

*A museum which is
needed by the world*





A MUSEUM WHICH IS NEEDED BY THE WORLD

You are holding in your hands a booklet that tells you about permanent exhibition of the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the International Centre of the Roerichs (Moscow, Russia), which does no longer exist.

Since April 29, 2017, the work of the public Nicholas Roerich Museum has been stopped due to the illegal seizure of the Roerichs' heritage and the Lopukhin Estate by the State Museum of Oriental Art with the direct involvement of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

The unique museum exposition, created over 25 years, was barbarously destroyed, and part of the expensive museum equipment as well as exhibits were deliberately damaged and broken.

Many years of work by the international public and Lyudmila Shaposhnikova, the Museum's general director, academician and indologist, have been cynically destroyed, crossing out the will of its founder, Svetoslav Roerich.

"Destroying a museum means destroying the country," Nicholas Roerich wrote in the 1940s, deeply believing in the high purpose of museums and their leading role in preserving culture.

The Roerich Pact - Treaty on the Protection of Artistic and Scientific Institutions and Historic Monuments - signed in Washington in 1935, defines the need to protect cultural property not only in time of war but above all in peacetime.

What happened in Moscow in the 21st century with the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the International Centre of the Roerichs is one of the reasons to emphasize the importance of the Roerich Pact in today's world.

As US President Franklin Roosevelt said during the signing ceremony of the Roerich Pact on April 15, 1935: "This treaty encapsulates a spiritual meaning far more profound than that expressed in the text itself."

The public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the International Centre of the Roerichs

In 1990, Svetoslav Roerich, the youngest son of Helena and Nicholas Roerich, handed over the priceless heritage of his parents from India to Russia under the condition of creating a public Nicholas Roerich Museum in Moscow. Thanks to the efforts of Svetoslav Roerich's trusted person, indologist and writer Lyudmila Shaposhnikova, together with the help of renowned diplomat Yuli Vorontsov and sponsor Boris Bulochnik, Svetoslav Roerichs' will was fulfilled, and in February 1993 the Museum was opened for the first time.

The exposition of the Museum, developed by its Director General Lyudmila Shaposhnikova, reflected the key stages in the life and creative path of the Roerich family. Each of them contributed to the treasury of world culture and science. Their lives and works are based on the ideas of the Living Ethics, a philosophical system dealing with issues of cosmic evolution of mankind.

The public Nicholas Roerich Museum, equipped according to the most modern international standards, was located in the centre of Moscow, in the historic Lopukhin Estate. Over the years, the staff of the International Centre of the Roerichs, with the help of sponsors and the public, restored from the ruins the historic and cultural monument of the XVII-XIX centuries - the Lopukhin Estate, and enriched the museum's collection with paintings of Roerich father and son, published over 250 books on the heritage, organised over 600 travelling exhibitions and several dozen scientific conferences, supported the peace promoting ideas of the Roerich Pact at international level.

The unique heritage, which Svetoslav Roerich handed over to his homeland Russia, contains an exceptional wealth of thought, both artistic and philosophical. Created in accordance with his concept, the Museum in a short time became a true cultural gem, not only in Russia, but all over the world. It has truly become a monument to the great Roerich family.



Petersburg Hall

Petersburg is a city of high culture, a fairy-tale city, a city-museum combining the East and the West, different epochs and styles. It is in this city where Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947) was born. He spent 42 out of his 73 years in Petersburg and carried the spiritual connection with this wonderful city through the rest of his life.

The photographs and documents that were displayed in the hall showed Nicholas Roerich during the different periods of his life: childhood, studies at the famous Karl May school, the St. Petersburg University, and the Academy of Arts. Nicholas Roerich's student drawings and pictorial works were also on display. During his life in Petersburg, Roerich became a well-known artist, scientist, writer, archaeologist, and public figure. It happened in Petersburg, too, that he got acquainted with Helena Shaposhnikova (1879–1955) – an outstanding lady from the renowned family of Golenishchev-Koutouzov. The exhibits in the hall included the Golenishchev-Koutouzovs' coat of arms, Helena's childhood photos, as well as photos of her parents.

Nicholas and Helena walked hand in hand throughout their entire life, complementing each other both creatively and spiritually. Their elder son Yuri (1902–1960) became a well-known orientalist, while their younger son Svetoslav (1904–1993) followed his father's path and became an artist. Both left an inimitable mark in the cultural heritage of the Planet.

Introductory Hall

The Introductory Hall could have been viewed as an epigraph to the main Museum exhibition. The hall design represented the ideas of the Living Ethics – philosophy of Cosmic Reality, in the development of which the Roerichs were closely involved.

The symbolic images on the paintings by modern artist Nina Volkova show the main stages of the spiritual and cultural evolution of mankind: from the downfall of Atlantis and the spring of the ancient Greek culture on to the new epoch and the appearance of a new spiritually transformed human being whose consciousness is beyond the earthly limits. The leading role in this evolutionary process belongs to the great spiritual Teachers represented in the paintings of Buddha and Christ.

It is the ideas of the Living Ethics about the cosmic evolution of mankind that the versatile activities of the Roerichs were based upon. The public Nicholas Roerich Museum was dedicated to the life and the work of this great family.





Russian Hall

The lace of the wooden carving on the walls of the Russian hall revived the magic world of the age-old legends. The two fancifully decorated dioramas “Heathen Rus” and “Christian Rus” based on the theatre decoration works by Nicholas Roerich brought us back to the two great epochs in the Russian history – the epochs that Roerich delved into as a historian, archaeologist, and artist.

The image of the Russian Land pierces through the entire oeuvre of Nicholas Roerich. The hall exhibition contained paintings created by the artist in different years and in different countries. The painting “The Fairest City – Anger for Enemies” was created in Russia in 1912 in the anticipation of the impending war; the famous series “Sancta” (“The Saints”) was created in the USA in 1922; the paintings “Saint Sergius of Radonezh”, “Terra Slavonica” and others were created in India. All these works are permeated with the artist’s deep love for Russia and his faith in its great predestination.



Hall of the Living Ethics

The Hall of the Living Ethics was the heart of the Museum exhibition. The distant galaxies and constellations were radiating bright colours in the dark-blue space of the hall. The ever-burning fire blazes in the lifted hand of a woman standing on the mountain top. The paintings by Nicholas Roerich are shining in the depth of dark frames. The sculptural composition “Messengers of Cosmic Evolution” presented the images of Those who age by age were bringing knowledge to the planet Earth, showing the humanity the path to the heights of Spirit...

In the 1920–30s, Helena and Nicholas Roerich brought the philosophy of Cosmic Reality to the world. It was passed over to mankind under the name “The Living Ethics” by a group of Indian philosophers and Teachers. The Teaching included several books with quiet unusual names: “The Call”, “Illumination”, “Heart”, “Fiery World”, etc. The first editions of these books in Russian, published in Paris and Riga, were on display in the hall.

The Living Ethics initiated a new paradigm of cosmic thinking that is currently developing on our Planet. Viewing the Universe as a grand energetic system of spiritual Cosmos, it reveals the basic laws of the Universe and explains the most important processes of evolution.

In this hall you could find the diaries of Helena Roerich with her first notes on the Living Ethics, as well as ancient thangkhas and vajras, presented to her by the Teacher. There had also been paintings by Nicholas from the series “His Country”, telling about Their philosophical ideas, Their work for the welfare of mankind.

Teacher's Hall

Communication with these High Beings, standing above us on the ladder of cosmic evolution and guiding mankind along the path of spiritual development, became the defining principle in the life of the Roerich family.

In the hall you could see the portraits of the Great Teachers as well as Nicholas Roerich's paintings "The Herald" and "Mother of the World". The triptych "Long Live the King!" (1931), placed in the centre of the exhibition, depicts the Teacher who guided Helena Roerich in the creation of the Living Ethics.

In this hall you could see the Teacher's gifts to Helena, among them a ring of the Egyptian czarina Nefertiti; a letter from the Teacher written on a birch bark sheet received by Helena in Darjeeling; and her drawings, many of which became the basis for the paintings by Nicholas. The inspirational image of Helena appears on the portrait painted by her younger son Svetoslav Roerich.



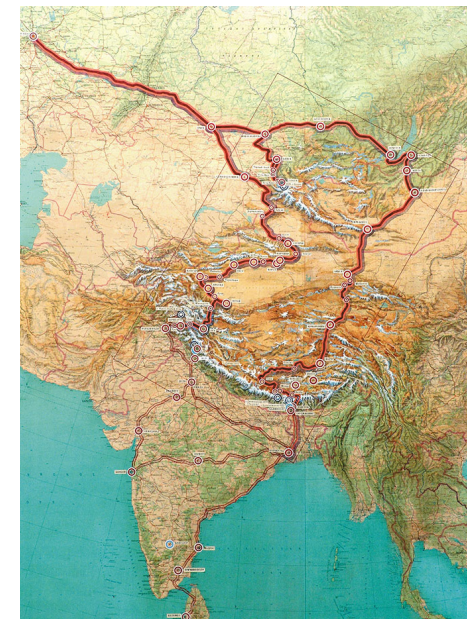
Central Asian Expedition

The Central Asian Expedition was the climax in the life of Nicholas Roerich. Initiated in 1924 in India, the expedition went through China, Siberia, Mongolia, Tibet, and in the end of 1928 returned to India, having explored the hitherto scantily studied and barely passable regions of Inner Asia. Beside the expedition crew, the team consisted of Roerich himself, his wife Helena and their son, orientalist Yuri Roerich.

The hall featured a map layout showing the itinerary of the expedition caravan, information about the events that took place on the route, the unique archaeological collection gathered by Nicholas and Yuri Roerich in Tibet, as well as Nicholas' route diaries. During the expedition, Nicholas Roerich created about 500 paintings, including those having been displayed in this hall – "The Crossroad of Christ and Buddha", "Shekar Dzong", "The Greatest and the Holiest of Tang-la". The exhibition also included unique portraits of Nicholas Roerich in High Lama's clothes painted by his younger son Svetoslav in the 1930s.

The expedition passed through the ancient regions of Asia. The enormous scientific material collected on the route was later processed and analysed by Nicholas Roerich in the wide philosophical context. Beside the great scientific significance, the Central Asian Expedition also had evolutionary value which the humanity is yet to fully realize.

*Itinerary of the expedition
1924-1928*





Hall of the Banner of Peace

The Banner of Peace, the flag of Culture, was the main exhibit in this hall. On a white background there is an ancient symbol – three red orbs in a circle. It can be interpreted as the Past, the Present and the Future forming an eternal entity, or as Art, Science and Religion united in the circle of Culture. This banner was suggested by Nicholas Roerich as a distinguishing sign for the first-ever international treaty on the protection of cultural property, called “The Roerich Pact”.

The photo documents displayed in the hall showed us the entire process of preparing and signing the Pact which was elaborated by Nicholas Roerich in cooperation with European lawyers in 1929. We could see photos of the international conferences in connection with the Pact. One of the photos showed the historic moment of signing the Roerich Pact that took place on April 15, 1935, in the White House in Washington in the presence of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. That day was called by journalists “a luminous occasion for all mankind”.

In our days, the initiative of spreading the ideas of the Pact and promoting the Banner of Peace has been taken over by the International Centre of the Roerichs. The Banner of Peace and the Roerich Pact call for the protection of cultural values not only in the wartime, but also in times of peace. “The Roerich Pact taken as a whole,” Lyudmila Shaposhnikova writes, “is a cosmic phenomenon connecting us through our cultural heritage with the world of the higher condition of substance, the one that leads us along the path of cosmic evolution and prevents us from downfalls, chaos, and ignorance”.

Kullu Hall

The Kullu Hall brought us to the holy valley of India, where the Roerichs came in the end of 1928. Here, in the Kullu Valley, the Roerichs founded the Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute, its name meaning “the light of the morning star” in Sanskrit. The basic principle of the activities of this comprehensive institute was the combination of ancient knowledge with the latest scientific achievements. The Institute conducted research in the field of human psychic energy and the energy of thought. Among the scientists who cooperated with the Institute were such eminent figures as Albert Einstein, Robert Milliken, Sven Hedin, Nikolaj Vavilov, and others.

In this hall, you could also see personal belongings of the Roerichs and items from their art collection. Their life in Kullu was full of events: work at the Institute, versatile artistic activities, meetings with famous people. One of the photos showed Nicholas together with Jawaharlal Nehru who visited the Roerichs in 1942 to discuss the issues of Russian-Indian cooperation during the hard wartime.

The exhibition presented portraits of the father and the elder brother painted by Svetoslav Roerich. There was also a self-portrait by Svetoslav. All the activities of the Roerich family were aimed at asserting the enduring significance of culture. One of the most important initiatives in this respect was the Treaty on the protection of cultural property, to which the Hall of the Banner of Peace was dedicated.



Hall of Svetoslav Roerich

The hall was dedicated to Svetoslav Roerich – the founder of the public Museum, the younger son of Helena and Nicholas Roerich, a great artist, philosopher, and public figure. As said by Svetoslav, “we will bring the word about Beauty to every heart, to every home. Let the aspiration for the Beauty be our everyday prayer...”

Svetoslav Roerich himself was a messenger of the Beauty. His paintings are full of integrity and amazing beauty. The characters depicted in his portraits win us by spiritual strength.

Portraits of Tibetan lamas and hermits, ordinary Indians, female portraits, and a portrait of Nicholas Roerich were all exhibited in this hall. Portraits of his father (he painted more than thirty of them) occupy a special place in the artist's oeuvre. This unique series can be called an epos told by the great son about the great father.

The painting “Ploughing” depicting the life of an Indian village can be perceived as a philosophic parable.

The beauty and subtlety of India and its ideas inspired the artist to create many beautiful paintings about this wonderful country: a soft light of “The Pearly Blue Mountains”; bright and contrasting colours of the “Two peaks. Gepang”; beauty of the world and of the man in the “Saga about Gessar Khan”.

The topic of spiritual guidance is examined by Svetoslav in the painting “Christ with His Disciples”. The theme of the Teacher was congenial to the Artist. His father and mother were his Teachers in the highest sense of the word. Sharing their views and participating in all the initiatives of his family, Svetoslav succeeded in the implementation of their deeply humanistic philosophical ideas. It can justly be stated that were it not for Svetoslav Roerich, we would not be able to get acquainted with the oeuvre of the Roerichs as fully as it was possible to do in the Museum.



Yuri Roerich Hall

The hall was dedicated to Yuri Roerich, the eldest son of Helena and Nicholas, who was an orientalist, traveller, linguist, art historian, archaeologist and historian. The frieze surrounding the hall and the photographs on display transported us to India, Tibet and Central Asia.

The young Yuri Roerich's artistic gift is reflected in his paintings and drawings made during his school years. Unique expedition items from the Roerich family collection were displayed in the hall, representing the rich spiritual culture of the peoples of the East, including the thangka of Buddha Maitreya, a banner which accompanied the Roerichs during the whole route of their expedition.

Sketches by Nicholas Roerich depict a picturesque panorama of the route of the Manchurian expedition (1934–1935). He also painted “Gesar-Khan”, a majestic canvas representing the legendary hero of the Central Asian epic, and a sketch for the painting “Hero's Star”. Both works are dedicated to Yuri Roerich. In the hall you could find the canvas “Portrait of a Brother”, painted by Svetoslav Roerich. The portrait is not finished, but a face of great charm appears on it. Determination, will, concentration and a surprisingly benevolent radiant look. This unforgettable inner light emanating from Yuri Roerich was noted by many who knew him personally.





The International Centre of the Roerichs and its Museum

The activities of the International Centre of the Roerichs (ICR) and its public Nicholas Roerich Museum were carried out in accordance with the vision of its founder Svetoslav Roerich, who saw it as an active scientific and cultural centre. Over the 27 years of its existence, the International Centre of the Roerichs has become not only the largest but also the world's leading organisation for the preservation, study and promotion of the Roerichs' heritage, based on humanistic ideas about the priority of Culture in the life of humanity.

The International Centre of the Roerichs conducts international activities aimed at the promotion of the peace-making ideas of Nicholas Roerich in the Roerich Pact, the first international treaty for the protection of cultural property (April 15, 1935, Washington, DC), which served as the basis for the creation and activities of UNESCO. From 2012 to the present, exhibitions of the project "The Roerich Pact. History and Modernity" have taken place in 20 countries around the world. For this, it has received several commendations from the Director-General of UNESCO and the UN Secretary-General.

Links:

https://en.icr.su/news/Pact_project.php

https://icr.su/rus/news/icr/Pact_project.php

In 2020, the new exhibition project of the ICR "The Roerich Pact. Peace through Culture" has started.

Links:

<https://en.icr.su/news/index.php?news=6762>

https://icr.su/rus/news/icr/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6761

The Museum:

- had a permanent exhibition of paintings by Nicholas Roerich and his son Svetoslav,
- had travelling exhibitions of paintings by Nicholas and Svetoslav Roerich in cities of Russia, near and far abroad,
- had a manuscripts department where the family stock of the Roerichs was kept, a reading room as well as a scientific library with a reading room and a unique book collection,
- held exhibitions of works by contemporary artists, as well as classical music concerts,
- is engaged in publishing activities on a wide scale, publishing books and the quarterly magazine "Culture and Time",
- is participating in the work of the UN Department of Public Information,
- maintains permanent links with the national and international Roerich Movement,
- holds annual international scientific and public conferences devoted to the Roerich family heritage, scientific lectures and seminars,
- carries out active scientific activities in approval of the concept of a new picture of the world based on the methodology of Living Ethics, created by Academician Lyudmila Shaposhnikova.

Although today the exposition of the public Museum has been destroyed and the Roerichs' heritage has been seized by the State Museum of Oriental Art, the International Centre of the Roerichs continues its active cultural and scientific activities.

International scientific conferences and seminars continue to be held, affirming the ideas of new cosmic thinking in science.

Links:

<https://en.icr.su/work/conferencies/2016/>

<https://icr.su/rus/conferencies/>

There is a permanent scientific lecture program which introduces the artistic, philosophical, and scientific heritage of the Roerich family.

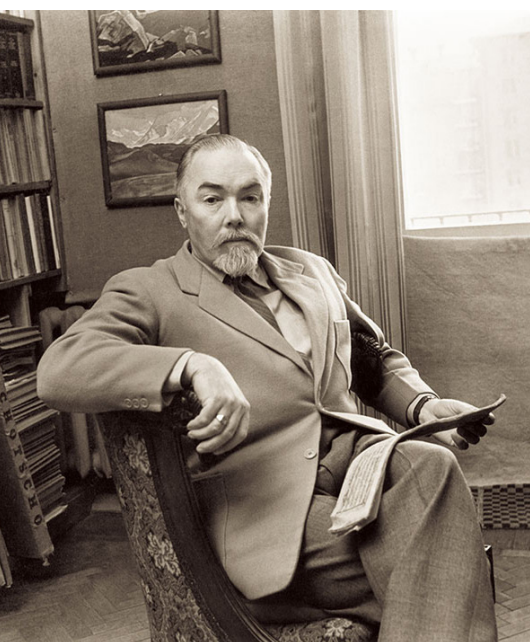
The artistic, philosophical and scientific heritage of the Roerichs is a heritage of global significance. It is part of the cultural heritage of all mankind. Due to the work of the ICR and its public Museum, the Roerichs' ideas in the field of philosophy, art, science become a part of cultural, scientific, public life in the international space.



Nicholas Konstantinovich Roerich

(1874-1947) was a great Russian artist, scientist, thinker, traveller and public figure of world renown. His creative legacy includes more than 7,000 paintings and drawings and about 30 books, which include literary and philosophical works. He was the initiator of the Roerich Pact, the first international treaty for the unconditional protection of cultural property in peacetime and during armed conflicts which was signed in Washington (USA) in 1935. The Roerich Pact became the basis of the modern international legal system for the protection of cultural property. In the 1930s, Roerich founded the international movement for the protection of cultural property under the Banner of Peace, which he called the Red Cross of Culture. He conducted the largest scientific expedition in the

twentieth century to Central Asia (1924-1928). He founded the Himalayan Institute of Scientific Research «Urusvati» in India (Kullu Valley, Naggar). Roerich fervently loved his homeland and strove to return to Russia (then USSR) until his last days but did not receive permission from the Soviet authorities. From 1928 until the end of his days, he lived in India, which became his second homeland. A close friendship was forged between Nicholas Roerich's family and that of Jawaharlal Nehru.



Yuri Nikolaevich Roerich

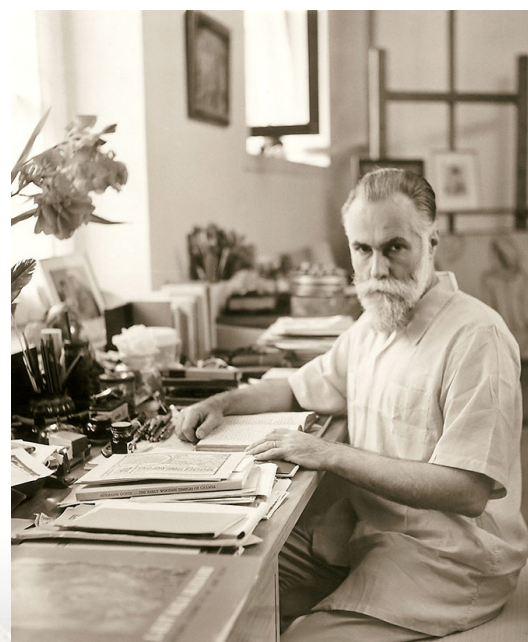
(1902-1960) was an outstanding Indologist, Tibetologist, Mongolologist, Buddhologist of the twentieth century, the elder son of Nicholas and Helena Roerich. He left dozens of scientific works which contributed greatly to the development of some fields of modern Orientalism and the affair of rapprochement of peoples and cultures of the West and the East. He was the only Roerich family member who returned to the Soviet Union in 1957, where he accepted Soviet citizenship and became the head of the Philosophy and Religion of the East sector of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences. He passed away unexpectedly in 1960, in Moscow.



Helena Ivanovna Roerich

(1879-1955) was a great Russian thinker, a profound expert of Oriental philosophy, a writer, a public figure, and a true associate of her husband, Nicholas Roerich. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, this distinguished daughter of Russia ended her life in Kalimpong, India, as she, like her husband, did not receive permission to return to her homeland until the end of her days. Her books include: "Fundamentals of Buddhism", revealing the fundamental philosophical concepts of the Buddha's teaching; "Cryptograms of the East", dedicated to the legends of the spiritual Teachers of mankind; the essay "Saint Sergius of Radonezh" about one of the most revered Russian saints. She left a huge epistolary heritage. Helena and Nicholas Roerich, together with the Teachers of the East,

created the philosophical system of the Living Ethics. This philosophical system, created in Russian language, is an inseparable part of that period of flourishing Russian culture (late 19th and early 20th centuries), which is known as the Silver Century. The Living Ethics permeated all aspects of Nicholas and Helena Roerich's creative activity, being their foundation. This also applies to their sons.



Svetoslav Nikolaevich Roerich

(1904-1993) was an outstanding artist, thinker, naturalist scientist, public figure, the younger son of Nicholas and Helena Roerich. In his creative heritage are more than 5,000 pictorial works. He lived a significant part of his life in India, where he finished (in Bangalore). Svetoslav Roerich was a great son of Russia and a citizen of India. In 1962, he founded a children's school in Bangalore, India, based on the ideas of the Indian philosopher Aurobindo Ghosh, where great importance is dedicated to art education. Svetoslav Roerich was and still is the Honorary President of the International Centre of the Roerichs, which has been established on his initiative.



The deliberate destruction of the Exposition of the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the International Centre of the Roerichs violates the cultural rights of the participants in the international Roerich Movement who have contributed so much to the restoration of Lopukhin Estate and the creation of the public Museum.

The international Roerich Movement participates in many activities of the International Centre of the Roerichs, such as exhibition projects, seminars, conferences, creative competitions. The enforced closure of the public Nicholas Roerich Museum and the confiscation of its exhibits resulted in a violation of human rights in the field of cultural activities not only of Russian citizens but also of the international community.

Until now, the International Centre of the Roerichs, with the support of the international community, continues to defend through the courts, including the European Court for Human Rights, its right to the Roerich family heritage in accordance with Svetoslav Roerich's legacy and to assert his will of the donation.

Links:

<https://save.icr.su/ru/>

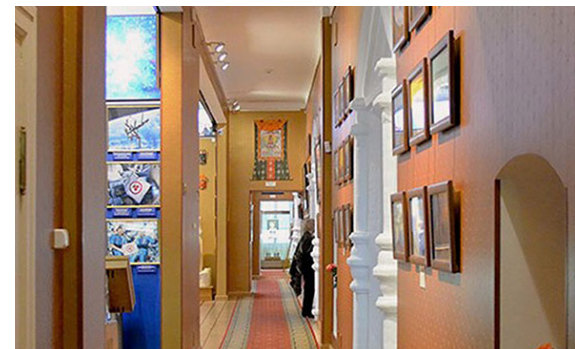
<https://save.icr.su/en/>

The public Nicholas Roerich Museum was a unique phenomenon in Russian culture, and its educational and peacekeeping activities have caused a wide response in many countries of the world. We trust that through the joint efforts of all warm-hearted people who are not indifferent to the values of culture and who are ready to uphold law and justice, the exposition of the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the ICR will be reestablished!

The public Nicholas Roerich Museum is operating in virtual mode. To visit the exposition, please follow this link: <https://roerich.museum/>

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Halls of the public Nicholas Roerich Museum before destruction

After destruction and seizure of the heritage and the buildings of Lopukhin Estate by the State Museum of Oriental Art

Chronological background

In 1989, Svetoslav Roerich took the decision to transfer the Roerichs' heritage to Russia, based on the guarantees of the State (USSR, Russian Federation became the successor), that a public Museum would be created to deal with the heritage and would be located in the buildings of Lopukhin Estate. The public Museum would be part of the structure of a newly established public organisation, the Soviet Roerich Foundation, which would carry out the Museum's activities. State guarantees were enshrined in the Resolutions and Decisions of the governing bodies of the country.

https://icr.su/rus/news/icr/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=6942&sphrase_id=467346
https://icr.su/rus/news/2021/Postanovlenie_Sovet_Ministrov_950_4.11.1989.pdf
https://icr.su/rus/news/2021/Resheniye_2248_28.11.1989.pdf

In March 1990, Svetoslav Roerich in accordance with the rules of Indian law made a will «Roerichs' Archive and Legacy for the Soviet Roerich Foundation in Moscow» and transferred Roerichs' heritage to the Soviet Roerich Foundation (SRF) to create the public Museum through the executor of the will, Vice Chairman of the Soviet Roerichs Foundation Lyudmila Shaposhnikova which she brought to Moscow in May of that year. The SRF administered the legacy received on the basis of Svetoslav Roerich's power of attorney. According to point 5 of the testamentary disposition, the SRF would come into possession of the heritage only after the death of Svetoslav Roerich.

In 1991, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union the Soviet Roerichs Foundation was transformed into the International Centre of the Roerichs (ICR) by initiative of Svetoslav Roerich.

In 1992, Svetoslav Roerich registered and notary certified in India an order of Roerichs' heritage transfer in favour of the public organisation International Centre of the Roerichs which executed Svetoslav Roerich's will: in Lopukhin Estate, it created the public Museum named after Nicholas Roerich.

There is not a single document about Svetoslav Roerich's transfer of his heritage to the Russian state. However, attempts to take the Roerichs' heritage from the ICR were made by the state from the first years of existence of the public Nicholas Roerichs Museum. To this end, the ICR has been embroiled in numerous lawsuits.

As a result, **in 2011**, Russian court established the fact of acceptance by the International Centre of the Roerichs of Svetoslav Roerich's legacy property. This decision was final and entered into force.

With the appointment of Vladimir Medinsky as Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation **in 2012**, a campaign was launched to seize the Roerichs' heritage from the ICR and liquidate its public Nicholas Roerich Museum.

In 2014, the State Museum of Oriental Art, supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, filed a lawsuit to overturn the 2011 court decision «on the

fact that the ICR took over Svetoslav Roerich's legacy property». One of the arguments was a letter from Vladimir Medinsky to President Putin containing unsubstantiated assertions about the state's rights to the heritage.

https://www.icr.su/rus/protection/heritage/museum/files/medinskii_letter_11.11.2013.jpg

https://icr.su/rus/news/icr/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=5458&sphrase_id=467348#_ftn4

The 2014 appellate ruling of the Moscow City Court overturned the 2011 court decision, but did not approve that the heritage transferred by the owner was in the ICR illegally and did not approve that the heritage belonged to the state.

Until 2017, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation did not assert state rights to the Roerichs' heritage located at the ICR and did not apply to court to challenge the ICR's ownership of the Roerichs' heritage transferred to it by the owner Svetoslav Roerich.

In October 2015, at the initiative of Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinsky, the transfer of Lopukhin Estate structures into federal ownership took place, and **in November 2015** the Federal Property Management Agency complied with the request of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation to transfer the estate into the operational management of the State Museum of Oriental Art. It was planned to create a State Museum of the Roerichs in the estate as a branch. No account was taken of the fact that the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the ICR had been housed in Lopukhin Estate for more than 25 years.

In 2015, First Deputy Minister of Culture Vladimir Aristarkhov initiated five inspections of the ICR by the Prosecutor's Office to check the legality of ownership of the Roerichs' heritage. The Prosecutor's Office found no evidence of illegal possession of the Roerichs' heritage at the ICR.

In February 2016, the Board of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation decided to establish the State Museum of the Roerich Family at Lopukhin Estate as a branch of the State Museum of Oriental Art. This violated the state's commitment to Svetoslav Roerich to establish a public museum at Lopukhin Estate.

In 2016, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation initiated 17 unscheduled inspections by various controlling state bodies with respect to the ICR. The purpose of the inspections was to exert administrative pressure, evict the ICR from Lopukhin Estate, take away the legacy given by Svetoslav Roerich, and liquidate the public Nicholas Roerich Museum.

In 2016, on the rights as operational manager, the State Museum of Oriental Art filed lawsuits for early termination of the contracts of gratuitous use with the ICR and eviction of the ICR from Lopukhin Estate on far-fetched grounds.

Despite the outstanding achievements of the ICR in restoring Lopukhin Estate from its dilapidated state and the Order of the Government of Moscow (No 452-RP dated 21.08.2014) on transferring two buildings of the Estate to the ICR for the gratuitous use for 10 years, in April 2017 the court satisfied the claim of the State Museum of Oriental Art. The International Centre of the Roerichs appealed this court decision within the statutory deadline.

On 7-8 March 2017, the first violent action supported by armed special forces was held against the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the ICR and its staff. About 200 works by Nicholas and Svetoslav Roerich, acquired by the ICR through donations from patrons and owned by the ICR, were seized from the exhibition and storage of the public Museum. The original agreements on the donation of these works by the Roerichs to the Museum since 2002 and the most valuable historical documents of the 1990s were seized.

On 28 and 29 April 2017, the second forceful action, led by the State Museum of Oriental Art with the participation of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and an unmarked special force, took place. As a result, the Roerichs' heritage belonging to the ICR was seized and the permanent exhibition of the public Museum and expensive equipment were barbarically destroyed. Thus, all principles of law and legality were violated. As time has shown, all this has turned into theft of cultural property.

In 2017, for the first time in the entire period of the existence of the public Museum, the tax inspectorate demanded payment of 60 million roubles in tax for the use in museum activities of the paintings on permanent display. No museum in Russia has ever paid property taxes for the use of works of art in museum activities. The ICR's objections and arguments in court about the inappropriateness of accounting for the donated works of art in the museum as its fixed assets and paying taxes on them did not yield results.

In May 2017, the tax inspectorate issued a decision to hold the ICR liable for a tax offence with a requirement to pay the arrears, which amount to an unaffordable sum (about 800 thousand euros) for a public organisation.

On the night **of 1 May 2017**, representatives of the State Museum of Oriental Art removed the Banner of Peace, the distinctive flag of the Roerich Pact, the first international treaty to protect world cultural heritage, from its flagpole on the grounds of Lopukhin Estate.



The attitude of the state media to the situation around the public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the ICR

Since 2015, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation has completely blocked any possibility of publications about the situation around the International Centre of the Roerichs and its cultural and educational activities in the media under its control. Examples for such significant events for the country are:

- the opening and holding at the UN headquarters in New York in April 2015 of the ICR's peacekeeping exhibition «The Roerich Pact. History and Modernity»,
- the goodwill visit of Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, to the public Nicholas Roerich Museum in Moscow in May 2015.

Since 28 April 2017, there has been an unprecedented smear campaign against the International Centre of the Roerichs and its public Museum in most state media. It is completely impossible for the ICR to refute the defamatory publications and to present an alternative position. Therefore, the Russian Federation represented by the Ministry of Culture with the support of law enforcement agencies, in gross violation of Russian and international law, liquidated the exposition of the public Museum, barbarically destroyed considerable part of the museum equipment and denied the International Centre of the Roerichs the right to protection.

The Roerichs' heritage belonging to the ICR, illegally held by the State Museum of Oriental Art and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, is in danger of being lost because of the risk of theft and damage due to improper storage and display. (<https://save.icr.su/en/news/> and <https://save.icr.su/ru/news/>)

Further activities of the ICR aimed at the popularisation of Nicholas Roerich's peace ideas and widely acknowledged by the country's leadership, the UN and UNESCO, need moral and financial support from caring and just people.

You can learn more about these facts on the website:

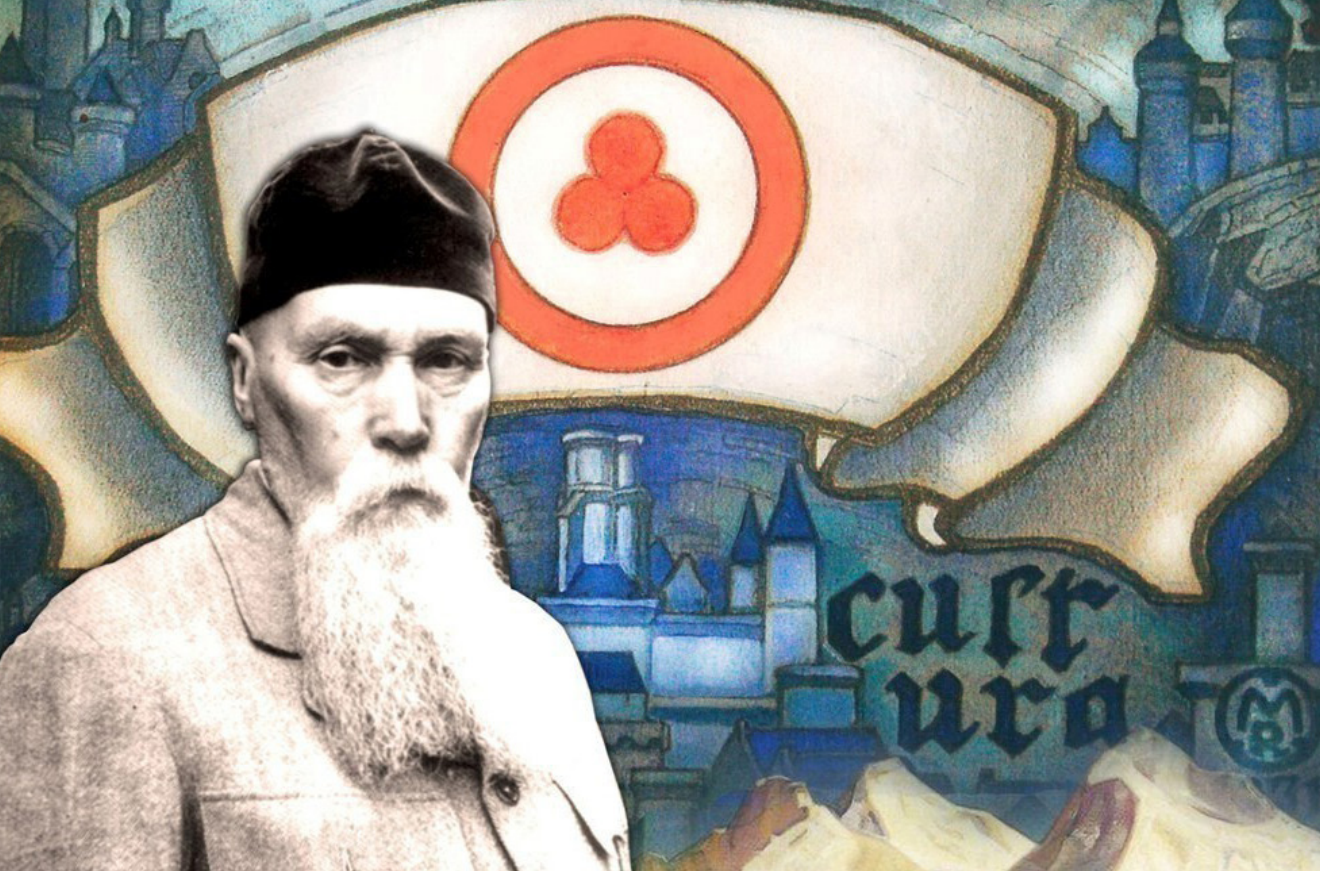
#СохранимМузейПериха | #SaveRoerichMuseum

<https://save.icr.su/en/>

<https://save.icr.su/en/news/>

<https://save.icr.su/en/category/chronicle/>





ABOUT THE ROERICH PACT

One of the important conditions for the development of any society was and remains Culture, as the environment in which new ideas are born, expanding the horizon and forming a new worldview, giving impulses for the development and prosperity of statehood and the well-being of the country as a whole.

Nicholas Konstantinovich Roerich and the members of his family have left an enormous cultural legacy. It contains new philosophical, scientific, cultural and artistic findings, being so important for the development of civil and legal values. Nicholas Roerich contributed to the treasury of world culture and science. He was elected an honorary and full member of more than a hundred world-renowned institutes, academies, scientific corporations and cultural institutions. His paintings can be found in many museums and private collections all over the world.

Svetoslav Nikolaevich Roerich bequeathed a part of Roerich's heritage to his parents' homeland in Russia to be placed in a public museum, which was to become a museum of cultural development and enlightenment. Changes in Russia in the 90's made the successful implementation of the Roerichs' initiative to be possible. The public Nicholas Roerich Museum in Moscow became a vivid example of the formation of a public form of culture and the building of civil society in Russia.

An important event of the 20th century was the Roerich Pact, a treaty for the protection of artistic and scientific institutions and historical monuments, initiated by Nicholas Roerich. Being a lawyer, he tried to establish in the minds of people the necessity, first of all, of legal protection of cultural objects, as he was deeply convinced that the cultural wealth is beyond time, beyond the borders of states and belongs to all mankind. The document he created was aimed to protect the cultural values of various nations, the will of patrons and donors, as well as the copyright of creators and geniuses. The Roerich Pact was signed in Washington D.C. in 1935 by 21 countries of the Americas as a result of the extensive legal and public works of Nicholas Roerich and his associates. The signatory countries pledged to protect cultural objects and accord them protection and respect in times of military conflict as well as in times of peace.

Above all, this document is distinguished by its high humanist content, as it asserts the priority of culture in the life of society. The Roerich Pact reflects principles for the protection of cultural property, such as its unconditional inviolability, a peacetime list of cultural property and its marking with a special symbol, among others. These principles contribute to successful inter-state cooperation in the protection of cultural patrimony, and they were embodied in the second half of the twentieth century in the principles of UNESCO's work. The Roerich Pact can undoubtedly be called an outstanding public initiative of the twentieth century, as it was supported by the general public, intellectuals and statesmen.

At present, the importance and relevance of the Roerich Pact has increased, as the destruction of cultural property in both war and peace times continues unabated in the world. A vivid example of this is the destruction of the unique public Nicholas Roerich Museum of the International Centre of the Roerichs, created by Svetoslav Roerich and having possessed the world's largest collection of paintings and drawings by Nicholas and Svetoslav Roerich, a priceless archive, the Roerich family library, and other rare collections.





Treaty

ON THE PROTECTION OF ARTISTIC AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTIONS AND HISTORIC MONUMENTS (ROERICH PACT)

Washington, 15 April 1935.

The High Contracting Parties, animated by the purpose of giving conventional form to the postulates of the resolution approved on 16 December 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 agreed upon the following Articles:

Article 1. 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 2. 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 3. 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.

Article 4. 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 5. The monuments and institutions mentioned in Article 1 shall cease to enjoy the privileges recognized in the present Treaty in case they are made use of for military purposes.

Article 6. 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 7. 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 8. 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.





Material provided by the International Centre of the Roerichs

Text for this booklet prepared by EURASSIM

Translation: Tradogan Uebersetzungen, Remscheid/Germany

Design and layout: P.Stepanov, E.Tomsha

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