

Constant Care

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH.



OUR committees are already enquiring what their situation is likely to be after the Pact. They realise that official ratification may mean that the Pact societies will be excluded from taking any initiative or from co-operating with their different governments.

The opposite, however, is likely to occur. The more we progress in this matter of safeguarding cultural treasures, the more we are likely to require the co-operation of public and private enterprise.

Culture can never be the work of a single government ; rather is it the expression of a whole nation—of all nations.

Co-operation between all nations is indispensable if we are to make any advance in the matter.

Educational institutions and all those other societies which exist for progress and enlightenment must necessarily co-operate with all the elements in the nation.

The closer the connection between our museum societies, the more active are our committees likely to be with the schools and co-operation more lively in every sense.



The same will occur with the application of the Pact for the Preservation of Cultural Treasures. Quite apart from the activity of government committees and institutions, we cannot dispense with private assistance or the initiative of well-wishers.

The committee which participated in the work of the Pact negotiations will remain the best collaborator in the future. If our committees have shown their activity in multifarious directions, then they are all the better equipped for co-operating with government activities.

Remember how many useful initiatives have been taken in the last four years and that in addition to three international conferences, lectures have been arranged in many countries.

Many times attention has been drawn to the Pact in schools, many articles have appeared in the press, and processions in which the banner has appeared have been organized so as to give an idea of cultural values.

Besides the local committees, the Washington convention established a Pact committee which gave a permanent character to the Pact, and made it the custodian of those resolutions which were drawn up at the Washington convention to defend and preserve all cultural values.

It is most probable that this permanent committee will grow in importance and attract more and more attention together with an increasing number of collaborators from the arts and sciences.

So wide is the scope of work that all newcomers will be welcomed with joy and friendship, for we require the co-operation of all sections of the community.

The need for safeguarding cultural values ought to be realized by every class of society. It should be taught in schools and colleges, and teachers should do their best to enlighten everyone as to its urgent character.

Several of our committees have no doubt realised that a large section of the community are, as it were, shut out from taking any part or interest in cultural activities. They have had to fight their way to get a hearing for the simplest propositions and have often encountered opposition even in intellectual circles.

In short, they have no illusions, knowing that there will always be difficulties.

The way of culture is the way of the cross and one which is never likely to be an easy one. There are many, however, who are ready to raise their voices but will do little to save the situation.

There will be meetings held on behalf of culture in which much will be said but little achieved, but this should not deter us in our determination to raise aloft the banner of culture.

The work of all these groups, societies, committees and collaborators will always be one of great variety, and the work is likely to grow in all directions since it depends upon the world-structure of life itself.

Governments ought to be glad of the work of volunteers who so willingly give their time to help in matters which, after all, are of the highest concern to the state.

The Committee itself is a centre of friendly co-operation able to attract the goodwill of everyone. It is unlimited in the number of its members and can be separated into sub-divisions, sections and commissions, and made to conform with anything that will promote the good work.

Let constancy be expressed by a desire for action, co-operation, benevolence and altruism. Where the word Culture is pronounced, there let altruism grow, so that the work of enlightenment can proceed with joy and mutual confidence.

Every friend acquired is a pathway to culture; every enemy overthrown is a victory for light. The salvation of beauty and knowledge is itself a lofty form of prayer.