
ANNIVERSARY

We Celebrate 140th Anniversary!

Editor-in-Chief A. I. Rusanov

DOI: 10.1134/S107036320904001X

Time is flying! It seems, I just have congratulated the readers with the 130th anniversary of the Journal, and now its age has reached 140 years. If the birth is to be regarded as the appearance to the world, then the birth date of the Journal of the Russian Chemical Society is exactly known: It is the third (fifteenth) of April, 1869. The role of an obstetrician was played by N.A. Menshutkin, and the world to which the newly-born was presented was the meeting of recently founded Russian Chemical Society that among its principal targets had the foundation of a journal of the Russian chemists. Like an oil-gusher, the Journal showed to all world the accumulated power of the Russian chemical science. Already the first volume of the Journal contained description of over 220 new compounds, the works covering different fields appeared, and works of what level! The authors of the Journal counted among them N.N. Zinin, D.I. Mendeleev, A.M. Butlerov, A.M. Zaitsev, V.V. Markovnikov, N.A. Menshutkin, N.N. Beketov, and other outstanding chemists. In the May issue of the same volume in an article of D.I. Mendeleev “The Relation of Properties to the Atomic Weight of Elements” was reported on the discovery of the Periodic System. Note that all the other papers dedicated to the Periodic System D.I. Mendeleev also published in the Journal of the Russian Chemical Society. It turned out that the Journal and the Periodic Systems are of the same age: Celebrating the 140th anniversary of the Journal of General Chemistry we at the same time celebrate the jubilee of the Periodic Law.

This year is outstanding for it is the year of the jubilee of D.I. Mendeleev himself, 175 years since his birth. The great scientist played different parts, but he is most commonly regarded as chemist. Obviously, D.I. Mendeleev is a great chemist, but it should be defined more exactly, that he is also (and perhaps, first of all) physical chemist. His physicochemical essence revealed itself in the tendency to investigate the general, fundamental laws as seen also in the Periodic System, in the discovery of the critical state of the

matter, in the formulation of the gas state equation, and in the search for the universal ether. Naturally, from the first steps of the Journal of the Russian Chemical Society D.I. Mendeleev tried to invite physicists to contribute to the Journal. On his suggestion a section of physics was opened in the Journal, and since 1873 “Journal of the Russian Chemical and Physical Societies” was published, and since 1878 (when both Societies joined under the persuasion of D.I. Mendeleev) the Journal became “Journal of the Russian Physico-Chemical Society” (ZhRFChO) and existed under this name till 1931.

The abbreviation ZhRFChO became a world-known brand, and, saying without overestimation, it was a great Journal. In 1969 in a large review dedicated to the centenary of the Journal S.N. Danilov tried to achieve the impossible by describing the scientific discoveries published in the Journal within 100 years. Limiting himself to chemistry only he was obliged to describe the following themes: Periodic law and the doctrine on elements; the law of chemical structure and stereochemistry; gases and evaporation of liquids; solutions and alloys; colloids; salts, molecular and complex compounds; organometallic and organoelemental compounds; fundamental research in the series of organic compounds; natural and synthetic macromolecular compounds. It can be said in short that for Russian physicists and chemists ZhRFChO was “our all.” But its greatness is not limited to this. In essence ZhRFChO was a precursor of the most important chemical and physical journals of our country. In 1928 from it finally set up on its own Journal of Applied Chemistry (the first unsuccessful try was performed in 1924). Since 1930 Journal of Physical Chemistry has been published, since 1931, Journal of Experimental and Theoretical Physics and Journal of Technical Physics, successors of the physical section of ZhRFChO. Finally, “Advances of Chemistry (Uspekhi Khimii)” should not be overlooked, the Journal founded in 1932 as the successor of the review section of ZhRFChO. As

regards the Journal of General Chemistry, it started to be published since 1931 as the direct heir of ZhRFChO and first ten years it was published with the mention: previous Journal of the Russian Physico-Chemical Society, in the parenthesis were indicated the numbers of volumes including all published before 1931.

When the applied aspects were separated for publication in the Journal of Applied Chemistry, our Journal focused on the fundamental problems of the chemical science. It remains like that up till now. The changes occurred only in the subject matter, for the editorial strategy of general journals like ours should be carried out accounting for the existence of specialized chemical journals to avoid the leakage of weak papers refused by the latter. The new appearance of the Journal of General Chemistry consists in the focus on the frontier fields of the chemical science, like organoelemental and organometallic chemistry and mechanochemistry. It is impossible to enumerate all the problems, and their number still grows, they develop fast, for the most of discoveries occur at the boundary of sciences. A good example is the nanochemistry that is already treated in the Journal of General Chemistry.

Celebrating the 140th anniversary of the Journal we must render justice to eminent scientists managing its work and ensuring the high level of publications throughout all its history. The forerunners of the present Editor-in-Chief are curiously few in number, and that means the great contribution of every one among them. The founder of the Journal N.A. Menshutkin edited the Journal of the Chemical Society (and later the chemical section of ZhRFChO) over thirty years and retired in 1900. His merits were so great and obvious that it was suggested to publish his name on the title-page of the Journal. Taking into consideration the

known close friendship of N.A. Menshutkin and D.I. Mendeleev (he died of stroke on the day of D.I. Mendeleev's funeral) it is presumable that this friendship added the glamour to the work of the Journal. The successor of N.A. Menshutkin was one of the "pillars of organic chemistry" in Russia A.E. Favorskii. For the next 30 years he was the Editor of the chemical section of ZhRFChO. Taking into account that since 1931 to 1940 he was the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of General Chemistry, his editorial work enclosed four decades! The Correspondent Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences S.N. Danilov whose selfless work was already mentioned was the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal nearly as long, since 1946 to 1978. Since 1981 to 1992 the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal was another Correspondent Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences B.V. Gidasov, on whose untimely death we already informed the readers. It was a special fate. The chemical engineers regarded him as a "god-blessed chemist", but he was put on the top by hierarchy of the Communist Party. To say nothing of editors of Journal, but hardly any of chemists (perhaps only V.N. Ipatiev) could have boasted to hold so high an office. The peak of this ascent was at the end of eighties–beginning of nineties, and it was presumable, what a stroke of ill luck was for him the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the elimination of the Communist Party. The author of this note took the office in 1993 at the height of the difficulties of the nineties, unfriendly for the science. Not only that we have survived but also all the history of the Journal of General Chemistry shows the wonderful tenacity of life and fruitfulness of the chemical science notwithstanding the crises which attack it. Congratulating on behalf of the Editorial Board our authors and readers with the jubilee of the Journal I wish them scientific success and new discoveries!