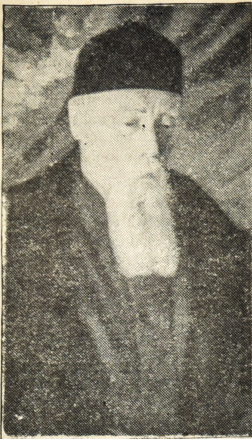


# RED CROSS OF CULTURE



PROFESSOR NICHOLAS ROERICH, who spent the best years of his life in the Kulu Valley. He is the author of the Roerich Pact, the chief object of which is to preserve cultural treasures. This is a painting by his son, Svetoslav.

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 harmoniously 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. In the meantime, the fact remains that shells from a few 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, let us protect, as sacred, the creative treasures of humanity. First of all, let us agree 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.

## WORLD UNITY

We often repeat that the cornerstone of the future civilization rests upon beauty and knowledge. Now we must act upon this thought and act quickly. The League of Nations, which has progressed towards international harmony, will not be opposed to this flag, for it expresses their aims of a world unity. The idea as originally proposed in the United States is not an accident. By its geographical position, the United States is least personally

This article by Professor Nicholas Roerich was written before his death a few years ago. His idea of a pact was first conceived in 1904, but it was only in 1929 that it was formally promulgated in America. Later, committees were founded in Paris, New York and Brussels. Last August the Government of India announced their approval of the International pact for the protection of cultural treasures, known as 'The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace.'

affected by such measures of protection. Hence, this proposition comes from a country whose own art treasures are in no particular danger, illustrating the better that this flag is a symbol of peace, not of one country, but of civilization as a whole.

The flag for this project has three spheres within a circle on a white ground, symbol of eternity and unity. Although I do not know when this banner may wave above all the world's cultural institutions, the seed is already sown. Already it has attracted many great minds and travels from heart to heart, spreading once again peace and goodwill among men.

Really it is imperative to take immediate measures to preserve the noble heritage of our past for a glorious posterity. This can only come if all countries pledge themselves to protect the creations of culture, which after all belong to one nation but to the world. In this way we may create the next vital step for a universal culture and peace.

## CULTURE AND PEACE

Culture is reverence of light. Culture is love of humanity. Culture is fragrance, the unity of life and beauty. Culture is the synthesis of uplifting and sensitive attainments. Culture is the armour of Light. Culture is salvation. Culture is the motivating power. Culture is the Heart. If we gather all the definitions of Culture we find the synthesis of active Bliss, the altar of enlightenment and constructive beauty.

Condemnation, disparagement, defiling, melancholy, disintegration and all other characteristics of ignorance do not benefit Culture. The great tree of Culture is nourished by an unlimited knowledge, by enlightened labour, incessant creativeness and noble attainment. By study, esteem and admiration we become real co-operators with evolution and out of the brilliant rays of supreme Light may emerge true knowledge. This refined knowledge is based on real comprehension and tolerance. From this source comes the great understanding. And from the great understanding rises the Supremely Beautiful, the enlightening and refining enthusiasm for Peace.

Culture and Peace make man verily invincible and realizing all spiritual conditions he becomes tolerant and all-embracing. Each tolerance is but a sign of weakness. If we understand that every lie, every fallacy, shall be exposed, it means that first of all a lie is stupid and impractical. But what has he to hide who has consecrated himself to Peace and Culture? Helping his near ones he helps general welfare which in all ages was appreciated. Striving to Peace he becomes a pillar of a progressing State. By not slandering the near ones we increase the productiveness of the common creativeness. By not quarrelling we shall prove that we possess the knowledge of the foundations. By not wasting time in idleness we shall prove that we are true co-workers in the plough-field of culture. Finding joy in everyday's labour we show that the conception of infinity is not alien to us. Not harming others we do not harm ourselves and eternally giving, we receive.

## NEW EVOLUTION

Contemporary life is changing rapidly. The signs of a new evolution are knocking at all doors. In real unconventional science we feel the splendid responsibility before the coming generations. We understand gradually the harm of everything negative. We begin to value enlightened positiveness and constructiveness and in this measure, in merciful tolerance, we can prepare for our next generation a vital happiness, turning vague abstractions into beneficent realities.

What an epoch-making day might be before us when over all countries, all centres of spirit, beauty and knowledge could be unfurled the one Banner of Culture! This sign would call everyone to revere the treasures of human genius, to respect culture and to have a new valuation of labour as the only measure of true value. From childhood people will witness that there exists not only a flag for human health, but also there is a sign of peace and culture for the health of the spirit. This sign, unfurled over all treasures of human genius will say: Here are guarded the treasures of all mankind, here above all petty divisions, above illusory frontiers of enmity and hatred, is towering the fiery stronghold of love, labour and all-moving creation.

Let us also mark and find a place in our lives for the great ones, remembering that their name no longer is personal, with all the attributes of the limited ego, but has become the property of pan-human Culture, and must be safeguarded and firmly cared for under most benevolent conditions. We shall thus continue their self-sacrificing labour and we shall cultivate their creative sowing, which, as we see, is so often covered with the dirt of misunderstanding and overgrown with the weeds of ignorance.

## HERITAGE OF CULTURE

If you are asked what kind of country and what future constitution do you dream, you can answer in full dignity: We visualize the country of Great Culture. The country of Great Culture shall be your noble motto. You shall know that in that country will be Peace, where Knowledge and Beauty will be revered.

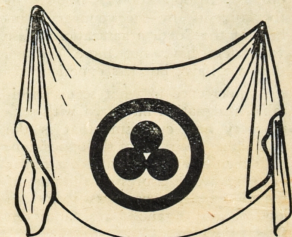
Everything created by hostility is impractical and perishable. The history of mankind gave us remarkable examples of how necessary just peaceful creativeness was for progress. The hand will tire from the sword, but the creating hand sustained by the might of the Spirit is untiring and unconquerable. No sword can destroy the heritage of Culture. The human mind may temporarily deviate from the primary sources, but at the predestined hour it will realign itself with renewed powers of the spirit.

We are tired of destruction and negations. Positive creativeness is the fundamental quality of the human spirit. Let us welcome all those

who, surmounting personal difficulties, casting aside petty selfishness, propel their spirits to the task of preserving Culture, thus insuring a radiant future.

Humanity has become accustomed to the sign of the Red Cross. This beautiful symbol has penetrated life not only in times of war, but has afforded to all existence an affirmation of the concept of humanitarianism. And the same realization of humanitarianism, the same undeferrable necessity from small to great, must surround this sign of Culture similar to the Red Cross. One must not think of Culture at certain times when digesting the tasty food of a dinner. One should know that during hunger and cold it is also needed. As the sign of the Red Cross shines luminously to the wounded, so to the physically and spiritually famished should the sign of Culture burn radiantly.

Is it now the time to obstruct, to protest, to disagree and to wrangle pettily? When a Red Cross ambulance hurries through the streets, all traffic stops to make way for it. Likewise for the sign of Culture let us also give up at least some of our usual habits and all the vulgar



THE PEACE BANNER has three spheres in a red circle on a white ground, symbol of eternity and unity.

sediments and dusty limitations of ignorance from which, in any case, we shall sooner or later have to purify ourselves.

## GOAL OF HUMANITY

Culture and Peace—the most sacred goal of Humanity! In these days of great confusion, both spiritual and material, the disturbed spirit strives to these radiant strongholds. But we should not unite only abstractly in the name of these regenerating conceptions. According to our abilities, each in his own field, we should bring them into actual surrounding life as the most necessary and undeferrable. We must not fear enthusiasm. Only the ignorant and the spiritually impotent would scoff at this noble feeling. Such scoffing is but the sign of inspiration for the true Legion of Honour. Nothing can impede us from dedicating ourselves to the service of Culture, so long as we believe in it and give to it our most flaming thoughts.

Above all confusions the Angels sing of Peace and Goodwill. No guns, no explosives can silence these choirs of heaven. And despite all the earthly wisdom, idealism, as the Teaching of Good, will still remain the quickest reaching and most renovating principle in life.

N. Roerich.