

4TH NEW ENGLAND BIOLABS WORKSHOP ON BIOLOGICAL DNA MODIFICATION  
INNSBRUCK - IGLS (AUSTRIA), 2 TO 7 SEPTEMBER 1997

**Final Speech: Wilhelm Guschlbauer**

**Igls, 7. September 1997**

***Dear friends, chers amis, cari amici, Liebe Freunde, caros amigos etc.***

*At the end of this workshop I just want to say a few last words. First I have to thank, then to apologize and finally to make an announcement.*

*Many years ago, I was in Tübingen at a seminar by Max Perutz, a famous Austrian expatriate, and he started out with "Man kann über alles sprechen, nur nicht über eine Stunde" ("One can talk about any thing, but not more than an hour"). Don't worry, I won't be talking for an hour. And since "Ecrire, c'est parler sans être interrompu" ("Writing is talking without being interrupted") - I think Jules Renard said something like this - I wrote my speech and since it's a festive occasion, I wrote it in - hopefully not too bad - verse.*

Permit me now to give this speech.  
Don't worry, I shall not teach.

This Workshop of New England Biolabs may not enter into Science history perhaps. But I always enjoyed the informality, a mixture of rigor and utility, an encounter of high fertility. No primadonnas give the same old speech, no big bosses come to teach. Everybody just tells his story, good or not, don't be sorry! If things had not worked out the last years, we won't shout! The spirit of exchange is dominant, with quality of work concomitant. As far as I can say, all meetings should be that way.

To start out I have to thank Bernd Auer who was a tank, who took care of our bank. Thanks to his constant intervention the budget was never under tension. He took the shots in all local matter, he shall deserve a golden platter!

From Don Comb, the president of NEB, the money for the workshop did not ebb. Without his persistent generosity it would have been impossibility for many to be here today, to participate, work and stay.

The NEB ladies, Elisabeth and Joan, my griping often they did bemoan. They gave me much encouragement and thus deserve an entitlement.

Miss Wassermann, she housed us all, in fine hotels, big and small. Efficiently she negotiated prize, for a crowd of this large size.

The chairmen worked very hard. But the real work now shall start: Papers have to be refereed, according to the chairmen's creed.

For long has suffered Marie-Pierre, my spouse, when I brought lab problems to the house. She drew the cover of the abstract book. You don't believe it? - just look! For decades of devotion I thank her with emotion. You drink today her lovely wine. Don't drink too much, this will be fine.

I shall give you now the reason why I had committed treason. My crime was not all that bad. Shall I end before a firing squad?

As a boy I had lived the war, this has left some secret scar. Not that I complain - I got out fine, but the merit was not mine.

When I got established in sweet France I noted that I had a chance. I thought it would be rather swell, if the guys behind the iron curtain could get out of the Eastern hell. I could do something, this was certain.

I started "cooperating" with the East, at some time this was not a feast! It was not "politically correct" to work with people who were suspect. But with some guts and much chance I got some people to work in France. East Germans, Russians, Czechs and Poles, although suspected to be "moles",

to the nuclear sanctuary they came,  
it was old Willi who was to blame.

In eighty-nine the hated Berlin wall  
broke open and came to fall.  
Everybody foresaw a better future  
Many hopes this event did nurture.  
For the guys in the East  
it did not turn out that fine.  
They could travel now at least.  
But it was still the same old line:  
money was extremely tight  
and more and more about to fight.  
Science was in bitter blight.

Thus when I got called by Joan and Lise  
my enthusiasm did not freeze.  
I thought this was a gorgeous way  
that scientists could fray  
with colleagues from the East.  
I did what I knew best.  
So they can meet at least  
the people working in the West.

To avoid a German-Anglo-Saxon jamboree  
in other countries I did foray.  
Other people do good Science  
without an official licence.  
New England Biolabs had shown the way,  
enabling postdocs in its labs to stay.  
Thus let's open up the door  
to India, Japan, Singapore,  
Korea, Portugal and Spain,  
South Africa, Norway, many more.  
In Science there is no chain  
which can't be bust'd  
in Europe's heart to meet in trust.  
I hope you enjoyed the Science feast  
the encounter between West and East.

Many people had been surprised.  
With my rough manners I had surmised  
that everybody in the West  
was rich and should be a paying guest.  
Forgive me for my indolence  
I won't repeat it from now on hence.

A last thing I want to say.  
Ten seconds more to stay!  
I want to say "Good-bye!" to all  
my friends and colleagues, short and tall.  
Next month I shall turn sixty-five,  
don't be stunned - that is life!  
I shall have to take my retirement.  
Your presence is my encouragement.

Younger people have to do the work.  
I shall have no lab or office, nor a perk.  
Most of you I shall see no more.  
That you came, I thank you for.

*A thing that always did me strike:  
Do Science only, if you really like.  
Without joy, without fantasy  
to do Science - like Art - is heresy.  
The younger crowd I thus advise.  
To all of you now, my glass I rise.*

Thank you!