

26 SEP. 1933

Dear Mr. Secretary,

A note in regard to the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace has been handed to me by a member of the State Department. This plan has deeply interested me since ~~its introduction~~ 1929, and in view of the personal knowledge I have of its progress, I should like to present to you certain aspects of the question.

The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace was created and promulgated by Nicholas Roerich, artist and educator of international renown, for the protection of the world's cultural treasures. Briefly it provides that educational, artistic and scientific institutions artistic and scientific mission, works of art, cultural records and all sites and monuments of cultural significance shall be deemed neutral by the nations and as such shall be respected in times of war or peace. To insure this, a Banner was designed by Nicholas Roerich by which such museums, universities, cathedrals, churches, special collections, libraries and other cultural monuments be marked. In practice, the Roerich Banner of Peace presents a project, for the feasibility of which the Red Cross may be regarded as a precedent.

Since 1930, the Roerich Pact has made extraordinary progress in the consideration of governmental bodies, international jurists and cultural bodies the world over. In May, 1930, the International Museums' Office of the League of Nations unanimously endorsed the plan for the Roerich Pact. A parallel interest in many countries at the same time, encouraged the foundation of the Union Internationale pour le Pacte Roerich in Bruges, Belgium, as a permanent body to further the acceptance of the Roerich Pact. Through the initiative of this body, two International Conferences were held in Bruges in 1931 and 1932, during which twenty two countries participated in the sessions and ~~attended~~ accompanying exhibitions, and ~~established~~ the Fondation Roerich pro pace, Arte, Scientiae et Labore was established. Deepest regrets were ~~expressed~~ expressed at that time that the United States did not participate, a fact made the more poignant since the plan has emanated from an American institution.

because of their

It is especially through anxiety let the sponsorship of this plan, entirely humanitarian and altruistic in its concern for art and science, be lost to America that the Roerich Museum has arranged that the third International Convention be held in Washington this coming November.

In answer to the question of the relationship of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace to previous conferences on the subject, I may mention that Dr. M. Adatci, President of the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague was himself the Protector of the two Conferences for the Roerich Pact at Bruges, voicing his definite endorsement of the necessity of this further step in the direction of the protection of the world's cultural sites. Moreover, such authorities in the field of international law as Antonio de Bustamante, member of the Permanent Court of International Justice; Professor B.C. Loder, member of the same body and its former President, Baron Michel de Taube, former Minister of Education of the Russian Empire and international jurist; Prof. Albert Geouffre de la Pradelle, Vice President of the Institute of International Law, Dr. Georges Chklaver of the Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales of Paris, and other international authorities of greatest renown, have expressed their support of the Roerich Pact and their urgent anxiety for its adoption on the ground that, while taking full cognizance of the Conferences at The Hague of 1899 and 1907, as well the Convention of Saint Germain en Laye in 1919, it goes far beyond these in the fulfillment of this much desired purpose. To quote Judge Bustamante: "It is a step further in the path already adopted by the Peace Conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907, especially the latter." Baron de Taube, an equally eminent authority, states, "The realization of this project from an international judicial point of view would be a logical and necessary development of the principles already sanctioned by the two Hague Conferences in 1899 and 1907 and would constitute to my mind new progress in the long and hard march of humanity for the humanization of war and the final triumph of peace."

Prof. de Juvv -

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The so-called Roerich Pact is a proposal brought forward by the Roerich Museum in New York for the conclusion of an international covenant for the protection of artistic and scientific institutions, missions and collections through the display on such property of a distinctive flag entitling it under the convention to especial protection and respect on the part of belligerents of governments and people of all the parties to the convention.

The Department has in the past reached the conclusion that the proposed convention should not be made the subject of a proposal by the United States to other countries at the present time, because reasonably sufficient guarantees against the wanton injury or destruction of artistic and scientific property in war are already provided for by the Convention of the Second International Peace Conference held at The Hague in 1907, to which a large proportion of the countries of the world are parties, and that injury to such property is unlikely to result from willful or malicious attack and accidental or inadvertent injury resulting from the modern type of warfare could scarcely be defended against in the way proposed by the convention. That position was taken by Mr. Cotton, Acting Secretary of State, April 29, 1930. Unless it be the purpose of the Administration to adopt a new policy which is believed to be of doubtful wisdom, it would seem undesirable for a member of the Cabinet to be the presiding officer at the forthcoming meeting. There would seem to be no objection, however, to a member of the Cabinet making an address at the meeting in which he would give expression to his own view on the subject of the protection of artistic and scientific property in times of war.

(This note was not a letter--but a memo, unsigned and on a plain piece of white paper --not official paper. Our friend regarded it in this light.)
Our inclosed answer refers to it.

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In addition to the adherence of international jurists, advocacy of the Roerich Pact has come from thousands of world bodies and individuals, some of which are cited in the various publications accompanying this letter. As an expression of the wide reaching character of its appeal, I might mention the name of such a military authority as H.E. Hubert Lyautey, Grand Marshall of France, who expressed his opinion of the urgent need of the Pact at this time; also those of Pope Pius, King Albert of Belgium, King Alexander of Yugoslavia, President Masaryk, President Marshall Von Hindenburgh; such world cultural figures as Einstein, Tagore, Bose, Maeterlinck, Raman and others; in addition to world universities, scientific bodies, National academies some of which are outlined in the accompanying book on the Roerich Pact, one may especially mention the International Red Cross at Geneva, since the Roerich Pact is essentially a parallel to the Red Cross.

In this country wide support has ^{advocacy} been expressed among cultural bodies, and the women have voiced their unanimous endorsement of the Roerich Pact through the General Federation of Women's Clubs, which has unanimously endorsed it. In this deep response to the ideals set forth in the Roerich Pact, one may mention the words of Mrs. Roosevelt in regard to it: "I think the ideals represented by the Roerich Pact cannot help but appeal to all those who hope that the best in the past may be preserved to guide and serve future generations." So those of Miss Mary Wooley, "The adoption of the Roerich Banner of Peace seems to me most important step toward assuring the safety of the world's treasures and I hope the nations of the world will take this action."

Other equally interesting opinions have been voiced by enlightened leaders in all fields of educational endeavor the world over.

Having known the work of the Roerich Museum for many years, I would also like to express to you my highest endorsement of its educational and cultural activities which are very far-reaching. Chartered by the University of the State of New York, as a public museum, the Roerich Museum also expresses its educational and cultural activities through a school of all arts, an international art center, a department of publications, an international society devoted to cultural interchange between the nations and now having 65 branches in 24 countries, and the scientific research institute which has been of especial interest to me because, in addition to its other scientific researches, it is conducting studies into the ancient medical and plant lore of Tibet and Central Asia. This brief resume of the activities of the Roerich Museum, I am supplementing by an outline "Decade of Activities" which also accompanies this letter.

altruistic

view therefore of the ~~scientific~~ and humanitarian purposes to which the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace is dedicated, and its sponsorship by an institution of unquestioned educational and altruistic aims, it seems to me especially in keeping with our new point of view of world affairs. Being profoundly appreciative of the lofty and beautiful ideals which inspire and animate all your actions in the cause of International Relations, I have felt it a pleasure to bring to your attention this plan, for which I have the highest respect. It seems to me, that as an expression of high ^{esteem} respect for the artistic and scientific achievements of other countries and a concern for their preservation, it is an especially propitious movement at this time. Moreover, because of my interest in things artistic and scientific, I believe this Convention for the Roerich Pact in Washington, this November, furnishes opportunity for a restatement by America--particular in keeping at the present time-- of its belief that there must be no barriers to the fundamentally worthwhile things which transcend national boundaries and have to do with the expression of a common human purpose, however apparently separate the paths of the nations may lie. Through this mutual respect and vigilance for the cultural attainments of all nations, ~~and~~ as the heritage of the entire race, I believe we have made way for a distinct movement towards the peace of the nations.

Material Attached:

Material accompanying this letter:

"Roerich Pact"

"Roerich Museum: A Decade of Activity"

Dr. George Chklaver: "Le Pacte Roerich et la Societe des Nations "

"Le Mouvement en faveur du Pacte Roerich"

C. Tulpinck: "La Protection en temps de gue re des institutions, missions, collections
artistique, scientifiques, monuments historiques et besutes de la nature--
Le Pacte Roerich, sa necessite , son activite."

Roerich Museum Bulletin: October 1931

September 1931

December 1932

(Sent by our friend
man)

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MEMORANDUM IN REGARD TO THE RECEIVERSHIP
OF THE ROERICH MUSEUM

Since the matter of the Receivership has been mentioned to me by the member of the State Department --although I cannot see its bearing on the subject in hand--I should like to present the facts of this matter, which are entirely familiar to me.

The mentioned Receivership is not at all concerned with the Roerich Museum, which during the last year has continued its activities in an even increased scope and measure from the educational and cultural point of view. The Receivership is on one of the Buildings owned by the Roerich Museum, since the Museum also owns property, in addition to this building, in New York State, Connecticut, and India.

In line with this Receivership, however, I may state that I know from the Roerich Museum officials that a complete legal victory has been won by them and a definite plan has now been drawn up whereby the Building returns entirely into the hands of the Museum, which had never once defaulted in interest payments on this Building.

The reason why wide attention has been drawn to this case is the fact that the Roerich Museum has been acclaimed for its fight in bringing about a revelation of the existing receivership ~~practices~~ practices and "rackets" worked in conjunction with the New York Banks, due to the lure of high receivership fees and other malpractices.

I may also state that this case --fought as a precedent by the Roerich Museum--has provided a basis for the new legislation in regard to Real Estate and Receiverships now promoted by Governor Lehman of New York., which are aimed to wipe out forever the insidious practices which have held in the real estate field, and which have long terrorized real estate owners.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

My dear Mr. Secretary:

I have received your letter of October 11th regarding the designation of someone to attend the Convention for the Banner of Peace to be held in Washington on the 17th and 18th of November next.

I have given much consideration to what you have said and to what you have written to me about the attitude ~~of~~ this Government should take toward this plan for a Banner of Peace and while I am not convinced that the practical measures which would be necessary for the carrying out of such a plan would be acceptable to all the nations of the world, and I think you will agree that such an arrangement would be ineffective unless it were entered into by all nations, I agree with you that this is not a time for the United States even to seem to withhold its approval from such a plan for the preservation of the accomplishments and results of civilization in its intellectual and cultural domain.

As I understand that you are planning to attend this Convention yourself it would seem entirely appropriate and I would be grateful to you if you would be good enough to represent me on this occasion for the purpose of conveying to the assembly a message along the following lines:

"I have learned with interest and personal satisfaction of the efforts now being made for the protection and preservation of the educational, artistic and scientific works in every country during any period of hostilities in which they might be subject to destruction or injury. While there are in existence certain agencies for the protection of such works, I am in entire sympathy with the objects for which the meeting you are now attending was called and I would be gratified if these aims could be accomplished."

Sincerely yours,

S) Cordell Hull