

1

C/o. The Indian Bank,
Lady Curzon Road,
Cantonment,
BANGALORE - 1.
KARNATAKA, South India.

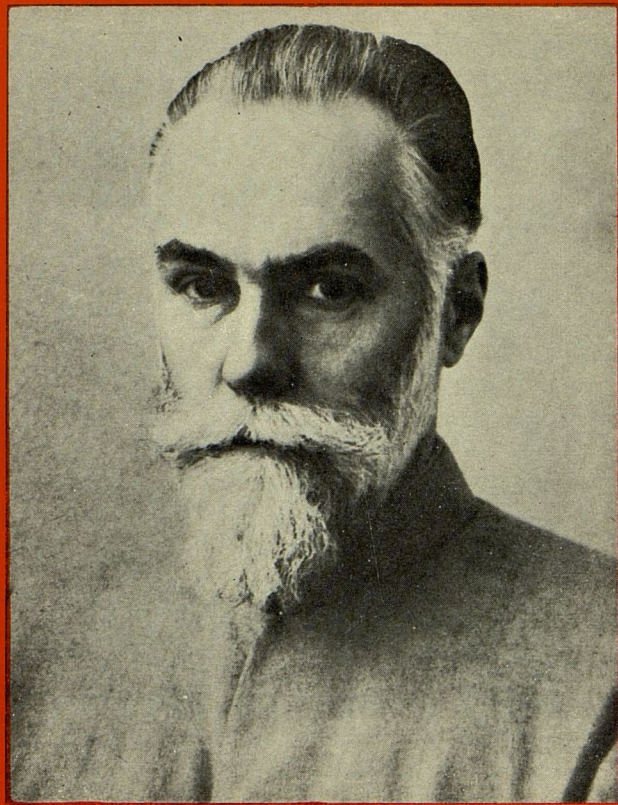
April 1975.

Dear

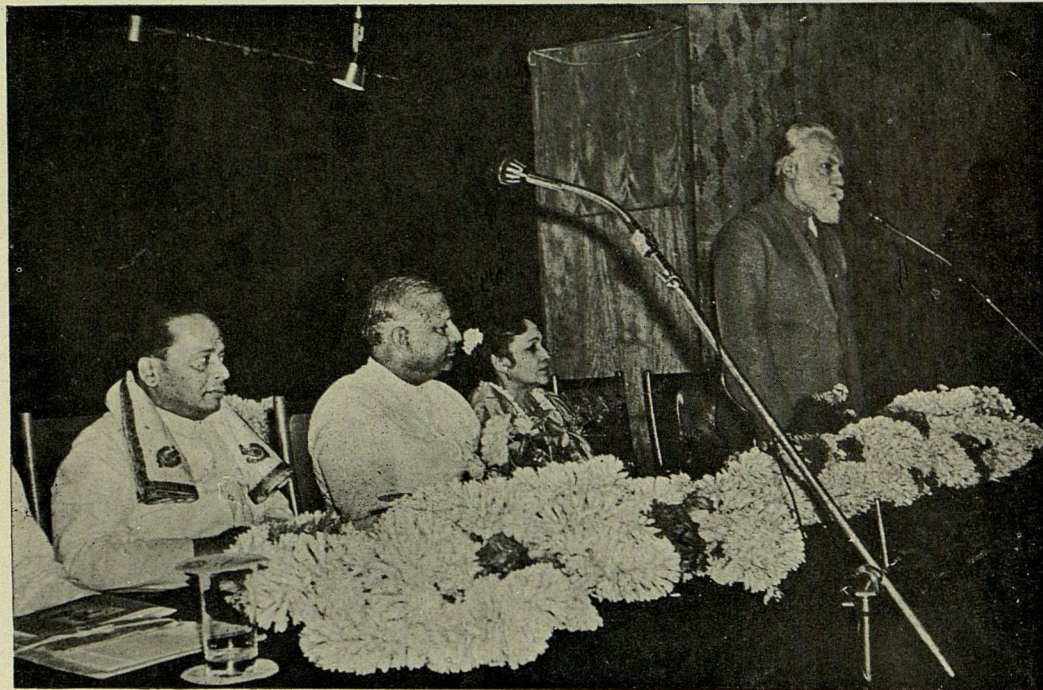
Since returning home from the U.S.S.R. I wished to write to you, this booklet however will give you some idea of our Exhibitions in the U.S.S.R. so I send it with my compliments to you.

With our kind regards,

(Mme. DEVIKA RANI ROERICH)



S. T. Beach.



Svetoslav Roerich replying to felicitations given to him by a Committee of Hosts at Hotel Ashoka
 Sitting L. to R. Hon'ble Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy, Minister for Education, Hon'ble Chief Minister
 Sri D. Devaraj Urs, Smt. Devika Rani

HE TOOK INDIA TO RUSSIA

by V. BALU

In the recent past, some happenings in Soviet Russia had a great impact upon the people of the country. The happenings have been non-political and completely cultural, revolving around two great personalities in the realm of art.

During November-December 1974, people in Moscow lined up in long queues, and waited for more than five hours, in biting frost and cold, in front of the Tretyakov Gallery. The attraction for the queues at this premier Russian art gallery was not only the exhibition of the masterpieces of Svetoslav Roerich but also the benign presence of the creator of these compositions.

The exhibition was made possible—thanks to the invitation of the Soviet Ministry of Culture, the Soviet Academy of Art and the Soviet House of Friendship. It was inaugurated by the Deputy Minister of Culture of Soviet Russia in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering and was an unprecedented success. The people . . . they all came, they saw and they were conquered. To give statistics, 1,62,018 tickets were sold within the period of a month at the gallery, which figure did not include season tickets, passes and free admissions for students.

There were several reasons for the excitement of the people, the willingness with which they waited in queues and the keenness with which they thronged to the exhibition of the works of Svetoslav Roerich. The twin events of the centenary celebrations of his father, Professor Nicholas Roerich, and his own 70th Birth Anniversary, as well as the exhibition of paintings of both father and son, around



Queues waiting outside the Tretyakov Gallery to see the Svetoslav Roerich Exhibition, Moscow-December 1974

4

the same time, and to cap it all, the presence in flesh and blood of the son in Russia, produced a tremendous emotional upheaval in the people.

Svetoslav Roerich, though born in Russia, settled down in India and married the first lady of the Indian screen, the beautiful Devika Rani. All his works are the result of the inspiration of the scenic beauty of India, its rural milieu, its mountains, its people, its religion and its spiritual heritage. Therefore, in taking over 190 of the paintings done by him in India to Russia, Svetoslav Roerich really carried the message of the culture of India to Russia. It is true that his paintings are not restricted to national boundaries, for one sees in them the fruition of many cultures, the portrayal of values that are international and the communication of concepts beyond time, space and territories. But then such indeed are also the spiritual ideas and thoughts that have gone out from India, since times immemorial. The universality of that understanding which had soaked into the soul of Svetoslav Roerich, naturally made him function pre-eminently as a cultural ambassador for India in Russia.

What is Svetoslav Roerich's impression of Russia since he was there after an interval of fourteen years? To use his own words: "The country has forged ahead in all directions. The vital pulse of the country can be felt throughout its complex and rich facets. In the realm of art, it can be seen in the search for richer and different impressions." Discussing abstract art, Dr. Roerich said: "This is not much encouraged since the State is vitally interested in the presentation of art in its classical forms." He explained that he accepted abstract art as also creative art "but not as great art since abstract art cannot convey any concrete thought". Asked about the impact of his own exhibition, he said he was moved by "the great response" to his art. He found people emotionally surcharged for



Crowds at the Svetoslav Roerich Exhibition at the Hermitage, Leningrad—January 1975

5

deeper spiritual values. The many intelligent questions they asked him were proof positive of the new dimension of the great country. He referred to his father's exhibition in Moscow and said, "Prof. Nicholas Roerich's exhibition of 350 paintings which opened in Leningrad came later to Moscow to the Academy of Art at about the same time as the exhibition of my paintings and drew record crowds for a month".

His masterpieces of the Himalayan mountains and his philosophic paintings and his studies of rural India evoked great response of joy and peace. His canvases of different personalities were equally popular, particularly as the studies revealed the soul of such personalities as his own father, Prof. Nicholas Roerich, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Radhakrishnan, former President of India and others. The portrait done by him of Devika Rani attracted very great attention particularly as the gracious lady had accompanied him to witness the joy and abandon with which the people of Russia enjoyed the works of her distinguished husband. What moved Devika Rani in particular was the manner in which many of the people in the crowds after feasting their eyes on the paintings went over to her, bowed in all humility and said: "Thank you, Devika, so much, for looking after the great man". This was indeed instant recognition of the role of the woman behind every famous man, stressed particularly well in a year dedicated to women.

After the exhibition in Moscow, Svetoslav Roerich's paintings moved over to the Hermitage in Leningrad and is currently on. Here 190 of his masterpieces are on display. From letters and opinions that are pouring in, it would only be an understatement to say that the response to his exhibition continues to be tremendous.

P. F. Belicov, well-known Art Historian and writer, wrote recently to Svetoslav Roerich saying: "the exhibition in the Hermitage is continuing with tremendous



Svetoslav Roerich addressing the crowds at the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, during his Exhibition in December 1974.

6

success . . . On Saturdays and Sundays enormous queues are waiting for admission and the halls are always full to capacity". M. Belicov is doing a special article and adds: "for the basis of my article I have taken the meetings, the explanations you gave and talks you had with the boundless stream of visitors which were pouring through the halls of the Exhibition. Through the close contacts of the Creator with the broad masses of the people, the true importance and intrinsic value of a work of Art is best revealed". Besides those in Moscow and Leningrad people in other parts of Russia have also been enabled to see and hear master painter Svetoslav Roerich and enjoy his paintings, thanks to TV programmes in colour.

The Roerichs are back home in Bangalore much to the joy and delight of the people of Bangalore and India. But, in the meantime, letters and reports are pouring in, testifying to the continuing response the exhibition in Leningrad has been evoking. Some views from the Books of Opinions have been reproduced separately.

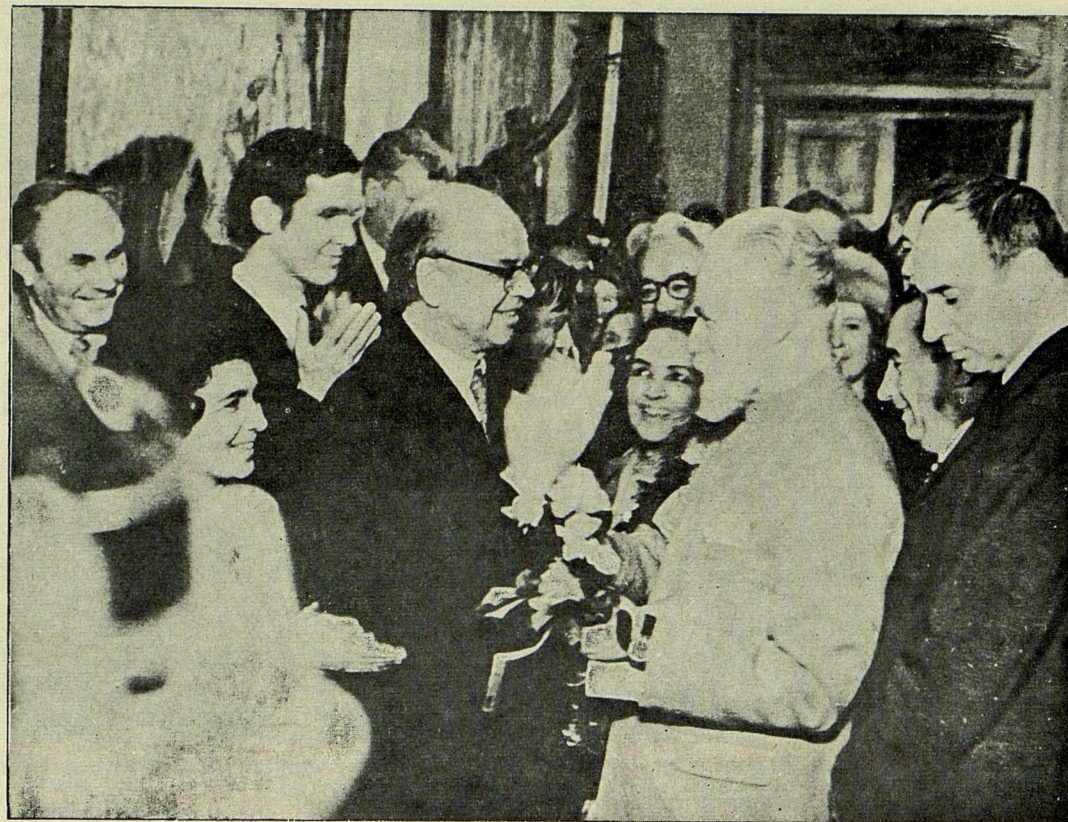
A REVELATION

Though I missed your presence, my comfort was to visit the Exhibition—an enormous kingdom created by the hands, eyes, the soul and the entire being of ONE MAN.

The meeting with your former paintings and the new one's evoke a feeling of awe in this wondrous temple of Art and gratitude to the artist, who has created all this great Beauty which reflects life in all its multifacetedness of subjects and forms.

Visitors come without end. Silence reigns in the halls, that silence which is born of contact with the most innermost in Art.

Many write in note books, sheets of paper and all stand for a long time before each picture.



Svetoslav Roerich being congratulated by the Director Mr. Lebedev of the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow

7

What shall I say about myself ? My dear and wonderful Svetoslav Nicholayevich you know that your paintings are for me a revelation, a soaring of my soul into realms from which it is difficult to return to this life.

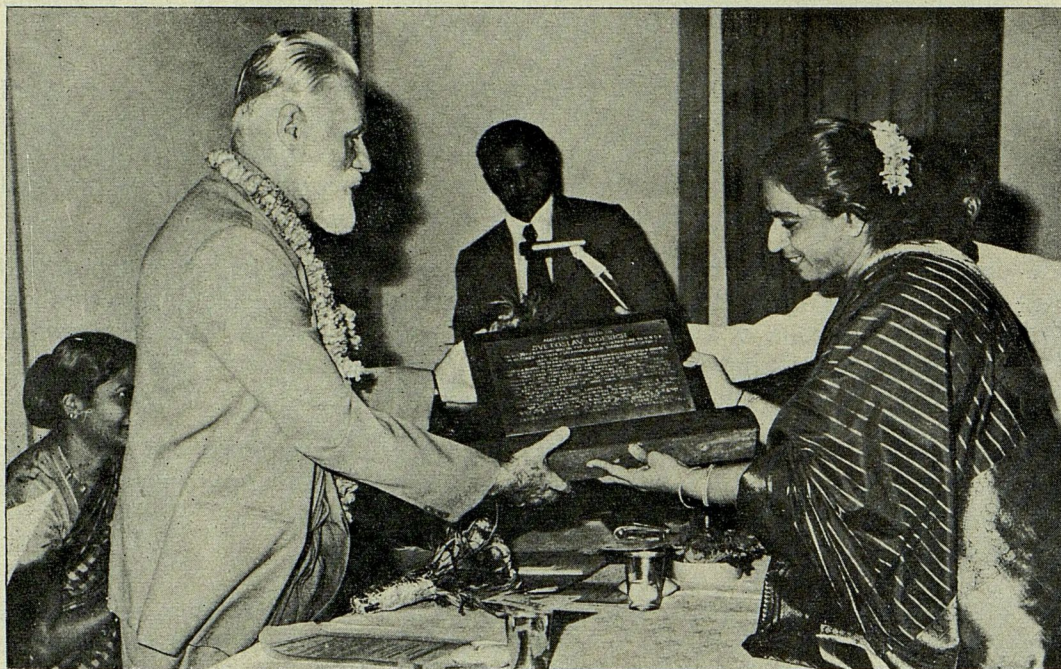
My ecstasy to see again 'GIRNAR' and 'KANCHENJUNGA' with the portraits of Devika and Jawaharlal Nehru and the revelation before the portraits of Nicholai Konstantinovich. Words are powerless, one can only bow before the great gift of the artist, who has left for future generations not only portraits but also the soul of one of the greatest men of this century—N. K. Roerich.

One can write very much, but why should I tire you when you know it all yourself. I shall only mention a study of a young woman in a brown saree with golden threads, about the new portraits of Devika and Roshan Vajifdar, whose body radiates a living warmth—this is something marvellous! And the expression of the little girl in 'LITTLE SISTER' and the portrait of 'MORU RAM' and so many, many more.

And then the Himalayas—'THE SETTING SUN'—'DAMODAR KUND'—'THE AUTUMN SUNSET' and one more 'SUNSET'—'EVENING'—'GREEN HILLS'—'MISTS'—'THE SECRET HOUR' of Kanchenjunga and the Blue Himalayas.
How much more !!!

And here is a new experience—'PIETA'! This ancient theme has been revealed by many great creators of the past, and yet how originally it has been solved by you. The greatest simplification of form amidst the profound expressiveness of the entire composition deeply moves you in the tragedy of the mother. I stand frozen and I am not alone!

Then that other masterpiece 'THE TRIUMPH OF EVE'—a new projection of the old theme of Sin. How many academic Eve's, tall and cold with broad hips hide



Smt. Nagarathamma, Speaker of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, presents a memento to Dr. Svetoslav Roerich on behalf of the Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, at a special meeting arranged in his honour on the eve of his departure to U.S.S.R.

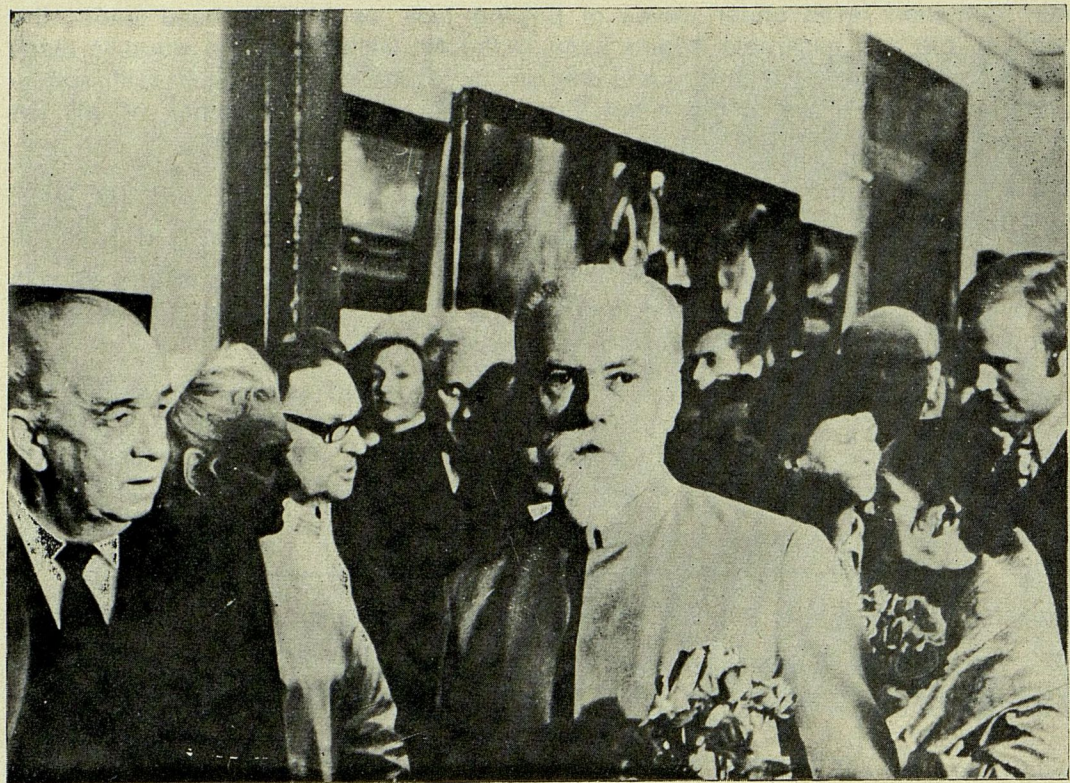
their frightened faces under waves of flowing hair, unnaturally bend under the weight of Sin and miserable Adams hang in the Art Galleries of the world to teach men! And, here a bewitching, unbridled in joy, a charming young Eve all sparkling in the attractive joy of 'Sin'—our 'First Mother', the first mother of all the womanly women. I fell in love with your Eve—and I am not alone!

With what fine irony and humour is permeated the painting 'NEARER TO THEE MOTHER EARTH'. Your own philosophy and your own solution!

A creative individualism permeates the entire Exhibition which is saturated with the love for nature and men. The forms and contents are welded into a grand symphony of unforgettable canvases.

A. KHANDAMIROVA
LENINGRAD
Dancer and Choreographer

By popular request, the Ministry of Culture in Russia has requested Svetoslav Roerich for the extension of his exhibition to various Republics that are most anxious to have it.



Svetoslav Roerich at his Exhibition at the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow
Left to Right: Mr. Pegov—Deputy Foreign Minister; Mme. Shelvankar—wife of the Ambassador to the U.S.S.R.; Academician Reshetnikov, Vice-President of the Academy of Art of U.S.S.R.

SVETOSLAV ROERICH

by

S. TYULYAYEV

Doctor of Science (Art),
Jawaharlal Nehru Prize Winner,
Honoured Worker in the Arts of the RSFSR

The opening of the Svetoslav Roerich exhibition at the State Tretyakov Gallery and the 70th birthday of the remarkable artist were a great occasion. . .

. . . Svetoslav Roerich's art is like a great river whose source lies in the heart of Russia, but which draws water from two tributaries—West European and Indian. It becomes a single torrent in his brilliantly individual and sweepingly creative personality. A harmonious blend of three such different sources, he is, in this respect, the only painter of his kind. . .

. . . After a large exhibition of his paintings, held in 1960 in Delhi, the Indian Government awarded Svetoslav Roerich the highest civil order of the country—Padma Bhushan. . .

. . . India's Ambassador to the Soviet Union K. P. S. Menon said: "The paintings of Roerich show conclusively that art rises above all national and political frontiers. In Roerich's art two worlds meet, the world of India and the world of Russia. This is not surprising, because he himself belongs to both worlds. . . . In his paintings, heredity and environment, the inspiration of Russia and the inspiration of India are beautifully and harmoniously blended." . . .

'Moscow News', Saturday, November 30, 1974



Welcome to Svetoslav Roerich



by the Russian Embassy in India

A few appreciations from the book of opinions which contains thousands written by the visitors to the Exhibition in Moscow.

The Beauty of the Himalayas, the Beauty of India that is what one sees and feels with one's eyes and after one visits this Exhibition. The paintings of S. N. Roerich are so individual that they can never be mistaken for some one else —only perhaps there are some traits of his Father.

An enormous thanks to the artist that he permitted to come to this world of Beauty!

—V. T. DMITRIEV

* * *

Dear Svetoslav Nicholayevich,

We thank you for your lofty and unforgettable Art. That which we have seen can never be forgotten. All trivialities of life recede before your Art. We hope that this meeting is not the last one.

*Students of the Moscow
Technological Institute of Food Production*

Dear Svetoslav Nicholayevich,

We are amazed at your mastery of seeing life in all its colours. We express to you our sincere gratitude for the pleasure which we have received.

*Students of "STAR CITY"
Zvezdnyi Gorodok
Many Signatures*

* * *

Dear and much respected Svetoslav Nicholayevich,

I have no means to express my admiration from what I have seen. It is so beautiful and marvellous!

I thank you for the joy!

Your Art gives people happiness.

Please repeat this Exhibition.

*With great respect to you
—E. M. PARANOVA, MOSCOW*

* * *

It is fantastic but it is so real!

Signature

Speech Delivered by
The Hon'ble Sri D. DEVARAJ URS
Chief Minister of Karnataka
On the Occasion of Felicitation to
Dr. SVETOSLAV ROERICH

on his Return after the Glorious Success of his Exhibitions in the U.S.S.R.

It is a privilege to be called upon to preside over this pleasant function to felicitate Dr. Svetoslav Roerich on his return after the glorious success of his exhibition in the U.S.S.R., his motherland. Roerich and his gifted and charming wife, Smt. Devika Rani, the First Lady of the Indian Screen, are so much a part of the cultural and intellectual life of Bangalore that we regard them as our own. I am, therefore, very happy indeed to associate myself with this function in honour of these great artists.

Svetoslav Roerich is the heir to a triune heritage—the heritage of Russia, the heritage of India, and the heritage of his great father Nicholas Roerich, the immortal painter, whose centenary India and the world celebrated with such fervour last year. In Svetoslav Roerich, this triune heritage is fused in a marvellous symbiosis. I do not profess to be a great connoisseur of painting, but I do enjoy painting as a lay man, and there is little doubt that Svetoslav Roerich's paintings are beautiful compositions which blend the grandeur of the Russian spirit with the ethos of India, which he has made his home. In his paintings one can also glimpse the influence of his illustrious father.

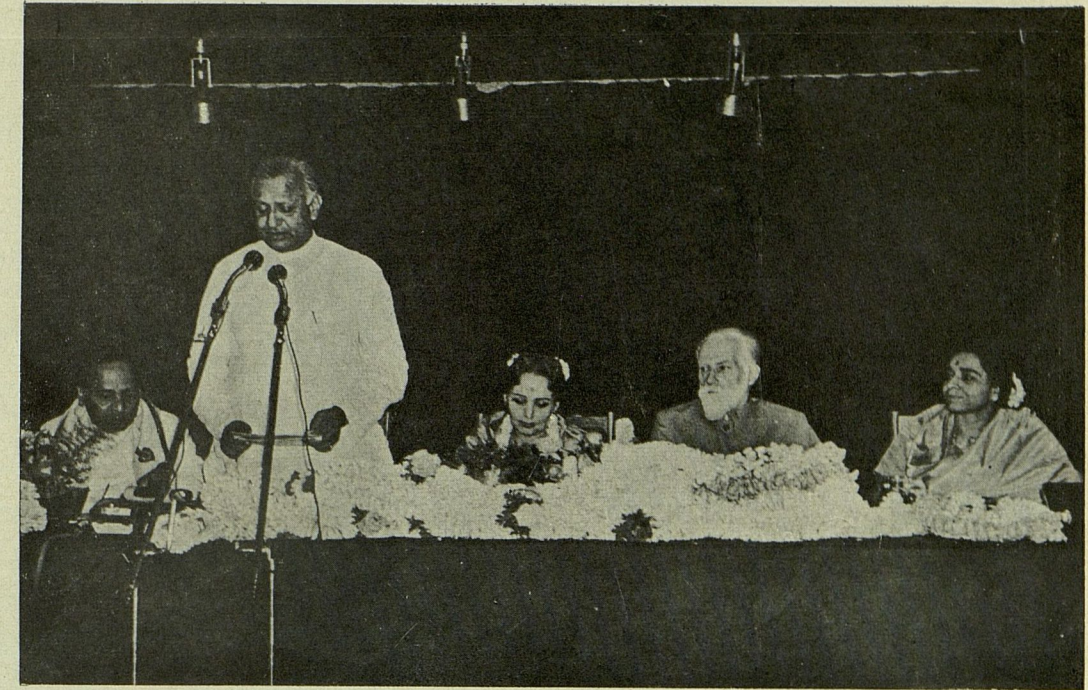
12

Great art, in a sense, is the common property of all mankind. It is also a testament that individual genius, as exemplified in the works of Dr. Roerich, helps to pull down artificial barriers between nations and people and makes us aware of our shared humanity. Dr. Roerich's paintings faithfully capture the spirit of India, and especially his Himalayan landscapes are suffused with a transcendentalism that is akin to great poetry. His canvases depict many facets of Indian life. They are the products of a man who, throughout his life, sought the underlying reality behind sensory phenomena and who always refused to be merely fashionable. There are artistes who are in great demand for a brief and transient period and thereafter are completely forgotten. Roerich has never succumbed to the temptation to be fashionable and, therefore, his paintings are a perennial source of delight to all those who care for true and authentic art. At the same time, he has not remained static, but has continued to grow and his paintings have continued to offer people deeper insights into the meaning of life.

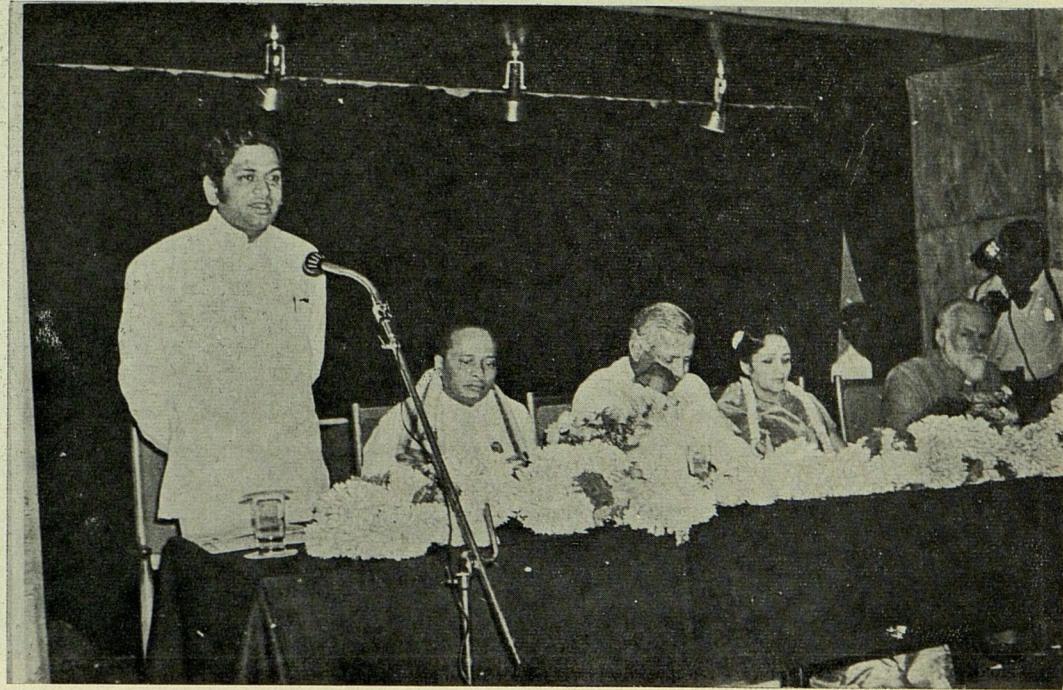
"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever", said John Keats, and Svetoslav Roerich's paintings are things of beauty. Their design, colour and rhythm harmonise beautifully to produce works of enduring value. His exhibitions in the Soviet Union were a pageant of triumph. No wonder that on the occasion of his 70th birthday on 23rd October 1974, he received a message from the Presidium of the Academy of Fine Arts of the U.S.S.R. which bore eloquent tribute to his great talent. The message said: "You organically combine the talent of a remarkable painter and public man, successor of the beautiful humanist traditions of a Roerich family who made a great contribution to the treasure-house of culture and art, in the fight for peace, and the protection of world monuments, and first of all, the strengthening and consolidation

of the friendship between the people of India and the U.S.S.R.". Many eminent leaders of India like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Radhakrishnan, former President, Shri K. P. S. Menon, former Indian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., and Dr. Humayun Kabir, former Union Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, have paid rich tributes to Dr. Roerich. In a sense, he is Russia's gift to India, and we are indeed very fortunate to have him and Smt. Devika Rani Roerich with us in Karnataka. They have always been in the vanguard of the cultural resurgence that we are witnessing in our State and in the country to-day. All those who seek to foster art and culture have found in them ardent supporters.

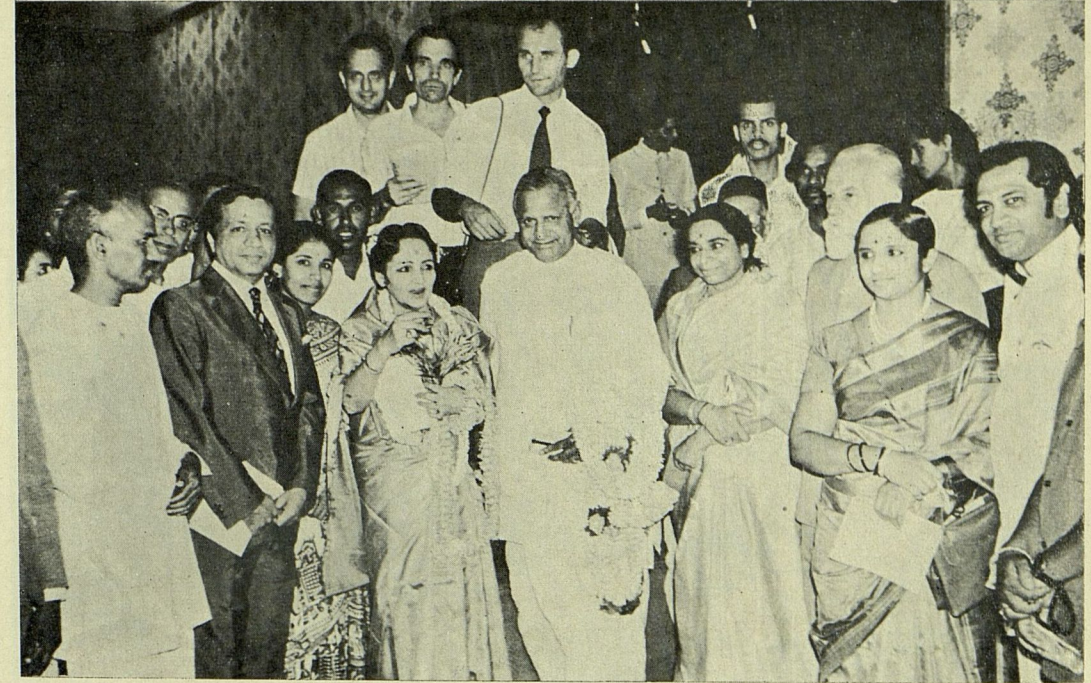
Let me say once again, before concluding, that I am very happy to be here and meet all of you on this happy occasion. It is a happy idea of the Committee of Hosts to organise this function to felicitate Dr. Roerich on his return after his splendidly successful exhibitions in the U.S.S.R. The presence of Roerich and Smt. Devika Rani is a source of inspiration and benediction to us all, and I am sure that many budding artists will be inspired by their mission and look upon them as creative pathfinders in the domain of art. With these few words, let me wish both of them a long and happy life and an ever greater sense of fulfilment in their chosen field and in the many other fields of activity for the betterment of the State and the country with which they are so actively associated.



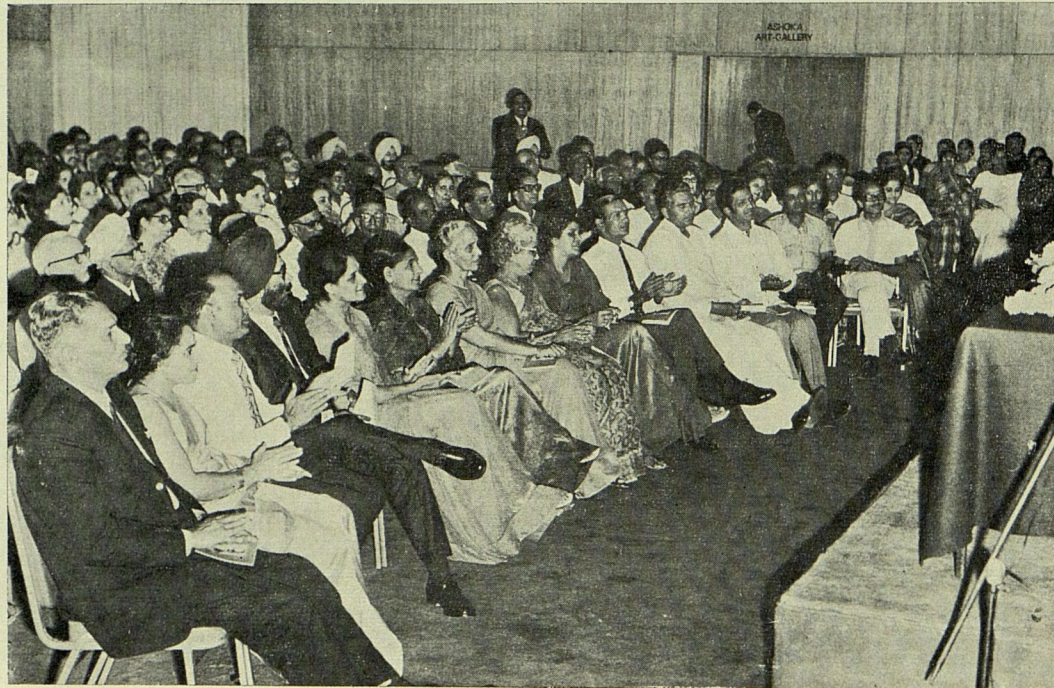
Hon'ble Sri D. Devaraj Urs, Chief Minister of Karnataka, delivering presidential speech at a function arranged to felicitate Roerichs



Hon'ble Sri S. M. Krishna, Minister for Industries, paying tributes to Roerichs



L to R—Sri M. S. Nanjunda Rao, Secretary of the Parishath, Sri H. K. Kejriwal, Industrialist, Smt M. J. Kamalakshi, Madam Devika Rani, Chief Minister Sri D. Devaraj Urs, Smt K. S. Nagaratnamma, Speaker, Karnataka Legislative Assembly, Dr. Svetoslav Roerich, Smt Chandraprabha Mohan, Sri S. M. Krishna, Minister for Industries with Russian Experts



Distinguished Invitees at the Reception function arranged at Hotel Ashoka

**FIGURES OF ATTENDANCE OF VISITORS
TO THE SVETOSLAV ROERICH EXHIBITIONS IN THE U.S.S.R.
1974-1975**

New attendance figures just received from Leningrad indicate that 4,50,000 persons have visited the Exhibition of Svetoslav Roerich's paintings at the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad.

Figures at the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, were well over 1,80,000, which included the tickets sold, plus season tickets, passes and free admissions for students, but it was estimated that over half a million people would have come had the capacity of the Tretyakov Galleries been greater.

The total number of visitors to the Exhibitions in the Republic of the U.S.S.R. will be known only after the conclusion of the Exhibitions after a few months.

Mysore Pradesh Chitrakala Parishath (Regd)

BANGALORE-3

The recent tour of U.S.S.R. undertaken by Dr. Svetoslav Roerich, the eminent artist and academician of our great land, has in many ways contributed to strengthen the bond of lasting friendship between the two countries. The exhibition of the invaluable art works of this son of India presently being held in U.S.S.R. has been so popular in that it is attracting hundreds of thousands of admirers. At the behest of the Govt. of U.S.S.R. the exhibition will be retained for a few more months in that country. His lectures aimed at increasing the understanding between the people of these countries, delivered in several important towns of the U.S.S.R., have been widely acclaimed.

It is our privilege that Dr. Roerich has maintained close contact with the Parishath ever since it was founded. He is also in the committee of the Chitrakala Vidyalaya, School of Arts, a subsidiary organisation of the Parishath.

Deeply interested in the art and culture of India, Dr. Svetoslav Roerich has been giving every encouragement to the traditional forms of art. Acting on his advice the Parishath has collected several hundreds of specimens of Karnataka Traditional Paintings and Leather Puppets which could otherwise have been lost to our people. Dr. Svetoslav Roerich is also one of the prominent Trustees for Life in the Trust formed by the Parishath with the objective of furthering the cause of art and culture.

The Parishath is honouring an artist of eminence and renown in Dr. Svetoslav Roerich upon his happy return from an epoch-making tour of our great neighbouring country and on this occasion I pray the Almighty to grace this illustrious son of Mother Bharath with everything nobler in life that humanity aspires for.

K. S. NAGARATHNAMMA
President