

*Obituary*

## Yuri A. Ovchinnikov

On February 17th 1988 Academician Professor Yuri A. Ovchinnikov, Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, died at the age of 53. As a pupil and successor of Professor Shemyakin, Professor Ovchinnikov centered his scientific activity on the study of structure-function relationships in membrane transporters. Working initially under Professor Shemyakin's direction, and then independently, he clarified the structure and the mode of action of a number of ionophores. Subsequently, his group established the primary structure of bacteriorhodopsin (at the same time as G. Khorana's group), then that of rhodopsin, and more recently that of Na<sup>+</sup>,K<sup>+</sup>-ATPases. Many of his important papers appeared in our journal, one of them is the first of this very issue.

The scientific achievements of Professor Ovchinnikov earned him an impressive number of awards. But here I mainly wish to mention the importance of Professor Ovchinnikov's activity in the development of modern biochemistry in the Soviet Union. His success in this endeavour was due to an unusual combination of scientific gifts, vision, energy and efficiency. As the Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, responsible for Chemistry and Biology, he played a pivotal role in fostering scientific exchanges with a great many countries within and outside the FEBS area. Quite simply, for him science did not have frontiers.

FEBS owes Professor Ovchinnikov a great deal. He served for many years as a member of the Editorial Board of this journal, was Chairman of FEBS between 1984 and 1986, and immediate Past-Chairman between 1986 and 1987. His death is a great loss to all biochemists who share his belief that scientific exchanges are an essential ingredient in the development of our science.

G. Semenza