

HENRY FORD: AN ADVENTURE WITH THE PEACE MOVEMENT OF 1915-1916

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Henry Ford by 1915 was the epitome of modern American business success. He was the father of the perfected assembly line and the mass producer of the "Tin Lizzie". High wages and social benefits were revolutionary marks of this world renowned symbol of United States capitalism. Moreover, Ford was not only an innovator in the business world; he was also a complex humanitarian whose impetuous instincts were prone to quixotic adventures. One of the most intriguing sidelights of his long career centered in 1915-1916 in his association with the Peace Movement. Seen in the perspective of fifty years and the powerful American Peace Movement of today which has literally invalidated one American President, Lyndon B. Johnson, this episode may not be of great significance; yet at the time it captured the imagination of millions, held front page position in the *New York Times*, made Theodore Roosevelt remark, "a most discreditable thing to the country", and might have changed the course of United States participation in the European Conflict.⁽¹⁾

The years before 1914 were marked by an increasing interest in the cause of international peace. There was rising confidence in the goodness of mankind, and in the use of reason in the adjustment of controversies among nations. Statesmen in Europe and America could compliment themselves on the achievements already made: a Court of International Arbitration established by the Hague Conference (1899), Alfred Nobel's Peace Prizes, one of which had already been awarded

(1) "Henry Ford in Search of Peace," *The Literary Digest*, LI (December 11, 1915), 1334.

to Theodore Roosevelt for his role in ending the Russo-Japanese War (1905), and the Andrew Carnegie Endowment for International Peace were concrete examples of these achievements. In the election campaign of 1912 Theodore Roosevelt's call for social justice and Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom received wide response, for the American People were looking for a means to combine America's newly acquired might with the moral mission they had long espoused. Rather than curtail, therefore, the peace sympathizers or even to discourage them the outbreak of fighting in 1914 caused most to intensify their efforts.⁽²⁾

The Peace Movement within the United States in 1915 had diverged into two groups. The board of trustees of the Carnegie Endowment, who were known in some circles as "Molly Coddles", were representative of one of these segments. These pacifists in retreat held the basic tenet that it was not yet time for peace negotiations.⁽³⁾ The other group headed by Dr. David Jordon, Chancellor of Stanford University, and Miss Jane Addams of Hull House, Chicago, called for immediate action. By October this latter group's activities were slowed to a crawl and it appeared to many within its ranks that the movement faced a dead end. Dr. Jordon and Louis P. Lockner, Secretary of the National Peace Federation, approached President Woodrow Wilson with a peace plan calling for continuous mediation by neutral countries. As Mme. Rosika Schwimmer of Hungary, representative to the United States from the Hague International Congress of Peace, had found earlier, Wilson was non-committal to this plan. Lockner came to realize, as Schwimmer had previously, that in order for any official action to be forth coming from the White House, public interest and pressure for peace would have to

(2) Frank Ernest Hill and Allan Nevins, *Ford: Expansion and Challenge 1915-1933*, Vol. II. (New York, 1957), 32-33 Hereafter cited as *Expansion and Challenge*.

(3) Burnet Hershey, *The Odyssey of Henry Ford and the Great Peace Ship*, (New York, 1967), 59. Hereafter cited as *The Odyssey*.

(4) Louis P. Lochner, *America's Don Quixote*, (New York, 1924), 10. Hereafter cited as *Don Quixote*. I would like to deeply thank Mr. Lockner for the kindness he showed me in his correspondance and in lending me this hard to find book from his personal library.

be built up within the United States.⁽⁴⁾ It was not surprising, therefore, that Schwimmer, who was passing through Detroit on her way to Washington D.C. for another conference with Wilson, became very interested in certain articles of the *Detroit Free Press*, which since its August headline of "Ford Pledges Entire Life and Fortune for Peace" had been building up excitement around this topic.⁽⁵⁾

Why would one of the wealthiest entrepreneurs in the world make such a pledge? Henry Ford had been brought up from childhood in an atmosphere of pacifism. Of the dozen Fords in Dearborn in 1861 not one volunteered to serve the Union and Ford's mother, whose two brothers had been killed during the war, had always held a deep aversion against fighting. Ford also had been schooled on McGuffey readers whose lessons depicted soldiers as murders.⁽⁶⁾ Ford's nature was directly opposite Carnegie's hibernating peace foundation and the inhibition in diplomatic circles of 1915. Ford was a man of enthusiasm and action. Impulse compelled his life. He was not one for abstraction, but rather liked to see concrete results. He was an optimist with a large heart, but as John Burroughs, the naturalist and close friend of Ford, noted: "His head was not so large except in his own line."⁽⁷⁾ By 1915 Ford's attitude towards the holocaust in Europe was summed up in his own words: "I do not like the word peace as a word. Peace means 'nothing doing'. It is negative. I like the word 'construction' No matter what a few munition factories want, the people want that war stopped Ever since the war broke out I have hoped for a definite plan to end it"⁽⁸⁾

On November 19, 1915 Ford was given his opportunity when he dined with Lockner and Schwimmer in Detroit. Before the meal was over Ford had promised that he would either offer Wilson the money to support a conference of neutral nations for continuous mediation for

(5) *Detroit Free Press*, August 22, 1915, p. 1.

(6) Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, II. 31-32.

(7) John Burroughs, *John Burroughs Talks*, (Boston and New York, 1922), 134.

(8) *New York Times*, December 2, 1915, p. 2.

peace or would sponsor an unofficial conference himself.⁽⁹⁾ That very day Ford announced that he would go to Washington D.C. to meet with Wilson and on November 21 Ford left for New York, stating: "Whatever we decide to do, I'm sure that New York is the place for giving it publicity."⁽¹⁰⁾

In New York at the Hotel McAlpin Ford met with Jane Addams, Oswald Garrison Villard of the *Nation*, Dean George W. Kirchweg of Columbia University and Paul Kellogg of the *Survey*. During the pursuing discussion Lockner suggested the idea of a ship to carry the American delegates to Europe.⁽¹¹⁾ Mme. Schwimmer fully backed this idea, for she had previously proposed an American Peace Ship at the National Peace Conference in Chicago in February, and she had been reported in the *New York Times* of March 12 as saying: "A peace ship ought to be ready to leave New York before the beginning of the Spring campaign."⁽¹²⁾ Ford applauded this plan of dramatic and concrete action and against the caution of Addams by late afternoon he was already starting to negotiate with the Scandinavian-American Line for rent of a ship. That evening after an interview with Colonel Edward Mandell House, Wilson's "man in Europe", Ford told reporters: "Come again Tuesday morning at ten o'clock and I'll have a big story for you."⁽¹³⁾

The morning of November 23 the fruits of the House interview were harvested and Ford received a call from the White House telling him that the President would see him at noon. Accompanied by Lockner Ford wore a plain business suit and, after being introduced to Wilson, slipped unceremoniously into an arm chair throwing his right leg over the arm. After pleasantries had been exchanged Ford urged Wilson to appoint a neutral commission and offered unlimited financial backing in this project. When the President replied that he could not

(9) Lochner, *Don Quixote*, 13.

(10) *Ibid.*, 17.

(11) *Ibid.*, 19-20.

(12) *New York Times*, March 12, 1915, p. 8.

(13) Lochner, *Don Quixote*, 21.

act now Ford delivered an ultimatum to a surprised Wilson: "If you feel you can not act, I will." Quickly the interview ended and Ford on the steps of the White House said to Lockner: "He is a small man."⁽¹⁴⁾

The next day, therefore, when Ford faced a group of forty reporters at the Biltmore Hotel he was unable to announce that his actions had the official backing of the White House. Nevertheless, Ford, who was notorious for his inability to speak in front of crowds, announced that he had chartered the Scandinavian-American liner Oscar II which was leaving for Europe December 4.⁽¹⁵⁾ Declining to elaborate Ford told the newspaper men: "We are going to try to get the boys out of their trenches and back to their homes by Christmas Day."⁽¹⁶⁾ Ford gave no indication of the practical plan behind this propaganda stunt nor that "Home by Christmas" was just a slogan. Lockner's later thoughts that Ford's impulsive and laconic statement had laid him and the Peace Ship open to "merciless ridicule" were well-founded.⁽¹⁷⁾

This ridicule from the press started from the very beginning of the expedition and lasted to the end. The *New York Times* in a front page article on Ford's announcement of the Peace Ship ran this insertion:

As Noah, looking out of his ark after the rain was over, sent forth a speculatory dove which eventually came back with an olive leaf in his mouth, so Mr. Ford is going to send out dove-like wireless messages to soothe the passions of the warring nations."⁽¹⁸⁾

Within the coming weeks "Ford's folly", "peace junket," and "peace joy-ride" were a few of the terms used by American editors to describe Ford's expedition. The *Philadelphia Evening Ledger* noted "that peace

(14) Louis P. Lockner, *Always the Unexpected*, (New York, 1956), 59.

(15) Ford's first speech to a large group—at Sing Sing prison—had been a complete failure when he said: "Boys I'm glad to see you all here." Burroughs, *John Burroughs Talks*, 330.

(16) *New York Times*, November 25, 1915, p. 1.

(17) Lockner, *Always the Unexpected*, 60.

(18) *New York Times*, November 25, 1915, p. 2.

now would be premature, a calamity worse even than the war itself."⁽¹⁹⁾ The *Buffalo Enquirer* thought the expedition was "so far across the field of fancy as to verge on lunacy." While the *New York Times* hoped that it could be "confidently assumed that Ford would do as little harm as good."⁽²⁰⁾ John O'Keefe's poem, "The Flivvership", gathered wide circulation in the American press with its satirical look at the expedition:

I saw a little fordship
 Go chugging out to sea.
 And for a flag,
 It bore a tag,
 Marked 70 h.p.
 And all the folk aboard ship
 Cried, "Hail to Hennery."
 ...
 And so, without a quiver
 The dreadful task they dare.
 Of teaching peace
 To France and Greece
 And Teuton, Celt and Bear.
 Ho For the goodship Flivver
 Propelled by heated air.⁽²¹⁾

While the majority of the press releases on Ford's expedition read like comic strips they did not attack Ford directly, but only laughed at his misguided nature. There also appeared in the press a sense of dim hope as expressed by the *Buffalo Enquirer*: "The world will be fooled if the Peace Ship does any good, but the world would be mighty glad to be fooled."⁽²²⁾

Amid this barrage of bad press releases the frantic work of assembling a group of delegates within nine days was carried on in what

(19) "Henry Ford in Search of Peace," *The Literary Digest*, LI (December 11, 1915), 1333.

(20) *Ibid.*, 1336.; *New York Times*, November 27, 1915, p. 14.

(21) *New York Times*, November 27, 1915, p. 14.

(22) "Henry Ford in Search of Peace," *The Literary Digest*, LI (December 11, 1915), 1336.

Lockner called an "inferno."⁽²³⁾ A staff of filing clerks and stenographers from Ford's Long Island branch set up their headquarters at the Biltmore Hotel and in Room 717 Schwimmer, Addams, and Ford worked as a triumvirate in selecting the candidates, who on November 26 were sent a telegram signed by Ford which stated: "The time has come for a few men and women with courage and energy ... to free the goodwill of Europe, that it may assert itself for peace and justice"⁽²⁴⁾ Ford had himself excluded Congressmen, writing them: "I ask for your support by fighting preparedness at home."⁽²⁵⁾ Prominent men and women in Europe were asked to form commissions from each neutral country to join the peace expedition when it reached Copenhagen. Ford asked all the presidents of the nation's colleges to send him student delegates as he needed some "live wires" on his Ship of Peace. Invitations to all the major newspapers were sent out, for Ford noted: "Publicity ... is what keeps the wheels turning."⁽²⁶⁾ On November 27 follow up letters were sent to former President William Howard Taft, William Jennings Bryan, Helen Keller, all the governors of the United States, and many other prospective delegates stating that "envoys to thirteen belligerent and neutral European Governments have ascertained in forty visits that there is a universal peace desire."⁽²⁷⁾

As the date of sailing approached the list of committed delegates slowly grew until, according to Hill and Nevins, "a large group many of intelligence and reputation" gathered in New York.⁽²⁸⁾ Actually this seems to be somewhat from the truth. Of the forty-eight governors who had been invited only one, Louis B. Hanna of North Dakota, had accepted. No major figure of world stature was to emerge and the

(23) Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 29.

(24) Ford Invitation to Prospective Delegates, November 24, 1915, reprint in *New York Times*, November 26, 1915, p. 1.

(25) Ford Letter to Congress, November 30, 1915, reprint in *New York Times*, December 1, 1915, p. 1.

(26) *New York Times*, December 4, 1915, p. 2.

(27) Ford Supplemental Letter to Prospective Delegates, November 27, 1915, reprint in *New York Times*, November 28, 1915, p. 3.

(28) Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, II. 37.

London Times was led to comment that it would "not feed the vanity of the small fry among his (Ford's) imitators by naming them."⁽²⁹⁾ Professor Garland Spencer of Union Theological Seminary in reply to Ford's invitation bluntly stated what seems to have been the major reason no mass exodus to join the expedition occurred, when she expressed: "Regret that such preliminary steps as careful selection of people, plans of procedure, and careful method of securing foreign assistance were not taken before public ... statements were made."⁽³⁰⁾ Bryan telegraphed, saying that he was in "sympathy", but thought he could render "a greater service here opposing the plan to commit this country to a large and indefinite increase in expenditures for army and navy."⁽³¹⁾ Unfortunately Jane Addams was seriously ill on November 30 and was unable to accompany the Party.

The facts concerning who eventually did board ship and in what number are still in great controversy.⁽³²⁾ One could not really say as one of the delegates, Mary Alden Hopkins, that the final delegate group was "representative: a cross-section of America." Actually half the party was made up of writers, suffragists, socialists, single-taxers and professional pacifists, while the next largest segment consisted of lecturers, teachers and ministers with very few government officials included. Of the main figures who did accompany Ford there was

⁽²⁹⁾ *New York Times*, November 30, 1915, p. 1.

⁽³⁰⁾ Letter of Professor Garland Spencer to Ford in reply to Invitation, November 26, 1915, copy sent to *New York Times* and reprinted, *New York Times*, November 30, 1915, p. 1.

⁽³¹⁾ Bryan Telegram to Ford in reply to Invitation, November 30, 1915, reprint in *New York Times*, December 1, 1915, p. 1. Bryan later in the week came to New York and after an interview with Ford said he hoped to join the party at the Hague. *New York Times*, December 4, 1915, p. 1.

⁽³²⁾ Sward list 88 delegates, 18 college students, 50 clerks and technical attaches and 57 press members. Keith Theodore Sward, *The Legend of Henry Ford*, (New York, 1948), 88. Hill and Nevins report the *New York World* as listing 77 delegates, 25 students 46 newsmen; while the "Who's Who" on board the Oscar II listed 67 delegates, 36 students, 23 business staff, 3 foreign participants, 28 journalists, 2 photographers and 7 miscellaneous. Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, II. 40. Lockner list 83 delegates 54 reporters, 3 photographers, 50 technical staff and 18 students. Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 48.

Governor Hanna, S.S. McClure, editor New York Evening Mail, Rev. Charles F. Aked, formerly pastor of John D. Rockefeller's Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, Mrs. Joseph Fels, widow of the millionaire soap manufacturer and a single tax leader, and Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver.⁽³³⁾

On November 26 Dean S. Marquis of St. Paul's Cathedral, Detroit, a close friend of Clara Ford, handed Ford a note which stated: "Now, Henry you follow the advice of Dr. Marquis." The next day Ford was back in Detroit and the night of December 3 was spent trying to convince Ford to stay home. When this became unsuccessful it was decided that Marquis should be Ford's companion on the voyage, and with the power of attorney signed over to Edsel Ford all was ready.⁽³⁴⁾

December 4 was a cloudy day with a freezing drizzle falling from the sky, yet a crowd of 15,000 had gathered on Hoboken Pier in New Jersey by noon to see the Oscar II off. Two bands—one on the ship and the other on the pier—were playing such songs as "I Did Not Raise My Boy to be a Soldier" and the new peace anthem "Tell the Boys It's Time to Come Home."⁽³⁵⁾ Soon the crowd was creating its own entertainment with the German contingent from the *Bier StuBe*, located back of Hoboken waterfront, singing "*Deutschland, Deutschland Uber Alles*" which was quickly counter-pointed by the English "God Save the King".⁽³⁶⁾ A giant poster hung on the side of the ship symbolizing the Peace Movement with Ford's slogan of "Home by Christmas" in one corner. Just as Lloyd Bingham, a theatrical man who had been hired as an official cheerleader, began to arouse the crowd's emotions to a higher pitch Ford appeared and "three cheers for Henry" drowned out the noise of the bands.⁽³⁷⁾ The crowd went wild over Ford, who was one of the most charismatic persons of his day. On board Ford received best wishes from Bryan and his two old cronies Thomas A. Edison and John Burroughs. Bryan who had been

(33) Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, II. 40.

(34) Lochner, *Don Quixote*, 43. Sward, *The Legend of Henry Ford*, 89.

(35) *New York Times*, December 5, 1915, p. 1.

(36) Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 10.

(37) *New York Times*, December 5, 1915, p. 1.

kissed by an elderly woman wearing a white streamer proclaiming, "Peace at Any Price", later remained on the pier lifting his hat time and again in salute until the Peace Ship had disappeared.⁽³⁸⁾ Edison's visit was short and it was reported by the young William G. Bullitt of the *Philadelphia Ledger* that Ford had offered Edison one million dollars if he would stay on board.⁽³⁹⁾ Two squirrels were presented to Ford by a prankster and soon the press was calling them "Henry F. Acorn" and "William J. Chestnut". Amid this confusion Berton Braley, a correspondent for Collier's, who was later to make his success as a war poet, was being married on board.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Because of or in spite of the tears of a weeping Clara, the cheers of the crowd, the yells of a brawl which had broken out on the pier among two opposing groups, the headlines of the morning papers which proclaimed that three ships had been sunk in the past week came Ford's determined past sentiment: "I'd go even if the ship was torpedoed off the Hook."⁽⁴¹⁾ Finally an hour late the Oscar II slipped out to sea and her mission of peace.

The delegates were soon settled in their staterooms where each found such literature as "Bankrupt New York" and "Standard Oil and the People", favorite topics with Ford.⁽⁴²⁾ To the surprise of the reporters new typewriters were found in each of their cabins, compliments of Ford. The passengers fall into three groups: the invited delegates who were the most important and at the same time the least conspicuous; the students whose frankness in pointing out inconsistencies was not always welcome; and finally the press agents who were by far the most noticed and felt aboard.⁽⁴³⁾ A schedule of activities was begun

(38) *Ibid.*, p. 6.

(39) Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, 39.

(40) Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 24-25. One man who should have been married was Dr. Charles Giffin Pease, head of the Anti-Smoking League, as Ford had him removed from the ship when he heard Pease was planning to share his cabin with his secretary.

(41) *New York Times*, November 25, 1915, p. 1.

(42) *Ibid.*, January 3, 1916, p. 6.

(43) Letters of Florence L. Lattimore on board the Peace Ship, reprinted in "Aboard the Oscar II," *The Survey*, XXXV (January 15, 1916), 457-458. Hereafter cited as Lattimore Letters.

very early in the voyage with daily lectures from the delegates to the students in the second-cabin dining-room. The reporters held three meetings a day and at first Ford made himself readily available for one hour in the morning and another at night.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The delegates, themselves, held a mass meeting each evening in order to plan the coming reception at Christiania which Schwimmer had described as a "national reception with flags waving and with people from all over present"⁽⁴⁵⁾

Burnet Hershey, a rookie reporter for the *Brooklyn Eagle*, said the "entertainment and cuisine left little to be desired" aboard ship and before the ship was to leave American waters the newsmen pledged to drink the bar dry before reaching Norway.⁽⁴⁶⁾ By the second day out a new lodge called the "Vacillating Sons and Sisters of St. Vitus" was formed by twelve newsmen with the squirrel and nut playing a symbolic nature in the secret mysteries and among the officers the "Keeper of the Strait Jacket" having a commanding role. The students not for being outdone formed a "Friendship Masonic", an organization of the members of Greek letter societies.⁽⁴⁷⁾ If the voyagers' interest in these activities began to lag, they always could turn to the library of peace books which Ford had furnished for circulation on board, or they could read the four-page daily peace paper, *The Argosy*, published in the first cabin smoking room on a multigraph, or as a last resort they could join the ever present band in the official song of the Peace Ship which went:

The submarine and battleship
Have served the devil long and well.
The bloody sword and Zeppelin
Will find their resting place in hell.⁽⁴⁸⁾

By this time two stowaways, a Danish citizen who wanted to go home for Christmas and a twenty year old Western Union boy had come

(44) Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 86.

(45) *New York Times*, December 1, 1915, p. 6.

(46) Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 86.

(47) Lattimore Letters, 459.

(48) Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 81.

out of hiding. The former found work in the galley while the latter became the personal message boy of Ford.

Amid all of this Rosika Schwimmer worked on in her usual seclusion and became what Lockner called "the unquestioned field marshal of the whole expedition."⁽⁴⁹⁾ Ford followed Schwimmer's advice very closely letting her write the text of all official communication. On ship she set up the daily programs, was in constant touch with the peace people in the neutral countries, and was making all the arrangements for the peace party's European stay. Mme. Schwimmer was an indefatigable worker who had genuine personal charm and wit. Her past experience in the international peace movement and ability to speak fluent English, French, German and Hungarian gave her many qualifications for playing the role she held in Ford's expedition. But Schwimmer also had an autocratic nature and would not give any responsibility to the other delegates. This along with her old style of diplomacy of mystery—which, I believe, the whole Peace Ship episode was a sign of a rebellion against—undermined her position until she became rather more of a hindrance than an asset.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Mme. Schwimmer's mysterious "blackbag", which presumably contained a collection of state papers which indicated the readiness of certain belligerents to consider mediated peace, shortly became a great controversy on board.⁽⁵¹⁾ Schwimmer's refusal to show these statements and her reports of attempted espionage over the members of the expedition had become the main topics of discussion on board.⁽⁵²⁾ Finally, as J. Herbert Duckwork, a newspaper writer on board for the *New York Sun*, reported: "Mme. Schwimmer was obliged under general insistence to disclose their (statements of neutral countries) nature at an open

(49) Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 65.

(50) *Ibid.*, 66-67.

(51) *Ibid.*, 67.

(52) Actually Ford's personal body guard had searched Schwimmer's "blackbag" one day when an emergency false alarm had rung on board and had also been assigned by Marquis to sit up all night watching her and Ford's door to make sure they didn't get together. Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 130.

Meeting ...” and “... lo, they turned out to be the same old papers collected in Europe last spring (with no new break throughs at all).”⁽⁵³⁾

The occasion for the first of Schwimmer's three appearances on board started another controversy which caused the *Chicago Tribune* to write: “The dove of peace has taken flight ... chased off by a screaming eagle.”⁽⁵⁴⁾ The problem began during an evening meeting headed by Jones, Aked, and Fels. McClure whose position as an editor gave him access to an advanced copy of Wilson's speech of December 7, read this message of strong preparedness leanings to the peace delegates. Immediately Lockner rose and attacked the speech, calling for a resolution condemning it. McClure replied that he could not “remain silent when an official action of the President of the United States is impugned.”⁽⁵⁵⁾ For the first time the effects of Ford's haste in selecting delegates appeared and a fierce debate began. Finally the delegates in order to clarify the issues elected a committee of five to draft resolutions to be submitted to Congress as views of the Peace Ship and the meeting was quickly adjourned.⁽⁵⁶⁾ These resolutions Ford thought would bring a degree of organization among the guests, but just the opposite was to be the case.

On December 9 the committee submitted its resolutions which declared their “opposition to any increase by the United States of her military and naval forces,” telling the delegates that there would be no discussion and that they would be given two days to sign if they wished.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The result of this approach to the problem is clearly seen in Dr. Aked's statement: “We went to end the war in Europe, We

(53) “Rocking the Peace-Boat,” *The Literary Digest*, LII (February 5, 1916), 342.

(54) *Chicago Tribune*, December 11, 1915, p. 1.

(55) *New York Times*, December 28, 1915, p. 3.

(56) Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 73.

(57) Peace Ship's Resolutions to Congress, December, 11, 1915, reprint in “Rocking The Peace-Boat,” *The Literary Digest*, LII (February 5, 1916), 343. In Hill and Nevins the time sequence of the events in this dispute differs with this account and Lockner's account. See Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, 41-42.

started more than one war of our own."⁽⁵⁸⁾ Ford on December 12, in order to unite the delegates, sent a letter to each saying that the idea for no discussion had been meant to eliminate an unnecessary embarrassment, but still that it was necessary to know the persons who stood directly behind him. Ford concluded by saying that though some did not agree "all can be useful."⁽⁵⁹⁾ Nevertheless the delegates never became a united group and in Norway McClure was to shout to a group of foreign reporters: "We are divided. No words can change that."⁽⁶⁰⁾

The newspaper men were to have a Roman holiday over this division in the ranks. "Mutiny on Board" was a familiar headline with some stories describing actual fighting on board. Ford was compelled to send a wireless message to Wilson pleading with him to please "disregard inaccurate ... newspaper accounts of happenings on board."⁽⁶¹⁾ Captain William Hempel, who made it a rule to read all wireless messages sent from his ship, in order that no violation of neutrality would occur, insisted that Ford at least see the sensational messages being sent by reporters. Ford, who said that he would not "for the world censor them", therefore, spent most of his evenings with Lockner in the wireless cabin.⁽⁶²⁾ Still, through all this Ford kept his sense of humor, saying to Lockner: "Do you remember how the President advised us not to take only pacifists with us? Well, I guess we have followed his suggestion."⁽⁶³⁾

An incident which was to have far reaching implications on the expedition took place nine days out of Hoboken on December 13. The voyage had been to date a very rough crossing, causing most of the

(58) Interview of Dr. Charles F. Aked by *Current Opinion*: "Dr. Aked Tells of his Mortifrying Experience as a Ford Peace Delegate," *Current Opinion*, LXI (November, 1916), 334.

(59) Ford Letter to Delegates, December 12, 1915, reprint in Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 233-234.

(60) *New York Times*, December 20, 1915, p. 1.

(61) Ford Wireless Message to Wilson, December 10, 1915, reprint in *New York Times*, December 9, 1915, p. 4.

(62) Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 61.

(63) *Ibid.*, 74.

voyagers to feel the effects of *mal de mer*. Burnet Hershey, the rookie reporter, was surprised by Ford, who came out of his cabin dressed only in his familiar sable-collared coat and derby. Suddenly the ship pitched and soared out of the water falling quickly back, causing Ford to fall. Sliding in inch-deep water on the listing deck Ford became fully drenched in the ice-cold water before Hershey grabbed him and got him to his feet.⁽⁶⁴⁾ After this incident Ford, who caught a cold which developed into grippe, was only to appear in public twice. It is thus that the expedition lost for all practical purposes its only world figure whose public appearances, both for the delegates themselves and for the coming European tour were so badly needed for the success of the expedition.

On December 14 a shot was fired over the bow of the Peace Ship by the British cruiser Hildebrand and the Oscar II was boarded by a British officer whose first words to Captain Hempel were: "You didn't really mean you had a mutiny on board, sir, did you?"⁽⁶⁵⁾ After waiting sixteen hours outside Kirkwall Harbor in the Orkney Islands, as no ship was permitted to enter in hours of darkness, the Oscar II was escorted into the port where most transatlantic vessels, held for search, were taken. The wireless was sealed, cables closely censored and letters that were sent ashore had to be unsealed. Thousands of wrapped Christmas gifts which had been sent along for the children of Scandinavia were opened and searched. For the first time all on board felt the real effects of the war. While in harbor all warmth and baths were lacking, causing a flu epidemic to break out on ship. Part of the cargo which was asserted as being prunes was found to be contraband and only under the pressure of Ford did the authorities allow the ship to continue to Christiania, Norway. As the ship glided over the cold waters of the North Sea there was a general edginess on board. The lifeboats were made ready, side lights were set burning and the Danish flag hung at the helm. Some of Ford's guests went up to the upper

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Hershey, *The Odyssey*, 96.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

decks to be near the lifeboats while others slept in their lifejackets, for all had heard of the stories of eight months ago when daily a ship had been sunk in the North Sea.⁽⁶⁶⁾

No record crowds and no flags met the Peace Ship as she docked at Christiania on December 18, at 4 A.M. The temperature was -12 degrees. No one was in sight and not until nine o'clock did twelve Norwegians appear to greet the Ford party. Ford insisted upon walking from the dock to the hotel while his guests were running up a thousand dollar taxi bill. Later that afternoon he joined the delegates playing in the snow.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Ford was constantly surrounded by a crowd of curious people wherever he went, but by noon the strain had become too great and from the moment of his return to the city until his departure he was confined to his room.

Under the direction of Marquis, Ford was placed in the back room of a double suite at the Grand Hotel with Marquis overseeing the front room. Ford, thereafter, became incommunicado even with the closest delegates of his party. Still Ford assured everyone: "I will stay here till I can show my face to the people." For the success of the peace mission in Europe this seemed of utter importance as most of the Norwegian papers, such as the powerful moderate *Tidens Tegu*, had ridiculed the peace party, but praised Ford.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Lockner was, therefore, very glad to be able to relay Ford's promise to the Norwegian public at a mass meeting.

On December 23 Lockner described Ford as follows: "pale, thin and listless, he lay in his bed, little interest in what I told him of the many tributes that were being paid him." That same day Ford told Lockner: "Guess I had better go home to mother You've got this thing started now and can get along without me." Against Lockner's pleas and with Schwimmer arousing the sleeping delegates, Ford, along with a sockless Marquis, on December 24 at 4 A.M. made his escape

(66) *Ibid.*, 108.

(67) Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 81.

(68) *New York Times*, December 21, 1915, p. 1.

from the Grand Hotel with the help of a flying wedge of company employees who had been called in for the event.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Most of the delegates didn't hear the news until morning when it was announced on the Stockholm train that Ford had been compelled to leave because of health, that he hoped to return, and that all would be provided for as before.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Financially, all was provided for by Ford, but the delegates were on their way to an illusory conference which, without any belligerent participation and now without a world famous figure, was to slowly disintegrate after fourteen months of internal conflict.

By the time Ford arrived in the United States he was in good enough health to be at his diplomatic best when questioned by the press: "Only one thing bothers me in this whole affair. My wife doesn't like the criticism to which I have been subjected I like it; I hope it won't stop. You know the best fertilizer in the world is weeds."⁽⁷¹⁾ The only time Ford admitted any negative feelings towards this episode in his long life was when he told friends that he "would sooner work at my desk for the next twenty-five years without a vacation then go through this thing again."⁽⁷²⁾ Thus ended one of a series of quixotic adventures which before this Jamesian character died in 1947 was to have lead him into anti-Semitic, anti-milk and anti-labor union campaigns.

The question remains: What had Ford accomplished? Surely Ford had furnished the peace movement with what it had asked of him—publicity. But Mark Sullivan in *Our Times* saw this publicity in a negative light and stated: "... dying down to an echo of gigantic and exhausted laughter, it deprived every other peace movement in the country of force and conviction,"⁽⁷³⁾ Merle Curti in his book, *Peace and War*, thought the expedition through the conference, which developed beneath all the other antics, had coordinated scattered efforts for peace

(69) Lockner, *Don Quixote*, 87-89.

(70) *New York Times*, December 25, 1915, p. 1.

(71) *Ibid.*, January 3, 1916, p. 1.

(72) *Ibid.*, January 4, 1916, p. 2.

(73) Mark Sullivan, *Our Times Over Here*, Vol. V. (New York, 1933), 183.

in the neutral countries and had caused a definite opinion in Europe.⁽⁷⁴⁾ I strongly doubt that Mr. Curti's opinion is entirely correct for soon afterwards some of these same neutral countries had joined the fighting and even at this sanguinary period in the European Conflict spirits were high for the continuance of this last noble war to its natural end. According to Ford the expedition which had cost \$465,000 had gotten for him: "... a million dollars worth of advertising ... and a hell of a lot of experience."⁽⁷⁵⁾

It would appear that while the expedition did little harm neither did it do much good. To bring to an end the senseless slaughter of millions in Europe would have been no small achievement. No one can fault Ford for his idealism, but much less may be said for his guileless engineering techniques in assembling the Great Peace Expedition of 1916. If one is to look back at this event not only for the story, which in itself is highly interesting material, but also for some type of enlightenment for the present-day, it would be to this hasty and haphazard assemblage that one would have to focus his constructive criticism. It is here that the current movements of this nature which hope to channel their energy into one specific event could take some notes. For even if in the political and diplomatic realm this expedition had a chance for success it was this assemblage that doomed it from its very conception. First of all, if a project of this kind is to be successful time must be allotted not only for the logistics to be planned, but also for the thorough rational of the plan to be set down clearly so that both the participants and the public are well-informed not only about the demonstrable action, itself, but also about the concrete follow-up plans. Second, members of the project must reflect a powerful, but actual cross section of the country if it is to have any real force or validity. (While Hill and Nevins imply that this first attribute was true of the Ford Expedition I believe, as I have previously pointed out, that their assumptions are for the most part incorrect.) Third, the

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Hill and Nevins, *Expansion and Challenge*, II. 53.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ *Ibid.*, 54.

members chosen must be able to work together or at least be placed into selected working aggregations and, thereafter, these factions must emerge looking at least in public as one consolidated group. It was because of an ignorance of these points that the Great Peace Expedition of 1916 became a laughing matter for the world instead of a gallant try to stop the war; and it is this same ignorance that will doom many present-day projects to certain failure.

One other very interesting point that can be drawn from this episode is that the American predilection for action as shown through the many recent unofficial acts of diplomacy directed at Hanoi by American delegations made up of peace advocates, wives of captured servicemen, and philanthropic millionaires is not a new innovation of the 1970 American, but is an inborn characteristic of Americans. This tenacity for spurning official channels when they seem to have failed is surely a living peculiarity which has come from the American tradition, itself—a characteristic which American Presidents and diplomats may not like, but which they no doubt will have live with now and in the future.