

THE MISSING PEACE: She was called a traitor in 1915 for her pacifist opposition to World War I. She was adamant that no matter the cause, the pain of the fight would render meaningless the victory. She was convinced only peace and democracy would bring peace and democracy. Her name was on the Senate Judiciary Committee's traitor list in 1919. Her name was on another list in 1931, that of Nobel Peace Prize winners, as the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Her name? Jane Addams.

Another woman pacifist, Countess Bertha Kinsky was born of aristocracy in 1876 in Prague, which then was part of the Austrian Empire. She grew up learning languages, studying the classics and preparing to be an opera singer. But as a young woman, with family fortunes squandered, she had to earn her living. She first worked as a governess in Austria, and then for a mere eight days as secretary-housekeeper to Alfred Nobel in Paris. It is speculated she departed his employ quickly perhaps rejecting his attentions and marriage proposal, for it is known she loved another.

Upon her return to Austria, she married Arthur von Suttner and began her career as a journalist and author. In her book, *The Machine Age*, she published radical views on education and women's rights. She became a pacifist and envisioned an international peace league to arbitrate instead of to war. Largely through her efforts, the International Peace Bureau was formed with her as vice-president. She became known as 'Peace Bertha.' In 1899 she led 200 women to the first world peace congress at The Hague, but was the only woman allowed in the conference. Her work there laid the foundation for the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Her anti-militarism book, "*Die Waffen nieder*" "*Lay Down Your Arms*," though extremely controversial, was extremely successful and translated into twelve languages. She became a sought-after speaker promoting peace and she founded the Austrian Peace Society. She and Nobel corresponded until his death. It is believed she was the impetus in his decision to establish a prize for peace for deserving people, be they "Swede or foreigner, man or woman." Upon his death, December 10, 1896, Nobel left his entire fortune to create the foundation which annually honors men and women for outstanding contributions toward peace. In accord with a choice most likely he would have endorsed, Baroness Bertha von Suttner was the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905.

On December 14, 1914, in a letter to suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, Jane Addams wrote of her dedication to "the cause of peace." At the end of that year, they wrote to women's groups around the country inviting them to gather in Washington, D.C. early the following year to consider organizing a National Peace Committee. In April of 1915 at The Hague, Addams convened with more than one thousand women from eleven European countries and the U.S. at the International Congress of Women to stop the savageness of WW I. They formed a Women's Committee for Permanent Peace (WPP). Addams was its first president.

Their peace efforts did not keep the United States from entering WW I. But women's valor for the value of peace was winning regard. On April 2, 1917 in Washington, forty-nine U.S. Congressmen and U.S. Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to the House, cast fifty votes against U.S. entry into the war. Though not reelected, Rankin continued to advocate for peace. She joined Addams in Zurich, Switzerland, as a delegate to the Second International Congress of Women,

where Addams reorganized the WPP into the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 1919. The WILPF was founded to promote an awareness on the causes and concept of war, to completely abolish war, and to ceaselessly work for world peace based on justice and respect for human rights.

The male American Legion considered the WILPF members radical and publicly attempted to portray them as dangerous, unpatriotic females. But the Legion's accusations were debased as President Calvin Coolidge upheld Addams and her peace efforts. After 1920 Addams came to be recognized as the greatest woman of the Progressive Era. In 1931 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, principally for founding the WILPF. Born in 1860, Jane Addams died of cancer in 1935.

In Chicago, artifacts and Hull House itself are preserved in the Hull-House Museum.* Addams' social programs of opportunities that respect the dignity of the less fortunate, especially immigrants, continue through the Hull House Association.** As well, the WILPF is still active, still seeking the missing peace.

*www.hullhousemuseum.org **www.hullhouse.org

Sources: *The Book of Distinguished American Women*, Vincent Wilson, Jr.;
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