

September 9, 1948

Senor F. Rodrigo de Lara
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Bolivar 608
Buenos Aires, Rep. Argentina

My dear friend:

In my last letter I intimated that we soon would write you about something important which would bring our cooperation with you even closer. I trust you have received our cable about India's acceptance of the Pact. This joyous historic event should inspire us, who belong to the first group of nations to adopt the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, to undertake the next logical step.

As you know, between 1929 and 1935 three International Conferences were held, and world-wide enthusiasm aroused, before the Pact was actually adopted by any nation. On Pan-American Day in 1935 plenipotentiaries of all the Americas signed the treaty of the Roerich Pact. Now, 13 years later, India becomes the first country of the Eastern Hemisphere to follow our example. Of course during these years there was war and much disruption, but the work of promoting adoption of the Pact by other nations and of actually bringing the Banner of Peace into life in the nations which have already signed, is continuous.

Just now, however, we are especially cognizant of the need for definite action. It is time for us in America to launch a veritable campaign to bring about results not only universally desirable but obligatory here among the vanguard nations.

Following the successful pattern of the past, the first major step in this campaign should be the calling of a Congress of representatives of the governments and cultural institutions of the countries who have signed the Pact. And we are most happy to inform you that Buenos Aires has been indicated as the most fitting location for this great meeting.

We are confident, my esteemed colleague, that under your able guidance the Congress would take shape easily, and would accomplish successfully its projected aims. It would be attended not only by delegates from the United States and the South and Central American Republics and India, but by invited representatives from all the other nations of the world, as one major objective would be the adoption of measures to promote official acceptance of the Pact by the nations whose governments have not yet signed it.

In its Pan-American aspect, equally important and much larger in scope, the Congress should strive to the following objectives:

1. Each national unit should be informed and aware of the responsibilities of the Pact and encouraged to live up to the obligations they have assumed under it.
2. All cultural institutions in each signatory nation should be informed:
 - (a) as to the text of the Pact and its implications
 - (b) that their country has signed the Pact
 - (c) that they themselves must ratify the Pact by displaying the Banner of Peace as a protection in time of danger and on all occasions when the national flag is flown
 - (d) that they themselves must urge adherence to the Pact by their own countrymen both in peace and war
3. Each cultural unit should prepare and submit to a central committee in its own country, and this central committee in turn submit to the International Headquarters of the Banner of Peace in New York a record of all treasures and all objects of art, scientific or other cultural value, in their possession. This cataloging, to be immediately begun and continued hereafter, will have a three-fold purpose:
 - (a) to record for posterity the cultural treasures of the world
 - (b) to inform each institution and each nation as to the extent of its cultural wealth
 - (c) to make each nation conscious of its cultural institutions and the need to preserve and protect these treasures.

A Congress of such magnitude would be of inestimable value, as it would draw the attention of leading citizens and cultural institutions and revive interest in the idea very broadly everywhere. Not only would the various Governments be represented by appointed delegates, but separate institutions in the various fields of culture could send their representatives. The many members of your Committee, for instance, could participate in the Congress as delegates representing their respective scientific, educational, art, religious or other cultural institutions, including museums, universities, libraries, men's and women's clubs, etc. We have no doubt that all these organizations and personages would be most enthusiastic about an announcement of a Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Congress in Buenos Aires in 1949. We feel confident that the press of your country and the other Latin-American countries would gladly give the necessary support and publicity. The ties of friendship between Argentina and other countries would be strengthened through cooperation in a noble project working for peace and the safeguarding of the culture of mankind.

We are ready to assist you in every way, referring to procedures followed in the previous Conventions, and we would also ask the European Pact Committees to cooperate actively in your Congress.

Of course the decision as to the best time and date for the holding of such a congress would be left entirely to you, as you would know what season of the year would be most suitable and how much time would be needed for planning and preparation. Several members of our Committee here in New York would make the special journey to Buenos Aires to attend.

We shall eagerly await your response to this plan. If you feel as enthusiastic about it as we do, we could immediately start working out a number of details. I shall hope to receive soon your reply informing us that you have come to a favorable decision after conferring with your worthy associates.

Faternally yours,

Dudley Fosdick
Chairman

P.S.

We shall appreciate it if you will acquaint our good friend Mr. Albuerne also with the contents of this letter.