

Quarry House
West Chester, Pa.
Aug. 7th, 1931

Mr. Frederic Allen Whiting,
President American Rederation of Arts,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Whiting:

Your letter of inquiry regarding the purpose of Roerich Museum, and the personality of its founder are herewith answered in detail.

It was in response to a cablegram sent to London by me in July, 1920, that Professor Roerich determined to come to America with his wife and two sons. I met them on the dock October 2, since which date I have been continuously in touch with the Professor and his manifold cultural activities both here and broad.

It was I who arranged for and catalogued the first memorable exhibition of Professor Roerich's paintings which opened at Kingore Galleries, New York, December 18th, 1920; and it was I who induced Director Robert B. Harshe of the Art Institute, Chicago, to book the two years tour of this same collection in the leading art museums of America.

I was likewise sympathetically interested in the founding of Master Institute of United Arts and Corona Mundi International Art Centre (1921-22) at their modest quarters, 312 W. 54 St., New York City which proved to be Roerich Museum in embryo.

That the varied aesthetic and cultural activities of Professor Roerich in America should, as has been hinted, be tainted with self-glorification or Soviet propoganda is both historically and factually absurd to any one who has witnessed their idealistic beginnings, or who has known the Professor with any degree of intimacy.

It is only in the minds of certain envious fellow-artists or those devoid of any sort of political sense or sagacity that such ideas and suspicions have arisen. It may well be asked in what political capacity could Roerich Museum possibly serve the Soviet Government--its incorporators, its officers, and its staff (in as far as I know), all of them American citizens. And furthermore, the fact that Roerich Museum is virtually supporting itself as a real estate and renting proposition is hardly sufficient grounds for assuming that it enjoys a fat subsidy from the USSR.

Let me state quite frankly that such vague and vapid delusions are not only totally unfounded in fact, but reflect not a little upon the mental state of those giving them credence and currency.

There remains, however, one point to be stressed, touching upon the purely personal side. It is the fact that Professor Roerich is an avowed, and ardent internationalist. And it is perhaps because of the very breadth of his fraternalism, his fundamental humanity of spirit, that he has at times been misunderstood and misinterpreted.

It is not toward the towers of the Moscow Kremlin that the windows of the Roerich Museum look, but across the world--over the vast, surging sea of humanity which is today struggling as never before to preserve not only its illusions, but its very life. It is this world in which Professor Roerich is interested both as painter and as thinker. And it is the ills of this world which he maintains alone can be cured by culture and

enlightenment.

The credo of Nicholas Roerich is, in brief, the credo not of narrow nationalism but of universal brotherhood-political, aesthetic, social, economic. Personally I never heard or known him to express a thought, or a wish, that were not essentially lofty of purpose. His philosophy has many times reminded me of the philosophy of Matthew Arnold preached forty years ago when I was a college lad--the philosophy of "sweetness and light."

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Only, being a Russian, it is at once deeper and more searching. it can best be summed up in the passionate cry of his own countryman, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, who on more than one occasion fervently proclaimed--"Beauty will save the world!"

I beg to remain, my dear Mr. Whiting,

Very truly yours,

(Signed)

CHRISTIAN BRINTON

CB/EE