

Panel 2 The New Diplomacy: Peace Building

The Road to Peace Building: Revolutions in Progress

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(Rapporteur's summary)

Nowadays, high-level official declarations generally promise to support and implement two propositions long put forward by non-governmental organizations and civil society:

- Transition from war to peace badly needs strengthened partnerships between the United Nations and its system, governments, and civil society organizations (the essence of “new diplomacy”).
- Women’s full inclusion in peace processes is essential.

This paper focuses primarily on women’s insights and activism in the fields of demilitarization and security as they contributed to these radical changes.

Early leadership

Although their efforts have had little recognition from historians, women have worked publicly for peace for more than a century. In 1899 Baroness Bertha von Suttner published *Die Waffen Nieder* (Lay Down Your Arms), an anti-militaristic novel that became an international best seller. Her intention was to broaden the international peace movement and create interest in alternatives to war: arbitration, the rule of law and a federation of European states. She wanted to influence the ruling élite and her book had an impact on great men of the time, including Leo Tolstoy and Alfred Nobel. Birgit Brock-Utne suggests that the first Hague conference might not have happened if Tsar Nicholas II of Russia had not been influenced by her book. After his call for an international conference “to form an alliance of all peace-loving nations to meet at the Hague to form an alliance of nations to fight for world peace and abandon all wars,” 26 countries did come together, though they altered the Tsar’s agenda to include the laws of war. From this came an ad hoc Tribunal (The Hague Tribunal) in 1899 for the arbitration of conflict. The second Hague conference in 1907 led to the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Arbitration inaugurated in 1913.

Excluded from the management of foreign affairs and defence, women also had minimal authority even in mixed-sex peace organizations. This led to the establishment of all-women societies concerned for human life and using a varied set of non-violent techniques.