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PEACE- MAKER

FOR the second time in the
space of three years, Count
Folke Bernadotte, youngest
son of Prince Oscar of Sweden and
vice-president of the International
Red Cross, stands in the centre of
world events. As the mediator
appointed by United Nations in the
present Palestine dispute he has been
given one of the most exacting assign-
ments that international diplomacy
could offer, but one for which he has
particularly fitted himself by training
and experience. For this is not the
first time he has had such a role.

During the closing stages of the
Second World War one of the major
sensations was the offer of peace made
by Himmler to the Western Powers.
But it was an offer made *only* to the
West—Russia was not included—and
the offer was rejected by Mr. Churchill
and President Truman only a week
before Germany surrendered uncondi-
tionally on all fronts. On that occa-
sion, however, it was Count Bernadotte,
then in Germany negotiating (under the
aegis of the International Red Cross)
for the exchange of war prisoners, who
was called on to facilitate these diplo-
matic exchanges.

Count Bernadotte was born at Stock-
holm in 1895, and is descended from
Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, one of
Napoleon's marshals, who became
Charles XIV. of Sweden in 1818. The
Count's father, Prince Oscar of Sweden,
is a brother of the reigning king, but
renounced his rights to the throne when
he married Ebba Henriette Munck of
Fulkila, a lady of noble but not royal
blood. Count Folke was the youngest
of five children and was brought up
according to strict Christian principles.
At school he won successes in his study
of the Bible and the English language,
and later he entered the Karlberg mili-
tary school, from which he graduated
as a cavalry officer in the Royal Guards.

Married an Heiress

In 1928 he married Estelle Manville
—an American heiress whom he met on
the French Riviera and married after
only a few weeks' acquaintance—and in
later years he acted on several occasions
as an unofficial ambassador of goodwill
between his country and the United
States, representing Sweden at the
Chicago Exposition of 1933 and the
New York World's Fair of 1939.

When war broke out his country
remained neutral, but in his position as
head of the Swedish Boy Scout move-
ment Bernadotte was supposed to have
been responsible for the organisation of
his scouts into a defence corps which
provided medical assistance and helped
to man anti-aircraft guns. As vice-
president of the Swedish Red Cross he
organised the exchange of disabled Brit-
ish and German prisoners of war in
1943, and in the succeeding years it
became necessary for him to make fre-
quent air trips to the capitals of the
two belligerent countries on this work.



COUNT FOLKE BERNADOTTE
Peace-making is a worrying business

While he was, in Germany arranging
for the release of Scandinavian political
prisoners in 1945 he came into contact
with the Nazi Gestapo Chief, and in
April Himmler again sent for him,
explained that Hitler was dying, and
suggested that he act as neutral inter-
mediary between Germany and the
Western Allies with his proffered peace
terms. Bernadotte flew to Stockholm,
from where the message was sent to the
British and American Governments
through the Swedish Foreign Office.
Bernadotte's part in the affair was kept
secret, and following the rejection of
Himmler's terms he flew back to Ger-
many with that answer. It was not until
April 30, just before the final surrender,
that the world found out that Berna-
dotte had been acting as a courier
behind the scenes.

In those days he was described as a
tall and handsome man with smiling,
grey blue eyes and a long, lean face,
favouring in his dress double-breasted
suits and fedora hats, and fond of
horses and cycling. Recent photographs,
however, show a lined and prematurely
aged face. They reveal what a weary-
ing business peace-making must be, and
what a strain it must throw on the
shoulders of this lone man who makes
peace his personal business.

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