Report on the Symposium on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize award to Bertha von Suttner, organized by the Embassies of Austria, Norway and Sweden in cooperation with the Carnegie Foundation in the Peace Palace on 18 April 2005
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Colophon

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In 2005 it is a century since the Oslo-based Nobel Prize Committee had awarded the famous Austrian writer and peace activist Bertha von Suttner with the Peace Nobel prize in 1905. She was not only the first woman to receive that outstanding award, but it was her commitment that led the Swedish philanthropist Alfred Nobel to the creation of the Nobel Peace Prize in the first place. With her touching appeal for peace in her book "Lay Down Your Arms!" she ignited a lot of people in her lifetime with a want for peace.

"Lay Down Your Arms!" – that was the simple and yet immense complex message that Bertha von Suttner strived for decades to translate into an effective movement to end military conflict and secure the peaceful resolution of international disputes. She never gave up the struggle, though it sometimes seemed completely unrealistic. In that regard she gained a lot of strength by her optimism in relation to the evolution of mankind towards a more peaceful one.

It was perhaps a mercy upon her that she had not to witness the brutal negation of her vision, since she died a few weeks before the outbreak of the First World War.

In order to remember the important work of Bertha von Suttner and the beginnings of the peace movement exactly 100 years after the Nobel Peace Price award the embassies of Austria, Norway and Sweden decided to jointly organize a symposium on Suttner and her work. It seemed particularly appropriate to hold such a symposium in The Hague, where not only important international institutions working for world peace have their seat, but where also the first universal peace conferences were held in 1899 and 1907. Suttner closely followed both peace conferences, at the festive opening of the first peace conference she was the only woman to be present. The symposium was organized in the small Court Chamber of the Peace Palace, which is somehow the architectural concretisation of the thrust for peace that drove Bertha von Suttner. Experts from Austria, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands threw light not only on various aspects of the life and work of Suttner but also on her legacy in contemporary international relations. Several achievements in international law would be unthinkable without the foundations laid by Suttner.

The symposium was held on 18 April 2005 and proved to be a big success. It was therefore decided to make the findings of the symposium available to a larger audience by printing the lectures delivered at the symposium. This brochure therefore contains these lectures as well as forewords by the three participating Ambassadors, the Nobel Lecture of Bertha von Suttner and a short curriculum vitae.

I would like to thank the Carnegie Foundation and the Foundation for Austrian Studies for their support in making this publication possible.

Gregor Schusterschitz
Austrian Embassy The Hague
The year 2005 marks the centenary of Bertha von Suttner's Nobel Peace Prize, a welcome opportunity to commemorate this remarkable Austrian novelist, early peace activist and first woman to receive this prestigious award. Suttner's outstanding commitment for peace, exemplified by her ground-breaking novel "Die Waffen nieder!" ["Lay Down Your Arms"], was finally rewarded by the world community.

Peace and human rights questions are just as urgent today as they were 100 years ago, when Bertha von Suttner addressed them in her books. Of course, books and the commemoration of positive historic role models certainly cannot prevent armed conflicts; the courage and foresight of personalities such as Bertha von Suttner, however, deserve our attention — if we want to make a difference.

It was therefore the wish of my colleagues from Norway and Sweden and also my wish, to commemorate this remarkable woman here in the Peace Palace in The Hague, the very place that stands for the rule of law in international relations. Today Suttner would certainly applaud the existence of institutions as the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as well as the International Criminal Court in The Hague as firm evidence that her ideas are gaining ground.

Erwin Kubesch

Austrian Ambassador
The role of Bertha von Suttner in the history of the Nobel Peace Prize is remarkable. She both had an influence on Alfred Nobel in the setting up of the prize and she was the first woman to receive it. Her pioneering role as an activist for the international peace movement and her demonstration of women's participation in political life was of great inspiration for her contemporaries. Today these are still goals that require a continuing effort for its realization.

The Nobel Peace Prize was installed during the period of union between Sweden and Norway [1814 - 1905], when foreign policy was conducted by the Swedish King on behalf of the two countries. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why Alfred Nobel decided in his last will and testament that "a committee of five persons elected by the Norwegian Parliament" should make the choice as to who should receive the prize among the 'champions of peace'. The union between the two countries was dissolved in 1905 in a peaceful manner in the best spirit of the Peace Prize laureate of that year, Bertha von Suttner.

Kåre Bryn
Ambassador of Norway
The reunion, which was held on 18 April 2005 in the Peace Palace to commemorate Bertha von Suttner, was a most timely event. It focused attention on a remarkable woman who – far in advance of her times – fought the militarism that characterized the leading European powers in the decades preceding World War I. As pointed out by Professor Ove Bring, in her criticism of the then rudimentary international law pertaining to armed conflicts she anticipated some of the basic tenets of the UN charter and international humanitarian law.

Bertha von Suttner received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905 and the seminar could also draw attention to her very special relationship with Alfred Nobel, the great Swedish industrialist, who after she had briefly been his secretary in Paris, steadfastly supported her often penny-less activities. Although he seems to have believed that his own dynamite innovations would be more likely to put an end to all warfare than Bertha’s idealistic crusades, there are clear indications that towards the end of his life he was more convinced about the righteousness and correctness of her cause. The very creation of the Peace Prize in his testament is, of course, proof of this.

In this year 2005 we are forced to recognize that war, although proscribed, remains a reality and a constant threat in many parts of the world and that – contrary to Nobel’s hopes – weapons of mass destruction make our existence precarious. All the more reason to pay credit to Bertha von Suttner’s unconditional demand for the total outlawing of war and in favour of compulsory peaceful settlement of international disputes. The instruments to-day exist, but it still remains to make full use of them.

Mr. Björn Skala

Ambassador of Sweden
Programme of the symposium

Peace Palace, The Hague, 18 April 2005

16.00 Opening of the symposium by the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Erwin Kubesch
16.05 Dr. Brigitte Hamann, Vienna: “Some remarks on Suttner’s hard struggle for Peace”
17.15 Prof. Dr. Ove Bring, Stockholm: “Bertha von Suttner and international law, the development of the ius contra bellum”
17.50 Dr. Michael Riemens, Groningen: “This is Wonderland” – Bertha von Suttner, the Peace Movement and the Hague Conference of 1899
18.25 Dr. Ivar Libøe, Oslo: “Bertha von Suttner and the Nobel Peace Prize in a Norwegian perspective”
19.00 - 20.00 Reception hosted by Ambassador Kåre Bryn, Ambassador Erwin Kubesch and Ambassador Bjørn Skala
Some remarks on Suttner's hard struggle for peace

Dr. Brigitte Hamann, Vienna

Baroness Bertha von Suttner was born as Countess Kinsky in Prague in 1843. The still flourishing Kinsky family were important in the Habsburg monarchy because of their military merits in Austrian services — one Count Kinsky, for instance, played an important role in the events around Wallenstein in the Thirty-Years-War.

Her family's military tradition became an important factor in Suttner's further development. By pursuing her controversies against war and military predominance, she also opposed her family's tradition.

On the other hand, because of this tradition, she understood the role of soldiers and emphasized that they were not murderers at all, but victims of war themselves.

Furthermore, Suttner didn't regard armies as being without any sense. On the contrary: She stressed the importance of an international army that could protect human rights and — when necessary — intervene in states where minority groups are persecuted — as the Turks did with the Armenian people. For this specific purpose to protect the rights of humans — Suttner thought it appropriate to have a military force. Apparently she had something as our modern UN-troops in mind.

In the Kinsky-family Bertha suffered from discrimination: she was a so-called "bastard". Her old father, a general, died before her birth and her young mother was not an old aristocrat but came from a family that had been raised only recently to nobility. Because of this Bertha was never allowed to assist in the festivities of the Imperial Court and was never considered as an esteemed member of the Austrian nobility. On the one hand, she loved the high society, on the other hand she took every opportunity to emphasize the ideals of the middle class: the ideal of work and ability, the ideal to have success as a result of achievement and not of noble birth. Her political conviction soon became a liberal one — criticizing the privileges of the nobility and the Roman Catholic Church in Austria-Hungary and pleading for a more democratic political system.

But her high birth also brought her some advantages of which above all a good education by private teachers was the most important. In a time when girls were not allowed to attend higher schools or to study, this advantage was very special. She spoke German, English, French and Italian fluently, which proved to be an important asset for her future international work.
It was a time when women had exclusively one chance to make a career: through a rich marriage. That was also the last hope of Bertha's mother who, as a passionate gambler, had lost her whole fortune including the money of her children.

After three engagements with un-loved partners 30-years old Bertha made an extraordinary decision: she left her mother and took a job as a governess of the four daughters of the rich Baron Suttner in Harmannsdorf in Lower Austria.

A Countess as a teacher in a Baron's house: that was against all the aristocratic rules of the Empire. And more: Bertha fell in love with Arthur, the elder brother of the four girls, a not very successful student and seven years younger, which made marriage impossible and forced her to leave the house.

Then — shocking indeed for a countess — she answered to a newspaper announcement: an unknown gentleman in Paris needed a multilingual secretary. It was Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite and the richest man of the world. She got the job.

Nobel was an idealist who dedicated his life to the prevention of war, which could - in his view - best be attained through the introduction of even more horrific military devices that would act as a deterrent. Bertha had never before been confronted with this topic and was not very interested in it. She was very unhappy because of her separation from Arthur, which made her blind for the possibilities that her new position offered her. Nobel, a man of immense wealth and intelligence, a romantic and tender man, ten years older than Bertha, fell in love with her. She couldn't however forget Arthur, a young man without a profession but with profound depths. So she returned to Austria, but remained in best friendship with Nobel until his death.

In Vienna, she married Arthur secretly and flew with him across the Black Sea to the Caucasus where she knew the Princess of Mingrelia. Ekaterina Dadiani, who had been a gambler friend of her mother visiting the same casinos.

For nine years, the Suttners stayed in Georgia and went through a bitter experience, living a poor and hungry life. From this time on, Bertha developed a strong social feeling.

To earn money, Bertha gave piano and language lessons and Arthur made sketches for wallpapers. Because they urgently needed money, Bertha began to write articles for European newspapers and became a writer. Arthur did the same with less success. Both were eager readers as well: they read the new books of the English sociologists Spencer and Buckle and became eager students of Charles Darwin and his doctrine of evolution. Suttner believed that the progress of technology would lead to the progress of mankind: the evolution from a primitive mankind to the more developed kind of cosmopolitan, peaceful, tolerant and educated people that would inhabit the future.
You see: isolated from the Caucasus Suttner developed the basis of her social theory of war and peace without knowing that in the English speaking countries there had always existed an organised movement to propagate these thoughts.

In political terms the Suttner’s were convinced liberals showing a great tolerance towards all religions and confessions, what contrasted to the strict Catholicism of the Austrian aristocracy. Thus it is no surprise that Arthur became a freemason. One of the most important principles of freemasonry is to be tolerant towards other religions, nationalities, customs and members of another social group. Masonry, however, was closed for women. [Some years later Bertha was the first woman to give a lecture in the freemasons’ lodge of Bucharest in Romania. Naturally she spoke about Peacemaking.]

In 1885, the Suttner’s returned to Austria. They lived with Arthur’s family in Harmannsdorf, earning their living by writing and travelling a lot. In Paris, in the house of the French poet and friend, Alphonse Daudet, Bertha learned about the International Arbitration and Peace Association in London which had been founded by Hodgson Pratt in 1886 and about similar groups on the continent, organisations that had as their objective what both Suttner’s now sought as an ideal: arbitration and peace [in place of armed force], fight against all sorts of nationalism and against intolerance in religious questions, promotion of international trade, art and science, promotion of personal and political relations despite all national differences.

Bertha was convinced that the rapid development of the arms technology would lead to a change in politics: politicians finally would have to acknowledge that war cannot be an instrument of politics. In this she agreed with her old friend Nobel.

Suttner often has been called naive because of her strong belief in the progress of mankind and in her belief in the possibility of peace over the world. This peace demanded a better mankind, a thing of which she was sure that it would come about, since she thought it to be a law of nature based on Darwin’s evolution theory. Her strong conviction that peace could be realised through the natural evolution of mankind and that this evolution would lead to more peaceful thinking explains Bertha’s commitment to peace.

Now — at the age of 45 — Bertha von Suttner finally knew what made her life worth living for: the organised international peace movement. She wrote the novel: “Die Waffen niedert”, “Lay down your arms!”, a book similar to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” which became very important in the fight against slavery in America.

“Die Waffen niedert” was not intended to be an artistic novel but to be a novel to awaken feelings and activities against war and to find allies for the organised peace movement. The novel is filled with very realistic war scenes concentrating on blood and death, written in the style of Suttner’s admired writer colleague Emile Zola. In the novel the reader will not find the heroism or glorification of soldiers as it was common in other novels of that time. Suttner wanted to inform her readers about the cruelty of war in as many horrible details as possible and to make a clear appeal to her readers: “Lay down your arms!”.

The impact the book made on the audience was tremendous. This single book, translated into many languages and printed in millions of copies, made the International Peace Movement known all over the world. Overnight, Bertha von Suttner became an important personality of the international peace movement.
Consequently she was urged to found an Austrian Peace Society. In that time, however, women did not even have the right to assist any political association. Nevertheless, Suttner founded the Austrian Peace Association and made herself president in 1891. One year later, she succeeded in founding the German Peace Association in Berlin, the capital she saw as the embodiment of militarism under young Emperor William II. She initiated a peace journal called “Die Waffen nieder” for which she wrote most of the articles. She also founded the Hungarian Peace Society in Budapest.

In 1892, an important year for Suttner, she attended her first International Peace Congress in Rome for which the travel was financed by Nobel. Here she gave the first lecture of her life to a prominent international audience. She did this in Italian, spontaneously and without any preparation. It was a great success.

Suttner’s struggle for peace included the struggle against any kind of intolerance, above all against anti-Semitism that was a dreary reality in Vienna of the fin de siècle. She supported her husband who joined a new league against anti-Semitism in Vienna. In dialogue with that league, Bertha’s friend Theodor Herzl developed his idea of Zionism and wrote his novel “Der Judenstaat” out of a comparable motivation as Bertha wrote “Die Waffen nieder!”. Both books, so-called “Tendenzromane”, propagated ideas.

In addition, also the struggle for women rights as a basis for a better partnership in the future was part of Suttner’s struggle for peace. And naturally she fought for equal social and political rights, for more democracy, because all these rights would improve the chance of peace in the future.

Nobel gave her subsidies to finance her activities and even became a member of the Austrian Peace Society. Bertha continued to appeal to her friend to do something outstanding for the peace movement. In January 1893, he told her in a letter that he hoped to establish a peace prize. After his death three years later, his will showed that he indeed had set up this Prize, which now is known as the Nobel Prize for Peace. But the realisation of Nobel’s will took a lot of time. And against her hope Suttner was not the first to get the prize.

In 1899, the manifest of Czar Nicholas and his call for the first Peace Conference to The Hague aroused Bertha’s hope for a decisive step forward for the Peace Movement. Naturally, she wanted to go to The Hague but she was not allowed because she was neither a politician nor an official deputy. So she wanted to go there as a journalist, but the Viennese newspapers were not interested in the matter. Finally it was her friend Theodor Herzl who gave her the money for the journey to The Hague and for a stay in an elegant hotel where she could gather international pacifists, politicians and journalists in an improvised “Salon”. Now she had not only to propagate the peace movement, but also Herzl’s new Zionism, as a way to fight anti-Semitism.
Suttner was the only woman present at the festive opening of the conference. But as a journalist she had only limited access to the sessions. She was a woman and women in this time had not the right to vote and not the right to be elected as politicians. Under these conditions Suttner's engagement and her success were astonishing enough. She devoted all her efforts to the acceleration of the development of peace, to the "step from theory to experiment", which would finally culminate in an official and international discussion on securing peace.

I quote: "Only those who have the power in their hands can put the idea into action. But the idea, if it is repeated clearly, frequently, and unanimously enough, also possesses power, namely the power to affect the desire of the mighty to act. And that is what we want. Not we ourselves erecting the house of world peace... but may those who can, do it." She thought and hoped, things were going "in the direction of gradual reduction of violence".

Against the often used argument of "interference" in the domestic affairs of other countries, she argued, "My God, you have certain independence in private life at home, too, and forbid outside interference, but if cries for help come from a neighbouring apartment, if a lunatic is trying to kill a member of his own family, don't you rush to the rescue - or do you calmly respect the internal affairs of the deranged neighbour? No, you call the police."

In the end, Suttner was disappointed with both Peace Conferences taking place in The Hague, above all with regard to the question of international disarmament. It became very clear that preparations for a war were being made in all countries of Europe. Hardly anyone thought that war could really be averted, and everyone intensified the armament process. In retrospect, Suttner bitterly called both Conferences "Conferences for consolidating war". Especially in the German Reich under Wilhelm II but also in Austria-Hungary she saw mighty politicians, who worked very effectively against the pacifists.

In the years after Nobel's death, Bertha von Suttner suffered a lot. Arthur was very ill. The Suttner family became very poor and had many debts. After Arthur's death in 1902, the family was bankrupt and had to leave their castle in Harmannsdorf. Bertha moved to Vienna into a modest flat. She now longed for the Nobel prize above all because she needed money so urgently. Yet, she was too proud to show it.

In a time, when nationalism and militarism were constantly on the rise, Bertha open opposition to rearmament attracted hostilities and attacks. She had to bear insults and mockeries in public. She had become an old and very corpulent lady and, unusual enough for a woman, a person of public and political interest and furthermore a woman who protested against the "Zeitgeist". Comic papers often chose her as their target, calling her 'peace fury' or 'peace-mongering Bertha'.

Through her unwavering engagement in the Association for the Prevention of anti-Semitism "Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus" she incurred the hostility of the Christian Socialists around the Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, and the anti-Semitic German-Nationalists in Austria. Her engagement gained her the abusive term "Judenbertha" - "Jewish Bertha".

When finally in 1905, Bertha von Suttner received "her" Nobel Peace Prize, she was on a lecture tour in Germany. It was in Wiesbaden where the happy news reached her. She received ovations and noted in her diary: "Cheers and hurrah even in the street". The next lectures were a veritable triumph, mainly because of the efforts of the women associations, who proudly announced that Suttner was the first female Nobel Peace prize winner. In her native country Austria-Hungary, "Peace-Bertha" was derided and little esteemed. Most of the newspapers in Austria-Hungary kept silent on Suttner's Prize. And there were no ovations for her in Vienna.

In her lecture in Christiania she stated, I quote: "One of the eternal truths is that happiness is created and developed in peace, and one of the eternal rights is the individuals' right to live. The strongest of all instincts, that of self-preservation, is an assertion of this right, affirmed and sanctified by the ancient commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." It is un-necessary for me to point out how little this right and his commandment are respected in the present state of civilization. Up to the present time, the military organisation of our society has been founded upon a denial of the possibility of peace, a contempt for the value of human life, and an acceptance of the urge to kill."
Herrn Dr. Alfred H. Fried,
Wien XVIII/3.
Skibo Castle, 2. Juli 1914.
"Die traurige Nachricht vom Himmelsabgang der Baronin ereilte mich in London. Je eher wir uns zusammenschließen, desto mehr wird die ganze Welt eine Nachbarschaft, um bald eine Bruderschaft zu werden. In zivilisierten Ländern wird das gegenseitige Taten der Menschen unbekannt sein, die Sache, für die unsere verstorbenen Freundin wirkte, wird triumphieren, und zivilisierte Menschen werden Kriegführung nicht mehr lernen.

Unter allen jenen, die dieses wahre Evangelium predigen und noch im Tode diese Mission verkünden, wird keine im Ränge höher stehen als jene, um die wir heute so tief trauern.

Lasst uns stark genug sein, um ihrem Beispiel zu folgen."

Ihr ergebener
Andrew Carnegie.

Before World War I, the Austrian peace movement remained restricted to isolated and even diminishing circles around Suttner and Fried, which were marginalized socially and politically and dismissed as sectarian groups. It must be mentioned that there was no kind of cooperation between these middle-class exponents of pacifism and the strongest movement of pacifism, the socialist one. On the contrary: the socialist pacifists were not only rivals, but enemies of the bourgeois pacifists.

Andrew Carnegie

In her last years Suttner suffered again from permanent lack of money. It was Andrew Carnegie who gave her a pension in the last year of her life. She died on 21 June 1914, seventy years old. Seven days later the fatal shots were fired in Sarajevo killing the Austro-Hungarian Heir to the Throne Franz Ferdinand and his wife. Four weeks later the First World War began which would last four years and caused the death of almost ten million people all over the world. Any activities of Pacifists were officially prohibited.
Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to start on a personal note. After having read Dr Hamann's fascinating biography of Bertha von Suttner and other publications about her, I must admit that I do not know whether I would have liked her if I had met her in flesh. But of one thing I am sure: she would have inspired me with awe and admiration. This woman who was "easily recognized by friend and foe as the undisputed standard-bearer of pacifism" was a true apostle of peace. She therefore fully deserved to be awarded the Noble Peace Prize, even if she got it later than she herself had hoped and expected.

For a jurist, however, giving an address in her honour is a rather precarious enterprise. Although she strongly believed in the role of law for the establishment of durable peace, as is clear from the quotations from her Noble lecture which you find in the programme of this symposium, she had a rather low opinion of the members of the legal profession. "International law - so often destitute of legality - has no place in the peace movement, as neither has the Red Cross", she wrote in 1912. And - as Dr Hamann reports - only four weeks before her death she jotted down in her diary "The international lawyers surely will suffocate pacifism".

This disdain for international lawyers surely can be explained to a large degree by her abhorrence of humanitarian international law, which from her point of view is nothing more than a set of rules for the waging of war. In this respect she did not really differ from the British delegate to the First Hague Peace Conference, Sir John Fisher, who on an occasion exclaimed: "The humanizing of war! You might just as well talk of humanizing hell. As if a war could be civilized".

In other fields, however, Von Suttner had a strong belief in the function of law. She was a keen advocate of arbitration and she set great value on a gradual reduction of armaments through binding agreements. Contrary to what she was perceived as advocating, she was not a proponent of total disarmament. "Why are they always talking about disarmament?" she wrote in 1899. "I never used the expression. I know only too well that immediate disarmament is out of the question... Surely the most practical step, and the first that should be taken, would be an attempt to come to an agreement to refrain from increasing armaments for a term of five years. After four or five years we should learn to trust one another and to keep our word. By this means we should secure a basis for a proposal to reduce the armaments".

"A moratorium on armaments, arms reduction, arms control, confidence-building measures", it all sounds very much like the agenda of the UN Disarmament
Commission and other universal and regional negotiating bodies of the second half of the 20th century. It is, therefore, with some confidence – albeit also with some trepidation – that this lawyer will now say some words on what can be said to be the heritage of Bertha von Suttner: the law of disarmament and arms control. Where have we gone since her days and where are we heading?

With all her doubts and misgivings about the outcome of the First Hague Peace Conference, Von Suttner undoubtedly subscribed to that part of the Final Act which said that “the restriction of military charges, which are at present a heavy burden in the world, is extremely desirable for the increase of the material and moral welfare of mankind; the governments might examine the possibility of an agreement as to the limitation of armed forces by land and sea, and of war budgets”. In this respect the first half of the twentieth century was particularly disappointing in spite of the signs of hope which were offered by the establishment of the League of Nations on the ruins of the First World War. Arms limitations were imposed on the vanquished states but violations by Nazi Germany were not sanctioned, whereas the victor states responded to German rearmament rather apathetically. Some progress was made in the field of the codification of the laws of war, in particular by the conclusion of the 1929 Geneva Red Cross Conventions and the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibiting the use of gas and other chemical weapons and of bacteriological weapons. These measures, however, were only a contribution to the humanization of warfare and not to the reduction of armaments. The 1933 Disarmament Conference was a complete failure, and the atrocities of the Second World War extinguished all hopes which might have been cherished in the interbellum.

The new world-organization of the United Nations seemingly was put on a better footing. Although disarmament was not mentioned as one of its main purposes, at least its main organs were given a task in this field. The General Assembly was entrusted with the task to consider principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and to make recommendations with regard to them [Art. 11, UN Charter], whereas the Security Council was made responsible for formulating plans for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments [Art. 26]. The Cold War intervened, however, and – although for many years general and complete disarmament was discussed at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament – it was “mainly an exercise in public relations that took place to the music of an armaments race, both in the field of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction”, to quote Hans Blix.

In spite of all these ominous conditions and circumstances, the picture of the second half of the twentieth century is not completely bleak. In particular the process of detente led to piecemeal progress in the field of arms reductions.
With regard to nuclear weapons Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties [SALT I and II] were concluded in 1971 and 1973 between the United States and the Soviet Union in which they committed themselves to important limitations in the possession of strategic nuclear weapons and launchers, whereas in 1987 an agreement was concluded on the elimination of intermediate and shorter-range missiles, the INF Treaty. Positive as these developments may be, they are a far cry from a nuclear-weapons-free world. Both states may retain under this treaty-régime considerable stockpiles of nuclear weapons and the arms-race itself has certainly not come to a halt. Efforts to prevent the nuclear arms race from spreading to other space have not been successful. One cannot fail to be reminded of the words of Captain Mahan, the American representative at the First Hague Peace Conference, who said, on the subject of a proposed ban on the use of asphyxiating gas, that his country was averse to restricting “the inventive genius of its citizens in providing weapons of war”.

With regard to conventional weapons, reductions have only been agreed upon in the European region. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe entered into force in 1992 and was updated in 1997.

Of more importance from the viewpoint of disarmament proper are agreements in which the development, production and stockpiling of whole categories of weapons are prohibited.

Such comprehensive bans on the possession of weapons have been established for biological and for chemical weapons, the first one without a verification mechanism, the latter with an extensive régime of verification, symbolized by a building not very far from the place where we are at this moment. Since both treaties have near-universal application, (albeit with not insignificant exceptions) they have established – at least in name – a world which is free of these two categories of weapons of mass-destruction in the possession of States. A weakness of both conventions is that a party may withdraw if it [unilaterally] “decides that extraordinary events related to the subject-matter of this Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests”. State sovereignty still reigns supreme; the ban, therefore, may be near-universal, it is not absolute.

In the field of conventional weapons, a similar ban was established with regard to anti-personnel landmines. These are the only conventional weapons of which not only the use, but also the production, stock piling and transfer are prohibited. The Convention was concluded in 1997.

Such a far-reaching step could not be set – as will be clear from what I said about arms reductions – in the field of nuclear weapons. In view of the strategic importance these weapons had for the big powers, the best what could be achieved was the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. Whereas those States, already possessing nuclear weapons at the time of its conclusion, retained the right to develop, produce and stockpile them, the non-nuclear weapon State-parties have committed themselves not to acquire them. It is complemented by a number of regional conventions which establish a nuclear-free weapons zone in the region concerned [Latin America, Antarctica, the South Pacific, South East Asia and Africa].

The Non-Proliferation Treaty thus willfully established an unequal régime of have's and have not's. Such a régime is highly unusual in international relations and finds its explanation in the doomsday scenario of a nuclear war. It is based on the presumption that the have’s will behave in a rational way, but that such rational conduct cannot under all circumstances be expected from the non-have’s.

By putting it in this way, I purposefully expose the blatant weakness of this presumption. States which would or could never consider the possibility of acquiring nuclear weapons and states which are protected by the nuclear umbrella of a “have”, will have no difficulty in living with this in itself unsatisfactory solution. But states which have ambitions of their own are inclined to refuse and resist a régime which they perceive as discriminatory and which in actual fact is discriminatory. Our present-day world is only too well aware of the problems created by it and I do not have to mention these problems by name. “Quod licet lovii, non licet bovi” may be a wise adage, but who is determining who will be Jupiter and who the ox in a world full of self-appointed Jupiters?

The quid pro quo which the have’s had to offer the have not’s is, i.a., contained in Article VI of the Treaty in which “Each of the Parties undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general
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and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control". That solemn promise, made nearly forty years ago, has not been converted into a tangible undertaking. Who is to blame?

In its 1996 Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, the International Court of Justice said – and I cannot but hear an echo of Bertha von Suttner’s lament of 100 years earlier –: “In the long run, international law, and with it the stability of the international order which it is intended to govern, are bound to suffer from the continuing difference of views with regard to the legal status of weapons as deadly as nuclear weapons. It is consequently important to put an end to this state of affairs: the long-promised complete nuclear disarmament appears to be the most appropriate means of achieving that result”. Wise words – no doubt about that – but rather impotent as well.

There was another part of Von Suttner’s heritage which was very much present in the second half of the twentieth century, in particular during the nineteen-seventies and eighties: the peace movement. In that period the peace movement was mainly focused on the nuclear arms race and it manifested itself throughout the open societies of the Western world.

The biggest demonstration ever held in this country [more than 400,000 participants], was a protest against the planned stationing of American nuclear-headed cruise missiles on Dutch territory. When the prime minister at another mass-meeting tried to address the demonstrators [in itself a courageous act], they turned [as if on command] their back to him. The stationing never took place due to a break-through in arms-reduction negotiations. But if the peace movement probably was rather ineffective in the international field, it certainly played a dominant role in internal politics. No government or parliament in the West was totally immune to the pressure exerted by large parts of public opinion. It brings to mind Bertha von Suttner’s words during the Second Hague Peace Conference: “The delegates are only the hands on a watch; their movements are governed by a great invisible spring. That spring is public opinion: not the private opinion of individuals; but public opinion – opinion expressed, organized, made palpable and even disagreeable to those who oppose it. That is the master and even the god, of this conference”. These words, which to cynics undoubtedly sound as the cry of a person, desperately hoping against better knowledge, were based on a strong belief in the ultimate effectiveness of public opinion and I think it is correct to say that the development of the law on disarmament and arms control has been determined not exclusively on the inter-governmental playing-field but also by the pressure of the peace movement on public opinion and – through public opinion – on governments.

I did not only ask earlier: “Where have we gone since Bertha von Suttner’s days?” [a question I have tried to answer in the foregoing]. I also asked: “and where are we heading?”

The world of today is marked by the events of 9/11. These events have also been of tremendous importance for the process of disarmament and arms control. The enemy of today no longer has the face of a state; its arms do not represent anymore the most imminent danger, even if the risk of a state going nuclear cannot be underestimated. The problem with regard to today’s enemy is that he is faceless and that his whereabouts may be everywhere; his weapons are extremely diverse: they may be bombs, planes, toxic material and what not. But the greatest problem of all is that he is elusive: it is impossible to negotiate with him, to make agreements which can be verified, in short, he is no longer an
Identifiable, manageable and controllable partner.
The world of the Cold War was a haven of security
and predictability in comparison with the world of
terrorism. Inter-state disarmament and arms-control
agreements have not become irrelevant but they are
marginal in respect of today’s essential threats; they
have moved from the main-stage to a side-track.

Self-defence – that crucial concept of the post-World
War II international order – has all of a sudden acquired
new and different dimensions.

And the peace movement – which in the nineteen-
nineties was still noticeable in the anti-landmines
movement although it already at that time changed
colours and turned into the anti-globalist movement
seems to have completely evaporated in the post 9/11
world. Public opinion feels insecure and is fearful and
lethargic.

I have no difficulty in imagining Bertha von Suttner
playing her role in the second half of the twentieth
century: relentlessly and intrepidly pleading, accusing,
agitating against the unabated arms race, bearing the
standard of the peace-movement.

But the post 9/11 world is not Bertha von Suttner’s
world: what would have been her message, what would
she agitate against, what “arms should be laid down?”
That leaves us with the question to which I do not know
the answer: how to handle Bertha von Suttner’s heritage
in the twenty-first century? There is only one thing I am
sure of: our world is in dire need of a personality of her
stature, whether she or he is likeable or not.
Bertha von Suttner and International Law: the development of the ius contra bellum

Prof. Dr. Ove Bring, Stockholm

When Bertha von Suttner published her novel “Die Waffen nieder!” in 1889, international law was in many fields in early stages of development. For example, this is true of the international law on the use of force between states, which was fairly rudimentary in the late 19th century. But interestingly enough, the situation was soon about to change, and it is conceivable that von Suttner contributed to the progressive development of the law on the use of force that was to manifest itself ten years after the publication of her book. I am referring to the, albeit meagre, but nevertheless interesting, results of the 1899 Peace Conference here in The Hague. I will revert to the Conference later, but first let us look at the legal situation at the time of publication of “Die Waffen nieder!”

As to the legal regulation of war, international lawyers and diplomats have always made a distinction between jus ad bellum [admitting self-defence and prohibiting aggression] on the one hand, and jus in bello [on humanitarian standards in war] on the other. The first set of norms did in the late 1880’s not amount to a clear rule on the non-use of force in international relations. In modern international law the jus ad bellum has matured into a jus contra bellum [prohibiting aggression and admitting self-defence, in that order], and this modern approach more or less corresponded to Bertha von Suttner’s and the peace movement’s ambition to abolish and prohibit war as such.

However, the modern view recognizes that war, even if prohibited, will still happen, and that specific legal rules are needed to deal with that fact. Hence the need for a jus in bello, what we today call international humanitarian law of armed conflict, equally applicable to all parties irrespective of who is aggressor and who is “self-defender”. International humanitarian law requires a decent behaviour on the battlefield, in the prisoners of war camps, and towards the civilian population. The peace activists were mainly interested in a prohibition on war as such, but they had to relate to the jus in bello as well, and we shall see how Bertha von Suttner approached this matter.

But let us start with the dimension of jus ad bellum, or contra bellum as von Suttner surely would have preferred to address the issue. In “Die Waffen nieder!” the leading character is Marta whose first husband is killed in war. In the latter part of the novel her second husband Frederic discusses the outbreak of war with a clergyman in Berlin and sums up the discussion:

“So we arrive at the following conclusion, that only
wars of self-defence are admitted, and there is no right to resort to arms unless the enemy has first attacked your country. But if the enemy accepts the same reasoning, how could wars ever come about? In the last war [Frederic here referred to the war between Prussia and Austria of 1866] it was your army that first crossed the border ..."

The German clergyman referred to the Holy Bible and the duty of the national leader to use any convenient opportunity to defeat a national enemy. Frederic shook his head and noted that the principle of convenient opportunity could not possibly be equally applicable to both parties. Von Suttner is here speaking through Frederic’s mouth and she displays no confidence in a legal norm which admits a broad justification of self-defence. She seems to favour an absolute ban on all use of force.

The French Declaration of War in July 1870 generally produced the reaction that the German nation was the victim of aggression. This was the view, for example, of Karl Marx and other German socialists. But in September 1870 the situation had changed. The general view was now that the Prussian war of self-defence had transformed itself into a fighting for territorial expansion in Alsace-Lorraine. Karl Marx described the war after the battle of Sedan as "an act of aggression" against the territorial integrity of France and the people of Alsace-Lorraine. Marx was oscillating between the poles of justifiability [self-defence] and non-justifiability [aggression], between perceived legality and illegality in line with the customary law development of the time. Von Suttner did not "buy" this dualistic and legalistic approach. She realized that it could not stop the outbreak of war. She wanted a watertight prohibition against the use of force in international relations.

In order to achieve that, the international community needed alternatives to gunboat and war diplomacy, and von Suttner, together with many others, advocated arbitration.
In the novel, Frederic Tilling is involved in a discussion with a retired diplomat who argues that governments cannot possibly agree among themselves on how to solve all disputes. Frederic answers:

“But that is not necessary. If a dispute arises it should be settled by a court of arbitration and not through the use of force”.

The older man interjects:

“The sovereign states and nations will never accept such a court’s decision!”

Frederic responds:

“The nations? It will be the diplomats and Their Excellencies who won’t accept it. But ask the people and you will get another answer! Among the people the wish for peace is genuine and heartfelt”.

At the end of the book, in the Epilogue, von Suttner mentions the Alabama Claims arbitration of 1872, and the Caroline Islands arbitration of 1885, as successful examples of peaceful settlements of disputes. This was a time when the peace movement was very active and when idealistic international lawyers founded peace-oriented institutes and associations. “Die Waffen nieder!” includes a couple of references to the Swiss professor Johann Caspar Bluntschli [d. 1881] who was famous for his efforts to develop international law in a progressive direction. Bluntschli was much inspired by the successful conclusion of the Alabama dispute [between the USA and the UK] through the arbitral award in Geneva in 1872. The following year he belonged to those who founded the Institut de droit international in Ghent. Belgium was chosen as the host country due to its status of neutrality. The new institute should, according to its statutes, promote the development of international law through its ambition to function as “the common legal conscience of the civilized world”. Bluntschli had suggested this concept, a “Rechtsbewusstsein der civilisierten Welt”, and von Suttner was influenced by it. She did not believe in the value of treaties negotiated among so-called statesmen [that is clear from some passages in Die Waffen nieder], but she had great hopes for a development of international morality.

Let us compare with what a famous Finnish lawyer recently has written about Bluntschli:

“For Bluntschli, the essence of the legal craft was neither the reporting of treaties, negotiated by diplomats with an eye for immediate benefit, nor the elucidation of customs, always developed for local situations and for particular needs. Law was, in accordance with the catch-word of the times, dynamic, and it was the task of the legal science to capture and describe it in its dynamism.”


Von Suttner was not the only writer at the time that advocated international arbitration. The Swedish writer August Strindberg, who in 1884 lived in Switzerland and was influenced by the cosmopolitical atmosphere of Geneva with its refugees, peace activists and international associations, wrote on spot a short story where the Alabama arbitration played a major role. The story first pictures a tragic incident during the Franco-Prussian war and it concludes with a peace-time dinner party at Lac Léman where glasses of champagne are lifted to greet the news of the successful arbitration in Geneva. The story is still very readable. It was published in Swedish and Danish in 1884 and 1885, in French in 1885 and 1895, in German [in Vienna] in 1885, and it was presented in English in 1895 in Belgravia London Magazine. The title of the French version was Requins. The German translation was done by Mathilde Prager in Vienna and it was published in the Neue Freie Presse in July 1885, probably with the title “Gewissensqual”. Bertha von Suttner might have
read this “Peace story”, as it was sometimes referred to in Sweden. There is one comment by Marta Tilling in Die Waffen nieder which indicates that this could well be the case. After the conclusion of the German-Danish war of 1864, Marta puts forward a suggestion in order to rule out future wars in Europe. She says:

“[W]hy couldn’t all civilized states in Europe enter into a pact, a community with one another? Wouldn’t that be the easiest way?”

In the novel the idea is totally ignored by the male participants of the conversation, but it is the same idea that Strindberg at one point had presented in his story. At the dinner-party at Lac Léman one person had made the point that future wars of reconquest could be avoided:

“...when Europe becomes unified ... one federation of states, then Alsace-Lorraine will be neither French nor German, but simply - Alsace-Lorraine. Will that be the end of the problem?” [Utopier i verklijheten, 1885].

So far the issues touched upon have all demonstrated a potential for a jus contra bellum, either directly as a legal and moral imperative, or indirectly through mechanisms of arbitration or integration.

Now let us turn to the jus in bello, the “laws of war”. Modern international humanitarian law of armed conflict has its genesis in the battle of Solferino in 1859, or rather in the booklet “A Memory of Solferino” that Henry Dunant wrote between 1859 and 1862. In the book Dunant, who had been present at the bloody battle, made an appeal for international cooperation to alleviate the suffering of the victims of combat in the future. His appeal resulted in the birth of the Red Cross movement and the adoption of the first Geneva Convention of 1864 on the Protection of War Victims - it was later to be replaced by more modern and extended versions.

Bertha von Suttner tells the story about Dunant’s book in “Die Waffen niedern”, and her alter ego, Marta, deplores that Austria was not an original party to the Geneva Convention.

Marta’s first husband is killed in the French-Austrian war of 1859. The reader first gets the impression that he was killed at Solferino, but later it becomes clear that he was killed before that - at the battle of Magenta. In my view, von Suttner makes a mistake here as an author of a Tendenzroman, a novel with a purpose. The place of death for the young officer is not completely irrelevant. She should have chosen Solferino which, through its link to the Red Cross movement, stands as a symbol for the need to do something in the face of war.

During the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866 Austria joins the Geneva Convention and the Red Cross system. In the novel Marta’s father asks her:

“Well, are you satisfied now? Do you realize that war, which you always labelled as barbarism, will grow more humane as civilization advances?”

Marta responds that the efforts of the Red cross will always be insufficient. The organization will never be able to eliminate the misery that comes with a battle. Her father agrees:

“Not eliminate, but alleviate. What you cannot prevent, must be alleviated.”

Marta does not accept this argument. Her response is “...it is not possible to alleviate such misery. I would like to turn your sentence round and say: What you cannot alleviate, must be prevented.”

In other words: War as such must be prevented.

Bertha von Suttner does not articulate the standard legal objection to the humanitarian laws of war, that since war itself is or should be outlawed, it is absurd to regulate something which is or should be prohibited. But she comes pretty close to this line of argumentation.
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To sum up her views on international law and war, as far as they can be deduced from her novel, she is all for a strong prohibition against the first use of force in international relations, but she does not exclude that this prohibition also covers some second use of force. One the other hand, it has been pointed out that she does not condemn war in self-defence as such, and consequently, the legal prohibition she aspired could not be totally without exceptions. Anyway, what she wanted was a comprehensive jus contra bellum, something which did not exist at the time.

With regard to jus in bello, especially the humanitarian law on conduct in hostilities, she simply did not believe in it. In the beginning of “Die Waffen nieder!” a Dr. Bresser argues that as long as “enmity” is a living phenomenon among humans, the dictates of humanity will not have universal application.

Bertha von Suttner and other activists of the peace movement attended with great hopes the Hague Peace Conference in 1899. They must have felt a certain disappointment that the Conference’s main achievements was in the field of jus in bello [e.g. the land warfare regulations and the prohibition of the dum-dum bullet], rather than in the field of jus contra bellum. Nevertheless, the first convention adopted dealt with Pacific Settlement of Disputes and Arbitration. The popular demand for arbitration had yielded results. One small step in the direction of phasing out war had been taken. But it was a very small step. The idea of compulsory arbitration had been abandoned. There was no binding renunciation of the use of force, merely a declared intention to avoid armed force “as far as possible”. There was an agreement to use good offices and mediation instead of resorting to force, but only as far as “circumstances” permitted. After these vague commitments the Convention elaborated a voluntary system for arbitration with the still existing Permanent Court of Arbitration.

The Preamble of the Convention on Pacific Settlement of Disputes, although not of a binding nature, is interesting. Its formulations indicate an emerging customary law principle of non-use of force in international relations. The first two preambular paragraphs refer to the Contracting States as:

"Animated by a strong desire to work for the maintenance of general peace;

Resolved to promote by their best efforts the friendly settlement of international disputes;"

Perhaps, one of the more interesting aspects of the 1899 Conference was its follow-up in 1907 [the Second Hague Peace Conference], and its planned but abortive follow-up with a similar conference in 1915. Conference diplomacy was being arranged in a regular pattern that paved the way for more institutional cooperation after World War I. With the founding of the League of Nations in 1920 and the United Nations 25 years later, the system of collective security had established itself as a goal for the international community. The concept of collective security included the norm of jus contra bellum that the peace movement had so ardously fought for. It is not surprising that Bertha von Suttner was interested in collective security, even if she did not use that term. But of the four elements of collective security that may be listed, she stood behind at least the first three. She supported peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force, and collective decision-making to maintain the peace. She may also have supported the fourth concept of collective sanctions [including military measures] against peace-breakers. We don’t know for sure.
Für Bertha von Suttner.

Was war der Krieg, den Anthologie zu lesen,
als die Hände eines Kindes flehen.
Wir wollen uns um unsere Blumen kümmern,
die immer in einer Gruppe zusammen.

Erst der Frieden ist hören des Wunder.
Und die Kriege werden in unserer Erinnerung.

In Namens der Friedensbrachte in Deutschland

Hedwig Edenburg

What we know is that she took an interest in the history of ideas as to different schemes for European confederations with a permanent council of decision-making states. In Die Waffen nieder there are a number of references to Immanuel Kant’s Zum ewigen Frieden and Kant’s ideas on inter-state cooperation. But there are also references to Kant’s predecessors, King George of Podiebrad of Bohemia, Henry IV of France, the Duke of Sully, the Quaker William Penn, the Abbé de St. Pierre and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who all supported some kind of European union as a means of maintaining peace and building common security.

Bertha von Suttner did not elaborate on this aspect, but she lived in an era when the first steps towards collective security were taken, and when the ongoing process of conference diplomacy needed the peace movement to keep its momentum. She played her constructive part in that.

As we know, World War I had to come and go before the first experiment in collective security could be launched. Bertha von Suttner had died in 1914, just before the shots of Sarajevo, but her spirit was certainly present in Versailles in 1919, when the Covenant of the League of Nations was adopted and a further step in the direction of a jus contra bellum was taken by the international community.
‘This is wonderland’: Baroness Bertha von Suttner, the peace movement and the Hague Peace Conference of 1899.

Dr. Michael Riemens, Groningen

1. The history of the peace movement

Among historians it is not unusual to speak of the ‘Long 19th Century’, which ended not in 1900, but in 1914, with the outbreak of the First World War. During that long 19th century two tendencies could be seen. The first one was an ever-growing bellicism. It showed itself in various forms of warfare, nationalism, militarism, arms races etc. The second one was 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. In the first part of my lecture, I am going to expand on the history of the peace movement.

Throughout the ages, church-leaders, philosophers, writers, reformers and other thinkers voiced protests against the use of coercion, violence, war, and/or killing. For example, in the Classical world dramatist Aristophanes wrote a comedy Lysistrata, in which the women of Greece used a sex strike to force their men to the peace table and end the Peloponnesian War. In the beginning of the 16th century Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam used arguments as well as satire against worldly and spiritual leaders who thought they could use war as an instrument of politics. The humanist denied that there was glory in war, which injures or kills people on both sides and destroys cities. Instead Erasmus pleaded for peace through justice, tolerance and the use of reason. These were isolated voices.

According to peace studies, the end of the Napoleonic era, in which huge national armies of conscripts had fought, 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 arrived in London, William Allen and Joseph Price called for a meeting where in June 1816 the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace, ‘the Peace Society’ for short, was formed. Three months earlier, another peace association had been formed in London that probably was called the Society for Abolishing War. We’re not completely sure about that name.
In the first peace societies Quakers played an important role. 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 circumstances defensive wars might be allowed. In 1828 the by then fifty local peace groups were united into the nation-wide American Peace Society. In Britain, the Peace Society slowly developed into a national peace organisation. 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 tried to appear as ecumenical as possible; and despite its quietism it showed some interest in the political and international issues of the day. On the continent, the first peace society was formed in December 1830 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The 1840s started with the well-attended and quite successful World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Its success encouraged the 'Friends of Peace' to seek and develop international contacts. As a result, in 1843 the First General Peace Convention was held in London. Some of the issues the more than 300 delegates discussed were arbitration; armaments; a High Court of Nations; and the excessive force the colonial powers used in Tahiti, Afghanistan and China to submit 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, especially free trade. 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. From then on, every year an international conference was held.

The series came to an end as a result of the Crimean war (1853-1856), in which great powers fought each other for the first time since 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. Many of the rank and file left the peace societies.

The period of 1859 to 1871 saw fierce fighting whose outcome were, amongst others, 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 those years, the Friends of Peace were in many countries the object of slander. But it was not all sorrow and misery. There were also new peace societies formed, for instance in Paris, Geneva and here in the Netherlands. The origin of the Red Cross Movement deserves special mention. The suffering of wounded left untended on the battlefield of Solferino in 1859 and the devastation and horrors he witnessed there inspired Henry Dunant to issue a humanitarian appeal on behalf of the victims of combat. The book A Memory of Solferino touched the heart and stirred the conscience of Europe and formed the origin of the Red Cross.

In the last quarter of the 19th century European culture showed a Janus face. Bellicism 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. At the other end, the number of peace activists and their societies also increased. Especially religious communities, women and members of parliament were receptive to the message of peace. In 1889, the Interparliamentary Conference was launched by British and French parliamentarians to meet and discuss peace and arbitration initiatives. The same year, a Universal Peace Congress was organised by private peace activists. It was the first of twenty-one held until 1914. Both Conference and Congress created a permanent bureau that took care of daily affairs and the organisation of activities. The peace movement was now slowly developing into a transnational lobby.

2. Von 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 diary that was first published in 1909 you notice for instance that the war of 1859, in which her own country Austria fought against the combined forces of France and Piedmont,
passed her by completely. Famous battles like Magenta or Solferino did not distract the ten 16 year old Countess Kinsky from her youth flirtations in Wiesbaden. The Austro-Prussian war of 1866 also failed to impress her. She was only happy that her guardian, who had just passed away, did not have to experience the defeat. At that time, newspapers were not read in the villa in Baden-Baden and all her time went to singing. The war of 1870-71 between France and Prussia made a stronger impression on her because she and her mother were in Paris when it started and in Berlin when it ended.

Die Waffen niedert!

E ine L e b e n g e s c h i c h t e
von Bertha von Suttner

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During Berlin-Paris
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Fifteen years later, after they had returned to Austria from their self-chosen exile in the Caucasus, the Von Suttner went to Paris to spend the winter there. On various occasions they met writers, journalists, members of the Académie Française and artists in literary and political salons. Conversations were dominated by the growing tension between France and Germany; a war seemed likely, 'revanche' and the return of Alsace and Lorraine was near. In one of the salons she 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 then 43 year old all sorts of details, including the name of its founder and chairman Hodgson Pratt, who at the time was travelling Europe holding lectures in various continental capitals on the purpose and aims of his peace organisation. 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. When she returned home, Von Suttner found the proofs of her new book The Age of the Machine, and added a report on the London organisation.

But she wanted to do more for the peace movement. And out of that came Die Waffen niedert or Lay down your arms, one of the most influential anti-war novels of all time. The book told the sad 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 during the siege of Paris by order of a court-martial as the Austrian colonel Tilling was presumed to be a German spy.

Von Suttner did a lot of research for the book. It allowed her to give very realistic descriptions of war’s cruelty, suffering, and inhumanity. She had great difficulty getting the book published, but when it appeared, the novel was a bombshell. Soon it had to be reprinted. In the year that she received the Nobel Peace Prize, the book went through its 37th edition and it had been translated in almost all other European languages. Von Suttner won millions for the movement. Contemporaries compared Lay down your arms with Harriet Beecher-Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

All over the world people joined existing peace societies or formed new ones. In countries where until then peace organisations had not existed, they were formed. That, for instance, was the case in Central Europe. In Austria, it was Von Suttner herself who initiated the Austrian Peace Society of which she became president. In Germany, she helped the socialist of Jewish origin and future Nobel Peace Prize winner Alfred Herman Fried to found the German Peace Society, edited with him the journal Die Waffen niedert, and after 1899
contributed to Fried's new journal Die Friedens-Warte. In Imperial Germany, the peace societies and individual activists met only resistance. The peace movement was considered to be unmanly, un-German and Jewish. Von Suttner was deeply hated by German nationalists and militarists. More than once, they treated her with vitriol. Her opponents often jeered at the baroness, calling her names like 'Judensbertha', 'Friedensbertha', 'Friedensfury' and 'Friedensfairy'. I'll give you one example that I have taken from Von Suttner's Memoirs. It's an epigram which was published by the German lawyer, historian and writer Felix Dahn: 'An die weiblichen und männlichen Waffenscheuen. Die Waffen hoch! Das Schwert ist Mannes eigen, Wo Männer fechten, hat das Weib zu schweigen. Doch freilich, Männer gibt's in diesen Tagen, Die sollten lieber Unterröcke tragen.'

Von Suttner visited the Netherlands on four different occasions. In 1894 she was here for the first time because of the Fifth Interparliamentary Conference that convened that year in The Hague. Minister of the Interior Van Houten invited Von Suttner and her spouse to be present at the discussions on international arbitration. In 1899 and 1907 she was here in The Hague to attend the First and Second Peace Conference. Finally, in 1913 she attended the Twentieth Universal Peace Congress and was present at the inauguration ceremony of the building we're now in, the Peace Palace. In the third part of my lecture I would like to take a closer look at the activities Von Suttner displayed during the First Hague Peace Conference of 1899 and how she experienced that Conference.

3. Von Suttner and the Hague Peace Conference of 1899

In August 1898 newspapers brought the news that the ruler of the Russian Empire, tsar Nicholas II, in a Rescript had invited the nations 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 responded positively on the tsar's initiative. Peace activists, among them the Von Suttners, could not believe the news. One of the most powerful persons in the world had all of sudden accepted the agenda of the peace movement. No longer could their ideas be called utopia. Everywhere, peace societies started to petition the governments. The journalist William Stead even went to visit the European capitals on his 'Peace Crusade' to ensure that the Conference would be held and that its emphasis would be on arms control. At the time, people said that the tsar had taken his initiative after reading Lay down your arms and the books of another peace activist, Johan Bloch.

Governments responded less enthusiastic. 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 place of venue of the Conference.

The Hague Peace Conference would last from 18 May till 29 July 1899. That summer, contemporaries called The Hague the 'city of peace'. While the diplomats, military men, naval specialists and international lawyers were negotiating behind closed doors, there were all sorts of activities by representatives of oppressed peoples who demanded immediate action on the part of the Conference. There were also demonstrations by
socialists and radicals. 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. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde of the Netherlands’ Women’s League for International Disarmament organised some meetings and lectures. So did the Cosmopolitan Alliance for Peace and Free International Intercourse. Both organisations had been founded the year before. It’s striking that the above mentioned General Dutch Peace Association did not develop any sort 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 Von Suttner was there. At virtually the last moment she received an entrance card 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 there.

During the Conference the Von Suttner opened up a salon, first in Hotel Central, later in Kurhaus Hotel in Scheveningen, where they received journalists to talk about the peace cause. In the salons reporters could consult several journals and works on peace, for instance the books of Bloch. The baroness also organised private dinners and meetings between prominent peace activists like Stead, Bloch, Novikow and herself and susceptible official delegates and military men. During these informal talks, the peace leaders were informed on ongoing developments in the Conference and sometimes even on the diplomatic initiatives and strategies of delegations, like the American and British. Von 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 on Austria and Germany to support the plan for a Court. In the literature about the First Hague Conference, the salon of the Von Suttner has always been described as an important centre of influence.

During the Conference Von Suttner also 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. Since 1998, we know that Wilhelmina only played a role that evening. From the start she looked with great dissatisfaction at the Peace Conference. The queen thought that the Netherlands, internationally seen, 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 ongoing in Dutch parliament. Wilhelmina had read Lay down your arms. She found 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.

When the Conference was in its second week, Von 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 me every time I enter a salon. I feel that there is an atmosphere here, that the ones who are present, have never inhaled. This is Wonderland.’

At the end, Von Suttner’s enthusiasm was gone. The Conference failed to give an answer to the burning question of armaments. She was also displeased that a Peace Conference made rules concerning the mitigation of warfare. However, the formation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration pleased her.

In the following years Von 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. Her colleagues in, what was now more and more called, the ‘pacificist’ movement, began to call the baroness ‘Notre Général en Chef’. She won the Nobel Peace Prize 1905. ‘The general in chief’ died on 21 June 1914. One week later, Gavrilo Princip fired his fateful shots in Sarajevo.

4. Von Suttner’s relevance

Some final words on Von Suttner’s relevance today.

I think her relevancy lies in the passion for peace. Von Suttner was one the icons of the peace movement who
before 1914 pleaded for a new political culture based on peace, the rule of law over might, international co-operation instead of confrontation, the organisation of a states system and openness in diplomacy. It took the shock of the total war of 1914-1918 for those new forms to become a reality in international relations; for instance in the League of Nations. 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 could not go round about the passion for peace of the peoples. They have always had to confess in public that they are in favour of international peace and solidarity, justice, the community of peace loving countries etc. This goes on until today. True, on many occasions they only paid lip service to the ideal of peace. Nonetheless, in international political and diplomatic culture and style 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 very strong on the eve of the First World War in, for instance, the Wilhelmine Empire.

A second reason. 'Friedensbertha' and her ideas are part of a Western tradition that in the second part of the 20th century slowly seems to be spreading all over the world. Von Sutter, her ideas and this symposium are proof of the topicality of the past. Simultaneously, as the collective memory nowadays seems to go back only for a few months, perhaps a year at most, they show us that current affairs do have a long history.

Having said that, I would like to thank the organisers for inviting me to this symposium. I find it an honour to be here in such a distinguished company.
It is a great pleasure and an honour to be here at the Peace Palace as a representative of the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, which will be opening on 11 June this year. In the history of the Nobel Peace Prize, Bertha von Suttner and her work hold an outstanding place. The union between Sweden and Norway was dissolved in 1905 – the same year that Bertha von Suttner became Peace Prize laureate. In fact, one of the first official duties carried out by the newly elected King Haakon and his wife, the English born Queen Maud, was their presence at the Norwegian Nobel Institute to hear the announcement that Bertha von Suttner was the winner of the 1905 Peace Prize.

I have chosen to focus on four themes relating to Bertha von Suttner, the Peace Prize and the dramatic political situation between Sweden and Norway in 1905.

1. Why did Bertha von Suttner have to wait five years before she was awarded the Peace Prize?
2. What caused the bitter struggle within the Norwegian Nobel Committee in 1904/1905?

Let me begin with some facts about the Norwegian Nobel Committee. The Committee has always consisted of five members elected by the Norwegian parliament, the Storting. The statutes of the Nobel Foundation specify that foreign citizens can be elected, but to date only Norwegians have been chosen. The Committee is completely independent, and today neither cabinet members nor members of the Storting can be elected. In the early days, however, this was not the case. In 1905 the Norwegian Nobel Committee was comprised of the following members:

Chairman Jørgen Lovland, former prime minister and Norway’s first foreign minister
Deputy Chairman John Lund, former president of the Lagting [one of the chambers of the Storting]
Member Carl Berner, president of the Storting
Member Hans Jacob Horst, former president of the Odelsting [one of the chambers of the Storting]
Member Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, poet and friend of peace
They all supported the Liberal Party.

Before 1905 Norway had no foreign service; the foreign policy was controlled by the Swedes. This fact had become a source of tension between the two union partners. The majority of Norwegian politicians and voters wanted independence from Sweden. After 1895 the political situation between Norway and Sweden had grown increasingly tense. How did this influence the decision-making process for the Nobel Peace Prize?

Why did Bertha von Suttner have to wait until 1905?

This question has often been discussed, and a number of scholars have argued that Alfred Nobel wanted her to be the first laureate. In my opinion, however, Bertha von Suttner committed an error of judgement the year before the first Peace Prize was awarded.

In a letter to the Norwegian Nobel Committee she explained how she interpreted the statutes of the newly founded Nobel Foundation. This letter was printed in the introduction to the first report, in 1900, from the secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee to the five committee members.

In this letter Bertha von Suttner wrote that Alfred Nobel had had confidence in her and that she knew his intentions regarding the testament. She also emphasised that both Ragnar Sohlin, the executor of Nobel’s last will and testament, and Alfred Nobel’s nephew Emanuel had sought her advice. She criticised the fact that the statutes of the Nobel Foundation had allowed institutions to become Peace Prize laureates. She said that Alfred Nobel had wanted individuals to enjoy financial independence when they were awarded the Peace Prize. Therefore the Peace Prize ought not to be divided.

It seems most probable that the members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee did not like to be instructed. Indeed, their actions show that they ignored Bertha von Suttner’s advice: in 1901 and 1902 they divided the Peace Prize, and in 1904 they chose to award it to an institution, the Institute of International Law.

Another drawback for her was the simple fact that she was a woman. Being a woman was not an advantage, even though her name was Bertha von Suttner. We must recall that we are talking about the Norway of more than 100 years ago. The Nobel Committee may have had only liberal members, but they were not that liberal! To my knowledge these five members were rather conservative in our sense of the word. In truth, Bertha von Suttner waited only five years. That is fantastic! The next woman to become Peace Prize laureate was the American Jane Addams in 1931. By 2005 there are a total of 92 individual laureates, and no more than 12 of them are women. Five of them have been chosen after 1990 – and two of these five were selected during the past 5 years.

My research on the decision-making process leading to the award of the Nobel Peace Prize before the Second World War has revealed a distinct pattern. Of course a person or an organisation must be properly nominated to become a laureate, but it is also nearly always necessary as well to have a Norwegian lobby to advocate the candidacy to the members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, enjoyed such support in 1901, as did the Institute of International Law in 1904. But what about Bertha von Suttner?

She was never nominated by a Norwegian, and it did not impress the Committee that she had prominent foreign nominators. This is what happened during the first four years in the history of the Peace Prize:
1901: many foreigners nominated Bertha von Suttner. She nominated Frédéric Passy, France. He was chosen. No Norwegian lobby supported Bertha von Suttner’s nomination.

1902: Bertha von Suttner was nominated by many foreigners and also by Passy, the 1901 laureate. She herself nominated Élie Ducommun, Switzerland, who was chosen. Again, no Norwegian lobby supported Bertha von Suttner’s candidacy.

1903: Many foreigners nominated Bertha von Suttner, among them the laureates Ducommun and Passy. But there was no Norwegian lobby supporting Bertha von Suttner. William Randal Cremer, Great Britain was chosen.

1904: Bertha von Suttner was nominated by nearly the entire peace movement, including Ducommun and Dunant. These two laureates repeated their nomination in 1905. In this year something happened that explains why Bertha von Suttner became Peace Prize laureate as early as in 1905.

Let us examine the workings of the Norwegian Nobel Committee in choosing Peace Prize laureates in 1904 and 1905, bearing in mind that the union conflict between Sweden and Norway reached a climax during these years.

The decision-making process within the Norwegian Nobel Committee 1904/1905

In the contest for the Peace Prize in 1904 and 1905, two predominantly Norwegian factions promoted their separate candidates. Two members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, a poet and friend of peace, and John Lund, also a friend of peace and himself nominated for the Peace Prize on several occasions, championed Bertha von Suttner’s cause. They lost in 1904, but were successful the following year.

In 1904, however, the Institute of International Law – Institut de Droit International – was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This was due to the ardent support of persons within and near to the Norwegian Nobel Committee. In my opinion, the union conflict between Sweden and Norway may have influenced the choice of the Institute of International Law. Let us see what actually happened during the decision-making process in 1904.

The Institute of International Law was first nominated for the Peace Prize in 1901, and it was immediately placed on the short list. However, the nomination did not carry enough weight, as the only signers were two foreign members of the Institute. The following year the law faculties of 16 French and Italian universities nominated the Institute, but the most important factor was that Norwegian leading politicians and members of the Institute nominated it.

And the efforts of the Norwegian jurists bore fruit. For Norway it might be useful to build alliances with foreign international law experts. The union conflict was reaching its climax, and arbitration and the international legal order had been championed by all the members of the Nobel Committee for two decades. In this light, it is no wonder that Bertha von Suttner’s candidacy was unsuccessful in 1904. Why, then, was she chosen the following year – the year of the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian union? Let us move to her primary Norwegian advocates, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and John Lund, two of the five members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

As Bjørnson was living in Rome in the autumn of 1904, a deputy assumed his seat on the Committee. In September Bjørnson wrote to Lund that he had already known that the French Baron d’Estournelles de Constant would be awarded the Peace Prize “before your letter arrived”. For that reason he had written a letter that was going to be printed in Berliner Tageblatt immediately after the Peace Prize was awarded on 10 December. As Bjørnson explained: “Those gentlemen [on the Nobel Committee] shall not reap only satisfaction for their decision. Thus I thank you for having voted for Bertha von Suttner. You see, John Lund, it is in terms of a sense of honour that I feel I am distinctly different from Norwegian politicians.”

On 2 November Bjørnson sent his now well-known letter from Rome to the Norwegian Nobel Committee in which he fervently endorsed Bertha von Suttner’s candidacy. He wrote that he had been in contact with Alfred Nobel’s nephew Emanuel Nobel, who had said that Alfred felt Bertha von Suttner was the first person that should be awarded the Peace Prize. Bjørnson wrote that he probably would have voted for the French baron, but in light of this new knowledge “we must first fulfill Alfred Nobel’s unequivocal wish, before we award the prize to anyone else.”
April 1906. The secretary wrote to Bjørnson that he was the only member who could introduce her under the circumstances “of which you are hereby informed in accordance with the instructions I have been given.”

Thus it was that the first organisation and the first lady of the peace movement were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1904 and 1905, respectively. But Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson was not re-elected to the Nobel Committee in June 1906.

_Bertha von Suttner and the dissolution of the union between Sweden and Norway, 1905_

Bertha von Suttner visited Norway in the summer of 1899. She was guest at the 9th Interparliamentary Conference that took place in Kristiania. At a dinner she was seated next to Randi Blehr, the wife of a Norwegian cabinet minister, and naturally they spoke about the union conflict between Norway and Sweden. Bertha von Suttner observed that the relationship between the two countries was not an ideal siblingship. Randi Blehr responded that the relationship was rather like a marriage where the husband wanted to have the upper hand, and that it could not be compared to a relationship between brother and sister. And she used Henrik Ibsen’s _A Doll’s House_ to explain what she meant: “Norway will not be a Nora nor a doll’s house; therefore we want a divorce.”

Six years later – in the middle of June 1905 – Bertha von Suttner commented on the union conflict in a short article in Alfred Hermann Fried’s periodical _Die Friedens-Warte_. This was only a few days after Norway had broken out of the union. She expressed her surprise that Norway had broken out of the union and that the _Storting_ had dethroned King Oscar II. However, she was relieved to see that so far no war had broken out. “Dabei hat der erstrebte Friedensgedanke wieder eine enorme Belastungsprobe bestanden”, she said. [Hence the notion of peace we have been aspiring to achieve has again withstood a tremendous strain.] Just a few years earlier such an act by Norway would have led to an invasion, the baroness wrote. Finally she pointed out that it would be a disaster if war broke out between Sweden, Alfred Nobel’s native country, and Norway, the home of the Peace Prize Committee.

The war between the committee members continued after this letter. On 26 November Bjørnson’s ally John Lund reported from the Committee meeting: “I can divulge that things are not going according to your wishes and mine this time. If you had been at home we could have managed it. But God bless you. Do not mention anything about this, for it would make things very uncomfortable for me.”

Bjørnson must have kept quiet about his correspondence with John Lund, but he settled accounts with his colleagues on the Norwegian Nobel Committee in his article in _Berliner Tageblatt_ on 13 December 1904. This article was translated and printed in several European newspapers.

But in 1905 Bjørnson and Lund were successful. Bjørnson had resumed his seat on the Nobel Committee. In my opinion – although we do not know – he used coercion to get Bertha von Suttner’s candidacy through. Substantiating this claim is a letter the secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee wrote to Bjørnson a couple of weeks before Bertha von Suttner was to give her Nobel Lecture in Kristiania [present-day Oslo] in
Bertha von Suttner at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo

When the decision was made five years ago to establish a Peace Center in Oslo, the Norwegian Nobel Committee appointed a project group. In drawing up the first plans, several elements were self-evident. Alfred Nobel would be a key component. The Peace Prize laureates and their goals were another. In this setting Bertha von Suttner stands out, and we decided to focus on her in her roles as:
- an outstanding advocate of peace and organiser of the peace movement,
- an influential friend of Alfred Nobel, and
- the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.
At the Nobel Peace Center you will find Bertha von Suttner in "Nobel Field" along with all the other laureates. You will also meet her again in an interactive illuminated manuscript, in a conversation with Alfred Nobel on the matters of war and peace. Finally she will be presented in an electronic newspaper where visitors can delve a bit deeper into the laureates' achievements and thoughts.

When the King and Queen of Sweden and the King and Queen of Norway meet at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo on 11 June this year, one hundred years after Norway decided to leave the union, they can look back on a century of peace between our two countries. However, perhaps we should remind them – and ourselves - of something Bertha von Suttner said to a Norwegian women's magazine in December 1905. She was pleased that the dissolution of the union had been carried out peacefully and that it could serve as an example to others, but she also had hopes for the future:
"We have now seen, that two nations that have been united for years and years, can be separated without war. Shouldn't it also be possible then for nations that have common sympathies, to be united without war and bloodshed?"

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Bertha von Suttner – her life in data

9 June 1843 born as Bertha Countess of Kinsky in Prague as posthumous daughter of an Austrian general and the daughter of a recently nobilitated officer.

1873-1875 after several proposals for marriage did not lead to marriage, Bertha Kinsky takes a position as teacher-companion to the four daughters of the family von Suttner in Vienna, where she meets the elder brother of the girls, Arthur von Suttner, who was seven years younger than herself.

1875 takes up a position as secretary of the wealthy bachelor Alfred Nobel in Paris since her relationship with Arthur made a further stay in the family von Suttner impossible; yet returns to Vienna after a few months to marry Arthur von Suttner secretly.

1876 after their marriage the young couple leaves for the Caucasus, where Bertha knows an old gambler friend of her mother. In the Caucasus the couple earns an often precarious living by giving language and piano lessons and finally by writing contributions for European journals. During this period, Suttner starts to develop her ideas on world peace.

1885 Bertha and Arthur von Suttner return to Austria and take up their residence in castle Harmannsdorf. In the following years they travel a lot, also to Paris, where Bertha von Suttner gets acquainted with the emerging international peace movement. Suttner from now on concentrates her efforts on the furthering of the peace movement.

1889 publishes her most important novel “Die Waffen nieder! [Lay down your arms!] and also “Das Maschinenzeitalter” [The Machine Age]. In 1891 she initiated and started the fund needed to establish the Bern Peace Bureau.

1891 founds the Austrian Peace Society of which she was for a long time the president. In the following years Suttner also initiates the Peace Societies in Germany and Hungary.

1892 initiates together with A. H. Fried the peace journal “Die Waffen nieder” of which she writes most of the articles. When the journal is superseded by the journal “Friedenswarte” in 1899, she also writes a lot of contributions.

1899 participates in the first Hague Peace Conference, where she tries to assemble like-minded participants. Suttner is the only woman present at the opening ceremony. She also reports to Austrian and other newspapers on the conference.

1902 her husband Arthur dies. She moves into a flat in Vienna and is increasingly confronted with financial problems. She therefore longs to be awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, which her friend and mentor Alfred Nobel had founded. In the following years Suttner travels around Europe speaking in favour of peace.

1905 finally receives the Nobel Peace Prize.

1912 travels to the United States, where she speaks to large audiences and is received with a lot of enthusiasm.

21 June 1914 Bertha von Suttner dies a few days before the fatal shots of Sarajevo, triggering the First World War.
Nobel Lecture*, April 18, 1906
[Translation]

The Evolution of the Peace Movement
The stars of eternal truth and right have always shone in the firmament of human understanding. The process of bringing them down to earth, remolding them into practical forms, imbuing them with vitality, and then making use of them, has been a long one.

One of the eternal truths is that happiness is created and developed in peace, and one of the eternal rights is the individual’s right to live. The strongest of all instincts, that of self-preservation, is an assertion of this right, affirmed and sanctified by the ancient commandment “Thou shalt not kill.”

It is unnecessary for me to point out how little this right and this commandment are respected in the present state of civilization. Up to the present time, the military organization of our society has been founded upon a denial of the possibility of peace, a contempt for the value of human life, and an acceptance of the urge to kill.

And because this has been so, as far back as world history records [and how short is the actual time, for what are a few thousand years?], most people believe that it must always remain so. That the world is ever changing and developing is still not generally recognized, since the knowledge of the laws of evolution, which control all life, whether in the geological timespan or in society, belongs to a recent period of scientific development.

It is erroneous to believe that the future will of necessity continue the trends of the past and the present. The past and present move away from us in the stream of time like the passing landscape of the riverbanks, as the vessel carrying mankind is borne inexorably by the current toward new shores.

That the future will always be one degree better than what is past and discarded is the conviction of those who understand the laws of evolution and try to assist their action. Only through the understanding and deliberate application of natural laws and forces, in the material domain as well as in the moral, will the technical devices and the social institutions be created which will make our lives easier, richer, and more noble. These things are called ideals as long as they exist in the realm of ideas; they stand as achievements of progress as soon as they are transformed into visible, living, and effective forms.

“If you keep me in touch with developments, and if I hear that the Peace Movement is moving along the road of practical activity, then I will help it on with money.” These words were spoken by that eminent Scandinavian to whom I owe this opportunity of appearing before you today, Ladies and Gentlemen. Alfred Nobel said them when my husband and I visited with him in 1892 in Bern, where a peace congress* was in progress.
His will showed that he had gradually become convinced that the movement had emerged from the fog of pious theories into the light of attainable and realistically envisaged goals. He recognized science and idealistic literature as pursuits which foster culture and help civilization. With these goals he ranked the objectives of the peace congresses: the attainment of international justice and the consequent reduction in the size of armies.

Alfred Nobel believed that social changes are brought about slowly, and sometimes by indirect means. He contributed 80,000 francs to Andrée's attempt to cross the North Pole. He wrote to me that this could contribute more to peace than I would believe. "If Andrée attains his goal, or even if he only half attains it, it will be one of those successes that stimulate a spate of talk and excitement which open the way for the generation and acceptance of new ideas and new reforms."

But Nobel also saw a shorter and more direct way before him. On another occasion he wrote to me: "It could and should soon come to pass that all states pledge themselves collectively to attack an aggressor. That would make war impossible, and would force even the most brutal and unreasonable Power to appeal to a court of arbitration, or else keep quiet. If the Triple Alliance included every state instead of only three, then peace would be assured for centuries."

Alfred Nobel did not live to see the great progress and decisive events by which the Peace Idea was brought to life and made to function in a number of organizations. He was, however, still alive in 1894 when Gladstone, the great British statesman, went even further than the principle of arbitration in proposing a permanent international tribunal. Philip Stanhope, a friend of the Grand Old Man, delivered this proposition to the Interparliamentary Conference of 1894 in Gladstone's name and succeeded in having a plan for such a tribunal forwarded to the member governments. Alfred Nobel lived to see the forwarding, but it was only after his death that any results were achieved: the calling of the Hague Conference and the founding of the Permanent Court of Arbitration. It was of incalculable damage to the [peace] movement that such men as Alfred Nobel, Moritz von Egidy, and Johann von Bloch were taken from it prematurely. It is true that their ideals and their work continue beyond the grave, but had they still been living in our midst, how greatly would their personal influence and the effect of their work have contributed to the acceleration of the movement? With what courage would they have taken up the fight against the militarists who are at the present time trying to keep the shaky old system going!

That system is doomed to failure. Once a new system begins to emerge, the old ones must fall. The conviction that it is possible, that it is necessary, and that it would be a blessing to have an assured judicial peace between nations is already deeply embedded in all social strata, even in those that wield the power. The task is already so clearly outlined, and so many are already working on it, that it must sooner or later be accomplished. A few years ago there was not a single minister of state professing the ideals of the peace movement. Today there are already many heads of state who do so. The first statesman in office to pledge his agreement to an interparliamentary conference officially, was, as I recall, Norwegian Prime Minister Steen. It was John Lund who brought this news which caused a sensation at the time - to the 1891 Interparliamentary Conference in Rome. Moreover, it was the Norwegian government which was the first to pay the traveling expenses of members of the Interparliamentary Union and to make a grant to the Peace Bureau in Bern. Alfred Nobel had good reasons for choosing to entrust the administration of the funds of his peace legacy to the Norwegian Parliament.

Let us look round us in the world of today and see whether we are really justified in claiming for pacifism progressive development and positive results. A terrible war, unprecedented in the world's history, recently raged in the Far East. This war was followed by a revolution, even more terrible, which shook the giant Russian empire, a revolution whose final outcome we cannot yet foresee. We hear continually of fire, robbery, bombings, executions, overflowing prisons, beatings, and massacres; in short, an orgy of the Demon Violence. Meanwhile, in Central and Western Europe which narrowly escaped war, we have distrust, threats, saber rattling, press baiting, feverish naval buildup, and rearming everywhere. In England, Germany, and France, novels are appearing in which the plot of a future surprise attack by a neighbor is intended as a spur to even more fervent arming. Fortresses are being erected, submarines built, whole areas mined, airships tested for use in war; and all this with such zeal - as if
to attack one's neighbor were the most inevitable and important function of a state. Even the printed program of the second Hague Conference [to be held in 1907] proclaims it as virtually a council of war. Now in the face of all this, can people still maintain that the peace movement is making progress?

Well, we must not be blinded by the obvious; we must also look for the new growth pushing up from the ground below. We must understand that two philosophies, two eras of civilization, are wrestling with one another and that a vigorous new spirit is supplanting the blatant and threatening old. No longer weak and formless, this promising new life is already widely established and determined to survive. Quite apart from the peace movement, which is a symptom rather than a cause of actual change, there is taking place in the world a process of internationalization and unification. Factors contributing to the development of this process are technical inventions, improved communications, economic interdependence, and closer international relations. The instinct of self-preservation in human society, acting almost subconsciously, as do all drives in the human mind, is rebelling against the constantly refined methods of annihilation and against the destruction of humanity.

Complementing this subconscious striving toward an era free of war are people who are working deliberately toward this goal, who visualize the main essentials of a plan of action, who are seeking methods which will accomplish our aim as soon as possible. The present British prime minister, Campbell-Bannerman, is reopening the question of disarmament. The French senator d’Estournelles is working for a Franco-German entente. Jaurès summons the socialists of all countries to a united resistance to war. A Russian scholar, Novikov, calls for a sevenfold alliance of confederated great powers of the world. Roosevelt offers arbitration treaties to all countries and speaks the following words in his message to Congress: "It remains our clear duty to strive in every practicable way to bring nearer the time when the sword shall not be the arbiter among nations."

I wish to dwell for a moment on the subject of America. This land of limitless opportunities is marked by its ability to carry out new and daring plans of enormous imagination and scope, while often using the simplest methods. In other words, it is a nation idealistic in its concepts and practical in its execution of them.

We feel that the modern peace movement has every chance in America of attracting strong support and of finding a clear formula for the implementation of its aims. The words of the President just quoted reveal full understanding of the task. The methods are outlined in the following objectives, which comprise the program of a peace campaign currently being waged in America.

[3] An international body with strength to maintain law between nations, as between the States of North America, and through which the need for recourse to war may be abolished.

When Roosevelt received me in the White House on October 17, 1904, he said to me, "World peace is coming, it certainly is coming, but only step by step." And so it is. However clearly envisaged, however apparently near and within reach the goal may be, the road to it must be traversed a step at a time, and countless obstacles surmounted on the way. Furthermore, we are dealing with a goal as yet not perceived by many millions or, if perceived, regarded as a utopian dream. Also, powerful vested interests are involved, interests trying to maintain the old order and to prevent the goal's being reached. The adherents of the old order have a powerful ally in the natural law of inertia inherent in humanity which is, as it were, a natural defense against change. Thus pacifism faces no easy struggle. This question of whether violence or law shall prevail between states is the most vital of the problems of our eventful era, and the most serious in its repercussions. The beneficial results of a secure world peace are almost inconceivable, but even more inconceivable are the consequences of the threatening world war which many misguided people are prepared to precipitate. The advocates of pacifism are well aware how meager are their resources of personal influence and power. They know that they are still few in number and weak in authority, but when they realistically consider themselves and the ideal they serve, they see themselves as the servants of the greatest of all causes. On the solution of this problem depends whether our Europe will become a showpiece of ruins and failure, or whether we can avoid this danger and so enter sooner the coming era of secure peace and law in which a civilization of unimagined glory will develop. The many aspects of this question are what the second Hague Conference should be discussing rather than the proposed topics concerning the laws and practices.
of war at sea, the bombardment of ports, towns, and villages, the laying of mines, and so on. The contents of this agenda demonstrate that, although the supporters of the existing structure of society, which accepts war, come to a peace conference prepared to modify the nature of war, they are basically trying to keep the present system intact. The advocates of pacifism, inside and outside the Conference, will, however, defend their objectives and press forward another step toward their goal - the goal which, to repeat Roosevelt's words, affirms the duty of his government and of all governments "to bring nearer the time when the sword shall not be the arbiter among nations".

The laureate delivered this lecture in the Hals Brothers Concert Hall to a large audience. The Oslo Aftenposten of April 19, 1906, reports that the laureate, dressed in black, her voice husky with emotion, held her audience from the first; that she spoke concisely, using no contrived appeals, no gestures, no change of facial expression. The translation is based on the German text published in Les Prix Nobel en 1905.

2. Salomon August Andréé [1854-1897], Swedish aeronautical engineer and explorer, lost while attempting the first exploration by balloon of the Arctic.
3. This quotation, as well as the story of Nobel's connection with Andréé, is reported by Nicholas Halasz in Nobel: A Biography of Alfred Nobel [New York: Orion Press, 1955], pp. 257-258: 262-264.
5. William Ewart Gladstone [1808-1898], British prime minister [1868-1874; 1880-1885; 1886; 1892-1894].
6. Philip James Stanhope [1847-1923], member of House of Commons [1886-1892; 1893-1900], member of House of Lords after becoming Lord W eardale in 1905; president of two Interparliamentary Conferences [1890; 1906].
7. Commonly known as the Hague Tribunal, the Court was established by the first Hague Peace Conference [1899].
8. Christoph Moritz von Egidy [1847-1898], German officer and writer; forced to leave the army because of his pamphlet Erste Gedanken which questioned some of the official dogmas of the established church; his broad concept of the Christian ideal involved taking a stand on all problems, including that of peace.
9. Jean de Bloch [1836-1902], Polish-born industrialist, author, and peace advocate; wrote The Future of War in Its Technical, Economic, and Political Relations [English tram., 1894] which contends that modern war will become too deadly to be risked.
10. Johannes Wilhelm Christian Steen [1827-1906], member of Norwegian Parliament for many years; prime minister [1891-1893; 1898-1902]; member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee [1897-1904].
11. John Theodor Lund [1842-1913], member of Norwegian Parliament; member of the Norwegian Nobel Committee [1897-1913]. At the banquet honoring the laureate, Mr. Lund proposed the toast to Sweden and the memory of Alfred Nobel.
12. The Interparliamentary Union [1889], composed of members from the various parliaments of the world, had at this time the primary objective of furthering the cause of international arbitration. The Permanent International Peace Bureau [1891], commonly called the Bern Bureau, was an information center for organizations and individuals working for peace and an executive arm for the international peace congresses.
14. The Revolution of 1905 in which dissatisfaction with czarist autocracy, spurred by losses in the war with Japan, resulted in a series of strikes, insurrections, and assassinations, along with demands for a constituent assembly; the atmosphere of revolution was still strong at the time of the laureate's speech.
15. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman [1836-1908], British statesman of the Liberal Party; prime minister [1905-1908]; advocate of international arbitration and armament limitation.
17. Jean Léon Jaurès [1859-1914], French politician; leader of the Socialists in the Chamber of Deputies; founder [with Aristide Briand] and editor of L'Humanité [1904-1914].
18. Yakov Aleksandrovich Novikov [1849-1912], Russian writer; author of La Fédération de l'Europe [1901].
The authors

Brigitte Hamann [1940] studied history in Münster/Germany and Vienna and works as a free-lance historian. She has published widely on Austrian and German history. Her works, which have been translated in a lot of different languages, include a study on the influence of Vienna on Hitler's thoughts ["Hitler's Vienna"], biographies on the Austrian Crown Prince Rudolf, the Austrian Empress Elisabeth [Sisi], Bertha von Suttner as well as on the wife of one of the offspring of Richard Wagner, Winifred Wagner.

Pieter H Kooijmans [1933] studied law and became a professor of international law in Amsterdam and Leiden. From 1973 till 1977 State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and from 1993 till 1994 Foreign Minister. Since 1997 he is judge at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. He has widely published on international law.

Ove Bring [1943] studied law in Stockholm and became an associate professor in Stockholm afterwards. He served as legal adviser at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs from 1987 till 1993. In 1993 he took up the position of professor of international law in Uppsala. Since 1997 he is professor of international law at Stockholm University and at the Swedish National Defence College.

Michael Riemens [1964] studied history in Groningen and worked as a researcher firstly at the department of political science and later at the department of history at the University of Groningen. Since 2003 he has been an assistant professor and teaches history of international relations. In his research, he focuses on international political culture and the history of the peace movement.

Ivar Libæk [1949] studied history in Oslo in 1975 and worked as teacher in senior secondary schools. Since 1980, he has written textbooks in history for primary and secondary school levels. He is co-author of the books "The History of Norway from the Ice Age to Today" [2003] and "The Nobel Peace Prize: One Hundred Years for Peace Laureates 1901-2000 [2001]. In the period 1999-2001, he was Nobel Institute Fellow, and is now Project Advisor at The Nobel Peace Center in Oslo.
This bibliography is based on material available in the Peace Palace Library in The Hague. The library has a small "Bertha von Suttner Collection", comprising early editions and translations of her famous book "Die Waffen nieder!" and its sequel "Martha's Kinder". Publications about Bertha von Suttner are also included. The titles by Bertha von Suttner are in a chronological order, starting with the oldest publication. The titles about Bertha von Suttner are arranged in alphabetical order, following the name of the author or the title in case of a compilation of material.

This bibliographic information gives a fascinating view over her work, and its appreciation worldwide. The books, articles and letters mirror her relentless activities for peace in the world.

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*About Bertha von Suttner*

Album de Mme la Douairière Van Alphen contenant des brochures d’Émile Arnaud, Bertha von Suttner, Norman Angell, A. de Maday, Yves Guyot et des photographies et découpages de la presse quotidienne et illustrée, toutes relatives au mouvement pacifiste et notamment à l’ouverture du Palais de la Paix. 1913. [S.l. : s.n.]


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