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1848: Gregor Mendel, the monk who wanted to be a citizen

IN THE REVOLUTIONARY YEAR 1848, six Augustinian friars addressed a petition, in German, to the Constitutional Parliament of Vienna, stating that members of religious orders are deprived of civil rights and demanding that they be given citizenship. V. Orel and A. Verbig (1984) arbitrarily ascribe the authorship of this text to another signatory, the monk M. Klassel, and present the petition as a “plea for freedom for teaching”.

We suggest 1) that this text primarily requested citizenship and 2) that the author of this text was Mendel, who both signed and actually hand-wrote it (F. Weiling, 1998–99). We also contend that the tragic events he was experiencing at the time (late July 1848) pushed Mendel to such desperation as to write a bitter attack on the monastic institution in this petition.

References

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