

TRANSCRIPTION:

To: All Commanders

Today we are fighting in a country which has contributed a great deal to our cultural inheritance, a country rich in monuments which by their creation helped and now in their old age illustrate the growth of the civilization which is ours. We are bound to respect those monuments so far as war allows.

If we have to choose between destroying a famous building and sacrificing our own men, then our men's lives count infinitely more and the building must go. But the choice is not always so clear-cut as that. In many cases the monuments can be spared without any detriment to operational needs. Nothing can stand against the argument of military necessity. That is an accepted principle. But the phrase 'military necessity' is sometimes used where it would be more truthful to speak of military convenience or even of personal convenience. I do not want it to cloak slackness or indifference.

It is a responsibility of higher commanders to determine through A.M.G. Officers the locations of historical monuments whether they be immediately ahead of our front lines or in areas occupied by us. This information passed to lower echelons through normal channels places the responsibility of all Commanders of complying with the spirit of this letter.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

DECREE OF THE FUHRER

Jews, Free Masons and those opponents of National Socialism who are affiliated with them on the basis of "Weltanschauung", are the authors of the present war against the Reich. The systematic spiritual battle against these forces is a task made necessary by the war effort.

I have therefore directed Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg to carry out this task in agreement with the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command. His staff for the occupied territories is authorized to search libraries, archives, lodges and other "Weltanschauung" and cultural establishments for relevant material and to have this material requisitioned for the "Weltanschauung" tasks of the NSDAP, and for future scientific research by the higher educational institutions. The same regulation applies to cultural treasures which are the property or in the possession of Jews, which are ownerless, or the origin of which cannot be clearly established. Directions for carrying out this order in cooperation with the Wehrmacht will be issued by the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command in agreement with Reichsleiter Rosenberg.

The necessary measures within the Eastern Territories under German administration will be taken by Reichsleiter Rosenberg in his capacity of Reichsminister for Occupied Eastern Territories.

/s/ HITLER

Headquarters of the Fuhrer, 1 March 1942.

To all Offices of
the Wehrmacht,
the Party and
the State.

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