



GIVE AND TAKE
BERT HÖLLDOBLER

Bert Hölldobler (born 25 June 1936) is a German behavioral biologist and sociobiologist whose primary study subjects are social insects and in particular ants. He is a co-winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his work on *The Ants* (1991) with Edward O. Wilson. In 1990, he received the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. He also collaborated with Wilson to write *Journey to the Ants* (1994). In 2008 he and Wilson co-authored their third book *The Superorganism*. He holds positions at the University of Würzburg as Professor emeritus and Arizona State University, where he is a Foundation Professor in the School of Life Sciences. – Address: Zoologie II, Biozentrum, Am Hubland, 97074 Würzburg. E-mail: bertholl@asu.edu

The six weeks I was privileged to spend at the Wissenschaftskolleg (Wiko) zu Berlin were wonderful and most stimulating. My only regret is that my time schedule did not allow me to accept an invitation for a more extended visit. At the Wiko I experienced several highlights. One was the workshop on “Developmental Evolution of Eusocial Systems” organized by Manfred Laubichler and Robert Page. There was no pressure to produce a paper, and this, I think, was one of the reasons for the lively “give and take” discussion, the genuine probing of different views concerning the evolutionary origin of eusociality, and the extensive analysis of levels of selection that shape eusocial adaptations. I also enjoyed the many conversations with Wiko Fellows, the scientific fields of some of them quite different from my own field of expertise, which was especially enlightening for me. Equally exciting were the Tuesday seminars; I mention exemplarily the most informative presentation by Yogendra Yadav on “Elections and Representation in Contem-

porary India". The relaxed atmosphere during the Thursday dinners marvelously fostered new encounters with scholars and their spouses. Finally, the quiet and comfortable private office enabled me to finish the last touches of my new book, "The Leafcutter Ants: Civilization by Instinct". All in all, these were wonderful weeks in Berlin!

My heartfelt thanks go to the Rector, Luca Guiliani, the Secretary, Joachim Nettelbeck, the Academic Coordinator, Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus, and to the most helpful, competent and very cordial staff of Wiko. All of them made me feel at home at Wiko.