

TOWARDS A BERTHA VON SUTTNER PEACE MUSEUM IN VIENNA (1914 – 2014)

Peter van den Dungen

‘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.’

Bertha von Suttner, at the start of her Nobel lecture, delivered on 18th April 1906 in Oslo¹

The capital of Austria, and until 1918 of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, is not short of museums. One category celebrates the lives and music of the many great composers who were born here or lived in the city which has a musical heritage second to none. Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert – to mention only the most famous among them – draw classical music lovers from all over the world to Vienna – to visit the houses where they lived, and to enjoy their music, often in the same concert halls where they performed. On the first day of every year, the New Year’s concert from the Musikverein in Vienna featuring mainly music from members of the Strauss family is broadcast live to the four corners of the world. This relatively modern tradition is itself responsible for stimulating interest in Vienna and bringing countless visitors to the city who wish to experience first-hand its unsurpassed musical culture. Imposing statues of the great composers with roots in Vienna adorn its beautiful parks. World-class museums are also devoted to

art, especially painting. Among late 19th century and 20th century artists, Gustav Klimt and Friedensreich Hundertwasser have strong associations with the city, and attract countless devotees. In a very different field of human endeavour, students and practitioners of psycho-analysis associate the city with Sigmund Freud, its pioneer. It was from his residence in the city, now the Freud museum, that in September 1932 he wrote his famous letter to Albert Einstein in reply to the latter's question, 'Why War?'

Army museums are among the oldest and most numerous museums in the world and few countries are without at least one. Austria's largest and most important military museum, the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, is in Vienna. Typically, such museums are closely associated with the history of the country; with notions of independence and liberation; of conquest and victory; of patriotism and glory. In order to illustrate such narratives and themes, there is never any lack of artefacts for display in such museums; on the contrary, there is a superabundance, testifying to the long history of warfare. Among the most common artefacts on display are paraphernalia of the military profession, including uniforms and decorations; images and artefacts of the heroes of war; depictions of battle-scenes and campaigns; reproduction of trenches; documents of surrender; and of course, weapons of war. The latter are as numerous as they are diverse, ranging from bullets and small pistols to enormous guns and tanks, and bombers and missiles, not to mention battleships which then constitute open-air museums all by themselves. These tools of death and destruction demonstrate the insane and immoral lengths mankind has gone in order to prevail. With the invention and use of atomic weapons in the 20th century it has now become obvious that the development of means of destruction has gone too far, and that the world's survival is henceforth dependent on the avoidance of the use of weapons of mass destruction and, indeed, on their prohibition and elimination. Also with respect to this great and burning issue of our time, the prevention of the proliferation

of nuclear weapons, Vienna finds itself at the centre of the world's efforts and attention. This was recognised in 2005 when the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, were jointly honoured with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize.²

Exactly one hundred years earlier, the same prize had also gone to Vienna – to Bertha von Suttner. More than anyone else at that time (or since!), she was concerned about the proliferation of weapons, and warned of a coming catastrophe if the arms race was not halted and put into reverse. The title of her famous novel, *Lay Down Your Arms!*, also became the goal of an international peace movement which she initiated and led until the feared catastrophe became reality in 1914. Even before the invention and use of nuclear weapons, she foresaw the mass slaughter which would result from the application in warfare of recent advances in human inventiveness. Her two essays, written in the last years of her life – *Armament and Super-armament*³ and *The Barbarisation of the Air*,⁴ published in 1909 and 1912, respectively – contain insights which made her a pioneering peace researcher 'avant la lettre' and which have not lost their relevance today.

Vienna, which is so richly endowed with museums dedicated to some of the world's most famous and admired personalities should also become the home of a unique peace museum devoted to one of the world's most important and exceptional peace heroes – and to the cause which she served so valiantly. Peace Museums are far less numerous than war and army museums, and given the traditional dominance of the military ethos in most of our societies (at least those in the so-called civilised western world) this is hardly surprising. Leaving aside a very few rare precursors, peace museums only emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, particularly in Japan. The annihilation by atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 showed the world that its continued survival depended on the imperative to abolish war and the new

weapons which had the potential of bringing universal death and destruction. The first and today still most important peace museums are the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum. Set in large and beautiful peace parks, both museums were inaugurated in 1955 as the centre-piece of the reconstructed cities which had declared themselves cities of peace. They strongly continue to convey the message that life and civilization anywhere on the planet will only be secure when nuclear weapons are abolished. These museums are, in essence, anti-atomic bomb museums.

During the Cold War, other kinds of peace museums were established in various countries, often the result of private initiative. Whereas virtually all countries have established national war museums, it seems that there is not even one country which has established a national peace museum. This is perhaps not surprising given the traditional (but also controversial) association of war and the military with the defence and survival of the country, and of 'peace' with 'appeasement', weakness, defeatism, treachery. Traditionalists and so-called realists will argue that trying to make a dichotomy between war and peace (and war and peace museums) is wrong and misleading because the military are the best and only guarantee for keeping the peace, in accordance with the old maxim, 'Si vis pacem, para bellum' (If you want peace, prepare for war). Both history and logic show the fallacy of this argument. On the other hand, the power of nonviolence has been convincingly demonstrated by the 20th century's greatest exponents of its theory and practice, Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Their message is unequivocal: 'There is no way to peace, peace is the way'. Museums dedicated to Gandhi and his pupil, King, in India and the USA, respectively, are peace museums of a very different kind from the ones in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and complement them. Still other peace museums document the activities of the grassroots peace movement, including campaigns for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Hardly any peace museums exist, however, which try to do justice to the rich

history of peace comprising the variety of peace ideas and proposals, of campaigns and movements, of organisations and institutions, and which bring into the limelight some of the many courageous and inspiring heroes of peace. Likewise, hardly any peace museums exist which inform the visitor of the widespread and global phenomenon that is the peace movement of today, of its aims and achievements, and of the challenges it is faced with, and which would encourage the visitor to join the common struggle for the creation of a culture of peace.

The Bertha von Suttner Peace Museum in Vienna would be such a museum. It is difficult to think of a more appropriate personality around which to construct such a museum. The organised peace movement started in the early 19th century, at a time when the Napoleonic Wars were coming to a close. The first peace societies were established in the U.S.A. and London in 1815-1816. Today, two hundred years later, the peace movement has become a mass movement as never before. This is especially true if one takes into account the large number of people who can be mobilised to protest against a particular weapon, or war. With the invention, use and proliferation of nuclear weapons, the very survival of humanity is at stake, and this helps to explain the widespread support that exists (at least, on occasion) for the peace movement today. Bertha von Suttner straddles the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As documented in her *Memoirs*, she was amazed and pleasantly surprised to discover, as late as the late 1880s, that there existed an organised peace movement. She immediately contacted one of the leading organisations, the International Arbitration and Peace Association, founded by Hodgson Pratt in London in 1880. His reply to her, dated July 1889, is reprinted in English (together with a German translation in a long footnote) in *Die Waffen nieder!* At no other place in the novel does Martha so emphatically become Bertha, is fiction fact, than here.⁵ During the next quarter-century, no other single individual contributed as much to the further development and spread of the movement than she did. 1914, the year of her death, stands as the

half-way point between the emergence of the organised peace movement and its successor two centuries later. The inauguration of the Bertha von Suttner Peace Museum in June 2014, on the hundredth anniversary of her passing as well as on the 125th anniversary of the publication of her famous novel, would be an appropriate and long overdue way to commemorate an exceptional woman who deserves to be remembered by the creation of such a permanent, living, memorial; whose name and life-work will thereby become better known; and whose example will inspire and encourage countless women and men today to join the peace movement. She devoted the last twenty-five years of her life to prevent a catastrophe which, a few weeks after her passing, Europe unleashed upon itself and the rest of the world. Today, an even greater catastrophe looms on the horizon – a war, whether accidental or deliberate, with nuclear weapons. By informing the visitor of the work of the global peace movement today, and the challenges that confront it, the museum will continue the campaign of Bertha von Suttner to enlighten public opinion on matters of war and peace and to engage ever larger numbers of concerned citizens in order to bring about fundamental change resulting in the creation of a culture of peace and the abolition of weapons and war.

The number as well as the range of personalities and organisations to be invited for the opening of the museum, and likely to attend, are clear indications of Bertha von Suttner's standing and of the continuing significance of her legacy. It is also a reflection of the high regard, admiration and even affection in which she is being held by all those who know of her and her work for peace. Among a long and impressive list, the following invitees can be mentioned: The President and Chancellor of Austria, the Minister of European and Foreign Affairs (amongst other ministers), the President of the Austrian Parliament; the Governor of the Federal State of Vienna; the Mayor of Vienna; the director of the city's Historical Museum (Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien), which has a rich collection of Suttneriana. Also the Director

General of the office of the United Nations in the city, and of the International Atomic Energy Agency (and of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization, CTBTO); ambassadors and cultural attaches of several countries represented in Vienna. To this already lengthy list of prominent invitees has to be added an equally lengthy and impressive list of participants from abroad. Born in Prague, in the days of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Bertha von Suttner's heritage is also claimed outside what is today Austria, so that the celebrations are likely to be joined by leading figures from the Czech Republic and Hungary. Her advocacy of a European Federation will explain the presence of the President of the European Parliament. Her pioneering work in the establishment and development of various international organisations, still existing today, will account for the involvement of the Presidents and General Secretaries of the International Peace Bureau and the Inter-parliamentary Union as well as representatives of the Austrian, German, and Hungarian national peace societies whose founder or co-founder she was. No explanation is needed for the participation of the Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, the Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, and the Director of the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm or for that of several Nobel peace laureates. As the guardians of Bertha von Suttner's important archive, the Directors of the library and archive of the UN in Geneva will be especially welcomed in light of the various documents and other artefacts which they may have kindly loaned to the new museum. The same is true for several leading biographers and scholars from Austria and abroad whose research and publications on Bertha von Suttner have greatly enriched our understanding of her life and work. It goes without saying that senior members of the Kinsky, von Suttner, and Nobel families will also grace the occasion with their presence. The same applies to several of the main sponsors whose financial and material support will have made the realisation of the museum possible, first and foremost the Governor of the National Bank of Austria. The world's most beloved Austrian, W.A. Mozart, is rightly

depicted on the Austrian 1 Euro coin. Museums dedicated to him in Vienna and Salzburg draw a constant stream of visitors from around the world. The new Peace Museum will greatly help to make the woman whose profile appears on the Austrian 2 Euro coin much better known and appreciated, at home and abroad. Her pictures (not Mozart's) featured at the front of the colourful leaflet publicising the Euro-Facts exhibition held in 2003-2004 in the Austrian National Bank's Money Museum. Perhaps this was the Bank's way of making her better known although the main reason undoubtedly was her promotion of European federation (of which the Euro is the tangible expression today) as a way of overcoming war.

Many of the individuals and representatives referred to above already showed their admiration for Bertha von Suttner, and the wish to remember and make better known her life and work – and the vitally important task of continuing the latter – on the occasion of the numerous events which were organised in several countries to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to her in 1905. The centenary of this particular award was special because of two reasons. Not only was she the first woman to be so honoured but, even more importantly, all Nobel peace laureates, and indeed the whole of humanity, owe it to her that Alfred Nobel decided to remember the peace movement in his testament. The largest and most impressive event was the international symposium entitled 'Peace, Progress, and Women' organised by Professor Erich Glawischnig, the founder and president of the International Bertha von Suttner Association, and owner and restorer of the von Suttner castle in Harmannsdorf, north of Vienna. Held in nearby Eggenburg, in May, the 3-day conference was opened by Dr. Heinz Fischer, the Austrian President; several ministers from the federal government as well as ambassadors were also present. Keynote speeches were delivered by the 2003 Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi, and Petr Pithart, deputy chairman of the senate of the parliament of the Czech Republic. Among the invited speakers was Cora Weiss, initia-

tor and chairperson of the Hague Appeal for Peace (HAP), the great peace festival which had brought 10,000 peace activists to The Hague in 1999 for the centenary of the official, unprecedented First Hague Peace Conference (in which von Suttner, although not an official delegate, played a prominent role behind the scenes). Dr. Ruth-Gaby Vermot-Mangold, member of the Swiss Parliament and of the Council of Europe, and president of the Association 1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005, introduced this imaginative initiative which was conceived with a triple purpose in mind: to celebrate Bertha von Suttner's Nobel peace prize 100 years earlier; to draw attention to the fact that so few women had been honoured with the same prize since; and to highlight the fact that today countless nameless women across the world are working for peace, often in trying circumstances. Early in 2005, the Swiss ambassador in Oslo presented the names and merits of 1,000 women to the Norwegian Nobel Committee for consideration for the 2005 award.⁶ The keynote addresses and papers delivered at the conference in Eggenburg have been published.⁷

The conference also saw the opening in Harmannsdorf castle of a Bertha von Suttner travelling exhibition, *A life for peace*, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vienna (the exhibition is reproduced, in colour, in an attractive 16-page Leporello-style brochure). The texts of the exhibition panels were translated into several languages (including Japanese), and the exhibition was shown in cities around the world, and continues to be available. The same ministry also published an illustrated essay written by Hella Pick, entitled *Bertha von Suttner – living for peace*.⁸

The Eggenburg-Harmannsdorf international conference was followed in November 2005 by another one, entitled 'Bertha von Suttner's Ideas in the Present Time' held in the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in Prague. Hosted by Petr Pithart, the conference took place under the patronage of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, the Federal Chancellor

of Austria, and the Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament. Participants were invited to a reception hosted jointly by the ambassadors of Austria and Norway. Earlier in the year, the embassies of Austria, Norway and Sweden in The Netherlands, in cooperation with the Carnegie Foundation, organised a symposium in the Peace Palace in The Hague (18th April 2005) – a third city which had good cause to remember the first woman Nobel peace laureate. As a foremost representative and leader of the international peace movement who was highly respected by many diplomats, she played a prominent role during the 1899 and 1907 peace conferences there. When the Peace Palace was inaugurated in 1913, she highlighted the great significance of this new building devoted to world peace by stating that peace conferences, treaties and tribunals were not sufficient by themselves: ‘These things also require their material forms, their easily recognisable visible symbols, their homes. War, which has dominated the world for thousands of years, is not short of monuments and palaces. Peace has just ONE monument: the statue of Christ on the Andes; and in Europe it has now for the first time ONE beautiful building: the Peace Palace that Andrew Carnegie has made possible in the city which has given birth to the international court of arbitration ... The Peace Palace in The Hague stands as a visible landmark of the already nascent international law which will develop progressively. The festive inauguration of the Peace Palace, despite the general noise of war, signifies another step in the forward march of pacifism ... The world at large will take note of this event. And while opponents will double their scorn, those who are indifferent (because of ignorance) will be shaken up – and the conviction of supporters will be strengthened and their number will grow.’⁹

Exactly the same words and sentiments will apply to the proposed Bertha von Suttner Peace Museum in Vienna. It is true that today there are many more monuments and buildings devoted to peace than was the case in her day – a welcome reflection of the progress of the peace idea and of the growth of a

culture of peace. In addition to traditional monuments and memorials, such institutions as peace museums, peace research institutes, and peace studies programmes, make peace more visible than ever before and represent its material and tangible forms the absence of which Bertha von Suttner was deploring in 1913.¹⁰ The museum, if professionally done, will indeed attract the attention of the world – how could it be otherwise for a museum with Alfred Nobel and his mentor, Bertha von Suttner, at its heart. The Nobel Peace Prize has become a global ‘brand’, widely admired; a museum dedicated to the woman who inspired its creation cannot but excite global interest. Opponents of the central message of the museum – disarmament – will still be numerous although both in Austria and Europe, as well as elsewhere in the world, they no longer dominate the debate as was the case until 1914. Much more than the Peace Palace which is the home of the International Court of Justice, the Peace Museum in Vienna – designed as a foremost educational facility and prime instrument for the promotion of peace education and a culture of peace – has the potential of greatly diminishing that section of the general public which is apathetic and disinterested because of ignorance. Lastly, the celebration of a great and courageous campaigner for peace who achieved many successes (in spite of all the hostility and obstacles that confronted her) will indeed only strengthen the resolve of her followers today and inspire and encourage others to join them.

At the 2005 symposium held in the Peace Palace one of the speakers, Professor Pieter Kooijmans, former Dutch Foreign Minister and subsequently judge at the International Court of Justice, talked about *Bertha von Suttner and the development of the law of disarmament and arms control*.¹¹ He concluded his fine analysis and appreciation of her by stating that ‘our world is in dire need of a personality of her stature’. During the symposium, the famous library of the Peace Palace displayed a selection of its rich holdings of her publications, first and foremost various editions of her great novel.

Almost a year later, another noteworthy, high-level commemorative programme was held across the border (now invisible!), in Brussels, headquarters of the European Union. On 8th March 2006 – International Women’s Day, and also the centenary of the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bertha von Suttner in Oslo (which, to be precise, took place on 18th April 1906) – an office building of the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in Rue Montoyer in the Belgian capital was renamed after her. A commemorative plaque in the shape of an open book, by the Austrian sculptor Lilo Schrammel, refers to the ‘first female Nobel peace prize’ (in English, German, and French). The renaming ceremony was celebrated with a varied programme of events, including a symposium. An excellent illustrated record was published.¹² In her foreword, Anne-Marie Sigmund, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, quoted von Suttner’s observation, ‘The message of the peace movement is not some fanciful dream which is out of touch with the world – it is a message which embodies the survival instinct of civilization’.¹³ Benita Ferrero-Waldner, former Austrian Foreign Minister, and now EU Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, in her preface called her fellow countrywoman ‘the great Austrian European’ who was much ahead of her time and whose famous novel was ‘not only a passionate plea in favour of peace, and against any form of fanaticism, [but] it also embraces the vision of a unified, social Europe’.¹⁴ Both writers stressed the continuous source of inspiration her life and work provides us with. In his contribution entitled *"Lay Down Your Arms!" – Teaching the message of peace*, Professor Werner Wintersteiner analysed and applauded von Suttner’s campaign to instil a culture of peace, and stressed the need today for a large-scale peace education campaign, deliberately planned and promoted. The energetic founding-director of the Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education at the Alpen-Adria University in Klagenfurt is in the forefront of this campaign in Europe today.

Earlier in the same year, on 12th January 2006, another event celebrating the 100th anniversary of von Suttner's peace prize took place in Osnabrück, Germany's first and most important 'city of peace' which is also the home of the federally-sponsored German Foundation for Peace Research (Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung), established in 2001. Dr. Barbara Hendricks, Secretary of State in the Federal Ministry of Finance, presented the Foundation with the special postal stamp, and also commemorative coin, dedicated to von Suttner. Released in November 2005, the stamp is a little work of art: comprising three panels, the title and cover of her famous novel is flanked on the left by a photo of the author and, on the right, by the text '100 Years Nobel Peace Prize to Bertha von Suttner', together with an image of Nobel and the year 2005. This design, as is the case with the best stamps, manages to convey a great deal of information in a very small yet attractive format. The Ministry also issued a folding card for the first-day issue with a concise biographical sketch. Formal lectures were presented by Professor Volker Rittberger, chairman of the Foundation (on von Suttner's legacy for contemporary peace research), and leading German peace historian Karl Holl (on one woman's passionate struggle against war, and the inspiration she continues to provide).¹⁵

In addition to the more formal and official commemorative events which were organised in 2005 and 2006 (of which the above is not meant to be an exhaustive account), many other activities, events, and programmes took place throughout both years to celebrate Bertha von Suttner's jubilee such as the international *Imagine Peace* project for schools initiated and coordinated by Dr. Susanne Jalka of the Vienna-based Association *Konfliktkultur*. The project culminated with a programme of events in the City Hall in Vienna on 19th April 2006, under the patronage of Mrs. Margit Fischer, wife of the Austrian President. Similar peace education project work involving schools took place in Prague, through the efforts of Dr. Jana Hodurova of the Czech Bertha von Suttner Society. Dr. Laurie

R. Cohen, historian and expert on Bertha von Suttner associated with the Leopold-Franzens University in Innsbruck organised an international workshop at the university entitled *War at home/War at the front (Heimatfront/Kriegsfront)* in December 2005; she also edited a book with new perspectives on von Suttner which was published at this time.¹⁶ Similarly, 2005 saw the publication of another study which shed new light on von Suttner's self-imposed exile in Georgia, Maria Enichlmair's *Abenteurerin Bertha von Suttner: Die unbekanntenen Georgien-Jahre 1876 bis 1885*.¹⁷ Enichlmair recalls that in 1999 readers of the leading Austrian newspaper, *Der Standard*, had voted Bertha von Suttner the most important Austrian woman of the 20th century.¹⁸ This is despite the fact that she died in the early years of that century. Her continuous influence and inspiration are likely to make her also in the 21st century a most important Austrian, and not only for her compatriots.

These anniversary celebrations were of course not the first ones concerning Bertha von Suttner. A large and well-attended exhibition entitled *Bertha von Suttner and Other Women in Pursuit of Peace* was organised in 1993 by the League of Nations and Historical Collections Unit of the Library of the United Nations in Geneva, in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations. The exhibition opened on 9th June, the 150th anniversary of von Suttner's birth and lasted for three months. It was then shown as a travelling exhibition in a dozen German and Austrian cities during 1994 and 1995. The exhibition in Geneva was accompanied by a number of public lectures and seminars as well as an international symposium. An illustrated catalogue, with valuable essays, was also published.¹⁹ During the same year (1993), an exhibition on *Bertha von Suttner in the mirror of the contemporary press (Bertha von Suttner im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Presse)* was held in the State Library in Berlin (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin/Preußischer Kulturbesitz). The exhibition was able to make good use of the extensive collection of German newspapers and journals in the State Library and presented, in 17

display cases, a comprehensive overview of the life and work of the peace campaigner.

She is also remembered in the name of several schools, especially in Germany, and sometimes they have used one or other anniversary concerning von Suttner, or the school, to focus on her life and work through projects, publications, and exhibitions.²⁰ Exemplary in this respect is the Bertha-von-Suttner-Oberschule (Gymnasium) in Berlin-Reinickendorf which published a valuable and substantial *Bertha von Suttner. Festschrift zum 150. Geburtstag am 9. Juni 1993* with essays, messages and greetings from a great variety of contributors (including the Mayor of Vienna, the Director of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, and the German Chancellor) as well as from current and former pupils of the school, and their parents. Its 250 pages are a glowing tribute to the importance of von Suttner in the hard struggle for world peace, and a rich testimony of the continuing inspiration that she represents for the generations of today.²¹ Ten years earlier, in June 1983, the same school celebrated its 75th anniversary by organising an exhibition about its patron, with the assistance of the UN library and archives in Geneva.²² Among the various anniversary celebrations should also be mentioned the congress of female authors that was held in Essen in November 1989 on the centenary of the publication of *Die Waffen nieder!*. Its significance in launching the late 19th and early 20th century peace movement in Austria and Germany was well summed up in an article published in 1905 in the *Frankfurt Zeitung* (quoted in the brochure publicising the congress): ‘When in those days one asked a friend of peace why he or she had decided to become a member of the peace movement, the answer was almost always: “I was persuaded by the book of Frau von Suttner”’. A somewhat belated anniversary contribution appeared in a leading scholarly peace research journal, *Peace & Change*, published in the U.S.A., which contained a special section with articles about Bertha von Suttner, including the first detailed study of the original 1914 film version of her anti-war novel, and which is now regarded as the first pacifist film.²³

It hardly needs saying that in virtually all the commemorative and celebratory conferences, symposia, publications, exhibitions, and displays the significance of Bertha von Suttner, in her time, and the continuing relevance of her message for our own, was stressed again and again. No-one foresaw as clearly as she did, the catastrophe which would befall Europe and the world if the major powers would be reckless enough to start another war. No-one warned as insistently and as passionately as she did of the dangers ahead if countries did not turn their back on the war system. However, there was one exception: her Polish-Russian friend Jan Bloch, who she first met during the 1899 Hague Peace Conference and whose monumental and prophetic 6-volume study on *The War of the Future/The Future of War* graphically portrayed the nature of a future great war. Like the baroness, he died before the Great War was started, and which he did everything possible to prevent. Among his most notable creations was the establishment of the International Museum of War and Peace in Lucerne, Switzerland, the first-ever peace museum. It was opened in June 1902, in the absence of its founder who had died in Warsaw at the beginning of the same year. The ribbon was cut by the two doyens of the international peace movement (which was represented in great numbers): von Suttner and Frédéric Passy. In a lecture entitled ‘Die Bloch’sche Theorie’, she said that with the museum ‘our age has been presented with something new and unprecedented: the embodiment through a building of a similarly new and unprecedented idea’. This was the idea developed by Bloch in his great study, viz. that war could no longer be regarded as a rational instrument of statecraft in view of the enormous destruction a future great war would bring about and which would result in the collapse of European civilisation. Von Suttner correctly observed, ‘Through the museum this theory will undoubtedly penetrate in much larger circles than could be reached by the book, and also will be easier to grasp’.²⁴ Having assisted in the opening of the world’s first peace museum – which was unable to prevent World War I, and became its victim, closing its doors in 1919 – a peace

museum dedicated to the memory of Bertha von Suttner, and conceived to educate a large public about the need, as urgent as ever, to ‘lay down arms’ and abolish war in favour of a more rational and humane way of peaceful conflict resolution, is a requirement of our age. The rationale which she put forward for the Bloch museum applies with equal force to the proposed museum: it will bring the need and possibility for disarmament and the abolition of war to a much wider public (going beyond the peace movement), and at the same time will enable it to understand, accept, and act on, that all-important message.

At the heart of the Bertha von Suttner Peace Museum will be the same message that launched a whole peace movement, and that was also her last whisper on her death-bed: ‘Lay Down Your Arms!’ This has always been and always must be the central message of any peace movement worthy of the name. It is not surprising that this has also been the view of all the greatest minds who have occupied themselves with the question of war and its elimination from human society. For instance, in his essay *Towards Perpetual Peace*, published in 1795, Immanuel Kant specified in the third of his preliminary articles that ‘Standing armies shall be abolished in the course of time’. Precisely one hundred years later, the same idea was also expressed by a prominent scientist and hard-nosed entrepreneur: Alfred Nobel. In his last will and testament, drawn up in 1895, he mentioned three kinds of efforts which should be honoured with the peace prize that he established in his will. Apart from promoting fraternity between nations, and the holding of peace congresses, the prize should honour efforts ‘for the abolition or reduction of standing armies’. (This is no surprise given the connections between Nobel and von Suttner).

Different as they, and their authors, are, Kant’s slim philosophical treatise and von Suttner’s voluminous novel, belong to that small selection of immortal books on peace in the German – and for that matter, any – language. Her novel appeared in countless editions and reprints, and many translations, espe-

cially in the period up to 1914. Its importance and popularity, as well as its message, make the book itself a key artefact for display in the museum. The sensitivity of its subject, and the resistance the book encountered, was clear from the beginning. Did not every journal that the author approached reject her request for the book to be serialised (prior to publication as a book)? Did not the regular publisher of her books, Pierson's in Dresden, request that she make numerous deletions and alterations before it could be published? When she flatly refused to entertain such notions, he confined his demands to just one change: that of the title, which was held to be offensive and provocative. To Pierson, the book seemed dangerous. Her reaction was again adamant and uncompromising: 'No! The title embraces in three words the whole aim of the book. Of the title, too, not a syllable is to be changed'. She would sooner have flung the manuscript into the fire than accede to his demands, she noted in her memoirs. Pierson relented a second time and to his and his author's surprise saw the book become an instant bestseller. The original edition of 1,000 copies was quickly followed by reprints.

However, four decades later the book was confined to the fires by which the Nazis wanted to eradicate any literature which was seen as anti-German, including all books and journals that were critical of war and the military profession. The book burnings of May 1933 are likely to be one of the main reasons for the rarity today of first editions of the novel. So far, only two copies of the first edition have come to light. The same is true for the rarity of her periodical, of the same name, the first issue of which appeared in January 1892. It ceased publication towards the end of 1899 when it was succeeded by *Die Friedens-Warte*.²⁵ In 1935, her name appeared in the 'List of Harmful and Undesirable Writings', in accordance with which public libraries throughout Germany had to purge their stocks. During World War I, her two-volume history of the struggle to prevent the looming catastrophe of a great war, posthumously published by her friend and co-worker Alfred H. Fried in Zu-

rich in 1917, initially could not be circulated in the territories of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.²⁶ The censorship, repression, and burning of pacifist literature is a phenomenon of all times, including the present. Is it any wonder that the peace movement finds it hard to dislodge the military, and the institution whose existence it perpetuates – war? In the proposed museum, this theme should be the subject of a fascinating exhibition which documents the story during the past 500 years, beginning with the censorship of Erasmus's writings against war and on peace. For instance, copies of the French edition of one of the earliest peace writings of the modern era, his *Complaint of Peace*, printed in Lyon in 1531 or 1532, were burnt, as was the translator. For centuries it was assumed that no copies had survived but some 400 years later two copies surfaced, making them among the rarest in the literature on peace.

So also are copies of the first edition of a modern classic from that same literature: *Die Waffen nieder!* Indeed, in the exhibition entitled *Bertha von Suttner and the beginnings of the Austrian peace movement*, organised by the Historical Museum of the city of Vienna and the Austrian Peace Society, held in 1950 in the new city hall, no copy of the first edition could be shown because none had been discovered. The copy on display, borrowed from the Historical Museum, was published in 1892 and of the 5th thousand printing.²⁷ The organisers apparently were unaware of a private library which possessed a rare copy of the first edition, and had done so from the moment the book had appeared. This particular copy is of the greatest interest since its owner – and reader – was none other than Alfred Nobel. Regrettably, his library in his Swedish home at Björkborn near Karskoga today only has the second volume (the only other library which is known to possess a copy of the first edition is the Hofbibliothek in Donaueschingen, in southern Germany).²⁸ The novel unexpectedly launched its author on her career as a leader of the international peace movement until her death, 25 years later. For its famous Swedish reader, it may well have sown the germs of an idea which a few years later would find

expression in his will, viz. the creation of an annual peace prize. Just as von Suttner could not have envisaged the success of her novel and the way it would change her life, Nobel could not have foreseen that the peace prize would become the most prestigious award known to the world. Laureates of the Nobel peace prize constitute a select and much-admired ‘club’ whose presence at a conference or support for a campaign, lend it weighty support – enhancing both the legitimacy and visibility of the cause concerned. The praise the novel received not only from Nobel and Leo Tolstoi, but many other prominent figures of the time, and the impact of its success on the author herself, provide ample justification for placing *Die Waffen nieder!* at the centre of the museum. As Cora Weiss has aptly remarked, the novel is ‘certainly the only disarmament best seller in history.’²⁹

The idea for a Bertha von Suttner museum is not new; in fact, it was first suggested immediately after her death by her close collaborator (and executor of her will), Alfred H. Fried. He had been much involved in the planning and organisation of the 21st World Peace Congress, scheduled to take place in her honour, in Vienna in September 1914. Following her death in June, the programme for the congress featured an item entitled *The Suttner Museum*, and reported: ‘The intention exists to maintain intact the apartment of the defunct Baroness Bertha von Suttner in Zedlitzgasse no. 7 also after the congress is over, and to open it up to registered participants during the congress. Afterwards, at least her study should be kept as it was when she died, and the ground-floor should be given over to a Suttner-museum’.³⁰ However, nothing came of this (or of the conference, because of the war) and only a memorial plaque is found at the address. Recently – thanks to the efforts of Ernst Pecha and the Austrian Peace Society Bertha von Suttner (*Österreichische Friedensgesellschaft Bertha von Suttner*) – a second plaque was affixed following the centenary of her Nobel peace prize. The history of a memorial for von Suttner – whether a museum or monument, or a

street or public park naming – is long, and its outcome until today disappointing (although her image has appeared on an Austrian stamp and banknote, and is today on the Euro coin, as noted above).

On the occasion of her 70th birthday, in June 1913, Fried wrote a glowing article in celebration. He noted that the Czech City Council of Prague, following a unanimous vote, had sent her an artistic plaque representing the official honour and merit plaque of the Royal City of Prague, with a warm inscription. He praised the Council for honouring a woman who, although born in the city, was German. Unfortunately, he continued, the German city government of Vienna could not be bothered to even send her a mere greeting.³¹ In a private letter to her, he wrote rather bitterly: ‘Today, you are distinguished because your fatherland ... fails to distinguish you, and because the city where you live, and which you grace [and which honours anti-Semites and other riffraff] does not honour you. But rest assured: one day also Vienna will have its Bertha-von-Suttner-Street, its Suttner memorial’.³² Her biographer adds that at least up to now (1986) Fried was proven wrong. It is indeed incomprehensible – and unforgiveable – that no street in Vienna is named after Bertha von Suttner. This is especially so when streets are named after foreign women Nobel laureates such as Marie Curie, Selma Lagerlöf, and Sigrid Undset.³³ If not a street, at least a housing estate carries her name – the Bertha von Suttner Hof in the Favoritengasse 38-40. At the entrance is also a sculpture dedicated to *Die Waffen nieder!* This work by Siegfried Charoux, unveiled in 1959, depicts a fleeing war widow, with two children at her side.³⁴

In the early years, attention focussed on the construction of a memorial in Gotha, in which her ashes might be placed. Plans were made and approved, and funds collected, but the war and following inflation ruined them.³⁵ The long and sad story for a monument or memorial was fully documented in a section dedicated to the subject in the exhibition held in the City Hall in Vienna in 1950.³⁶ The inauguration of a Bertha von Suttner

Peace Museum in the centre of Vienna, on the 100th anniversary of her death will, at last, be a worthy and living memorial to this exceptional woman and (in the words of Alfred Nobel) peace champion.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- ¹ Cf. Suttner, Bertha von: *The Evolution of the Peace Movement*. In Haberman, Frederick W. (ed.): *Nobel Lectures-Peace*, Vol. 1, 1901- 1925. Amsterdam 1972, pp. 84-90.
- ² Abrams, Irwin / London, Scott (eds.): *Nobel Lectures Peace, 2001-2005*. Singapore 2009, pp. 125-154.
- ³ Suttner, Bertha von: *Rüstung und Überrüstung*. Berlin 1909.
- ⁴ Suttner, Bertha von: *Die Barbarisierung der Luft*. Berlin: Die Friedens-Warte, Internationale Verständigung, Heft 6, 1912, pp. 32.
- ⁵ In the letter Bertha von Suttner sent to the Nobel Committee in 1901 to nominate her candidate for the award of the first peace prize, she mentions Pratt, immediately after her nomination of Passy. The letter, in English translation, is reproduced by Anne C. Kjelling in *Bertha von Suttner as Nobel Peace Prize Nominator* in the volume: Internationaler Bertha-von-Suttner-Verein (ed.): *Friede-Fortschritt-Frauen. Friedensnobelpreisträgerin Bertha von Suttner auf Schloss Harmannsdorf*. Wien 2007, pp. 37-44.
- ⁶ Cf. the wonderful volume, comprising more than 1,000 pages, entitled *1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe* published by the Association '1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005'. Zurich 2005.
- ⁷ Cf. Internationaler Bertha-von-Suttner-Verein (ed.): *Friede-Fortschritt-Frauen. Friedensnobelpreisträgerin Bertha von Suttner auf Schloss Harmannsdorf*. Wien 2007. The Eggenburg/Harmannsdorf international symposium, and Bertha von Suttner, received full coverage in the excellent and impressive official volume published by the Bundeskanzleramt to celebrate the many anniversaries in Austria in 2005, first and foremost the 50th anniversary of the signing of the state treaty, returning full sovereignty. Indjein, Teresa (ed.): *Österreich 2005: Das Lesebuch zum Jubiläumsjahr mit Programmübersicht*. St. Pölten & Salzburg 2004, pp. 129-133, 165. On the occasion of the Eggenburg/Harmannsdorf symposium,

a collection of essays on and about Bertha von Suttner, in Czech and German, was published: Hodurova, Jana / Haubelt, Josef (eds.): *Bertha Suttnerova – laureatka Nobelovy ceny miru 1905*. Prague 2005.

⁸ Pick, Hella: *Bertha von Suttner – living for peace*. Vienna 2005.

⁹ See her contribution entitled *Der Friedenspalast*, pp. 49-51 in a volume of congratulatory messages and essays commissioned by the leading Dutch peace society Vrede door Recht and published on the occasion of the inauguration of the Peace Palace: *Le Palais de la Paix. Memoire*. The Hague 1913.

¹⁰ Cf. Ted Lollis: *Peace Monuments*. In: The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace, ed. Nigel Young. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, Vol. 3, pp. 416-421, and especially the many websites he has created: www.maripo.com.

¹¹ Kooijmans, Pieter: *Bertha von Suttner and the development of the law of disarmament and arms control*. In: 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. The Hague 2005, pp. 16-20.

¹² *Bertha von Suttner*. Brussels 2006.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁵ Cf. Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (Hg.): *Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung: 2001 bis 2006 [and] 100 Jahre Friedensnobelpreis: Bertha von Suttner*. Osnabrück: Forum DSF No. 3, 2006.

¹⁶ Cohen, Laurie R.: “Gerade weil Sie eine Frau sind ...“ *Erkundungen über Bertha von Suttner; die unbekannte Friedensnobelpreistraegerin*. Vienna 2005.

¹⁷ Enichlmair, Maria: *Abenteurerin Bertha von Suttner: Die unbekanntes Georgien-Jahre 1876 bis 1885*. Maria Enzersdorf 2005.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁹ Ruser, Ursula-Maria (ed.): *Die Waffen nieder! Bas les armes – Lay down your arms. Bertha von Suttner and Other Women in Pursuit of Peace*. Geneva 1993.

²⁰ According to an official Austrian publication issued by the Bundeskanzleramt, three schools in Austria are named after Bertha von Suttner, and 14 in Germany. Cf. Wohnout, Helmut (ed.): *Österreich 2005. Ein Gedankenjahr*. Vienna 2004, pp. 31-32.

²¹ Zimmermann, Lutz (ed.): *Bertha von Suttner. Festschrift zum 150. Geburtstag am 9. Juni 1993*. Berlin 1993.

²² Cf. Jaumann, Holger / Eitel, Robert: *Ausstellungskatalog, Bertha von Suttner. 75 Jahre Bertha-von-Suttner-Schule*. Berlin 1983.

²³ Cf. *Peace & Change*, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1995, pp. 64-112; see, at pp. 97-112, Kelly, Andrew: *Film as Antiwar Propaganda: Lay Down Your Arms (1914)*; see also *The first pacifist film of the war: Ned med Vaabnene/Lay Down Your Arms*, chapter 1 in the same author's *Cinema and the Great War*. London 1997, pp. 4-14 and his article *The United States and the Anti-War Cinema of the First World War: The Case of Ned med Vaabnene/Lay Down Your Arms (1914)*, pp. 53-60 In *Krieg und Literatur/War and Literature*, Vol. 6, No. 11/12, 1994.

²⁴ Cf. *Bertha von Suttner & Frédéric Passy, Johann von Bloch und sein Werk. Gedenkblatt zur Einweihung des Internationalen Kriegs- und Friedensmuseums in Luzern*. Luzern 1902, p. 5; see also Van den Dungen, Peter: *The International Museum of War and Peace at Lucerne*, pp. 185-202 in *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 1981.

²⁵ Cf. Ruser, Konrad: *An Academic Library and the Books of Bertha von Suttner*, pp. 14-15 in the 1993 Geneva exhibition catalogue mentioned above; Weidemann, Volker: *Das Buch der Verbrannten Bücher*. Cologne 2008, p. 186.

²⁶ Cf. *Freigabe des Suttner-Werkes in Österreich-Ungarn*. In: *Die Friedens-Warte*, Vol. 19, No. 8, August/September 1917, p. 255. *Der Kampf um die Vermeidung des Weltkriegs* was published in Zurich in December 1916.

²⁷ Cf. Kaut, Hubert (ed.): *Bertha von Suttner. Katalog der Sonderausstellung im Historischen Museum der Stadt Wien*. Wien 1950, p. 24.

²⁸ See Erlandsson, Ake: *Alfred Nobels bibliotek. En bibliografi*. Stockholm 2002. The cover of the second volume of *Die Waffen nieder!*, with 'Ex Libris A. Nobel', is reprinted as an illustration at p. 29. Nobel's library contains a further ten books by Bertha von Suttner, half of them with a dedication (p. 326).

²⁹ Weiss, Cora: *Where is Bertha Now that We Need Her?* In International Peace Bureau & International Fellowship of Reconciliation, eds.: *The Life of Bertha von Suttner and Her Legacy for Women Peacemakers Today*. Geneva & Alkmaar 2005, pp. 3-7, at p. 5.

³⁰ Cf. Fried, Alfred H.: *Das Suttner Museum*. In: *Die Friedens-Warte*, Vol. 16, June 1914, p. 279; *Musée Suttner*. In: *Le Mouvement Pacifiste*, 15 July 1914, p. 306.

³¹ Cf. Fried, Alfred H.: *Der 70. Geburtstag der Baronin Suttner*. In: *Die Friedens-Warte*, Vol. 15, 1913, pp. 269-270.

³² Letter of 9th June 1913, quoted in: Hamann, Brigitte: *Bertha von Suttner: Ein Leben für den Frieden*. Munich 1986, pp. 501-502.

³³ Cf. Hamann, Sibylle: *Spurensuche: Frauen auf der Spur – auf den Strassenschildern Wiens*, pp. 15-33. In Geber, Eva / Rotter, Sonja / Schneider, Marietta (eds.): *Die Frauen Wiens*. Vienna 1992. It is just as well that Bertha von Suttner features prominently on the cover of the book.

³⁴ For a brief description, and illustration, see Settele, Matthias: *Wiener Denkmäler*. Vienna, 4th ed., n.d., pp. 172-173. See also Unger, Petra: *Wiener Frauenspaziergänge: Wo sich Frauen in Wien am besten finden*. Vienna 2006, pp. 68-69.

³⁵ Cf. Playne, Caroline E.: *Bertha von Suttner and the Struggle to Avert the World War*. London 1936, p. 238.

³⁶ Cf. *Bertha von Suttner. Katalog der Sonderausstellung*, pp. 52-54.