

ON VIGIL FOR PEACE !

(Diary Leaves).

By Nicholas Roerich .

The main thing# is to start the movement and to give direction to the thought. Later on thought will already flow assuming a world scope. Of course there always shall be// i//mitations, repetitions, elucidations, comments and affirmations....Everything is for the good. Dangerous is only a morbid stagnation.

The friends of our Pact have again cause to feel encouraged. In the League of Nations there have been proposed useful measures for the protection of Art treasures. The League urges bombproof shelters for art and museums are to be isolated from military objectives.

"The building of bombproof shelters for portraits and restoration of the medieval sanctuary system for statues are recommended to all countries by the League of Nations international museums office in a report recently issued. It proposes that pending an agreement for the protection of art, competent authorities everywhere shall put their national art on a war footing along these lines:

"For movable or easily transportable art works, the building of reliable shelters within museums offering the same efficacy as those designed, for example, for protection of the civil population against aerial bombardments.

"Equipment of museums with a view to the removal of art works to these shelters in cases of impending danger.

"Drawing up drilling instructions for training museum staffs in these delicate operations. Acquisition of material that can be rapidly utilized for protection against effects of bombardment of art works difficult to remove.

"For architectural monuments, adoption of the same protection measures by competent departments with a view to insuring, in the event of aerial bombardment, the safety of more fragile parts (stained glass windows, bas-

reliefs and other sculptural features) both inside and outside monuments. Acquisition of appropriate equipment for dismantling these parts.

"Steps to be taken with public authorities with a view to clearing in peace time certain artistic monuments of outstanding artistic or historic value of all surrounding buildings, works, aerodromes, lines of communication, &c, used or capable of being used for military purposes.

"Lastly, and in view of facilitating and concluding an international agreement acceptable to the military authorities of all countries, construction outside urban centers and in places that give rise to no misunderstandings from a military or from a strategical viewpoint of shelters and depositaries to which movable objects to be protected can be transported wherever possible; or appointment of a town or center in each country to be declared strictly neutral and to serve as last asylum for humanity's laws!"

Thus the League of Nations also ponders of the protection of the beautiful. We shall not discuss the details of these ~~legislations~~^{proposals}, some of them are more feasible, others less. This does not matter. It is important that the thought about the safeguarding of cultural treasures is spreading all over the world. Many more golgothas and burning pyres will yet fill the world with confusion and awe, and these horrible signs imperatively will remind the world how indeferrable are the questions of the protection of all flowers on the field of Culture.

Some time back we suggested to our Pact Committees to gather and summarize all proposals regarding peace, emanating from manifold organizations. Much indexing and many catalogues have to be made in order to reveal the world thought about peace, about the protection of world treasures, about agreements possible in this direction. There is endless work to accomplish and world events prove the real necessity of these efforts.

Similarly to the many branches of the Red Cross, there will arise around the Banner of Peace various problems for decision. Without envy and enmity

every country will have to bring its mite into the treasury of true achievements.

In schools, from early childhood, the foundation will be laid for the saving of the Beautiful. This year will mark the 34th anniversary of our peace pact movement. During these three decades many people have approached, many opinions were expressed, but one thing remained unalterable - the indeferrability of action ~~xxx~~. World events have but confirmed this.

Newspapers communicated that the Spanish government with difficulty saved the Cathedral in Barcelona from its own ~~xxx~~ mob. It was necessary to paste large posters on the walls of the cathedral wring its protection and to call out troops with machine guns. Is this not a striking example how necessary it is to educate the people's consciousness? Before our very eyes deplorable and irreparable destructions are continuously taking place and only a powerful moral impulse can save humanity from a repetition of fatal annihilations.

The Pact for the protection of cultural treasures is needed not only as an official regulation, but as an educating law, which from the first school days will imbue the young generation with the noble idea of safeguarding the true values of the entire humanity. The Pact has already been signed by 22 countries. No doubt this large number will ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ gradually be joined by all other countries as well. Our Pact has justly been named the Red Cross of Culture. Truly it ~~is~~ stands in closest relation to the great Red Cross, which at the time of its inception was received rather sceptically, but now has become an undisputably humanistic foundation of life.

To show the imperative necessity of all peace movements, let us listen to some statements of leading militarists. "If previously peace wished to subject war to its own laws and regulate it by legal limitations, and tried to compel war to respect its morals and values, now it is the opposite: peace should be subordinated to the demands of war, which has become the

ruler
 marxism of the age and has shifted peace to a mere concept of armistice. This emancipation of war, that constitutes the main feature of our era, demands for its realization the introduction of the last decisive step: the abolition of the present social order, which is based on the assumption of peace, and the substitution of this order by a militaristic one. The establishment of such a militaristic constitution is the specific aim of to-day."

Let us not burden the reader with too many such depressing quotations. There exist entire volumes, as for example "The Total War" ^{and} ~~see~~ "The War for Annihilation". They ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ describe a war in which the whole population of the nation is to take place, with the object of the complete annihilation of the enemy, by all available means, without any restrictions whatsoever, without mercy. Thus the "Total War" is directed not against the enemy's army, but against entire nations as such. "War is the highest manifestation of the vital will of the people and therefore politics should serve military supremacy" - so militarists assert.

One can easily understand what is meant by the "complete annihilation of the enemy". This covers also all accumulations of culture. In face of the cruel aims of the "Total War" the merciless methods of conquerors of the past will appear as child's play. If humanity has reach^{ed} such unheard monstrosities, one must the sooner directs all efforts towards the protection of cultural values - both in artistic and scientific treasures and in the person of cultural representatives themselves. It

In 1920, at a banquet given by the Board of the Committee on the occasion of my exhibition in London, Mr. H.G. Wells, who was also a member of this Committee, expressed the following idea, lifting his glass: "This ordinary object, which yo no one of us appears as a rarity, may under certain circumstances become a unique treasure. It is always possible that owing to self-destructive hatred civilization may be wiped out and humanity would then have to start afresh its cultural accumulations under most difficult conditions of savagery".

After seventeen years, do we not see Wells's foresight in the present belligerent threats?!

It is deplorable that after millions of years of existence of our planet, one has still to reiterate such axioms. Hence, if at our previous Peace Pact Conferences we called for a doubling of efforts, the present condition of the world demands that our efforts should be increased threefold! On vigil for Peace!