned enterprise founded in 1919 and by several private companies up to the occupation of the Republic of Estonia in 1940 by Soviet troops. During Soviet occupation the production of mineral resources in Estonia increased some 15 times and the oil-shale-based generation of electric power about 100 times. As a result, the oil shale industry has caused most considerable ecological damage.

In the present-day Estonia, where efforts are made to introduce the principles of sustainable development, great importance ought to be attached to the mining of kukersite oil shale, which so far has greatly controlled the trends of power engineering. Since no environmentally safe mining and processing technology has been elaborated so far, the journal *OIL SHALE* is accepting papers not only in the field of oil shale mining and technology, but also papers dealing with nature protection and sustainable management of oil shale industry.

In the former Soviet Union the entire land surface and all subsoil resources were vested in the State. All the basic problems related to the Earth's crust usage, such as regulation of geological explorations, registration of mineral reserves, release of the studied deposits for commercial production, validation of prescriptions of technical exploitation of mining enterprises were in the competency of all-union centralised authorities. As a result, there arose an urgent need for a legal scientific instrument which would have enabled to influence incompetent party decision-makers, introduce ideas of sustainable development in mining industry and propagate the rather high-standing Estonian technologies in the other parts of the former Soviet Union with a rapidly developing oil shale mining.

In 1983, the Division of Chemistry, Geology and Biology of the Estonian Academy of Sciences initiated publishing of a new scientific-technical journal in the field of environmentally safe mining and usage of oil shale in the



power and chemical industries. The idea was supported by the Presidium of the Estonian Academy of Sciences and by the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. The first Russian-language number of the journal of the both above-mentioned academies was issued in 1984. Member of Academy Ilmar Õpik, an acknowledged oil-shale power specialist, became the editor-in-chief. The editorial board consisted of highly-qualified oil-shale specialists – power and technology engineers, chemists, geologists and economists from all over the Soviet Union. In Estonia there was a strong scientific, industrial and polygraphic basis for the journal that soon became very popular.

In 1990 the Soviet Union split up. In the independent Republic of Estonia oil shale became the basis of power industry and economy, however, its mining and processing continued to cause serious environmental problems. To maintain the more than 80-year-long traditions of oil shale mining and to continue publishing of the journal but now already at a new level – as an English-language international scientific publication, Member of Academy I. Õpik started to look for people holding the same views. Among his supporters were Jüri Kann, director of the Institute of Chemistry; Victor Yefimov, scientific director of the Oil Shale Institute; oil shale chemists Kaarli Urov and Leevi Mölder, and many others.

Aili Kogerman, candidate of technical sciences, became the acting editor. Reformation of the Russian-language journal into an international publication in English was a hard but interesting work. This included passing to an entirely new publishing technique and computer layout. The Editorial Board had to find money for new computers, publishing costs and salaries. The network of permanent authors split up, and readers from the previous Soviet republics ceased to subscribe to the journal.

During those difficult years we were supported by the Estonian Science Foundation, Environmental Fund, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Economics of Estonia, Swedish Estonian Society, Tallinn Technical University and several Estonian oil shale enterprises. We are extremely grateful to Arvi Hamburg, Helle Martinson, Arvo Niitenberg, Guido Paalme, Väino Viilup and several others who never refused their advice and kind help.

At the present time the situation is improved: for the publication of the journal the Government of Estonia has allocated money from the state budget, and the *Estonian Academy Publishers* has included the journal in the list of its publications. Preservation of the quality of the journal, but also creation of international contacts and inserting trust in the subscribers proved much more difficult.

In 1994 *OIL SHALE* joined the journals indexed in the Science Citation Index® and in the following ISI® products: Sci Search®, ISI Alerting® Servicessm and Current Contents®, becoming thus the first CC journal in Estonia. Publication of the journal in the English language was difficult. We are grateful to Peet M. Sööt, an oil specialist of the USA, who kindly agreed to revise our articles linguistically during several years.

However, we managed and survived, and also foreign authors have found us. At the time being we have permanent authors from Russia, Belarus, the USA, Hungary, Japan, Turkey, Israel, Jordan, China, and Mongolia. The members of the Editorial Board of the journal come from the USA, Israel, Russia, Belarus, Turkey, China and Australia.

In December this year the journal *OIL SHALE* will celebrate its 20th anniversary. During this relatively short time good results have been obtained and a competent and friendly collective of publishers has developed. The jubilee volume will include papers on geology and resources of some oil shale deposits of the world (John R. Dyni), origin and structure of Estonian kukersite kerogen (Ülo Lille) and another Estonian oil shale – Dictyonema argillite – (Rein Veski and Vilja Palu) demonstrating the variability and great theoretical and practical significance of oil shale investigations.

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