

Preface

Scope and ideas of the workshop

The workshop which took place at the University of Giessen from Oct. 3 to Oct. 7, 2002 and whose proceedings are collected in this volume started from the idea to convene a number of scientists with the aim to outline their "visions" for the future of radiation research on the basis of their expertise. As radiation research is a very wide field restrictions were unavoidable. It was decided to concentrate this time mainly on molecular and cellular biology because it was felt that here action is particularly needed. This did not exclude contributions from neighbouring fields as may be seen from the table of contents. It was clearly not planned to have a comprehensive account of the present scientific achievements but the results presented should only serve as a starting point for the discussion of future lines of research, with the emphasis on the "outreach" to other parts of life sciences.

If you are interested in the future ask the young – we attempted, therefore, to invite mainly younger colleagues (with a few exceptions) who had, however, already left their marks in the field. They were asked to describe what they felt is important in radiation research and may have significant influences on other branches of life sciences. They were given the task to demonstrate what is lost for science "if we do no longer exist". This is clearly not a well structured programme for a scientific congress but extremely useful to stimulate discussion. The views presented are hence quite diverse, and so are the contributions gathered in this volume. The following sequence of papers is not the one how they were actually given. The structure for which the editors takes responsibility is intended to guide the reader who will quickly find out that order of subtopics is only rather vague. Many problems are addressed in nearly all contributions (e.g. DNA response, repair etc.) nevertheless it was felt that some kind of structuring might be helpful.

Most of the participants came from Germany. Radiation research is, of course, international and the problems encountered world-wide. So we invited – within the limitations of the budget also some contributors from abroad to let us share their views. Their presentations and discussion contributions were highly welcome. One paper (Srivastava and Sharan) was not actually given at the workshop but only supplied in writing. As it presents ideas from a developing country we felt it should be included as an example of another view.

The following proceedings contain 20 submitted papers loosely grouped in different categories (by the editor) plus a preface and a postscript. They all give examples how radiation research could find its way into the future, some rigorously based on scientific findings, some more philosophically in a general way. We all hope that in this way new hope may arise in the people directly concerned but – more importantly – stimulate more than one second thought in those who are now convinced that radiation research is out of date and therefore dispensable.

Acknowledgements

To organise a meeting is always a joy and a lot of work. The joy is with the main organiser, the work with his coworkers. But it also requires some money. We thank the "Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung" (BMBF) (Drs. Komorowski and Gelford) for financial support through "Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe (Dr. R. Papp) and the "Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit" (Dr. H. Landfermann) for co-sponsorship. Drs. Gelford, Landfermann and Papp acted also as co-organisers and gave very valuable help. Karin Rinn, and Ina Allendörfer gave more than their share to the load of administrative work involved and helped to create a good working atmosphere. The production of this volume could not have been possible without the efforts and the experience of Hermann Witzemberger and the secretarial assistance of Karin Rinn. I thanks them all and hope that the workshop and its proceedings are able to supply at least a small brick to the new building of modern radiation research.

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