

**A BANNER OF PEACE.**

By Colonel A. E. MAHON, D.S.O.



# THE ROERICH BANNER OF PEACE

WHAT IT IS.—By Colonel A. E. Mahon, D.S.O.

A BANNER of Peace may sound out of place in a world that is anything but peaceful, but if we examine the real objects of such a banner we will find that not only is it not out of place but it is eminently desirable.

Professor Roerich's idea is to create a flag to be respected as international in the same way as the Red Cross is to-day, and the places under which it is flown would be treated as neutral territory. It would be raised above cathedrals, museums, libraries, mosques, temples, universities and other centres of culture in every country with the object of preserving them in times of war and similar calamities.

Professor Nicholas Roerich will need no introduction to the majority of people, his reputation in the spheres of art and letters is famous throughout the world. It is indeed fortunate that an acknowledged leader of culture whose name is familiar in every country should pioneer this scheme for the preservation of international treasures.

If the Great War did no other good it at least brought home to us the irreparable loss that modern warfare must inflict not only to human life but also on those treasures of art and science that form the milestones of civilisation.

We know that the Red Cross Flag has been fairly well respected, as far as the conditions of war will permit. Would it not be possible to have a flag for the protection of institutions of culture and also of monuments of artistic and scientific value?

Such an idea seems simple enough, and yet it was left to Professor Roerich to make the suggestion and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the idea should materialise. So long ago as 1904, in an address to the Society of Architect Artists in St. Petersburg, he outlined this idea. Again in 1914, when numerous irreparable historical monuments perished, he made a similar proposal to the late Emperor Nicholas II and to the late Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas. Both proposals met with great sympathy and it was only the war that prevented the immediate

development of the scheme. Had it been possible to adopt the idea at that time the Cloth Hall at Ypres, and the irretrievable treasures of Rheims and Louvain might have been saved. In 1929 he proposed to the nations to establish a pact for the preservation of treasures of Art and Science of the world. This proposal was made public in the U. S. A. through the *New York Times* and at the time Professor Roerich commissioned Dr. Georges Chklaver, Doctor of Laws and Lecturer of the Paris University, to draft the legal form of this Pact.

The Pact was submitted in 1930 and unanimously approved by the Museum's Committee of the League of Nations. In the same year were founded the "Committee of the Roerich Banner of Peace" in New York and the "Comité pour le Pacte Roerich" at Paris. The next year saw the foundation of the "Union Internationale pour le Pacte Roerich" with its seat at Bruges and under the Protectorship of M. Adatci, President of the Hague Court of International Justice.

Three International Conferences have been dedicated to the promulgation of the Roerich Pact. The first was held in Bruges in 1931 and the second, also in Bruges, in 1932, at which delegates of over twenty countries participated.

At the time of the Second International Conference an Exhibition of Art Cities took place at which twenty-three countries were represented. At the same time the "Foundation Roerich pro Pace, Arte, Scientia et Labore" was inaugurated in Bruges.

All three Banner of Peace Committees held lectures, published reports and arranged manifestations, as, for instance, the Pageant of the Shakespearean Association of Roerich Society in Central Park in New York.

Enthusiastic response came in from all parts of the world and thousands of letters of appreciation and endorsement were received from governments, scientific and artistic institutions, women's organisations and leading statesmen. These opinions were published in the form of Vol. I of the "Roerich Pact Book." Almost all leading men in the world of culture have expressed their appreciation and enthusiasm for the Pact,



and we find in this list of adherers such prominent names as H. M. the late King Albert of Belgium, President Masaryk of the Czechoslovak Republic, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, H. H. Pope Pius XI, Marshall Lyautey of France, Maurice Maeterlinck, the renowned Belgian author, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sir C. V. Raman, Sir Jagadis Bose, Secretary H. A. Wallace, Senator Copeland, Senator Ricci, Baron de Taube, Prof. A. Bustamente, Prof. R. Alramira, Prof. Louis Le Fur, the Duchess of Somerset, Prof. Anesaki and numerous other names of international standing, followed by a list of Academies, headed by the Academie Francaise and by the world's Universities, Museums, etc., etc.

At the commencement of the Convention an international broadcast was sent out to the world. The participants in this were the Hon. Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture. Prof. Magoffin, Hon. President of the Archæological Institute of America. International radio addresses were also made in French, German, Italian and Spanish. An invocation was made by the Bishop of Washington. On the second day the proceedings were opened by the Bishop of Modra and Rector of the Catholic University of America. Rear-Admiral Taussig stated that the Navy would fully support the Roerich Pact. The Hon. Toshihiko Taketomi, official delegate of the Imperial Japanese



*Nicholas Roerich's Painting "Sancta Protectrix," a Symbolical Painting representing the "Banner of Peace."*

The Third International Convention was held in Washington in 1933. The audience was composed of the highest representatives of the diplomatic corps, U. S. Government officials, and leaders in the fields of art, science and religion. In addition to the 35 countries represented there were members of the Cabinet, an Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of the U. S., the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Heads of American Government Departments, 14 Senators, 16 Governors of States, Members of Congress, Officials of the U. S. War and Navy Departments, heads of leading colleges, scientific institutions and libraries. Among the endorsers and honorary members were leaders in the fields of international law, art and science from foreign countries.

Government, mentioned that on the day of the Convention the Roerich Banner of Peace was being unfurled over the Library and Museum in Tokyo.

Copies of the resolutions passed by the Convention were submitted to the Governments of all nations throughout the world, also to all international conferences and organisations working for peace and culture. On the suggestion of General Alfredo de Leon a Permanent Committee for the Advancement of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, similar to those in existence in Paris and Bruges, was formed for America.

The following Governments were represented at the Convention: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Dominican



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Republic, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Irish Free State, Japan, Lithuania, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, U. S. America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, and the following sent observers: Albania, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Turkey, Hungary.

The Pan-American Congress recently held at Montevideo unanimously adopted the Roerich Pact.

Although the idea has been welcomed in the highest quarters, and its practicability endorsed by competent military authorities, there are still sceptics who express their doubts as to the possibility of respecting such a flag in modern warfare. Similar doubts were expressed in the past with regard to the Red Cross and yet we must admit that, in spite of regrettable accidents, the Red Cross has been respected and that it has proved an inestimable blessing to all nations.

If it is possible to respect the Red Cross which, generally speaking, is for the protection of the sick and wounded and their attendants, would it not be equally possible to protect those places which, on the cessation of hostilities, are for the benefit of both belligerents? There are many soldiers who would respect the Banner of Peace in preference to the Red Cross because in respecting the Red Cross they know they are sparing the lives of the enemy when it is their avowed object to kill as many of them as possible.

If it is thought that any nation would sink so low as to abuse the proposed flag and use for military purposes certain buildings over which the flag was flown, it should be possible to make it one of the conditions under which this flag is to be flown in war, that officers belonging to neutral nations should be deputed to see that no building over which this flag was flown was used for any kind of military purpose, and to report to the League of Nations any case in which the neutrality of the zone was not respected.

It has to be admitted that in cases of long distance bombardments, aerial bombardments by night, defective shells, etc., accidents will happen. But we believe that, as has been the case in the past with the Red Cross, such cases are genuine accidents and that no nation would sanction the bombardment of any place which they had previously agreed to regard as neutral territory.

For the effective protection of any building it would, of course, be necessary to delimit a certain specified zone in the immediate locality of such building and the whole of this zone would have to be regarded as neutral and not made use of for any military purpose. But it will undoubtedly be necessary in future to apply this rule to hospitals, and what would be possible in one case would be equally possible in another.

If nations can agree not to use soft-nosed bullets and to conform to other agreed rules for the conduct of warfare there is no reason why they should not agree to preserve from destruction those edifices which can be regarded as international treasures or which are for the lasting benefit of humanity. Had all the arts and sciences of the past been handed down intact, human civilisation would have been far superior to-day to what it is. But most of the instruments and institutions of ancient culture and knowledge have perished through the vandalism of war, and to-day man gropes among the ruins for a glimpse of ancient culture and wisdom. Unless we can guard against destructions in future we cannot claim to have made any advance on former civilisations, and our institutions of culture and knowledge will have no permanent value. These cultural achievements which constitute the greatest treasures of the human race, and are the common heritage of all humanity, will perish in the same way as the institutions of culture and knowledge have perished in ages past.

It is not only in wars between nations that this flag is a necessity. Recent happenings in Spain have shown us that it is equally desirable in revolutions and internal disorders that are liable to occur in any country. When once it is realised that certain buildings really are international treasures and not to be considered as merely the property of the country in which they happen to be located, it should not be difficult for the nations to agree to protect them during internal strife as well as in war. It is very true that the most effective protection would be a universal peace, but as this happy state is not likely to be obtained in this generation, the hope of a lasting peace should not blind us to the necessity for taking measures for the protection of irreplaceable treasures until the ideal of peace on earth and goodwill among men becomes an accomplished fact.

Even in the heat of war, ships flying neutral flags have been respected. It is equally possible to respect a neutral flag that indicates a neutral zone on land.



The Banner, as such, represents three spheres within a circle, in majenta, on a white background. These spheres are symbolic of the Past, Present and Future. Their position shows that they conjoin for further constructive work. The circle represents eternity within which are the three demarcations of time. The colour of the spheres and the circle is the colour of life and vigour. The background is simple purity. The flag, on the whole, is emblematic of pure, sanguine life and immortality; and changing, active, creative time and eternity in one. It immortalises life and the achievements of the past, present and future by enfolding them in one vivid embrace of ever-advancing eternity. In the words of Professor Roerich: "One must know that no world matter was ever decided without the raising of all kinds of symbols. In every procession are being carried manifold placards and emblems which, however, in their inner essence serve the same ideal."

The Professor hopes that not only the present generation but generations to come by having this reminder constantly before their eyes will realise what are the things that matter and that with this knowledge will come the realisation of the futility of war, so that the flag may ultimately become not merely a protection in war but a preventive against war and a real Banner of Peace. This idea is beautifully expressed by Dr. Robert Norwood in the concluding passage of the consecratory sermon which he delivered in New York during the solemn festivity of "Peace Day."

"We shall have peace, Beautiful Flag, and it will come to us one day. We send you thus forth on your mission at this moment. We send you forth, and we pledge ourselves that we who touch your folds, that we who look upon your whiteness, shall consecrate ourselves, our souls and bodies, to the adoration of Good in the Highest, the height of human hearts. And so it shall come to pass that Peace shall come at last to Humanity through the victorious folds of your whiteness, the challenge of your colour and the completeness of your symmetry. Go forth and conquer in the name of Love, and we who are Lovers here this afternoon, lay our hearts upon your folds, and wish you good luck in the name of the Highest!"

Even though it may be many years before it achieves the Professor's ideal of the unification of mankind, its effect on the minds of men will be inestimable, while its material value cannot fail to be considerable.

There are always to be found individuals who will decry any new idea. Possibly because they were not the originators of it, or possibly because their visions are limited. Fortunately there are men with broader minds and wider visions. In his plea for a Banner of Peace Professor Roerich has given a lead to these men who are capable of thinking internationally and whose patriotism has not blinded them to the greater issues. One of the greatest dangers to peace is when patriotism runs riot, and the greatest enemies to their own countries are the misguided and over-zealous patriots.

A wider outlook, an outlook that goes beyond our present needs, that considers the future of mankind and the future of our own posterity will surely see that by limiting the destruction of war to purely military needs we are making a long step forward towards that higher state of civilisation that we hope may some day attain that everlasting peace we all so ardently desire.

If this flag is accepted by all nations—and there would appear to be every prospect of this being done—the name of Roerich will go down in history as the name of the man who has done more for the preservation and advancement of art and culture and the attainment of everlasting peace than any other man, either now or in the past.

In the Roerich Hall in Bruges is exhibited this great artist's large canvas, "The Great Mother of the Banner of Peace," the idea of this Banner of Peace is also expressed in several of his most recent paintings.

The Roerich Banner of Peace is already flying over many cultural institutions and there can be little doubt that its general adoption is only a matter of time since so many countries have expressed their approval of it. In the words of Professor Roerich himself: "If the Red Cross Flag protects the physical health, then let the Banner of Peace preserve the spiritual health of mankind!"





## A Banner of Peace

*From a Military Point of View. By Colonel A. E. Mahon, D. S. O. Sole Copyright by F. H. Rauleder*

PROFESSOR Roerich's idea of creating a flag to be flown over cathedrals, museums, libraries, universities and other centres of culture in every country, and that such places should be regarded as neutral territory with the object of preserving them, not merely for the country in which they are located, but for humanity as a whole, is a practical proposition and not an Utopian ideal. It is an idea that is worthy of the most earnest consideration, and we can ill afford to delay the universal adoption of such a flag.

Although the idea has been welcomed in the highest quarters, and its practicability endorsed by no less an authority than Marshal Lyautey of France, there are still sceptics who express their doubts as to the possibility of respecting such a flag in modern warfare. Similar doubts have been expressed in the past with regard to the Red Cross and yet we must admit that, in spite of regrettable accidents, the Red Cross has been respected and that it has proved an inestimable blessing to all nations.

If it is possible to respect the Red Cross which, generally speaking, is for the protection of the sick and wound-

ed and their attendants, would it not be equally possible to protect those places which, on the cessation of hostilities, are for the benefit of both belligerents?

If it is thought that any nation would sink so low as to abuse the proposed flag and use for military purposes certain buildings over which the flag was flown, it should be possible to make it one of the conditions under which this flag is to be flown in war, that officers belonging to neutral nations should be deputed to see that no building over which this flag was flown was used for any kind of military purpose, and to report to the League of Nations any case which the neutrality of the zone was not respected.

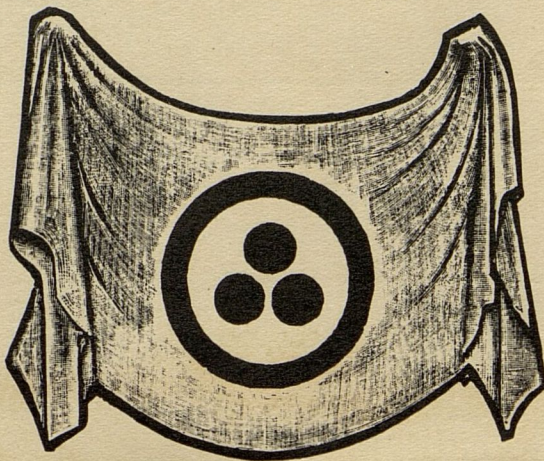
It has to be admitted that in cases of long distance bombardments, aerial bombardments by night, defective shells etc., accidents will happen. But we believe that, as has been the case in the past with the Red Cross, such cases are genuine accidents and that no nations would sanction the bombardment of any place which they had previously agreed to regard as neutral territory.

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It is, moreover, not only in wars between nations that this flag is a necessity. Recent happenings in Spain have shown us that it is equally desirable in revolutions and internal disorders that are liable to occur in any country. When once it is realised that certain buildings really are international treasures it should not be difficult for the nations to agree to protect them. It is very true that the most effective protection would be a universal peace, but as this happy state is not likely to be obtained in this generation, the hope of a lasting peace should not blind us to the necessity for taking measures for the protection of irreplaceable treasures until the ideal peace on earth and



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A wider outlook, an outlook that goes beyond our present needs, that considers the future of mankind and the future of our own posterity will surely see that by limiting the destruction of war to purely military needs we are making a long step forward towards that higher state of civilisation that we hope may some day attain that everlasting peace we all so ardently desire.

If the Banner of Peace is not practical from a military point of view then the Red Cross is also not practical, but the Red Cross has been proved to be practical, therefore, as Euclid would say, Q. E. D.



# THE ROERICH BANNER OF PEACE

WHAT IS IT?

By Col. A. E. MAHON, D.S.O.

**A** BANNER OF PEACE may sound out of place in a world that is anything but peaceful, but if we examine the real objects of such a banner we will find that not only is it not out of place, but it is eminently desirable.

Professor Roerich has brought forward an idea which is to create a flag to be respected as international in the same way as the Red Cross is to-day, and the places under which it is flown would be treated as neutral territory. It would be raised above cathedrals, museums, libraries, mosques, temples, universities, and other centres of culture in every country with the object of preserving them in times of war and similar calamities.

Professor Nicholas Roerich's reputation in the spheres of art and letters is famous throughout the world. It is indeed fortunate that an acknowledged leader of culture whose name is familiar in every country, should pioneer this scheme for the preservation of international treasures.

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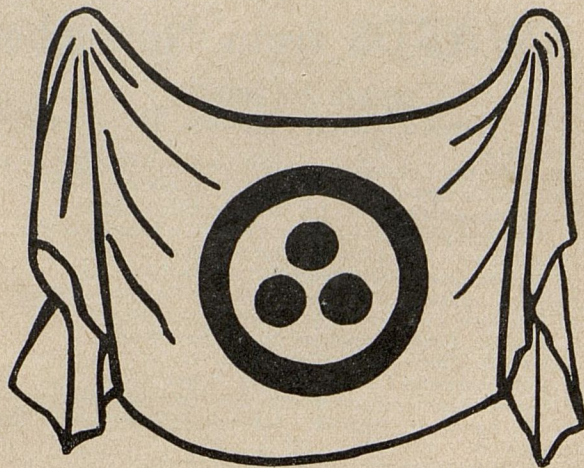
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Such an idea seems simple enough, and yet it was left to Professor Roerich to make the suggestion, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the idea should materialise. So long ago as 1904, in an address to the Society of Architect Artists in St. Petersburg, he outlined this idea. Again in 1914, when numerous irreparable historical monuments perished, he made a similar proposal to the late Emperor Nicholas II, and to the late Russian Commander-in-Chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas. Both proposals met with great sympathy, and it was only the war that prevented the immediate development of the scheme. Had it been possible to adopt the idea at that time, the Cloth Hall at Ypres and the irretrievable treasures of Rheims and Louvain might have been saved. In 1929 he proposed to the nations to establish a pact for the preservation of treasures of Art and Science of the world. This proposal was made public in the U.S.A. through the *New York Times*, and at the same time Professor Roerich commissioned Dr. Georges Chklaver, Doctor of Laws and Lecturer of the Paris University, to draft the legal form of this Pact.

The Pact was submitted in 1930, and unanimously approved by the Museums Committee of the League of Nations. In the same year were founded the "Committee of the Roerich Banner of Peace" in New York, and the "Comité pour le Pacte Roerich" with its seat at Bruges and under the Protectorship of M. Adatci, President of the Hague Court of International Justice.

Three International Conferences have been dedicated to the promulgation of the Roerich Pact. The first was held in Bruges in 1931, and the second also in Bruges, in 1932, at which delegates from over twenty countries participated.

The Third International Convention was held in Washington in 1933. The audience was composed of the highest representatives of the diplomatic corps, U.S. Government



officials and leaders in the fields of art, science and religion. In addition to the thirty-five countries represented there were members of the Cabinet, an associate Judge of the Supreme Court of the U.S., the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Heads of American Government Departments, fourteen Senators, sixteen Governors of States, Members of Congress, officials of the U.S. War and Navy Departments, heads of leading colleges, scientific institutions, and libraries. Among the endorsers and honorary members were leaders in the fields of international law, art, and science from foreign countries.

All three Banner of Peace Committees held lectures, published reports, and arranged manifestations, as for instance, the Pageant of the Shakespearean Association of Roerich Society in Central Park in New York.

Copies of the resolutions were submitted to the Governments of all nations throughout the world, also to all international conferences and organisations working for peace and culture.

The Banner, as such, represents three spheres within a circle, in magenta, on a white background. These spheres are symbolic of the Past, Present, and Future. Their position shows that they conjoin for further constructive work. The circle represents eternity within which are the three demarcations of time. The colour of the spheres and the circle is the colour of life and vigour. The background is simple purity. The flag on the whole is emblematic of pure, sanguine life and immortality; and changing, active, creative time and eternity in one. It immortalises life and the achievements of the past, present, and future by enfolding them in one vivid embrace of ever-advancing eternity.

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THE ROERICH BANNER OF PEACE

BY

Colonel A. E. Mahon, D. S. O.

(for "*Les Nouvelles Litteraires*")

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Professor Roerich's idea is to create a flag which would be respected as international in the same way as the Red Cross is today, and the places over which it is flown would be treated as neutral territory. It would be raised above cathedrals, museums, libraries, mosques, temples, universities and other centres of culture in every country with the object of preserving them in times of war.

Professor Nicholas Roerich will need no introduction to the majority of people, his reputation in the spheres of art and letters is famous throughout the world, and his work in the cause of universal peace and understanding is known in every country. It is indeed fortunate that an acknowledged leader of culture whose name is universally familiar should pioneer this scheme for the preservation of international treasures.

We have heard so much of pacts in recent years that we are inclined not to give them the consideration that they deserve. If, in experience, agreements have often been broken, that bare fact does not nullify their value. The more deeply one probes into historical records the more one comes to appreciate the restraining influence which agreements exercise. They operate both psychologically and technically. We are justified in deducing that assurances of help, prohibition of certain forms of action, and limitation of weapons may be an effective check, if not a complete one. Their effect may even persist after they have been broken. Moreover, although each tie separately may seem a fragile strand, when interwoven they may form a powerful check.

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Although the idea has been welcomed in the highest quarters, and its practicability endorsed by competent military authorities — including the late Marshal Lyautey — there are still sceptics who express their doubts as to the possibility of respecting such a flag in modern warfare. Similar doubts were expressed in the past with regard to the Red Cross, and yet we must admit that, in spite of regrettable accidents, the Red Cross has been respected, and that it has proved to be an inestimable blessing to all nations. The spirit of the Geneva Convention has been observed in all wars between civilised powers that have occurred since the signing of the Convention in 1864.

If it is possible to respect the Red Cross which, generally speaking, is for the protection of the sick and wounded and their attendants, would it not be equally possible to protect those places which, on the cessation of hostilities, are for the benefit of both belligerents?

Personally I believe that the protection of the places which the Roerich Pact is designed to protect, would not be so difficult as the protection of a hospital, although I am well aware of the difficulties that would have to be overcome. As a soldier I know that in war one becomes imbued with the desire to kill as many of the enemy as possible, and one is even loath to spare the sick and wounded in hospitals, for will they not return to the fight as soon as they are well again? Even though one may feel no personal animosity towards the enemy one feels that in order to win the war one must kill as many of the enemy as possible. When a spirit of hatred for the enemy has been fostered among the fighting forces, as is sometimes done, it is possible to understand the killing of even women and children in a mad desire to exterminate the race of