

Scandal over “Cult in the Castle”

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Germany: Campaign against Family Values financed with Tax-Payers’ Money

<http://foref-europe.org/2015/11/12/germany-campaign-against-family-values-financed-with-tax-payers-money/#more-1367>



Munich, 12.11.2015 (FOREF) – On Thursday 5 November, 2015, the *Bayerische Rundfunk* (Bavarian broadcasting station, BR) launched a media outcry against an internationally recognized organization. Last weekend, the [Universal Peace Federation](#) (UPF) held a seminar on family values in the Catholic seminar centre, Castle Fürstenried, in Munich (Bavaria). Those invited included a member of parliament, members of the European

parliament, publicists and representatives of civil society from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. However the BR spread the word that a dangerous ‘cult’ lurked behind the organizers. However, for quite some time now the BR has in fact been leading a [campaign](#) against what it sees as its new enemy: the representatives of conservative Christian family values.

The arbitrary term ‘cult’ (in German: ‘Kult’ or more often ‘Sekte’) has been strongly criticized by sociologists ever since the 1980’s. [1] It is now only used by religious fundamentalists and left-wing radicals in order to vilify dissenters. According to its guiding principles, the BR must distance itself from any kind of religious discrimination. With its campaign, the radio station is not only infringing on its neutrality, but also on its commitment to journalistic accuracy, objectivity and balance. When it comes to traditional family values, it seems that the BR no longer takes its job seriously as a broadcasting station ruled by public law. And this at the tax payer’s expense!

Thus for some time now, conservative Christians have been labelled as ‘right scene’ and have been systematically vilified. This [tendency in journalism](#) continues despite much protest. Public figures such as Jürgen Liminski, Gabriele Kuby, Hedwig von Beverfoerde, Hartmut Steeb and others who take a stand for Christian values, marriage and the family and who express criticism of abortion and gender-mainstreaming are defamed as ‘fundamentalist’, ‘ultra-conservative’, or ‘right-wing’. Next, Andreas Halbig, a BR journalist, brought out the tried and tested inquisitory cult-term to boycott the UPF conference about family values. The news about ‘[cult in the castle](#)’ soon became a media outcry, because in uninformed segments of the public there is still an irrational fear of ‘cults’. In addition, Peter Schmidt of the *Münchener Merkur* instigated a targeted telephone campaign to ‘warn’ the invited speakers. As a result, three speakers cancelled their participation in the conference, fearing an attack of their reputation by the media.

Despite the staged rumpus about the UPF conference that took place last weekend, not one BR or *Münchener Merkur* journalist was there on the scene to report about the content of the presentations or discussions. It seems that in this case the BR is not interested in factual information. The background agenda is this: traditional family values are politically incorrect and any discussions on this topic must be nipped in the bud. Thus the end justifies the means.

Does the tax payer really have to continue to finance this scandalous tendency in BR journalism?

[1] E. g. *Definitions of Cult: From Sociological-Technical to Popular-Negative*, James T. Richardson, *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Jun. 1993), 348–356. “[T]he word cult is useless, and should be avoided because of the confusion between the historic meaning of the word and current pejorative use.” / Barker, Eileen (1986). “Religious Movements: Cult and Anti-Cult Since Jonestown”. *Annual Review of Sociology* 12: 329–346.