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The Unexpected Desulfurization of 4-Aminothiophenols

Peter Mulder,^{*,†} Olga Mozenon,[‡] Shuqiong Lin,[‡] and K. U. Ingold[‡]*Leiden Institute of Chemistry, Leiden University, P.O. Box 9502, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands, and
The National Research Council of Canada, 100 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON K1A 0R6 Canada**peter.mulder@nrc.ca**Received November 24, 2006*

High boiling solvent, T = 523 K

Thermolysis of 4-aminophenyl benzyl sulfide at 523 K in the hydrogen donor solvent (HDS), 9,10-dihydroanthracene (AnH₂), gave 4-aminothiophenol and toluene as the predominant products of the homolytic S–C bond cleavage. Under these conditions, a portion of the 4-aminothiophenol was desulfurized to aniline with first-order kinetics and with a rate constant estimated by kinetic modeling to be $7.0 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$. Starting with 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH at 523 K, it was found that sulfur loss was more efficient in the non-HDSs, anthracene and hexadecane, than in AnH₂. Under similar (competitive) reaction conditions, YC₆H₄SHs with Y = H, 4-CN, and 3-CF₃ were completely inert; with Y = 4-CH₃O, there was some very minor desulfurization, whereas with Y = 4-N(CH₃)₂ and 4-N(CH₃)(H), the sulfur extrusions were as fast as that for Y = 4-NH₂. We tentatively suggest that this apparently novel reaction is a chain process initiated by the bimolecular formation of diatomic sulfur, S₂, followed by a reversible addition of ground state, triplet ³S₂ to the thiol sulfur atom, 4-NH₂C₆H₄S[†](SS[†])H, and insertion into the S–H bond, 4-NH₂C₆H₄SSSH. In a cascade of reactions, aniline and S₈ are formed with the chains being terminated by reaction of 4-NH₂C₆H₄S[†](SS[†])H with 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH. Such a reaction mechanism is consistent with the first-order kinetics. That this reaction is primarily observed with 4-YC₆H₄SH having Y = N(CH₃)₂, N(CH₃)(H), and NH₂ is attributed to the fact that these compounds can exist as zwitterions.

Introduction

Sulfur-containing organic compounds are among the many ingredients present in fossil fuels, particularly, coal.¹ The selective removal of sulfur from these fuels, desulfurization, has been, and still is, a challenge that must be met in order to comply with current and future emission standards for power plants, etc. To mimic the thermal processing of coal and gain insights into the mechanisms of desulfurization, the reactivities of sulfur-containing model compounds have been examined at high temperatures, frequently in the presence of hydrogen atom donor solvents (HDS). Phenyl benzyl sulfide, C₆H₅SCH₂C₆H₅, can be regarded as a prototypical sulfur compound with its S–aryl and S–benzyl bonds. The thermolysis of this compound has been investigated in a number of solvents and at various temperatures: cyclohexane (523 K),² water (523 K),² mesitylene

(630 K),³ tetrahydroquinoline/mesitylene (608–630 K),³ Tetralin (661 K),⁴ Tetralin (573–659 K),⁵ water (573–659 K),⁵ and methanol (573–659 K).⁵ These studies have shown that in the presence of a HDS the main route for decomposition involves the cleavage of the S–benzylic bond with the resultant radicals then reacting with the HDS to form thiophenol and toluene (in a 1:1 ratio) as the main products (reaction 1):

The major byproducts have been reported to be diphenyldisulfide and diphenylmethane.^{4,5} The formation of diphenylmethane has

[†] Leiden University.[‡] National Research Council of Canada.(1) Yan, J.; Yang, J.; Liu, Z. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* **2005**, *39*, 5043–5051 and references cited therein.(2) Katritzky, A. R.; Lapucha, A. R.; Greenhill, J. V.; Siskin, M. *Energy Fuels* **1990**, *4*, 562–571.(3) Panvelker, S. V.; Shah, Y. T.; Cronauer, D. C. *Ind. Eng. Chem. Fundam.* **1982**, *21*, 236–242.(4) Ignasiak, T. M.; Strausz, O. P. *Fuel* **1978**, *57*, 617–621.(5) Abraham, M. A.; Klein, M. T. *Fuel Sci. Technol. Int.* **1988**, *6*, 633–662.

FIGURE 1. Product distributions obtained during thermolysis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅, **1**, in AnH₂, **2**, at 523 K as a function of time. Yields defined as $100 \times 0.5 \times [3]/\{0.5 \times ([3] + [4] + [5] + [8]) + [1] + [6] + [7]\}$. All products are defined as, for example, $0.5 \times ([3] + [4] + [5] + [8]) + [6] + [7]$. Drawn lines are calculated yields based on kinetic modeling; see Scheme 1.

been rationalized as involving the abstraction of a benzylic hydrogen atom from C₆H₅SCH₂C₆H₅ with the resulting C₆H₅CH(*)SC₆H₅ radical then undergoing a neophyl-like rearrangement (1,2-migration of the phenyl group) to yield C₆H₅CH(S*)C₆H₅.⁶ Hydrogen atom transfer then yields the thiol C₆H₅CH(SH)C₆H₅, which has a weak S–C bond,⁷ and is converted into C₆H₅CH₂C₆H₅ and H₂S under high-temperature conditions. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the presumed spirocyclohexadienyl radical intermediate in the C₆H₅CH(*)SC₆H₅ rearrangement may directly eliminate elemental sulfur.^{2,10} Hence, diphenylmethane formation constitutes the only desulfurization pathway for C₆H₅SCH₂C₆H₅ because the main sulfur-containing product, thiophenol, appears to be thermally stable under the usual experimental conditions.¹¹

We have recently reported on the kinetics of the S–C bond homolysis in several 4-Y-substituted phenyl benzyl sulfides (Y = NH₂, CH₃O, H, CN, the first at 523 K, the remaining three at 548 K) using 9,10-dihydroanthracene as the HDS in order to establish the effect of substitution on the S–C bond dissociation enthalpies.¹² We noted that, for Y = NH₂ at 523 K, there was an unexpected desulfurization of the thiyl radical product,

4-NH₂C₆H₄SH, with the formation of C₆H₅NH₂. The other 4-Y-substituted thiophenols were inert under the same reaction conditions, and even at 548 K, only one of them, Y = CH₃O, underwent desulfurization, but to a very small extent. Herein, we report on the thermolysis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ and related compounds with the emphasis being on the products and possible mechanisms of desulfurization of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH. We believe this work may improve understanding of the mechanisms by which sulfur could be extruded from other organic compounds.

Results

4-Aminophenyl Benzyl Sulfide. The product yields for the thermolysis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ (**1**), ca. 0.17 M, dissolved in 9,10-dihydroanthracene (AnH₂, **2**) at 523 K are presented in Figure 1. After homolytic S–C bond cleavage (reaction 2, see Scheme 1), the caged thiophenoxy and benzyl radical pair either escape the solvent cage (reaction 2a) and are scavenged by **2** to form 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH (**3**) and toluene (**4**), respectively, or they undergo an in-cage radical–radical combination to form the diphenylmethane derivative, 2-SH,5-NH₂C₆H₃CH₂C₆H₅ (**6**) (reaction 2b). The initial sulfur-containing products **3** and **6** undergo further reaction (desulfurization) during the course of the thermolysis. Thus, **3** is converted into aniline (**5**, reaction 3), and **6** is converted into 3-NH₂C₆H₄CH₂C₆H₅ (**7**, reaction 4). The ratio of [5]/[3] increases with the reaction time, but the fraction, $100 \times ([3] + [5])/[4]$, remains close to 100%. The [7]/[6] ratio also increases with time, while the fraction, $100 \times ([6] + [7])/([4] + [6] + [7])$, remains constant at $10.8 \pm 0.8\%$. A very minor product, C₆H₅CH₂SH (**8**), is also formed (reaction 5), and the fraction, $100 \times ([8])/([4] + [8])$, remains constant at $1.7 \pm 0.5\%$ during the course of the thermolysis.

The in situ desulfurization of compounds **3** and **6** and the overall conversion of **1** are summarized in Table 1. These results show that the rates of reactions 3 and 4 (Scheme 1) are (almost) identical, as would be expected. An additional experiment was

(6) (a) Alnajjar, M. S.; Franz, J. A. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **1992**, *114*, 1052–1058. (b) Ismail, K.; Mitchel, S. C.; Brown, S. D.; Snape, C. E.; Buchanan, A. C., III; Britt, P. F.; Franco, D. V.; Maes, I. I.; Yperman, J. *Energy Fuels* **1995**, *9*, 707–716.

(7) The S–C BDE in C₆H₅CH(SH)C₆H₅ can be estimated to be 57 kcal mol^{−1}.^{8,9}

(8) Auxiliary thermodynamic data from <http://webbook.nist.gov>.

(9) Rossi, M. J.; McMillen, D. F.; Golden, D. M. *J. Phys. Chem.* **1984**, *88*, 5031–5039.

(10) The reaction enthalpy for sulfur elimination from the spirocyclohexadienyl radical intermediate $\rightarrow$ C₆H₅CH(*)C₆H₅ + S can be estimated to be 35 kcal mol^{−1}.^{6a,8,9}

(11) However, one study does claim that benzene and toluene were the products of C₆H₅SCH₂C₆H₅ thermolysis and that no thiophenol was detected.³

(12) Mulder, P.; Mozenon, O.; Lin, S.; Bernardes, C. E. S.; Minas da Piedade, M. E.; Santos, A. F. L. O. M.; Ribeiro da Silva, M. A. V.; DiLabio, G. A.; Korth, H.-G.; Ingold, K. U. *J. Phys. Chem. A* **2006**, *110*, 9949–9958.

SCHEME 1. Reaction Mechanism for the Thermolysis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅, **1**, in AnH₂, **2**, at 523 K (reaction numbers are indicated by the subscripts on the ks)

conducted with **1** ($[1] = 0.17$ M) in the presence of an excess of one of the products, 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH (**3**) ($[3] = 0.3$ M), in AnH₂ at 523 K. After 1.7×10^5 s, the overall conversion of **1** was 42.0% (based on the formation of **4**, **6**, **7**, and **8**), and the fractions, $100 \times ([6] + [7]) / ([4] + [6] + [7])$ and $100 \times [8] / ([4] + [8])$, were 12.1 and 5.4%, respectively. The in situ desulfurization of **6** was 43.5% (see above). These results show that the decomposition of **1**, as presented in Scheme 1, is only marginally affected by the presence of a large excess of product **3**. However, **3** did accelerate the formation of benzyl sulfide (**8**), the yield of which increased from 1.7 to 5.4%. The formation of **8** will be acid-catalyzed (see below), and the excess of **3** may be the source of acid.

In our earlier study, we reported that the overall rate constant for disappearance of **1** was $3.05 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at 523 K.¹² With a parallel/consecutive kinetic model, as outlined in Scheme 1, the following additional rate constants have now been calculated on the basis of the product distribution: “effective” $(k_2 - k_{-2}) = 3.0 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$, $k_{2a} = 2.7 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$, $k_{2b} = 3.2 \times 10^{-7} \text{ s}^{-1}$, $k_5 = 5.2 \times 10^{-8} \text{ s}^{-1}$. By fitting the calculated yields from kinetic modeling with the experimental yields (Figure 1, drawn lines), the experimental first-order rate constants for desulfurization of **3** (k_3) and of **6** (k_4) at 523 K were both found to be $7.0 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$.

The thermolysis of **1** yields a very different product distribution from the product distributions obtained with the other 4-YC₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ (Y = OCH₃, H, CN) under the same reaction conditions. A careful re-examination of the products obtained from the 548 K thermolyses of C₆H₅SCH₂C₆H₅ and 4-CNC₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ showed absolutely no traces of C₆H₆ and C₆H₅CN, respectively, for conversions (within brackets are the corresponding reaction times) of the starting material of 69% (1.3×10^6 s) and 46.6% (1.1×10^6 s), respectively. Because C₆H₅OCH₃ had been used as an external standard for the GC analyses, the 548 K thermolysis of 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ (about 0.17 M in 9,10-dihydroanthracene) was repeated without adding anisole. By using an internal mass balance, an overall conversion of 56.3% was calculated after 1.7×10^5 s. This yields an overall first-order rate constant for S–C homolysis

TABLE 1. In situ Desulfurization (in %, $100 \times [\text{Product}] / \{[\text{Product}] + [\text{Reactant}]\}$) of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH (**3**), to Give C₆H₅NH₂ (**5**), and of 2-SH,5-NH₂C₆H₃CH₂C₆H₅ (**6**) to Give 3-NH₂C₆H₄CH₂C₆H₅ (**7**), Together With the Overall Conversion (in %) of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ (**1**) Into Products at 523 K^a

$\tau/10^{-5} \text{ s}$	3	6	1
0.29	3.0	8.5	9.4
0.68	17.9	17.7	19.8
1.08	25.4	22.4	27.3
1.41	33.6	37.0	36.2
1.52	49.4	43.3	37.0
2.09	56.7	59.0	49.3
2.74	57.6	64.7	55.2

^a In situ desulfurization defined as $100 \times [5] / ([3] + [5])$ and as $100 \times [7] / ([6] + [7])$. The overall conversion of **1** was defined as $100 \times \{0.5 \times ([3] + [4] + [5] + [8]) + [6] + [7]\} / \{0.5 \times ([3] + [4] + [5] + [8]) + [1] + [6] + [7]\}$. τ = reaction time.

SCHEME 2^a

^a (A) Dechlorination of 4-chloro-1-naphthylamine, **9**, according to a tautomerization/RRD mechanism in AnH₂, **2**. The thermodynamic data (in kcal mol⁻¹ and at 298 K) are obtained by computational chemistry: B3LYP/6-31G(d,p)//B3LYP/6-31G(d,p).^{13a} (B) Desulfurization in AnH₂, **2**, of 4-aminothiophenol, **3**, according to a potential tautomerization/RRD mechanism. The thermodynamic data (in kcal mol⁻¹ and at 298 K) are obtained by computational chemistry: B3LYP/6-31G(d,p)//B3LYP/6-31G(d,p).^{13b}

of $4.8 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$, in full agreement with our earlier reported value of $5.1 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$ (obtained from a series of experiments).¹² The in situ 548 K desulfurization for 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH to C₆H₅OCH₃ in the above experiment was found to be 2.2%, indicating that this is only a minor reaction pathway in comparison with the desulfurization of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH during the 523 K thermolysis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ (see Table 1). The formation of C₆H₅CH₂SH, **8**, during the thermolyses of 4-YC₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ was observed only for Y = NH₂, not for Y = CH₃O, H, and CN.

The facile desulfurization of the thiophenol, 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH, has not, apparently, been previously reported. The mechanism of this desulfurization was, at first, thought to be similar to that suggested for the dechlorination of phenols and anilines under the same reaction conditions.^{13a} A key observation for the

(13) (a) Mulder, P.; Arends, I. W. C. E.; Santoro, D.; Korth, H.-G. *J. Org. Chem.* **2003**, *68*, 4247–4257. (b) Korth, H.-G. Private communication.

SCHEME 3. Formation of Benzyl Sulfide, 8

proposed dechlorination mechanism was that phenols with a chlorine atom at C-3 were thermally stable, whereas those with a chlorine atom at C-2 or C-4 lost their chlorine at appreciable rates. The mechanism of the 523 K dechlorination of 4-chloro-1-naphthylamine, **9**, into 1-naphthylamine and hydrochloric acid in AnH_2 was investigated in detail.^{13a} The rate of dechlorination increased with the initial concentration of **9**, eventually reaching a constant (plateau) value. At high concentrations of **9**, 1,1'-dinaphthylamine emerged as a product with a concomitant increase in the overall conversion of **9**, whereas at low [**9**], the dechlorination reaction was catalyzed by an added organic acid. These features led to the mechanistic rationale presented in Scheme 2A. The first step is the establishment of an equilibrium between **9** and its tautomeric imine. Subsequently, a hydrogen atom is transferred from AnH_2 to the imine by a reverse radical disproportionation (RRD) reaction, and this ultimately leads to 1-naphthylamine, hydrochloric acid, and anthracene, **10**. Tautomerization is an acid/base-catalyzed reaction, and at low [**9**], the rate of equilibration becomes rate limiting. At high concentrations of **9**, this compound combines with its tautomer to form an intermediate that is more reactive in the RRD reaction and yields the observed 1,1'-dinaphthylamine. In biphenyl, a non-hydrogen donor solvent, **9**, was thermally stable.^{13a} A similar mechanism for desulfurization of $4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}$ is shown in Scheme 2B.

At 523 K, the bimolecular rate constant for dechlorination of **9** was calculated from the pseudo-first-order rate constants using an average AnH_2 concentration of 4 M and gave $k_{\text{Cl}} = 5.11 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$.^{13a} A similar calculation of the bimolecular rate constant for desulfurization of **3** at 523 K gave $k_{\text{S}} = (k_3/[\text{AnH}_2]) = 1.75 \times 10^{-6} \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$.

In Scheme 2, the DFT-calculated free energy changes for tautomerization, ΔG_{t} , and the RRD reaction enthalpies, ΔH_{RRD} , are presented for **9**^{13a} and **3**^{13b}. The rather small difference (0.8 kcal mol⁻¹) in the ΔH_{RRD} values for these two reactions implies that their RRD rate constants will not be dramatically different. However, the large difference in their ΔG_{t} values (9.4 kcal mol⁻¹), which determine the amine/imine equilibrium ratios for **3** and **9**, would lead to the expectation that k_{S} would be smaller than k_{Cl} by about a factor of about 8.5×10^3 ; that is, the “expected” $k_{\text{S}} = 5.1 \times 10^{-5}/8.5 \times 10^3 = 6.0 \times 10^{-9} \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$, a value very much lower than the experimental, $k_{\text{S}} = 1.75 \times 10^{-6} \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$. This suggests that tautomerization followed by RRD cannot be the dominant mechanism for desulfurization of **3**. On the other hand, the formation of minor amounts of benzyl sulfide (**8**)¹⁴ during the thermolysis of **1** indicates that a tautomerization/RDD mechanism does occur to a small extent

(Scheme 3) and as outlined above is acid catalyzed.¹⁵ The ΔG_{t} values for tautomerization of **1** and **3** are probably almost identical. With $[\text{AnH}_2]$ equal to 4 M, the bimolecular rate constant for the conversion of **1** into **8** can be calculated from the experimental first-order rate constant to be $5.2 \times 10^{-8}/4 = 1.3 \times 10^{-8} \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$, which is reasonably close to the predicted value of $6.0 \times 10^{-9} \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ based on the analogy with **9** (see above).

4-Aminothiophenol. The reactivity (desulfurization) of $4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}$, **3** (ca. 0.3 M), at 523 K was investigated in more detail using various high-boiling HDSs and non-HDSs: hexadecane, 9,10-dihydroanthracene, 9,10-dihydroanthracene mixed with anthracene (w/w = 1:1), and anthracene. The results are summarized in Table 2.

In hexadecane, the desulfurization of **3** was about 66%, and two additional products were found: $(2\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4)(4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4)\text{S}$ and $(4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4)_2\text{S}$ (mass spectra are presented in the Supporting Information). These two byproducts are probably formed by radical–radical combination reactions between the 4-aminothiophenoxyl radical and the aniliny radical. The equilibrium shown in eq 6 is estimated to have $\Delta H_6 = 14.5 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$.¹⁶

This means that the concentration $4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S}^\bullet$ will be much higher than the concentration of $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}^\bullet$ even when $[4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}] \ll [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}_2]$. Consequently, the coupling of two $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{-NH}^\bullet$ radicals will be very unlikely, a conclusion that is consistent with the fact that $(\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH})_2$ products were not observed. The coupling between two $4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S}^\bullet$ radicals would presumably yield the disulfide, $(4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S})_2$, but the estimated S–S BDE in this compound is only 44.3 kcal mol⁻¹; hence, there would be no build up of this product during the thermolysis of $4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}$.¹⁸

In AnH_2 , the conversion of **3** into **5** (ca. 33%) is a clean reaction, with no detectable byproducts. The (pseudo-)first-order rate constant for desulfurization of **3**, k_3 , was calculated to be $2.4 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$ (using an internal mass balance), a value that is

(15) An induced decomposition of **1** by means of a hydrogen atom addition to sulfur followed by elimination of **8** can be ruled out (see Supporting Information).

(16) The S–H BDE in $4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}$ is 76.5 kcal mol⁻¹; that is, it is 3.6 kcal mol⁻¹ weaker than the S–H BDE in $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{SH}$ (80.1 kcal mol⁻¹);¹² the N–H BDE in $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{NH}_2$ is 91.0 kcal mol⁻¹.¹⁷

(17) Colussi, A. J.; Benson, S. W. *Int. J. Chem. Kinet.* **1978**, *10*, 1139–1149.

(18) The S–S BDE in $(\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{S})_2$ is 51.5 kcal mol⁻¹ (based on a heat of formation for the phenylthiyl radical of 54.9 kcal mol⁻¹).^{8,12} With twice the bond weakening effect by the 4-NH_2 substituent (-3.6^{12}), the S–S BDE in $(4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S})_2$ is calculated to be $51.5 - 2 \times 3.6 = 44.3 \text{ kcal mol}^{-1}$. This implies that the rate constant for S–S homolysis of $(4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S})_2$ would be $7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at 523 K ($\log A/\text{s}^{-1} = 15.2^{12}$), which is about 240 times higher than the rate constant for S–C cleavage in **1**.

(14) The S–C BDE in $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{SH}$, **8**, can be estimated to be 61.2 kcal mol⁻¹,⁸ which means that the thermolysis of **8** according to $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2\text{SH} \rightarrow \text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{CH}_2^\bullet + \bullet\text{SH}$ does not take place under the reaction conditions.

TABLE 2. Desulfurization of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH in Various Solvents at 523 K^a

solvent	hexadecane	AnH ₂	AnH ₂ /An (1:1)	An
4-NH ₂ C ₆ H ₄ SH (initial)	156	177	162	158
4-NH ₂ C ₆ H ₄ SH (remaining)	22.9	124.3	14.7	8.4
C ₆ H ₅ NH ₂	66.6	61.7	169.0	94.3
others	24.0 ^b		3.7 ^c	37.4 ^d
mass balance (%) ^e	88	105	113	78
desulfurization (%) ^f	66	33	90	97

^a In μmol , the reaction time, τ , was 48 h ($\sim 1.7 \times 10^5$ s), and with ca. 500 mg of solvent, the initial [4-NH₂C₆H₄SH] was ca. 0.3 M. Mass spectra of tentatively identified products are presented in the Supporting Information.

^b Additional products: 3.4 μmol (2-NH₂C₆H₄)(4-NH₂C₆H₄)S and 20.6 μmol (4-NH₂C₆H₄)₂S. ^c Additional product: 3.7 μmol dibenzothiophene. ^d Additional products: three isomers of NH₂C₆H₄-An (4.2, 8.8, and 0.4 μmol); 4.9 μmol C₁₄H₈S₂; 14.6 μmol C₁₄H₉SH (two isomers, ratio 6/1); 3.1 μmol dibenzothiophene; 1.9 μmol (2-NH₂C₆H₄)(4-NH₂C₆H₄)S; 1.6 μmol (4-NH₂C₆H₄)₂S. ^e Nitrogen mass balance, defined as $100 \times \sum[\text{N-containing compounds}]_{\tau=0} / \sum[\text{N-containing compounds}]_{\tau}$, the [N-containing compounds] _{$\tau=0$} includes a stoichiometric factor of 2 for (2-NH₂C₆H₄)(4-NH₂C₆H₄)S and (4-NH₂C₆H₄)₂S. ^f Desulfurization is defined as $100 \times (1 - \sum[\text{S-containing compounds}]_{\tau=0} / \sum[\text{N-containing compounds}]_{\tau=0})$; see also footnote ^e; the [S-containing compounds] do not include C₁₄H₉SH and C₁₄H₈S₂.

about one-third of the k_3 value of $7.0 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$ obtained from the kinetic modeling of the decomposition of **1** (see above). In the AnH₂/An solvent mixture, the conversion of **3** into **5** increased to ca. 90%, with only dibenzothiophene as a minor byproduct. Finally, in anthracene, the overall conversion of **3** increased even further, but in addition to **5**, there was also an array of byproducts. The main fraction consisted of condensation products between aniline and anthracene (three isomers, mass spectra are presented in the Supporting Information). Interestingly, three sulfur-derived compounds were also formed which are identified, on the basis of their recorded mass spectra (Supporting Information), as condensation products between sulfur species and anthracene: C₁₄H₁₀S (two isomers, ratio 6/1, with identical mass spectra) with $M = 210$ (100), $M - 32$ (73), $M - 45$ (40), and C₁₄H₈S₂ (dithioanthraquinone)¹⁹ with $M = 240$ (100), $M - 45$ (11), $M - 77$ (11):

The Anthracene + Sulfur Reaction. Thermolysis of 8 μmol S₈ in 500 mg of anthracene under standard conditions (523 K and 48 h reaction time) gave the same three sulfur/anthracene condensation products mentioned above in yields of 2.9 μmol C₁₄H₁₀S (two isomers, ratio 2.5/1) and 9.3 μmol C₁₄H₈S₂. We prefer not to speculate about the mechanism(s) by which these compounds are formed because cyclic S₈ has an S–S bond dissociation enthalpy of only 32.8 kcal mol^{−1},²⁰ and, at the reaction temperature, not only will various S₈ isomers be present, but also there will be linear species including the linear S₈ biradical, its polymers (e.g., S₈ + S₈ → S₁₆...etc.) and dissocia-

TABLE 3. Thermolysis of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅, **11**, in 9,10-Dihydroanthracene at 523 K: Product Distribution (in %) after 1 and 48 h^a

	1 h	48 h
C ₆ H ₅ C ₂ H ₅ ^b	20.6 ^b	48.9 ^b
C ₆ H ₅ C ₂ H ₃	0.4	nd
C ₆ H ₅ N(CH ₃)(H)	nd	3.2
C ₆ H ₅ N(CH ₃) ₂	tr	14.1
4-N(CH ₃)(H)C ₆ H ₄ SH ^c	0.8	4.3
4-N(CH ₃) ₂ C ₆ H ₄ SH ^c	17.1	20.1
4-N(CH ₃)(H)C ₆ H ₄ SCH ₃	nd	1.9
4-N(CH ₃) ₂ C ₆ H ₄ SCH ₃	1.2	7.5
11	60.0	0.02

^a tr = trace, identified but less than 0.1%, nd = not detected less than 0.01%. Compound **11** contained 10% of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(C₄H₉)C₆H₅ as an impurity (see Experimental Section). The product distributions presented in this table have been corrected for the thermolysis products arising from this impurity by utilizing the quantities of C₆H₅C₂H₁₁ that were formed. Product distributions have been calculated using the internal mass balance: $[\mathbf{11}]_{\tau=0} = [\mathbf{11}]_{\tau} + 0.5 \sum[\text{products}]$. ^b Including 2.2% (1 h) and 8.0% (48 h) of 9,10-dihydro-9-(1-phenylethyl)-anthracene. ^c The desulfurizations of 4-YC₆H₄SH with Y = N(CH₃)₂ and N(CH₃)(H), defined as $100 \times [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{Y}] / ([4\text{-YC}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}] + [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{Y}] + [4\text{-YC}_6\text{H}_4\text{SCH}_3])$, are 33.8% (Y = N(CH₃)₂) and 34.0% (Y = N(CH₃)(H)).

tion products (e.g., S₈ ⇌ 4S₂), an altogether incredible mixture of reactive species that has been aptly referred to as “the sulfur zoo”.²¹

4-Dimethylaminophenyl-1-phenylethyl Sulfide and 4-Dimethylaminothiophenol. The thermolysis of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅ (**11**) in 9,10-dihydroanthracene was employed for the in situ generation of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SH at 523 K. After reaction times of 1 and 48 h, the overall conversion of **11** (using an internal mass balance) reached 40.0 and 99.98%, respectively,²² which indicates that reaction is essentially complete in 3–4 h. The product distribution (Table 3) was markedly different from that obtained during the thermolysis of **1**. Isomerization did not occur, and the analogue of **8**, C₆H₅CH(CH₃)SH, was not formed. After 48 h, the desulfurization of the 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SH formed in the reaction to C₆H₅N(CH₃)₂ was about 34% ($= 100 \times [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{N(CH}_3)_2] / ([4\text{-N(CH}_3)_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}] + [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{N(CH}_3)_2] + [4\text{-N(CH}_3)_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SCH}_3])$). That is, the rate (and extent) of desulfurization of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SH and 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH (see Table 2) were equal under identical reaction conditions. When calculated in the same way, the in situ desulfurization of 4-N(CH₃)(H)C₆H₄SH under these conditions is also 34%.

The desulfurization of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅ was accompanied by the formation of methylation/demethylation products. Interestingly, the ratios C₆H₅N(CH₃)(H)/C₆H₅N(CH₃)₂, 4-N(CH₃)(H)C₆H₄SH/4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SH, and 4-N(CH₃)(H)C₆H₄SCH₃/4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH₃ were almost identical: 0.23, 0.21, and 0.25, respectively; see Table 3. Because the sum of all the nitrogen-containing products was almost equal to the yield of ethylbenzene, there was no loss of methyl groups. This means that methylation/demethylation did not involve free methyl radicals because most of the methyl radicals would have been scavenged by the HDS to produce methane.

The methylating agent is presumably 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SH since this compound is highest in concentration and methylation/

(19) (a) Heilbron, I. M.; Heaton, J. S. *J. Chem. Soc. Trans.* **1923**, 123, 173–185. (b) Yousif, N. M.; Shabana, R.; Lawesson, S. O. *Bull. Soc. Chim. Fr.* **1986**, 283–287. (c) Lakshmikantham, M. V.; Levinson, M.; Menachery, M.; Cava, M. P. *J. Org. Chem.* **1986**, 51, 411–412.

(20) Benson, S. W. *Chem. Rev.* **1978**, 78, 23–35.

(21) Wong, M. W.; Steudel, Y.; Steudel, R. *Chem. Phys. Lett.* **2002**, 364, 387–392.

(22) For the S–C bond cleavage, 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅ (**11**) → 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄S* + C₆H₅C*(*)H(CH₃), these results lead to an average first-order rate constant of $9.3 \times 10^{-5} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at 523 K, indicating that this reaction is some 30 times faster than the S–C bond cleavage in 4-NH₂C₆H₄SC₂C₆H₅ (**1**).

TABLE 4. Desulfurization (in %) after 48 h of Mixtures of 4-YC₆H₄SH in 9,10-Dihydroanthracene at 523 K^a

	4-CH ₃ OC ₆ H ₄ SH	3-CF ₃ C ₆ H ₄ SH	4-NH ₂ C ₆ H ₄ SH
mix 1 ^b	0.92	nd	
mix 2 ^c	0.13	nd	32.8

^a Results are the average of two runs using toluene as an external standard for the GC analyses; nd = not detected (less than 0.01%). Desulfurization defined as $100 \times [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{Y}]_{t=\tau} / \{[\text{YC}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}]_{t=\tau} + [\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{Y}]_{t=\tau}\}$. ^b Mix 1: 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH (146 μmol) and 3-CF₃C₆H₄SH (29 μmol) dissolved in ca. 500 mg of 9,10-dihydroanthracene. ^c Mix 2: 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH (149 μmol), 3-CF₃C₆H₄SH (30 μmol), and 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH (162 μmol) dissolved in ca. 500 mg of 9,10-dihydroanthracene.

demethylation can be represented by eqs 7 and 8. If, as would be expected, the rate constants for methylation of the two

thiols are approximately equal (i.e., $k_7 \approx k_8$), the ratio $[4\text{-N}(\text{CH}_3)(\text{H})\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SCH}_3]/[4\text{-N}(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SCH}_3]$ should be similar to the product ratio $\{[\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{N}(\text{CH}_3)(\text{H})] + [4\text{-N}(\text{CH}_3)(\text{H})\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}]/[\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{N}(\text{CH}_3)_2] + [4\text{-N}(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}]\}$, and this is indeed the case (0.25 versus 0.22).

Mixtures of 4-YC₆H₄SH. Because desulfurization might be due to the formation of some specific reactive species from the 4-aminothiophenols that would desulfurize other thiophenols, two experiments were conducted using mixtures of thiophenols in 9,10-dihydroanthracene at 523 K. The results are compiled in Table 4.

In both mixtures, there was no desulfurization of 3-CF₃C₆H₄SH (just as there was no desulfurization of 4-CNC₆H₄SH and C₆H₅SH used alone under these conditions). The conversion of 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH to C₆H₄OCH₃ was very slow, but it could be detected in both mixtures. The desulfurization of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH in the presence of 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH and 3-CF₃C₆H₄SH (32.8%) occurred to the same extent as in the absence of these two thiophenols (33%, see Table 2). From Table 4, it can be estimated that the rate of desulfurization of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH is at least 300 times greater than the rate for 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH, while the rate for 3-CF₃C₆H₄SH must be at least 3 orders of magnitude smaller.

Discussion

There is a remarkable difference in the thermal stability of ring-substituted thiophenols, YC₆H₄SH. For Y = 4-H, 4-CN, and 3-CF₃, the thiophenols are inert under the standard conditions of 523 K in 9,10-dihydroanthracene and a reaction time of 48 h. In contrast, for Y = 4-NH₂, 4-N(CH₃)(H), and 4-N(CH₃)₂, desulfurization to the responding anilines takes place at appreciable and identical rates. Desulfurization also occurs with 4-CH₃OC₆H₄SH, albeit at a rate which is at least 300 times slower than the rate for 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH. The possibility that the desulfurization of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH follows a tautomerization/RRD mechanism (Scheme 2B) can be excluded for two simple reasons: (i) The thermolysis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ (**1**) actually does yield the product of a tautomerization/RRD mechanism, benzyl sulfide, **8** (Scheme 3), but only in a very

low yield. (ii) Sulfur is extruded from 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SH, although tautomerization cannot occur.

Surprisingly, desulfurization does not require an external source of hydrogen (atoms) because the reaction decreased in efficiency along the solvent series: anthracene, hexadecane, 9-, 10-dihydroanthracene (see Table 2). Since the loss of sulfur from 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH follows first-order kinetics, the desulfurization of this compound could, most simply, be represented by reaction 9. However, a unimolecular elimination of atomic sulfur *cannot*

be the mechanism of desulfurization because reaction 9 has an enthalpy, ΔH_9 , of about 60 kcal mol⁻¹.^{8,23} If the activation enthalpy is assumed to have its minimum value of 60 kcal mol⁻¹ and A_9 is assumed to have the very high value of 10¹⁵ s⁻¹, then k_9 will be 10⁻¹⁰ s⁻¹ at 523 K, a value that is 5 orders of magnitude smaller than the experimental rate constant for this desulfurization at this temperature (i.e., $k_3 = 7.0 \times 10^{-6}$ s⁻¹; see Scheme 1). To fit the experimental rate constant using the same A factor would require an activation enthalpy of about 48 kcal mol⁻¹, which is at least 12 kcal mol⁻¹ lower than the minimum value of E_9 .

A similar problem exists for the thermal elimination of sulfur from thiirane, reaction 10.

That is, $\Delta H_{10} = 59.1$ kcal mol⁻¹,^{8,20} but if the sulfur atom was formed in its excited singlet state for reasons of spin conservation, the required enthalpy would be even higher. However, the measured activation enthalpy in the gas phase is 40–42 kcal mol⁻¹,²⁴ ruling out desulfurization by a simple unimolecular extrusion of atomic sulfur, despite the fact that the reaction is first order in thiirane.^{24–27} Attempts to explain this anomaly have been inconsistent with experimental data. For example, Benson²⁰ suggested a complex chain reaction initiated by reaction 10, the atomic sulfur produced then attacks the thiirane to form S₂ which is the chain carrier and reacts with thiirane in the rate-determining step (rds), eq 11. The S₂ is

in equilibrium with S₈. Such a mechanism can be ruled out on several grounds, most tellingly by the fact that Gunning and

(23) The heat of formation, ΔH_f , of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH can be calculated to be 26.95 kcal mol⁻¹ using the isodesmic reaction: C₆H₅NH₂ + C₆H₅SH → 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH + C₆H₆ (computed reaction enthalpy, -0.91 kcal mol⁻¹)¹² in conjunction with auxiliary thermodynamic data, cf. $\Delta H_f(\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{SH}) = 26.9$ kcal mol⁻¹.⁸ With a 4-NH₂C₆H₄S-H BDE of 76.5 kcal mol⁻¹, the $\Delta H_f(4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{S}^\bullet) = 51.4$ kcal mol⁻¹.

(24) There have been three reports on the thermolysis of thiirane in the gas phase.^{26–28} All are agreed that this reaction follows first-order kinetics, and the following Arrhenius parameters have been reported: log A/s^{-1} , $E_a/\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$; 13.2, 40.2;²⁵ 15.8, 42.4;²⁶ and 13.2, 40.9.²⁷

(25) Lown, E. M.; Sandhu, H. S.; Gunning, H. E.; Strausz, O. P. *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* **1968**, *90*, 7164–7165. The reported activation entropy of -2.5 eu is in error. Recalculation using the rate constant of 3.70×10^{-5} s⁻¹ at 498 K and $E_a = 40.2$ leads to a reaction entropy of -1.1 eu. In subsequent studies^{26–28} on the thermolysis of thiirane, the erroneous value (-2.5 eu) has been quoted without comment.

(26) Amano, A.; Yamada, M.; Mizuuchi, K.; Kamo, T. *Kenkyu Hokoku: Asahi Garasu Kogyo Gijutsu Shoreikai* **1982**, *41*, 151–157.

(27) Yamada, M.; Kamo, T.; Tang, J.; Amano, A. *Nippon Kagaku Kaishi* **1987**, *60*, 1377–1384.

co-workers²⁵ demonstrated experimentally that atomic sulfur was not produced during the desulfurization of thiirane. Most recently, Steudel and co-workers²⁸ carried out a very thorough theoretical study of this reaction and concluded that the thermochemical requirements could be met by a bimolecular elimination of S₂ in its excited singlet state, reaction 12 (and even more favorably if the S₂ were eliminated from the

intermediate thiirane-1-sulfide, C₂H₄S=S, in its triplet ground state, ³S₂). Of course, this would mean that the reaction would be second order in thiirane, a fact that forced these authors²⁸ to conclude that “the reported first-order rate law²⁵ is unlikely” to be correct. However, Gunning and co-workers²⁵ were highly experienced gas kineticists, and they would have been very unlikely to make an error of this magnitude. Moreover, later work (not cited by Steudel and co-workers²⁸) has confirmed that the desulfurization of thiirane in the gas phase follows first-order kinetics.^{26,27} Fortunately, as we show below in dealing with a possible mechanism of desulfurization of 4-aminothiophenols, a bimolecular formation of S₂ can still lead to overall first-order kinetics.

The bimolecular formation of S₂ (reaction 13) has ΔH₁₃ =

32.7 kcal mol⁻¹, if the S₂ is eliminated in its excited singlet state (18.4 kcal mol⁻¹ if spin conservation is not obeyed and elimination yields S₂ in its triplet ground state).^{8,23,29} We now assume that the ground state ³S₂ initiates a chain reaction with chain termination being proportional to [thiophenol]² because this leads to overall first-order kinetics. There are many possibilities.³¹ One of the simplest is presented below, solely for illustrative purposes (reactions 14–19):

Chain Propagation:

(28) Steudel, Y.; Steudel, R.; Wong, M. W. *Chem.–Eur. J.* **2002**, 8, 217–228.

(29) From experimental studies, the energy difference between ¹S₂ and ³S₂ has been estimated as 13 ± 2 kcal mol⁻¹,³⁰ according to G3(MP2) level computations the energy difference is 15.5 kcal mol⁻¹.²⁸ We use ΔH_f(¹S₂) = ΔH_f(³S₂) + 14.3 (average value) = 30.7²⁰ + 14.3 = 45.0 kcal mol⁻¹.

(30) Carleer, M.; Colin, R. *J. Phys. B* **1970**, 3, 1715–1723.

(31) Calculated reaction enthalpies for some of the possible reactions follow. The S–C BDE in C₆H₅SS• is given as 60 kcal mol⁻¹,²⁰ which, combined with a S–H BDE in C₆H₅SSH of 70 kcal mol⁻¹,²⁰ leads to ΔH_f(C₆H₅SSH) ≈ ΔH_f(4-NH₂C₆H₄SSH) = 32.5 kcal mol⁻¹.^{8,23} Insertion of S in H₂S₂ → H₂S₃ or H₂S₃ → H₂S₄ increases the ΔH_f(H₂S₃) by 3.6 and ΔH_f(H₂S₄) by 3.2 kcal mol⁻¹, respectively. With this increment for S insertion, the ΔH_f(4-NH₂C₆H₄SSSH) is estimated as 32.5 + 3.4 (average) = 35.9 kcal mol⁻¹. The overall enthalpy change for ³S₂ + 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH → 4-NH₂C₆H₄SSSH (reaction 14) is calculated to be 35.9 – 30.7²⁰ – 26.95²³ = –21.8 kcal mol⁻¹. The reaction enthalpy for S–S cleavage, 4-NH₂C₆H₄SSSH → 4-NH₂C₆H₄S• + HS₂•, is 51.4²³ + 22.1²⁰ – 35.9 = 37.6 kcal mol⁻¹; this means that under our thermal conditions the homolysis reaction is fast. However, the reaction enthalpy for the S₃ extrusion, 4-NH₂C₆H₄SSSH → C₆H₅NH₂ + S₃, reaction 15, x = 3, is only 20.8⁸ + 32.5²⁰ – 35.9 = 17.4 kcal mol⁻¹. In view of the large difference in the reaction enthalpies for S–S cleavage in and for S₃ extrusion from 4-NH₂C₆H₄SSSH, ca. 20 kcal mol⁻¹, it seems most likely that the S₃ extrusion reaction prevails.

Chain Termination:

Analysis of this reaction scheme yields the overall first-order kinetic rate law, eq 20:

$$-d[4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}]/dt = k_{13}k_p[4\text{-NH}_2\text{C}_6\text{H}_4\text{SH}]/k_t \quad (20)$$

Zwitterionic structures are a characteristic, and probably unique, feature of 4-aminothiophenols.^{32,33} It therefore appears logical to attribute the extremely facile desulfurization of 4-aminothiophenols (relative to other thiophenols) to reactions involving their zwitterions. For example, the formal initiation reaction (13) could be presented as the reaction sequence 13a to 13d. In favor of such a mechanism is the well-known fact

that thiolates are good nucleophiles and readily substitute divalent sulfur³⁴ (i.e., reaction 21).

The rate-determining step in the above initiation sequence would probably be the (formal) proton shift from sulfur to the aromatic carbon in reaction 13c with 4-N⁺H₃C₆H₄SS[–] being the leaving group, X[–]. For the first step in the chain propagation, reaction 14, the presence of zwitterions may again provide a rationale for the unexpectedly facile desulfurization of 4-aminothiophenols. This is because the intermediate obtained after the addition of ³S₂ will be in equilibrium with its zwitterionic counterpart (reaction 14a) which will provide additional stabilization to

(32) We thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the presence of zwitterions.

(33) 4-Aminothiophenol exists in the solid state and in the liquid state as the zwitterion: Jetti, R. K. R.; Boese, R.; Thakur, T. S.; Vangala, V. R.; Desiraju, G. R. *Chem. Commun.* **2004**, 2526–2527.

(34) (a) Pryor, W. A. *Mechanisms of Sulfur Reactions*; McGraw-Hill: New York, **1962**. (b) Peach, M. E. In *The Chemistry of the Thiol Group*; Patai, S., Ed.; Wiley: New York, **1974**; Chapter 16.

4-NH₂C₆H₄S[†](SS[†])H (and its singlet) and make the addition of ³S₂ less reversible. It is also possible that the 4-aminothiophenols

show unique desulfurization properties because the zwitterions both eliminate polysulfur (reaction 15a) and add polysulfur (reaction 16a) more readily than non-zwitterionic thiophenols.³⁵

This could explain why, in a reaction mixture containing 4-NH₂C₆H₄SH and two other thiophenols, only the aminothiophenol underwent desulfurization (see Table 4).

The foregoing “illustrative” desulfurization of 4-aminothiophenol by a chain reaction would be subject to autocatalysis by the generated elemental sulfur (see the equilibrium in eq 11, i.e., S₈ ⇌ 4 S₂). However, Benson²⁰ has pointed out in his discussion of the mechanism of desulfurization of thiirane that such a rate acceleration would be proportional to [S₈]^{1/4} so that a 4-fold change in [S₈] would produce only a 40% change in [S₂]. If such autocatalysis occurs during the thermal desulfurization of 4-aminothiophenols, it was not detected possibly because sulfur quickly reaches its solubility limit.

Experimental Section

Materials. The synthesis of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅, **1**, has been reported.¹²

Synthesis of 4-Dimethylaminophenyl-1-Phenylethyl Sulfide, 11: Originally we tried to synthesize 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ from NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅. Two attempts were made, but the final product contained an additional methyl group at the benzylic carbon. The first followed a literature procedure³⁷ and used (CH₃O)₃PO as the methylating reagent. It gave a complex mixture containing

(according to GC/MS) 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH₃, 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SC₆H₄-CH₃, 4-N(C₆H₅CH₂)(CH₃)C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅, and 4-N(C₆H₅CH₂)₂C₆H₄-SCH₂C₆H₅, with only minor amounts of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ and 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅. It appeared impossible to isolate a sufficient quantity of the desired compound from this mixture by standard preparative chromatographic methods.

The second attempt involved the addition of *n*-butyllithium (2.0 M in hexanes, 5.2 mL, 10.32 mmol) dropwise via syringe to a colorless solution of 4-aminophenyl benzyl sulfide (1.11 g, 5.16 mmol) in anhydrous THF (20 mL) at 0 °C. The reaction mixture, which turned dark green when the addition was complete, was stirred at 0 °C for 2 h. Methyl iodide (0.64 mL, 10.32 mmol) was then added dropwise via syringe, and the resulting dark-brown solution was stirred at 0 °C for 2 h then at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was poured onto ice water and extracted with ethyl acetate (3 × 30 mL), and the combined organics were washed with brine, dried with anhydrous magnesium sulfate, and concentrated by rotary evaporation to give 1.30 g of crude product as a liquid. GC/MS showed that the crude product consisted mainly of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅ (60%) and that the desired 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅ was not present. Further purification by preparative TLC (hexanes/EtOAc = 3:1) afforded a mixture of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅ (90%) and 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH-(C₄H₉)C₆H₅ (10%) according to ¹H and ¹³C NMR and GC/MS analysis (see Supporting Information).

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Supporting Information Available: General experimental and analytical methods; possible routes for the non-observed induced decomposition of 4-NH₂C₆H₄SCH₂C₆H₅; ¹H and ¹³C spectra of 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄SCH(CH₃)C₆H₅ containing 10% 4-N(CH₃)₂C₆H₄-SCH(C₄H₉)C₆H₅ as the impurity, including their mass spectra; mass spectra of some products listed in Table 2. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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(35) In previous work, we have demonstrated that the reduction of a carbonyl group to a CH₂ group at high temperatures in nonpolar hydrogen atom donor solvents follows an ionic mechanism.³⁶