

Disregarding resolutions

"For instance, it goes without saying that, when discussions are held, people must put their cards on the table: producing proxy votes, previously held secret, at the last minute to reverse a consensus is not acceptable."

This quote from my attacks on dnwe refers to extraordinary events at an extraordinary general meeting (AGM) held at Düsseldorf on November 19, 2011. Extensive documentation and analysis is available on the German (DE) side of this contra-dnwe website.

The key powerpoint (!) presentation by board member Dr Annette Kleinfeld was sent only 72 hours prior to the start of the meeting. This late delivery effectively prevented any conferring between non-attending members and their proxies. Nonetheless, Cusanus prepared a damning analysis of the pretensions and misrepresentations in this presentation. He was unable to reach most of the attendees because e-mail addresses had been withheld, as has been routine at dnwe.

Already, though, in a paper of November 8, "Protest against the general meeting in Düsseldorf" Cusanus had described massive ethical failings of the board, including censorship by the backdoor.

The chairman, Prof. Dr. Albert Löhr refused to forward this paper to members. See www.contra-dnwe.de/deutsch/liebesmueh.html

The Düsseldorf meeting was premised on the validity of the Roland-Berger survey (i.e. by the consultancy of that name).

Cusanus had previously demonstrated not only that this study was wholly worthless and misconceived; he had also demonstrated that it had been prepared in bad faith. The most striking demonstration of the bad faith and intellectual bankruptcy involved is the assertion there, hidden under pretentious wording and made to fit the desired conclusion, that the figures $164 + 16 + 12$ add up to more than 200.

Professor Löhr refused to make the line-by-line deconstruction available to members. Previously its title had been changed on a discussion forum (which was subsequently deleted rather than being archived) such that its subject matter could not be recognised.

A major part of Professor Löhr's reasoning was that Cusanus had made attacks on the integrity of leading members and that these persons would not have time to defend themselves before the meeting. Compare the much shorter reaction time granted to Cusanus and others by Annette Kleinfeld in the far more urgent matters of the members' meeting.

Löhr's line would imply that no criticism could ever be made until all responses (counter-arguments) – and presumably counter-counter-arguments – had been received. This does not happen even in a court of law. Allegations, defences and counter-allegations are made over time, for example, in a temporal process of thesis, anti-thesis and, possibly, synthesis. As a professor of philosophy, Löhr

should know this. He chose not to, presumably because it was inconvenient, or embarrassing, or destructive to concealed agendas. The truth is that he chose to suppress unwelcome criticism in order to protect his cronies or else himself.

Cusanus had complained in his letter about his key submission having been repressed by illicit renaming of the title of the file ("Roland-Berger"). Hence Löhr's assertion that everyone could contribute to the discussion is, in this respect, false. The (chaotic) website for exchange of ideas had been corrupted. In any case, it would have been enough to communicate the letter of 1100 words and leave members to look up the website *csr-skepsis* with the other material. It was obviously not the case that members were being overwhelmed with submissions, and even if this were the case, it would not have been a justification for suppression.

If meant seriously, Löhr's objection to personal attacks reveals a fundamentally immature conception of ethics. In given circumstances personal attacks are imperative, as Cusanus has explained in various articles (also suppressed). Ethics is not politics, let alone etiquette. This insight is age-old and Cusanus claims no originality. Evil does not happen by chance, or by itself, but because some individuals choose to enter on that path, and otherwise good people fail to stand in their way. This truth may count as banal, but it is no less true.

The gist of the submissions by Cusanus, which were detailed, referenced and wide-ranging, was that there had been systematic suppression of debate. Professor Albert

Löhr chose to suppress this message. Need more be said?

Cusanus did not go to Düsseldorf. It would have been a long and expensive journey, besides, despite being a slow learner, Cusanus had already realised that this too-short meeting would be another farce.

Therefore this report is dependent on what was available on the dnwe-Intranet, information whose accuracy was confirmed to Cusanus by a telephone report by an attendee. However, the subsequent highly critical discussion of the proceedings was removed from the intranet website (rather than being archived) by Professor Monika Eigenstetter, the unelected assistant of Professor Joachim Fetzer. Cusanus is therefore compelled to work from memory.

There was a lot of disaffection among those attending. Groups were formed to discuss the issues involved, each chaired by a board member. In each Group one or more resolutions were taken (or standpoints agreed) by majority vote, the board member having one vote.

When the groups reassembled for an aggregate vote, the board members produced proxy votes, giving them multiple voting rights. They still failed to outvote those attending, but an overwhelming majority was reduced to a slight one.

It goes without saying that this conduct is thoroughly devious and unbecoming of people who claim to represent the cause of business ethics.

No information is available to Cusanus on whether those who attended are still members or have preferred to

leave. Membership records, fluctuation and reasons for leaving are kept largely secret even to members of the "network" (status June 2013). In June 2013 the latest membership directory, notwithstanding fluctuation, dated from February 2009, although voting by non-attendees at the AGM is only possible by identifying an attendee of like mind. This is how voting is rigged.

After the meeting, Professor Albert Löhr (who had been chair) and Michael Aßländer resigned from their posts. They have not been forthcoming on their reasons (or indeed on any regrets, for instance, about going along with the deception). These were the only two board members to have had a remotely serious education in philosophy and, therefore, ethics, understood here as synonymous with moral philosophy.

Michael Assländer, incidentally, would seem to be the only member to have actually published something original and worthwhile in the dnwe flagship "journal" Forum Wirtschaftsethik, namely a report on underhand (mafia-like) dealings in the automotive industry, work he did together with Julia Roloff.

Cusanus has inside information that leading German automotive companies were so outraged that they bought expensively very many copies. There was never any follow-up on the explosive report. Why not? (Cusanus would have had constructive proposals on how to combat the kind of illicit power-play reported – see under “Fog” here or on a linked website – but dnwe has never been designed for either constructive or critical contributions, despite protestations to

the contrary.)

The members' meeting at Düsseldorf resolved that there should be a consultative meeting early in the new year. Mysteriously, this meeting never took place, the youngest board member, Jonas Gebauer, explaining that "for economic reasons" – "aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen" – the meeting had been restricted to the board members.

Jonas Gebauer was very sharply attacked on the intranet, since the reason given is blatantly fabricated: members had to pay their attendance anyway, and even hiring a larger venue could easily have been financed from their contributions. So the argument about "economic" reasons was a pretext and dishonest.

On a social media website, Xing, Gebauer is still (early 2014) one of those involved in dnwe. For a period, even long after leaving the board of dnwe, his profile (with photograph) was prominent on the dnwe website. He likely uses his board membership at dnwe to promote his career and to flatter his CV.

Indeed, it would seem that dnwe is mainly a forum for mutual compliments, vanity and other self promotion rather than business ethics. In their defence, though, it must be said that the leading members are very good at hand-shaking, entirely in conformity and compliance with the rules of etiquette, skills that Cusanus spurns.

Nothing ever transpired from the work of the members attending the Düsseldorf meeting. But then, twenty years of the regional groups of dnwe, too, have never actually achieved anything for business ethics. Some members may

have tried, sincerely, while others, the wreckers, were just along for the ride. So far indeed it is the scoundrels who have made the running. The conclusion is inescapable: dnwe is dedicated to the suppression of business ethics, except where it can be abused for the self-promotion and income generation of its in-group of confidence tricksters (con-men).

written late 2013, revised April 2014

Cousin Cusanus