DISCUSSIONS

“Nail and Chemistry”

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The essay “The Reasons Organic Chemistry is Needed for in a Well Developed Country” by Beletskaya and Ananikov [1] is concerned with an extremely important issue for all chemists, but logically, it should be concerned with the interests of each person whose activity affects what is being done in our economy.

First of all, this is due to the fact that almost all aspects of the problem could be carried over to “other chemistries.” But organic chemistry is a specific science. Its achievements, i.e., achievements of organic synthesis, underlie the development of such branches as pharmaceutical chemistry, chemistry of dyes and intermediate products, macromolecular chemistry, chemistry of natural compounds, agricultural chemistry, food chemistry, textile chemistry, and, oddly enough, the environment, etc.

We should honestly admit that during the last two decades these important aspects of the Russian economy have been given very little attention. Unlike power industry, all chemical industry has passed into private ownership, which immediately affected both enterprises and science.

Organic reagents that have been produced on a small scale in sufficient assortment, except for exotic ones, have now become exotic themselves, and almost all of them we buy abroad. All this, of course, affected the organic chemistry as a science. Taking into account that before the establishment of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF), there was no large funding (mildly speaking) of organic chemistry, the situation in the

country is not entirely favorable. Furthermore, RSF projects are not available for all chemists, and they are different in terms of volume.

The essay absolutely correctly raises all questions related to why a developed country, if we want it to be even with regard to economic sanctions and other restrictive measures, cannot exist without organic chemistry. While fully supporting the main conclusions, we understand that the “other chemistries” encounter with a similar problem. Of course, the title “The Reasons Chemistry ...” would be better. This was understood in the former USSR, especially in the distant 1958 when the program “Chemicalization of the Country” was adopted. Therefore, we and primarily the powers that be need to understand that this problem is (as V.I. Lenin said) “paramount.”

It would not have happened like in the Burns’ poem “For Want of a Nail.” If the economy of our country (which is mainly supported by oil and gas, though they are better to use to obtain useful organic compounds rather than export as raw materials and fuel; by the way, remember the words of great D.I. Mendeleev “Firing with oil is like to fire with banknotes”) compared with a horseshoe, then we would not like just chemistry proved to be that proverbial nail.

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REFERENCES

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