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Whitewashing

I am a reader of your magazine by being married to my wife who is a Swiss citizen. The article "Clean money" by Lukas Hässig is a great piece of whitewashing typical of the financial world at present. Maybe this kind of blinkered view will always happen when specialists write about their own narrow section of knowledge but it is not hard nowadays to stand back from this situation to see we have entered a period long expected by anyone who read "The limits to growth" when it was published in 1972. To be brief: We have reached Peak Oil, therefore the age of cheap energy is over and our industrial system cannot function without this input. Neither can the financial world work without the pyramid system of perpetual growth. S. ALLIN, IRELAND

Account with BEKB

I would like to thank Mr Crabtree-Ruggli for writing a letter to the mailbag on CS's charges. I was equally annoyed with CS and their treatment of Swiss clients abroad. I have now closed my CS account and opened one with the Berner Kantonalbank. I have received service to my full satisfaction and can fully recommend this bank to Swiss abroad disappointed with CS and who just want a straightforward Swiss account.

V. BADER, HAMBURG, GERMANY

Kindergarten

Mr Eckert really hit the nail on the head. His article should be hung on the walls of the corridors in the Federal Palace as a "reflection" to remind the politicians WHO and WHAT they are actually supposed to be



representing. Self-interest, narcissism and a general detachment from the people (without exception) have been prevalent for a long time in the Federal Council. The abilities of Federal

Councillors may be evident, but so too are their egos. The media, primarily driven by sales figures, are, of course, only too willing to satisfy the desire of the people, who are tired of politicians, for sensationalism. From abroad, you can only look at this "kindergarten" and shake your head in disbelief. If we carry on like this, we will end up with a situation like in the USA. No thanks!

H. BLOCH, CALGARY, CANADA

Like a mirror

I just read your article "Poor Colleagues" and heartily agree with you. It is one of the best articles in a long time. There are times it feels to me as though this is like a virus circling the world; most governments seem to suffer from the same personality cult rather than working together for the good of the country. This, as you probably know, is especially true for the U.S.

Thank you for this insightful article. Let us hope the Federal Councillors read it and work to find common ground.

S. SHIMAZU-WEIBEL, WASHINGTON, USA

Many thanks

Many thanks for your editorial "Poor Colleagues" in "Swiss Review". You said exactly what needed saying.

T. WALLACE, TEXAS, USA

"Sennentuntschi" – the story behind the film

CINEMATIC PROJECTS sometimes have to surmount many obstacles before reaching the big screen. The fantastical thriller "Sennentuntschi" and its director Michael Steiner ("Grounding: The Last Days of Swissair", "My Name is Eugen") had to overcome some tremendous hurdles. This feature film is about a Swiss legend – the Sennentuntschi (the herdsman's doll) – widely known throughout the entire German-speaking alpine region. The author Hansjörg Schneider's play on the subject (1972) provoked outrage and condemnation when it was broadcast on Swiss-German television in 1981, with its storyline telling of how three herdsman in the Alps make a straw doll to satisfy their sexual urges but the doll comes to life and takes revenge on its tormentors.

With a budget of 5.5 million Swiss francs, the Swiss blockbuster initially appeared set for completion without any hitches. But, after having completed filming in October 2008, Michael Steiner's Kontraproduktion company announced that it had run out of money. Actors and production staff had not received their wages. The lab fees had not been paid and the Bernese company Schwarz Film was holding the negative. An estimated 2.8 million Swiss francs was needed to complete the film. The accountants confirmed a shortfall of one million. Protracted negotiations between the Federal Office of Culture, the Swiss state broadcaster and the Zurich Cinema Foundation came to nothing. Unable to find any potential investors in France, Avventura Films, the French subsidiary of Vega Film, withdrew. As a result, only two countries (Switzerland and Austria) were now involved in the production of the film, and Eurimages, the Council of Europe's cinema support fund, blocked its promised funding. The Federal Office of Culture also considered a request for the restitution of its million-franc contribution. Industry professionals and the general public looked on with dismay.

In February 2010, after more than a year of uncertainty over



investment, the Swiss subsidiary of the German company Constantin Film decided to save the sinking ship and ensured the film's completion and release. It injected an initial 1.6 million Swiss francs to cover the payment of wages and the Kontraproduktion debt. In return, it secured the collaboration of Michael Steiner and his team for one film a year. "Sennentuntschi" was finally presented at the opening of the Zurich Film Festival on 23 September. The critics loved it, and the film has been running in cinemas in German-speaking Switzerland since 14 October, drawing over 100,000 people to see it by early November. The accursed film has won acclaim with an accursed Swiss myth.

ALAIN WEY