

Opus Dei and Franco

14/11/2008

The dossier attached (click on the 'pdf' attachment) presents data about a chapter in the history of Opus Dei about which a confused image has sometimes been presented. Although a generation has passed, one still finds statements in the media and works of reference to the effect that Opus Dei had political influence in the government of General Franco, who ruled in Spain from 1939 to 1975.

A further summary has been prepared in 2015 and is also available for download.

The Statutes of Opus Dei state that members act with freedom "in the exercise of their job, their social life, and in politics, etc", and that the authorities in Opus Dei "are obliged to abstain completely from giving indications or advice about these matters".

The dossier is a compilation of articles taken from books and the press which show that Opus Dei, as an institution with exclusively spiritual aims, has always acted in accordance with its aims and Statutes. It has not become involved in politics, and it did not support Franco. Nor did Opus Dei in the time of Franco become involved in the political actions of its faithful; those who were in politics always acted on their own responsibility.

It is well known that there were members of Opus Dei who were ministers in Franco's government. However, it is heard less often that there were other members who were in opposition to Franco and had to go into exile abroad. It is mentioned only infrequently that the government ministers who were in Opus Dei were often in disagreement among themselves, as historians Paul Preston and Brian Crozier show in their biographies of Franco, extracts of which are cited in this dossier.

The dossier contains the following material:

- A profile from *IPI Report* , published when the International Press Institute nominated Antonio Fontán, a member of Opus Dei who opposed Franco, as one of its 50 "Press Freedom Heroes" for its 50th anniversary in May 2000.

- Texts written by historians about the so-called 'technocrats' within Franco's government.
- An interview of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, conducted by Cesare Cavalleri. For forty years Bishop del Portillo was the person closest to the founder of Opus Dei, Josemaría Escrivá, and afterwards became his first successor.
- A chapter translated from a book by Vittorio Messori, *Opus Dei: Un'indagine* (*Opus Dei: An investigation*).
- An obituary from *The Times* , published on the death in 1988 of Rafael Calvo Serer, a member of Opus Dei who opposed the Franco regime from within Spain and later from exile in Paris.

Dossier

Summary article 2015

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