“Consequences: The Denial of Church Burial for Peter Gemeinder,” *Germania*, Thursday, September 10, 1931. Notation at top right in Italian: Enclosed with Report No. 2815

The recently deceased Hessian *Gauleiter* and Reich parliament representative of the Nazi Party, Peter Gemeinder, has been denied a Church burial by Catholic Church authorities. The National Socialist press is naturally trying to exploit the Gemeinder case for sharp anti-Church partisan propaganda. Thus it is necessary to set out the true state of the matter in this case.

The Diocesan Ordinariate of Mainz, at the beginning of October 1930, issued a well-known, entirely clear instruction, whereby every Catholic is forbidden to be a card-carrying member of the Hitler Party, and whereby a Catholic who is a card-carrying member of the Hitler Party may not be admitted to the Sacraments. Since October 1930, the Nazi Party leadership has not done anything whatsoever to clarify unconditionally its ambiguous culture-policy goals, or to revise in any way the points that are in explicit contradiction to Catholic doctrine. As a result, the aforementioned instruction remains valid, after as before, and it is totally obvious that inevitable consequences flow from it for the support or non-support by Church authorities for the burial of National Socialists.

The Vicar General of the Mainz Diocese, Dr. Mayer, took a position on the Gemeinder case in the following statement:

“The German Bishops have unanimously condemned National Socialism as a heresy, because it includes provisions in its written and unwritten program that contradict Catholic doctrine. Therefore no Catholic is allowed to belong to the Nazi Party as a card-carrying member. Whoever fails to heed this prohibition and joins the party can receive no Church burial unless before death he somehow makes it known that he repents for his disobedience. The law applies to every Catholic, be he prince or commoner, rich or poor, a representative in parliament or a simple citizen. Since in the aforementioned case there are no mitigating factors, the law must be strictly carried out.”

In matters of principle, the Church knows no compromise. Since the National Socialists, for their part, purport to reject all compromise just as decisively, we do not rightly understand why they do not summon up the necessary understanding for the consequences flowing from the Catholic Church and its doctrine. National Socialists should also be very familiar with the concept of unconditional obedience, to which the Catholic Church obligates its members. It would mean surrendering the authority of the Church, if its principled position were to be subordinated to the commands of an Adolf Hitler, who orders his people to obey him more than the Bishops. It is reported from Hesse that the National Socialists there have been responding to the stance of the Mainz Ordinariate by inciting a movement to leave the Church. Thus far two Nazi Party members have announced their departure from the Catholic Church. The Nazi Party may, if it considers it good, continue confidently in this way to launch an attack against the Catholic Church. It will never, with such methods, bring the Church to agree to bend its principled position to accommodate Nazi heresies. But it may well thereby create decisive clarity that between the doctrines of Adolf Hitler and the doctrines of the Catholic Church, common ground is unthinkable.