

Preface

Biocatalysis is a recurring international meeting with a strong national influence that takes place every two years in various parts of Russia. The ancient, historic museum-town of Suzdal was chosen in 1995 because of its fruitful combination of quietude, its embodiment of the mysterious spirit of Russian history, its ancient Orthodox architecture, and its fascinating display of the colors of the late northern summer. Such an atmosphere correspondingly "tuned" all of the participants, the majority of whom were Russian scientists, and afforded four unforgettable days to all.

Traditionally, the *Biocatalysis* meeting offers a very rich collection of reports on diverse subjects. These are not strictly oriented conferences. To a certain extent (*see* the papers of this issue of *Applied Biochemistry and Biotechnology*), they represent a "cross-section" of the contemporary state of biocatalytic science in Russia. Our hope is that the papers presented by both indigenous and international teams constitute convincing evidence that, often in collaboration with foreign partners, with a little help from new national and international funding agencies, and despite numerous problems, Russian bioscience is step-by-step transcending the temporary crisis in our society! We find it very important that the activities of the funding agencies, including the International Science Foundation, founded by George Soros and subsequently supported by the Russian federal government, appear to have been most timely, helpful, and fruitful.

The broad scope of our presentation makes unnecessary any detailed comment on the papers included in this issue. Rather, the latter should be considered as a sort of distillation of just how the field is now developing in Russia. Also, traditionally the Russian scientific community has not been oriented toward publishing in international scientific literature for many years, partly because of a common linguistic barrier. While working on this issue, the authors (for some, full papers appear rarely in international journals) and I have worked closely together to bring the presentations to international standards. We would be happy if we, at least partly, succeeded!

*Alexander D. Ryabov
Sergei D. Varfolomeyev
Guest Editors*