

## **Bertha von Suttner (1846–1914)**

**Baroness Bertha Sophie Felicitas von Suttner, née Countess Kinsky von Wchinitz und Tettau**, who was born in Prague on 9 June 1843 and died on 21 June 1914, was a radical Austrian pacifist and winner of the 1905 Nobel Peace Prize.

### **Early journalism and writing career**

She became Alfred Nobel's secretary in 1876, while he was living in Paris. Although this lasted only for a very brief period, she remained a great friend of the scientist, and continued to correspond with him until his death in 1896.

In 1877, Bertha von Suttner began working as a journalist, achieving great success under the pen name B. Oulot. She wrote short stories and essays for Austrian publications, and in 1889, she published the pacifist novel *Die Waffen nieder! (Lay Down Your Arms!)*. The novel was hugely successful, and Bertha von Suttner became a leading figure in the pacifist movement. In her novel, she described the horrors of war from a female perspective. Printed in 37 editions, translated into a dozen languages and adapted for the big screen, Bertha von Suttner's book enjoyed enormous success.

### **First woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize**

On 3 September 1891, Bertha von Suttner announced the founding of an Austrian pacifist society, the *Österreichische Gesellschaft der Friedensfreunde*, in an article in the *Neue Freie Presse*. This proved to be an incredibly successful announcement. Bertha von Suttner was appointed president of the society, a post that she held until her death in 1914.

At the Universal Peace Congress in Rome in November 1891, she was elected Vice President of the International Peace Bureau and, jointly with Alfred Hermann Fried, she founded the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft* in 1892.

In 1899, she took part in preparations for the first Hague Peace Conference, during which issues relating to national and international security, disarmament and the establishment of an international arbitration tribunal were discussed. The Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration was founded.

In June 1904, Bertha von Suttner was one of the key participants in the International Congress of Women in Berlin. The same year, she travelled to the United States for the Universal Peace Congress in Boston.

On 10 December 1905, Bertha von Suttner was the first woman to be named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, which was presented to her on 18 April 1906 in Oslo.

### **Links with Monaco**

Bertha von Suttner attended the 11th Universal Peace Congress in Monaco in 1902, which began a partnership with Prince Albert I, himself a passionate campaigner for peace since 1898. In 1903, she visited Monaco again and helped to create the International Institute for Peace, founded by Prince Albert I. She proofread and corrected the German translation of the "Scholar Prince's" book, *La carrière d'un navigateur (The Career of a Navigator)*, which was published as *Eine Seemans-Laufbahn* in 1903. She continued to correspond with Albert I despite the march towards war and Bertha's more alarmist view of the coming disaster. To the end, Prince Albert I remained fairly confident in the power of personal dialogue to avoid conflict, while Baroness von Suttner foresaw the terrible impact of mass technological warfare.