

REFORMATION TROUGH CULTURE AND THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL VALUES

The Roerich Pact: Three Documents

Nicholas Roerich: A Brief Biographical Note

The famous Russian painter, writer, archaeologist and philosopher Nicholas Roerich was born on October 9, 1874 in St. Petersburg. 1897 he graduated from the Academy of Arts, and 1898 from the Faculty of Law of the University of St. Petersburg. After his graduation, he became secretary of the Society for the Advancement of the Arts, in 1906 director of the Art School, and in 1910 director of the art association "World of Art". Nicholas Roerich was one of the founders and most active members of the Society for the Revival of the Arts in Russia and the Society for the Protection and Preservation of Art and Antiques. After visiting ancient Russian cities from 1903 to 1904, he began an active struggle against the destruction of monuments and other cultural values. In 1914, he personally addressed the Supreme Command of the Russian Army, the governments of the United States and France with the idea to conclude an international agreement for the protection of cultural values in armed conflicts. In 1915, Roerich sent a report to Tzar Nicholas II calling for serious state action to protect cultural assets nationwide. The October Revolution impedes these plans, and he left Russia moving with his family to London and later to the USA. In 1920 he founded in Chicago the the "Cor Ardens" ("Burning Hearts") International Artists' Association, in 1921 the Institute of United Arts in New York, whose main purpose was the rapprochement of the peoples through culture and art, and in 1922 the International Cultural Center "Corona Mundi" ("Crown of the World"). In November 1923, the Roerich Museum was opened in New York, which became the first museum of a Russian artist abroad and has one of its richest collections. 1929 Roerich, together with G.G. Chklaver, Doctor of International Law and Political Sciences, Paris University, prepares a draft of the Pact for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, and also suggests a distinctive sign of identification of protected objects – the Banner of Peace. 1935, the U.S.A. and representatives of 21 countries of the American continent ratify the Treaty "On the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic monuments (Roerich Pact)", which is released by the U.S. President the 25 of October. The same year Roerich is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In the years 1923-1928 Roerich undertook a scientific and artistic expedition through the Himalayas, Tibet, Altai and Mongolia. In the Indian city of Naggar, district Kullu, he set-

tled from 1928 until his death in 1947 and founded the Himalayan Institute for Scientific Research "Urusvati".

1.

**Formal draft of Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, Prepared by Dr.
Georges Chklaver, August 1928¹**

**International Pact for the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions,
Historic Monuments, Missions and Collections Originated by
Nicholas Roerich**

BETWEEN THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES

The President of the United States of America.

The President of the German Republic.

His Majesty, the King of Great Britain, Ireland and of the
British Dominions beyond the seas, Emperor of India.

The President of the French Republic.

His Majesty, the King of Italy

His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan.

Etc., Etc., Etc.

Whereas their high offices impart on them the sacred obligation to promote the moral welfare of their respective Nations and the advancement of Arts and Sciences in the common interest of Humanity, Whereas the Institutions dedicated to the education of youth, to Arts and Sciences, constitute a common treasure of all the Nations of the World, Recalling the ideas sponsored by a wise and generous foresight which have guided the High Contracting Parties in framing the Geneva Convention of August 22nd, 1864, for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded, The General Act of the Conference of Berlin of February 26th, 1883, which provides for a special protection to be accorded to scientific Expeditions, The Final Acts of the Hague Conference of July 29th, 1899, and of October 18th, 1907, and especially Article 27 of the Annex of the IVth Convention of the Second Conference relative to the safety of buildings consecrated to Religion, to Arts, to Sciences and to Charity as well as to historic Monuments, in case of siege and bombardment.

¹ Published in the collection *The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace* (New York: The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee, 1947, 33-35). See also the 1929 draft preserved by the Roerich-Museum: http://www.roerich.org/pact/1929_draft.html

Article II of the Convention of St. Germain-en-Laye of September 10th, 1919, confirming the above mentioned provisions of the General Act of Berlin of 1885, concerning the special solicitude to be granted by the High Contracting Parties to scientific Missions, to their equipment and to their Collections, The Pact for the renunciation of War as an instrument of national policy signed at Paris on the 28th of August 1928;

Adopting the propositions of Professor Nicholas Roerich tending to create an efficient protection for all centers of Culture, have resolved to conclude a solemn Pact with the aim of perfecting the protection enjoyed by all civilized countries by Institutions and Missions dedicated to Arts and Sciences, as well as by artistic and scientific Collections, and historic Monuments, and have nominated for this purpose their respective Plenipotentiaries, to wit: _____ who, after having respectively presented their full powers in due and proper form, have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The historic Monuments, educational, artistic and scientific Institutions, artistic and scientific Missions, the personnel, the property and collections of such Institutions and Missions above mentioned shall be deemed neutral and, as such, shall be protected and respected by belligerents.

Protection and respect shall be due to the aforesaid Institutions and Missions in the entire expanse of territories subject to the sovereignty of the High Contracting Parties, without any discrimination as to the State allegiance of any particular Institution or Mission.

ARTICLE II

Each of the High Contracting Parties may furnish to the Registrar of the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, to the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation at Paris or to the Educational Department of the Pan-American Union of the City of Washington, as it may choose, a list of Monuments, Institutions, Collections and Missions, either public or private, which it desires to place under the special protection provided for by the present Pact.

The Monuments, Institutions, Collections and Missions thus registered may display a distinctive flag (red circle with a triple red sphere in the circle on a white background) which will entitle them to the special protection and respect on the part of the belligerents, of Governments and Peoples of all the High Contracting Parties.

The aforesaid Monuments, Institutions, Collections and Missions shall cease to enjoy the privileges of neutrality in case they are made use of for military purposes.

ARTICLE III

In case of any act alleged to be in contradiction to the protection and respect due to artistic and scientific Institutions, Monuments, Collections and Missions, as stipulated in the present Pact, the complaining Institutions or Missions shall have the right to appeal, through the intermediary of its Government, to the International Institution with which it has been registered. The International Institution concerned shall then bring the complaint to the cognizance of all the High Contracting Parties who may decide to constitute an International Committee of Inquiry on the case. The findings of such an International Committee of Inquiry may be rendered public. The details regarding the constitution and functioning of the above mentioned Committee of Inquiry shall be regulated by a special agreement

ARTICLE IV

The Contracting Parties declare that it is their intention to provide by appropriated measures of internal legislation the enforcement of the protection enjoyed in their respective territories by artistic and scientific Institutions, Monuments, Collections and Missions, either National or Foreign.

The Present Pact shall be ratified by the High Contracting Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional methods.

The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the State Department of the United States of America.

The present Pact shall go into force as soon as it has been ratified by the majority of the original signatories thereof.

The Powers who are not signatories to the present Pact shall have the right to join it, by means of a notification addressed to the Government of the United States of America.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Pact and affixed their seals.

Done in duplicate (one copy in the English language and the other in the French language) both of which to be regarded as being equally authentic in the city of Washington, on the..... day of..... of the year.....

Signatures.

2.

Treaty for the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments (Roerich Pact)²

The High Contracting Parties, animated by the purpose of giving conventional form to the postulates of the Resolution approved on December 16, 1933, by all the States represented at the Seventh International Conference of American States, held at Montevideo, which recommended to "the Governments of America which have not yet done so that they sign the 'Roerich Pact', initiated by the Roerich Museum in the United States, and which has as its object, the universal adoption of a flag, already designed and generally known, in order thereby to preserve in any time of danger all nationally and privately owned immovable monuments which form the cultural treasure of peoples", have resolved to conclude a treaty with that end in view, and to the effect that the treasures of culture be respected and protected in time of war and in peace, have agree upon the following articles:

ARTICLE I

The historic monuments, museums, scientific, artistic, educational and cultural institutions shall be considered as neutral and as such respected and protected by belligerents. The same respect and protection shall be due to the personnel of the institutions mentioned above. The same respect and protection shall be accorded to the historic monuments, museums, scientific, artistic, educational and cultural institutions in time of peace as well as in war.

ARTICLE II

The neutrality of, and protection and respect due to, the monuments and institutions mentioned in the preceding article, shall be recognized in the entire expanse of territories subject to the sovereignty of each of the signatory and acceding States, without any discrimination as to the State allegiance of said monuments and institutions. The respective Governments agree to adopt the measures of internal legislation necessary to insure said protection and respect.

ARTICLE III

In order to identify the monuments and institutions mentioned in article I, use may be made of a distinctive flag (red circle with a triple red sphere in the circle on a white background) in accordance with the model attached to this treaty.

² Cf. <http://www.roerich.org/roerich-pact.php>

ARTICLE IV

The signatory Governments and those which accede to this treaty, shall send to the Pan American Union, at the time of signature or accession, or at any time thereafter, a list of the monuments and institutions for which they desire the protection agreed to in this treaty. The Pan American Union, when notifying the Governments of signatures or accessions, shall also send the list of monuments and institutions mentioned in this article, and shall inform the other Governments of any changes in said list.

ARTICLE V

The monuments and institutions mentioned in article I shall cease to enjoy the privileges recognized in the present treaty in case they are made use of for military purposes.

ARTICLE VI

The States which do not sign the present treaty on the date it is opened for signature, may sign or adhere to it at any time.

ARTICLE VII

The instruments of accession, as well as those of ratification and denunciation of the present treaty, shall be deposited with the Pan American Union, which shall communicate notice of the act of deposit to the other signatory or acceding States.

ARTICLE VIII

The present treaty may be denounced at any time by any of the signatory or acceding States, and the denunciation shall go into effect three months after notice of it has been given to the other signatory or acceding States.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Undersigned Plenipotentiaries, after having deposited their full powers found to be in due and proper form, sign this treaty on behalf of their respective governments, and affix thereto their seals, on the dates appearing opposite their signatures.

For the Argentine Republic:

FELIPE A. ESPIL

April 15, 1935For Bolivia:

ENRIQUE FINOT

April 15, 1935For Brazil:

OSWALDO ARANHA
April 15, 1935For Chile:
M. TRUCCO
April 15, 1935For Colombia:
M. LOPEZ PUMAREJO
April 15, 1935For Costa Rica:
MAN. GONZALEZ
April 15, 1935For Cuba:
GUILLERMO PATTERSON
April 15, 1935For the Dominican Republic:
RAF. BRACHE
April 15, 1935For Ecuador:
C. E. ALFARO
April 15, 1935For El Salvador:
HECTOR DAVID CASTRO
April 15, 1935For Guatemala:
ADRIAN RECINOS
April 15, 1935For Haiti:
A. BLANCHET
April 15, 1935For Honduras:
M. PAZ BARAONA
April 15, 1935For Mexico:
F. CASTILLO NAJERA
April 15, 1935For Nicaragua:
HENRI DE BAYLE
April 15, 1935For Panama:
R. J. ALFARO
April 15, 1935For Paraguay:
ENRIQUE BORDENAVE
April 15, 1935For Peru:
M. DE FREYRE Y S.
April 15, 1935For the United States of America:
HENRY A. WALLACE
April 15, 1935For Uruguay:
J. RICHLING
April 15, 1935For Venezuela:

PEDRO M. ARCA YA

April 15, 1935

AND WHEREAS the said Treaty has been duly ratified by the United States of America, whose instrument of ratification was deposited with the Pan American Union on July 13, 1935;

AND WHEREAS the said Treaty has been duly ratified also by the Republic of Cuba, whose instrument of ratification was deposited with the Pan American Union on August 26, 1935;

NOW, THEREFORE be it known that I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, have caused the said Treaty to be made public to the end that the same and every article and clause thereof may be observed and fulfilled with good faith by the United States of America and the citizens thereof.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have caused the Seal of the United States of America to be hereunto affixed.

DONE at the city of Washington this twenty-fifth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixtieth.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

By the President:

CORDELL HULL

Secretary of State.

3. Call To World Unity (1947)³

With each crisis in history man has paused to take inventory of the facts and issues of the day. This is an opportune time to reflect upon the enormity of World War II and its global devastation. We find there is no longer a national insurance against war. Nations can no longer seek immunity from war in their geographical barriers.

Mountains, oceans and climes are no longer obstacles to modern science. Wars cannot be prevented by interdicts, disarmaments, nor large standing armies. In the wake of World War II there are millions of people dead, crippled and diseased, wanton destruction of property and barbarous vandalism. More than a year after the war's termination the world is still a fused keg of dynamite ready to explode at the faintest spark. Today the common man knows, for the first time, there can be no peace without a world peace.

How can this be obtained? What is the foundation of World Peace? The answer lies in the oft-preached, seldom practised—"Know Thy Neighbor". This ageless teaching must be practiced now, more than ever before, to establish the world peace for which so many gave to the last measure. It could be done if we were to live among our global neighbors. Obviously it is impractical. However, in the absence of the desired personal contact the knowledge necessary for mutual understanding can be secured through Culture. Availing a people's constructive genius to others is the basis of—"Knowing Thy Neighbor". Esteem and appreciation of this Culture can insure the common understanding necessary to unity and permanent peace.

Culture belongs to no one man, group, nation or era. It is the mutual property of all mankind and the heritage of generations. It is the constructive creation of human endeavor. It transcends all obstacles, prejudices and intolerances.

It is the highest perception of Beauty and Knowledge. Without Culture there is no truth, no unity, no peace.

The creative mind and its equally important sponsors are aware of Culture's omnipotence as the sole instrument for permanent world peace. In the same breath Culture must be availed to and sponsored by all mankind and generations.

It must be made sacred and inviolate to the human mind and hand. It is to the fulfillment of this beneficent goal that humanity must dedicate itself.

³ A text by the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee published in the collection *The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace* (New York: The Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace Committee, 1947, 1-4).

Our past is filled with deplorably sad and irreparable destructions. Not only in times of war but in times of peace, creations of human genius are destroyed. At the same time the elite of humanity understand that no evolution is possible without the accumulations of Culture. The ways of Culture are untold and difficult. Hence, the more carefully one must guard the paths which lead to it. It is this generation's duty to create for the younger generation the traditions of Culture for there, where Culture is, there is Peace.

Mankind must strive for Culture's Day of Triumph. This will occur when, simultaneously in all schools and all educational institutions, the world will be reminded of the true treasures of humanity, of creative heroic enthusiasm, of a richer and fuller life. The ennobled consciousness, having contacted the Realm of Culture, will naturally enter upon the path of peaceful construction, discarding as shameful rubbish all belittlement of human dignity created by ignorance. For this purpose our cultural heritage must be safeguarded by all available means. These treasures must be consciously valued, remembering that every contact with them will ennoble the spirit. The one pan-human desire is to make inviolate the cultural achievements of mankind and thus insure permanent unity and peace, the world over.

Material effort and endeavor in this fulfillment is not new. This goal had its inception in 1929 when the Roerich Peace Pact proposed a special Banner of Peace for the protection of all cultural treasures. An International Congress for the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace was established with its central seat in Bruges, Belgium. This agency was spreading the ideals of Peace through Culture with most significant results. It proved conclusively how close this aim is to the hearts of all positive people of the world.

The lists of adherents to the Banner of Peace are long and glorious. The Banner has been consecrated already. Sacred oaths have been offered to introduce it everywhere. This ideal must continue to its complete fulfillment. The late President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935 said of the Roerich Peace Pact, "This treaty possesses a spiritual significance far deeper than the text of the instrument itself."

The Roerich 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 all humanity. It condemns not only the destruction of Culture in war but also all the barbaric acts by which the symbols of Culture are endangered in peace.

The Pact instills unceasingly into the minds of our children, our grandchildren and all who surround us the impulse to strive toward constructive creation. Thus, it inscribes an essential page in the history of cultural achievements.

The Roerich Peace Pact has been justly named the Red Cross of Culture. Truly, it stands in closest relation to the great Red Cross which at the time of its inception was received rather skeptically, but now has become an undisputably humanistic foundation of life. If humanity recognized the Red Cross as a protection to the physically wounded and ill, then it will also recognize the Banner of Peace as the symbol of peaceful prosperity and health of spirit.

All cultural centers of the world should proclaim ceaselessly the call to the Roerich Pact and Banner of Peace, thus eliminating the very possibilities of war. There can be created for generations new lofty traditions of veneration for real cultural treasures. Untiringly, everywhere the Banner of Peace unfurling, the very physical fields of war will be destroyed.

Time is short! Not an hour nor day must be lost! Man's cultural heritage must be made inviolate. The ideals of the Roerich Peace Pact must be availed to all. Its text is a cultural covenant which is the welding force necessary to world unity and peace. Under the Banner of Peace mankind will proceed towards the one Supreme Culture in powerful and peaceful union as the World League of Culture!