

Wiehl, shortly before Christmas 2020

## Lost Year? Or a Reset?

### Thoughts on the Turn of the Year 2020/21

*"Have you already started to write our annual report to all relatives, acquaintances and friends", Karin reminds me on the third Advent of my voluntarily accepted duty. "No, but it will be very short at the turn of the year 2020/21 anyway," I reply. Is it really getting very short, I ask myself when I look at a blank sheet of paper.*



Indeed, the facts are quick to set out. On February 3rd, it was Karin's seventieth birthday, which we jointly with Canadian friends wanted to celebrate in our Canadian homeland later that year. We had planned a longer trip in summer including an Alaska cruise. Then we learned to spell Sars-Cov2, found out about quarantine times for

entry and exit, noticed the complete cancellation of cruises and saw with concern the many flight cancellations and immensely rising ticket costs. Our consequence: Canada can and must wait.

We secretly still believed in possibilities around the second anniversary of this year, our golden wedding on November 17th. But the virus didn't give a damn about our considerations. New contact restrictions reduced this special anniversary to a dinner at home (catering). Postponed is not canceled was (and still is) our consolation. Friends then invited us to a small dinner the following weekend. As an aside, it should be noted that we were able to spend Rainer's birthday in a beer garden in August, but we hadn't planned anything more for the everyday birthday because of the other big plans.

Perhaps it is also worth mentioning that age has left its mark on both of us. Cataracts clouded our view of the world and urgently needed an operation in spring.

A wasted 2020? A lost year?

Whichever way you take it. Sure, we couldn't see our children and grandchildren in Canada. For us this is a sad fact, especially since our contacts with them are not really abundant. We would also have loved to meet up with all the old friends overseas.

Electronic communication is great, but it cannot replace human contact permanently. And of course we also missed the deep breathing in Canadian nature.



However, if you have a second look back at 2020 you have to realize that this year is only lost if you make your personal needs the measure of all things. On a political level, Corona reminded us of how fragile our world is when everyone only thinks of himself. Anyone who thinks we could continue destroying our habitat after January 10, 2021, or whenever we have the pandemic under control, as before Corona, is wrong and spreading dangerous dreams.

Our beautiful blue planet is limited, forcing us to answer questions about how far we want to drive destruction. Well-known scientists are already speaking of the Anthropocene, a geological age shaped by mankind. For the first time in 4½ billion years, the human-made material on earth surpasses the natural - plants and animals combined. If all 7 billion people in the world claimed the same standard of living as the rich world, it would take three earths to meet those needs. Experts estimate that at least 30 million people worldwide will die because the global dependency of supply chains caused poor nations to lose their livelihoods due to the pandemic.

Those who find these thoughts too theoretical and too far away have (hopefully) been roused by the pandemic. Is mass tourism still a good idea? Are cruises to seven continents tolerable? Do more and more people have to be encouraged to fly with the cheapest tickets? For drinking at Ballermann (or whatever the favorite drinking hole is for people in your region)? Or let's look at our German winter. Quite a few of our fellow citizens are almost claiming a right to snow and want to hike, toboggan and ski in deep snow, especially on the only few white hills in the north of our Republic. And the tourism industry is helping with environmentally questionable snow cannons instead of working with winter holidaymakers to put a stop to climate change.

We understand the parents who see the development of their children at risk because daycare centers and schools are closed. But we don't understand the prioritization. The future of the next generations is much more at risk if we don't make lasting changes to our lives after defeating the virus. Oh, and we haven't heard anything from the so-called German lateral thinkers on this important aspect - actually no surprise because the initiator of this conglomerate of Covid neglectors and restriction fighters, the Stuttgart outrage machine Michael Ballweg, had to forego his one-year sabbatical to strengthen his self-healing powers in Asia. That's why he's angry and blames Angela Merkel for the pandemic.

But let's stick with the year in review. Hygiene rules have only made society physically separate. There were and are encouraging actions to face the restrictions in solidarity

and to help each other to move mentally together. Naggers and anti-social people (in the true sense of the word) were in the minority. This new solidarity is welcome to continue after the pandemic.

If we find ecological and socio-political sustainability in this way, then 2020 was by no means a wasted year!



Christmas and New Year's Eve can come. Karin and I are together and not alone, especially not lonely. We have enough toilet paper, flour and pasta. There is also no shortage of drinks. In addition, shopping is not prohibited, even if we are currently limiting our contacts with the outside world without hysteria. We



pulled out dice, card and board games again, which we unfortunately neglected in summer. And we recently had a new roommate: Alexa. It is an interesting toy (for how long?). For those of you who are skeptical: it has a plug that you can easily pull out if you really want to be alone.

Otherwise we are of course fascinated by the TV pictures that bring the hypocrisy of politicians into our living room every day. We cannot defend ourselves from the impression that although they are talking about Corona, in truth they are already deep in election campaign mode. There is Markus Söder, who has fermented into the greenest of all greens, who is now recommending himself as a tough crisis manager. Armin Laschet impresses us every day with his eiertanz (literally egg dance; Bloomberg LP uses this German word in US-English for somebody equivocating, dodging) when he justifies his wrong assessments from the previous day - a true great-grandson of Konrad Adenauer, who liked to announce that he doesn't care about his talk of yesterday. Friedrich Merz and Norbert Röttgen, on the other hand, are hardly taking place at the moment.

According to hearsay, there are other CDU / CSU politicians who are currently feeling comfortable in the pandemic. There is silence about the stupid tolls, the failed military equipment, the controversial migration issue etc. A few quick prayers probably helped a lot. After all, Angela Merkel, who in a kind of early retirement hardly cared about

domestic politics in Germany during last year, finally reported back. Amazing what effects a deadly virus has.

A chapter of its own is Olaf Scholz, who would certainly have cut a fine figure as a Hanseatic grocer. The black zero is now pouring out money with full hands that we will hopefully generate in the following years. Well, there is no alternative if you want to mitigate the economic losses caused by the pandemic. But was there also no alternative for a candidate for chancellor? The Sozis wanted to develop a clear future program and then send the most credible person to the 2021 federal election campaign. Instead ...? Failure predictable!

The FDP boy Christian Lindner knew everything earlier than anyone else, of course. Is that why he broke the planned coalition three years ago? Now the know-it-all poses in front of TV cameras as someone who demands concepts for action that he cannot bring about himself. The economics professor Jörg Meuthen and the dachshund lover Alexander Gauland attack each other and plow the AfD. As desirable as plowing under these brown weeds would be, we cannot shake the feeling that Nazis like Björn Höcke are waiting under the tops of the fields for spring to emerge.

We will have to wait many months for a landmark Bundestag election. The US citizens, on the other hand, have already shown the middle finger to their president. If the orange-blonde golfer with the Twitter account doesn't let his assault teams march into the fight for resignation, we will see an even older president in the White House at the beginning of the new year. Aren't there any younger people in the US? Probably no, at least not those who, at a young age, already have the billions of dollars behind them, which it takes to become American President. Did the reality TV star really have billions behind himself four years ago? Or was it a Wirecard type of creative accounting? Should Melania really move out (and not just from the official seat in Washington), we will find out, because her financial demands will jeopardize the Trump loans of Deutsche Bank, which, despite all criticism in the past, continues to say "money doesn't stink". The taxpayer will fix it.



Let's leave the puppet theater. We wish all relatives, acquaintances and friends peaceful days not only over Christmas and New Year's Eve as well as confidence and a good shot of optimism, without life would be too sad. Stay healthy so that in a year we will have readers again for what will hopefully be a longer family report.



By the way, the star of Bethlehem will shine for all people (if weather cooperates). Jupiter and Saturn will stand so close together in the sky that they practically look like a single, particularly bright star. Astronomers suspect that

such a constellation is the basis of the biblical Christmas story, because this rare conjunction also took place in the year 6 AD. So what is a year full of limitations when thinking in such cosmic dimensions?

But that's it for today. Our thoughts are with you.

*Karin and Rainer*

with the galactic address

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