

Congratulations to Bertha von Suttner
on her 175th birthday

June 9, 2018, Peace Palace
The Hague

On this birthday anniversary of Bertha von Suttner, I join you in spirit. I think of the hundreds of thousands of Bertha's around the world who are carrying out her vision for peace, for disarmament, for gender equality and against anti-Semitism. *Lay Down Your Arms* is probably the only book about disarmament that became a best seller! Her visions were holistic, understanding peace as not the absence of war, but the presence of justice, of all human rights for all people, respect for the Earth and for gender equality. Bertha was a founder of and vice-president of the International Peace Bureau, which I served as President and now represent at the United Nations.

The women and girls who are standing on Bertha's shoulders, I call Berthas, and many feminist men, I say Berts, keep her vision alive. Berthas marched wearing knitted pink pussy caps in 2016, for gender equality; Berthas and Berts march for an end to climate change and for environmental protection. Wangari Maathai was a Nobel Peace Prize recipient for her work in planting trees to save the Earth. Bertha would have loved her for that. Berthas and Berts are marching for sustainable development. Berthas are sitting around the "Banyon trees", in Burundi, Colombia, the Philippines, Nepal and elsewhere, bringing together local authorities and civil society activists to integrate [Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security](#), and [SC Resolution 1820](#) which links sexual violence as a tactic of war, into local and national plans for community development. That will assure the inclusion of women at decision making tables at all levels of governance as well as in peace processes. This Localization program is the work of the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders, something Bertha would applaud.

Berthas continue to fight anti-Semitism to prevent violence and promote respect for all people. Surely she couldn't have imagined the development of nuclear weapons, the omnicidal invention which twice have been used in Japan and which continue to inflict cancers on survivors. I believe she would have marched with the women against atomic testing, and would support efforts to abolish all nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants. I know it is dangerous to second guess the departed, but Bertha von Suttner left such a powerful and clear message about weapons, war and peace that it is not difficult to imagine what she would do and say today.

Bertha was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. There have only been 16 women Nobel Peace laureates, while 104 men have been peace laureates. With so many Berthas following in Bertha von Suttner's steps, I can't believe more women peace laureates or women's peace organizations would be hard to find.

I recall the centennial of Bertha's Nobel Peace Prize, in Eggenburg, 2005, where we were with Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Peace laureate for her human rights work and Austria's Foreign Minister. I met Dr. Heinz Fischer, then President of Austria, and appealed to him, if he had time, to become president of our country. But it is now, more than ever, that we could use your wisdom, moral compass, and your politics in the White House.

In solidarity and with best wishes,

Cora Weiss

Former President, International Peace Bureau (2000-2006)

Representative of the IPB to the United Nations

President, Hague Appeal for Peace