



European Economic and Social Committee

# | Bertha von Suttner |





This text was published in connection with the renaming after Bertha von Suttner of an office building of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in Rue Montoyer in Brussels. This renaming was celebrated with a varied programme of events on 8 March 2006, International Women's Day and the centenary of the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bertha von Suttner.

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**| Bertha von Suttner |**



*“Europe is already more than a geographical expression; one could say that it has become a latent personality. (...) A unified, confederal Europe, this must henceforth be the watchword of enlightened pacifism.”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: *Kampf II*)





*Bestha* **ES** *Suttner*





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## IForewordI

> Anne-Marie Sigmund  
President of the European Economic and Social Committee

*"The message of the peace movement is not some fanciful dream which is out of touch with the world – it is a message which embodies the survival instinct of civilization."*

*(Bertha von Suttner: In der Brandung)*

Bertha von Suttner was an extraordinary woman. She always rejected the stereotypical views of her century and worked tirelessly to promote the cause of world peace. In an era when the concept of peace had not yet achieved the status of a self-evident tenet of European culture, her work in this field was exemplary. It was Bertha von Suttner who inspired Alfred Nobel to establish the Nobel Peace Prize and she it was who convinced him to donate part of his fortune to promote work on behalf of peace. In 1905 Bertha von Suttner herself was the first woman to receive this highest accolade, awarded to those who strive for peace.

Bertha von Suttner recognised at an early age that peace was the key to achieving a higher form of freedom and bringing about a united Europe, concerned about social issues. At that time Europe already represented for Bertha von Suttner something more than a mere geographical concept. As it strove to achieve peace at the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe gradually acquired a "latent personality". Following the publication of her novel Lay down your arms! in 1889, Bertha von Suttner became a world-famous writer. She masterfully exploited the medium of fiction as a tool for mobilising public opinion against war, anti-Semitism, social injustice and the marginalisation of the role of women.

The fact that one of the official buildings of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions will henceforth bear the name of this distinguished pacifist and convinced European is an inspirational gesture which has symbolic force for a new century.





## I Preface I

> Benita Ferrero-Waldner  
 EU Commissioner for External Relations and European  
 Neighbourhood Policy

In times of change, when the European Union is plotting its course for the 21st century, Europe must look to its foundations.

By naming a building after Bertha von Suttner, the great Austrian European, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions send out an important signal. Her epoch-making book "Lay Down Your Arms!" is not only a passionate plea in favour of peace, and against any form of fanaticism, it also embraces the vision of a unified, social Europe.

One hundred years ago, Bertha von Suttner was ahead of her time in recognising that only through European integration can we overcome destructive nationalism and create lasting peace and prosperity. However, in her lifetime her appeals went unheeded. Europe had first to overcome the darkest hours of its history before von Suttner's ideas could blossom. Nowadays, they are considered self-evident - proof that the European project has been a success.

Bertha von Suttner was not just European in spirit but also in her actions; she was somebody who explored the remoter parts of our continent in the Caucasus. The unconventional life of this strong-willed woman is also an argument in favour of a Europe that is open and active internationally, and which stands up for its fundamental values on the world stage. European external policy emphasises democracy, human rights, especially the rights of women, and aims to create a safe human environment, not just in our immediate neighbourhood, but also beyond.

At the beginning of the 21st century we need a new "European vision", both within Europe and on the international scene. Bertha von Suttner's life and work provide us with a continuous source of inspiration. Our political mission as Europeans must be to continue drawing on her intellectual legacy.

Panorama of Brussels from the North Station, according to Guesdon, around 1850 | © M.V.B., cat.II.2.12, Brussels





Bertha von Suttner building in Brussels

## The Bertha von Suttner building in Brussels and the history of the surrounding area

> Astrid Lelarge

In 1830 Brussels became the capital of a new state: Belgium. From being the former *de facto* capital of the Austrian Netherlands, it had been downgraded to the rank of a county capital after the territory was annexed by the young French Republic, before becoming capital of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, alternating this role with The Hague.

Like many European cities, the city was profoundly changed by population growth and the modernisation of transport. The industrial revolution swept away the old way of life in both the towns and the countryside. Industries sprang up near sources of raw materials, and close to transport routes or outlets, which encouraged a regrouping of the labour force. The development of Brussels was linked to this phenomenon and to attraction exerted by its status as a capital. The city became a major centre of consumption and of intellectual and artistic life.

Gradually, urban growth within the city limits reached saturation point. The city had remained closed by a tax barrier set up along the boulevards that had been built between 1819 and 1840 to replace the mediaeval city walls.

Construction projects initiated by private companies in the new districts added to the "spontaneous" urban growth around the city gates and along the main highways. The Civil Society for the Enlargement and Improvement of Brussels set up in 1837 called for the "foundation of new districts either outside or inside the city of Brussels, and in particular of a district between the Louvain and Namur Gates, to be called the Leopold District". The aim was to provide the ruling class with luxury dwellings near the decision-making centres around the Brussels Royal Park: the Royal Palace, Parliament and the headquarters of the *Société Générale*, which was the country's main financial organisation.

The buildings housing the centres of power had been concentrated in this part of the city since the Middle Ages. Brussels had developed in the valley of the Senne.





The Luxembourg Station, beginning of the 20th century  
© Ernest Thill (Nels postcards) Rights Sofam 2006

Artisans and traders were grouped in the western part, on the alluvial plain. Conditions were healthier on the steep slopes in the eastern part of the city, where the castle was built from the eleventh century onwards and the court resided.

The plan to develop the Leopold district extended this tendency outside the city centre. In the same vein, the plan conceived by the neo-classical architect Tilman-François Suys (1783-1861), continued the features of the orientation of the Park. He drew up a grid layout whose main streets were extensions of the routes crossing the Park. Others were based on existing visual reference marks.

The three streets of the Rue de la Loi, the Rue Guimard and the Rue Belliard were the main axes of the grid. The rue Montoyer was aligned on the façade of the Palace of the Academies. This street took its name from the architect, Louis Montoyer, who had previously distinguished himself by constructing such buildings as the Park Theatre, the Coudenberg Church and the castle at Laeken.

Born in Morlanwelz-Mariemont on 15 October 1747, he died in Vienna around 1800.

Most of the plan was carried out up to the Rue de Trèves but its full implementation was blocked by two developments: the extension of the Rue de la Loi and the passage of the railway line of the Luxembourg Company. The first of these aimed to connect the countryside to the town centre. In 1880, the road ended at the Jubilee Arch, built to commemorate Belgium's fiftieth anniversary. It was then extended towards the city outskirts by the Avenue de Tervueren. The Rue de la Loi then became the main road of the district. The second of the two developments ended with the building of the Luxembourg Station in 1855, designed by the architect Gustave Saintenoy, and the square of the same name.

Close by, the old Eggevoort estate, which was handed over to the newly-formed Royal Zoological, Horticulture and Leisure Society by the Dubois de Bianco family in 1851, was soon converted into an elegant park.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the district welcomed members of the Belgian and foreign



Panorama of Brussels from the North Station, according to Guesdon, around 1850  
© M.V.B., cat.II.2.12, Brussels

middle-class elite and aristocracy, who resided in prestigious town houses established for the most part along the main thoroughfares.

But at the lower end of the Rue Montoyer, around the Rue du Remorqueur, the population was different. This part of the street, between the numbers 92 and 102, was the home of domestic servants, craftsmen, barkeepers and workmen, some of whom worked on the railway nearby.

From the 1920s onwards, the area changed radically due to several factors: emigration towards the city outskirts, the development of the services sector, followed later by the increasing use of cars and the underground railway.

The first of these came about because of the increased mobility of the "elites", the attraction exerted by the leafy suburbs, but above all the crisis in the domestic service sector, which prompted people to live in apartment blocks. In the district itself a building of this kind was constructed between 1922 and 1928 by the Swiss architect Michel Polak: the Palace Residence.

The massive transformation of the area into a zone of office buildings began before the arrival of the European Community administration, even if the latter boosted the trend.

The special relationships between the owners of the disused town houses and the business community, the location of the district close to the city centre and the national government buildings and, as Patrick Burniat put it, "the layout of the blocks of housing, the rational and geometrical way in which the properties were split up, the size of the plots, the way they were grouped together" made it easier to "re-assemble the properties and re-build the blocks of housing".<sup>1</sup>

Soon, the whole district was given over to high-rise buildings for the services sector and the great town houses became increasingly scarce.

In the 1950s, the European Community came to Brussels. The city hosted the Commissions and the Councils of the EEC and Euratom, Luxembourg became the base of the ECSC High Authority and the secretariat of the European Parliament, while Parliament itself sat in Strasbourg. The

<sup>1</sup> P. BURNIAT, « Le Quartier Léopold, lecture d'un ensemble urbain du XIXe siècle », Documents d'Architecture, n°3, La Cambre, March 1998.



Before it was renamed, the 1990s office building was dedicated to the Belgian architect Louis de Montoyer (1749-1811), who completed his major works in Vienna as the chief architect of governor Duke Albert Kasimir von Sachsen-Teschchen.

share-out of the European institutions between the three cities was confirmed when the Community executives were merged in 1965.

Finally, in 1992 this share-out was reviewed at the European Council in Edinburgh with the aim of rationalising the operations of the European institutions, especially the Parliament.

It was decided that the Commission, the secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the European Economic and Social Committee and meetings of the European Parliament's committees and political groups would be in Brussels, Luxembourg would host a meeting of the Council of Ministers every three months and be the base for the Court of Justice, the secretariat of the Parliament and the European Investment Bank, and the plenary sessions of Parliament would be held in Strasbourg.

The Belgian government put their faith mainly in private enterprise to provide the European Community administration with the offices it needed for its work. Originally, most of the departments were settled in buildings in the district, though not all. When the European Economic and Social Committee was set up in 1957, its offices were in the Coudenberg, on the Mont des Arts.

In 1967, in response to the increase and dispersal of staff and in order to boost Brussels' chances of becoming the single seat of the European institutions, the Belgian government decided to finance the construction of the Berlaymont building, named after the convent that was to be demolished to make way for the European Commission's headquarters. The design work was entrusted to the architects Lucien de Vestel, Jean Gilson and André and Jean Polak, who drew their inspiration from the three-pointed star on pillars at the UNESCO building in Paris.

It was also the Belgian government's wish to concentrate the European Community administration in this part of the city. The recurring aim was to make a profit from the road and rail infrastructures that had been built previously. This policy, which was to aggravate the loss of habitat and boost the trend towards office-building, was fought by residents' committees, citizens' associations and

also by the European officials' own European Public Service Union, which argued in favour of the district being a mixed-function one.

An entrepreneur who was very active in the district, Armand Blaton, bought up numbers 3 to 17 in the Rue du Remorqueur, on the corner of the Rue Montoyer. Between 1964 and 1967 it was he who had built the Charlemagne building in the boulevard of the same name, the architect of which had been Jacques Cuisinier.

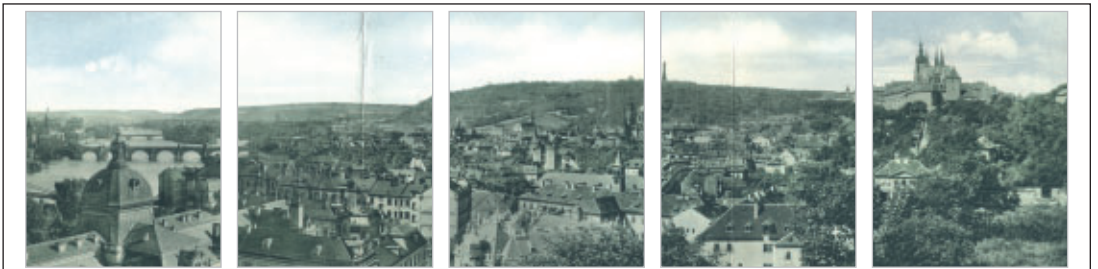
A few years later, the company S.A. Etudes et Investissements Immobiliers, a subsidiary of the Blaton group, made plans to erect a large building in the place of the Remorqueur plots. In 1989, it obtained a building permit and was able to place the building, named "Montoyer" after the street, in the service of the European Parliament.

The building was designed by the practice of the architect Henri Montois, among whose previous designs had been the Hilton Hotel on the Boulevard de Waterloo in Brussels (1964-1967).

Once the "Leopold Area" was built between the Leopold Park and the Luxembourg Station and handed over to the European Parliament, the latter lost no time in releasing the buildings that it had formerly occupied.

Today, the building is home to the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. With the establishment of their staff in the Rue Montoyer (nos. 92-102), the Rue Belliard (99-101 and 93) and the Rue de Trèves (74), the two Committees have now joined the other administrative departments of the European Union in what can now be called the "European district".

Prague, photograph ca. 1900, from Suttner's property





Young Bertha lived a life of plenty as a socialite beside her mother.

## Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914) Biographical introduction I

### > Sabine Veits-Falk

Bertha von Suttner was a woman who tirelessly devoted her life to pursuing one of the loftiest ideals of civilised humanity, namely peace. She worked to achieve equality between men and women and stood up against anti-Semitism; she thus represented values which are of key importance to a united and democratic Europe.

In 1899 this Austrian writer achieved a breakthrough with her consciously emotional anti-war novel entitled *Lay down your arms!*. In 1905 Bertha von Suttner was the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She had an extensive knowledge of politics and was engaged in successful international "networking" with a view to winning over as supporters of her objectives influential personalities who could, in turn, rally others to the cause. Seeking support for her ideas and demands, von Suttner entered into the male-dominated territory of politics. Whilst she was appreciated for her competence and commitment, she was, also, at the same time the object of caricature and derision, being portrayed as "Bertha the palm-leaf wielding peace activist". She was an eternal optimist, who was convinced that humanity would always change for the better (Brigitte Hamann), a standpoint which was interpreted – not wholly without a reason – as being naïve. Von Suttner's stubborn commitment to opposing war and her conviction that peace could be achieved do, however, set an example for people of the present day and future generations.

### > Von Suttner's childhood and early years

Bertha, Countess Kinsky was born in Prague in 1843. Shortly before she was born her father, then aged 75, passed away, leaving a widow who was almost 50 years his junior. Whilst Bertha's father belonged to one of the oldest noble families in Bohemia, her mother was from the minor nobility – something which was regarded at the time as a "stigma" and which was a matter of concern to her throughout her life. Bertha grew up in the aristocratic surroundings of the Austrian monarchy. She learned several foreign languages. She was a self-educated person who studied key works of world literature and academic books. She unsuccessfully



Arthur  
von Suttner

sought to pursue a career as an opera singer. In her memoirs, Bertha von Suttner did not spare criticism of herself when summing up her early life, admitting that "the youthful Bertha was a real dead loss".

### > Governess, wife and author

By the time von Suttner was 30 years old, the inheritance which she had received from her father had been exhausted. As she was still unmarried, von Suttner took up the post of governess and companion – one of the few jobs open to her in view of her social background – in the house of Baron Carl von Suttner. While she was working for this family she first made the acquaintance of Arthur von Suttner, who was to be her future husband. When the relationship between the governess of the daughter of the von Suttner household and the son of the household became known, Bertha Kinsky, as she then was, had to leave the house.

She went to live in Paris for a short while, taking the post of private secretary to Alfred Nobel at his Paris residence. Immediately afterwards, however, she secretly married Arthur von Suttner, against the will of his family. The newlywed couple fled to the Caucasus in 1876 as Bertha had well-to-do friends living in that area. Bertha and her husband earned their living through teaching work and casual jobs, made an intensive study of modern literature and began to write for a variety of magazines.

When war threatened between Austria and Russia in 1885, Bertha and her husband returned to Austria, reconciled themselves with his family and went to live on the von Suttner family estate in Harmansdorf in Lower Austria. Life spent in rural seclusion in conservative family surroundings was not without its problems for the politically liberal couple with their anti-clerical views. After her return to Austria, Bertha von Suttner resumed her writing career, following the success of the short stories and essays which she had written whilst living in Georgia. Her work focused on social grievances and she subsequently began to take an interest in pacifism. She learned of the existence of the *International Arbitration and Peace Association*, founded in London in 1880.



Tbilisi in a contemporary photograph in Bertha von Suttner's possession



Schloss Harmannsdorf in Lower Austria



To earn money, Bertha wrote serials for Austrian newspapers. She thus became increasingly well known.

## > Lay down your arms!

In 1887 von Suttner entered into contact with what was then the only existing peace organisation and acquainted herself with the concept of pacifism. Two years later in 1889 her main literary work, *Lay down your arms!*, was published in Berlin and Vienna. This novel was translated into more than 20 languages and was one of the best-sellers of the 19th century. Von Suttner carried out thorough research for her book in order to enable her to paint a vivid picture of the horrors of war. In order to convey her ideas to the broadest possible public, Bertha von Suttner consciously took up the genre of light fiction. Her novel has as its heroine a noble woman whose life story is determined by wars. Although the novel went against the spirit of the times, it greatly popularised the concept of peace in both Europe and America. Whilst Harriet Beecher-Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had helped to abolish slavery, von Suttner's novel was, of course, not able to emulate this example by helping, as Leo Tolstoi had wished, to abolish war.

## > Peace activist

After her great success with her novel *Lay down your arms!*, the then 46-year old Bertha von Suttner increasingly assumed the role of political player and protagonist of the peace movement. In 1891 she founded the *Austrian Peace Association* and remained as its president until her death in 1914. In 1891, too, her husband, Arthur von Suttner, established the "Association for the Rejection of Anti-Semitism" with the help of a series of prominent Austrian politicians. Bertha von Suttner also played a decisive role in this context.

Working together with Alfred Fried, whose acquaintance she had first made in Berlin in the period 1891-1892 and to whom she had given her support with the establishment of the German Peace Association, she edited the magazine *Lay down your arms!* from 1892 to 1899. She called for recourse to be had to international arbitration in order to peacefully resolve future disputes between nations.

Bertha von Suttner subsequently participated in almost all international peace conferences, at which she represented Austria. She managed to convince Alfred Nobel, with whom she maintained a life-long friendship, to donate part of his fortune to the cause of promoting peace, in particular by establishing a peace prize. In 1905, Bertha von Suttner, herself, became the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.





Membership card of the Austrian Peace Society for Alfred Nobel, who supported Suttner generously



Suttner, now famous, as a subject for caricaturists



Suttner with American feminists. Beside her, the wife of newspaper tycoon William R. Hearst

At the same time, she recognised that nationalism was becoming an ever more important political force and she realised that individual states were investing ever greater sums in the armaments industry. In the course of a large number of lectures given in Europe's capital cities, she issued urgent warnings against the dangers of building up arsenals of weapons and the risk of an international war of annihilation. In 1912 she embarked upon a lecture tour of the United States during which she warned her listeners of the impending world war.

Bertha von Suttner backed up the political and economic arguments against war advocated by male anti-war activists with her own emotional rejection of war. Because of this approach, her opponents defamed the peace movement, with "peace-loving Bertha" as its figurehead, as an effeminate movement.

### > The question of women's rights and the women's movement

In 1889, Bertha von Suttner published an essay entitled *The Age of Machines*, which dealt with issues such as the nation, the education of young people, the question of women's rights and the issue of peace. She wrote under the pseudonym of "Jemand" (Someone) since she feared that, as a woman, she would not be taken seriously. The critical reviews of von Suttner's novel *Lay down your arms!*, which appeared later in the same year, demonstrated that her anxieties in that respect were, in part, not wholly unjustified. She recognised and experienced how difficult it was to find recognition as a woman in a male-dominated world. Against this background, she nonetheless assumed the role of a pioneer. At the third Universal Peace Congress, held in Rome in 1891, she was the first woman to give a speech in public in the Capitol and in 1899 she was the only woman to be admitted to the Hague Peace Conference .

In dealing with the issue of promoting peace, Bertha von Suttner was convinced that there was no difference in the attitudes held by men and women, since both genders were equally enthusiastic about war. She did not believe that women were "naturally" inclined towards peace. In her view, both men and women had to struggle for peace. She was a



Suttner struggled to the end to prevent the looming war.

convinced believer in gender equality.

In the light of this stance, her attitude towards women's associations and women's movements was understandable. Although von Suttner was president of the Peace Commission of the Federation of Austrian Women's Associations, founded in 1902, she nonetheless rejected - ostensibly on grounds of lack of time - an invitation to become actively engaged in the struggle to secure the right to vote for women. The real reason why she declined this offer, however, was because, in contrast to the view taken by feminists, she did not believe that women had a special role to play in the renewal of society (Sabine Weiss).

The part played by Bertha von Suttner in the movement to achieve female emancipation was not the role of a battling women's rights activist. In an era in which any public expression of views by women was frowned upon, Bertha von Suttner broke through the barriers imposed by gender stereotypes by means of her work as a publicist and an author and through her political action. Her contributions towards the analysis of the relations between the sexes have, however, so far remained largely disregarded. In the view of Christine M. Klapeer, relations between some individual groups belonging to the "*New women's movement*" and Bertha von Suttner can be described as varying "between superficial admiration and feminist marginalisation".

### > The final years of Bertha von Suttner's life on the eve of the First World War

Following the death of her husband in 1902, Bertha von Suttner moved to Vienna where she continued to publish further works and continued her struggle to promote peace. The Austrian public viewed with reserve internationally known women peace activists and writers. In 1912 von Suttner aroused considerable admiration in the course of her tour of the United States and she was greatly acclaimed, above all, by women's associations.

On the occasion of her 70th birthday, she received the congratulations of peace supporters from all over the world but no public honours were forthcoming in Austria. Bertha von Suttner died on 21 June 1914 while she was making preparations for a world peace congress which she was planning to organise in Vienna in August 1914. Seven days after her death, on 28 June 1914, the shots which rang out in Sarajevo led to the outbreak of the First World War.

Bertha von Suttner



## Bertha von Suttner and the women's question - Women and Peace!

> Brigitte Hamann<sup>2</sup>

Bertha von Suttner was deeply committed to equality between the sexes; she actively campaigned against the defamation of women in all its forms, but also against the overeagerness of some feminists to attribute special qualities to the female sex. This conflict focused above all on the subject of women and peace. Many feminists were and still are of the opinion that women, unlike "warlike" men, are peace-loving and gentle by nature, born pacifists in other words. Lida Gustava Heymann, the German feminist, at the time coined the phrase: "Because female nature, female instinct are synonymous with pacifism"<sup>3</sup>.

Bertha von Suttner always opposed this view very actively and her denunciation of the warring instinct was by no means limited to men. "In my personal experience," she wrote in a key article in her periodical *Lay down your arms* in 1895, "there is no difference between the male and female sex as regards their attitude towards the peace question. Enthusiasm for acts of war and war heroes can be found among women as well as men, enthusiasm and support for the peace movement is just as strong among women as it is among men, and finally indifference, adherence to routine and a failure to understand a new era of thought are inherent in us all as well."

She vigorously protested against any attempt to portray the peace movement as a typical women's movement opposed to the male principle of war. "It is pointless to expect women as such to make the peace movement their own. In any case, they would achieve nothing if they saw their role as juxtaposed to that of men; the tasks involved in mankind's continuing ennoblement are such that they can only be fulfilled through fair and equal cooperation between the sexes"<sup>4</sup>. [...]

The prejudices about the "female" love of peace and "male" war, in her view, included accusations of cowardice and egotism. "Women who loudly whine, 'the war should end because we are suffering, because we may lose our sweethearts!', certainly had a significantly lower standing than those who said, 'what purpose does our misery serve, the welfare of mankind takes priority!' or those who cried out to their sons, 'either return home victorious or dead!' Any enmity caused by differing interests – be they interests of a social rank, a class or a sex – has no ethical grounds and therefore no ethical force."

More worthy in her view were the motives of those women "who rebel against war, not because it is a threat to *their* homes, but because they understood that it

2 Brigitte Hamann, *Bertha von Suttner, Ein Leben für den Frieden*, München 1986, 448 – 459. The original text was shortened for this publication.

3 Gisela Brinker-Gabler, *Frauen gegen den Krieg*, Hamburg 1980, 66.

4 *Die Waffen nieder* (Periodical), 1895, 254 ff.

is an evil for the whole of humanity. It is not because they are daughters, wives and mothers that modern women want to shake the foundations of the institution of "war", but because they have become the sensible half of what has become a sensible humankind, and they see that war represents an obstacle to cultural development and that from every perspective – moral and economic, religious and philosophical – war is damaging and reprehensible"<sup>5</sup>. The struggle for peace was an issue that concerned all of humanity and had to be taken up by both men and women equally. [...]

To show that women in politics are no less warlike in their actions than men, she gave the example of Queen Maria Christina of Spain; in 1895 the Queen put down a Cuban revolt against Spanish rule and showed "that women can command a sceptre just as forcefully as men; because the Queen did not hesitate even for a moment before sending her nation's children into battle, and did not allow herself to be overcome by the foolish and utopian delusion that there could be means other than canons to remedy the dissatisfaction of the insurgent population"<sup>6</sup>. To Bertha's disappointment, very few mothers joined the peace movement. She accused the traditionally educated woman of endorsing war in two different ways: "Tacitly through her admiration for war heroes and the pleasure she derived from uniforms, and openly through her direct calls for action"<sup>7</sup>.

To give an example of the arduous nature of the peace work carried out by women, in 1895 Countess Kielmannsegg set up a women's committee that wanted to dedicate a flag of honour to a new warship and asked for donations. Suttner saw this as a welcome opportunity for a counter-reaction, "Well then, I thought, this appeal does justice to the 'old custom', so perhaps the new spirit which now fills the air may also find expression."

She too issued an appeal to women, in this case to contribute towards the cost of a white flag for the peace society. "And if one day – perhaps as early as the turn of the century – various flags are raised in celebration of the official establishment of a European peace federation (that would certainly be a more welcome moment than the 'grave hour of battle', whose arrival we want to prevent!), the Austrian women's flag should also fly among them, as proof of the role they played in this fine blessed act"<sup>8</sup>. She asked those women who wanted "to achieve the cultural objective of a legal federation of nations" more quickly for a donation of at least one crown. After one week, more than enough had been received for the war flag, but for the peace flag just five crowns, contributed by three women. It goes without saying that caricaturists were quick to respond to peace Bertha's latest defeat, and, what is more, turned the disappointed Bertha into a public laughing stock.

This only increased her enthusiasm for any work carried out by women in support of peace, and she did everything to publicise it. For example, she cited a

5 BvS, Die Haager Friedenskonferenz 106 f.

6 BvS, Wohin?, Berlin 1896, 75.

7 BvS, Haager Friedenskonferenz 107 f.

8 Freies Blatt, June 1895.

letter from the "women of England to their sisters in France" of 28 April 1895, appealing for a joint struggle for solidarity against the military mindset, which received a warm response from a French women's committee. Suttner commented, "It will in any case be an immense step forward for the peace movement if supporters of the women's movement everywhere - which is growing by the day - put the abolition of war on their programme"<sup>9</sup>.

The English and French women's appeal for peace was soon endorsed by German women too, whose calls were headed by Lina Morgenstern. Bertha also supported the appeal but remarked in her periodical "that the terms 'the women of France' and 'the women of Germany' are too sweeping if it is a question of a declaration by just five or six women." [...]

It goes without saying that Bertha worked together with the women's movement and had personal contacts with leading women's rights campaigners. Among the first endorsements of the founding of the Austrian Peace Society in 1891 was an enthusiastic letter from the Austrian feminist, Auguste Fickert. Bertha's efforts had been met "with jubilation" among her associates, she wrote; she was pleased "that in our country a woman, following the deepest instinct of her genuinely female soul, had risen to the top, and would liberate mankind from the final remnants of a barbaric age"<sup>10</sup>. She promised that women would play a role in the "peace league" and asked Suttner for her help in the campaign for the women's vote.

However, Bertha turned down this request. In 1892 she wrote to her "esteemed associate", Auguste Fickert, "I must in principle stick to the one area of activity in which I am involved and which takes up every second of my time. You have no idea how much work I have, liaising with the peace societies, publishing my journal, writing relevant articles etc. Even now I barely know how to manage it all."

Therefore she could not personally get involved in the women's movement. "However, I will send in a declaration of support, which will serve the purpose of showing that I endorse your objectives." She kindly asked for understanding, "But at the same time, I must also remain active on the literary front and all my sisters will acknowledge that I do this in a way that supports equality for our sex ..."<sup>11</sup>. [...]

Occasionally feminists and peace campaigners lamented their sorrows to each other. Unlike their like-minded associates in America, they had had only very limited success - in Austria-Hungary, and in the German Empire. But they persevered and Auguste Fickert assured Suttner at a joint event, "What we in Vienna cannot achieve through numbers - you are well aware of how weak the interest in public affairs is in our country - we must make up for through good representation"<sup>12</sup>.

They looked at the size of the women's movement in the Anglo-Saxon countries with great envy and admiration. It goes without saying that Bertha gave priority to

9 Die Waffen nieder (Periodical), 1895 417.

10 UNO Geneva Library, Fickert to BvS 20.10.1891.

11 StBW BvS to Fickert 13.4.1892.

12 UNO Geneva Library, Fickert to BvS 24.12.1901.



Suttner's closest collaborator, the journalist Alfred Hermann Fried; he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1911.



Dedication to Fried by Suttner: "To him, who first was my disciple, later my helper, finally my staff (A. H. Fried), I devote this volume."

American feminists over the Europeans. When in 1904 she was offered the presidency of the International Council of Women, she turned it down – although she was very flattered – and gave her full backing to the American, Sewell, whose praises she sang, "A great women; in my eyes at least much greater than peace Bertha. Well, I'm glad that I did not accept the presidency of the International Council of Women. Such things are still not possible in our countries. This is a role for England and America. Mrs Sewell was able to say that 300 000 men had also joined her association"<sup>13</sup>.

She wrote with admiration about the political activities of American feminists in her novels and newspaper articles; she praised them in her lectures as a role model for the Central European peace movement. During her stay in America, she closely followed the extremely successful public work carried out by women and drew lessons for the organisation of her peace associations. While in America, she wrote in her diary, "the international situation would be perfectly suited to pacifist work on a large scale. But I see *how* (I experienced this with the women's association) these things are done. An idea does not work by itself but through agitation and funds"<sup>14</sup>.

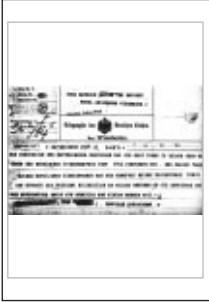
In spite of all this support, Suttner sometimes saw the women's movement as a competitor, but also as a source of motivation. When the new Brockhaus encyclopaedia came out in 1902, to Bertha's regret there was an entry for the women's movement, but not for the peace movement. She wrote to Fried, "The women's movement is ten years older than the peace movement.

Ten years ago there were not even 20 lines in the encyclopaedias about the issue of women. We should write complaints to Brockhaus from different quarters and put them in the picture"<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, in another letter to Fried she wrote, "The *Woche* now regularly dedicates half a column to

13 to Fried 8.4 and 18.6.1904.

14 Diary, 28.11.1912.

15 to Fried, no date (June 1902).



Suttner is informed of the award of the Nobel Prize in 1905 to her during a lecturing tour in Germany.

the 'women's chronicle'. Soon the peace chronicle will also find its way into the papers. The increasing number of inter-parliamentary conferences, agreements concerning the Court of Arbitration, etc. will provide material for such an item"<sup>16</sup>.

She always recorded in her diary any progress made on the question of women's rights; in November 1907 for example, she wrote, "In Australia women entitled to vote and eligible for office"<sup>17</sup>. In 1911, she noted with satisfaction and great pride that in Norway the first ever female member of Parliament had taken her seat. Even in her inaugural speech, it was apparent that Ms Rogstad was in favour of peace and that she endorsed the International Court of Arbitration. Suttner was full of hope when she noted in the *Friedenswarte*, "It is interesting and worthy of mention that the first ever woman MP in her very first comments, spoke up for the future legal institution of the world"<sup>18</sup>. [...]

In June 1904, Suttner was among prominent figures present at the international women's conference in Berlin. On the very first day, however, an Australian spoke out in favour of armament. "Too loyal, would even melt bullets etc.", Bertha noted disapprovingly in her diary. A high point of the conference was the large women's peace demonstration in the philharmonic hall, which included a speech by Suttner. "Quite simply a triumph ... Lady Aberdeen was excellent ... Much celebrations, even out on the street"<sup>19</sup>.

Berlin's newspapers confirmed that it had been a great success and even summarised the content of the speech, which was about the role of women in the peace movement. Once again Suttner urged women not only to "be moved and enthused when listening" to appeals for peace, but also "not to buy toy soldiers for their children" and "not to apply for a place in cadet school for their sons". The modern woman had to "step outside of the gender role she had played hitherto", because the new type of human being required a new type of woman, and also a new ideal of a man. "Women

16 to Fried 9.7.1902.

17 Diary 26.11.1907.

18 Kampf II, 318 f.

19 Diary, 6.6.1904.



will become the sensible half of a sensible human race. Forbearance shown towards women's weaknesses, lack of logic, silly flirting, exaggerated obsession with dressing up and vanity, has to stop. We want to bring up a generation that is sensible, that has common sense, and that is educated and good-natured."

Men also had to change, "It is no longer the "macho" male, respected for his idleness, drunkenness and pugnacity etc., who will be desired, but the man who combines courage and spirit with gentleness and a peaceable nature"<sup>20</sup>.

Theses forceful statements led to protests. The *Posener Tagblatt*, for example, opposed Suttner's image of women, "Now more than ever, our generation needs men who are capable of thinking and using a weapon, and gentle, sensible and mild women. Save us, God, from masculine women and crazy old crones, who unfortunately attended this international congress in excessively large numbers" .

And the *Leipziger Neuesten Nachrichten* inveighed against the pacifist ideal, "Without struggle, there is no life – this first principle of male nature, this phrase which makes a man a real man, will never be understood by Ms Bertha von Suttner." If she were to succeed in her efforts "mankind would become a Eunuch" and "be robbed of all his valuable possessions"<sup>22</sup>. [...]

In response to Felix Dahn's well-known verse, "The sword is a man's own – when men fight, women must be silent", Suttner belligerently said, "They will not be silent, Professor!" And the *Leipziger Tagblatt* wrote with resignation, "No, women will no longer be silent as far as the peace question is concerned"<sup>23</sup>.

The Nobel Peace Prize made Suttner, who was the first female recipient, the source of great pride and a role model for the international women's movement. During her second trip to America in 1912 it was once again mainly women who feted and cheered her. More than ever before, she implored women to mount daily resistance against war, "We must look misery in the eye, but not to lament it as misfortune but to condemn it as a misdeed. Because it is no natural disaster – it is the result of human madness and human callousness. So let us not be scared off by the accusation of 'sentimentality'. We have the right, us women, to show our feelings. Women in particular should not forget that pacifist work does not just consist of studies of international law, examinations of socio-economic issues and political campaigns, but is also work that brims with heart-rending kindness and is the object of the deepest devotion"<sup>24</sup>.

One of the last manuscripts she wrote before her death was for "The Women's Federation of the German Peace Society". She called upon her "dear fellow campaigners" to "persist, persist and continue to persist". Women should campaign

20 *Berliner Morgenpost* 11.6.1904.

21 UNO Geneva Library, *Tägl. Rundschau Berlin* 15.6.1904.

22 UNO Geneva Library, *Deutsche Volkszeitung Reichenberg* 15.6.1904.

23 UNO Geneva Library, *Leipziger Tagblatt* 13.6.1904.

24 *Neues Wiener Journal* 8.6. 1913, BvS, Die Friedensfrage und die Frauen.

against war wherever they could "because nowadays there is no area of social study from which we are barred and everyday more and more public offices are open to us." Reason had to rebel against war, "but we should not let this suppress the rebellion in our hearts"<sup>25</sup>.

25 Gisela Brinker-Gabler, *Frauen gegen den Krieg*, Hamburg 1980, 51-54.

The elegant widow as a lecturer





"Will of the people, swell your sails! The peace ship has now a captain... Land ho!"  
An example of Suttner's idealistic hopes for the "Peace Tsar"

## "Lay down your arms!" – Teaching the message of peace!

> Bertha von Suttner and her campaign to instil a culture of peace

> Werner Wintersteiner

### 1. The peace movement and peace education

Peace education was, from the outset, a key component of the organised peace movement in Europe for which Bertha von Suttner was both the spokesperson and the icon. The world peace congresses, held at regular intervals from 1889 onwards, almost all also addressed the issue of peace education. These congresses were expected to strengthen the organisation of the peace movement and to make a contribution towards international understanding, a programme for which was set out in the magazine *Friedens-Warte* ("Peace observatory"), as follows:

"The desire for peace needs to be strengthened by input from teachers if it is to achieve success in the world of politics. It is particularly important to have the peace movement supported by teachers in the individual states as they are in a position to understand international relations between civilised nations and to mobilise people to participate actively in the organisation of the peace movement". (*Friedens-Warte* 1913, p. 185)

Pacifists vehemently criticised militarism in the educational system; they criticised not only the explicit military propaganda passed on in schools but, also, and above all, the fact that the history of mankind was taught solely in terms of wars and battles. Pacifists carried out a critical appraisal of the organisation, structure and spirit of the whole educational system and reproached it for endeavouring to stifle critical thought and instil submissiveness and conformity.

On the eve of the First World War, in addition to the tasks of promoting *peace education* and *criticising militarism*, pacifists set themselves a third task, namely



"The Machine Age" – Suttner first mentioned the international peace movement in this book, published in 1888.

to promote *pan-European understanding* by means of direct contacts between schoolchildren, students and teachers from the opposing states. The *Friedens-Warte* even calls upon young people in Germany and France to commit themselves to spending one year abroad.

The idea was that a mutual exchange of this type would make future wars between the two countries impossible, thereby leading to a peace in Europe "which was no longer balanced on the point of bayonets" (*Friedens-Warte* 1913, p. 349). These measures paved the way for the concept of a united Europe. Young people were regarded as the pioneers of new, peaceful contacts between nations which could, in turn, rally to the cause of the older generations, who were educated along nationalistic lines. This was a vision which, regrettably, could only be realised in the wake of two devastating world wars.

## 2. Bertha von Suttner's work in promoting peace education

Bertha von Suttner repeatedly stressed that "Education brings power, education bring freedom and education brings enrichment" (*Werkstatt*, p. 49). The two main educational strands of the peace movement, namely criticism of the militaristic educational system come, on the one hand, and peace education, on the other hand, are the principles which imbue von Suttner's essay entitled *The Age of Machines* and her novel entitled *Lay down your arms!*

### > The Age of Machines

*The Age of Machines* is a visionary criticism of the Habsburg monarchy which takes the literary form of an imaginary look-back in time from the vantage point of some date in the future. At this date in the distant future *the culture of violence* has long since been overcome. If, at that date in the future, people examine the 19th century, i.e. the age of Bertha von Suttner, it would be like studying an era which they had long since left behind and one which was scarcely comprehensible to them –

an era marked by hatred between nations, militarism and prejudice. At the same time the "first imperceptible steps" of a change for the better were emerging at that time, the first "grains" which would not develop until very much later. And one of the most important fields of discussion during that transitional period was the very question of school education:

"Old and modern philosophies of life [...] were battling for supremacy in all areas and nowhere more violently than in the field of education since this is the field in which decisions are taken on the most important element to every individual and every community, namely our future existence" (*Maschinenzeitalter*, p. 66).

Referring to school education, von Suttner criticised that "particularly withered part of the plant" (*Maschinenzeitalter*, p. 35) singling out for special criticism, above all, "the discrepancy, between the spirit which imbues public education and that of the outstanding scientific authors" (*Maschinenzeitalter*, p. 45), as evidenced, above all by the example of the teaching of history. "Nothing was too faded or dry that it could not form part of the official teaching curriculum" (*Maschinenzeitalter*, p. 36). With the aid of a large number of pieces of evidence gleaned from school books and aids for teaching staff, she demonstrated that history teaching was being reduced to the history of wars and the deeds of great commanders and rulers, even though historians had long since discovered social history. Von Suttner's argument is very specific and precise and it shows that she had a highly detailed knowledge of the subject. In the same essay she does, however, set out even more fundamental criticism:

"The real purpose of this teaching was not so much to instil in pupils a knowledge of the facts in question but rather to teach them the underlying principles, namely: loyalty, patriotism and religious belief, which are to be imparted as a primary requirement. In this form of teaching objective knowledge served only as a means, not as an end in itself" (*Maschinenzeitalter*, p. 60).

Von Suttner condemns the prevailing philosophy of the period: "The spirit behind education was even more rigid and antiquated than its contents", which she pointedly summed up in the phrase "dead languages, dead dogmas, dead myths" (*Maschinenzeitalter*, p. 36).

On the eve of the First World War schools were being pressed more and more into service as vehicles for promoting militarism and nationalism. In Austria, for example, military training was incorporated into the grammar school curriculum. The purpose of the "Shooting Edict" was not so much to provide pupils with actual weapons' training but rather to pursue the "patriotic" goal of making them accustomed to military life. This edict met with opposition from teachers' circles and the peace movement. Bertha von Suttner intervened personally in the argument by publishing two commentaries in the *Friedens-Warte* of 1910 and 1912. The peace movement also called for the introduction of peace education into school curricula. The following two paragraphs were published in the *Friedens-Warte* of 1913:

"How can a grammar school pupil learn about the peaceful organisation of the world if his or her teacher fails to explain this. The concept of peace is not mentioned in any decree. This is a considerable disadvantage for young people who, after having taken their school-leaving exam, embark upon a career in one of the caring professions or go



Her anti-war novel was one of the most successful books of the 19th century.

to university, without having been given any understanding of the great goal of the peace ideal, which is sure to triumph.

It is a certain fact that, under the present circumstances, there is not the slightest sign of a pacifist education being provided at Austrian elementary schools or secondary schools". (Friedens-Warte 1913, p. 184-185).

The arguments in favour of disseminating an "active concept of peace" had been well articulated some time earlier in Bertha von Suttner's novel *Lay down your arms!*

### > Lay down your arms!: a tool for promoting peace education

Bertha von Suttner's successful novel makes a noteworthy contribution towards promoting peace education in a number of respects: it is a "Bildungsroman" (a novel concerned with a person's formative years and development); it criticises militarism and the move towards re-armament and war; and it puts forward a counter-model based on the establishment of peace. The novel contains an implicit message of peace which is evident in its language and structure. This enormously popular novel also served as a tool for promoting peace education by virtue of its widespread distribution.

The novel *Lay down your arms!* portrays a woman who gains experience in the course of her life which is diametrically opposed to the education which she received as a child. The novel follows the development of a naïve young married woman who allows herself to be carried away by the enthusiasm of her father and her husband for all things military. She has, of course, married a young officer and teaches her young son to play role-playing games as a soldier when he is still a baby.

The novel not only shows how this woman is transformed into a convinced opponent of militarism, as a result of painful experiences, but also contains a vehement settling of scores with an educational system which seeks to generate an ongoing enthusiasm for war: "Everything which comes under the heading of war is no longer



Suttner in her study in Vienna. In the background a painting of Arthur, who died in 1902. It is decorated with palm fronds.

judged from a human standpoint – it is treated with a particular mystical, historical and political reverence" (*Die Waffen nieder!*, p. 5).

This novel follows a long tradition of character development novels. The particular feature of this novel is, however, that it deals with a "male" subject, namely war, but the leading figure happens to be a woman. This gives rise to one of the key messages of the novel:

"Girls - who do not march away to war – are, nonetheless, taught using the same school books, which seek to transform young boys into soldiers. Girls thus acquire the same views, which in turn lead to a feeling of jealousy at not being allowed to take part and an admiration of the military [...] this gives rise to the phenomena of Spartan mothers and "flag mothers" (custodians of the flags of associations) and to the practice whereby women offer imitation medals to the officer corps in recognition of the dancing skills which they display during the 'ladies choice' dances" (*Die Waffen nieder!*, p. 5).

The novel not only presents us with a female figure with whom we can identify but also introduces a female protagonist who represents the standpoint of humanity vis-à-vis the "masculine" standpoint. The author thus makes clever use of the social conventions of her time, under which women did indeed play a subordinate role but nonetheless had a degree of freedom of manoeuvre not granted to men, on pain of losing their masculine identity. The novel does not, however, simply reflect the existing clichés as regards the respective roles of men and women, it also criticises these clichés and comes out in open rebellion against them through the character of *Martha*. Bertha von Suttner takes the view that war is a "matter of concern to mankind" and therefore "half of the human community" may not be banished to the sidelines "without understanding or participating in this issue" (quoted by Biedermann 1995, p. 169).

Support for women's emancipation goes hand in hand with advocating a new, positive masculine image, as portrayed in the novel by Friedrich Tilling. This is one of the many indications that, in her novel, von Suttner by no means focuses exclusively on a female audience but also targets her work at (male) political decision-makers.

A further decisive element is the fact that this novel takes the form of a *fictitious autobiography*. The narrator,



who is a mature woman and a grandmother, takes a critical and self-critical retrospective look at her life. With the aid of her diaries, she calculates how far she has travelled since the errors of her youthful years and the insight which she now possesses. As she points out in the first sentence of the novel, "When I was 17, I was a very overexcited person" (*Die Waffen nieder!*, p. 3). It is one of the strengths and part of the powers of conviction of this novel that the heroine does not merely draw attention to political views but also clearly indicates how she has slowly arrived at these views. Furthermore, the reader discovers that Martha has understood the background to her earlier opinions. One example may be quoted to illustrate this point.

The mature narrator does not simply smile when considering the heroic courage displayed by the youthful Martha; she sees that behind this courage lie erotic motives which were hidden from Martha at the time: "All these passionate dreams of longing and ambition [...] are, for the most part, simply an unconscious striving brought about by the growing desire for love" (*Die Waffen nieder!*, p. 6). Seen from this perspective, the author has both a political and educational agenda. The aim is to achieve self-determination and responsibility for one's own education and journey through life, backed up by a critical appraisal.

The enormous success of Bertha von Suttner's novel meant that it rapidly became a popular work. It was also very soon recognised, e.g. by von Suttner's fellow author, Peter Rosegger, that this novel also represented an ideal tool for promoting peace education. As pointed out in a call made by the Hamburg Peace Society to teachers in Germany, von Suttner's novel provided an opportunity "to educate children not to engage anymore in hatred of people from other countries but rather to love their fellow human beings and an opportunity to accustom children not solely to admire war heroes but also to honour cultural heroes" (cf. von Suttner 1897, Foreword). But this was not the whole story. Von Suttner's best friend, Hedwig Gräfin Pötting, set about adapting the novel for a youthful audience. The resulting book, *Martha's Diary*, came out in 1897 and may be regarded as the first pacifist novel aimed at young people published in German.

### 3. The importance of Bertha von Suttner's peace education in today's world

At the close of the 19th century, the peace education movement, largely inspired by Bertha von Suttner, developed a programme. Serious attempts to implement this programme were not, however, made until after the Second World War. This programme comprised a number of elements: teaching young people to engage in independent thought rather than blind obedience; educating young people to support peace, human rights and democracy, rather than militarism and racism; teaching equal rights for men and women; and overcoming borders in Europe. The programme thus advocated inter-cultural, global education.

An astonishing variety of methods and practical activities were tried out in Bertha von Suttner's time, for example the promotion of pan-European understanding and international youth exchanges.

If Bertha von Suttner were, alive today, and was able to look back in time, as she did in her essay entitled *The Age of Machines*, she would undoubtedly have drawn attention to the considerable progress achieved as a result of the establishment of the European Union. States which were traditional enemies have now become peaceful neighbours and even friends. Much has, however, still to be done in order to do justice to Bertha von Suttner's legacy in the Europe of today. Peace education needs to be consciously planned and promoted.

The very fact that the EU sees itself as a force for peace means that it has to prove its credentials in the field of peace education, too. Already in 1995, UNESCO adopted its Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, an action plan for launching peace education throughout the world. Europe has, however, yet to give tangible expression to this action plan and to implement its provisions. Such measures would be in line with Bertha von Suttner's peace education programme, which was based on the following principle: *If you want to have peace, go out and prepare the ground for it!*

Suttner had her first great public appearances at the annual peace congresses.





The angel of peace mocks Suttner.

## Baroness Bertha von Suttner and the organized peace movement: towards a new international political culture!

> Michael Riemens

On 21 June 1914, at 11.10 a.m., a doctor officially declared that Baroness Bertha von Suttner was dead. The 71-year-old had died in her bed, at home in Vienna. During her last hours she had become delirious. According to her close friend and admirer, Alfred Hermann Fried, Suttner's last audible words were 'Die Waffen nieder! – sag's vielen – vielen' (Lay down your arms! – tell that to many – many people).

Seven days after the death of the 'General in Chief' (as Suttner was called) of the international peace movement, a young terrorist murdered Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie in Sarajevo. Five weeks later, a regional conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia over the assassination of the heir apparent to the Habsburg throne developed into an all-out European war between the great powers. In this critical period, it turned out that the dominant international political culture had not changed. Political and military elites still regarded war as a normal and rational instrument of politics. The declarations of war were greeted with enormous popular enthusiasm in the capitals of all combatant countries. Famous scenes took place, as in Berlin where Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed on 4 August that the war had suspended domestic strife and that henceforth he 'recognized no parties, only Germans'. In the Reichstag, the social democrats of the SPD joined the other parties in a unanimous vote in favour of the credits to finance the war. The same happened in other countries, to the relief of many governments.

The guns of August shot the ideals and illusions of the international peace movement to pieces. In a way, one could say that pacifists and other internationalists were amongst the first victims of the Great War. Did the outbreak of the First World War in the summer of 1914 prove that all the efforts of the deceased Suttner to prevent



"Oh Bertha, what a lovely smell!" – the European heads of state as Indians smoking the pipe of peace.

that war had been in vain? Did the first woman and Austrian to win the Nobel Peace Prize live, work, fight and suffer for nothing, as the 'Mutterkatastrophe des 20. Jahrhunderts' was about to unfold?

The first part of this article provides an overview of the history of the organized peace movement. The second describes how Suttner became one of the icons of the 'Friends of Peace'. The third concentrates on the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899 which, perhaps, was her finest hour. The above-mentioned questions are dealt with in the fourth and final part, where an attempt will also be made to say something about Bertha von Suttner's relevance today.

### > A history of the international peace movement

According to some historians, the 19th century ended not in 1900 but in 1914, with the outbreak of the First World War. During the 'Long 19th Century', as it is called, two tendencies can be seen. The first is an ever-growing bellicosity. This revealed itself in various forms of warfare, nationalism, militarism, arms races, etc. The second is a humanitarian tendency. Private citizens were struck by the evils of war, the treatment of slaves, the suffering of the wounded, and women, children and even animals who needed protection. Both tendencies can be followed as they evolved over time.

According to modern peace studies, the end of the Napoleonic era, when huge national armies of conscripts fought each other, marked the genesis of the peace movement. In the second half of 1815, private citizens formed three local peace groups in New York, Warren County and Boston. When this news reached London, William Allen and Joseph Price called a meeting where in June 1816 the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace was formed, 'the Peace Society' for short. Three months earlier, another peace association had been formed in London that probably was called the Society for Abolishing War.

Quakers played an important role in the first peace societies. For moral and religious reasons they rejected violence on principle and preached the gospel of non-resistance. Only like-minded citizens could become members. The one from Boston tried to reach a larger public by admitting persons who abhorred violence but nevertheless believed that under certain circumstances defensive wars might be allowed. In 1828, William Ladd, a merchant and cotton-grower, united the by then fifty local peace groups into the nationwide American Peace Society. In Britain, the London Peace Society slowly developed into a national peace organization.

The society made it clear that it was anti-war, Christian, Quaker-backed and quietist. At the same time, its leadership allowed non-Christian arguments against war provided that these were admitted to be secondary; it presented itself as an ecumenical organization; and, despite its quietism, it showed some interest in the political and international issues of the day. In December 1930, the Société de la Paix was established in Geneva, Switzerland. It was the first peace society on the European continent. Its founder, the Protestant nobleman and philanthropist Count Jean-Jacques de Sellon, was a strong believer in international organization. He regarded the Holy Alliance in particular as a model for a future European juridical order.

The 1840s started with the well-attended and fairly successful World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Its success encouraged the 'Friends of Peace' (as the peace activists called themselves at the time) to seek and develop international contacts. As a result, in 1843 the First General Peace Convention was held in London. The purpose of the meeting was to deliberate upon 'the best means, under the Divine blessing, to show the world the evil and inexpediency of the spirit and practice of war, and to promote permanent and universal peace'.

Among the issues the over 300 delegates discussed were arbitration treaties, disarmament, a Congress and a High Court of Nations, and the excessive force the colonial powers used in Tahiti, Afghanistan and China to subdue the local population. Then, in 1848, the first of what would become a series of international peace conferences, was held in Brussels. Its agenda was dominated by liberal political economics, particularly free trade formulations. Under the influence of the debate in Great Britain over free trade, the British Peace Society had embraced the ideas of Richard Cobden.

War was not only condemned on religious and moral grounds, but for economic reasons as well. Warfare disrupts the free flow of goods and thus prevents the increase of prosperity, and standing armies and weapons cost money. The Paris resolutions of 1849 were barely debated and followed the pattern set the year before in Brussels: the delegates were in favour of arbitration treaties, a Congress of Nations, and general disarmament. Interestingly, one of the other resolutions that was accepted spoke of 'better education of youth' so as to eradicate national prejudices. Over the next few years meetings were held in Frankfurt, London, Manchester and Edinburgh.



Suttner had her first great public appearances at the annual peace congresses.

The series came to an end as a result of the Crimean War (1853-1856), in which the great powers fought each other for the first time in decades. The British Peace Society had always put its faith in public opinion. Now it turned out that the British public was in a warlike mood and chauvinistic thanks to the news sent home from the battlefields by so-called 'war correspondents'. No wonder that the international conference in Edinburgh, the last one of the series, received a bad press. Thousands left the peace societies. It was a first bitter experience for the movement, and an ordeal it certainly was. And yet the end of the Crimean War brought the British Peace Society a small victory. Protocol 23 of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 stated: 'The Plenipotentiaries do not hesitate to express, in the name of their Governments, the wish that States between which any serious misunderstanding may arise, should, before appealing to Arms, have recourse, as far as circumstances might allow, to the Good Offices of a friendly Power.'

The Plenipotentiaries hope that the Governments not represented at the Congress will unite in the sentiment which has inspired the wish recorded in the present Protocol.' The wording was manifestly cautious, but the protocol rendered it impossible in the future for sovereign states to interpret an offer of mediation as an unfriendly act. It was the first clause of its kind to be inserted in a multilateral treaty. It was a watered-down version of an original suggestion by the British Peace Society. The Times foresaw that it would make 'all Europe one court of appeal'.

The period from 1859 to 1871 saw the consolidation of large nation-states. Crises and wars resulted in, *inter alia*, a new German Empire, a unified Kingdom of Italy, a Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary and the triumph of centrality in the United States. During these years, the Friends of Peace had to row against the current of nationalism. In many countries they became the objects of vicious ridicule and slander. But it was not all sorrow and misery.

There were also new peace societies formed, for instance in the United States (Universal Peace Society, chaired by Alfred Love), France (Ligue internationale et permanente de la paix, founded and led by the famous Frédéric Passy), Switzerland (League internationale de la paix et de la liberté, headed by Charles Lemonnier; it was the first to admit women as members and soon developed a separate women's branch), Belgium (Association internationale des amis de la paix, founded by Albert Picard) and the Netherlands (Algemeene Nederlandsche Vredesbond, chairman Daniël van Eck).

The origin of the Red Cross Movement deserves special mention. The suffering of the thousands of wounded soldiers left untended on the battlefield of Solferino in 1859 and the devastation and horrors he witnessed there, inspired future Nobel Peace Prize winner Henry Dunant to issue a humanitarian appeal on behalf of the victims of combat. The famous book he wrote, *A Memory of Solferino*, touched the heart and stirred the conscience of Europe and led to the founding of the Red Cross.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, European culture showed a Janus face. On the one hand, bellicosity was clearly on the rise. The great powers formed all sorts of alliances with secret military stipulations, nationalism and militarism grew profusely, there was a scramble for colonies, an armaments race and always the looming threat of a local war turning into a general European one. On the other hand, the number of peace activists and their societies in Europe and America also increased. In particular, religious communities, women and their associations, and members of parliament were receptive to the message of peace.

In 1889, the Interparliamentary Conference (later called the Interparliamentary Union, which still exists today) was launched by British and French parliamentarians to meet and discuss peace and arbitration initiatives. The same year, a Universal Peace Congress was organized by private peace activists. It was the first of twenty-one held until 1914. The two bodies were sometimes characterized as the upper and lower houses of the parliament of peace. In 1892, both Conference and Congress created a permanent bureau in Bern that took care of daily affairs and the organization of activities. The peace movement was now slowly developing into a transnational lobby.



## > Suttner and the Friends of Peace

There is a well-known English saying 'Life begins at forty'. Baroness Bertha von Suttner was a late convert to the peace movement. When you read her book *Memoiren*, first published in 1909, you notice for instance that the war of 1859, in which her own country Austria-Hungary fought against the combined forces of France and Piedmont, passed her by completely. Famous battles like Magenta or Solferino did not distract the then 16-year-old Countess Kinsky from the thrill of her first ball and her youthful flirtations in Wiesbaden, where she stayed with her mother, aunt and cousin. Mother Kinsky and her sister were both addicted to gambling and spent their mornings at the casino. They were sure that they were gifted with clairvoyance and could predict the outcome at cards and at the roulette table. Reality, however, did not confirm their second sight.

The Austro-Prussian War of 1866 also failed to impress Bertha. She was only happy that her guardian, who had just died, did not live to witness the defeat. At that time, newspapers were not read in the villa in Baden-Baden where they were staying, and all her time went on singing lessons. You see, another *idée fixe* of her mother's was that she was a misunderstood artistic genius. In her obsession she decided that Bertha should become a world-famous singer. So the young girl was 'tortured' by having to practice, practice, and practice again. The war of 1870-71 between France and Prussia made a stronger impression on Bertha because she and her mother were in Paris when it started and in Berlin when it ended.

Fifteen years later, after they had returned to Austria from their self-chosen exile in the Caucasus, Arthur and Bertha von Suttner made a trip to Paris to spend the winter. On various occasions they met writers, journalists, members of the Académie Française and artists in literary and political salons. The growing tension between France and Germany dominated the conversations: a war was in the air, 'revanche'



Three important fellow campaigners of Suttner :  
Rudolf Virchow,  
Elie Ducommun  
and Frédéric Passy.

was near, and Alsace and Lorraine would soon return to the Third Republic. At the time, the most talked-about man in France was the Minister of War, General Boulanger, who was admired by the public at large.

He restored the tradition of military parades and frequently rode at their head, he instituted popular reforms in the army, and he spoke out in chauvinistic fashion against the Germans, thereby reviving the memory of the defeat of 1871 and the lost provinces. In one of the salons Bertha had a talk about war and peace with a friend, Dr Löwenthal, who informed her (and I quote from her *Memoirs*): ‘that there existed in London an “International Arbitration and Peace Association” whose objective it was to mobilise public opinion in order to achieve the establishment of an international court which would replace armed combat as a means of settling disputes between nations (...) This information electrified me.’ Löwenthal gave the 43-year-old Bertha all sorts of details, including the name of its founder and chairman Hodgson Pratt, who at the time was travelling through Europe holding lectures in various continental capitals on the purpose and aims of his peace organization. Pratt wanted to set up societies based on the London model in as many countries as possible, and then to bring them together in a huge confederation. On her return home, Suttner found the proofs of her new book *Das Maschinenzeitalter* (The Age of Machines), and added a report on the London organization.

But she wanted to do more for the peace movement. Out of this desire came *Die Waffen nieder* or Lay down your arms, one of the most influential anti-war novels of all time. The book told the story of Martha von Tilling, who lived through the wars of 1859, 1864, 1866 and 1870-71, during which she lost both her husbands: the first one in war on the battlefield of Magenta in 1859, and the second one as a result of war, shot by French nationalists during the siege of Paris by order of a court martial as the Austrian Colonel Tilling was presumed to be a German spy.

Suttner did a lot of research for the book. She gave very realistic descriptions of war’s cruelty, horror, suffering and inhumanity, and denied its heroism, honour and glorification of a culture of violence. She had great difficulty getting the book published. Editors of Austrian and German periodicals returned the manuscript, stating that, in a militarized state, it was impossible for such a text to be serialized. Publishing companies did the same as they were afraid of burning their fingers.

Eventually, her own publisher Pierson of Dresden agreed. He was not particularly impressed and wanted several cuts and changes, for example another title. The Baroness refused and managed to overcome his reservations. The novel was published under the title she herself had chosen, and there were no cuts or alterations made. When *Die Waffen nieder* appeared, it burst on its readers like a bombshell. The first edition of 1,000 copies was soon completely sold out and it had to be reprinted. The second edition also sold like hot cakes. Translations soon followed. It became a worldwide sensation. In the year that she received the Nobel Peace Prize, the book went into its 37th edition and had been translated into almost all the European languages. Suttner introduced millions to the peace movement. Contemporaries like Leo Tolstoy compared *Lay down your arms* with



The monthly bulletin of the Austrian Peace Society

Suttner has become "Peace-Bertha" to the caricaturists: "It is embarrassing for nature to kid me."

Harriet Beecher-Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which had helped to trigger the abolition of slavery in the United States.

All over the world people joined existing peace societies or formed new ones. In countries where until then there had been no peace organizations, they were formed. That, for instance, was the case in Central Europe. In Austria, it was Suttner herself who initiated the Österreichische Friedensgesellschaft, of which she became president. In Germany, she helped the young socialist of Jewish origin and future Nobel Peace Prize winner Alfred Hermann Fried to found the Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft in Berlin, she edited with him the journal *Die Waffen nieder!*, and after 1899 contributed to Fried's new journal *Die Friedens-Warte*.

In Imperial Germany's domestic political culture, the peace movement was considered the odd man out. Its societies and individual activists met only resistance. Because of the leadership of Suttner and Fried, the peace movement was stigmatized as 'unmanly', 'un-German' and 'Jewish'. The Baroness was deeply hated by German nationalists and militarists. More than once, they subjected her to vitriol. Her opponents often jeered at the Baroness, calling her names like 'Judenbertha', 'Friedensbertha', 'Friedensfury' and 'Friedensfairy'. Papers and journals published a great number of malicious caricatures of her and other 'obscure zealots', to use one of the favourite expressions at the time. Suttner never reacted to the insults and spiteful remarks. She always kept her distance. That was completely natural for her, being of high birth. In her public appearances Suttner also showed aloofness and dignity, as Fried would later remark in his obituary of her in *Die Friedenswarte*. We now come to what was probably her finest hour: the First Hague Peace Conference in 1899.



Mrs. Suttner:  
I see, sharpening  
your bayonet is  
what you call  
peace? – The  
Russian: I swear,  
as long as I  
sharpen my  
bayonet, I wish  
for peace.

## > 'To the place where peace is to be born!'

In August 1898, newspapers carried the news that the ruler of the Russian Empire, Tsar Nicholas II, had invited the nations in a Rescript to a conference to discuss 'the progressive development of the present armaments' and 'the most effectual means of insuring to all peoples the benefits of a real and durable peace'. Public opinion in Europe and America for the most part responded positively to the Tsar's initiative. Peace activists, among them the Suttners, could hardly believe their ears. One of the most powerful persons in the world had all of a sudden accepted the agenda of the peace movement. No longer could their ideas be called Utopian. Everywhere, peace societies started to petition governments.

The journalist William Stead even visited European capitals on a 'Peace Crusade' to ensure that the Conference would be held and that its emphasis would be on arms control. Contemporary observers thought that the Tsar had taken his initiative after reading Suttner's *Lay down your arms* and the six-volume study *The War of the Future in its Technical, Economic and Political Relations* by Polish-born industrialist and peace activist Johan de Bloch.

Governments responded less enthusiastically. They were sceptical about the motives of the Tsar and they distrusted each other. In the international political culture of the 19th century, war was an accepted and rational instrument of national politics. Because of the lukewarm response, the Russian government devised a modified agenda that focussed on arms reduction, modification of codes of warfare and acceptance of new means of peaceful settlement of conflicts, i.e. the use of good offices, mediation and voluntary arbitration. Later, The Hague was chosen as the venue for the Conference.

The Hague Peace Conference lasted from 18 May until 29 July 1899. That summer, contemporaries called The Hague the 'city of peace'. While the more than 100 politicians, diplomats, military men, naval specialists and international lawyers from 26 countries were negotiating behind closed doors, there were all sorts of activities by representatives of oppressed peoples who



"To The Hague!" – My bags are packed, tomorrow I shall travel to the "birthplace of peace".

demanded immediate action on the part of the Conference. There were also demonstrations by socialists and radicals. They opposed the meeting because an autocratic ruler had convened it, and its delegates belonged to the aristocracy and bourgeoisie. According to them, the only force that could stop the spiral of war was the class struggle of the international proletariat.

During the Conference, Mrs Waszkléwicz-van Schilfgaarde of the Nederlandsche Vrouwenbond ter Internationale Ontwapening organized some meetings and lectures. So did the Cosmopolitan Alliance for Peace and Free International Intercourse. Both organizations had been founded the year before. It's striking that the above-mentioned General Dutch Peace League did not initiate any kind of independent action. Its executive later stated that it had refrained from action because it did not want to give a podium to foreign peace activists.

A small elite of the Friends of Peace had come to The Hague to experience the Dawn of a New Age. Of course, the ever-present Suttner was there. At virtually the last moment she received an invitation from the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs De Beaufort to witness the opening of the Conference. Amongst the photographers, draftsmen, journalists and correspondents of newspapers from all over the world, she was the only woman in the room.

During the Conference the Suttners hosted a salon in the Hotel Central, and later in the Kurhaus Hotel in Scheveningen, where Bertha was often besieged by an army of reporters and interviewers who wanted to talk to her about the peace cause. She showed great skill and tact in handling the press. There, she also met other peace activists, politicians, industrialists, lawyers, scientists, feminists, writers and artists. She had been corresponding with some of them for years and now they finally met in person. At the same time, the Baroness organized private dinners and meetings between the leaders of the

movement, such as Stead, Bloch, Novikov and herself, and susceptible official delegates and military men.

During these informal talks, the peace leaders were kept informed of ongoing developments at the Conference and sometimes even about the diplomatic initiatives and strategies of delegations like the American and British ones. Suttner wrote everything meticulously down in a diary that was later published. In it we can read that the Baroness on at least one occasion was even involved in secret, unofficial diplomacy. When the negotiations over arbitration reached a deadlock, the leader of the American delegation, Andrew White, urged her to use her contacts to exert pressure in Austria and Germany to support the plan for a Court. In the literature about the First Hague Conference, the salon of the Suttners has always been described as an important centre of influence.

During the Conference, the sophisticated Baroness was sought out by those wielding power in the Netherlands. For instance, she met the young Dutch Queen, Wilhelmina, at a royal dinner. They exchanged a few words and then the Queen had to talk to another guest. We have only known for a few years which role Wilhelmina played that evening. From the start she regarded the Peace Conference with great dissatisfaction. The Queen thought that the Netherlands, internationally, had made a fool of itself. She also disliked the activities of the peace activists because at the time there was an important debate on conscription in the Dutch parliament. Wilhelmina had read *Lay down your arms*. She thought it dreadful and could not understand how the book could have persuaded the Tsar to take his peace initiative. No, Wilhelmina was definitely not a Friend of Peace.

On 29 May, when the Conference was in its second week, Suttner felt so excited that she wrote in her diary, and I quote, 'Who has ever heard that in the company of diplomats and military men, the discussions would be on world peace? This thought crosses my mind every time I enter a salon. I feel that there is an atmosphere here that the ones who are present have never inhaled before. This is Wonderland.' Eight days later, she committed to paper that in The Hague 'something was floating in the air, which – at least in my eyes – laid a special mood over what I see: the pollen of a new phase of civilization.' By the end, however, her enthusiasm had evaporated. The Conference failed to provide an answer to the burning question of armaments. She was also displeased that a Peace Conference made rules concerning the mitigation of warfare. Nevertheless, she was happy with the formation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

In the following years Suttner propagated the development of the work of The Hague. She travelled all over Europe and the United States, lecturing extensively, writing, and attending peace conferences. She always called for arbitration and arms limitation on the basis of justice and humanity, and for the benefit of mankind. Her colleagues in what was now increasingly called the 'pacifist' movement (the term was invented in August 1901 by the French peace activist Arnould), began to call the Baroness 'Notre Général en Chef'. According to a poll by the Berliner Tageblatt, in 1903 she was the most famous popular woman in

Europe. In 1905 Suttner was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She was the first woman and Austrian to be recognized in this way. She had earned it.

### > Bertha von Suttner's relevance

At the beginning of this paper the question was raised whether Suttner had lived, worked, fought and suffered for nothing, as the volcano of the First World War was about to erupt. The answer to that question is a clear: 'Definitely not!'

The pre-1914 peace movement, of which Bertha von Suttner was the very symbol, pleaded for a new international political culture based on peace, the rule of law over might, international co-operation instead of confrontation, arms limitation, the organization of a state system and openness in diplomacy. The total war of 1914-1918 proved that several ideas and analyses of the peace movement were correct, for instance the dangers of an armed peace, the counter-productivity of war between modern, highly developed societies, and the need for international organization and disarmament. It took the mega-catastrophe of the Great War and the diplomatic revolution of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 to transform the discourses, ideas and practices in international politics and diplomacy into a new coherent form and style of international relations in which peace was the centre of interest. In the international political culture of the 1920s, liberal internationalism, pacifism and juridicism reappeared in the vocabularies, practices and ideas of the leading statesmen, and returned in institutions like the League of Nations with its character of a world parliament. The passion for peace had never before found expression in an intergovernmental organization of such importance.

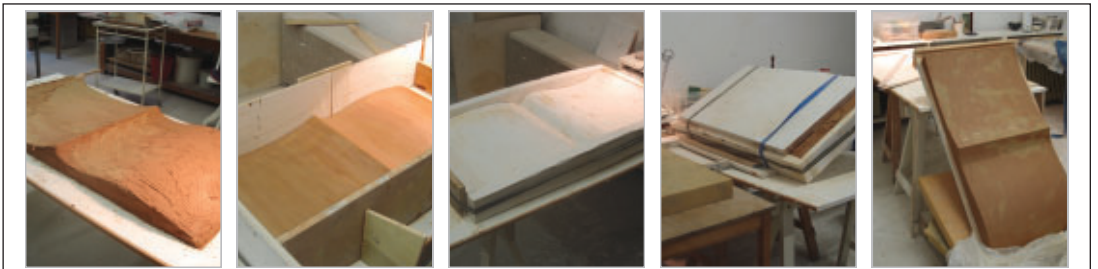
Bertha von Suttner's relevance lies in the passion for peace. After the slaughter of the Great War, the issue of war and peace became a public matter. Since 1919 governments, politicians – even the dictators – and diplomats have not been able to avoid the passion for peace of their people. They have always had to avow in public that they were in favour of international peace and solidarity, justice, the community of peace loving countries, etc. This is still true today. Although on many occasions they have only paid lip service to the ideal of peace, nonetheless, in international political and diplomatic culture it is no longer possible to glorify war, to state that frequent wars are unavoidable, that wars have purifying effects, that wars are indispensable for the development of a state, and that war is life. These ideas were quite popular on the eve of the First World War in, for instance, the Wilhelmine Empire. Bertha von Suttner combated them with everything that was in her. Another reason why she is still relevant today is that 'Friedensbertha' and her ideas are part of a Western tradition that since the second half of the 20th century slowly seems to be spreading all over the world. This is why she and her ideas should be studied. We still have a lot to learn from her.

The Chautauqua amphitheatre, N. Y. Suttner giving a peace lecture in English in front of thousands.





Lilo Schrammel | commemorative plaque | work in progress

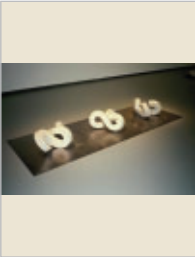


## The open book - A memorial plaque by Lilo Schrammel for Bertha von Suttner!

> Katja Miksovsky



Lilo Schrammel  
Wave block  
1/ 2001  
stoneware,  
pigment on metal  
150/50/20 cm



Lilo Schrammel  
Fluid  
permanence,  
2000  
white stoneware  
on metal, 1m/3m



Lilo Schrammel  
Paper work/2000  
water colour,  
paper on  
Japanese paper  
50/70 cm

A wave of clay, a peacefully smooth white surface softly ripples up the wall. The wave recalls an open book. Two of the pages are pressed together and form a narrow ridge. Normally, when opened, a book should form a groove in the middle. Lilo Schrammel has reversed the book, turning it inside out.

The book will be used to decorate a building, in memory of a woman of books and of the public sphere. Inside and out are themes not only of this ceramic sculpture, but also of Bertha von Suttner. The content of her books and her commitment to the public sphere shaped her life and was broadcast to the world. Lilo Schrammel's memorial plaque preserves the memory of Bertha von Suttner for the public, even today.

Instead of the usual form of a portrait, a highly reduced and symbolic form was chosen for this memorial plaque. As a sculpture of a book, the plaque has a relatively flat surface. The artistic form of the sculpture is almost two-dimensional here; the third dimension lies virtually hidden: the depth of Bertha von Suttner's life and literary activity are expressed in a wave. The movement of water conveys the dissolution of boundaries between inside and out. Just as von Suttner's external commitment and the content of her literary activity form a single whole, so the sculpture eschews the distinction between inside and out; instead, it flows. The soft, wave-shaped movement represents a theme, which could be described as a movement for peace, but also as a dynamic force, which is not explosive, but reposing in itself, static and meditative. Waves are a flowing part of a greater whole.

This creation of the Austrian artist Lilo Schrammel builds on her previous work. In the "Wellenblock" series Schrammel worked on the wave shape, and her "Fluid Permanence" series dealt with segments of circles. What these curved shapes have in common is a rippling movement, which the "Fluid Permanence" series portrays expressively, whereas the "Wellenblock" artworks are characterised by reduction and calm concentration.



Lilo Schrammel  
commemorative  
plaque  
work in progress

Schrammel's preferred medium is clay. However, over the last few years she has also been increasingly experimenting with other materials. She produces parallel drawings, both as preparation for her three-dimensional creations and as artwork in its own right. The development of Schrammel's work reflects a striving for reduction and harmonisation, not only in terms of shapes but also of surfaces and colours. Her works exude a kind of "static movement". These are contradictions which endow them with tension and intensity.

The soft shapes of a wave and convex and concave curves evoke femininity. Two women are communicating here: a twenty-first century artist is reaching out to a pioneering woman, remembering her and paying her homage. The result is a reduced and expressive "portrait". Smoothly formed lettering commemorates a woman of writing; as an optically soft material, ceramic ripples and sets off ripples. The glazed surface is white, evoking that colour as a symbol of peace.

In technical terms the execution of the plaque in clay also represents a challenge, due to its size. This is the challenge of a material that conveys original force. Clay is both earth and refinement, motherly creativity and realisation in form - the realisation of the portrait of a woman, who was a creative force for peace.

BERTHA  
VON 1843-1914  
PRAHA WIEN  
SUTTNER

FIRST  
FEMALE  
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE  
ERSTE  
WEIBLICHE FRIEDENS  
NOBELPREISTRÄGERIN  
PREMIERE FEMME PRIX  
NOBEL DE LA PAIX  
1905



Bertha von Suttner | Bertha von Suttner at the time of her return from Caucasus | © Brigitte Hamann



## Bertha von Suttner - Biographical notes

- > 1843      born in Prague on 9 June, Countess Bertha Kinsky was the daughter of retired Austrian field marshal Count Franz Joseph Kinsky.
- > 1873–75      companion and governess to the four daughters of Baron von Suttner in Vienna. She fell in love with the youngest son of the family, Arthur.
- > 1876      worked for a few weeks as a secretary for the Swedish industrialist Albert Nobel, who was living in Paris, then returned to Vienna to marry Arthur in secret.
- > 1876–85      the Suttners went to Georgia at the invitation of the Princess of Migrelia, and lived there for nine years. The heavy losses of the Russo-Turkish War, fought partly in Georgia, turned them into anti-war activists.
- > 1885–1902      Bertha and Arthur Suttner lived in Schloss Harmannsdorf (Lower Austria), a castle belonging to the Suttner family. After Arthur's death, Bertha moved to Vienna.
- > 1889      Bertha von Suttner's anti-war novel, "Lay Down Your Arms", was published and became a great success. It was translated into many languages.
- > 1891      Bertha von Suttner founded the Austrian Peace Society, and became its president.
- > 1895      In his will, Alfred Nobel established prizes not only for physics, chemistry, medicine and literature, but also for peace, now named after him. The peace prize was to be awarded to "the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity among nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses".
- > 1899      over several months Bertha von Suttner reported for Austrian newspapers from The Hague on the International Peace Conference.
- > 1905      Bertha von Suttner received the Nobel peace prize.
- > 1914      Bertha von Suttner died on 21 June in Vienna. Seven days later the shots were fired in Sarajevo that started the first world war, for which the major powers had long been preparing.



## IAuthorsI

> **Brigitte Hamann** studied history and German in Münster and Vienna. She has published many books on Austrian history, including "Elisabeth, the Reluctant Empress" (1981), of which many editions and translations are available, the biography of the pacifist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Bertha von Suttner (1986), "Hitler's Vienna, the apprenticeship of a dictator" (1996), which has since become a standard work, and also "Winifred Wagner or Hitler's Bayreuth" (2002). Brigitte Hamann lives and works in Vienna as a freelance historian.

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*“As long as we cling to the past, we will remain savages.”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: *Lay Down Your Arms*)

*“The future belongs to goodness.”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: *Lay Down Your Arms*)

*“What the peace movement expresses is not a dream of unrealistic fantasies; it is civilisation’s instinct for self-preservation”*

(Bertha von Suttner in : *In der Brandung*)

*“History will remain a chain of horrors as long as civilised man fails to acknowledge that no end whatsoever justifies the use of a means that is less pure than the end itself.”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: *Marthas Kinder*)

*“It is the same great sin: whether a duel or a battle of a hundred thousand – the same delusion that killing can achieve something, prove something or redress something.”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: *Marthas Kinde*)

*“War (is) an institution handed down from barbarian times (...) which should be abolished by civilisation.”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: Bertha von Suttner in: *Aus der Werkstatt des Pazifismus*)

*“War is the negation of culture, so that all achievements of culture must be abolished by it: it is a reversion to savagery (...).”*

(Bertha von Suttner in: *Lay Down Your Arms*)







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