

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 132

### “Guerre à la guerre”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

As the Great War of 1914 dragged into 1915 and then 1916 and as the death toll climbed ever higher while victory seemed ever more elusive, most people in the belligerent nations were prepared to fight on, some with enthusiasm, others with reluctance, but a brave few in those and in the neutral nations dreamed of something better: a negotiated end to the unending bloodshed.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 132. *Guerre à la guerre*.

Today on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, I want to take a break from the ongoing war narrative to zoom in on one particular aspect of the Great War I think doesn't get enough attention. And that is, simply, why did the war continue as long as it did? Why didn't it end sooner? Why wasn't there more political and diplomatic effort to end this appalling waste and loss of life?

To that end, I want to spend this episode examining peace efforts in the years 1915 and 1916. These peace overtures did not come from the governments of the combatant nations. The official position of those governments was that they expected to win on the battlefield and impose peace terms on their opponents after victory. What pressure there was for peace did not come from European governments, but from what we now call non-governmental organizations, and from the United States. I want to turn to those efforts to end the war, but if you'll indulge me for a few minutes, I'd first like to go on a little side journey and check in with an old friend of the podcast, Henry Ford, and see what he's up to these days. And I have a couple of other topics I've been itching to talk about.

Working class people faced low wages and appalling working conditions during this era, as we have already seen. This was true throughout the world, including in the United States. The absolute worst job a working-class person could have was coal miner, and 1914 saw a long and

bitter confrontation over coal mining in Colorado turn into the bloodiest strike in American history.

On one side was the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, owned by John D. Rockefeller Jr., son of the man behind the Standard Oil Company, which we talked about in episode 60. CF&I was the largest coal mining company in the western US at the time, and was famous for its low wages, its rapacious company housing and company stores, and its flagrant disregard for mine regulations. Workers there went on strike in September 1913. They were promptly evicted from their company housing, but their union, the United Mine Workers, had anticipated this, and had leased a nearby tract of land. The union invited the workers to erect a tent city there. The workers were therefore camping out near the mines, which allowed them to maintain a presence and intimidate scab workers brought in to replace them. CF&I responded to this by hiring private security.

On April 20, 1914, these company security cops attacked the tent city. The workers defended it, but the company cops were better armed, including some with machine guns. About twenty people died that morning, most of them wives and children of the strikers. There were more deaths that night when the company set fire to the tent city, and again most of the victims were women and children.

The event was known as the Ludlow Massacre. The strikers retaliated, and there was something like a guerilla war going on in southern Colorado for the next two weeks, running up the death total to a hundred or more. No one knows for sure. President Wilson sent in the United States Army to restore order, but the strike ultimately collapsed in December 1914, the union utterly defeated. Nevertheless, the Ludlow Massacre destroyed the reputation of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and would eventually lead to legislation bettering working conditions for miners.

I mention this story because it's an important moment in US history, and because it tells you something about the plight of the working class at the time, and beyond that, it gives us a context to consider the case of Henry Ford. We examined the automobile magnate and the rise of his company in episode 57. In January 1914, even as the CF&I strike was in progress in Colorado, Henry Ford made headlines by announcing that his workers would henceforth be paid \$5 per day—that's about US\$120 in today's money. This pay rate more than doubled the Ford Motor Company's previous base pay.

Factory owners across the nation howled in pain, but the newspapers loved it. So did would-be workers, who turned up at Ford plants in teeming mobs, intent on getting a taste of that \$5-a-day goodness. Ford would claim, years after the fact, that he had instituted the higher wage in order that Ford workers could afford to purchase the Model Ts they were building, and some historians have gone so far as to credit Ford with leading the United States on the first step down the road to the remarkable broad-based mid-century prosperity she is destined to enjoy. But I'm getting ahead of the narrative here.

Before we start handing out laurel leaves, though, it's worth taking a harder look at what's really going on here. Ford's real reason for this huge wage increase was much more prosaic than the explanation he gave later. It began with a report on the turnover rate at Ford plants, which he had received at the end of 1913. In that year, Ford oversaw a company with about 14,000 employees, and it had racked up 52,000 new hires. If you do the math, that means the average Ford job position turns over every three or four months.

You see, Ford's mass production methods were revolutionary in producing large numbers of cheap automobiles. But he had also invented something else: jobs that were boring, frustrating, and unfulfilling. Sitting by an assembly line all day tightening the same couple of bolts on every one of an endless parade of Model Ts is just not a very good job. Absenteeism was high, which is a big problem on an assembly line, because if one worker doesn't show up, the whole assembly line is useless until someone else can be brought in to take that position. Ford employed a pool of nearly 1,500 substitute workers, people whose only responsibility was to be on call to fill in vacancies on the assembly lines.

These labor problems were cutting into profits, and Henry Ford deemed that something drastic needed to be done. And so he did it. Now don't get me wrong. The wage increase he gave his workers was praiseworthy, especially in light of how other employers of the time were treating *their* employees. But let's make sure we fully understand his motivations.

And understand, too, that Ford asked a lot of his workers in exchange for that \$5. Not only on the job. Ford workers were expected to live their lives in a Ford-approved manner even on their own time. Ford set up a "Social Department" within the company, with fifty investigators, supervised by the Rev. Samuel Marquis, an Episcopalian priest who was also Ford's personal pastor. The Social Department monitored workers' habits and supervised their lives, even inspecting their homes. Ford workers were not permitted to drink alcohol or to gamble and were expected to support their families at a level Ford deemed appropriate, and the Social Department would be checking to make sure. Immigrant workers, and Ford employed many immigrant workers, were required to speak English on the shop floor and to demonstrate that they were assimilating American culture.

If you broke the rules, the Social Department could have you put on six months' probation at half-salary, during which time you either redeemed yourself or you got fired. Ford got more eccentric and more crotchety as he got older, as we old people are wont to do, and one of his little quirks as he grew older was to hold the line at \$5 per day and not raise the pay any further for decades to come. \$5 a day was pretty good money in 1914; by 1934, not so much. On the other hand, as Ford got older, he would also lose his zeal for micromanaging his employees' lives, and by the 1920s, he would begin to scale back the operations of the Social Department.

Ford's workers put up with all this meddling for the sake of that premium wage, and again, Ford deserves credit for that generous wage rise. If nothing else, he should be praised for having

enough business acumen to understand that it is not necessarily in a business's best interest to hold its employees' wages down to the minimum possible level it can get away with. Sometimes the minimum is not the optimum. Sometimes a higher wage is the better business decision. So kudos to Henry Ford for figuring out in 1914 what many businesses still can't see even in our time.

[music: *Serenade for Strings*]

Henry Ford was a vocal critic of the Great War, which was why he was vilified in Thomas Dixon's film *The Fall of a Nation*. He had an engineer's distaste for waste, and no doubt couldn't help thinking how wasteful the biggest, bloodiest, and most destructive conflict in human history must be. That if you took all these young men on the front lines whose lives were being wasted, and all that money and all those resources being spent and used them to build cars instead, well, you'd have an awful lot of cars. I'm being a little facetious here, but yeah, think about the tractors that could be built and the farmland that could be worked and the trucks that could bring the harvests to market. Think especially about countries like Austria and Germany and Russia, whose farms still operated mostly by the muscle power of human beings. As if the unprecedented slaughter of the Great War wasn't bad enough, these countries are now also slowly starving to death because there's no one left to work the farms. This is a topic I'm going to return to in future episodes, beginning next week in fact, but for now, imagine how, instead of devoting their resources to war, Europeans could be devoting them to mechanizing their agriculture and bringing about newer and higher levels of prosperity.

And then of course there's Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States. He was not an engineer, but he was a historian, and acutely aware of how unprecedentedly awful the Great War was. And as the leader of the most powerful country in the world *not* involved in the war, one who also happens to have a background in history and political science, Wilson could be forgiven for thinking he was the one person in all the world in the best position to bring an end to the fighting. And as a devoutly religious man, Wilson could be forgiven for wondering if the Almighty Himself hadn't put Woodrow Wilson forward into the role of the world's peacemaker.

Wilson had been angling for the role of the world's peacemaker since even before the war began. You'll recall from episode 75 that he had sent his close adviser and confidant, Colonel House, to Europe in the summer of 1914 to sound out the British and German governments about banding together with the United States to form the nucleus of a new alliance to enforce world peace.

We've met Colonel House a couple of times before on this podcast, but I haven't formally introduced him yet, so let me take care of that oversight now. He was born Edward House in Houston, Texas, in 1858. He held the honorary title of "Colonel" and made use of it, which was not unusual for prominent Americans of the time, although it's less common for historians to keep referring to them that way long after they've died, but Colonel House is the exception. He was a dapper little man with a white mustache, well educated and wealthy, having made his

fortune in banking and railroads, which was the way to get rich in 19<sup>th</sup>-century America. Unlike many of his peers, who made up the Eastern Republican plutocratic elite of the day, House remained stubbornly Texan and stubbornly Democratic and viewed the Eastern moneyed elites as dangerous to traditional American grass-roots democracy. House became an ardent Progressive and a supporter and friend of the then-Governor Woodrow Wilson in 1911.

House helped manage and advise Wilson's Presidential campaign and was offered a Cabinet position after Wilson won the election in 1912, but declined in favor of becoming a sort of American version of a minister without portfolio. He took a strong interest in international affairs, which led to Wilson's secretaries of state, first, William Jennings Bryan, and later, Robert Lansing, both to feel resentment over the fact that Colonel House seemed to be the *real* secretary of state around here.

Before the Great War began, House had devised his own simplistic plan for maintaining world peace. It was based on a three-way alliance between the United States and Britain and Germany. If these three nations agreed among themselves that they would oppose war and would be prepared to use their own combined military might to defeat any other nation that attempted to start one, well, that would pretty much keep a lid on the pot, wouldn't it? What other nation would dare provoke the wrath of the world's most powerful alliance?

Colonel House wanted to travel to Europe in 1914 to sound out the leaders of Britain and Germany about his brainchild, and Wilson approved the trip and sent him on his way. The reception he received in London and Berlin was decidedly lukewarm, even though this was before the fateful assassination of Archduke Ferdinand. House reported back to Wilson that he'd wanted to talk peace, but everyone in Europe had only wanted to talk war.

That war that everyone in Europe wanted to talk about came to pass in August of that year, as you know, the same month that death came for Ellen Wilson, which was a severe blow to the President. By the end of the year, though, as he was recovering and the war in Europe was in its winter lull, Wilson made a public offer of his services as a mediator to find an end to the conflict through negotiation. This offer was rejected by both sides. Undeterred, Wilson sent House back to Europe in early 1915 to meet privately with British and German leaders once again, and discuss the prospects for peace. I mentioned this mission briefly in episode 107.

In London, House found his British hosts cordial but steadfast, showing no interest in negotiating a settlement. He even got an audience with King George V, but it sounds like that didn't go so well. House reported back to Wilson that the King "is the most bellicose Englishman I have so far met....His idea seemed to be that the best way to obtain permanent peace was to knock all the fight out of the Germans and stamp on them for a while until they wanted peace and [wanted] more of it than any other nation."

The Germans were no more willing to talk peace than were the British, and House's visit to Germany reaffirmed what the US Embassy in Berlin had already been reporting: the German

government harbored a profound resentment against the United States, seeing it as a British ally in all but name. House met with Arthur Zimmerman, an official in the German Foreign Office; the two men already knew each other from House's 1914 visit, but this time around, House described Zimmerman's mood as "bitter."

The hardline stances of their governments reflected the public attitudes of the combatant powers. Privately, the German Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, was far less optimistic. He knew that the German military was already facing a shortage of officers and was demanding 180,000 replacement soldiers every month. These demands were manageable for now, but in the long run, Germany was going to face a shortage of manpower. That information wasn't available to the general public. The Army's top command, in the persons of Erich Falkenhayn, Paul von Hindenburg, and Erich Ludendorff, continued to insist victory was possible in spite of how badly the war was draining Germany. They disagreed on how to achieve this victory, but they insisted it could be achieved, and so long as these three soldiers wanted to keep fighting, and the public supported them, even the Chancellor of the Empire could not gainsay them.

In the Allied countries, the public mood was similarly bellicose, but there were two segments of the European public that were far less enthusiastic about the war than most of their fellow citizens: socialists and women's groups.

We've talked about the socialists before. Socialist theory holds that working people in the combatant nations have more in common with working people in the enemy nations than they do with the elites of their own countries. Worse still, socialists tend to view war as elites and capitalists sacrificing working-class lives in order to strengthen their own political positions and line their own pockets. This view, by the way, is not peculiar to socialists. Even prominent and wealthy figures like Henry Ford and Colonel House shared this cynical view of the Great War.

In pre-war France, the great socialist pacifist leader had been Jean Jaurès. As a member of the Chamber of Deputies, Jaurès had opposed President Poincaré's anti-German policy and had even voted against funding for Poincaré's fateful visit to St. Petersburg in July 1914, accusing the French President of being "more Russian than Russia."

The Socialist International had already scheduled a conference in August of that year. When the Austrians dropped their ultimatum in July, a group of about twenty prominent socialists from across Europe met in Brussels on July 29 to consider how to respond. The group included Jaurès, along with such notable leftists as Rosa Luxemburg and Hugo Haase of Germany, Angelica Balabanov of Russia, Friedrich Adler of Austria, and Keir Hardie from the United Kingdom. There were calls for socialists to organize general strikes across Europe to nip the war in the bud, but all they could agree on was to move the conference forward to August 9 and change the venue from Vienna to Paris. But the war began even before the new scheduled start date and the conference never met.

That Brussels meeting is remembered today for the stirring speech Jaurès gave on the necessity of averting the looming war. He spoke with his arm around the shoulders of Hugo Haase, his German colleague, in an eloquent gesture of solidarity. After he finished, the crowd poured out into the streets of Brussels singing “The Internationale,” the socialist anthem, and chanting the slogan “*Guerre à la guerre,*” “War on war.”

Afterward, Jaurès returned to Paris and resumed his duties in the National Assembly on July 31, lobbying his fellow Deputies and his colleague René Viviani, the prime minister, to slow the momentum to war. At 9:00 that evening, a small group of hungry and exhausted socialist Deputies including Jaurès adjourned to the Café Croissant to have dinner. Sadly, a 29-year old right-wing extremist named Raoul Villain, who had been stalking Jaurès since his return to Paris, fired two shots through the café window, killing him. The murder sent shock waves across France, and across socialist Europe. Whatever hope there might have been that France could avoid the war died with Jaurès. Prime Minister Viviani formed the *union sacrée*, the sacred union, a government of all parties to work together to prosecute the war, and many socialists, though not all of them, joined the sacred union.

By the way, Jaurès’s assassin, Villain, was held in prison for the duration of the war, and afterward tried for the murder. Amazingly, he was acquitted, and Jaurès’s widow billed for the costs of the prosecution.

In Germany, the German Social Democratic Party, the SPD, grudgingly went along with the war, leading to the German version of the *union sacrée*, which the Germans called the *Burgfriedenspolitik*, and the SPD contingent in the Reichstag voted to approve funding for the war, just like every other German political party. As the war dragged on, though, and further funding votes were taken, some socialists began breaking with their party to oppose the war, including such prominent figures such as Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, and Hugo Haase, the German Jean Jaurès had embraced before returning to Paris to be gunned down by a fellow Frenchman. Haase, Liebknecht, and Luxemburg would be expelled from the SPD for their break with the party in early 1917, and would create new left-wing parties. Luxemburg and Liebknecht would organize the *Spartakusbund*, or Spartacus League, which after the war would become the Communist Party of Germany, or the KPD. Haase would found the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany, which would merge back into the SPD in 1922.

The Austrian Social Democratic Party, the SPÖ, also supported the war at first, in the aftermath of the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince. But unlike the German SPD, the entire SPÖ would turn against the war in 1917.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the Labour Party supported the Liberal government’s decision to enter the war, and when Prime Minister Asquith bowed to the demands for a coalition government, in May of 1915, Labour Party leader Arthur Henderson got a Cabinet post, making him the first Labourite to reach the Cabinet. But there was also Labour opposition to the war,

notably Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald, who had resigned as the Labour Party leader over the war. Hardie and MacDonald did not leave the Labour Party; they were part of the Independent Labour Party, which sounds like it ought to be a splinter party formed by people who quit the official Labour Party over the war issue, but it wasn't, so don't think that. It was in fact a left-wing group within the larger, official Labour Party. The British call this a "ginger group," which is their term for a group of activists within a larger political party or other organization, one that tries to push that party or organization in a more radical direction. Huh. The things you learn when you do a podcast.

Anyway, to summarize, in most of the belligerent nations, the socialist parties are supporting the war, with varying levels of enthusiasm, with the most pacifistic among them quitting the party or at least continuing to advocate for pacifism from within the party. In Italy, however, the situation was reversed. There, the official Italian Socialist Party, the PSI, remained staunch in its opposition to Italian involvement in the Great War, and it was the pro-war socialists who split away. These socialists felt that the opportunity to complete the nationalist project of the Risorgimento by bringing the remaining territories of *Italia irredenta*, unredeemed Italy, back into the Italian kingdom and under the Italian flag trumped any high-minded socialist gobbledygook about class solidarity.

Socialists in Russia, like the majority of socialists in Italy and the minority everywhere else, opposed the war, but splintered anyway, into a bewildering assortment of factions. Even before the war, the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party had already split into the Bolshevik and Menshevik groups, "Bolshevik" meaning "majority" and "Menshevik" meaning "minority" in Russian, though actually the Bolsheviks were probably the minority and the Mensheviks the majority. And then there was the Social Revolutionary Party, which sounds like it ought to be a more radical party than the Social Democratic Labor Party but was in fact less extreme even than the Mensheviks, and was certainly not so radical as the Bolsheviks, because no one is as radical as the Bolsheviks.

If all that isn't confusing enough, the establishment of the Duma in Russia led to further divisions as the leftist parties split over whether to become fully legal political parties operating within the new political framework the Emperor had agreed to, or to continue their illegal and subversive underground activities from the days when illegal and subversive and underground was the only way you could *be* a socialist in Russia. There were Bolsheviks that wanted to do one or the other or both at the same time and Mensheviks who wanted to do one or the other or both at the same time. And then there was Leon Trotsky, who became leader of the let's-not-have-any-factions faction. The explanation for all this infighting among Russian socialists is probably the same as that old saw about academic politics—that it is so vicious because the stakes are so small. I say this because political parties in Russia, even after the Revolution of 1905, don't have much say about anything, least of all about the war.



That old joke about academic politics, by the way, is often incorrectly attributed to Henry Kissinger, but may actually have originated with former university president turned politician Woodrow Wilson.

Whatever will the socialist movement might have mustered to reach across national borders and stop the war crumbled as the war officially began. In Britain, France, Germany, and Austria, the socialists grudgingly went along with the war. Nationalist sentiment was too strong. The assassination of Jaurès proved that. To oppose the war would merely weaken and marginalize the socialist movement and threaten the progress already made. The minority of socialists who stood up against the war anyway were in fact marginalized, including by fellow socialists. In Italy, the socialists did stand up against the war as a party, and were marginalized for it. In Russia, what socialists think doesn't matter anyway.

Some socialists continued the efforts even after the war began. In September 1915, a socialist conference was held in the tiny village of Zimmerwald, in Switzerland, which included socialists from Germany, Russia, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. This conference passed a manifesto condemning the war and expressing sympathy for jailed socialist leaders such as Rosa Luxemborg and Karl Liebknecht in Germany, but the Zimmerwald Conference would be best remembered for its most famous delegate, Vladimir Lenin, who was living in exile in Switzerland at the time. There would be a second conference in April 1916. This one was held in the Swiss village of Kienthal, though it is usually referred to as the Second Zimmerwald Conference. And there would be a third so-called Zimmerwald Conference in Stockholm in September 1917, but we'll get to that one a little later.

[music: "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier"]

There's no polling data from this period, but it's reasonably clear that women were never as enthusiastic as men about fighting the Great War. Women were also politically marginalized. There were very few places in the world at this time where women had the right to vote. Among the combatant nations, women could vote in national elections only in New Zealand and Australia.

There were movements of women and sympathetic men aimed at gaining women the right to vote and other legal rights that would give them parity with men. We've already talked about some of those movements. They were what we would now call "feminists." That word was already in use by the Great War in the sense we know it today, but it was not common. We now refer to the women's movements of this era as "first-wave feminism," that is, feminism aimed at gaining women equal legal rights. And as we have also seen, when the war broke out, the movement split between those who felt the cause should be delayed until after the war and those who wanted to press ahead regardless.

You could argue that the gender gap in enthusiasm for the Great War was itself an argument for women's right to vote, as in, "If women had the right to vote, we wouldn't have gotten into this

stupid war in the first place.” And you can be sure that argument was being made. There’s some intersectionality here between socialists and feminists, as socialists were also among the first male-dominated political groups to endorse votes for women. In the United States, the Socialist Party declared a “National Women’s Day” in 1909. Socialists in other nations took up the idea and by 1914, International Women’s Day became established on March 8 of every year. The United Nations took up International Women’s Day in 1975, and it continues to our own time. Today, International Women’s Day is a public holiday in 27 nations.

I mention this because by the time International Women’s Day rolls around in 1917, which will occur soon in our narrative, something important might happen, and that, I believe, is what Mike Duncan calls “foreshadowing.”

Was there a role for feminism in ending the war? I already began telling you the story of the 1915 International Congress of Women in The Hague, back in episode 107, but then that episode got sidetracked by the use of poison gas on the battlefield just before the Congress convened.

The Congress went ahead anyway. It ran three days, April 28-30, and produced a set of resolutions calling for mediation of the war to begin immediately and to continue until a peace agreement was reached. It also called for the creation of a mechanism for peaceful resolution of international conflicts. The Congress would meet again in 1919, and it never really ended. It became the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, or WILPF, which still exists in our day.

The organizers of this Congress understood that the only authority they had over the conflict was a moral one. It wasn’t enough. As we already saw, the women of this Congress were not only ignored for the most part, but mocked. The press dismissed them with terms like “silly” and “hysterical,” and other language that looks transparently sexist from our modern point of view.

And then there were the colonial territories, especially those of the two largest colonial powers, Britain and France. We’ve already talked a little about the reactions of the people living in those territories to the war in Europe, and here, too, we see a split of opinion. There were those who were enthusiastic about answering the call from London or Paris in the hope that Africans and Vietnamese and Australians and Indians and Irish and peoples across the respective empires could prove themselves equal partners in the empire, and thus earn the right to an equal say in its governance. And there were those who saw the Great War as a purely European affair, and conscription of Asians or Africans to fight in a European squabble as nothing more than the twentieth-century version of slavery. There were even occasional outbreaks of armed resistance against the colonial powers triggered at least in part by conscription, as we have already seen, and not only by people of color. You already know about Afrikaner resistance and Irish resistance, for example.

One of the women present at The Hague conference was the Jewish Hungarian feminist and peace activist, Schwimmer Rozsa. She was called that in her native Hungary, but in English we

usually refer to her as Rosika Schwimmer. She had been in London when the war broke out and unable to return to her native Hungary. She traveled to the United States in the fall of 1914 in the hopes of organizing a mediation conference to end the war. When that failed, she traveled to The Hague and convinced the conference there to adopt her call for continuing mediation.

Afterward, she returned to the US and got the attention of Henry Ford. She helped persuade him to put his money where his mouth was and undertake a private peace initiative. Ford agreed and chartered a steamship to carry a group of American peace activists to Europe. What they were going to do when they got there was never explained; presumably the peace activists would be able to exert enough moral authority to shame the belligerents into entering negotiations.

Ford invited such prominent Americans as peace activist and feminist Jane Addams, who had been one of the American delegates at the Hague conference and whom we first met in episode 42, William Jennings Bryan, the former Secretary of State (episode 107), Thomas Edison, the inventor and Ford's former employer (episode 67), and Philadelphia department store mogul and purchaser of the organ and bronze eagle from the 1904 World's Fair, John Wanamaker (episode 26). All of them declined to participate.

Ford met with Woodrow Wilson and asked him to commission the project as an official US government peace mission. Wilson also declined, leading Ford to dismiss him as "a small man."

But Ford himself went on the mission, as did Rosika Schwimmer and the American suffragist Inez Milholland, last seen riding a white horse in front of the great march for women's suffrage in Washington the day before Wilson's inaugural, episode 68, and Samuel McClure, the founder of *McClure's Magazine*, episodes 24 and 97—it was one of the most important journalistic outlets of the time—and the Rev. Samuel Marquis, Ford's pastor and the head of his Social Department.

The press was invited along on the Peace Ship, as it was called, even though the press was mostly making fun of the whole enterprise. They called it "The Nutty Ship" and "The Ship of Fools." The vessel departed from Hoboken, New Jersey on December 4, 1915 while a band played "I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier."

Three days later, on December 7, Woodrow Wilson announced his military preparedness proposal and asked Congress for substantial increases to Army and Navy funding. This led to a squabble among the peace activists aboard the ship, some of whom wanted to condemn Wilson's proposal, while others felt that to do so would be unpatriotic and not relevant to their mission. Then an influenza epidemic broke out aboard the ship. Ford himself was taken quite ill and incapacitated for the rest of the voyage. A rumor developed that he had died. The quarreling among the peace delegates grew bitter, with a gleeful press reporting, and mocking, every bit of it. Rosika Schwimmer claimed to the press that he had documents proving the combatant powers were ready to negotiate but refused to produce them, which drew another round of press mockery.

The Peace Ship docked at Christiania, the capital of Norway, two weeks later, though the Norwegian government hosted the delegation with notable reluctance. Henry Ford was still shaky from his illness and returned immediately to the United States. The others stayed in Europe for a time, but their peace efforts came to nothing, and the only real result of Henry Ford's peace mission was to seal Henry Ford's reputation as an eccentric rich man ready to embrace peculiar and unpopular causes.

We'll have to stop there for today. Thanks for listening, and thanks to August for making a donation and to John for becoming a patron of the podcast. If you would like the warm and fuzzy feeling you get from helping to support the podcast, visit the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com), where you will find buttons to suit every need. Or if you haven't gotten around to it yet, how about giving the podcast a rating and review at the iTunes store? It only takes a couple of minutes and it's another way you can help the podcast.

And I hope you'll join me next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century* as we turn our attention to the homely subject of food production. The year 1916 saw unusually bad harvests in Europe, which led to food shortages, which led to political unrest, which changed the face of the war and changed the face of twentieth-century history. The Turnip Winter, next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. Rosika Schwimmer failed to make peace, but she continued to make history. In the late stages of the war, the new government of Hungary attempted to send her as its diplomatic representative to Switzerland in the hope of gaining recognition and negotiating rights with the Allies. This made her arguably Europe's first woman ambassador, although she never got formal recognition and the Swiss government sent her home, at least in part because she was a woman.

She eventually settled in Chicago, in the United States, where she had to fight back against false accusations she was a Bolshevik agent. She was unable to acquire US citizenship because as a pacifist, she refused to affirm that she would take up arms in defense of the United States, as the citizenship oath of the time required. Her citizenship case reached the United States Supreme Court, where, in a landmark 1929 decision, *United States v. Schwimmer*, the Court voted 6-3 to uphold the denial of citizenship. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote a famous opinion dissenting from the Court's decision that says in part:

*She is an optimist and states in strong and, I do not doubt, sincere words her belief that war will disappear and that the impending destiny of mankind is to unite in peaceful leagues. I do not share that optimism nor do I think that a philosophic view of the world would regard war as absurd. But most people who have known it regard it with horror....The notion that the applicant's optimistic anticipations would make her a worse citizen is sufficiently answered by her examination which seems to me a better argument for her admission than any that I can offer. Some of her answers might excite popular*

*prejudice, but if there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other it is the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate. I think that we should adhere to that principle with regard to admission into, as well as to life within, this country. And recurring to the opinion that bars this applicant’s way, I would suggest that the Quakers have done their share to make the country what it is, that many citizens agree with the applicant’s belief and that I had not supposed hitherto that we regretted our inability to expel them because they believed more than some of us do in the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount.*

As is typical for Supreme Court decisions of this era, the majority opinion has since been overturned and forgotten, while Holmes’s dissent remains with us. In particular, the observation that freedom of thought includes “freedom for the thought that we hate” has been widely quoted ever since.

Rosika Schwimmer lived the rest of her life in the United States, although she never did become a citizen. She did live long enough to see her Supreme Court case overruled in 1946, before passing away in 1948, at the age of 70.

[music: Closing Theme]