

OBITUARY

Professor Ing. Dr. Ivan Odler



Professor Ing. Dr. *Ivan Odler* (born on 16 April 1930 in Bratislava, Slovakia), one of the world-wide leading specialists in the chemistry and technology of cement and building materials, died on 16 August 2005 in Winchester (U.S.A.). His first scientific contributions were published in early sixties in that-time's Czechoslovak journals – *Chemické zvesti* 15 (8), 563–570 (1961) and *Stavivo* 39, 284–288 (1961), and also presented at the conferences in Czechoslovakia and abroad (e.g. 8th Conference of the Silicate Industry, Budapest, June 1965; 2nd IBAUSIL, Weimar, September 1966). Doctoral thesis in the field he elaborated in the Building Materials Research and Testing Institute and Institute of Construction and Architecture of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, both in Bratislava, and successfully defended at the Slovak Technical University, Bratislava in 1965. Among the key co-workers and co-authors of Ivan Odler in that period were his younger Bratislava-based colleagues – *Ján Skalný* and *Juraj Gebauer*, both remained his important professional fellows also later, till his leave. In the year 1976 Ivan Odler was appointed Professor of Materials

Science at the Technical University Clausthal-Zellerfeld (Germany), he was the Fellow Member of American Ceramic Society, from the year 1985 he was Honorary Professor at the Tongji University in Shanghai (China), for a long period he acted as the member of editorial boards of the top scientific journals in the branch – *Cement and Concrete Research* and *Advances in Cement Research*.

A hard “milestone” in the life of Professor Odler and his family was the attack of military forces of Warsaw Treaty Organization on Czechoslovakia in August 1968. After the occupation of Czechoslovakia he emigrated with his wife Maria and daughter Marika to the U.S.A., he joined the Clarkson Technological University in Potsdam (N.Y.), Westvaco Research Center in Charleston (South Carolina), and Grace Company in Cambridge (Massachusetts). He has got citizenship of the U.S. in 1974. In the year 1975 he moved to Germany and joined the Technical University Clausthal-Zellerfeld, where he was appointed Professor of Materials Science and director of the Institute of Nonmetallic Materials in 1976. He acted in the position of dean of the Faculty of Materials Science in the period 1986–1988. In the Technical University Clausthal-Zellerfeld Professor Odler emphasized the necessity of joint pedagogical and scientific formation of the profile of university students and graduates. The attitude of Professor Odler to inspire partner (no matter if student, industry partner or colleague in research team) in discussions has affected and formed many of us, also the author of this obituary is “in this way positively marked”. After the fall of iron curtain in Europe around the block of communist countries Professor Odler focused part of his professional activities towards the mother-country: he has contributed by his expertise to the improvement of production of autoclaved aerated concretes in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic, through research stays at the Technical University Clausthal-Zellerfeld he enabled scientific progress of several young colleagues from his mother-country.

Extraordinarily rich scientific activity of Professor Odler (around 250 papers in scientific journals and patents, the majority of which are regularly cited and used in the field) represents the important contribution to the development of branches of chemistry and technology of binding materials (especially cements) and testing. Notable part of the professional life and bequest of Professor Odler is concentrated in several monographs. He prepared these either alone: *Special Inorganic Cements*, E&FN Spon, 2000 (series Modern Concrete Technology), or in co-authorships with his scientific co-workers: *Toxicology* (in Slovak), *Small Encyclopedia of Chemistry* (in Slovak), *Calcium Hydroxide in Concrete* (series Materials Science of Concrete), *Sulfate Attack on Concrete* (series Modern Concrete Technology). The monographs which he published in the series Modern Concrete Technology and Materials Science of Concrete provide the essential reference for practitioners – help to select the correct binder or cementitious system, and scientists find here the comprehensive and motivating insights into the issues tackled. Special note needs the chapter “Hydration, Setting and Hardening of Portland Cement”, prepared by Professor Odler for *Lea's Chemistry of Cement and Concrete*, 4th Edition – internationally accepted “Cement Bible”. Each quoted book and also the chapter in “Cement Bible” mediate to the reader inspiring elaboration of topical themes of chemistry and technology of cement and building materials. Professor Ivan

Odler had been that sort of authors who are able not only to complete well-known knowledge by the results of own research, but in addition, can formulate and introduce innovative and unconventional challenges for the research, technological progress, and practice (in his case the challenges as for academicians so for building industry).

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