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## THE ROERICH PACT AND BANNER OF PEACE.

ITS AIMS AND HISTORY TO DATE.

BY MR. V. A. SHIBAYEV,  
*Naggar.*

[The author of this article is a Member of the Organizing Committee of the Third Convention of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, held at Washington, U. S. A.]

THE 17th of November—the anniversary of the Roerich Peace Banner Day—was celebrated with great solemnity and enthusiasm in New York, Paris and other centres of the world, where this epoch-making, cultural treaty has lately made such progress towards recognition and adoption by various nations. The Banner of Peace, as is now well-known, is the symbol of the Roerich Pact, under which the agreeing countries pledge themselves to guard, esteem and sponsor all those immeasurable and irreplaceable treasures of the achievement of the human spirit which otherwise, as has unfortunately been proved only too often, are neglected and destroyed, either by vandalism, lack of care and understanding, both in times of war and so-called peace. This great humanitarian idea thus provides in the field of mankind's cultural achievements the same guardianship as the Red Cross provides in pity for the physical sufferings of man. As Articles I and II of the Pact 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."

Prof. Nicholas de Roerich, whom the Honorable George Gordon Battle named "undoubtedly one of the greatest cultural leaders of all times" in a recent address at the opening of a new "Banner of Peace Committee" beautifully expressed the ideals of the Pact in the following words:

"The world is striving towards Peace in many ways and every one realizes in his heart that this constructive work is a true prophecy of the New Era. Of course arguments about the comparative qualities of various kinds of shells or about the advisability of replacing the guns of two battleships by one ship of a newer type do not contribute harmonically to constructive ideas of Peace. But let us hope that even these discussions are preliminary steps towards the same great concept of Peace, which will take place, thanks to a taming of belligerent instincts of nations, by great brilliant creations of the Spirit. But the fact remains in the meantime, that shells of these guns can destroy the greatest treasures of art and science as thoroughly as those of an entire fleet. We deplore the loss of the libraries of Louvain and Oviedo and the irreplaceable beauty of the Cathedral of Rheims, we remember the beautiful treasures



of private collections, which were lost during world calamities. But we do not want to inscribe on these deeds any words of hatred; let us simply say: 'Destroyed by human ignorance — rebuilt by human hope!' Nevertheless errors of one form or another may occur again and thus other valuable achievements of humanity remain in constant danger of being destroyed. Against such ignorant errors we must immediately take precautions and definite measures. Hence first of all let us sacredly protect the creative treasures of humanity. First of all let us agree on that, which is the most simple—so that, as with the Red Cross, the Banner may significantly summon the conscience of men to the protection of that, which in essence, belongs not to one nation alone, but to the entire world, and constitutes the real pride of the human race."

The design of the Banner of Peace shows three spheres surrounded by a circle in magenta colour on a white back-ground. Of the many national and individual interpretations of this symbol, which is so beautiful in its simplicity, the most usual are perhaps those of Religion, Art and Science as aspects of Culture—the surrounding circle; or that of Past, Present and Future achievements of humanity guarded within the circle of Eternity. "Both these interpretations," says Prof. de Roerich, the creator of the Pact and Banner, "are just as good, for they represent a synthesis of life and that is my ruling precept."

A brief outline of the history of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace gives the following important milestones:

Conceived and proposed by Professor Nicholas de Roerich as early as in 1904 to the Society of Architects and in 1914 during the

war to H. M. Tzar Nicholas II and the Grand Duke Nicholas (when in both cases it was received with highest interest but delayed owing to wars), the project was formally promulgated in New York in 1929 according to the codes of International Laws, the text of the Pact having been drafted by Dr. Georges Chklaver, Doctor of the International Law and Political Sciences of the Paris University. In the same year a committee of the Banner of Peace was founded in New York and the principles were published through the press. The following year similar committees were founded in Paris and Bruges, in the latter under the title "Union Internationale pour le Pacte Roerich". In the autumn of 1931 the Union convened the first International Conference, which proved the great interest of many Governments and in the next year another enthusiastic World Conference took place in the same city. Thousands of approving opinions came from religious, educational, artistic, scientific and other cultural bodies and personages from all over the world and it is only right and fair to state that none of the greatest men of our times omitted to take part in voicing their approval. To quote the Italian Ambassador at Washington, Signor A. Rosso: "I feel no one can be against such a great idea. Whoever would go against the Roerich Pact, will have the Sanctuary of public opinion to deal with." It is also of interest that the greatest military authorities (like the late Marshall Lyautey, Admiral Taussig, General Gouraud, etc.) were in complete favour of the Pact. The first volume of collected statements and letters was published in New York and Paris under the title "The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace". In the same year in Bruges the "Foundation Roerich pro Pace, Arts, Scientiæ et Labore" was inaugurated after the session



of the Second International Conference in that city. The following year, 1933, saw the Third Convention of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, held on Nov. 17th and 18th in Washington at the Mayflower, where thirty-six nations sent their representatives and this Convention unanimously passed the resolution to "recommend the adoption of this humanitarian measure to the Governments of all Nations" for "adoption or adhesion by unilateral action through proclamation of the executive, by bilateral action through international agreements and by multilateral action through declaration of international conferences." Hardly a month later, the Seventh Conference of the Pan-American Union at Montevideo passed the unanimous resolution to accept the above and to urge their participants—the twenty-one governments of the North, Central and South Americas—to sign the Pact and thus to apply the great principles in life. The Washington Convention of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace also elected a "Permanent Committee for the Advancement of the Adoption of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace," located at 310, Riverside Drive, New York, with Prof. and Mme. de Roerich as Honorary President; the Honorable Henry A. Wallace, U. S. Secretary of Agriculture, as Honorary Chairman; Mr. Louis L. Horch, President of Roerich Museum, as its Chairman; Miss F. R. Grant, Vice-Chairman, and Prof. Ralph V. D. Magoffin of the New York University as its Secretary-General. This body negotiates with all Governments, organizations and individuals, interested in the promotion and adoption of the Pact and receives their expressions of formal adherence. The proceedings of the Washington Convention have just been published in New York in book-form.

The Paris Committee of the Pact is under the presidentship of Baron M. A. de Taube, Member of the International Court at the Hague, and Dr. Georges Chklaver, Doctor of International Law, is Secretary-General. The Union International pour le Pacte Roerich in Bruges has M. Camille Tulpinck, Vice-Consul of Greece, as its President and Prof. M. Adatci, former President of the International Court at the Hague, as its Protector.

The current year—1934—saw the establishment of a "Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee" in the Far East in Harbin, Manchukuo, with Archbishop Nestor as Honorary President, N. L. Gondatti, President, and Prof. C. K. Hinz as Vice-President. A similar Committee was also inaugurated in Bruxelles with M. E. de Munck as President and M. Hendrickx, Barrister, as General Secretary and under participation of Count C. de Wiart, Minister; the Governors of Luxemburg and Western Flanders and a member of the Chamber of Deputies and a member of Court of Cassation on the Committee.

At the same time the following countries, which are members of the Pan-American Union, have either deposited their signatures of adherence or have appointed plenipotentiary delegates to do so, at the next Pan-American Conference to be held on Pan-American Day, April 14th, 1935; Panama (which thus was the first country to officially notify its readiness to ratify the Roerich Pact), Honduras, the United States, Equador, Uruguay, Guatamala and Brazil. Further Chile and China have informed of their readiness to ratify the Pact shortly and many countries of Europe have informed the Board of the Permanent Committee that their



respective Governments have the Pact under consideration. In Japan the Banner of Peace was actually already hoisted over the Ministry of Education on Nov. 17th, 1933, the day of the Washington Convention, and many educational and other cultural organisations have already unfurled the Banner.

As regards the United States, President F. D. Roosevelt has on August 11th officially empowered Secretary Henry A. Wallace as plenipotentiary to sign the Inter-American Treaty on the Roerich Pact. The Honorable Henry A. Wallace has recently given out the following statement to the press, which after reviewing the history of the Pact, concludes :

"I regard the Roerich Pact as an inevitable step in international relations. At no time has such an ideal been more needed. While the individual nations are working out their separate economic and national problems, it is also necessary that they recognize their responsibility as part of the community of nations. I am not one to urge visionary substitutes in the place of effective action in a world of hard economic facts, yet I do say that it is high time for the idealists who make the reality of to-morrow, to rally around such a symbol of international cultural unity. It is time that we appeal to that appreciation of beauty, science, education, which runs across all national boundaries, to strengthen all that we hold dear in our particular governments and customs. It is for this reason that I regard the ratification of the Roerich Pact as so significant a step. Its acceptance signifies the approach of a time when those who truly love their own nation will appreciate in addition the unique contribution of other nations and also do reverence to that common spiritual enterprise which draws together in

one fellowship all artists, scientists, educators and the truly religious of whatever faith. I feel that this age owes a great debt to Nicholas Roerich in the creation of this ideal—for such ideals alone afford reality to our efforts for creating material wealth and working out improved social machinery for its distribution. While we work out these myriad individual problems, we must have a unifying principle to which all our hearts can give supreme allegiance. In this we can work with faith and anticipation towards those spiritual cultural realities of which the Roerich Pact is the symbol."

It is indeed a great asset to know that in our present material and critical times there are not only thousands of individuals but also leading statesmen, who see and urge the fact of paramount importance—that the future of humanity is shaped more by actual spiritual strivings and cultural achievements and that the present age owes everything positive that it has, to true Culture and that thus the safeguarding of these pan-human achievements is of most imperative necessity.

Here in India one finds also a wide appreciation of the ideal for which the Roerich Pact stands. It would be impossible to quote all these signs of cultural understanding in so short a review as the present. But besides the adherences to the Pact as expressed by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Jagadis C. Bose, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Sir C. V. Raman, Dr. James H. Cousins, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the late Prof. S. R. Kashyab, S. V. Ramaswamy Mudaliar, O. C. Ganguly, Asit Kumar Haldar, N. C. Mehta, the late Ven. Sri Devamitta Dharmapala, etc., and institutions like the Andhra Historical Research Institute, the Allahabad Municipal Museum, the Bharat Kala Bhawan



in Benares, the Maha Bodhi Society, the Women's Indian Association, the Y.M.B.A. of Ceylon, the Madanapalle College, the Travancore Cultural Association, etc., and almost all the organs of the Press—the following two short quotations are expressive of the general enthusiastic attitude towards the Pact :

Mr. Gurdial Mallick of the League of Nation's Union writes in the *Sind Observer* on Banner of Peace Day, after a short description of the aims : " In the realization of this great and glorious ideal it is necessary to have the co-operation of the intelligentsia of the world to organize a strong public opinion in favour of the preservation of the artistic and cultural treasures of every country, so that mankind may have a continuous record of its achievement. To this end it is desirable that the governments of the world would all ratify the Roerich Pact guaranteeing this preservation and treating these treasures as the heritage not of any particular nation, but of the whole humanity and as such to be immune from the ravages of war and destruction."

Another distinguished writer, Swami Jagadiswarananda, states in a Message to the Banner of Peace Convention : " Professor Roerich, the founder and leader of this unique humanitarian movement, is himself the personification of Universal Art and Universal Culture. He has been truly called by Dr. James H. Cousins as 'Himalayan in Soul,' for he is really the Prophet of a New Humanity and the messenger of a New Cultural World... Let us all pray for the long life and sound health of Professor Roerich, our leader, who has opened a significant chapter in human history of inaugurating this movement and the Pact. Let the present Convention of Art and Culture prove to warring nations of the world by waving the Roerich Banner of Peace, that Art and Culture are the Divine property—the Universal Treasure of all mankind and write on the portal of every institution of the world—" Help and not fight, assimilate and not destroy, Harmony and Peace and Promo'e, not dissension ! "



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in Benares, the Maha Bodhi Society, the Women's Indian Association, the Y.M.B.A. of Ceylon, the Madanapalle College, the Travancore Cultural Association, etc., and almost all the organs of the Press—the following two short quotations are expressive of the general enthusiastic attitude towards the Pact :

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# The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace

(A Historical Sketch)

BY V. A. SHIBAYEV.



HERE are periods in the history of the world, when some great new ideas are introduced, beneficial for the whole of mankind and they always mark the beginning of a new era with far-reaching new effects and create new conditions of life. The ordinary man in the street is not always aware of the great importance of such turning points in history; but as human consciousness expands and as man finds himself more and more a conscious co-worker in the great cultural, religious, artistic, social, educational, scientific, economic and endless other fields of world constructiveness, it becomes imperative that he pays attention to, urges and supports these great movements, which improve life as a whole.

There are numerous such turning points in the history of mankind. The abolition of slavery (1833-1864), the protection of child labour in factories, the right of women for parliamentary franchise and equality (1918-20), international agreements regarding law (1922), labour (1919), post and telegraphs (1865-74), commerce (1920), airways (1919), the great idea of founding the International Red Cross Society in 1864 (conceived by Henri Dunant) and many other such international treaties are now regarded as self-understood and one dreads to think of the chaos which would befall the world, if these agreements were suddenly abolished.

The most important new contribution to this improvement of world conditions is the Roerich Pact and Banner



of Peace for safe-guarding the world's cultural treasures from annihilation through warfare and vandalism or in times of so-called peace from destruction through neglect, lack of understanding, internal calamities, etc. Under this Treaty the signing parties bind themselves to honour, promote and protect the cultural achievements of human genius, just as the Red Cross protects mankind from physical sufferings.

Professor Nicholas Roerich conceived this great idea already as far back as 1904, proposing it then to the Society of Architects in Russia and again in 1914 during the Russo-Japanese war to the Russian Government. Though received with great interest, actual warfare delayed the international adoption, but in 1929 the Pact, drafted according to the codes of international law by Dr. G. Chklaver, Doctor of International Law and Political Sciences of the Paris University, was formally promulgated in New York. The Pact provides that :

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..... The Institutions, Collections, and Missions thus registered display a distinctive flag which will entitle them to special protection and respect on the part of the Governments and people of all the High Contracting Parties (Articles I and II).

This Banner, designed by Prof. Roerich, is a white flag on which in magenta colour are shown three spheres in a circle. To mention but a few of the interpretations of this symbol,—it may be taken to represent Religion, Art and Science as expression of Culture or the Past, Present and Future achievements of mankind protected within the circle of Eternity.

A Committee of the Banner of Peace was founded in 1929 in New York and in 1930 two committees were inaugurated in Paris and Bruges respectively.

The First International Conference was held in September 13--15, 1931 and it resulted in a most enthusiastic response from all the different fields of world cultural activities. The first volume of adherences, messages and letters of support by cultural institutions and leading persons from all parts of the world was published the same year.



On August 8th and 9th, 1932 the Second International Conference took place in Bruges which met with still greater enthusiastic response and resulted in the foundation of the "Fondation Roerich pro Pace, Arte, Scientiae et Labore."

A great step forward was accomplished in 1933, when on November 17 and 18 at the Mayflower in Washington the Third International Convention of the Roerich Pact convened, with the participation of diplomatic representatives of 36 nations. The proceedings of this Convention, which the Director of the Pan-American Union rightly defined as "one of the most successful meetings ever held in Washington" have been published in a second volume. In summarizing this interesting book, one may say that — augmented by a colossal number of written endorsements from individuals and institutions in all branches of life — all speakers at the Convention advocated the acceptance and the Convention passed the unanimous resolution to adopt the Pact and to "recommend the adoption of this humanitarian measure to the Governments of all Nations" for "adoption or adhesion by unilateral action through proclamation of the executive; by bilateral action through international agreements and by multilateral action through declaration of international conferences".

In December 1933, the Seventh Conference of the Pan-American Union at Montevideo, also passed the unanimous resolution to accept the Roerich Pact and to urge its members (the 21 republics of North, Central and South America) to sign the Pact.

Thus on April 15th 1935 in the office of the President of the United States, at the White House in Washington, the Treaty of the Roerich Pact was signed by all the twenty-one countries of the Pan-American Union: The United States, Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Equador, El-Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Secretary of Agriculture, who had been officially empowered to sign the Treaty on behalf of the United



States, made the following statement in regard to the Roerich Pact :

"I regard the Roerich Pact as an inevitable step in international relations. At no time has such an ideal been more needed. While the individual nations are working out their separate economic and national problems, it is also necessary that they recognize their responsibility as part of the community of nations. It is high time for the idealists who make the reality to-morrow, to rally around such a symbol of international cultural unity. It is time that we appeal to that appreciation of beauty, science, education which runs across all national boundaries to strengthen all that we hold dear in our particular governments and customs. It is for this reason that I regard the ratification of the Roerich Pact as so significant a step. Its acceptance signifies the approach of a time, when those who truly love their own nation will appreciate in addition the unique contributions of other nations and also do reverence to that common spiritual enterprise which draws together in one fellowship all artists, scientists, educators and truly religious of whatever faith."

"I feel that this age owes a great debt to Nicholas Roerich in that creation of this ideal—for such ideals alone afford reality to our efforts for creating material wealth and working out improved social machinery for its distribution. While we work out these myriad individual problems we must have a unifying principle to which all our hearts can give supreme allegiance. In this we can work with faith and anticipation towards those spiritual and cultural realities of which the Roerich Pact is the symbol."

In Europe, besides the Committee of the Roerich Pact in Paris (at the Musee Roerich, Palais Royal, 7 rue de Valois) there are many other Pact Committees actively working in Bruges, Bruxelles, Prague, the Baltic States, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc. The great importance of the Roerich Pact, besides the actual protection of world cultural treasures, lies in its enormous educative value and the subsequent raising of the general cultural level. To make people understand the real values of their own national and other nations' contributions to Culture, means to uplift the very outlook on the purpose of human existence—it means to stimulate them to create such cultural treasures themselves, to turn their efforts towards higher ideals.

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## The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace

(A Historical Sketch)

BY V. A. SHIBAYEV.



HERE are periods in the history of the world, when some great new ideas are introduced, beneficial for the whole of mankind and they always mark the beginning of a new era with far-reaching new effects and create new conditions of life. The ordinary man in the street is not always aware of the great importance of such turning points in history; but as human consciousness expands and as man finds himself more and more a conscious co-worker in the great cultural, religious, artistic, social, educational, scientific, economic and endless other fields of world constructiveness, it becomes imperative that he pays attention to, urges and supports these great movements, which improve life as a whole.

There are numerous such turning points in the history of mankind. The abolition of slavery (1833-1864), the protection of child labour in factories, the right of women for parliamentary franchise and equality (1918-20), international agreements regarding law (1922), labour (1919), post and telegraphs (1865-74), commerce (1920), airways (1919), the great idea of founding the International Red Cross Society in 1864 (conceived by Henri Dunant) and many other such international treaties are now regarded as self-understood and one dreads to think of the chaos which would befall the world, if these agreements were suddenly abolished.

The most important new contribution to this improvement of world conditions is the Roerich Pact and Banner



of Peace for safe-guarding the world's cultural treasures from annihilation through warfare and vandalism or in times of so-called peace from destruction through neglect, lack of understanding, internal calamities, etc. Under this Treaty the signing parties bind themselves to honour, promote and protect the cultural achievements of human genius, just as the Red Cross protects mankind from physical sufferings.

Professor Nicholas Roerich conceived this great idea already as far back as 1904, proposing it then to the Society of Architects in Russia and again in 1914 during the Russo-Japanese war to the Russian Government. Though received with great interest, actual warfare delayed the international adoption, but in 1929 the Pact, drafted according to the codes of international law by Dr. G. Chklaver, Doctor of International Law and Political Sciences of the Paris University, was formally promulgated in New York. The Pact provides that :

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..... The Institutions, Collections, and Missions thus registered display a distinctive flag which will entitle them to special protection and respect on the part of the Governments and people of all the High Contracting Parties (Articles I and II).

This Banner, designed by Prof. Roerich, is a white flag on which in magenta colour are shown three spheres in a circle. To mention but a few of the interpretations of this symbol,—it may be taken to represent Religion, Art and Science as expression of Culture or the Past, Present and Future achievements of mankind protected within the circle of Eternity.

A Committee of the Banner of Peace was founded in 1929 in New York and in 1930 two committees were inaugurated in Paris and Bruges respectively.

The First International Conference was held in September 13--15, 1931 and it resulted in a most enthusiastic response from all the different fields of world cultural activities. The first volume of adherences, messages and letters of support by cultural institutions and leading persons from all parts of the world was published the same year.



On August 8th and 9th, 1932 the Second International Conference took place in Bruges which met with still greater enthusiastic response and resulted in the foundation of the "Fondation Roerich pro Pace, Arte, Scientiae et Labore."

A great step forward was accomplished in 1933, when on November 17 and 18 at the Mayflower in Washington the Third International Convention of the Roerich Pact convened, with the participation of diplomatic representatives of 36 nations. The proceedings of this Convention, which the Director of the Pan-American Union rightly defined as "one of the most successful meetings ever held in Washington" have been published in a second volume. In summarizing this interesting book, one may say that — augmented by a colossal number of written endorsements from individuals and institutions in all branches of life — all speakers at the Convention advocated the acceptance and the Convention passed the unanimous resolution to adopt the Pact and to "recommend the adoption of this humanitarian measure to the Governments of all Nations" for "adoption or adhesion by unilateral action through proclamation of the executive; by bilateral action through international agreements and by multilateral action through declaration of international conferences".

In December 1933, the Seventh Conference of the Pan-American Union at Montevideo, also passed the unanimous resolution to accept the Roerich Pact and to urge its members (the 21 republics of North, Central and South America) to sign the Pact.

Thus on April 15th 1935 in the office of the President of the United States, at the White House in Washington, the Treaty of the Roerich Pact was signed by all the twenty-one countries of the Pan-American Union: The United States, Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa-Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Equador, El-Salvador, Guatamala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The Secretary of Agriculture, who had been officially empowered to sign the Treaty on behalf of the United



States, made the following statement in regard to the Roerich Pact :

"I regard the Roerich Pact as an inevitable step in international relations. At no time has such an ideal been more needed. While the individual nations are working out their separate economic and national problems, it is also necessary that they recognize their responsibility as part of the community of nations. It is high time for the idealists who make the reality to-morrow, to rally around such a symbol of international cultural unity. It is time that we appeal to that appreciation of beauty, science, education which runs across all national boundaries to strengthen all that we hold dear in our particular governments and customs. It is for this reason that I regard the ratification of the Roerich Pact as so significant a step. Its acceptance signifies the approach of a time, when those who truly love their own nation will appreciate in addition the unique contributions of other nations and also do reverence to that common spiritual enterprise which draws together in one fellowship all artists, scientists, educators and truly religious of whatever faith."

"I feel that this age owes a great debt to Nicholas Roerich in that creation of this ideal—for such ideals alone afford reality to our efforts for creating material wealth and working out improved social machinery for its distribution. While we work out these myriad individual problems we must have a unifying principle to which all our hearts can give supreme allegiance. In this we can work with faith and anticipation towards those spiritual and cultural realities of which the Roerich Pact is the symbol."

In Europe, besides the Committee of the Roerich Pact in Paris (at the Musee Roerich, Palais Royal, 7 rue de Valois) there are many other Pact Committees actively working in Bruges, Bruxelles, Prague, the Baltic States, Bulgaria, Rumania, etc. The great importance of the Roerich Pact, besides the actual protection of world cultural treasures, lies in its enormous educative value and the subsequent raising of the general cultural level. To make people understand the real values of their own national and other nations' contributions to Culture, means to uplift the very outlook on the purpose of human existence—i: means to stimulate them to create such cultural treasures themselves, to turn their efforts towards higher ideals.

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## THE ROERICH PACT FOR PROTECTION OF CULTURAL TREASURES

By V. A. SHIBAYEV

[The author of this article is a member of the Organizing Committee of the "Third Convention of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace," held at Washington, U. S. A. and is eminently qualified to write on this subject. The article will be read with considerable interest in view of the forthcoming Eighth Pan-American Conference.]

There are periods in the history of the world, when some great new ideas are introduced, beneficial for the whole of mankind and they always mark the beginning of a new era with far-reaching new effects and new conditions of life. The ordinary man in the street is not always aware of the great importance of such turning points in history; but as human consciousness expands and as man finds himself more and more a conscious co-worker in the great cultural, religious, artistic, social, educational, scientific, economic and endless other fields of world constructiveness, it becomes imperative that he pays attention to, urges and supports these great movements, which improve life as a whole and ultimately also his personal achievements, inasmuch as he contributes them to the benefit of wider circles of humanity.

It is hardly necessary to recall these turning points in history of the past. The abolition of slavery (1833-1864), the protection of child labour in factories, the right of women for parliamentary franchise and equality (1918-20), international agreements regarding law (1922), labour (1919), post and telegraph (1865-74), commerce (1920), airways



(1919), the great conception of founding the International Red Cross Society in 1864 (conceived by Henri Dunant), and many other such international treaties are now regarded as self-understood and one dreads to think of the chaos which would befall the world, if these world agreements were suddenly abolished or disrespected.

The most important new contribution to this amelioration of world conditions is the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace for safe-guarding of the world's cultural treasures from annihilation through warfare and vandalism or in times of so-called peace from destruction through neglect, lack of understanding, internal calamities, etc. Under this Treaty the signing parties bind themselves to honour, promote and protect the cultural achievements of human genius, just as the Red Cross protects mankind from physical sufferings.

Professor Nicholas de Roerich conceived this great idea already as far back as 1904, proposing it then to the Society of Architects and again in 1914 during the Russo-Japanese War to H. M. The Tzar Nicholas II and the Grand Duke Nicholas. Though received with great interest, actual warfares delayed the international promoting and adoption, but in 1929 the Pact, having been drafted according to the codes of international law by Dr. Georges Chklaver, Doctor of International Law and Political Sciences of the Paris University, it was formally promulgated in New York. The Pact provides under Articles I and II that:

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 display a distinctive flag, which will entitle them to special protection and respect on the part of the belligerents of Governments and people of all the High Contracting Parties.

This Banner, also designed by Prof. N. de Roerich, is a white flag on which in magenta colour are shown three spheres within a circle. To mention but a few of the various interpretations of this beautiful symbol: it may be taken to represent Religion, Art and Science as expressions of Culture, or The Past, Present and Future achievements of mankind protected within the circle of Eternity.

A Committee of the Banner of Peace was founded that year (1929) in New York and in 1930 two committees were inaugurated in Paris and Bruges respectively.

The First International Conference was held in September 13-15th, 1931 and it resulted in a most enthusiastic response from all the different fields of world cultural activities. The first volume of adherences, messages and letters of support by cultural institutions and leading persons from all parts of the earth was published the same year.

On August 8 and 9, 1932 the Second International Conference took place in Bruges which met with still greater enthusiastic response and resulted in the foundation of the "Fondation Roerich pro Pace, Arte, Scientiae et Labore."

A great step forward was done in 1933, when on Nov. 17th and 18th at the Mayflower in Washington the Third International Convention of the Roerich Pact convened under participation of diplomatic representatives of 36 nations. The proceedings of this Convention, which a Director of the Pan-American Union rightly defines as "one of the most successful meetings ever held in Washington" have now been published in book form. In summarizing this most interesting description of almost 200 pages, one may say that—



augmented by a colossal number of written endorsements from individuals and institutions in all branches of life—all speakers at the Convention advocated the acceptance and the Convention passed the unanimous resolution to adopt the Pact and to “recommend the adoption of this humanitarian measure to the Governments of all Nations” for “adoption or adhesion by unilateral action through proclamation of the executive; by bilateral action through international agreements and by multilateral action through declaration of international conferences.”

The Convention also appointed a “Permanent Committee for the Advancement of the Adoption of the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace” with Prof. and Mme. de Roerich as Honorary Presidents, the Hon. Henry A. Wallace as Hon. Chairman and Protector, Mr. Louis L. Horch, President of Roerich Museum, as its Chairman, Miss F. R. Grant as Vice-Chairman and Prof. Ralph V. D. Magoffin of the New York University as Secretary-General. This permanent committee is located at 310 Riverside Drive, New York.

In December 1933, the Seventh Conference of the Pan-American Union held at Montevideo, also passed the unanimous resolution to accept the Pact and to urge its members (the 21 governments of North, Central and South Americas) to sign the Pact. Since that date the United States, Panama, Honduras, Ecuador, Uruguay, Guatamala, Brazil, Nicaragua, Costa-Rica and El-Salvador have appointed their plenipotentiaries for signing the Treaty or have stated their readiness to do so at the next Eighth Pan-American Conference to be held at Washington on April 15th, 1935. The Pact will be open for signature also to non-American Countries and many other governments are thus expected to ratify the Pact on this day. A solemn ceremony in honour of the founder, Prof. N. de Roerich, and the Permanent



Committee of the Pact, will take place on that day. In leading circles it has been stated that "the signing of this Treaty on the Roerich Pact will be one of the outstanding and one of the encouraging events in international life in 1935."

The Hon'ble Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture of the United States, who has been officially empowered by President F. D. Roosevelt to sign the Roerich Pact, has recently made the following beautiful statement in regard to the Pact:

I regard the Roerich Pact as an inevitable step in international relations. At no time has such an ideal been more needed. While the individual nations are working out their separate economic and national problems, it is also necessary that they recognize their responsibility as part of the community of nations. I am not one to urge visionary substitutes in the place of effective action in a world of hard economic facts, yet I do say that it is high time for the idealists who make the reality to-morrow, to rally around such a symbol of international cultural unity. It is time that we appeal to that appreciation of beauty, science, education which runs across all national boundaries to strengthen all that we hold dear in our particular governments and customs. It is for this reason that I regard the ratification of the Roerich Pact as so significant a step. Its acceptance signifies the approach of a time, when those who truly love their own nation will appreciate in addition the unique contributions of other nations and also do reverence to that common spiritual enterprise which draws together in one fellowship all artists, scientists, educators and truly religious of whatever faith.

Besides the Committees of the Pact in New York, Paris and Bruges, there have during the last year also been inaugurated new Committees in Bruxelles, Harbin, the Baltic States, Bulgaria and Rumania.

To quote from the endless messages in favour of the Pact, would mean to add pages and pages to this article;



suffice it therefore to say that the acceptance is universal and covers all branches of life, including the military circles (the late Marshall Lyautey, Admiral Taussig, General Gouraud, etc.), who—it is interesting to mention this—are by no means in a minority amongst the adherers to the Pact.

In India the appreciation of this humanitarian ideal has also been very great and amongst the names of those who sent messages or otherwise expressed themselves for the Pact are found: Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Jagadis C. Bose, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Sir C. V. Raman, Dr. James H. Cousins, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the late Prof. S. R. Kashyap, S. V. Ramaswamy Mudeliar, O. C. Gangoly, Asit Kumar Haldar, N. C. Mehta, the late Ven. Sri Devamitta Dharmapalla, the artist Bireswar Sen, etc., etc. and institutions like the Andhra Historical Research Institute, the Allahabad Municipal Museum, the Bharat Kala Bhawan in Benares, the Maha Bodhi Society, the Women's Indian Association, the Madanapalle College, the Travancore Cultural Association, etc., etc.

The great importance of the Roerich Pact, besides the actual protection of world achievements of human genius lies in its colossal educative value and the subsequent raising of the general cultural level. To make people understand the real values of their own national and other nation's contributions to Culture, means to uplift the very outlook on the purpose of human existence—it means to stimulate them to create such cultural treasures themselves, to turn their efforts towards higher ideals.

As soon as there shall be a better correct appreciation of the world's cultural treasures, the human mind will be naturally diverted from the many aimless so-called recreations and time-passings and this colossal waste will be replaced by real creative occupations: positive, constructive and



beneficial for their surroundings.

In quoting in conclusion from a speech of the Honorable H. A. Wallace one feels that this is as if the representative voice of the present epoch:

I feel that this age owes a great debt to Nicholas Roerich in the creation of this ideal—for such ideals alone afford reality to our efforts for creating material wealth and working out improved social machinery for its distribution. While we work out these myriad individuals problems we must have a unifying principle to which all our hearts can give supreme allegiance. In this we can work with faith and anticipation towards those spiritual and cultural realities of which the Roerich Pact is the symbol.

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FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY