
OBITUARY

Professor Boris Vasil'evich Gromov (March 18, 1933–August 28, 2001)



Boris Vasil'evich Gromov, who died on August 28, 2001, in St. Petersburg after a serious illness, was head of the Laboratory of Microbiology at the St. Petersburg University, an Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, a USSR State Prize winner, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Biology, and an Honored Soros Professor. His death is a huge loss not only for the Russian, but also for the international scientific community.

Gromov was born on March 18, 1933 in Leningrad (presently St. Petersburg) into a family of microbiologists. He graduated from the Department of Biology of the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) University in 1955 and received the degree of Candidate of Science in Biology three years later.

In 1959, Gromov organized the Laboratory of Microbiology at the Biological Institute and headed it until his death. From 1969 through 1999, he held the chair of the Department of Microbiology at St. Petersburg University. In 1972, Gromov was awarded a Doctoral degree for his fundamental investigations of microorganisms parasitizing on algae. He became a professor in 1974 and was elected a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 1991.

Gromov is a rare example of an “universal” biologist, for he investigated bacteria, eukaryotic microorganisms, and viruses. He was interested in the problems of taxonomy and phylogeny, cytology and physiology, biochemistry and molecular biology, ecology and biotechnology. It should be noted that his contributions to each of these sciences were significant and sometimes even remarkable. He was a skilled experimenter and possessed extensive knowledge and the gift of making theoretical generalizations.

Gromov also paid great attention to biotechnological problems. His investigations over the period from 1970 to 1990 on the optimization of the cultivation of microscopic algae under laboratory conditions allowed the main productivity parameters of these organisms to be determined and the efficient producers of phycoerythrin to be obtained.

His contributions to scientific literature include 2 monographs and more than 160 articles, 28 of which were published in internationally recognized journals.

Gromov was a member of many scientific councils and societies, such as the Councils for Microbiology and for Problems of Plant Photosynthesis and Photo-biology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Presidium of the Russian Microbiological Society, the Russian Botanical and Protozoological Societies, the International Algological Society, the International Committee on Bacteriophage Nomenclature, the International Committee on the Taxonomy of Phototrophic Prokaryotes, the Scientific Council of St. Petersburg University, as well as several other councils. He served as editor of the scientific journals *Algological Studies*,

Archiv für Protistenkunde, Current Microbiology, and Algologiya.

Gromov's teaching activities were notable for his successes. He advised two researchers in the preparation of their doctoral dissertations and more than 20 students in the preparation of their candidate dissertations. Gromov's monographs *The Structure of Bacteria* (1984) and *The Ecology of Bacteria* (1989) still remain valuable sources of relevant information and are used as textbooks by undergraduates, postgraduates, and researchers working in various areas of experimental biology. Gromov contributed a great deal to the popu-

larization of microbiology in Russian secondary schools.

Gromov was a prominent scholar and a man of extensive knowledge and high intellect. His outstanding personality attracted many to work with him. He served science until the end of his life, and his contributions to biology will remain in the scientific literature and in the works of those whom he advised and inspired. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

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