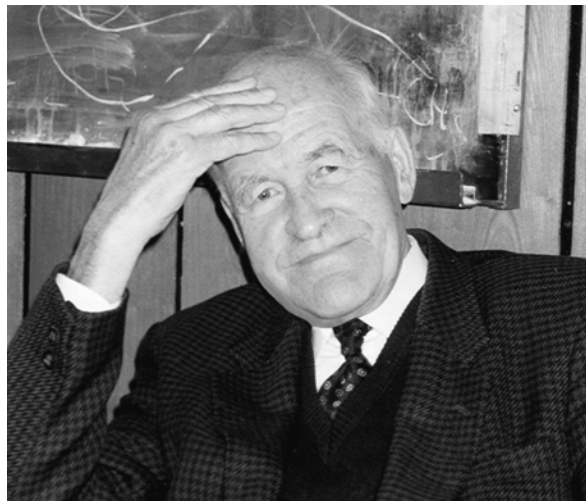


ANNIVERSARIES AND DATES



NINETIETH BIRTHDAY OF NIKOLAI KONSTANTINOVICH KOCHETKOV

May 18, 2005 is the ninetieth birthday of outstanding organic chemist Nikolai Konstantinovich Kochetkov. The unique range of his scientific interests is coupled with firm command of his investigations, and decisive scientific thought is coupled with his enormous experience and talent as an investigator. As a student of A. N. Nesmeyanov at Moscow University Kochetkov completed a Candidate's Thesis entitled "Investigation of the products from addition of mercuric chloride to acetylene derivatives" and subsequently did some extremely fruitful work in the fields of synthetic organic chemistry and the chemistry of natural compounds.

The most important landmark of his life must be his doctoral thesis entitled "Investigation in the region of β -chlorovinyl ketones" (1953), in which Kochetkov brought together data on the convenient synthesis that he had developed for these ketones and on their various transformations to compounds of the aliphatic, aromatic, and heterocyclic series. (Among the latter it is necessary to mention derivatives of isoxazole, pyrazole, pyridines, and chromylium salts.)

Subsequently, while working in 1954-1960 at the Institute of Pharmacology and Chemotherapy, Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, Kochetkov headed researches on the production of a series of synthetic drugs with antihistamine, antispasmodic, and antitubercular activity and also natural physiologically active compounds (the antibiotic cycloserine) and pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

From 1959 the main direction of Kochetkov's scientific activity became the chemistry of carbohydrates, but he also made a substantial contribution to the chemistry of nucleic acids and nucleotides. He created the largest scientific school with well-deserved authority on the chemistry of carbohydrates. A characteristic feature

of his work in this region was his progressive approach, based on a brilliant knowledge and understanding of contemporary organic chemistry. This approach enabled Kochetkov and his students to create original methods for the synthesis of polysaccharides and monosaccharides, including higher monosaccharides, and fundamentally new methods for the study of carbohydrates and for the biosynthesis of carbohydrate-containing biopolymers. A new strategy, based on modern instrumental methods (mass spectrometry and NMR) and theoretical calculations, was proposed for determination of the structure of polysaccharides. Carbohydrate chemistry and organic synthesis — the two main directions of Kochetkov's scientific activity — are represented to various degrees in his researches into the synthesis of complex natural compounds containing a large number of asymmetric centers from chiral carbohydrate synthons. This research included synthesis of the aglycones of 14-membered macrolide antibiotics.

Kochetkov paid great attention to his teaching and scientific administration work. He was creator (1954) of the Department of Organic Synthesis at the Institute of Pharmacology of the USSR and one of the creators of the Institute of the Chemistry of Natural Compounds, Academy of Sciences of the USSR. From 1966 to 1988 Kochetkov was director of the N. D. Zelinsky Institute of Organic Chemistry and played a leading role in the development of this major establishment. He is currently an honorary director of the N. D. Zelinsky of Organic Chemistry, Russian Academy of Sciences.

Nikolai Konstantinovich was one of the father-founders of the journal "Chemistry of Heterocyclic Compounds." Here, after 40 years, he remains a member of the editorial team of our journal and has more than once exhibited his readiness to help and to assist the journal in difficult situations. An astute mind, a genuine love for science, and a rare understanding of its problems excite the admiration of Nikolai Konstantinovich's students and colleagues, who wish him good health, vitality, and new creative successes.