



The German Intellectuals

Letter to *The Spectator*

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The German Intellectuals

Letter to *The Spectator*

The Spectator 155 (1935) no. 5601 (1 November 1935), 721–2; the letter from C. M. Cadogan appears in the issue of 18 October, 611, and there is another reply to it, by Edward Seymour, in the issue of 25 October, 666–7.



Wilhelm Furtwängler

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TO THE EDITOR OF *THE SPECTATOR*

All Souls College, Oxford

Sir, – Anyone reading Mr C. M. Cadogan's letter in your issue of 18 October would naturally infer that the recent quarrel between Drs Goebbels and Furtwängler ended with a complete victory for Dr Furtwängler, and that an effective blow had thus been struck for the freedom of artists and intellectuals in Germany. This impression would be strengthened [722] by memories of the letters which Dr Furtwängler wrote not long before his resignation to Dr Goebbels and to the celebrated violinist Bronislaw Huberman, published in *The Times*, in which he said that he recognised no distinction between artists save that into good and bad, and followed this up by inviting Huberman, Schnabel, Menuhin and other non-Aryan musicians to visit Berlin. In his reply M. Huberman, who naturally refused the invitation, gave expression to the admiration which those who had followed the course of events felt for Dr Furtwängler as being the only German artist holding an official position in the state with sufficient courage and dignity to resist the policy of his government. Then came the crisis over Hindemith and Dr Furtwängler's resignation.

There the matter seemed to rest for some months until the news, referred to by Mr Cadogan, of Dr Furtwängler's reinstatement. The great conductor has indeed recovered his former position, but not without having completely abandoned the principle for which he had formerly fought. For he has now consented to the dismissal of all those of his musicians who failed to pass the racial test, which has resulted in the loss, among others, of the three leading members of the orchestra. Even those members of the musical public in whom the claims of justice and humanity are outweighed by reluctance to criticise the internal policy of another country may well, on purely personal and aesthetic grounds, resent the fact that they have been invited to hear in their own country music whose authors and executants

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are determined for them by the abnormal political exigencies of another. Such a situation has never, to my knowledge, occurred before, nor would it be reasonable to blame Dr Furtwängler for it. He made a most honourable attempt to resist; it failed, and he capitulated. Nobody can expect him to be a martyr, but it does not follow that he can no longer be regarded as a hero.

Yours obediently,

I. Berlin

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