

WFWP Nederland members participate in UN Day of Peace Women's Conference Amsterdam, Netherlands, 21. September 2013

Rita Salaris



On September 21, UN International Day of Peace, two members of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) Nederland, Mikoho Koetsier and Rita Salaris, attended a women's conference in the Kurhaus, Scheveningen, in honor of Baroness Bertha Sophie Felicita von Suttner, née Countess Kinsky von Chinic und Tettau (1843 - 1914), author of *Lay Down your Arms* (1889). At the age of 56, she was the only woman to attend the opening of the 1899 Hague Peace Conference, May 18. In 1905, she was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

There were 11 tables, each with 11 women, with differing discussion topics. The guest speakers came from various organizations (also three ladies from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). We WFWP members were on the table discussing Women and Democracy. Every table needed to make one final internal point and one point of action. The points from our table were the need for more solidarity among women and to do research about establishing a women's party (one of the participants is in an advanced process of setting up a women's party in the Netherlands). In conclusion, an 11 point statement was made and given to the lady representing the Ministry of Defense and head of the women's department in the Ministry.

It was very empowering to see many inspired women who had accomplished so much in their lives, also young women, some completing PhD degrees.

"Inform me, convince me, and then I will do something great for the movement", Alfred Nobel said to Bertha von Suttner. There is little doubt that Suttner's friendship with Nobel had an impact on the content of his will, and many give her credit for his establishing the peace prize.

Report by Rita Salaris, President, WFWP Nederland

Notes:

Baroness Bertha Sophie Felicita von Suttner, née Countess Kinsky von Chinic und Tettau

Born: 9 June 1843, Prague, Austrian Empire (now Czech Republic)

Died: 21 June 1914, Vienna, Austria

Residence at the time of the award: Austria

Role: Author of *Lay Down Your Arms*, Honorary President of Permanent International Peace Bureau, Berne, Switzerland

Field: Peace movement

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