



Women as Peace Makers: An Historical Analysis

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History, Women, Peace, Role of Women

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ABSTRACT

In modern times women are emerging as major peacemakers of the societies all around the world. The main idea is to study their influence which motivated others for spreading peace and harmony in the society considering all the facts in the light of historical events and modern scenarios. Further this study is to highlight the role model Women Peacemakers all around the world. I tried to discuss the some of the National and International women who proved themselves as a woman of substance and had set an example for others to build a harmonious state and a peaceful world. I discussed several women who had worked for maintaining peace and prosperity in the 20th century and emerged as major peacemakers who became an iconic role model for the generations to come.

Womenfolk as mother, wife, and daughter feed the family, take care of the children and are the guardian of hearth and home. In their respective roles they sustain and preserve the tradition despite of many external invasion and upheavals. They ruled kingdoms, fought wars; gained knowledge. Women had empathy for other people. They had desire to feed and clothe the needy. They had natural instinct to help and care for people with an inclusive outlook to hold all the members of the family together in a group. There is certain fall in the general moral values in the societies worldwide due to which there is gradual decline in the position and status of the women. Mainly in patriarchal systems in all civilizations men have tried their best to limit the power to themselves only. They had the ambition and competitive drive to conquer empires and subjugate population and dominate life. On the other hand, Women can be found helping to explain and reconcile conflicts. Considering the impact of war and peace women always think of their children and their future before themselves. Women can often be found conciliating and re-establishing the disturbed harmony and peace. In this way this could be said that women are natural peace makers.

There are specific examples of special women who showed the strength of their principles, their human outlook and their determination for peace and prosperity, throughout the history. They influenced men and use their influence for the good. For example, Mary Martha and Mary Magdalene touched Jesus, Khadija inspired Mohamed, Bebe Nanaki who played important part in Guru Nanak's life. Apart from these there are many saints and nuns who had influence on priests and leaders of the world.

Women as Peace Makers:

The gender mainstreaming strategies adopted by countries all over the world and aimed at making equality of sex central to all the development activities. Women's participation could change the world by bringing new priorities and perspectives to the organization of society. Women bring new insights and contributions to all issues. We have many specific examples of special women who showed the strength of their principles, there human outlook and their determination for peace and prosperity, throughout the history. Some of the National and International women

who proved themselves as a woman of substance and had set an example for others to build a harmonious state and a peaceful world all over should be discussed. An attempt is made to throw light on some of them. They are as follows:

Emma Goldman:

Emma Goldman (1869 –1940) was an anarchist known for her political activism, writing, and speeches. She played a pivotal role in the development of anarchist political philosophy in North America and Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. During her life, Goldman was lionized as a free-thinking "rebel woman" by admirers, and derided by critics as an advocate of politically motivated murder and violent revolution. Her writing and lectures spanned a wide variety of issues, including prisons, atheism, freedom of speech, militarism, capitalism, marriage, free love, and homosexuality.

In her famous speeches one of her famous quote from "Socialism : Caught in the Political Trap", a lecture (c. 1912), published in the book *Red Emma Speaks*, Part 1 (1972) edited by AlixKates Shulman is ,

"Every daring attempt to make a great change in existing conditions, every lofty vision of new possibilities for the human race, has been labelled Utopian."

She stands as a major figure in the history of American radicalism and feminism. An influential and well-known anarchist of her day, Goldman was an early advocate of free speech, birth control, women's equality and independence, and union organization. Her criticism of mandatory conscription of young men into the military during World War I led to a two-year imprisonment, followed by her deportation in 1919. For the rest of her life until her death in 1940, she continued to participate in the social and political movements of her age, from the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War. After her death and through the middle part of the 20th century, her fame faded. Scholars and historians of anarchism viewed her as a great speaker and activist.

Dorothy Day:

Dorothy Day, (1897 – 1980) was an American journalist, social activist and devout Catholic converts; she advocated

the Catholic economic theory of distributives. She was also considered to be an anarchist, and did not hesitate to use the term. In the 1930s, Day worked closely with fellow activist Peter Maurin to establish the Catholic Worker movement, a nonviolent, pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf.

Intrigued by the Catholic faith for years, Dorothy Day converted in 1927. In 1933, she co-founded *The Catholic Worker*, which promoted Catholic teachings and tackled societal issues. It became very successful and spawned the Catholic Worker Movement, which tackled issues of social justice guided by its religious principles. Day also helped establish special homes to help those in need. Born on November 8, 1897, in New York, she was a radical during her time, working for such social causes as pacifism and women's suffrage. She protested in front of the White House in 1917 as part of an effort to get women the right to vote.

Dorothy Day dedicated much of her life in service to her socialist beliefs and her adopted faith, Catholicism. She died on November 29, 1980, at Mary house, one of the Catholic settlement houses she helped establish.

She was proposed for sainthood by the Claritin Missionaries in 1983. Pope John Paul II granted the Archdiocese of New York permission to open Day's "cause" for sainthood in March 2000, thereby officially making her a "Servant of God" in the eyes of the Catholic Church.

Jane Addams:

Jane Addams was a social worker who works among Chicago's immigrant poor. She met such people as Leo Tolstoy and Andrew Carnegie and Mark Twain and as head of the women's peace party in 1915 travelled to Europe with Henry Ford and Emily Balch to try to stop "the senseless slaughter." In 1918 she founded Women's International League For Peace and Freedom and became the first president of it. She also gave it the money she earned from Nobel Prize in 1931. She made total commitment to non-violence and was a pacifist.

On the outbreak of the First World War a group of women pacifists in the United States began talking about the need to form an organization to help bring it to an end. On the 10th January, 1915, over 3,000 women attended a meeting in the ballroom of the New Willard Hotel in Washington and formed the Woman's Peace Party. Jane Addams was elected chairman. When the US joined the war, in 1917, Addams started to be strongly criticized. She faced increasingly harsh rebukes and criticism as a pacifist. During her travels, she would spend time meeting with a wide variety of diplomats and civic leaders and reiterating her Victorian belief in women's special mission to preserve peace. Recognition of these efforts came with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Addams in 1931. As the first U.S. woman to win the prize; Addams was applauded for her "expression of an essentially American democracy."

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak:

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 70, a celebrity in academia whose work focuses on those marginalized by Western culture, including immigrants, the working class and women. Spivak founded the Pares Chandra Chakravorty Memorial Literacy Project, in 1997, to provide primary education for children in rural India. It runs schools in West Bengal and Spivak has been spotted over the years dressed in a sari

and combat boots trudging out to villages to train teachers. Spivak, was born in Calcutta and educated in India and the United States.

Spivak first made her reputation with her 1976 translation of Jacques Derrida's *De la grammatologie*. Spivak admirers say she has done long-term political good, in pioneering feminist and post-colonial studies within global academia. In 1985, she published her famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* about the economically dispossessed. She is considered by many in literary circles to be the one of the world's leading "Marxist-feminist-deconstructionists."

Spivak is University Professor, the highest honour given to a handful of professors across Columbia University and a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society.

Mother Teresa:

Mother Teresa was born in 1910 in war-ravaged Albania to Catholic refugees. At the age of 19, she went to India to join the Sisters of Loreto, a missionary order of nuns. She served with the Sisters as a teacher for 20 years. Her life's mission was to minister to the poorest of the poor. With the Pope's blessing, Mother Teresa descended into the slums of Calcutta and began the Sisters of Charity.

Under her direction, the Sisters of Charity ministered to the sick and hungry of Calcutta. Showering love and food on all who came to the mission's doorstep, Mother Teresa soon became a local celebrity. In 1969, a documentary chronicling her work in Calcutta was released. Overnight, Mother Teresa gained international prominence as a modern day saint. With a rare combination of goodness and media savvy, Mother Teresa took advantage of her newfound recognition. She began giving speeches worldwide, helping to bring attention to the plight of the poor everywhere. In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and her position as the world's greatest champion of the downtrodden was firmly established.

Towards the end of her life, it was with the poor that she chose to spend most of her time, travelling to war-torn areas such as Beirut and drought-stricken nations such as Ethiopia in her ongoing quest to find new persons in need of love and support.

There are several other women who had worked for maintaining peace and prosperity in the 20th century and emerged as major peacemakers who became role model for the generations to come. Nobel prize winner **Emily Balch** as president of International women's league for peace and freedom, **Manjula Pardeep** as Navsarjan's Executive Director, defending the rights of Indian women and Dalits, **Betty Williams** of Northern Ireland Peace movement, **Jody Williams** for banning and Clearing Land Mines. Most recently Malala, the young lady can also be considered as one of the most inspiring female activist who worked for the education for females and was able to secure a Noble Peace Prize jointly.

It can be concluded that women are torch bearers of peace and are making a difference in every region of the world. Palestinian and Israeli women have joined forces and work together as advocates for peace, through their often unseen and unsung work, are bringing peace to many troubled countries.

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