

## HANS TROPSCH

By Paul Truesdell

Chicago and the world lost a great chemist and gentleman when Dr. Hans Tropsch died in Essen, Germany on October 8, at the age of 46, after an illness lasting several months.

Dr. Tropsch came to Chicago in 1931. He was an associate director of research for Universal Oil Products Company and was on the faculties of the University of Chicago and Armour Institute of Technology as professor of chemistry.



*Hans Tropsch*

He was a world authority on the chemistry of coal and oil and had done important work in the development of processes to increase the yield and improve the octane rating of gasoline by catalytic means.

In association with Franz Fischer, Dr. Tropsch developed a process to produce motor fuel from carbon monoxide and hydrogen. A number of plants are now being built in Germany to operate this process.

Below is the story of Dr. Tropsch's life, told by himself in a few modest words:

"I, Hans Tropsch, was born in Plan, near Marienbad (Czechoslovakia), on October 7, 1889.

"From 1907 to 1912 I studied chemistry at the German Technische Hochschule and the German University in Prague. In 1912 I received the degree of a "Diplom-Ingenieur" at the German Technische Hochschule.

"From 1912-1914 I was assistant to Prof. Hans Meyer at the German University in Prague. Here I finished my doctor's thesis on "Amino-pyridines and pyridine carboxylic acids. In 1913 I received the degree of a "Doctor-Ingenieur" at the German Technische Hochschule.

"From 1914-1916 I was a research chemist in a plant now belonging to the I. G. Farbenindustrie. I worked in the field of anthraquinone dyestuffs.

"From 1916-1917 I was assistant in the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institut für Kohlenforschung in Mülheim-Ruhr.

"From 1917-1920 I was superintendent of a coal tar distillation plant belonging to the Ruetgerswerke A.-G., Berlin.

"From 1920-1928 I was assistant director (Abteilungsvorsteher) in the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institut für Kohlenforschung in Mülheim-Ruhr and from 1928 to 1931 I was director of the newly-founded Coal Research Institute in Prague.

"My scientific work which I carried out in the Coal Research Institutes in Mülheim and in Prague is published in about 90 papers in the "Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Kenntnis der Kohle," in the "Brennstoff-Chemie" and the "Berichte der deutschen Chemischen Gesellschaft."

"It deals with the constitution of coal, humic acids, bitumen of brown coal, research on tars, high-pressure hydrogenation, etc., and especially with the synthesis of organic compounds from carbon monoxide and hydrogen. Together with Franz Fischer, I discovered the synthesis of petroleum hydrocarbons from carbon monoxide at atmospheric pressure. Other problems which became important in con-

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