

World Peace in the eyes of Bertha von Suttner and Bertha Waszkiewicz

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Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Europe was experiencing an escalation in the arms race as never before. Military budgets were rising year after year and concern was growing internationally. In 1899, as the result of a Russian initiative, a large-scale international peace conference was organised in The Hague, in an attempt to slow down this militarisation. During the event, hopeful peace activists from all over the world assembled in the Dutch political capital to see whether the conference would achieve its aim to preserve peace. One of these activists was the renowned Austrian author of the anti-war novel *Die Waffen Nieder*, Bertha von Suttner (b.1843). She was at the centre of an international group of pacifist friends, who eagerly followed developments in the peace talks at her Hague salon. Von Suttner published her *Tagebuchblätter*, her diary on her stay in The Hague, just after the conference as a record of those promising summer days of 1899.¹

Another female peace activist present at the time of the conference was the Dutch Bertha Waszkiewicz-van Schilfgaarde (b.1850). Although not a direct member of Von Suttner's salon circle, they had some mutual friends, like the English journalist William Thomas Stead, a valued contact for them both. Waszkiewicz promoted the peace conference from the very start. She was as optimistic as Von Suttner was and later wrote the preface to the Dutch translation of Von Suttner's diary.² In the Dutch press, she was often compared with Bertha von Suttner, but how similar were they actually? To answer the question this article firstly delineates Bertha von Suttner's salon, her standpoint on peace as well as that of her friends. Then, in the second part of this article, the focus will shift to Bertha Waszkiewicz, her peace ideals and the special problems facing her in the Netherlands.

Little has been known until now about Waszkiewicz's ideas and activities, no biographies had been published about her, in stark contrast to the number of detailed books on Von Suttner.³ Furthermore, in current literature on women and world peace, women's contributions to The Hague Conference are described only superficially. The available literature focusses mainly on the first international Women's Peace Conference in the Netherlands in 1915, and the founding of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1919. The leaders of this League had close links with the Women's Rights Movement, the fight for the emancipation of women occurring simultaneously with the struggle for peace. This article will make clear that even before the outbreak of the First World War female peace activists like von Suttner and Waszkiewicz were publicly raising their voices. At that time, their common and most urgent mission was to make a success of the conference in The Hague. Von Suttner also believed that the cause of women could profit from the realisation of their goals for peace and was certainly in favour of gender equality. Waszkiewicz placed greater emphasis on certain tasks women in particular should fulfil. Not, however, as radical suffragists, but as peace-loving mothers who could exercise a strong moral influence on their children in the home.

Bertha von Suttner and the First Peace Conference in The Hague⁴

At the time of the peace conference Bertha von Suttner was president of the Austrian peace movement as well as vice-president of the international peace office in Bern. Her vision on peace had been deeply influenced by the works of the well-known academics of her time: Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin and Henry Thomas Buckle. Her favourite was the latter, since Buckle argued that the world was becoming increasingly harmonious due to the power of human intelligence and the invention of new technologies. For many years, she had been travelling through Europe to encourage the ideals of peace and meet prominent peace activists from all over the world. Some of them had become intimate friends and participated in her Hague salon. Among these were the Polish expert on modern warfare, Johann von Bloch, and the British journalist William Thomas Stead who also participated in her Hague salon. Writing about Von Suttner automatically entails writing about these friends too and her diary contains many fascinating details.

On 16 May, she and her husband arrived in The Hague where they stayed in the *Grand Central Hotel*, to be close to the official Peace Conference and to meet and speak with the delegates personally. Later, as the heat became oppressive in the city, they moved to the seaside hotel *The Kurhaus*. As a celebrated writer and a leading figure in the peace movement, Von Suttner could not be ignored. Indeed, she was invited to several official ceremonies and events, including the opening of the Conference at the Dutch Royal Palace. In her diary, she noted: 'I am the only woman who has access to the palace. I am very grateful for this, because it feels as a reward after all those years of hard fighting'.⁵ However, Von Suttner must have realised that the conference, with twenty-six countries participating and launched by the Russian tsar, would face innumerable difficulties. The aim of the conference was highly ambitious; the ultimate goal was the founding of 'a real and durable peace'. Some months before, Von Suttner had interviewed the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. This interview was published in her diary and makes clear the great divergence of opinion between Von Suttner and the minister regarding the ultimate aim of the conference:

'We do not dare hope', said the earl Murawieff [Minister of Foreign Affairs] 'that the final aim will be reached at this conference...'

'It would already be satisfactory', so I interrupted him, 'if the countries would agree that they would not start a war the coming twenty, let's say, ten years'.

'Twenty years, ten years! Vous allez trop vite, madame. We will already be very glad if we agree on a period of three years'.⁶

Russia had formulated the aim of the conference more



Bertha Von Suttner
Credit: Public domain

precisely just before the talks started: the purpose was the limitation of the use of *new* weapons and the introduction of rules of war law. Von Suttner, who was much more interested in *ius contra bellum* than *ius ad bellum*, must have been disappointed.⁷ However, her diary makes clear that, despite these setbacks, during the first days of the conference she remained optimistic. International newspapers were interviewing her almost daily and she had access to all sorts of official ceremonies. In one such

ceremony, she was introduced to the nineteen-year-old Dutch Queen Wilhelmina. Although the queen did not particularly sympathise with the peace movement, she expressed herself in polite, diplomatic terms. In Von Suttner's diary we read:

The young queen, with a friendly smile, asks me if this was my first visit to The Hague and if I like it there. Answering her question I said that my stay in Holland makes me feel very happy because of the elevated aim of the conference. The young queen then nodded and said that she was of the opinion that we all share this feeling.⁸

On the other hand, within the Dutch Ministry of War Von Suttner had a great admirer. He approached her with the words: 'May I introduce myself: my name is Kramer, Secretary of the Department of War and I'd like to say that I secretly share the ideal you so warmly stand up for in your novel (...) I am looking forward to seeing its realisation coming closer'.⁹

It is understandable that Von Suttner, after such amiable encounters, became convinced that interest in the peace movement was growing, also among politicians. 'Who had ever expected this?' she asked herself in her diary. 'But the miracle *has* happened', she writes, as if the peace activists had already triumphed.¹⁰ Indeed, in The Hague Von Suttner was surrounded by people who shared similar hopes and expectations. They would gather almost daily in her salon to discuss the results of the conference. One regular visitor of Von Suttner's salon was Johann von Bloch, a specialist in the field of 'modern' weapons and author of *Die Zukunft der Krieg*. When he entered her salon it was as if they had already been friends for years:

I only knew the author of the monumental work *Der Krieg* by his letters and works. Yet, when he entered our salon (...) we welcomed him like an old friend. He is about sixty years old, has a short, grey beard, a gentle and content appearance, good manners, and he is a natural, very interesting speaker.¹¹

Von Bloch gave several lectures on modern warfare during the weeks he stayed in The Hague. He was, according to Von Suttner, a talented and successful orator. In detail and with

an abundance of statistical data, he sketched the horrors of a new military conflict: a new war would be bloodier, more destructive and expensive than ever before. Von Suttner comments: 'it was not a series of sermons (...) neither did he try to impress his audience with eloquent words; it could have been a rigorous scientific discourse'.¹²

Von Suttner's circle of friends also included some journalists. One of them, the German journalist, bookseller and publisher, Alfred Hermann Fried, she had already known for many years. Fried, who after having read *Die Waffen Nieder* dedicated the rest of his life to the peace movement, had founded the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft* and was the publisher of the German peace journal *Die Waffen Nieder*. At The Hague, he reported on the conference for several German newspapers, among them the *Berliner Zeitung*. According to Von Suttner, Fried was a passionate peace fighter, a man 'ganz Feuer und Flamme'. However, he stayed only briefly, leaving The Hague in the first week of June. Von Suttner was not surprised that he left so soon since he had no access to the official debates. The secrecy of the whole event – the debates took place behind closed doors – irritated her from the start of the conference.

The English journalist William Thomas Stead, editor of the international monthly *Review of Reviews*, was, like Fried, an ardent peace activist. Even before the start of the conference, he had made a tour around Europe to speak with several leading European politicians to find out if they were willing to back the peace initiative of the Russian tsar.¹³ He had even organised an international 'crusade for peace' to St. Petersburg to offer the tsar letters of approval from all over the world. A 'wonderful person', so Von Suttner described him in her diary and, as usual, she noted his appearance too: 'he is a man with an apostolic head, a grey beard and a friendly face'.¹⁴ Stead was a hectic journalist too, a man who breezed into the salon only now and then. Yet he was the one who provided the peace activists with important news on the conference, information passed to him by befriended delegates:

'So there you are again', I called out.

'You forget me completely! I expected that especially you, with your excellent connections with the delegates, would inform me...'

'I will not disappoint you; just today I have important and joyful news for you.'

I took my notebook and started to write...¹⁵

The good news was that several plans were initiated at the conference to found a permanent court of arbitration. Therefore, there was reason for celebration. Finally, Von Suttner writes, there were 'positive, practical and clear plans'.

A very special person and a frequent visitor of Von Suttner's salon was the Dutch painter, Jan ten Kate. His paintings, exhibited during the conference in the Building of Arts and Sciences at The Hague, illustrated the horrors of war: the bloody massacre, dying soldiers, human misery. During the vernissage Von Suttner perceived her good old friend Von Bloch and suddenly, seeing him together with Ten Kate, she found herself distracted from the paintings by the remarkable contrast between the two men.¹⁶ Von Bloch, the man of the 'real' anti-war movement who fought against war with data and facts, and Ten Kate who, with his shocking paintings, showed the world what would happen if war broke out. Nevertheless they were both fighting for the same goals.

Finally there was Benjamin Trueblood, the classical scholar and chair of the American Peace Movement. Von Suttner characterised Trueblood as a man of firm conviction, with a sense of humour; he was sometimes even 'the darling' of the evening.¹⁷ His pacifist ideas were deeply influenced by Immanuel Kant. Like Kant, Trueblood was an advocate of a league of peace, a union of free countries with just one extremely important task: to prevent the outbreak of large-scale international conflicts. Trueblood hoped that the peace conference would become a permanent organisation; a union that in the near future could fulfil this task.

However, to some Von Suttner's ideals were an anathema. The socialists in particular were dismissive of her ideas of peace and her interest in a conference that totally neglected the problem of class struggle. They therefore organised an alternative meeting and invited 'everyone who is indignant about the nonchalant way the peace ideal was debated and treated these days'.¹⁸ Von Suttner's irritated reaction was:

All the real peace apostles, so also Von Bloch, Stead, Dr. Trueblood and me, had reason to be concerned about the invitation. War and peace are not class problems. The state of war we are now living in and the state of peace that is to come, are general phases of civilisation that have an impact on all social classes.¹⁹

The simple fact that Von Suttner was a woman would sometimes cause problems for her too. She was, for example, not invited to an official dinner organised by the French delegate Léon Bourgeois, since only men were welcome. Therefore, it was Arthur, her husband, who received an invitation instead. However, Von Suttner did not complain and noted pragmatically in her diary that 'you ought not to overestimate the utility of such meetings'.²⁰ The peace problem was definitely much more important, in her opinion, than that of gender. In one of her articles, titled 'World Peace from the Point of View of a Woman', she did argue that women could benefit from the peace movement. If the stated goals were realised, humanity would arrive at a higher moral level than ever before. Violence and suppression would give way to peace and freedom, and class and gender inequalities would disappear.²¹

Yet, during the weeks of the conference it became clear that her ideals would remain unfulfilled. The delegates failed to make agreements on the limitation of arms or the founding of an obligatory international arbitration system. In addition, although Von Suttner was convinced that history was on her side, she and her friends were sometimes slightly dispirited. When the weather also worsened, becoming windy and cold, she really became disheartened: 'there is reason to be unhappy (...). All hearts are cold. They are as cold as the icy air that comes in through the booming window. I shiver'.²²

Von Suttner left The Hague on 7 July. On the day of departure, she was cheered by the warm farewell: 'many friends accompanied us to the station. The train compartment was full of goodbye bouquets. Goodbye, lovely city with your parks and dunes!' She added that, hopefully, as a court of arbitration was founded there, The Hague would become a place of pilgrimage for future generations.²³

Bertha Waszkiewicz, Women and Peace

Shortly after her stay in The Hague Von Suttner published her *Tagebuchblätter* and the Dutch peace activist Bertha Waszkiewicz-van Schilfgaarde was asked to write the preface in the Dutch translation of this book (*Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*). Waszkiewicz was not as internationally famous as Von Suttner, but she was definitely a well-known activist in the Netherlands. In this section her main peace ideas and activities will be sketched, as well as the problems facing her in the Netherlands.

Waszkiewicz did not have to travel to the city of peace, as The Hague was called those days; she lived in the centre of the city, was married to a former colonial official and had founded her own peace organisation just before the start of the peace conference.²⁴ Her speeches and articles in the Dutch press – all preserved in her personal archive – show a special interest in international law.²⁵ This should not come as a surprise since she lived in a country that had been inspired for centuries by the philosophy of law. The Netherlands was renowned for its legal specialists (for example, Cornelis van Vollenhoven), promising law studies (Leiden University) and, not to forget, was the country of historical but still well-remembered pioneers of international thinking (Erasmus, Hugo Grotius). Personally, Waszkiewicz had been inspired most by a famous peace activist from France, Frédéric Passy. In 1867 he had set up a league, a 'society of arbitration', to prevent the outbreak of war between France and Prussia.²⁶ Just before the peace conference in The Hague he had sent the Dutch queen a remarkable letter that impressed Waszkiewicz with its candour: 'If I was a queen', he had written to Her Majesty, 'it would be an honour for me to connect this precious stone (a court of arbitration) to my throne'.

Not only in the academic but also in the literary world of the Netherlands the popularity of international thinking was remarkable. One of Waszkiewicz's favourite writers – her 'Buckle' – was Louis Couperus who, in 1895, had published his novel *World Peace*. Even though it was fiction, Waszkiewicz took the book very seriously.²⁷ She read his story about a peace-loving king of an imaginary country where a new era dawned: where visions of disarmament and arbitration circulated overall. In this fictional country, all children, from the moment they drank their first milk, were inspired by ideas of peace. A noble spirit reigned; the bloody history of humankind was finally over.²⁸

In 1898 Waszkiewicz, deeply concerned about the ongoing arms race and rising military budgets in the real world, founded her own organisation, the 'Dutch Female League for International Disarmament'. In the same year she delivered her first anti-war speech.²⁹ The title of this speech was significant: 'International Disarmament: a Women's affair and a Women's' interest.³⁰ Women, she explained, had an excellent opportunity to teach their children what to do when a quarrel broke out: to solve it not by fighting but by talking and thus make peace-loving human beings of their sons (the future politicians!). Waszkiewicz's view on the important role of women in the fight against war and military aggression was inspired by the arguments of the French writer, Jules Bois. In a letter he wrote to her in which he referred to the pacifist ideals of Immanuel Kant, he wrote:

Vous savez que Kant ne croyait pas à la possibilité

d'établir cette universelle concorde sur les bases indestructibles de l'individuelle harmonie. Il ne croyait pas à une grande perfectibilité de l'homme. Mais il n'avait pas songé à la collaboration de la femme. Ce fait bouleverse tout, nous promet le "miracle social" en quelque sorte; c'est à dire, une évolution de notre petite humanité vers une humanité plus grande parce qu'elle sera plus complète.³¹

Kant indeed was of the opinion that human nature was certainly not peace loving but inclined to belligerence. Therefore a system of peace had to be created systematically; it would be a long and slow process. However, Bois believed that Kant had missed an important element: the process could be speeded up if women collaborated and made humanity more 'complete'. Waszklewicz reasoned more or less the same way. Up until 1870, when the French-Prussian war broke out, women had been passive; they had wept on the battlefields and nursed soldiers, but had not raised their voices against war. However, since then something had changed, women no longer mutely accepted the misery of war and wanted a better future for their children. Following Bois' arguments and her confidence of what women, as mothers, could achieve, she wrote: 'We are half of humanity so that other half must give in'.³² Nevertheless, the fight for peace, for a world based on international law, was not to be as simple as Waszklewicz anticipated. Not only the socialists but also radical peace activists and their adherents in the Netherlands argued against her. Moreover, she was criticised as not being a 'true feminist'. Another objection was her sympathy towards Catholics.

Most critical were the so-called 'Tolstoians' or 'Christian Anarchists'. They rejected her pragmatic (juridical) approach and accepted nothing but radical pacifistic ideas and pleas for total abolishment of armies. As principled pacifists, they were not impressed by the peace conference in The Hague and they distrusted the motives of the participants. What the politicians and diplomats had in mind, so they said, was not peace but only more power and so more armies and soldiers. This was naturally in complete contradiction to Waszklewicz's high expectations of the conference and she reacted in the press by personally attacking their hero Leo Tolstoy. Just the appearance of the famous Russian writer made clear, she wrote, that this was a man with 'hollow ideas' and 'unreal illusions'. What the world needed was not make-believe 'fantasy' but, so she repeated, a reliable 'foundation of law'.³³ She distanced herself from the Tolstoians even more by stating that national disarmament was not a necessity in a world based on such a solid (legal) foundation. Her own country, she believed, had the right to use military means, both in its defence and in colonial wars. Waszklewicz obviously reasoned from the viewpoint of her own country's (colonial) power and so did not reject Dutch military activities in faraway Atjeh.³⁴

Waszklewicz was also criticised because of her traditional opinions with respect to feminism. Living in Victorian times, she did not question the role of women as housewives and mothers. She saw their main task to be in the home, close to their children, and to promote there, in that private world, the idea of peace and arbitration. In a biographical sketch of Waszklewicz by the Dutch writer Frans Netscher, it was said that it was a pity that she was not really a 'modern woman' and that, in spite of her pacifist activities, she did not support the more radical feminists of her time. She

was even a bit old fashioned, commented Netscher, who had minutely studied her appearance which he considered rather more reminiscent of ladies in the Louis XIV period than of her own day. A compelling picture of Waszklewicz illustrates Netscher's view: here you see a classically and elegantly dressed woman with an unflinching gaze.³⁵ Others praised Waszklewicz for the very reason that she was not a radical feminist. The more she distanced herself from those 'godless' ladies, it was said, the more successful her fight for peace would be.³⁶ Yet Waszklewicz herself was certainly not a traditional housewife. After she had set up her own peace organisation, she devoted almost all her time to it, travelling, lecturing and visiting peace conferences abroad. This was the reason the journalist Karel Wybrands, a well-known anti-feminist, attacked her in a very personal way. He wrote:

Do you know who I feel deeply for, every time we read that Mrs. Waszklewicz-Van Schilfgaarde opened a meeting or delivered a speech again? Mr. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde! The poor man. We can be sure there are holes in his socks, the beef is too raw, his children are not clean (...) But maybe Mrs. W.v.S also abolished having children...³⁷

Waszklewicz was indeed childless and, as a peace activist not living a conventional life, was clearly an easy target for critics such as Wybrands.

At the same time, Waszklewicz had to cope with criticism from Dutch Protestants who suspected her of Catholic sympathies. Waszklewicz, who would indeed eventually opt for Catholicism and become a staunch member of the Catholic Church in later years, was already in 1898 directing her ideas to Catholic women in particular. The fight for peace was a moral, a religious task, she argued: was it not the Catholic Church that mediated in the Spanish-American war?³⁸ This evoked an immediate reaction from Protestants. They retorted that the head of the Catholic Church was not as peace loving as Waszklewicz wanted people to believe and pacifism and religion had to be separated. Although Waszklewicz defended herself by stating that she was absolutely 'neutral' with respect to religion, that her organisation represented 'all colours', the damage had been done. A Dutch commentator compared her with Von Suttner, who had never based, so he said, her ideas on religious arguments, and made no secret of which of the two he respected most:

I presume Mrs. Waszklewicz is a Catholic. I heard she had once been a Protestant before she had become a Catholic. If so, a renegade. So be extra careful!

I don't know if Von Suttner was a Catholic. But we know her as a tireless, enthusiastic fighter against war, a woman with character and with unique courage, perseverance and energy.³⁹

So the 'incident' with the Protestants, as Waszklewicz preferred to call it, undermined her reputation as a peace activist and she would continue to meet opposition from them in the following months. But it seems she even managed to offend the Catholics when she published an article in the Dutch press praising the growing support of people in the predominantly Catholic province of Noord-Brabant. In her article she said that this support was very special because this part of the

Netherlands was not very modern, intimating that it was a bit backward.⁴⁰ Subsequently she had to defend herself against those Catholics who felt offended.

In spite of all the criticism, Waszkiewicz nevertheless succeeded in making her organisation a great success. In fact, it soon overshadowed the existing Dutch peace organisation, the 'General Dutch Peace League'.⁴¹ A possible explanation for this success was that, almost simultaneously to the founding of the women's league, the conference plans of the Russian tsar circulated in the Netherlands. Apart from all (national) reasons the tsar launched this plan, the call for pacifism was suddenly in the air and Waszkiewicz's organisation profited from this. Besides, Waszkiewicz also had some influential contacts. One of these was William Thomas Stead – as has been seen a close friend of Von Suttner too – who enlisted her for his own activities on the continent. Thus she became the head of a Dutch committee that was to support Stead's 'crusade for peace', an international tour to back the proposal of the tsar by sending him letters of approval. The man who signed this letter and joined the Dutch committee was Waszkiewicz's beloved writer Louis Couperus. But many others added their signatures, among them academics and local leaders (mayors) as well as several representatives of political and religious groups: Catholics, Protestants, Liberals and Socialists. This event was unique in a society in the grip of 'pillarization', which made broad alliances almost impossible.⁴²

So Waszkiewicz's star was rising, the result of international events but also of her own activities and personal initiative. She had dared to enter the public sphere, write articles in newspapers, debate with politicians and deliver public speeches. However, criticism of her continued too: it was said that her activities were directed only to the elite. For example, the letter of support for the Russian tsar was sent round to the mayor, the doctor and the vicar, people with a certain social status, not to the common man.⁴³ Besides, Waszkiewicz's friend Stead, who was anything but a conventional journalist, did not have a good reputation in the Netherlands. Thus Waszkiewicz's name was connected to a man with – as the highly conservative *Hollandia* wrote 'bad manners' and 'a questionable honesty'. Sometimes Waszkiewicz herself would also be the target of criticism and, from reports in the Dutch press of the time, we learn that although fearful of public debates, at the same time, she would exude such self-confidence that no room was left for critical reactions from her audience. People did not doubt her good intentions but she definitely was not, it was said, a talented, inspiring speaker.⁴⁴

Yet because she was the president of the Women's League and Stead's Dutch peace committee as well, she was honoured, as was Bertha von Suttner, with invitations for dinners and soirées. Besides, she was on good terms with the Russian delegate and president of the international conference, Baron de Staal. Thanks to him a copy of the letter to the tsar was put on the wall of the conference building, the royal palace, Huis ten Bosch, so that all politicians could read it (the original was sent to St. Petersburg).

The Two Berthas Compared

Waszkiewicz and Von Suttner were both connected to the first peace conference in The Hague. They shared ideals and expectations, they both dreamed about a better, more harmonious world, sometimes even their contacts in the



Bertha Waszkiewicz
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peace movement were the same and it seemed that especially Stead was of great importance for them both in the run up to, and during, the peace conference. All this explains why Waszkiewicz was invited to introduce the Dutch translation of Von Suttner's *Tagebuchblätter*: they were close.⁴⁵ But there were certainly also clear differences between the two peace activists.

Firstly, they had different ideals and their activism was of contrasting duration. After all, Waszkiewicz was a peace activist for just a very short period. Her activities started in 1898, when she was already forty-eight, and ended not long afterwards, in 1901, when she left the peace league she had founded. Von Suttner, who was also in her forties when she, as a writer, started her peace activities, remained loyal to the peace movement until the end of her life (1914). Her view on peace differed principally from Waszkiewicz's: peace was definitely more for her than just a set of rules and the realisation of a court of arbitration. She certainly did not deny the importance of such a court after it was initiated by the peace conference in The Hague, but in her view it was only a first step in the direction of a more peaceful world. In contrast,

Waszklewicz was fascinated by the practice of arbitration in itself. She must have been satisfied when a Permanent Court of Arbitration was founded in the Peace Palace in The Hague that seemed to make arbitration the alternative for peace. This court even enlarged its powers after the First World War on the base of the Covenant of the League of Nations. Waszklewicz was able to witness all this up to her death in 1938, and see that the short period in which she had been an activist for peace and arbitration had not been in vain. The pragmatic approach she preferred, so close to legal philosophers such as Passy, found greater success than Von Suttner's life-long fight for a universal, durable peace. Waszklewicz, however, could never compete with Von Suttner's worldwide reputation as one of the greatest peace activists in history, who was rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. Already in those years around the peace conference it was clear that Waszklewicz was not equal to the generally admired Von Suttner.

Waszklewicz was not only a pragmatic thinker but, contrary to Von Suttner, a passionate nationalist too. This is why Waszklewicz did not reject colonial wars (such as the Atjeh War) and wars in defence of territory. When the Boer War broke out at the end of the century, she was pro-Boer. The Boers were seen in the Netherlands as blood-related and strong feelings of national brotherhood made the war they fought against the English almost 'our war' to many Dutch people. Waszklewicz was particularly concerned about the fate of the South African women and children. In *Plea for the Grant of a Neutral Territory for the Boer Women and Children* she drew attention to the terrible conditions in the British concentration camps there and pleaded for a safe haven for them. Waszklewicz was also a supporter and admirer of Paul Kruger, the Boer Leader. In *Paul Kruger's Journey*, a book about Kruger's visit to Europe in 1900, she portrayed him as a fighter for peace, searching for justice for his people. And so she connected her special themes, peace and justice, to her love for her own country and to the cause of the Boers. Although the Boer War definitely aroused pacifists from all over the world, including Von Suttner and Stead, who strongly disagreed with the British politics in South Africa, they could not share such nationalistic feelings as expressed by Waszklewicz. They always showed a much stronger solidarity with the world as a whole, than with one specific nation.

There were several differences between Waszklewicz and Von Suttner with relation to their ideas on gender questions too. Waszklewicz realised the importance of male support only after Stead had launched his 'crusade for peace'. Before that time she was convinced that above all women, because of their important role in family life and their influence on young children, could best promote peace. This was a way of thinking partly based on traditional Victorian ideas concerning the role of women as housewives and partly on new ideas concerning women's special role, the moral mission they had to fulfil in society.⁴⁶ After she had accepted the role of men in the fight for peace, she nevertheless remained rather critical of them. This can be learned from her preface to the Dutch translation of Von Suttner's diary on the conference in which she showed her displeasure that only men were welcome to the opening ceremony of the peace conference. Somewhat irritated, she wrote: 'You saw them entering the conference building, those men who decided the future of the next generations'.⁴⁷ What perhaps bothered her too was that the only woman who – apart from the Dutch queen Wilhelmina – had access to the opening ceremony of the conference was Von Suttner.

Maybe this was the reason she wrote that she was willing to write the preface of the diary but that she would actually have preferred to connect her name to 'any attempt' to make peace a reality. This would seem to imply that, to her, Von Suttner was definitely not more important than any other peace activist. Was this comment perhaps a sign of envy or just an innocent remark in her introduction to Von Suttner's book? Von Suttner, who was sometimes excluded from peace meetings herself, seemed to have been less interested in the politics of invitation as long as the ideal of peace was promoted.⁴⁸ After all, gender issues would spontaneously disappear in a world based on peace (see her article 'World Peace from the Point of View of a Woman'). In daily life too, Von Suttner showed herself more relaxed with men, as her descriptions of pleasant intercourse with the (male) visitors of her salon (Von Bloch, Fried, Stead, Ten Kate, Trueblood), also makes clear.

In the end Waszklewicz's role even became undermined by the gender problem. She decided not to continue her activities as president of the peace league after its fusion with the mixed *General Dutch Peace League* in 1901 and the loss of its exclusively female character. She simply 'did not want to be a member of an organisation in which men showed inferior opinions towards women, opinions with which the new century had broken'.⁴⁹ One wonders if Von Suttner, had she lived in the Netherlands, would have made the same decision.

Notes

1. Bertha von Suttner, *Die haager Friedensconferenz. Tagebuchblätter* (Dresden/Leipzig, E. Pierson's Verlag, 1900).
2. Bertha von Suttner, *Den Haag en de vredesconferentie*, trans. by J.C. van Riemsdijk (Amsterdam, Cohen, 1900).
3. Since so little is known about Waszklewicz, in this article additional information is provided about her life, based on the scarce literature available and her personal papers at the National Archive in The Hague. For the biography of Von Suttner see: Beatrix Kempf, *Suffragette for Peace: the Life of Bertha von Suttner* (London, Oswald Wolff, 1972); Brigitte Hamann, *Bertha von Suttner: ein Leben für den Frieden* (München, Piper, 1986). See for Bertha von Suttner's memoirs: *Lebenserinnerungen* (Berlin, Verlag der Nation Berlin, 1970).
4. See also my article 'Een Haagse salon met toekomstige Nobelprijswinnaars', *Working Paper Series*, 6 (2007) (Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, European Studies).
5. Von Suttner, *Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*, 14.
6. *Ibid.*, appendix VIII.
7. Ove Bring, *Bertha von Suttner and International Law: ius contra bellum* (Symposium on Bertha von Suttner, The Hague, 2005) [www.berthavonsuttner.com/Papers/bring.pdf]
8. Von Suttner, *Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*, 35.
9. *Ibid.*, 36.
10. *Ibid.*, 37.
11. *Ibid.*, 17.
12. *Ibid.*, 116.
13. W.T. Stead, *The United States of Europe on the Eve of the Parliament of Men* (London, 'Review of Review' Office, 1899). About the European tour and Stead's stay at The Hague see: A.van Heerikhuizen, 'William Thomas Stead and the Peace Conference at The Hague' (The W.T. Stead Resource Site attackingthedevel.co.uk).
14. Von Suttner, *Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*, 25.
15. *Ibid.*, 43.

16. *Ibid.*, 63.
 17. *Ibid.*, 42.
 18. *Ibid.*, 18.
 19. *Ibid.*, 20.
 20. *Ibid.*, 197.
 21. Bertha von Suttner, 'Wereldvrede vanuit het standpunt eener vrouw', in Bertha von Suttner, *Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*, 79-80.
 22. Von Suttner, *Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*, 186
 23. *Ibid.*, 198.
 24. Frans Netscher, 'Karakterschets J.M.C.B. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde', *De Hollandsche Revue*, 4, 1899, 29-47; Lilly Wanjon, *Een vrouw voor vrede en vrijheid: de rol van Bertha Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde in de internationale beweging 1899-1902* (Amsterdam, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2009).
 Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914* (New York/Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), 62-3, 72-3, 98.
 25. National Archive, The Hague (NL-HaNA), Collection 094 Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde, 1899-1916, entrance nr. 2.21.174, inv. nr. 4 (Register with Articles on Disarmament and the Start of the Boer War). Hereafter: NA, 094.
 26. J.M.C.B. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde, 'Frédéric Passy', in J. Kalf Jr. (ed.), *Mannen en vrouwen van betekenis in onze dagen: levensschetsen en portretten* (Haarlem, Tjeenk Willink, 1900), 139-78.
 27. Couperus, in the preface of this book, made clear that he definitely had no wish to be a political writer. He sympathised with the 'friends of peace', he admitted, but his book was pure art. This was a statement that the 'friends of peace', including Waszklewicz, must have found hard to believe.
 28. Louis Couperus, *De Koningsromans* (Amsterdam, Uitgeverij 521, 2006), 267-74.
 29. Waszklewicz first had been president of the Dutch department of the French 'Ligue des femmes pour le désarmement'. Conflicts between Waszklewicz and the president of this French league were the reason Waszklewicz founded her own organisation in 1898.
 30. See for this speech and the league Waszklewicz founded: Ellen Bommeljé and Marij Derks, 'Internationale ontwapening: een vrouwenzaak en een vrouwenbelang? De Nederlandse Vrouwenbond ter Internationale ontwapening 1898-1901', *Vredesstreven in Nederland 1894-1960* (Groningen, Studiecentrum voor Vredesvraagstukken, 1985), 24-42.
 31. J.M.C.B. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde, *Internationale ontwapening: een vrouwenzaak en een vrouwenbelang* (Amsterdam, W. Versluys, 1899), 24.
 32. NA, 094: 'Het zwaard in de scheede'.
 33. NA, 094: 'Tolstoy en de vredesconferentie'.
 34. NA, 094: 'Strijd om de vrede'.
 35. Netscher, 'Karakterschets J.M.C.B. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde', 45-7.
 36. NA, 094: 'Geen feministe'.
 37. Gerard Termorshuizen, "Kleurloosheid is mij een gruwel": het fenomeen Karel Wybrands, *Indisch journalist*, in Gerard Termorshuizen (ed.), *Tropenstijl: amusement en verstrooiing in de (post)koloniale pers* (Leiden, KITLV Press, 2011), 227-49, 232.
 38. NA, 094: 'Strijd om de vrede'.
 39. NA, 094: 'Ontwapening'.
 40. NA, 094: 'Onkiesch'.
 41. Waszklewicz's organisation experienced a rapid growth from 234 members (in 1898) to 1200 members (in 1901).

- P.H. Kamphuis, *Het Algemeene Nederlandsche Vredesbond, 1871-1901: een verkennend onderzoek naar dertig jaar ijveren voor een vreedzame internationale samenleving* (Den Haag, Koninklijke Landmacht, Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis, 1982), 163, 172.
 42. 'Pillarisation' refers to the division of society into mutually exclusive political and religious groups. This was a phenomenon that became dominant in the Netherlands at the end of the nineteenth century.
 43. NA, 094: 'Tekenen van vredes-adressen'.
 44. NA, 094: 'Vredesmanifestatie'.
 45. 'close' in the sense of sharing of each other's ideas. There is no evidence of close personal contact between Waszklewicz and Von Suttner.
 46. Wanjon, *Een vrouw voor vrede en vrijheid*; Piet de Rooy, *Ons stipje op de waereldkaart: de politieke cultuur van Nederland in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, Wereldbibliotheek, 2014), 177.
 47. J.M.C.B. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde, 'Voorwoord', in Bertha von Suttner, *Den Haag en de Vredesconferentie*, vi.
 48. According to Sandi Cooper, Von Suttner 'initially minimised any gender connection to the peace cause'. *Patriotic Pacifism*, 63.
 49. J.M.C.B. Waszklewicz-van Schilfgaarde, *Evolutie*, 5 March 1902. Waszklewicz hoped to enhance the allure of her own peace league by this fusion. She soon realised 'she had lost the game for the dominant position'. See Kamphuis, *Het Algemeene Nederlandsche Vredesbond*, 172.

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