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Neues Abendland: A Search for European Unity Rooted in Catholic and Monarchist Tradition

This will be an examination of the Abendlaendische Bewegung and some of its leading figures - including Otto von Habsburg - and their roots in pre-World War I and Interwar Conservative and Christian ideology. Usually critiqued from a Liberal-Leftist perspective, this shall be a survey of the group and its origins from a sympathetic viewpoint, and would illustrate, among other things, how its failure - what we to-day would call "cancelling" - had the ultimate result of beggaring Christian Democratic thought after Vatican II. The paper shall also attempt to show how regaining some of their arguments can contribute to a vibrant Europe to-day.

In 1955, the German publication Der Spiegel began a journalistic campaign against the Abendlaendische Bewegung and members - especially those in public office. Specifically, the journal charged them with the high crimes and misdemeanours of being Catholic, Monarchist, Imperialist (in the sense of a European unity based upon some form of the Reichsidee), and suspicious of democracy - in a word, antifreedom. This campaign ended up doing a great deal of damage to the organisation, forcing its members in government for the most part to resign their positions.

After looking at what the magazine objected to, we shall look at the roots of the organisation's ideology in the 19th century, and the experiences of its holders in the interwar period and World War II, where so many fought in the resistance - and lost colleagues to Hitler. We shall mention briefly similar movements scattered around Europe at the time, and then focus on the truth or otherwise of Spiegel's claims.

We shall then see whether subsequent history has justified the views of the Abendlanders or their critics, and what insights into the current state of governments in general and the European Union in particular those views might bring us.