

COPY

Feb. 5, 1936.

Dr. George Chklaver, Secretary General
Society Francaise Nicholas de Roerich
12 Rue de Poitiers
PARIS (VII), France.

My dear Dr. Chklaver:

Long valuing your cooperation as officer of the European Headquarters of the Roerich Museum, we feel that you are entitled to a full explanation of the vicious situation which has arisen in New-York, in the efforts of Mr and Mrs Horch and Miss Lichtmann to invade the rights of the Roerich Museum and usurp the institutions founded by Prof. Roerich.

As you are aware, the first of the Roerich Institutions, founded by Prof. and Mme Roerich and created around their noble and humanitarian ideals, was called the Master Institute of United Arts and was organized in 1921. With Prof. and Mme Roerich in their endeavours were joined Mr and Mrs Lichtmann and Miss Frances R. Grant. A year later Mr and Mrs Horch begged to be allowed to enter the institution, offering their financial help, since neither Mr nor Mrs Horch were at any time educators or in any way associated with any educational or cultural projects. The Master Institute of United Arts was then incorporated as a self-perpetuating educational corporation with seven shares of stock distributed to these seven persons with Prof. Roerich as its President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, as well as its moving guide and spirit.

Subsequently, this original institution was enlarged by various other departments, and affiliated institutions. Several years later, however, when the Roerich Museum was founded, all of us who believed that these institutions should bear the great name of their founder and should be endowed with the international prestige of Nicholas Roerich, merged all these departments and institutions under the name of the Roerich Museum.

About three years ago, as you know, the great financial depression in this country was seriously reflected in a threatened disaster to all buildings which had been constructed during the 'boom' era of 1929. We also suffered in the process, but thanks to the prestige of Prof. Roerich's name and to the high purposes of the Institution, the Court of New-York last February, after a long process, restored the Building completely. In order to effect properly their continued educational work, Justice Shientag decreed that the building should be restored to an educational corporation controlled by the Roerich Museum Interests. Since the Master Institute of United Arts had been our first corporation, we consented to have the Building's title restored to this corporation.

Suddenly on December 15th quite by accident, we learned that Mr. Horch had conspired to oust us from the institutions through some scheme the following day. We obtained a stay from the Courts restraining him from carrying out any action and have instituted further proceedings.

It is especially significant that Mr. Horch's claim to owning this building and Institution came coincident with the restoration of the building on a most advantageous financial foundation. Yet, during the struggle for the saving of the Institution he constantly begged the public's aid on the basis of the great name of Prof. Roerich and the selfless work of ourselves, the Trustees, as well as on his own financial contributions.

It is true that Mr.Horch with other patrons has given financial aid to the work. But Professor Roerich has given it not only financial aid, but his colossal art, his great prestige, and the genius of his ideals and culture. We have given it all we had in money and in the fifteen years of our life work.

We wish to assure you that under no circumstances will we permit this usurpation on the part of Mr and Mrs Horch and Miss Lichtmann to take place.We will fight to the utmost to maintain that which Prof.and Mme.Roerich and we have created. We are determined to bring this cause to a brilliant victory. Thus far our friends, and those of the Museum, have rallied to our side and already a Defense Committee has been founded to protect Prof.Roerich's name and his rights.Of this Committee, Major J.G.Phelps Stokes is the chairman.

At no time had Mr.H.A.Wallace been a trustee or officer, nor had he ever been officially associated with our Institutions. For nine years he expressed his highest reverence for Prof.Roerich in his private and public communications, and became the Honorary Chairman of the Permanent Committee of the Roerich Pact. We do not know what considerations have induced Mr.Wallace suddenly to become a friend of Mr.Horch in the last few months, nor why, under the cloak of his public office, he is obviously assisting him in his financial scheme. Our attorneys have however already publicly warned Mr.Wallace that any aspersions cast by him on Professor Roerich, intended to aid Mr.Horch in the present litigation, will be held as libelous and action against him will be begun.

We are entirely confident that you, who have so deeply understood the great ideals of Prof.Roerich and the disinterested contribution of our own work, will transmit the true facts of the present situation to the friends of Prof.Roerich and the Roerich Museum, so that they will be aware of the conspiracy.

Since we, with Professor and Mme Roerich, represent five of the seven original Trustees of this institution, we will fight until we have rescued from an invader's hands this Institution and prevent the evident greed of Mr and Mrs Horch from turning into a real estate scheme for their own financial benefits, a work which was founded in the spirit of high humanitarian purposes and around the noble labors and ideals of Nicholas Roerich.

With our cordial personal greetings, believe us,

Sincerely,

(from: Mr.M.M.Lichtmann
Mrs S.G.Lichtmann
Miss F.R.Grant.)