for 15 h, and the bath temperature was 80 °C. The crystalline product was washed with some hexane and dried. The product was analyzed by mass spectrometry at 20 and 70 eV.

Thermal Decomposition of Diazidomalonamide (14). A solution of diazidomalonamide (14) (100 mg, 0.5 mmol) in dodecane (1.0 g) was heated to 140-142 °C in an oil bath for 2 h. At the end of given time the reaction was cooled and the white solid separated, which was washed with hexane (5 mL) to give 50 mg (89%) of 5-carbamoyltetrazole (15): mp 230-232 °C (lit.¹ mp 231–232 °C); IR (Nujol) 1700 (C==O) cm⁻¹; NMR (Me₂SO-d₆) δ 4.5 (2 H, s, NH₂), 8.3 (1 H, s, NH); MS, m/z (relative intensity) 113 (M⁺, 35), 86 (7), 85 (58), 71 (100), 70 (16), 69 (10), 60 (41), 57 (12), 44 (58), 42 (33).

Thermal Decomposition of N,N'-Dimethyldiazidomalonamide (16). N,N'-dimethyldiazidomalonamide (16) (150 mg, 0.7 mmol) in dodecane (1.0 g) was heated in an oil bath to 140-144 °C for 3 h. On cooling the reaction mixture, a white solid separated, which was filtered, washed with hexane (15 mL), and dried to give 80 mg (90%) of 5-(methylcarbamoyl)tetrazole (17): mp 233-235 °C (lit.¹ mp 235-236 °C); IR (Nujol) 1665 (C=O) cm⁻¹; NMR (Me₂SO- d_6) δ 2.4 (3 H, s, CH₃), 4.3 (1 H, s, NHCH₃), 8.3 (1 H, s, NH); MS, m/z (relative intensity) 127 (M⁺, 20), 99 (18), 98 (4), 85 (16), 84 (8), 70 (16), 69 (12), 58 (100), 56 (38), 55 (10), 44 (15), 43 (44), 42 (30).

5-Carbomethoxytetrazole (22). Dimethyl tetrazole-1,5-dicarboxylate (3)¹ (372 mg, 2.0 mmol) was dissolved in 3% aqueous potassium hydroxide solution (5 mL) and methanol (10 mL), and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 6 h. It was diluted with water (20 mL), neutralized with acetic acid, and extracted with chloroform $(3 \times 10 \text{ mL})$. The combined chloroform extracts were washed with saturated sodium bicarbonate solution and then with water, dried over anhydrous magnesium sulfate. and filtered. The solvent was removed in vacuo to give 75 mg of 5-carbomethoxytetrazole (22): mp 96-98 °C; IR (Nujol) 3405 (NH), 1740 (COOCH₃) cm⁻¹; NMR (CDCl₃) δ 4.16 (3 H, s, CH₃). Anal. Calcd for C₃H₄N₄O₂: C, 28.12; H, 3.12. Found: C, 28.43; H, 3.23.

Thermal Decomposition of Dimethyl Diazidomalonate (1)

in the Presence of the Lithium Salt of 5-Carbomethoxytetrazole (13-Li). A solution of 5-carbomethoxytetrazole (22) (64 mg, 0.5 mmol) in dry tetrahydrofuran (5 mL) was cooled to -78 °C, and to this was added dropwise a solution of *n*-butyllithium (0.5 mL, 2.5 M) in dry tetrahydrofuran (5 mL) under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was stirred at -78 °C for 1 h, and then it was slowly brought to room temperature. After the mixture was stirred 0.5 h at room temperature, a solution of dimethyl diazidomalonate (1) (1.0 g, 4.6 mmol) in dodecane (2.0 g) was added at once, and the reaction mixture was heated in an oil bath to 104-106 °C for 2 days. The reaction mixture was cooled to room temperature, and the dodecane was decanted from a black oil. The oil was washed with hexane $(2 \times 5 \text{ mL})$: IR (Nujol) 1745 (C=O) cm⁻¹; NMR (CDCl₃) δ 4.1 (3 H, s, CH₃), 4.51 (3 H, s, CH₃). The NMR of the crude product shows 10% of the 5-carbomethoxy-1-methyltetrazole.

Thermal Decomposition of Diazidomalonamide (14) in the Presence of the Lithium Salt of 5-Carbamoyltetrazole (15-Li). To a cold solution of 5-carbamoyltetrazole (15) (56.5 mg, 0.5 mmol)¹ in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) at -78 °C was added dropwise a solution of n-butyllithium (1.5 mL, 2.5 M) in dry tetrahydrofuran (10 mL) under nitrogen. The reaction mixture was allowed to stir at -78 °C for 1 h, and then it was slowly brought to room temperature and was stirred for 2 h. To this was added a suspension of diazidomalonamide (14) (500 mg, 2.5 mmol) in dodecane (1 g), and the reaction mixture was heated at 70–75 $^{\circ}C$ for 15 h. The reaction mixture was cooled, and the solid was filtered, washed with water and then with hexane, and dried to give 200 mg (81%) of 5-carbamoyltetrazole (15): mp 240-242 °C; IR (KBr) 1700 (C=O) cm^{-1} .

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Registry No. 1, 19132-24-2; 1-d₆, 97763-82-1; 2, 32366-17-9; **2**-*d*₃, 97752-03-9; **2**'-*d*₃, 97752-04-0; **2**-*d*₆, 97752-05-1; **3**, 16932-76-6; 13-Li, 97752-06-2; 14, 32366-18-0; 15, 32366-22-6; 15-Li, 97752-07-3; 16, 32366-19-1; 17, 32366-23-7; 22, 97752-08-4.

Reaction of gem-Dibromocyclopropanes with Potassium Dimethyl Phosphite in Liquid Ammonia. A Highly Stereoselective Reduction

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Although gem-dibromocyclopropanes undergo substitution with other S_{RN} 1 nucleophiles in liquid ammonia solution stimulated by "350 nm" light, only reduction is observed with dimethyl phosphite ion. This reduction proceeds in the absence of light and involves nonradical intermediates. It gives high yields of the trans monobromides 4 with little or no contamination by the cis isomers 5 or the direduced products 6. gem-Dichlorocyclopropanes are inert under the reaction conditions. The reaction is suited to preparative work.

It has recently been reported that gem-dibromocyclopropanes undergo a photostimulated reaction with certain nucleophiles to afford disubstituted products.¹ The reactions bear apparent similarity to the well-known $\mathbf{S}_{\text{RN}}\mathbf{1}$ reaction in that they are retarded by radical inhibitors and do not occur in the dark. Nucleophiles which have been shown to react with *gem*-dibromocyclopropanes,¹ such as thiophenoxide ion, pinacolone enolate, and cyanomethyl anion, are all effective $S_{RN}\mathbf{1}$ nucleophiles on aromatic systems. 2,3

However, diphenylphosphide ion, a very reactive nucleophile in aromatic $S_{RN}1$ chemistry,⁴ undergoes a reaction with gem-dibromocyclopropanes in which the first step is reduction to the monobromide, followed by a substitution of the remaining bromine to form cyclopropyldiphenylphosphines.^{5,6} We sought, therefore, to examine the behavior of other phosphorus nucleophiles under conditions believed to promote substitution.

Dialkyl phosphite ions are also effective aromatic $S_{RN}1$ nucleophiles,⁷ although they are somewhat less reactive

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than diphenylphosphide ion.⁴ We report now the results of a detailed investigation of the reaction of dimethyl phosphite ion with *gem*-dibromocyclopropanes.

Results

UV Irradiation. Dibromide 1a was irradiated for 4 h in a Rayonet apparatus equipped with 16 "350 nm" lamps in liquid ammonia with an excess of dimethyl phosphite ion, formed from the reaction of potassium tert-butoxide and dimethyl phosphonate.⁴ Although these conditions were thought likely to promote substitution, the expected products 2a or 3a, however, were not detected (Chart I). Instead, the monobromide 4a was obtained in virtually quantitative yield. Less than 1% of its isomer 5a was formed. Similarly, irradiation of 1c in the presence of dimethyl phosphite ion gave 4c (96%). The remainder was 5c; no phosphorus-containing cyclopropyl derivatives could be detected. Irradiation of 1h in liquid ammonia returned only starting material, although it was noted that 1h was not completely soluble in the reaction mixture. Addition of THF (25%) gave a homogeneous solution, but 4-h irradiation yielded only 31% of 4h accompanied by starting 1h (64%). The substitution products 2h or 3h were not detected. Evidently, photostimulated S_{RN}1 substitution of cyclopropyl bromides is not a favored process under the reaction conditions with dimethyl phosphite ion.

A phenomenon useful for initiating certain sluggish $S_{\rm RN}^{1}$ reactions is entrainment,³ where a small amount of a quite reactive substrate is added to the compound under investigation; the resultant radical chains initiated by the reactive substrate often serve to initiate the slower reaction. Iodobenzene is known to be quite reactive with dimethyl phosphite ion under photostimulation.⁷ However, addition of 5 mol % of iodobenzene to the reaction mixture containing 1a, followed by 4-h irradiation, failed to stimulate the production of 2a or 3a, even though the iodobenzene had been fully consumed. We did not search further for examples of photostimulated substitution with potassium dialkyl phosphites but chose to investigate the nature of the reduction reaction.

"Dark" Reactions. Treatment of 1a for 4 h in the dark with excess potassium dimethyl phosphite in refluxing liquid ammonia again gave the isomerically pure monobromide 4a in quantitative yield. Significantly, no direduction to the cyclopropane 6a occurred. It was discovered

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 Table I. Dark Reactions of 1 with Dimethyl Phosphite Ion in Liquid Ammonia

substrate	substrate remaining, %	4, %	5, %	isolated and distilled (4 + 5), %
1a	0	100	0	91
1b	10	82	0	71
1c	2	96	4	96
1d	0	92	4.5	94
le	0	91	8	60^{c}
1 f	0	98	2	88
1g	0	98		$n.d.^{b}$
1h	93	4		n.d.
1 h ª	73	19		n.d.
1 i	21	67	7	31^{d}
1 i	0	76	24	83
1 k	0	49	48	74

^aUsing THF/liquid NH₃ (1:3) as solvent. ^bn.d. = not determined. ^cSome thermal decomposition appeared to occur on distillation. ^dExtreme volatility made the isolation of 1i difficult.

that the reaction was complete after 1 h; even after 5 min, appreciable (82%) quantities of the starting material had been consumed. Diethyl phosphite ion was equally effective in reducing 1a, giving essentially the same results (100% 4a after 4 h) as its dimethyl analogue. Dimethyl phosphonate, itself, however, was a rather ineffective reducing agent; after 4 h of stirring in liquid ammonia with 1a in the dark, 4a was formed in only 20% yield accompanied by 5a (2%). The remainder of the reaction was starting material.

Table I details the results, as determined by calibrated GLC, of the reaction of potassium dimethyl phosphite with a series of cyclopropyl dibromides in refluxing liquid ammonia in the absence of light for 1 h.

In every case, except 1h, the yield of reduced material was high. With 1h, as in the irradiated experiments, the low solubility evidently played a part in decreasing the reaction rate, but this was apparently not the only factor since, with cosolvent, unreacted 1h still remained.

The dibromobicyclononane 1b gave a high stereochemical preference toward the trans monobromide 4b; not even a trace of 5b could be detected in the reaction mixture. With 1c, the preference for the formation of the trans monobromide over the cis was 24:1. The *n*-alkyl-substituted dibromocyclopropanes 1d and 1e both were reduced cleanly, giving 19- and 10-fold excesses of the trans monobromides 4d and 4e, respectively.

The *tert*-butyl-substituted cyclopropyl dibromide 1f exhibited a 50-fold preference toward reduction to the trans monobromide. The unsubstituted compound 1g was reduced virtually quantitatively. Even 1i showed a good $(9\times)$ selectivity toward giving the trans product 4i.

Compounds 1j and 1k, in which there is substitution on both sides of the ring, did not show a great preference toward dehalogenation from either side, giving mixtures of 4j and 5j, and 4k and 5k, respectively.

The gem-dichlorides **7a** or **7e** were completely inert to dimethyl phosphite ion under the reaction conditions.

Table I also records the yields of isolated, distilled material and demonstrates the preparative utility of the reaction. In contrast to some other preparative methods of reduction, in all cases, no trace of direduced product could be detected in the reaction mixtures.

Table II shows that debromination was markedly slower in THF than in liquid ammonia. Even at room temperature, the reaction returned appreciable amounts of starting material. The reaction in THF using sodium or potassium hydride as base to generate the phosphite ion failed, even though deprotonation of the phosphonate had clearly oc-

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Table II.	Dimethyl	Phosphite	Reductions i	n Other	r Solvents ^a
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substrate	temp, °C	solvent	base	substrate remaining, %	4, %	5, %	
	-33	THF	KOBu-t	45	51	2	
1 a	-33	THF/Bu-t-OH (3:1)	KOBu-t	75	17	1	
1a	-33	THF	NaH	96	0	0	
1 a	-33	THF	KH	100	0	0	
1a	25	THF/Bu-t-OH (3:1)	KOBu-t	38	60	1	
1a	25	Me ₂ SO	KOBu-t	0	96	1	
1 h	25	Me_2SO	KOBu-t	0	83^{b}		

^a The reaction time in all cases, except for 1h, was 1 h. ^b17% of 6h was also formed; the reaction time in this case was 4 h.

curred, as evidenced by the temperature of the reaction mixture rising and the liberation of hydrogen. Apparently, a little tert-butyl alcohol, formed from the butoxide deprotonation of the phosphonate, is necessary for the reaction to proceed in THF. A vast excess appears to decrease the reaction rate. However, in liquid ammonia, there was essentially no difference in the reaction outcome, whether potassium tert-butoxide or sodium hydride was used as the base to deprotonate the phosphonate. Potassium tert-butoxide without dimethyl phosphonate caused extensive decomposition of 1a and no 4a or 5a could be detected.

The stereoselectivity was lower in THF and in Me₂SO than in liquid ammonia. The high stereoselectivity in liquid ammonia was not associated with the low reaction temperature, since, in THF, reaction at -33 °C did not give improved stereoselectivity over reaction at 25 °C. Interestingly, 1h, which was reduced poorly in liquid ammonia, even with cosolvent, debrominated at 25 °C in Me₂SO. The longer reaction time required, however, led to some overreduction of 4h.

Mechanistic Studies. To exclude the possibility of reaction occurring by single electron transfer or homolytic pathways,⁸ the following experiments were carried out.

Dibromide 1a was treated for 5 min in the dark with dimethyl phosphite ion in liquid ammonia under an atmosphere of oxygen. The yield of 4a (75%) essentially remained the same as when the reaction was carried out under nitrogen. Similarly, the radical inhibitor, di-tertbutyl nitroxide (20 mol %), or m-dinitrobenzene (20 mol %), an electron scavenger, had no significant effect on the yields (95% and 92%, respectively, after 45 min) of 4a in the dark, compared with an identical experiment without inhibitors (yield 92%). These results point to nonradical intermediates. Confirmation that the reducing hydrogen is not derived from dimethyl phosphite's methyl groups was gained by treating $(CD_3O)_2PO^-$ with 1a; the resultant sample of 4a had no detectable incorporation of deuterium.

Assignment of Stereochemistry. The identities of the reduced products 4 and 5 were established by comparing their GLC retention times with those of "authentic" samples prepared, except as noted below, by tributyltin hydride reduction of the dibromides 1.10 In all such cases, except for 1f, the major isomer from the phosphite reduction had the same retention time as the minor isomer from the tin hydride reduction, previously assigned¹⁰ to the trans compound and vice versa for the cis compound. The monobromide 4f was the major product from tributyltin hydride reduction of 1f, as previously reported.¹¹



Its stereochemistry was further confirmed from analysis of its ¹H NMR spectrum.¹¹ Dibromide 1b was reported not to afford 4b on tin hydride reduction;¹⁰ the sample assigned the structure 4b was shown to be identical with the minor isomer formed on Zn/HOAc reduction of 1b.¹²

Compounds 4j, 4k, 5j, and 5k were identified by comparison with samples prepared by zinc reduction of 1j and 1k.¹³ Their ¹H NMR spectra were in reasonable agreement with that previously reported.¹³

All isolated compounds had ¹H NMR spectral data consistent with their structure, or in agreement with those reported. ¹H coupling constants, J_{trans} , which were all in the range 3.5-3.9 Hz, were derived either directly or from decoupling experiments at 300 MHz for all trans isomers 4.

Discussion

Lack of Reactivity toward Substitution. The reasons for the lack of reactivity of dimethyl phosphite toward substitution with 1 under the reaction conditions are unclear. Diethyl phosphite ion is, however, some 4-16 times less reactive than diphenylphosphide ion with respect to S_{RN}1 substitution with iodo and bromo aromatics.⁴ Compounds 1 are clearly rapidly converted to monobromides 4, which are less reactive to substitution than 1.¹ Evidently the monobromides, although reactive to diphenylphosphide ion,^{5,6} are comparatively inert to potassium dimethyl phosphite. There are, however, insufficient data to speculate on which of the $S_{RN}1$ chain steps is necessarily inefficient with dimethyl phosphite ion and 4.

Mechanism of Reduction. The experimental results point to an ionic pathway of reduction, the most likely of which seems to be nucleophilic attack on bromine by the phosphite ion. Such a nucleophilic displacement process has considerable precedent for phosphanions.^{14,15} Α

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pathway consistent with the available data is given in Scheme I, drawn for the reactions of 1a.

We suggest that the equilibrium between phosphite ion and 1a lies toward the starting materials as evidenced by the failure of 1a to react in THF in the complete absence of a proton source. However, when a proton source is present, the anion 8a can be irreversibly protonated, in effect, pushing the equilibrium toward product formation. Undoubtedly too, in the presence of nucleophilic solvents $BrPO(OCH_3)_2$ undergoes further reaction removing it from the equilibrium. The trans monobromide 4a is visualized as arising from the anion 8a. Evidence exists to suggest that 8a is the thermodynamically preferred anion.¹⁶⁻¹⁸

It is interesting to note that treatment of 1a with Me₂SO carbanion, a reaction also reported to involve nucleophilic displacement on bromine, results in a similar strong preference toward the formation of the trans isomer 4a.¹⁹

We suspect that under the reaction conditions the exo anion 9a is either not formed to any great extent or that it equilibrates to anion 8a. We tend to $prefer^{20}$ the latter suggestion, but we note that it relies on the assumption that the rate of protonation of carbenoids 8a and 9a under the reaction conditions is slow compared with the equilibration of 9a to 8a. Such equilibration might occur either by a pathway involving displacement with another molecule of $1a^{16}$ or by the equilibria shown in Scheme II.

The absence of direduction is presumably a result of the lack of stabilisation of anion 10a by bromine, and its consequent inaccessibility.

We suggest that similar processes lead to the other monobromides 4b-k.²¹

Synthetic Utility. The results demonstrate the preparative utility of the procedure. As well as giving high stereoselectivity and freedom from overreduction, the reaction is convenient to perform in the laboratory and the isolation of products is straightforward. It occurs under mild conditions and the phosphorus-containing byproducts can be removed in an aqueous workup. Little or no further purification is required. The reduction offers substantially more stereoselectivity than that presented in a previous report²³ using diethyl phosphonate in boiling triethylamine for longer periods—a reaction which may proceed by a similar pathway.

The present procedure is envisaged to have application in synthesis when coupled with stereospecific modes of alkylation.24

Experimental Section

General Methods. Analytical GLC was performed on a Perkin-Elmer 990 gas chromatograph equipped with a flame ionization detector. The column used was a 55 m \times 0.5 mm SP 2100 SCOT capillary, temperature programmed between 80 and 240 °C. All ¹H NMR spectra were recorded on either a JEOL JNM-PMX 60 (60 MHz) or a Bruker CXP-300 (300 MHz) spectrometer.

Starting Materials. gem-Dihalocyclopropanes were prepared by phase-transfer methods as previously described.²⁵⁻²⁹ 1.1-Dibromocyclopropane was prepared by a Hunsdieker-Cristol reaction.³⁰ Ammonia was distilled from sodium prior to use. Me₂SO was distilled from calcium hydride and stored over 4A molecular sieves under an atmosphere of nitrogen. Tetrahydrofuran was freshly distilled from benzophenone ketyl before use. In the initial experiments, potassium tert-butoxide was freshly sublimed before use; the experiments in Table I, however, were conducted without resubliming the commercial material. Dialkyl phosphonates (Fluka) were redistilled. Other starting materials were commercially available and further purified only where necessary.

Typical Procedure. Dimethyl phosphonate (660 mg, 6.0 mmol) was added to a solution of potassium *tert*-butoxide (673) mg, 6.0 mmol) in redistilled anhydrous liquid ammonia (40 mL) at reflux under N₂. After 5 min of stirring, 1,1-dibromo-2,2,3,3tetramethylcyclopropane (242 mg, 1.0 mmol) was added. The mixture was allowed to stir for 1 h, and then chilled ether (-40 °C) was added and the reaction mixture was guenched by the cautious addition of ammonium nitrate (0.75 g). The ammonia was allowed to evaporate and the mixture was diluted with water (20 mL). The phases were separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with ether (20 mL). After the addition of internal standards [7,7-dibromobicyclo[4.1.0]heptane and 2-bromotoluene (1.0 mmol each)] and drying, the combined organic phases were quantitatively examined by GLC. All yields were corrected for the detector responses. Sometimes, where appropriate, the internal standard(s) were added after quenching and before workup. For reactions in THF, the total solvent volume was kept to 40 mL; in the Me₂SO experiments, the solvent volume was 10 mL.

For preparative experiments, the reaction was then repeated on a larger scale, typically using 10 mmol of the dibromide in 100 mL of liquid ammonia. Under these conditions the standard reaction time was 2.5 h. Internal standards were not added and the reaction mixture was worked up as before and dried (MgSO₄). The combined extracts were fractionally distilled to afford the monobromide which was examined spectroscopically. In the case of 1i, traces of residual tert-butyl alcohol were not readily removed. The use of sodium hydride to generate the phosphite ion obviated this problem. However, isolation of 1i was still difficult because of its extreme volatility.

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Registry No. 1a, 2415-79-4; 1b, 32644-18-1; 1c, 3234-51-3; 1d, 41848-90-2; 1e, 5398-70-9; 1f, 52730-96-8; 1g, 3591-34-2; 1h, 22715-57-7; 1i, 21960-71-4; 1j, 63262-97-5; 1k, 39647-01-3; 4a, 1121-41-1; 4b, 1551-94-6; 4c, 32523-77-6; 4d, 34780-91-1; 4e, 32816-30-1; 4f, 32728-88-4; 4g, 4333-56-6; 4h, 3815-06-3; 4i, 3815-08-5; 4j, 78004-15-6; 4k, 58683-51-5; 5a, 1121-40-0; 5c, 32523-76-5; 5d, 34780-90-0; 5e, 57234-70-5; 5f, 35756-66-2; 5i, 3815-07-4; 5j, 78004-14-5; 5k, 58683-50-4; 6h, 4127-47-3; HPO-(OMe)₂, 868-85-9; t-BuOH, 75-65-0; PO(OME₂)⁻, 19437-82-2.

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