

Maha Bodhi
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TO ALL DEFENDERS OF CULTURAL TREASURES

The thunder of the European war again demands that active attention should be paid to the defence of cultural treasures. A pact to this effect is under consideration by many of the European governments and has already been signed by twenty-one governments of the Americas. No doubt, since military operations have already begun, it is hardly to be expected that any agreement could take place during actual warfare. Yet the activities of our Committees should at all times be fruitful. Remembering the position in which the defence of cultural treasures was in the beginning of 1914, we must say that at present this important question has been given definitely much more attention by governments and public institutions. No doubt the activities of our Committees have had beneficial influence upon public opinion and have contributed to such increase of attention. Besides government decrees, public opinion is the first defender of national treasures which have a universal value. During the last great war we have applied our utmost efforts to draw attention to the fact that it is criminal to destroy historical, scientific and artistic monuments. Then during recent conflagrations, as for instance in Spain and China, we happened to hear that our Pact was mentioned and applied in some cases. Also now all our committees and groups of friends, to whom the defence of world treasures is dear, should immediately draw attention of the public to the importance and urgency of the defence of creations of human genius. Each one of us has certain opportunities of spreading this panhuman idea. Everyone who has connec-

tions with the press or is a member of some cultural organization should consider it his duty to say wherever he can a good and impressive word about the defence of that on which the evolution of humanity is based. On March 24th this year our Committee undertook a series of steps imploring European governments to consider without delay the need of defending cultural treasures. We see now that such an appeal was most timely. Let every cultural worker remember now all his connections and possibilities in order to strengthen by all means public opinion which is first of all the guardian of world treasures. Friends, act urgently!

NICHOLAS ROERICH.

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