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About a DW TV documentary on Opus Dei

The German television station DW (Deutsche Welle) has broadcast a documentary which is misleading and which includes false and unsubstantiated allegations against Opus Dei.

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The German television station DW (Deutsche Welle) has broadcast a documentary entitled “Faith, power,

manipulation - The secrets of the Opus Dei sect". The title of the documentary gives an indication of its intention. It presents Opus Dei as a controversial and secretive organisation. To this end, it gathers opinions from people who left Opus Dei in pain and maintain a negative view, as well as from experts who are critical of the institution. As a counterpoint, the regional vicar of Germany is interviewed. Some people were invited to speak, but declined the invitation in view of the programme's approach.

The documentary includes a number of erroneous and unsubstantiated statements, for example:

- The rise of Opus Dei begins in Navarre (*A minimum of historical research disproves this*).
- During the Spanish civil war Opus Dei and the government of the region of Navarre supported General

Franco. At the end of the war, Franco thanks them after his victory. (*Opus Dei at the end of the civil war consisted of 12 men, plus the founder and 2 women, all very young. The assertion is unsustainable*).

- The governor of the Bank of Spain, linked to Opus Dei, at the beginning of the 60's (he is quoted as the director of the Bank) made loans to companies in which Opus Dei had a stake, and even today there are still close ties between the Spanish State and Opus Dei. (*Opus Dei did not participate nor was it a shareholder in any commercial company then or now, and the close ties cited are implausible to any moderately informed person*).

- They reproduce a report from a Spanish digital media in which it is stated that "One third of the judiciary belongs to Opus Dei". (*They take such a false exaggeration for granted. In*

any case, the members of Opus Dei act freely in their work, for which they are personally responsible and do not receive any indication from the directors of Opus Dei, therefore this number, whatever it may be, would not be of interest.)

- They tell a story that happened in Murcia in great detail, in which some people of Opus Dei are accused of hastening the death of a person. *It is a case that the Court investigated and dismissed.*

They use as a source of information testimonies from people who left Opus Dei disappointed. Their point of view, although worthy of respect, cannot be extrapolated to so many other people who also chose to leave Opus Dei and maintain a relationship of affection towards the Prelature. The implication is that all those who leave the Work have a negative view of Opus Dei, which is not true.

People outside Opus Dei, journalists and some priests also take part. Their opinions share the overall prejudice of the programme, which is summarised in the title.

The intervention of Christoph Bockamp, regional vicar of Opus Dei in Germany, expresses clearly what Opus Dei is and does.

The approach of the documentary is not rigorous: it casts doubt on the reality of Opus Dei and its exclusively spiritual purpose with many unfounded and false assertions. The conclusion leaves open the question of whether Opus Dei is what it claims to be or whether there are hidden interests linked to economic and political power behind it. It is an old and misleading insinuation, so often denied in words, in writing and in deeds, but which is now being uncritically repeated.

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