

Bertha von Suttner's *The Barbarization of the Sky*
Belinda Cooper



Objective: To explore Bertha von Suttner's contribution to the movement to ban aerial warfare through her 1912 essay, *Die Barbarisierung Der Luft* (The Barbarization of the Sky) published 65 years prior to the additional protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions which enhance protections of both civilians and cultural objects

Relevant Dates

1888: Bertha learns about the movement to organize the world by creating an international court that enables states to arbitrate their disputes. "There is a Peace Movement!" is one of the Chapter titles in her autobiography. She is 45 years old when she learns about the movement.

1889: Bertha publishes *Die Waffen Nieder!* (Lay Down Your Arms)

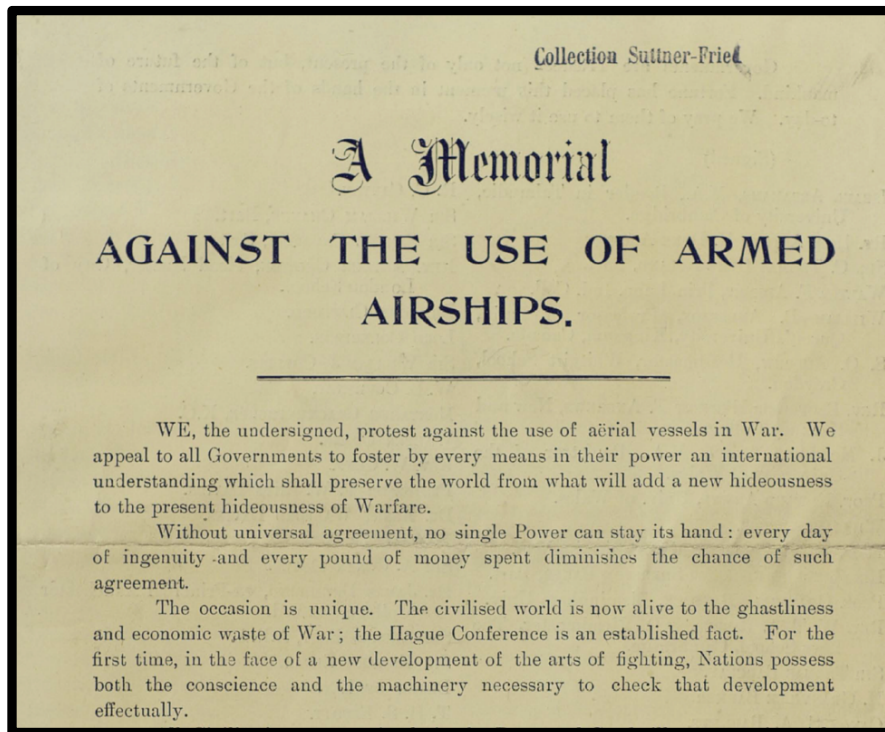
1899: Bertha attends the opening of the 1899 Hague Peace Conference, the only woman to do so. One of the outcomes of the 1899 Conference is the creation of a new court, the Permanent Court of Arbitration, designed to provide states with a non-violent form of dispute settlement. The Court still exists. Another outcome is a Declaration Prohibiting the Discharge of Projectiles from Balloons (available on "Materials" page at conscienceinaction.com)

1905: Bertha wins the Nobel Peace Prize (the first woman to do so). She is 62 years old

1907: The 2d Hague Peace Conference. Bertha meets with the secret Korean Delegation

1912: Bertha Publishes "The Barbarization of the Sky"

1914: Bertha dies



The 1912 Memorial Against the Use of Armed Airships, referenced in Bertha von Suttner's 1912 Essay, "*Die Barbarisierung Der Luft*" (The Barbarization of the Sky). The entire memorial can be downloaded at <http://www.conscienceinaction.com> (go to: Materials/Day 2/Belinda Cooper)

“For the first time, in the face of a new development of the arts of fighting, Nations possess both the conscience and the machinery necessary to check that development effectually”.

1912 Memorial Against the Use of Armed Airships

“Autonomous weapons select and engage targets without human intervention.... autonomous weapons have been described as the third revolution in warfare, after gunpowder and nuclear arms... The key question for humanity today is whether to start a global AI arms race or to prevent it from starting

- Autonomous Weapons Open Letter: AI & Robotics Researchers (2016/Future of Life)

Question: Reflecting on the quotes from the 1912 Memorial and the 2016 Autonomous Weapons Open Letter, what does the claim "Nations possess the conscience" to check the development of aerial warfare mean? Was this assertion accurate at the time? Is it still valid today? Do we “possess the conscience” to regulate the advancement of AI in autonomous weapons? How does the public's moral awareness compare between Bertha von Suttner's pre-WWI era and the present day?

(Weapons & Kings; The Arms Industry & Merchants of Death; The Military-Industrial Complex)

Question: The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 prohibited certain types of weapons (expanding bullets, poisoned arrows, etc.). Why are some weapons prohibited and others permitted?