

We feel that it has become imperative to bring to the attention of the head of the Nation the recent vandalism against the Roerich Museum in New York. The unethical and illegal destruction of this public institution threatens otherwise to remain a dark stain upon the history of culture in America.

A minority group of trustees of the Museum, headed by the President Louis Horch, have seized 1,000 paintings by Professor Nicholas Roerich which were in the Museum and put them into storage without the proper consent and authorization of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Horch took it upon himself to declare the Roerich Museum out of existence, and opened in its place the "Riverside Museum".

In view of the world-wide recognition of the art of Nicholas Roerich and the high valuation placed <sup>upon it</sup> ~~unanimously~~ by so many countries, as <sup>shown</sup> ~~well~~ ~~as~~ by Museums and special Halls devoted exclusively to his paintings, this seizure cannot be treated as a local episode but is truly vandalism in a universal sense. In the words of the late Dr. Robert Harshe, for years Director of the Chicago Art Institute, any serious difficulty for the Roerich Museum is a "national calamity".

This information is now conveyed to you, Mr. President, simply because we who have contributed to the intellectual progress of this country cannot remain voiceless when a great public loss threatens to result from a slanderous conspiracy so intolerable to the true American spirit.

The Roerich Museum is a public Institution, dedicated to art and culture and greatly esteemed since its inception in 1923, and its Board of Trustees unanimously regarded the Museum, and all its contents, as belonging to the nation. A special declaration of this fact remains at present in effect, never having been cancelled subsequently by any other resolution. Yet in publicizing the new Riverside Museum the usurpers proclaimed a change of policy to permit the sponsoring of American art

and artists, as if the latter idea were incompatible with policies of the Roerich Museum. In accordance with the original program conceived and outlined by Professor Roerich, an American Section was planned for which a collection of paintings by American artists was collected under the personal supervision of Professor Roerich and his son, Svetoslav Roerich. Professor Roerich himself created the design for the emblem for this Section, following his broad plans for the practical expansion of the museum. These plans devised by Professor Roerich were <sup>well</sup> known to all trustees and therefore the treachery of this certain minority group is especially malicious in arousing an unworthy chauvinism so repugnant to enlightened citizens of the United States.

This country has always with an open spirit collected and respected the art of all ages and nations, and if the Light of Truth can prevail the Roerich Museum will be rescued and allowed to continue its cultural work in America under the supervision of the original founders and loyal trustees. On the other hand, it will be regrettable if during this dark period in world history, when forces of destruction are engaged in so much ruthless barbarism, the United States will go on record as apathetically tolerating such a flagrant vandalism as the destruction of the Roerich Museum.