

February 7, 1936

To The Members of the  
Riverside Drive and 103rd Street Corporation.

As a member of the Committee representing the group of Roerich bondholders associated under the chairmanship of Harvey W. Corbett and participating in the Plan of Reorganization approved by the Supreme Court of this State, I bring here with to the attention of this Board certain arbitrary changes made in the membership of the Master Institute of United Arts, Inc., which are contrary to the purposes and adverse to the interests of the bondholders.

In agreeing that the Museum's premises should be reconveyed after foreclosure to an educational corporation controlled by the present Roerich Museum interests as existing March 2, 1934, the rival committees believed that since the property was identified by the name of Roerich and that much of the patronage of the apartment hotel was derived from the educational and artistic activities originating in the Museum, the continuation of this relationship was more liable to secure revenue necessary to meet interest charges and expenses than if turned over to ordinary interiale management. Furthermore, maintenance of the educational and Museum Foundation established by Roerich ensured remission of taxation not otherwise to be had.

The Trustees of the Roerich Museum, when the new plan was formally promulgated July 31, 1934, were Prof. and Mme Roerich, Dr. George Roerich, Mr. and Mrs Lichtmann, Mr. Svetoslav Roerich, Miss Grant, Mr and Mrs Horch, Miss E. Lichtmann, Mrs S. Schafron and Mr. Newberger, and it was the intend of the Court, as stated in the decision as well as the expectation of the bondholders' committees that these persons should retain control. Quite recently, I am informed, Mr. Horch in his capacity as President of the Master Institute has ordered the name "Roerich Museum" to be removed from the facade of the building and has expelled from their trusteeships, Prof. and Mme Roerich, Mr and Mrs Lichtmann, Miss Grant, Mrs Shafron, Dr. George Roerich and Mr. Svetoslav Roerich.

Now since Professor Roerich founded the Institution and gave it his name, invested it with his reputation, endowed it with the marvellous collection of his pictures it contains, and was the presiding spirit, and since Mr and Mrs Lichtmann and Miss Grant controlled and gave all their time and energy to the educational and artistic branches, elimination of their names and services and the relationships attaching to them is a serious detriment to bondholders' security and in complete contravention to the understanding under which this reorganization was made.

Certainly, if either of these bondholders' committees suspected that the Master Institute consisted of Mr. Horch alone they would never have turned over the interests they represented to him. They entrusted them to the control of "the present Roerich Museum interests". Your directorate is obligated to carry out the purposes and intentions expressly stipulated in the plan of Reorganization as approved by the Supreme Court and the bondholders. This action of Mr. Horch is in defiance of both purpose and interest.

Furthermore this Mr. Horch is by profession a foreign exchange broker. He has never had any professional relation with any cultural activity. He is not equipped to conduct an educational institution nor to manage a Museum. Certainly he has nothing to offer the Roerich Museum to compensate for the removal of the name and prestige of the great Nicholas Roerich.

Already his action in these matters has created an unfavourable publicity that is bound to rebound to disadvantage of this institution and to loss of <sup>the</sup> bondholders.

As I was a party to the proceedings that led to the plan of reorganization, I feel bound to protest against what I construe as the betrayal of its purpose and the calculations it was founded on. At the moment I and I presume the other members of both committees must feel as though we had been used as catspaws in what looks like a shrewd real estate deal by Mr. Horch to assume ownership of the property on behalf of his wife.

I demand that the matters contained here be given formal consideration by your board and that official action be taken to prevent Mr. Horch from further agressions that may be even more damaging to the reputation of the property, also you are obligated to insist that the letter of the agreement to vest the control of the Museum building in the original trustees be carried out. Yours John O'Hara Cosgrave.



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Yours,

John O'Hara Cosgrave



COPY

Letter from Mr. John O'Hara Cosgrave to the Editor Herald Tribune.  
Feb. 1936

"My letter about the Roerich situation dealt with matters of fact and of public record. Just what Dr. Fleischer is driving at with his mysterious hints I can't figure out. Certainly if the Courts and the bondholders turned over the property to the trustees of the Roerich Museum, they assumed that the interests which created that Foundation should remain in charge of it. Logically the removal of Roerich's name from the Museum containing his pictures, ousting him as trustee together with the persons he had selected to carry out his work and the renunciation of his auspices can only be construed as in contravention of both order and intention.

The question as to superiority of ideals as between Prof. Roerich and Mr. Horch, president of the corporation, did not enter into the proceedings nor come before the Court. Actually the bondholders sought no more than to ensure their investment and selected the Roerich group as best calculated to do so.

It is indeed a curious expression of the "enthusiastic idealism" Dr. Fleischer imputes to Mr. Horch that his first step on retaining possession of the property should take the form of evicting his associate trustees. Still perhaps he felt himself the font of "that spiritual reality" which Dr. Fleischer says "sensitive sympathetic folks have always felt behind the enterprise now known simply as the Master Institute" and decided the credit should go where it belonged. Cats having swallowed canaries may conceive themselves songsters. It is a bit ungrateful however to speak of "spurious cultural and spiritual leadership" when all that the Museum amounted to save the financing was contributed by the now disowned Roerich.

In this connection a glance at Prof. Roerich's later activities may be enlightening. He led an Expedition of exploration into the wilds of Tibet. He is author of the Banner of Peace movement, an extension of the Red Cross principle of protecting hospitals to cover Museums art galleries and Cathedrals. Not so long ago there was a great conference in Washington at which this noble project was debated and some preliminary understanding reached effectuating it among the nations of the three Americas. His last commission was to seek drought resisting grasses and plants in the Mongolian desert on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture. The man's idealism may be inferior to Mr. Horch's, who is a foreign exchange broker, but the sorts of things he has been doing spell public service. Besides he is really a great painter.