

ROERICH PACT AND BANNER OF PEACE COMMITTEE

200 WEST 57th STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

Telephone
Circle 5-5377

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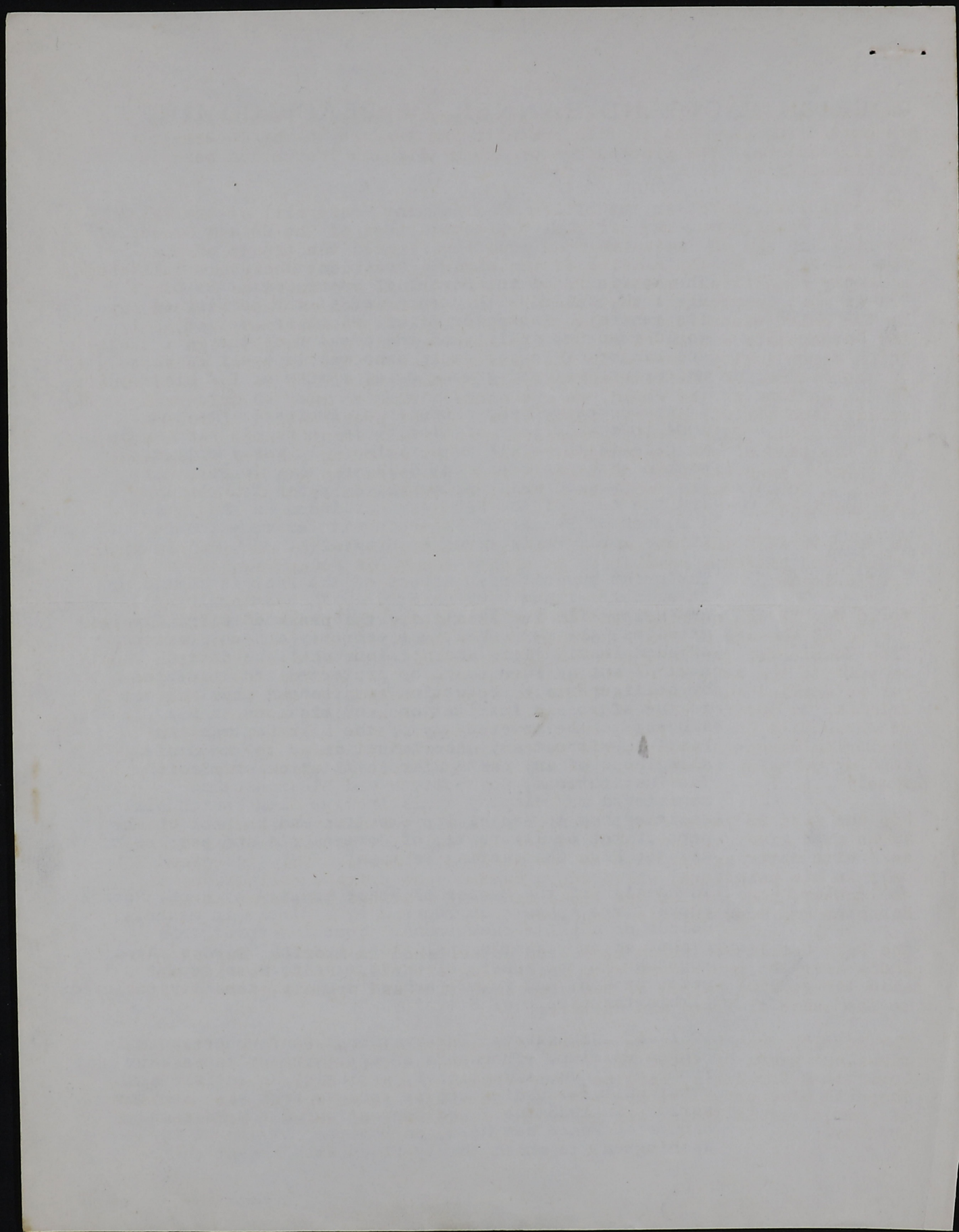
The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee of New York, filled with deep grief at the passing of its venerated Protector, Prof. Nicholas Roerich, world renowned artist and the creator of the Pact and Banner of Peace, feels behooved to speak of this unique project and give a brief review of its history.

It was conceived and proposed by Professor Roerich in 1904 to the Society of Architects in Russia, and again in 1914 to the state authorities. It was received with highest interest but delayed owing to war. The project was formally promulgated in New York in 1929, and the text of the Pact was published in the press. A number of Banner of Peace Committees were founded, in New York, Paris, Bruges, Bruxelles.

The great humanitarian aspect of the Pact is summed up in articles 1 and 2 which state: "Educational, artistic and scientific institutions, artistic and scientific missions, the personnel, the property and collections of such institutions and missions shall be deemed neutral and as such shall be protected and respected by belligerents. Protection and respect shall be due to the aforesaid institutions and missions in all places, subject to the sovereignty of the High Contracting Parties, without any discrimination as to the State Allegiance of any particular institution or mission. The Institutions, Collections and Missions thus registered may display a distinctive flag, which will entitle them to especial protection and respect on the part of the belligerents, of Governments and peoples of all the High Contracting Parties".

The design of the Banner of Peace created by Prof. Roerich shows three spheres surrounded by a circle in magenta colour on a white background. Some interpret this symbol as representing Religion, Art and Science, held together in the sphere of Culture; others as representing past, present and future achievements of humanity enclosed within the circle of Eternity.

1931 and 1932 saw two International Conferences held in Bruges Belgium. Thousands of approving opinions came from religious, educational, artistic, scientific and other cultural bodies and personages from all over the world. In 1933 the Third Convention of the Pact and Banner of Peace was held, on November 17 and 18 in Washington, to which thirty-five nations sent their



representatives. This convention unanimously passed a resolution to recommend the adoption of this humanitarian measure to the Governments of all Nations. The proceedings of the Washington Convention were published in New York in book form.

On April 15th, 1935, in the office of President Roosevelt, at the White House in Washington, the official representatives of the United States of America and all 20 Latin-American countries signed the treaty of the Roerich Pact. At the closing of the signing President Roosevelt delivered a deeply significant message in an international broadcast as follows: "It is most appropriate that on this day, designated as Pan-American Day by the chief executives of all the republics of the American continent, the Governments - members of the Pan-American Union - should sign a treaty which marks a step forward in the preservation of the cultural achievements of the nations of this hemisphere. In opening this Pact to the adherence of the nations of the world, we are endeavouring to make of universal application one of the principles vital to the preservation of modern civilization. This Treaty possesses a spiritual significance far deeper than the text of the instrument itself. Let us bring renewed allegiance to those high principles of international cooperation and helpfulness, which, I feel assured, will be a great contribution to civilization by the Americas".

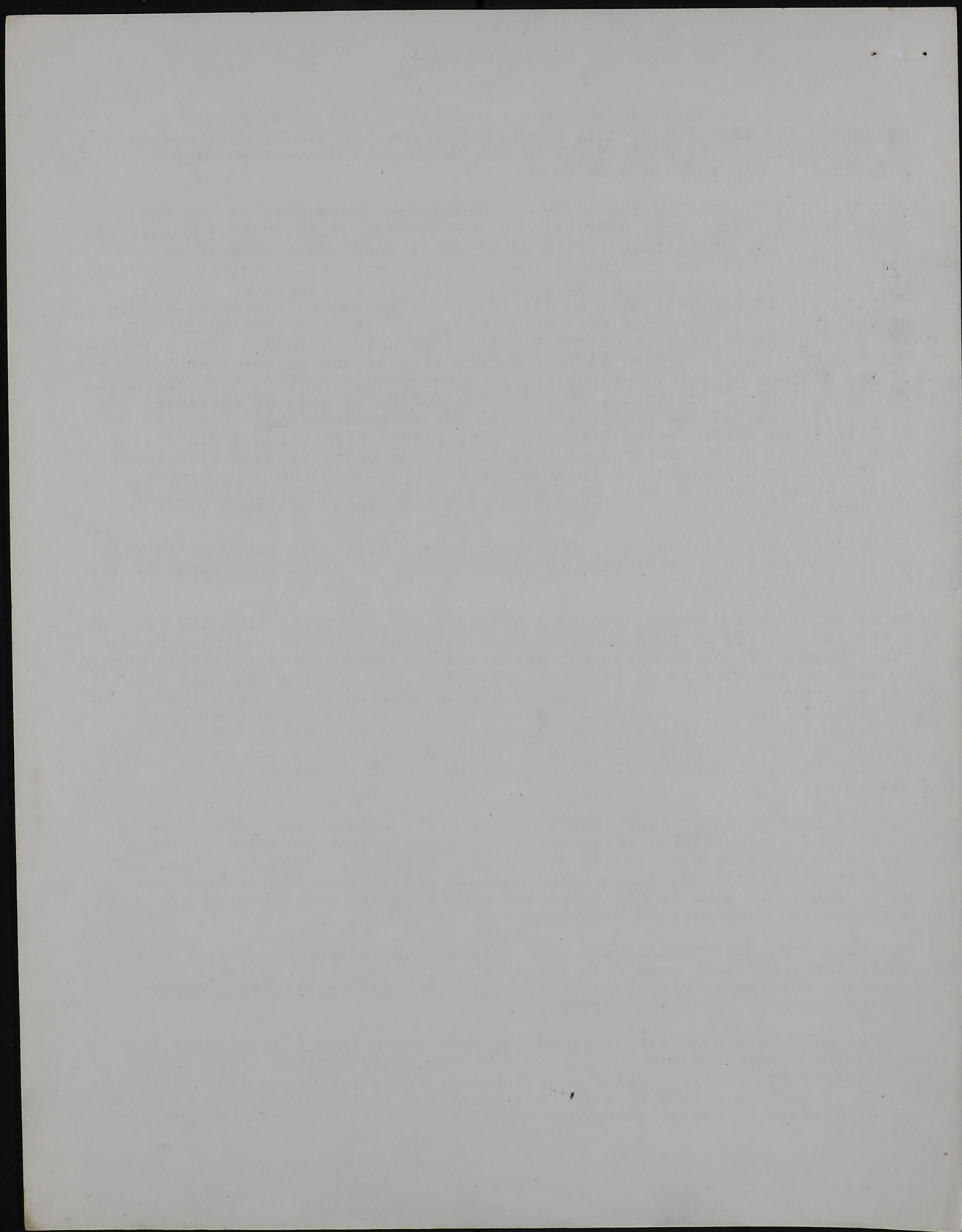
In October 1937 the Congress of Roerich Baltic Societies convened in Riga, Latvia and passed a resolution to create Banner of Peace Committees in all Baltic States.

World War II was nearing, and on its second day the press of India carried a special message of Prof. Roerich, which included the following warning: "The thunder of the European War again demands that active attention should be paid to the defense of cultural treasures During the last great war we applied our utmost efforts to draw attention to the fact that it is criminal to destroy historical, scientific and artistic monuments On March 24th of 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"

For the past 25 years Prof. Roerich made his residence in India. Widely known as a great artist, philosopher and educator, he has dedicated himself with untiring devotion to the mission of Peace. This is voiced not only in his paintings, which adorn museums and private collections the world over, but also in his books and many writings published in all European and many Asiatic languages.

The Pact Committees which have been established in America, Europe and India carry on their work with unswerving efforts. Prof. Roerich was also the guiding spirit of numerous societies and organizations devoted to the cause of Peace and Culture.

The Roerich Pact Committee resumed its activities in New York after the turbulent years of World War II. The European Vice-Chairmen represent Committees for Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, France, England and Portugal. There is also an active Roerich Pact Committee in Argentina, and a number of Committees in India, all under the leadership of eminent scholars and artists.

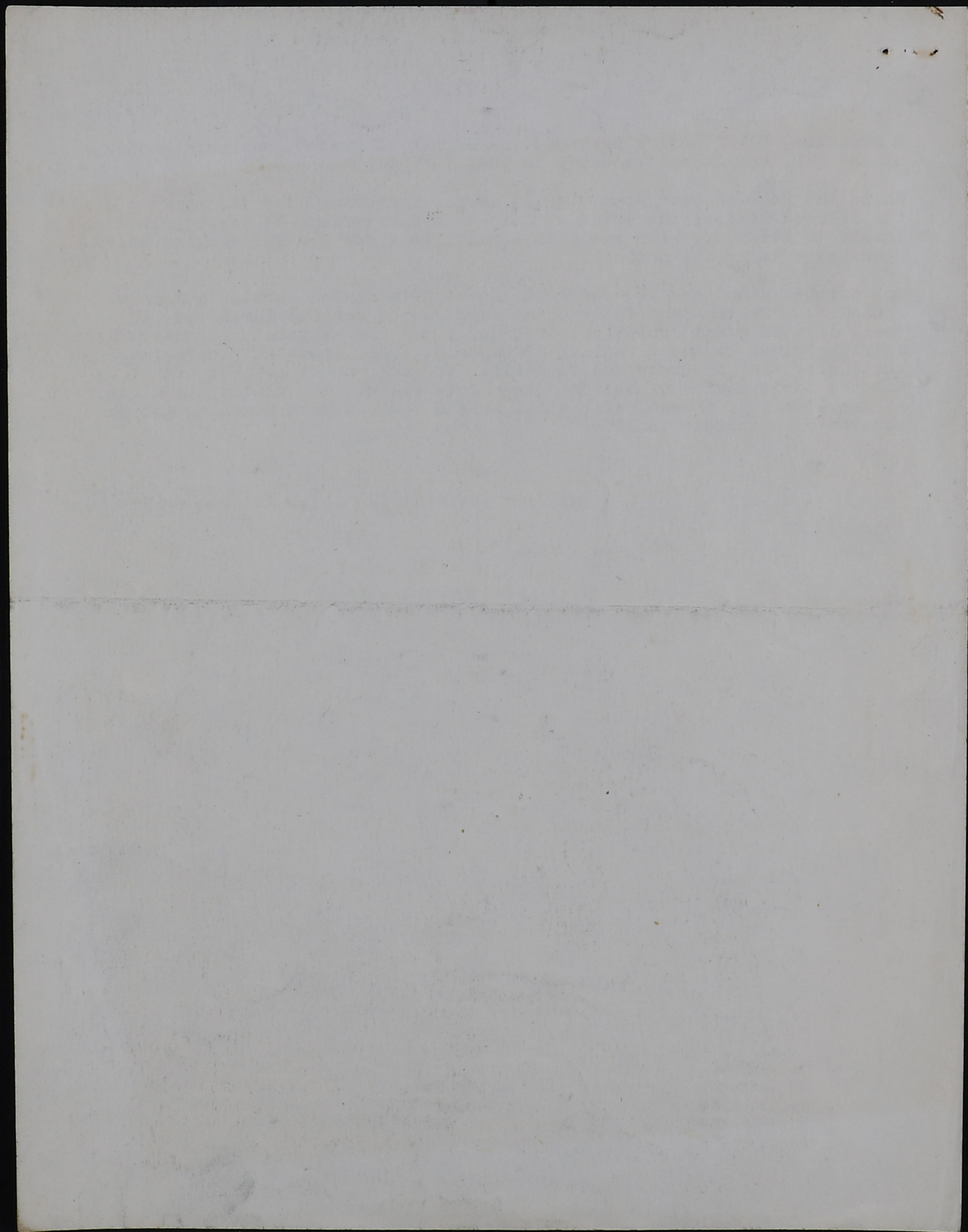


A Brochure, "The Roerich Pact and the Banner of Peace", was published by the New York Committee early in 1947.

While the Roerich Pact Committee is deeply sorrowing over the passing of its Beloved Leader, the great artist and humanitarian, it is rededicating itself to its work, with invincible faith in a New Era for mankind based upon Peace among all nations.

One of the recent messages of Prof. Roerich is quoted here as a timely reminder: "Culture and Peace - the most sacred goal of Humanity! In these days of great confusion, both spiritual and material, the disturbed spirit strives to these radiant strongholds..... Above all confusions the Angels sing of Peace and Goodwill. No guns, no explosives can silence these choirs of heaven. And above all earthly wisdom, idealism, as the Teaching of Good, will still remain the quickest reaching and most renovating principle in life."

Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee



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